

Three Tales

Videoper von
Beryl Korot
und
Steve Reich

Beryl Korot [video]

Steve Reich [music]

Auch 2002 ist für das Ensemble Modern wieder ein Jahr des Musiktheaters. Guo Wenjings „Ye Yan / The Night Banquet“, im Oktober 2001 beim Festival d’Automne à Paris uraufgeführt, wird – nach Australien – dieses Jahr noch in Berlin und New York zu erleben sein (siehe Rückseite); Im Winter gelangt Salvatore Sciarrinos Oper „Macbeth“ in Frankfurt und Paris zur Aufführung. Und bereits im Oktober 2002 wird Heiner Goebbels’ Oper „Landschaft mit entfernten Verwandten“ (Arbeitstitel) in Genf uraufgeführt. Ein anderes ganz wichtiges Projekt ist natürlich die neue Videoper von Steve Reich [music] und Beryl Korot [video], die im Mai in Wien Premiere hat. David Allenby von Boosey & Hawkes in London sprach mit Beryl Korot und Steve Reich über THREE TALES.

David Allenby [DA]: How did the idea for Three Tales first come about?

Steve Reich [SR]: When The Cave premiered in 1993 its first commissioner, Dr Klaus Peter Kehr of the Vienna Festival, asked if we’d ever thought about doing a piece about the twentieth century. One of the things that came to mind very quickly was that the twentieth century has been more touched and driven by technology than almost any other human endeavour. This wouldn’t create a music theatre piece in itself – we needed some events, some signposts from the early, middle and late parts of the century that would be emblematic of the period and its technology. So, Hindenburg came to mind rather rapidly. It represents the end of World War I as Hindenburg himself was the German hero of that war, it signalled the end of a failed technology when the airship named after him went down, and the crash was the first major disaster captured on film. Beyond that, Hindenburg is tied in with World War II and the end of the 1930s and beginning of the ‘40s, so it seemed an appropriate event to focus on. After that, World War II was just too big, so we turned to the atom bomb that in many ways was the emblematic technology of the century. Everyone at the time thought we’d entered a new atomic age, and it was the first time we’d created a technology with which we could destroy ourselves – literally, not metaphorically - and rapidly. We settled on the tests at Bikini, which were between ‘46 and ‘52, signalling the end of World War II and the start of the Cold War. It brought together the most ultra-sophisticated hi-tech known to man at that time, and some of the most primitive human life on the face of the Earth – namely the Bikini people of the Solomon Islands in the Pacific. For the third tale we were originally going to use the explosion of the Challenger spacecraft, but we soon realised this was one disaster too many for the piece. Then in 1997 Dolly the sheep was cloned and we both took one look at each other and said "That’s it!" It is a totally different situation, deriving from medical enterprise, and pointing to what life might be like for the rest of the twenty-first century.

DA: How did your personal experiences from handling technology feed back into your creative work?

Beryl Korot [BK]: Even at the very beginning, when I first started working in the genre of multiple channels, I looked to the ancient technology of the hand loom for ideas on how to program multiple channels of video. The loom was after all the most ancient of programming tools and held out very useful ideas to me of how to think about programming multiple images. I have always liked the tension between working with a modern technology and thinking about the older tools which preceded it and learning from those tools. The positive and negative aspects of the technologies that relate to our lives is also something I’ve always found of interest. The impact of media on the social and cultural environment in which we live was the focus of a magazine I co-edited in 1970 called Radical Software. That double-edged sword of the gains and losses of each new technology that we incorporate into our lives is one of the subtexts to Three Tales.

