



MING TSAO (*1966)

Plus Minus (2012/13)

Realization of Karlheinz Stockhausen's
"Plus Minus"

1	Plus Minus – Page I.	05:53	8	Erwartung	02:54
2	Plus Minus – Page II.	05:38	9	Es gibt einen Ort	02:33
3	Plus Minus – Page III.	04:15	10	Du entscheidest dich	02:01
4	Plus Minus – Page IV.	03:24	11	Heute	04:44
5	Plus Minus – Page V.	03:04	12	Helligkeitshunger	04:36
6	Plus Minus – Page VI.	03:59	13	Das Geschriebene	03:44
7	Plus Minus – Page VII.	05:55	14	Fadensonnen	03:47
			15	Stehen	02:31
			16	–vor der Erstarrung	01:40
			17	Caliban's Wound Response	03:45
			18	Against Hurt	04:56
			19	The Wound Day and Night	04:54

TT 74:29

Mirandas Atemwende (2014/15)

1-7 **ensemble ascolta**
Andrea Nagy, *clarinet*
Erik Borgir, *violoncello*
Hubert Steiner, *guitar*
Andrew Digby, *trombone*
Markus Schwind, *trumpet*
Anne-Maria Hoelscher, *accordion*
Florian Hoelscher, *piano*
Martin Homann, *percussion*
Boris Müller, *percussion*
Julian Belli, *percussion*
Akos Nagy, *percussion*

8-19 **Kammerensemble
Neue Musik Berlin**
Miranda: Tajana Raj, *soprano*
Caliban: Christoph Gareisen and
Jan Pohl, *speaking voices*
Rebecca Lenton, *flute*
Gudrun Reschke, *oboe/english horn*
Theo Nabicht, *bass clarinet*
Laurent Bruttin, *clarinet*
Edouard Cambreling, *horn*
Matthew Conley, *trumpet*
Matthias Jann, *trombone*
Alexandre Babel, *percussion*
Michael Weilacher, *percussion*
Guillaume Vairet, *percussion*
Frank Gutschmidt, *piano*
Lan Cao, *celesta*
Seth Josel, *guitar*
Theodor Flindell, *violin*
Lisa Werhahn, *violin*
Kirstin Maria Pientka, *viola*
Cosima Gerhardt, *violoncello*
Jonathan Heilbron, *double bass*

Conductors: 1-7 Johannes Kalitzke,
8-19 Stefan Schreiber
Recording dates: 1-7 18–19 Jul 2014,
8-19 28–29 Nov 2015
Recording venues: 1-7 KvB-Saal Funkhaus Köln, Germany
8-19 Teldex Studio Berlin, Germany
Producer: 1-7 Eckhard Glauche
8-19 Markus Heiland
Recording engineer: 1-7 Mark Hohn
8-19 Markus Heiland
Technique / Editing: 1-7 Astrid Grofmann
Executive Producer: 1-7 Harry Vogt
8-19 Markus Heiland
Final mastering: Markus Heiland
Graphic Design: Alexander Kremmers
(paladino media), cover based on
artwork by Erwin Bohatsch
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Mirandas Atemwende

by Stefan Schreiber

The two-part act, *Mirandas Atemwende – Calibans Wundantwort* [Miranda's Breath-Turn – Caliban's Wound-Response], forms the second part of composer Ming Tsao's chamber opera, *Die Geisterinsel* [The Ghost Island]. In this act, Miranda's distinctive vocal technique stands in contrast to the complex poetic-philosophic language of Caliban, played by two actors. With a kind of documentary distance, Caliban's actors develop a web of thoughts and images that separates itself lucidly from the instrumental sounds and noises, appearing to be wrested from the soundscape. At the same time, Miranda displays her new world of singing, which, nestled in these sounds, frequently coalesces with them. In the fourth scene of *Die Geisterinsel*, single phrases from Arnold Schoenberg's *Das Buch der hängenden Gärten* [The Book of the Hanging Gardens] emerge from Miranda's suggestive and often whispered lines in her dialogue with Prospero. Then, in leaving "Prospero's Garden," she completes the "breath-turn" [Atemwende] towards an idiosyncratic vocal language taken from the transformation of the opera *Erwartung*, which, in Schoenberg's oeuvre, follows the song cycle of poems by Stefan George. Schoenberg composed the expressionist monodrama *Erwartung*, with libretto by Marie Pappenheim, for dramatic soprano, whose vocal expressiveness historically receives its orientation from figures like Kundry or Salome. Here, however, the soprano exceeds these forerunners in its extreme tessitura. In reciprocal dependency on the appearances of nature, abrupt episodes of upending anxiety ensue;

their vocal expressions run the gamut from hesitantly searching lines to harrowing screams within the sphere of the large orchestra's myriad forces. These interrupted gestures and sudden reversals are inscribed in Miranda's musical language from the very beginning. However, Schoenberg's expressive vocal line appears to have been turned inside out and transplanted to Miranda's lower middle vocal range, thereby condensed to filigreed fragments. For Miranda, Pappenheim's language becomes a pulverized poetry endowed with a unique syntax, opening up to the untamed sounds and noises of the island. Confronted with the effects of nature on her inner life, the dramatic voice in *Erwartung* claims to be the lone shaper of her own expression. Now, the sensitive inventor of a new kind of singing begins to envision a different sort of lyrical subject. Shattered at its very foundation, this subject needs the wilderness beyond the garden, in order that it, in a process of previous assimilation, may find its way to a common-personal language.

En route to a wider opening of her new language, Miranda's voice unfurls into the web of instrumental sounds and extracts from these sounds a continually new-other song, consisting of multifaceted nuances situated between precise-brittle tones and vocal noises produced by the sudden turning of the in- and exhalation of the singing-breath. This leads directly to Paul Celan's poetry, more specifically, the cycle *Atemwende* [Breath-Turn]. With their critical force, motivated by an utopian turn of the voice that would lead to its very transgression, Celan's lines penetrate Miranda's singing, as though the whole thing were being cited for the purpose of rehearsing the centrifugal forces of the words' meanings. Miranda's par-

ticular appropriation of Celan's poetry emerges from the contradictory positions of Schoenberg's *Sprechgesang* – the technique's origin in the ceremoniously excessive language of the monodrama and its critical turn towards the pugnacious tone of cabaret –, that is, from the technique's myriad forces, and attains in the end the distance of documentary speech.

Out of the cool, phlegmatic quality of this documentary speech and into the poetic-philosophic network of echoes, meanings, and references disseminated by Jeremy H. Prynne, Caliban's two-part voice, in his "wound-response" [Wundantwort], discharges the explosive force of his language – a language suspended above the tetanic sonic ruins of an instrumental texture of violence from dead movement. Retracting any sort of definite position in the distance of this kind of speech, the chain of disassociations and gaps begins to mobilize in the network of language. According to Prynne, this chain tears open and calls into question the internal cohesion of language along with the conception of its limits, in order to be able to hear, in a primal world beyond the garden, another voice and its continually new-other singing.

