ole hübner

drei menschen, im hintergrund hochhäuser und palmen und links das meer

(2016/17)

for amplified large ensemble (1-1-2-1, 1-1-1-0, 1 pno, 1 keyb, 2 perc, 2-1-2-1), 8-channel playback, and live electronics

duration: 24’10” minutes
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[three people, in the background skyscrapers and palm trees, and the sea to the left]
(2016/17)

dedicated to sarah nemtsov – thankfully and admiringly.

written for ensemble modern and enno poppe.

world premiere:
26/11/2017 at großer sendesaal des hessischen rundfunks,
»cresc... biennale für moderne musik«, frankfurt/main.
instruments & technical setup

- c flute, doubling piccolo, bass flute
- oboe, doubling cor anglais
- clarinet in b-flat 1
- bass clarinet in b-flat, doubling clarinet in b-flat 2
- bassoon, doubling contrabassoon (or contrabassoon)
- french horn in f
- trumpet in c
- trombone
- grand piano
- keyboard: 88 keys, grand piano sound, pitched one quarter tone higher, with local amplification
- percussion 1:
  - pair of bongos
  - four untuned octobans (or rototoms)
  - snare drum
  - bass drum
  - hi-hat
  - suspended ride cymbal
  - suspended china cymbal
  - clash cymbals
  - large triangle
  - powerful megaphone (fixed on a stand)
- percussion 2:
  - three timpani (1. ~B3 | 2. ~F3 | 3. ~C3)
  - two wind gongs (medium and low)
  - tam-tam (very low)
  - eight thai gongs (G2, B2, C3, C#3, D3, G3, G#3, A3)
  - glockenspiel
  - large triangle
  - powerful megaphone (fixed on a stand)
- violin 1
- violin 2
- viola
- cello 1
- cello 2
- double bass (with fifth string on C)
- conductor
- audio engineer (front of the house)

All instruments must be amplified directly via loudspeakers 1 and 2. At this, in order to attain a differentiated audio image, the spatial disposal of the instruments must be transferred carefully to the stereo panning. The amplification should be rather subtle since its purpose is not primarily to gain loudness but to create a smart and well-balanced acoustical intermixture of instrumental and electronic sounds.

A mix of the whole ensemble must be routed to the audio interface (input 1). The max patch can be rendered either in a fully automated version (with continuous click track for the conductor) or with cues to be triggered manually by the audio engineer or an additional person (click track necessary only in few passages).

— score in c —

(keyboard sounds one quarter tone higher than written)
winds

flutter tongue

diamond-shaped notes are to be sung (exact pitches).

rhombic notes (above the fingered note) indicate harmonics to be produced by overblowing of the indicated fundamental tone.

all oboe multiphonics are borrowed from the book «the techniques of oboe playing» by peter veale and claus-steffen mahnkopf (published by bärenreiter) and marked with their respective index number.

extremely high sounds without absolute pitch indication, unstable and continuously floating and fluctuating, squashed and noisy, played according to further specifications written in each respective passage of the score.

trumpet and trombone: close | semi-open | open the stem of the harmon mute with the left hand (or by holding the bell against the stand if the left hand is not free).
french horn: + indicates stopped notes with cuivré sound.

the opening and the closing of the stem might also be demanded slow and smooth; this is indicated by dashed arrows.
trumpet: semi-pressed valves

trumpet: two note heads (with the rhombic note below) indicate split tones.

strings

double bass: harmonic sounds based upon the indicated fundamental note(s) produced – and modulated quickly and fluently – by changing the bow pressure, the bowing position, etc. the higher the line is, the sharper and the richer in high overtones is the sound.

very strong vibrato (high speed and large range).

bartók pizzicato (on both indicated notes).

notation of percussion instruments and mallets
extended accidentals

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\sharp & + \frac{1}{4} \text{ tone} \\
\# & + \frac{1}{4} \text{ tone} \\
\flat & - \frac{1}{4} \text{ tone} \\
\# & - \frac{1}{4} \text{ tone} \\
\flat & + \text{ »intonation inexactness«} (\approx - \frac{1}{6} \text{ tone})^* \\
\# & - \text{ »intonation inexactness«} (\approx - \frac{1}{6} \text{ tone})^* \\
\flat & + \frac{1}{3} \text{ tone} + \text{ »intonation inexactness«} (\approx + \frac{2}{3} \text{ tone})^* \\
\# & - \frac{1}{3} \text{ tone} + \text{ »intonation inexactness«} (\approx - \frac{1}{3} \text{ tone})^* \\
\flat & + \frac{1}{3} \text{ tone} - \text{ »intonation inexactness«} (\approx + \frac{2}{3} \text{ tone})^* \\
\# & - \frac{1}{3} \text{ tone} - \text{ »intonation inexactness«} (\approx - \frac{2}{3} \text{ tone})^* \\
\end{array} \]

* accidentals that indicate different types of »intonation inexactness« are oftentimes (especially with longer note values) used in the context of spectral ensemble sounds, e.g. for the 7th, the 11th, or the 13th harmonic (except few cases in which these harmonics are contrarily notated as pitches within – and all other harmonics are notated »off« – the »regular« chromatic scale). Therefore, in these cases, the »exact inexactness« of the intonation must be deduced by ear from the respective harmonic spectrum in order to make the tone merge well with it.

credits

The field recordings that appear in the playback were made by the composer:
- supermarket scene in beijing, china, 06/08/2016
- street market scene in beijing, china, 03/08/2016
- loudspeaker announcements at olympic green, china, 07/08/2016
- siren test in the rhoen mountains, germany, 05/11/2016
- muezzin in istanbul, turkey, 28/12/2014
- street market scene in athens, greece, 18/03/2017
- airplane sounds from flight LH 1346, frankfurt/main – warsaw, 03/02/2017

The text recordings that appear in the playback were made at the audio studio of the institute for applied theatre studies in gießen, germany, on 24/06/2017 and 05/07/2017, with the voices of five fantastic speakers:
- jakob boeckh (loudspeakers 1 & 3)
- jonas demuth (loudspeakers 1 & 3)
- lea könig (loudspeaker 2)
- junis gustav poos (loudspeakers 1 & 4)
- nika anouk poos (loudspeakers 1 & 4)

My very special thanks go to them!

All spoken texts were written by the composer.

The max/msp patch for the piece is programmed by the composer and optimized for the rendition with max version 7. In the case of any malfunction of the patch, or other problems concerning it, please contact the composer immediately – he knows the patch best, and you will help him develop a durably bug-free version.

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double bass in the foreground until bar 24 (everything else in accompaniment).
blazing, like a wall of light, suddenly inflamed.
suddenly much softer again
(even softer than in bar 54).
the whole ensemble very reserved: speech playback
must be in the foreground and well comprehensible,
instruments and soundscapes are recency.
the whole ensemble very reserved: speech playback
must be in the foreground and well comprehensible,
instruments and soundscapes are recency.
Jazzy strings. Cello 2 in the main voice.
trumpet, violins and viola clearly
and lucidly in the foreground.
Intense but not brutal, painful, or stabbing
Faint and cautious, really soft until bar 144.

[Sheet music page]