SR: When I first began doing the tape pieces in the 60s I couldn’t think of anything more interesting than the idea of phasing, but I thought it could only be done with machines. I finally decided that I would have to ‘become a machine myself’, playing against a pre-recorded tape loop of piano notes, and discovered, to my amazement, that it sounded and felt rather good. With all the works that followed, from Piano Phase to Drumming, I came to realise that they could not have come into being from listening to any Western or non-Western live music - it was an idea that came from electronics and was transferred to live performance. On the other hand, phasing itself is really just a variation of canonic technique where the rhythmic distance between the two or more voices is flexible. While the electronics suggested something, it was the connection to living musical tradition that made that suggestion valid and worthwhile. Later, when I became a touring musician with my own ensemble in the 1970s, doing parts of Drumming and Four Organs, we travelled with all our own instruments in rented trucks. The marimbas were set up, the drums were tuned just fine, the amplifiers were switched on, but invariably what didn’t work were the electric organs. A real love-hate relationship with technology developed.

DA: Following performances of Hindenburg as an individual work in 1998, you’ve made some changes.

SR: Yes, Hindenburg was originally five scenes, now it’s four. The second scene was about General Hindenburg himself, leading up to Hitler and the burning of the books. It was just too heavy-handed, so we just chucked it. The following short scene, Nibelung Zeppelin, is a reworking of the hammering Wagner leit-motif from Das Rheingold while you’re watching the German workers in 1935 building the zeppelin in Frederikshaven. This scene deftly and indirectly characterizes the whole Nazi era and Wagner’s influence on it. There’s also a tightening up in the first scene, so all in all Hindenburg went down from 24 to 16 minutes.

DA: Moving on to Bikini, how do you make connections between the atom bomb tests and the Biblical depictions of the Garden of Eden?

SR: The chief reporter for the New York Times who was stationed at Bikini during the tests writes about seeing a huge tree - a tree of knowledge - with alpha particle and beta particle fruits. The atom bomb was the device where we first realized that mankind had become so powerful that it could destroy worlds. That kind of thought wouldn’t have come from the crash of a dirigible. The bomb produced the feeling of quasi-religious awe because of the scope of it. So, we decided to present parts of the two stories in Genesis which deal with the creation of Man as a way of gaining a bit more perspective.

BK: The two creation stories in Genesis describe two types of human beings which are aspects of all of us to different degrees. In the first story of Creation, man and woman are created together and achieve dominion over the earth and its creatures. In the second story, man is made first from the dust of the earth, woman from his rib, and their task is to tend and care for the earth, a more humble type of human being. The Genesis texts interrupt the ongoing flow of images and are typed out, white letters against black, whereas other texts within the piece appear as part of a collaged image and are often in the form of headlines. I turned the live film footage of the islanders into photographic stills, made these stills painterly and then animated them at a different frame rate from the usual 30 frames per second. It creates a very different feeling, more so than usual slow motion. As for the structure of Bikini itself, there are in fact three image blocks which repeat and develop three times in the course of the work before the coda: the bombers, the Bikini people themselves, and the countdown to the bomb aboard the target ships in the harbour. The bomb itself is never seen, but when it does explode a group of palm trees, animated and painted on as I’ve described, precede the final image of elderly Bikini people walking along a beach on one of their brief returns to the island. ‘Majestic’ man has come upon humble man and asked that they make a sacrifice of their homeland for the sake of all mankind. The Bikinians are a paradigm for the plight of displaced people, past and present, to return to their beloved homeland.

DA: Turning to Dolly, the cloned sheep, we’re brought right up to date.

SR: Cloning is emblematic of the many biological and physical devices by which we can now manipulate the body itself. The possibilities are endless and the question arises whether we are the right beings for such a job. Now, as we step into taking over the making of our own species, we are crossing a line which has never been crossed before, and one that is fraught with dangers that we’ve never even contemplated. Dolly meditates on these themes, homing in additionally on the religious background which we feel needs to be restored to the dialogue. With Dolly’s dominance of ‘talking heads’ we seem closer to a theatrical world of human characters. But what sort of theatre are we talking about here?