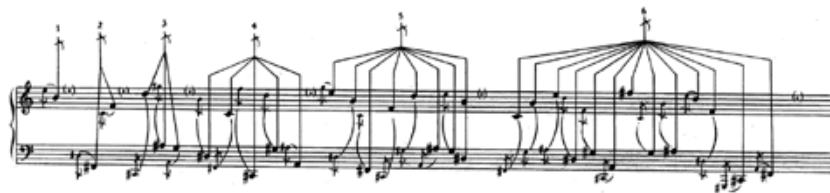
In his essay, *La fine del pensiero*, Giorgio Agamben writes, "La cerca della voce nel linguaggio è il pensiero." Following the French version as it appears in the original bilingual edition, one generally translates this sentence as "One searches for the voice in the language." On the other hand, the expression used by Agamben, "la cerca," originally staid and today no longer in use, suggests the expectation of an active search of the voice itself, a striving towards a new conception of speech and song. The film work of the

artist couple Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet constitutes an important aesthetic point of orientation for Ming Tsao. The composition of the spoken lines for the singers in *Die Geisterinsel* was inspired by a notated score for speech, which Straub and Huillet developed together with their actors. Throughout the long, painstaking process, the filmmakers referred to musical categories, and by applying this kind of precise, controlled acting, the construction of notated speech enabled a phonation that was original each time and rich in surprising inflections. Before the concert premiere of *Mirandas Atemwende – Calibans Wundantwort*, there was a screening of Straub and Huillet's 1989 film *Schwarze Sünde* [Black Sin], their film adaptation of the third version of Friedrich Hölderlin's *Empedocles*. In the final shots of the film, Huillet speaks aloud the fragment "New World" (vv. 486–496), which, on the opposing page of the original draft, Hölderlin had labeled "Choir. Future":

New world
and a brazen vault
Heaven hangs over us, a curse
freezes the limbs of mortals, and the strengthening,
joy-giving presents of Earth are like chaff, the
Mother mocks us with her gifts
and all is mere semblance –
O when, when will it break at last,
the flood, over the parched land.
But where is he?
That he might adjure the living spirit.

(translated by Michael Hamburger, 1988)

Huillet's voice releases the forces that dwell at the heart of Hölderlin's language through the precise construction of the speech-tempo, stressed and unstressed syllables, the rising and falling, accelerating and decelerating of different bits of verse, and incisions into the grammatical and lyrical structure of the fragment, unforeseen in their inflection. One of the film's production assistants described the effect of Huillet's declamation: "At that point, one had left behind the constrictions of reflective perception for the unbounded, open expanse of another kind of understanding, anchorless, without those reassuring boundaries that separate viewer from event, fiction from real life, oneself from the other."



Karlheinz Stockhausen, *Plus Minus* (Universal Edition, 1963): an example of a note page.

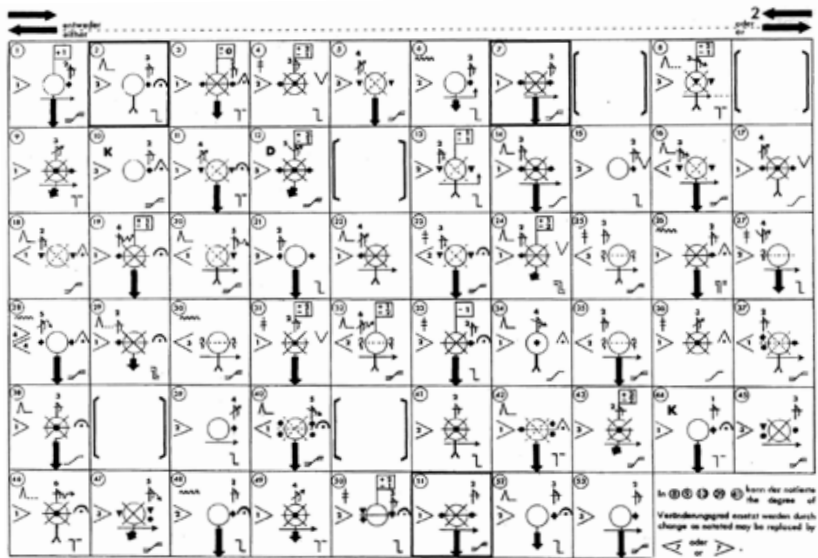
Plus Minus

by Ming Tsao

"You don't want to 'change' the world, but to engrave upon it the traces of your presence: you have seen, you have opened to us a part of that world as it gave itself to you."

*Karlheinz Stockhausen in his letter to filmmakers
Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet (1963)*

To my knowledge, no full realization of *Plus Minus* exists. All of the realizations that are available (including the well known Cornelius Cardew/Frederic Rzewski realization from 1964) only address one or two pages and one layer of the Stockhausen score (there are 7 pages total with a possibility of combining up to 7 layers).



Karlheinz Stockhausen, *Plus Minus* (Universal Edition, 1963):
an example of a symbol page.

Thus elements such as “inserts”, a moment from an earlier or later page that is incorporated into the present page, as well as the synchronization of layers, which can include “pitch replacements” if two layers contain one or more of the same pitches, are ignored. It is important for these aspects to be acknowledged for one to gain a full appreciation of the complexities of *Plus Minus*. My version uses all 7 pages and two layers. Since this realization is for ensemble ascolta with the addition of clarinet and accordion, I have assigned Layer 1 to a trio of cello, piano, clarinet and Layer 2 to the remaining instruments.

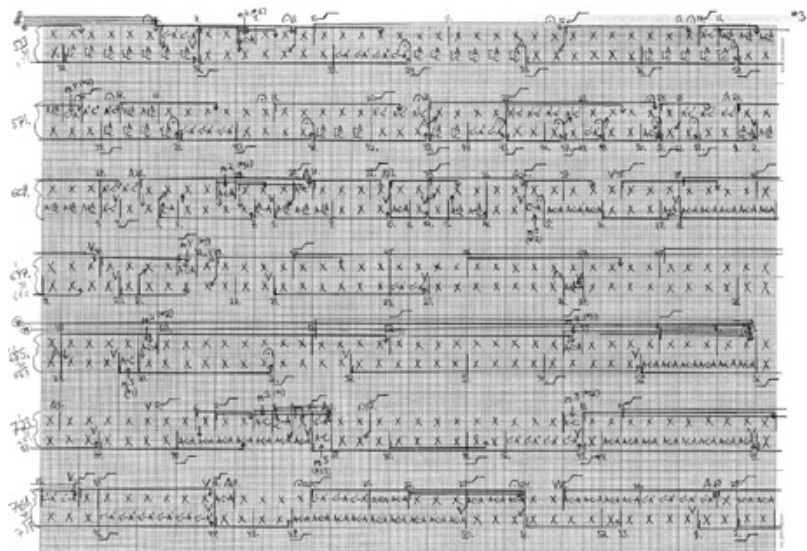
Why realize *Plus Minus* today, fifty years after Stockhausen sketched its initial ideas in the sand for Mary Bauermeister? As I began interpreting the rules of *Plus Minus*, particularly in the context of Stockhausen’s earlier works such as *Momente*, *Gruppen*, and *Refrain*, I began to see *Plus Minus* behaving as a meta-serial work; rather than being a work that is comprised of serial ideas (which it is), its realization calls into question the nature of serial thinking.

Handwritten musical score for *Plus Minus*, page 41, showing an event form-scheme. The score consists of five systems of staves. The first system has a treble clef and a common time signature. The second system has a bass clef. The third system has a treble clef. The fourth system has a bass clef. The fifth system has a treble clef. The score is heavily annotated with circles, arrows, and other markings, indicating specific events and relationships between notes. A large arrow points from the first system to the second, and another from the second to the third. The page number '41' is written at the bottom right.

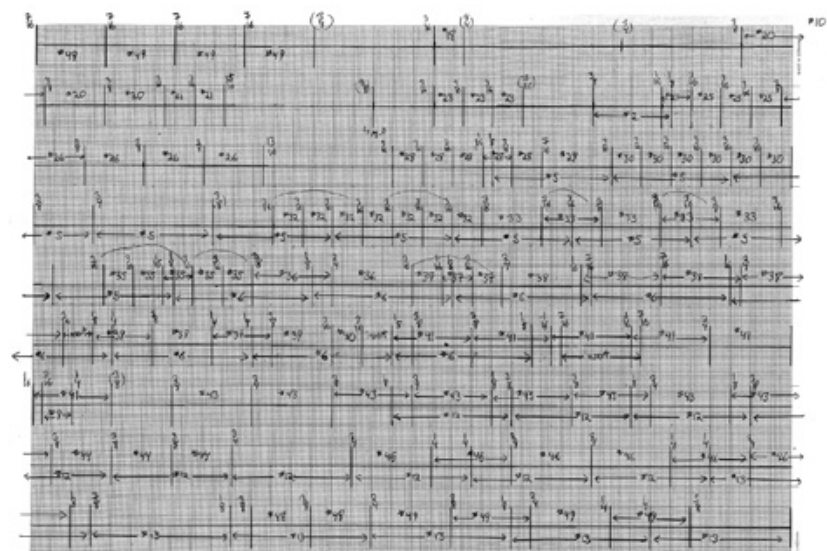
Ming Tsao, pre-compositional work for *Plus Minus*: a page from the event form-scheme.

Handwritten musical score for *Plus Minus*, page 41, showing worked out transpositions of the central chords. The score consists of five systems of staves. The first system has a treble clef and a common time signature. The second system has a bass clef. The third system has a treble clef. The fourth system has a bass clef. The fifth system has a treble clef. The score is heavily annotated with circles, arrows, and other markings, indicating specific events and relationships between notes. A large arrow points from the first system to the second, and another from the second to the third. The page number '41' is written at the bottom right.

Ming Tsao, pre-compositional work for *Plus Minus*: a page from the worked out transpositions of the central chords.



Ming Tsao, pre-compositional work for *Plus Minus*:
 an excerpt from a further elaborated level of the
 event form-scheme.



Ming Tsao, pre-compositional work for *Plus Minus*:
 an excerpt from the metric scheme.

On the one hand *Plus Minus* generalizes serial thought as it was absorbed by Stockhausen, which includes the attention given to all musical parameters in the work, as well as the serial shaping of a sound event by ordering and permuting the attack, central portion and decay of a sound, described in the score as accessories (Akzidenzen) of a “central chord” (Zentralklang), giving rise to the various musical “event types” (Ereignisse). Each event type – defined by a durational measure in my realization – consists of a serially generated central chord that appears in quantities derived from the Fibonacci series, along with subsidiary note groups (Nebennoten) and sonic qualities that shape the event such as periodic/aperiodic rhythms, pitch/noise timbres, etc. The incorporation of the plus/minus process, as a serial ordering in its most generalized form through the addition or subtraction of musical events of the same recognizable “type”, is also an important component (for example, the addition of 13 such events causes a qualitative change in that event, just as the subtraction of 13 such events causes that event to disappear and be replaced by a “negative band”). Furthermore, we find transposition rules for each event to guarantee that pitch or other parametric materials (duration, amplitude, impulse density) continually changes, as well as pitch replacement rules to guarantee that no pitch doublings or octave relationships exist. Finally, “inserts” which suggest that musical form itself is a series of “moments” that can be ordered and permuted in various ways also are a key element.

The image shows a handwritten musical score on a grid background, titled "Plus Minus" and "Layer 1". The score is divided into several sections, each with a number and a description:

- 1. Serial process → (A) → (B) → (C) → (D) → (E) → (F) → (G) → (H) → (I) → (J) → (K) → (L) → (M) → (N) → (O) → (P) → (Q) → (R) → (S) → (T) → (U) → (V) → (W) → (X) → (Y) → (Z)
- 2. Serial process → (A) → (B) → (C) → (D) → (E) → (F) → (G) → (H) → (I) → (J) → (K) → (L) → (M) → (N) → (O) → (P) → (Q) → (R) → (S) → (T) → (U) → (V) → (W) → (X) → (Y) → (Z)
- 3. Serial process → (A) → (B) → (C) → (D) → (E) → (F) → (G) → (H) → (I) → (J) → (K) → (L) → (M) → (N) → (O) → (P) → (Q) → (R) → (S) → (T) → (U) → (V) → (W) → (X) → (Y) → (Z)
- 4. Serial process → (A) → (B) → (C) → (D) → (E) → (F) → (G) → (H) → (I) → (J) → (K) → (L) → (M) → (N) → (O) → (P) → (Q) → (R) → (S) → (T) → (U) → (V) → (W) → (X) → (Y) → (Z)
- 5. Serial process → (A) → (B) → (C) → (D) → (E) → (F) → (G) → (H) → (I) → (J) → (K) → (L) → (M) → (N) → (O) → (P) → (Q) → (R) → (S) → (T) → (U) → (V) → (W) → (X) → (Y) → (Z)
- 6. Serial process → (A) → (B) → (C) → (D) → (E) → (F) → (G) → (H) → (I) → (J) → (K) → (L) → (M) → (N) → (O) → (P) → (Q) → (R) → (S) → (T) → (U) → (V) → (W) → (X) → (Y) → (Z)
- 7. Serial process → (A) → (B) → (C) → (D) → (E) → (F) → (G) → (H) → (I) → (J) → (K) → (L) → (M) → (N) → (O) → (P) → (Q) → (R) → (S) → (T) → (U) → (V) → (W) → (X) → (Y) → (Z)
- 8. Serial process → (A) → (B) → (C) → (D) → (E) → (F) → (G) → (H) → (I) → (J) → (K) → (L) → (M) → (N) → (O) → (P) → (Q) → (R) → (S) → (T) → (U) → (V) → (W) → (X) → (Y) → (Z)
- 9. Serial process → (A) → (B) → (C) → (D) → (E) → (F) → (G) → (H) → (I) → (J) → (K) → (L) → (M) → (N) → (O) → (P) → (Q) → (R) → (S) → (T) → (U) → (V) → (W) → (X) → (Y) → (Z)
- 10. Serial process → (A) → (B) → (C) → (D) → (E) → (F) → (G) → (H) → (I) → (J) → (K) → (L) → (M) → (N) → (O) → (P) → (Q) → (R) → (S) → (T) → (U) → (V) → (W) → (X) → (Y) → (Z)

At the bottom, it says "Background (Layer 2)".