BK: As with The Cave, when we’re editing the recorded interviews someone might have given us fantastic answers, but if that person doesn’t deliver the words in a certain way, or have a physical presence that we find interesting, then they don’t make it into our final cut. So in a way the interviewees are being cast like actors. The video provides both the visual action and the theatrical set, which in performance is underscored or subtly elaborated on by the stage designer, costume designer and lighting designer. The performers will be fairly static and iconographic, but will add a live presence that both extends into live space and supports what is on the screen. This is not theatre with a capital T trying to be a classic form of opera or drama. The theatre is really there to serve the video and music.

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The work is a co-commission by Wiener Festwochen, Holland Festival, Settembre Musica/Torino City Council, BITE:02 Barbican London, Festival musica Strasbourg, Festival d’Automne à Paris/Cité de la Musique, Hebbel-Theater Berlin, Centro Cultural de Belém Lisbon, Spoleto Festival and Brooklyn Academy of Music/BAM Next Wave Festival. A TV version is commissioned by BBC Television for transmission in September 2002.

„Hindenburg“ was commissioned by the Bonn Opera, sponsored by the City of Munich and the Cultural Foundation of the Deutsche Bank

KulturStiftung

der Deutschen Bank

*The complete interview can be found at www.ensemble-modern.com
Further information on Three Tales can be found at www.stereireich.com*

Gemeinsames Auftragswerk von Wiener Festwochen, Holland Festival, Settembre Musica/Torino City Council, BITE:02 Barbican London, Festival musica Strasbourg, Festival d’Automne à Paris/Cité de la Musique, Hebbel-Theater Berlin, Centro Cultural de Belem Lissabon, Spoleto Festivals und Brooklyn Academy of Music/Bam Next Wave Festival. Fernsehversion im Auftrag von BBC Television

„Hindenburg“ war ein Kommissionsauftrag der Oper Bonn, ermöglicht durch die großzügige Unterstützung des Kulturreferats der Stadt München und der Kultur-Stiftung der Deutschen Bank.

Das vollständige Interview finden Sie unter www.ensemble-modern.com

Weitere Informationen zu Three Tales finden Sie unter www.stereireich.com

Konzert Termine

Three Tales (1998-2002) by Steve Reich [music] and Beryl Korot [video]

Ensemble Modern & SYNERGY Vocals
Dirigent/Conductor: Bradley Lubman
Regie/Stage Direction & Design: Nick Mangano
Licht/Lighting Design: Matthew Frey
Kostüme/Costumes: Anita Yavich
Technische Leitung/Technical Director: Steven Ehrenberg
Video Projektion: Jack Young
Klangregie/Sound Director: Norbert Ommer
Produktionsleitung/Technical Coordination: Stephan Buchberger
Sound Software: Ben Rubin

12.-15.05.2002, 19.30 Uhr, Wien
Museums Quartier (Wiener Festwochen) (UA) (World Premiere)

13.-15.06.2002, 20.30 Uhr, Amsterdam
Koninklijk Carré Theater (Holland Festival) (Holl. EA) (Dutch Premiere)

13., 14.09.2002, 21 Uhr, Turin
Teatro Reggiao (settembre musica) (Ital. EA) (Italian Premiere)

18.-21.09.2002, 19.45 Uhr, London
Barbican Centre (BITE:02) (Engl. EA) (British Premiere)

27.09.2002, 20 Uhr, Baden-Baden
Festspielhaus (Festival musica Strasbourg) (DEA) (German Premiere)

29., 30.10.2002, 20 Uhr, Paris
Cité de la Musique (Festival d’Automne à Paris) (FEA) (French Premiere)

02., 03.11.2002, 20 Uhr, Lissabon
Centro Cultural Belém (Port. EA) (Portuguese Premiere)

06.-08.12.2002, 20 Uhr, Berlin
Hebbel-Theater

Weitere Konzerte mit Steve Reich:

19.07.2002, 20 Uhr, Wiesbaden
ESWE-Forum (Rheingau Musik Festival)
Gesprächskonzert mit Steve Reich
Steve Reich: Triple Quartet (1999)
New York Counterpoint (1985)
Different Trains (1988)
Solist: Roland Diry (Klarinette)
Gast: Steve Reich
Moderatorin: Kornelia Bittmann

20.07.2002, 20 Uhr, Wiesbaden
Kurhaus (Rheingau Musik Festival)
Steve Reich: Eight Lines (1979)
Music for Eighteen Musicians (1974-76)
Dirigent: Jonathan Stockhammer
Stimmen: Neue Vocalsolisten Stuttgart

Änderungen vorbehalten.

ENSEMBLE MODERN

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Vorschau: No.10 09/2002



Heiner Goebbels Landschaft mit entfernten Verwandten

Eine Koproduktion von Grand Théâtre de Genève, Berliner Festspiele, Festspielhaus St. Pölten, Filature de Mulhouse und Ensemble Modern, mit großzügiger Unterstützung durch die Kultur-Stiftung der Deutschen Bank. Mit Unterstützung der Europäischen Festival-Vereinigung.

Im nächsten Newsletter geht es gleich weiter mit Oper. Dann erfahren Sie alles über das neue Werk von Heiner Goebbels: Landschaft mit entfernten Verwandten (Arbeitstitel) für Ensemble Modern, 3 Solisten und Chor Uraufführung ist am **16.10.2002 in Genf** Bâtiment des Forces Motrices sowie 10 Folgeaufführungen bis zum 26.10.2002.

KulturStiftung
der Deutschen Bank

Konzerttermine Mai-August 2002

12.-15.05.2002, 19.30 Uhr, Wien
Museums Quartier (Wiener Festwochen)
Three Tales (1998-2002) (UA) by Steve Reich [music] and Beryl Korot [video]

18.05.2002, 18 Uhr, Rödinghausen-Bieren / Kreis Herford, Gut Böckel (Literaturbüro Detmold)
Lesung mit Eva Mattes und Bruno Ganz.
Nicolai Korndorf: Amoroso für 11 Instrumentalisten (1986)
Sofia Gubaidulina: Streichtrio.
Boris Pasternak gewidmet (1988)
Ferruccio Busoni/Erwin Stein: Berceuse élégiaque (1909/1921)

23.-25.05.2002, 20 Uhr, Berlin
Hebbel-Theater
Guo Wenjing:
Ye Yan / The Night Banquet (2001) (DEA)

08.06.2002, 20.30 Uhr, Paris
Centre Pompidou (Agora Festival)
Rebecca Saunders:
Molly's Song 3 shades of crimson (1996)
Michael Jarrell: Droben schmettert ein greller Stein, für Kontrabass, Ensemble und Elektronik (2001) (FEA)
Morton Feldman: For Samuel Beckett (1987)
Dirigent: Stefan Asbury
Solist: Enno Senft (Kontrabass)

13.-15.06.2002, 20.30 Uhr, Amsterdam
Koninklijk Theater Carré (Holland Festival)
Three Tales (1998-2001) (Holl. EA)
by Steve Reich [music] and Beryl Korot [video]

17.06.2002, 19.30 Uhr, London
Wigmore Hall
(Jewish Music Institute, International Forum for Suppressed Music, Andante.com)
Franz Reizenstein: Quintett (1936)
Matyas Seiber:
Permutazione a cinque (1958)
Hans Gál: Serenade für Klarinette, Geige und Violoncello op. 93 (1935)
Berthold Goldschmidt: Fantasy for oboe, cello and harp (1991)
Vilém Tanský: Coventry:
A Meditation for String Quartet (1941)
Egon Wellesz: Oktett op. 67 (1948)

14.07.2002, 21.00 Uhr, Paris
Centre Pompidou – Open Air (Quartier d'été)
Frank Zappa: Greggery Peccary & Other Persuasions (FEA)
Dirigent: Jonathan Stockhammer
Solisten: Omar Ebrahim, David Moss
Arrangements: Ali. N. Askin
Synclaviertranskriptionen: Todd Yvega
Eine Koproduktion von Ensemble Modern, MusikTriennale Köln 2000, musica viva/Bayerischer Rundfunk, Holland Festival, Comitato Bologna 2000/Angelica Festival, Konzerthaus Berlin/MOM GmbH & co. Classic Open Air KG, Kultur Ruhr/Musik im Industrieraum.