Ming Tsao, pre-compositional work for *Plus Minus*:
an excerpt from the plus-minus process for Layer 1.

On the other hand, *Plus Minus* can point to the limitations of serial thinking by incorporating the idea of the “negative band” material into its very structure. As one subtracts away the given Stockhausen material – the central chords – through the minus process, a negative band material replaces it. This material must be fundamentally different from the material given by Stockhausen and can lie outside the serial parameters of the work. Past realizations have interpreted the negative band material as something that lies outside the confines of the work itself: radio noise, spoken text, quotations of classical and pop music, etc. These interpretations too easily date *Plus Minus* as a 1960’s work by confronting the Stockhausen material with materials that are categorically at odds with it.

overlaps between units

Synchronization between the 2 layers

define proper and sections of the realization in terms of the simultaneous attacks of events

Example

Layer 2

Layer 1

Layer 3

Layer 4

Layer 5

Layer 6

Layer 7

Layer 8

Layer 9

Layer 10

Layer 11

Layer 12

Layer 13

Layer 14

Layer 15

Layer 16

Layer 17

Layer 18

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Layer 93

Layer 94

Layer 95

Layer 96

Layer 97

Layer 98

Layer 99

Layer 100

Middle Ground

My opinion is that, for *Plus Minus* to continually be relevant today, the negative band material should be interpreted freely through a composer's own musical language. In this way, a composer enters into a dialogue with the rules of *Plus Minus* that truly makes it a living work animated by the energy produced by one's confrontation with, and working out of, Stockhausen's serial materials. This is how I interpreted the negative band material, within my own musical language and materials that shape and become shaped by the rules of *Plus Minus*. Yet as the negative band material itself is subtracted, my own presence is gradually erased from the work through the noise of bowed timpani drums that act more as sonic "facts" that lie outside the dialectics of the work's progression. This self-reflexive quality of the negative band material that at first erases Stockhausen's presence then gradually my own, lifts *Plus Minus* above those "open scores" from the 1960's that remain merely interesting into the realm of a philosophical music where serial structuring encounters an awareness of its own conditioning.

Ming Tsao, pre-compositional work for *Plus Minus*: a further elaboration of the plus-minus processes linked between Layers 1 and 2.

Plus Minus Ming Tsao

The image displays a page of a musical score for the piece 'Plus Minus' by Ming Tsao. The score is arranged in a traditional orchestral format with multiple staves. At the top, the title 'Plus Minus' is centered, and the composer's name 'Ming Tsao' is on the right. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. There are tempo markings '♩ = 76' and '♩ = 92' at the top. The bottom of the page features a copyright notice: '© 2013 by Henry Loeffel's Verlag' on the left, the number '33428' in the center, and 'Loeffel Press' on the right.

Ming Tsao, *Plus Minus* (Edition Peters, 2012–13), mm. 1–8.
A composer enters into a dialectic with the rules of *Plus Minus* that truly makes it a living work animated by the energy produced by one's confrontation with, and working out of, Stockhausen's serial materials.

Mirandas Atemwende

by Ming Tsao

Mirandas Atemwende is the second act to my opera *Die Geisterinsel* that was premiered at the Staatsoper Stuttgart in 2011. *Die Geisterinsel* is based upon a late 18th century *Singspiel* with the same title by the German composer Johann Rudolf Zumsteeg, a contemporary of Mozart, and is an adaption of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. The music is in the late-Classical style of Mozart and Haydn and the libretto by Wilhelm Friedrich Gotter is characterized by its classically elevated German reminiscent of Goethe, which stands in sharp contrast to Shakespeare's "late style" writing with its condensed information, vernacular style and somewhat harsh and jagged rhythms.

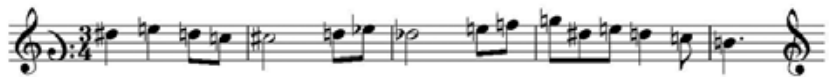
In *Die Geisterinsel*, this late-Classical musical style of Zumsteeg, its formal structures, harmonic language, etc., are reworked within my own noise-based aesthetics. After its premiere, I later felt the need of a second act in order to somehow balance and enrich the main characters of *Die Geisterinsel*, where Caliban and Miranda and their respective relationship to Prospero introduce a more subtle critique of Prospero's dominant position on the island where Shakespeare's *Tempest* takes place.

Influenced by the Cambridge (U.K.) poet J. H. Prynne's analysis of Shakespeare's Sonnet 94 ("They that Haue Powre to Hurt") where he exhaustively excavates its highly condensed semantic structures, as well as Paul Celan's energetic and sound-focused translations of the Shakespeare sonnets, I began to work with texts as material more than as a carrier of narrative meaning and ideas.

Mirandas Atemwende is structured in twelve tableaux, of which three are instrumental and nine sung or spoken by either Miranda or Caliban.

1. Erwartung (Expectation)
2. Es gibt einen Ort (There is a place)
3. Du entscheidest dich (You make a choice)
4. Heute (Today)
5. Helligkeitshunger (Brightnesshunger)
6. Das Geschriebene (The written)
7. Fadensonnen (Threadsunns)
8. Stehen (To stand)
9. –vor der Erstarrung (before paralysis)
10. Caliban's Wound Response
11. Against Hurt
12. The Wound Day and Night

In *Mirandas Atemwende*, only Miranda and Caliban remain as characters from *Die Geisterinsel* who extend their resentment of Prospero's authority over them to a more general critique of Prospero's language and its implied relations of hierarchy and power. The first eight tableaux of *Mirandas Atemwende* focus on Miranda through a radical reworking of Arnold Schoenberg's monodrama *Erwartung*. A sense of expectation (Erwartung) for the possibilities of a radically new language, musical and poetic, away from Prospero's influence (and in Schoenberg's case, from tonality) condition these tableaux. By quoting expressionist musical gestures rather than building upon a psychologically rooted expressionism, the music could be regarded as a "documentary about expressionism," where expression is mediated through the lyric in music subjected to a stringent formal rigor accompanied by the often delicate balance between extreme organization and unfocussed chaos.



Ming Tsao: Canon a 3, from *Mirandas Atemwende* Scene 8, "Schön, gut und treu' so oft getrennt, geschieden/ In Einem will ich drei zusammenschmieden." (Miranda from Shakespeare/Celan, *Sonnet 105*)

The libretto begins with syllabic fragments from Paul Celan's translation of Shakespeare's *Sonnet 105* and concludes with poems taken from his collection *Atemwende*, where the very integrity of the German language is put into question. Celan's translation of Shakespeare into German, with its particular emphasis on sound and the materiality of language, is a stepping stone into his own poetry in which poetic expression is clearly alienated, broken and bordering upon mute. Celan's poetry as Miranda's text, whose words are forged together from fundamentally different categories (such as "Wortmond" or "Wundenspiegel"), creates a metaphorical language that escapes Prospero's garden of rational discourse and reestablishes a necessary relationship between fact and value in order to have a power of consequences, a sense of existential meaning and purpose that had been lost on the island.

Miranda's "Atemwende" symbolizes a radical poetic re-orientation and solstice of breath by means of which poetry (Miranda's newly discovered language) is actualized. As Celan states in his *Meridian* speech: "The attention the poem tries to pay to everything it encounters, its sharper sense of detail, outline, structure, color, but also of the 'tremors' and 'hints,' all this is not, I believe, the achievement of an eye competing with (or emulating)

ever more perfect instruments, but is rather a concentration that remains mindful of all our dates."¹ Miranda's final lines from Gotter's libretto of *Die Geisterinsel*, "Ich will alle meine Sinne anstrengen" (I want to exert all of my senses), mirror Celan's sentiments, to become more "mindful of all our dates" (which the "Geisterchor", as spirits of the island, remind her of in *Die Geisterinsel*), that is, to have a greater awareness of one's sense of being which Prospero's more "perfect instruments" have reduced to an abstraction of numbers. Miranda recites Celan's text "in order to speak, to orient myself, to find out where I was, where I was going, to my reality." As Celan notes: "A poem ... may be a letter in a bottle thrown out to sea with the – not always strong – hope that it may somehow wash up somewhere, perhaps on a shoreline of the heart. In this way, too, poems are *en route*: they are headed toward. Toward what? Toward something open, inhabitable, an approachable you, perhaps, an approachable reality."²

Miranda's poetic language becomes the place for such an encounter – a meeting that conquers the self-distance she has acquired through Prospero's education and her isolation on the island – from which she can construct an identity for herself. Miranda's message in a bottle cast away from Prospero's island is, throughout

the opera, underway and her voice comes to symbolize fragility through this possibility of an unanswered poetic invocation. Miranda, through Celan's poems, seeks communication, contact, connection outside of the island: "there are / still songs to sing beyond / mankind." Celan's poems almost always have a "you" (*dich*) to whom the poems are addressed. "The poem wants to head toward some other, it needs this other, it needs a counterpart. Everything, each human being is, for the poem heading toward this other."³ Miranda reaches for this other in the absence of Prospero who is now gone, a counterpart to which she can be underway and headed toward. Indeed, Miranda embodies poetic discourse from the very beginning – the desire to forge Prospero's words into a new language that cannot divide and classify, one that explores the very limits of consciousness and establishes a necessary relationship to truth. In this sense, Miranda becomes fully aware of her potential – as poetic discourse – for propelling and allowing action. Through Miranda, poetry and music become *the* necessary force to counter Prospero's art by offering an alternative that is not dominated by instrumental reason and accepts the island as it is (and not to be cultivated into a garden), revealing a history far older than when Prospero arrived whose stewardship Miranda now feels responsible for.

The last third of *Mirandas Atemwende* tableaux nine through twelve, focus on Caliban. Tableaus nine and ten, in particular, reference a part from *Mouvement* (*–vor der Erstarrung*) by Helmut Lachenmann. Lachenmann's idea by the time of composing in the early 1980's was to take the material of "noise" and to bring it into a compositional sound structure. Taking this as a metaphor for Caliban's awareness of Prospero's taming or colonizing of

the island through his art (or compositional "language") and with poems from *The White Stones* and *Word Order* by J. H. Prynne, Caliban's consciousness is enriched so that he may "dissolve the bars to it and let run the hopes, that preserve the holy fruit on the tree"; that is, for Caliban to become more acutely aware of the material processes of the island from which Prospero's language had alienated him. In these tableaux, Caliban attempts to address the wound inflicted by Prospero's language, the wound that remains gaping through Celan's poetry. Caliban uses Prynne's poetry to express "the paradigmatic moment of impulsive feeling which escapes, or rather precedes, the conscious attempt to process and understand it,"⁴ an impulsive feeling that is then diagnosed in *Mirandas Atemwende* as "the moment of pain." One can also hear faint echoes of Lachenmann's ... *zwei Gefühle* ... when the wound is opened up by Caliban's "two feelings" (represented by two separate actors) for the "threatening darkness" of Prospero's garden and his own "desire to see with my own eyes" whatever wonderful things might be on the island in Prospero's absence, "in order to behold the beautiful wilderness of the other side of being."

¹ Paul Celan, *The Meridian: Final Version–Drafts–Materials*, Bernhard Böschstein and Heino Schmuil (eds.), Pierre Joris (trans.) (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), p. 9.

² Paul Celan, "Speech on the Occasion of Receiving the Literature Prize of the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen," in *Collected Prose*, Rosmarie Waldrop (trans.) (New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 34–35.

³ Paul Celan, *The Meridian: Final Version–Drafts–Materials*, p. 9.

⁴ Jay Basu, "The Red Shift: Trekking J. H. Prynne's *Red D Gypsum* (*The Cambridge Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 1, 2001), p. 26.

Mirandas Atemwende

Erwartung
♩ = 76
Ming Tsao 2015

Flute
Oboe
Clarinet
Bass Clarinet
Horn in E
Trumpet
Trombone
Percussion 1
Percussion 2
Percussion 3
Piano
Cello
Double Bass
Violin 1
Violin 2
Viola
Double Bass

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Ming Tsao, *Mirandas Atemwende* (Edition Peters, 2014–15), mm. 1–4. An experimental reworking of Arnold Schoenberg's *Erwartung* to invoke a sense of expectation (*Erwartung*) for the possibilities of a radically new language, musical and poetic, away from Prospero's influence. Miranda recites poems from Paul Celan's *Atemwende*, poems that question the very possibility of building a renewed poetic expression from the ashes of Prospero's language. In this new language, lyrical subjectivity is placed within the musical sounds themselves rather than in the voice of the singer as it originally was with Schoenberg.