Impressum:
Redaktion: Susanne Tegebauer, Ensemble Modern
Beiträge: Die Texte sind Originalbeiträge für diese Ausgabe. © Ensemble Modern, wenn nicht anders angegeben. Abdruck nur mit Genehmigung.
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Layout: www.headware.de

19.07.2002, 20 Uhr, Wiesbaden
ESWE-Forum (Rheingau Musik Festival)
Gesprächskonzert mit Steve Reich
Steve Reich: Triple Quartet (1999)
New York Counterpoint (1985)
Different Trains (1988)
Solist: Roland Diry (Klarinette)
Gast: Steve Reich
Moderatorin: Kornelia Bittmann

20.07.2002, 20 Uhr, Wiesbaden
Kurhaus (Rheingau Musik Festival)
Steve Reich: Eight Lines (1979)
Music for Eighteen Musicians (1974-76)
Dirigent: Jonathan Stockhammer
Stimmen: Neue Vocalsolisten Stuttgart

24-27.07.2002, 20 Uhr, New York
LaGuardia Concert Hall
(Lincoln Center Festival)
Guo Wenjing: Ye Yan / The Night Banquet (2001) (Amerik.EA)

28.07.2002, 19 Uhr, New York
LaGuardia Drama Theater
(Lincoln Center Festival)
Guo Wenjing:
Drama – Trio op. 26 (1995)
Helmut Lachenmann:
Trio Fluido (1966)
Elliott Sharp: Tessalation Row (1999)
Elliott Carter: Triple Duo (1983)
Dirigent: Franck Ollu

06.08.2002, 20 Uhr, Kiel-Molfsee
Winkelscheune im Freilichtmuseum (Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival)
Tango Sensation – Hommage à Piazzolla

07.08.2002, 20 Uhr, Wotersen
Reithalle (Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival)
Tango Sensation – Hommage à Piazzolla

09.08.2002, 20 Uhr, Hamburg
Kampnagel (Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival)
Conlon Nancarrow/Yvar Mikhashoff: Study No 12 „Spanish“ (1950/1987)
Martín Matalón:
Las Siete Vidas de un Gato (1996) (DEA)
mit Film von Luis Buñuel: Un chien andalou
Conlon Nancarrow/Yvar Mikhashoff:
Tango ? (1950/1984)
George Crumb:
Ancient Voices of Children (1970)
Joaquin Turina: El Arbol de Guernica (1926)
Roberto Gerhard: Nonet (1957), Libra (1968)
mit Film von Luis Buñuel: España 1937
Silvestre Revueltas: Homenaje a Federico García Lorca (1958)
Paul Dessau: Guernica (nach Picasso) (1937)
Dirigent: John Storgårds
Solisten: Sarah Leonard (Sopran), Luciano Lodi (Knabensopran) u.a.

16.-18.08.2002, jeweils 18.00 und 20.30 Uhr, Kassel
Opernfoyer (documenta 11)
Hanne Darboven: Sextett Opus 44 (1998-99)
Änderungen vorbehalten.