Caliban, like Miranda, is wounded by Prospero's enlightenment education and the desire to break up the continuum of time with ever more perfect instruments. Caliban's response is to rediscover those natural processes of the island, "the unison of forms," and to let them flow again. "If we arbitrarily break up the continuum of time into fixed intervals, upon which we then project hopes or expectations deferred from the present, we lose contact with natural processes."⁵ Similar to Friedrich Hölderlin's sentiments in his famous poem *Hälfte des Lebens*, "fruit" should not be declared 'holy', with the sense of being set apart, usually preserved on a tree. The fruit is a stage in the continuing cycle of the plant's life, not just the final outcome. Whatever lives by continuous change and development, we distort by solidifying – unless we are able to 'let run' what at present we anxiously 'rein in.'⁶ Caliban's words come from a renewed, heightened attention to the processes of the island, a vantage point where the final nail is driven into the coffin of Prospero's art.

The compression and intensification of verbal and musical language in *Mirandas Atemwende* are ways of engaging with a late modernist form of expression that makes the connections between romanticism and formal rigor, extreme expressionistic abstraction and documentary "authenticity." In working with expressionism as a way to let the material express itself but without psychologizing is to renew the idea of the lyric in contemporary music that becomes in my music fractured, damaged, multi-perspective, complex and problematized in order to negotiate the complexities of the surrounding world. Lyrical subjectivity is ultimately placed in the musical sounds themselves rather than with a single consistent "speaker", a sense of artistic expression

that embraces the exteriority of the world rather than retreating from it, an orientation to which filmmaker Danièle Huillet catches the essence of in a few words: "It's just the world. And who owns that?"

⁵ N. H. Reeve and Richard Kerridge, *Nearly Too Much: The Poetry of J. H. Prynne* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1995), p. 41.

⁶ *Ibid.*

Caliban's Wound Response 193

$\text{♩} = 96$

Fl. $\text{♩} = 96$

Cl.

Bsn.

Hrn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Perc. 1 *Theraps* *Maracas* *Castanets*

Perc. 2 *Castanets*

Perc. 3 *Theraps*

Caliban: *wiltst mich nicht*
nicht dich, Prospero, ich

Ming Tsao, *Mirandas Atemwende* (Edition Peters, 2014–15), mm. 680–685

A reference to the “Galopp” section of *Mouvement* (–*vor der Erstarrung*) by Helmut Lachenmann in order to enrich Caliban’s position with respect to Prospero where the material of “noise” is brought into a compositional sound structure as a metaphor for “taming” or for “colonizing” through a compositional language.



Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet, *Schwarze Sünde* (1989)

Caliban’s position towards the end of *Mirandas Atemwende* is mediated through a citation of Beethoven’s Opus 135 and “Der Schwer Gefaßte Entschluß” referring also to Straub-Huillet’s *Schwarze Sünde*, a filming of Hölderlin’s *Der Tod des Empedokles* (third version) where the choir (portrayed by Huillet), after the same Beethoven citation, speaks: “Neue Welt ... Aber wo ist er? Daß er beschwöre den lebendigen Geist” (New world ... but where is he? That he might adjure the living spirit) echoing Caliban’s final words from J.H. Prynne’s “*The Wound, Day and Night*.”



Jan Pohl and Christoph
Gareisen as Caliban with
Kammerensemble Neue
Musik Berlin



Tajana Raj as Miranda with
Kammerensemble Neue Musik Berlin

Mirandas Atemwende

Libretto

Libretto: Texts by (a) Paul Celan Atemwende and (b) J. H. Prynne The White Stones and Word Order
English translation of Celan by Pierre Joris (Los Angeles: Green Integer Edition 111, 2006)

I. Erwartung
(Instrumental)

II. Es gibt einen Ort

Miranda:

No text, only syllables

III. Du entscheidest dich

(Instrumental)

IV. Heute

Miranda:

Heute: Today:

Nächtliches, wieder, feuergepeitscht	nighththings, again, fire whipped.
Glosender	Glowing
Nacktpflanzenreigen.	naked-plants-dance.

Gestern: Yesterday:

über den rudernden Namen	above the rowing names
schwebte die Treue;	floated faithfulness;
Kreide ging schreibend umher;	chalk went around writing;
offen lag es und grüßte:	open it laid and greeted:
das wassergewordene Buch.	the turned-to-water book.

Sonst? Otherwise?

Halb- und Viertel-	Half- and quarter-
verbündete auf	allies on
der Geschlagenen-Seite.	the side of the beaten. Riches of
verloren-vergällter	lost-soured
Sprache.	language.

V. Helligkeitshunger

Miranda:

Helligkeitshunger- mit ihm	Brightnesshunger- with it
ging ich die Brot-	I walked up the bread-
stufe hinauf,	step, under
unter die Blinden-	the blindness-
glocke:	bell:

sie, die wasser-	it, water-
klare,	clear,
stülpt sich über	claps itself over
die mitgestiegene, mit-	the freedom that climbed with
verstiegene Freiheit, an der	me, that with me climbed
einer der Himmel sich sattfraß,	too high, on which
den ich sich wölben laße über	one of the heavens gorged itself,
der worddurchschwommenen	that I am letting vault above
Bildbahn, Blutbahn.	the worddrenched
	image orbit, blood orbit.

VI. Das Geschriebene

Miranda:

Das Geschriebene höhlt sich, das	The written hollows itself, the
Gesprochene, meergrün,	spoken, seagreen,
brennt in den Buchten,	burns in the bays,

in den	in the
verflüssigten Namen	liquified names
schnellen die Tümmeler,	the dolphins dart,

im geewigten Nirgends, hier,	in the eternalized Nowhere, here,
im Gedächtnis der über-	in the memory of the over-
lauten Glocken in- wo nur?	loud bells in- where only?

wer	who
in diesem	pants
Schattengeviert	in this
schraubt, wer	shadow-quadrant, who
unter ihm	from beneath it
schimmert auf, schimmert auf, schimmert auf?	shimmers, shimmers, shimmers?

VII. Fadensonnen

Miranda:

Fadensonnen	Threadsuns
über der grauschwarzen Ödnis.	above the grayblack wastes.
Ein baum –	A tree –
hoher Gedanke	high thought
greift sich den Lichtton: es sind	grasps the light-tone: there are
noch Lieder zu singen jenseits	still songs to sing beyond
der Menchen.	mankind.

VIII. Stehen

Miranda:

Stehen, im Schatten	To stand, in the shadow
des Wundenmals in der Luft.	of the stigma in the air.
Für-niemand-und-nichts-Stehn.	Standing-for-no-one-and-nothing.
Unerkannt,	Unrecognized,
für dich	for you,
allein.	alone.
Mit allem, was darin Raum hat,	With all that has room in it,
auch ohne	even without
Sprache.	language.