Druck: Druckerei Imbscheidt KG
Das Ensemble Modern wird über die Deutsche Ensemble Akademie gefördert durch die Stadt Frankfurt, das Land Hessen, die Kulturstiftung der Länder aus Mitteln des Beauftragten der Bundesregierung für Angelegenheiten der Kultur und der Medien, die GVL und die GEMA-Stiftung.
April 2002

Ye Yan/The Night Banquet

Guo Wenjing



Pressestimmen zu Guo Wenjing Ye Yan / The Night Banquet

Zu den Aufführungen am:

02.-06.10.2001, Sceaux
Scène Nationale (Festival d'Automne à Paris)
(Uraufführung der Neufassung 2001)
12.-14.02.2002, Perth
Mandurah Performing Arts Centre (Mandurah International Opera Festival – eine Initiative des Perth International Arts Festival)

„Guo Wenjing stellt die birnenförmige Pipa, eine mit harter Attacke gezupfte Laute, ins Zentrum. Sie ist Schlag- und Melodieinstrument. Beides wird vom Ensemble Modern unter Ed Spanjaard aufgegriffen: drei Bläser, drei Schlagzeuger, Harfe und Streichquintett. So kann Guo Wenjings Musik, die nie in der Kategorie der Entwicklung befangen ist, unmerklich zwischen den Stilen changieren, kann sich traditionell chinesisch geben, an Puccini parodieartig anlehnen, Asienpop konterkarieren, herber Moderne nacheifern. Nicht der Stil ist das Ziel, sondern der Weg durch die Kulturen. Dabei wird Han Xizai zur Schlüsselfigur, weil er vom Ausnahmebassisten Gong Dongjian gesungen wird. ... Gong Dongjian kann mühelos zwischen tiefsten Tönen und höchstem Falsett hin und her zappen, und noch nie ging diese erstaunliche Begabung so gut mit einer Rolle zusammen wie hier. ... Doch so bleibt ‚Ye Yan‘ eine Grenzgängerei, die nur von dieser Gruppe, die einige der besten chinesischen Künstler heute versammelt, zu realisieren sein dürfte.“
(Süddeutsche Zeitung, 8.10.2001)

„It WAS the newest of new that opened the festival. Created by composer Guo Wenjing and director Chen Shi-Zheng, The Night Banquet is an extraordinary and exquisite work. A tour de force of considered direction and skilled composition, the opera seemed to suspend time, reaching into the human soul to deliver a sorrowful tale of eternal regret. The commanding performances of Gong Dongjian (Han Xizai), You Hongfei (Hingzhu) and Jiang Qihu (Li Yu) were breathtaking examples of superior and effortless singing; the haunting counter tenor lines especially so. Integral to the work and wondrous in her own right was pipa soloist Wu Man, her virtuosity enthralling; and under Ed Spanjaard, Ensemble Modern were brilliantly precise, adeptly executing the demands of a sparse and magnificent score.“
(The Australian, 18.02.2002)



The Night Banquet 2002

23.-25.05.2002, 20 Uhr, Berlin
Hebbel-Theater (DEA)
24.-27.07.2002, 20 Uhr, New York
LaGuardia Concert Hall
(Lincoln Center Festival) (Amerikan.EA)
Guo Wenjing: Ye Yan / The Night Banquet in chinesischer Sprache (Mandarin)
Dirigent: Ed Spanjaard

Solisten: Jiang Qihu (Li Yu, hoher Tenor)
Gong Dongjian (Han Xizai, Bass)
You Hongfei (Hongzhu, Sopran)
Fan Jingma (Gu Hongzhong, Tenor)
Chen Yanlei (Zhou Wenju, Bariton)

Tomoko Makuuchi (Konkubine, Koloratursopran)
Wu Man (Pipa)
Libretto: Zou Jingzhi
Regie: Chen Shi-Zheng
Bühne: Yi Liming
Licht: Jean Kalman
Kostüme: Cheng Shuyi
Dramaturgie: Hannah Hurtzig

Eine Koproduktion von Festival d'Automne à Paris, Les Gémeaux/Sceaux/Scène Nationale, Lincoln Center Festival New York, KunstenFestivalDesArts Brüssel, Hebbel-Theater Berlin, Théâtre de Caen und Ensemble Modern.