IX. –vor der Erstarrung
(Instrumental)

X. Caliban's Wound Response

Caliban 1 and Caliban 2:

A blow on the side of the mouth
 strike harder, it is important
 to be lyrical and joyous
 then again, another
 on the neck, how can this
 be done so strongly without
 the highest fidelity, for there is
 no cry, hardly as to know
 is to loosen, being not part of sense
 or by ascultation, taking in the air
 and the force crushes up, blow upon
 the windpipe, next at a rush for breath
 for in the spine direct from the eyes
 holding back the parts
 of the soul by black thuds
 you know you do: had you not better
 with a metal spike the axis
 of ah, attention, no liquid, frame clipped
 by lapse indrawn and hit
 in no time or at all there is
 exactly to the front of this
 on the paper hoop as a form
 goes on through.

XI. Against Hurt
Caliban 1 and Caliban 2:

Endowed with so much
suffering, they should be / and that
what are so—the pain in the head
which applies to me
and the clouds low over
the horizon: soon it
will be dark
We love the brief night, for its
quick passing, the relative ease as
we slide into comfort and
the trees grow and
grow. I can hear
every smallest growth
the expanse is grinding with it,
out on the flats beyond, down by
the sodium street-lights, in the head:
pain, the hurt to these who are all
companions. Serenity
is their slender means.
There is not much time
left. I love them all, severally and in
the largest honour that there is.
Now and with the least hurt, this
is for you.

XII. The Wound Day and Night
Caliban 1 and Caliban 2:

Age by default: in some ways this must
be solved. The covenants that bind
into the rock, each to the other
are for this, for the argon dating
by song as echo of the world.
O it runs sweetly by, and prints over
the heart; I am supremely happy,
the whole order set in this, the
proper guise, of a song. You can hear
the strains from so far off: withdrawn
from every haunted place
in its graveness, the responsive
shift into the millions of years.
I am born back there, the plaintive chanting
under the Atlantic and the unison of forms.
It may all flow again if we suppress the
breaks, as I long to do,
at the far end of that distance
and tidings of the land;
If we dissolve the bars to it and let run
the hopes, that preserve the holy fruit on the tree,
casting the moist honey, curing the poppy of sleep.
"And in variety of aspects
the sum remains the same,
one family"—
that it be too much with us, again as
beyond that enfeebled history: that we be
born at long last into the image of love

Ming Tsao

is Professor of Composition at the Göteborg University in Sweden and holds a PhD in Music Composition from the University of California, San Diego, an MA in Mathematics from the San Francisco State University, an MA in Ethnomusicology from Columbia University and a BM in Music Composition from the Berklee College of Music. Further studies have included logic and philosophy at the University of California, Berkeley. He is also Visiting Professor of Composition at the Hanover University of Music, Drama and Media, Germany. Performance projects include the opera *Die Geisterinsel* for the Staatsoper Stuttgart in 2011 and his full realization of Stockhausen's *Plus Minus* successfully premiered in the Wittener Tage Festival 2013. His compositions have been performed by ensembles such as the Arditti Quartet, ensemble recherche, ELISION Ensemble, Ensemble SurPlus, Ensemble Ascolta in venues such as the Donaueschinger Musiktage Festival, Wien Modern, Wittener Tage Festival, Maerz Musik, Darmstadt New Music Courses. He is currently working on a new opera *Das Westzimmer* to be premiered in 2020 that speculates on the historical connections between fin de siècle Vienna and late Tang Dynasty China. Music by Ming Tsao can be found on the labels KAIROS, with performances by the Staatsoper Stuttgart, as well as Mode Records, with performances by the Arditti Quartet and ensemble recherche. Books by Ming Tsao include *Abstract Musical Intervals: Group Theory for Composition and Analysis*. His music is published by Edition Peters.

Mirandas Atemwende

von Stefan Schreiber

In der zweiteiligen Szene *Mirandas Atemwende – Calibans Wundantwort* von Ming Tsao, welche ihrerseits den zweiten Teil zu seiner Kammeroper *Die Geisterinsel* bildet, steht die eigentümliche Gesangskunst der Miranda zu der komplexen dichterisch-philosophischen Sprache der beiden Schauspieler des Caliban in einem Gegensatz. Während die Schauspieler mit dokumentarischer Distanz ein Netz aus Bildern und Gedanken entwickeln, das sich von den instrumentalen Klängen und Geräuschen deutlich abhebt, sogar als dieser Klangwelt abgerungen erscheinen, entfaltet Miranda ihre neue Welt des Singens eingebettet in diese Klänge und häufig mit ihnen verschmelzend. Wenn in Mirandas Dialog mit Prospero in der vierten Szene der *Geisterinsel* aus ihren gleichsam angedeuteten, oft geflüsterten Linien einzelne Phrasen aus dem *Buch der hängenden Gärten* von Arnold Schönberg durchschienen, so vollzieht sie nun beim Verlassen von „Prosperos Garten“ die Atemwende hin zu einer nur ihrer eigenen Gesangssprache aus der Transformation der historisch auf den Zyklus der George-Lieder folgenden Oper *Erwartung*. Das expressionistische Monodram *Erwartung* der Marie Pappenheim komponierte Arnold Schönberg für einen dramatischen Sopran, dessen stimmliche Ausdruckskraft sich historisch an einer Kundry oder einer Salome orientiert, diese aber in der extremen Tessitur noch überbietet. In wechselseitiger Abhängigkeit von Erscheinungen der Natur entfalten sich abrupt umschlagende Angsterlebnisse, deren gesanglicher Ausdruck im Kraftfeld des groß besetzten Orchesters die

Extreme von zögernd suchenden Linien zum entsetzten Aufschrei durchmisst. Die abgebrochene Geste, der plötzliche Umschwung sind Mirandas musikalischer Sprache bereits eingeschrieben, die expressive vokale Linie Schönbergs erscheint jedoch gleichsam umgestülpt auf die untere Mittellage ihrer Gesangsstimme zu filigranen Fragmenten konzentriert. Die Sprache der Marie Pappenheim wird für Miranda zu pulverisierter Dichtung mit einer Syntax eigener Ordnung und öffnet sich damit den ungezähmten Klängen und Geräuschen der Insel. Die dramatische Stimme in der *Erwartung* behauptet sich gegenüber den Wirkungen der Natur auf ihr Seelenleben als einsame Gestalterin ihres Ausdrucks, die feinfühlig Erfinderin eines neuen Singens entwirft nun eine andere Vorstellung des lyrischen Subjekts, das in seinem Grunde zersplittert der Wildnis jenseits des Gartens bedarf, um in durchlässigem Anverwandeln zu einer gemeinsam-eigenen Sprache zu finden.

Mirandas Stimme entfaltet in das Netz der instrumentalen Klänge einbezogen aus ihnen heraus einen stets neu-anderen Gesang aus vielfältigen feinen Abtufungen zwischen gerade-brüchigem Ton und Stimmgeräusch bei unvermitteltem Wenden des ein- und ausgehenden Gesangs-Atems, auf dem Weg zu einer weiteren Öffnung ihrer neuen Sprache, zur Dichtung von Paul Celan aus dessen Zyklus *Atemwende*. Celans Zeilen mit ihrer kritischen Kraft um einer utopische Wende der Stimme willen hin zu ihrer Überschreitung dringen in Mirandas Gesang als gleichsam zitierter Gebrauch von Worten zur Probe der Fliehkräfte ihrer Bedeutungen. Aus dem Kraftfeld von Schönbergs Sprechgesang, aus dessen gegensätzlichen Haltungen zwischen seinem Ursprung in der feierlich über-

höhten Sprache des Melodram und deren kritischer Wende zum streitbaren Kabarett-Ton heraustretend, erreicht Mirandas Aneignung der Dichtung Celans schließlich den Abstand des dokumentarischen Sprechens.

Die zweifache Stimme Calibans entläßt in seiner „Wundantwort“ aus der Kühle ebendieses dokumentarischen Sprechens in den von Jeremy H. Prynne ausgebreiteten dichterisch-philosophischen Netzen der Anklänge, Bedeutungen und Verweise die innere Sprengkraft seiner Sprache über den wundstarrten Klangtrümmern einer instrumentalen Textur der Gewalt aus toter Bewegung. In der Zurücknahme einer Haltung in der Distanz eines solchen Sprechens setzt sich im Netz der Sprache bereits jene Kette aus Unzusammenhang und Brüchen in Bewegung, welche nach Prynne¹ den inneren Zusammenhalt der Sprache zugleich mit der Vorstellung von ihren Begrenzungen aufbricht und infrage stellt, um in einer ursprünglichen Welt jenseits des Gartens eine andere Stimme vernehmen zu können, und ihren stets neu-anderen Gesang.

„La cerca della voce nel linguaggio è il pensiero“ schreibt Giorgio Agamben in dem Essay *La fine del pensiero*², in Anlehnung an die französische Fassung des Satzes in der originalen bilingualen Edition übersetzt man dies gewöhnlich in dem Sinne, dass man nach der Stimme in der Sprache suche. Der von Agamben ursprünglich gesetzte, heute nicht mehr gebräuchliche Ausdruck „la cerca“ legt dagegen nahe, ein aktives Suchen der Stimme selbst zu erwarten, auf ein neues Konzept hin des Singens und des Sprechens. Ein wichtiger ästhetischer Orientierungs-

punkt für den Komponisten Ming Tsao sind die filmischen Arbeiten des Künstlerpaares Jean-Marie Straub und Danièle Huillet; die Komposition der Sprechlinien für die Sänger in der „Geisterinsel“ ist von der Konstruktion der Sprechpartituren inspiriert, welche die beiden Künstler gemeinsam mit den Darstellern ihrer Filme unter Bezugnahme auf musikalische Kategorien jedes Mal über einen langen Zeitraum akribisch erarbeiteten und mittels dieser Art der kontrollierten Darstellung einen jeweils eigenständigen, an überraschenden Flexionen der Intonation reichen Stimmfall ermöglichten. Vor der konzertanten Uraufführung von *Mirandas Atemwende – Calibans Wundantwort* wurde im Saal der Film *Schwarze Sünde* von Jean-Marie Straub und Danièle Huillet aus dem Jahr 1989, die Verfilmung der dritten Fassung des Empedokles von Friedrich Hölderlin, gezeigt. In den letzten Einstellungen des Films spricht Danièle Huillet das Fragment „Neue Welt“ (vv. 486–496), welches Hölderlin auf der gegenüberliegenden Seite seines Entwurfs mit „Chor. Zukunft.“ bezeichnet hat:

Neue Welt
und es hängt, ein ehern Gewölbe
der Himmel über uns, es lähmt Fluch
die Glieder den Menschen, und ihre stärkenden, die
erfreuenden
Gaben der Erde sind, wie Spreu, es
spottet unser, mit ihren Geschenken die Mutter
und alles ist Schein –
O wann, wann öffnet sie sich
die Flut über die Dürre.
Aber wo ist er?
Daß er beschwöre den lebendigen Geist

Die Stimme von Danièle Huillet setzt mittels der genauen Konstruktion aus Sprechtempo, den Hebungen und Senkungen, auf- und absteigenden, beschleunigenden und verlangsamenden Zeilengliedern, Einschnitten aus grammatikalischer und lyrischer Struktur des Fragments in ihrem Tonfall unvorhergesehene, der Sprache Hölderlins jedoch innewohnende Kräfte frei, welche den Bedeutungszusammenhang des Textes aufsprengen und seine Grenzen überschreiten. „Von da an“, beschreibt einer der Assistenten der Filmproduktion die Wirkung, „tritt man unvermittelt aus der Enge der reflektierten Wahrnehmung in die grenzenlose Freie einer anderen Art des Verstehens, haltlos, ohne die beruhigenden Grenzen zwischen Zuschauer und Ereignis, zwischen Fiktion und Leben, zwischen dem Ich und dem Anderen.“³

¹ cf. J.H.Prynne, „Mental Ears and Poetic Work“ in *Chicago Review*, Vol.55, No.1 (2010)

² G. Agamben, „La fine del pensiero / La fin de la pensée“, Paris 1982, *Le Nouveau Commerce* No 53–54

³ M.W.Esser, „Das ist eben das Leben, das das Leben nicht ist. Über die Dreharbeiten zu *Schwarze Sünde*“ in *filmwärts* Nummer 12 (1988)

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ist Professor für Komposition an der Universität Göteborg in Schweden. Seinen PhD für Komposition erwarb er an der Universität von Kalifornien, seinen MA in Mathematik an der San Francisco State University. Obendrein hält er einen MA für Ethno-Musikologie und einen BA für Komposition vom Berklee College of Music. Des Weiteren studierte er Logik und Philosophie an der Universität von Kalifornien. Tsao ist Gastprofessor für Komposition an der Hochschule für Musik, Theater und Medien Hannover. An der Staatsoper Stuttgart verwirklichte er 2011 die Oper *Die Geisterinsel*, seine Ausarbeitung von Stockhausens *Plus Minus* feierte 2013 bei den Wittener Tagen für neue Kammermusik Premiere. Seine Kompositionen wurden von verschiedensten Ensembles aufgeführt, darunter das Arditti Quartet, Ensemble Recherche, ELISION Ensemble, Ensemble SurPlus, Ensemble Ascolta, u.a. bei den Donaueschinger Musiktagen, Wien Modern, Wittener Tage für neue Kammermusik, Maerz Musik und den Darmstädter Ferienkursen. Tsao veröffentlichte auch mehrere Bücher, darunter *Abstract Music Intervals: Group Theory for Composition and Analysis*. Momentan arbeitet er an einer neuen Oper – *Das Westzimmer* – die 2020 Premiere feiern soll. Seine Werke sind bei der Edition Peters verlegt, CDs mit seiner Musik erschienen bei Mode Records und KAIROS.

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