

LAYERING: In "Dislocations," I layer this source material vertically; under certain conditions, this can also be called "contrapuntal." You can imagine these layers like the different tracks of an audio program: one for Mahler, one for specific rock music, another for typical "New Music" gestures or sound gestures, etc. In this way, a large number of these layers exist vertically, some of which are very different in terms of content.

A decisive question was, of course: How do I want to relate these different musics or layers to one another? How do I organize them horizontally and vertically? Do I want to create contrast or "counterpoint" within the layers, or merely "polarize" them? Or do I want to support or "paraphrase" one or more layers? These are questions that are also—or perhaps even more—familiar from the field of film music. However, all these musics were first carefully analyzed and processed by me before they became independent layers. For example, a passage from Ligeti's *Horn Trio* (the high violin) was played backwards; a section from Varèse's *Déserts* was extremely stretched in time—augmented and looped—and transposed downwards, etc. This means I "appropriated" the foreign material more and more before assembling and transcribing it. What emerges here is a highly intertextual fabric, in which the source material no longer functions as a mere quotation but is transformed into a new context of meaning.

To reflect on the relationships and the composition of the individual layers, it is important to analyze them for specific structural characteristics in order to decide how they can be combined. By "structural characteristics," I mean those that apply to any form of music and can be described with terms such as pulse, impulse, texture (Fläche), foreground, background, melody, and accompaniment.

Furthermore, terms used in film music analysis are helpful. If, for example, a layer has a rather static, textural structure, I can use film music terminology to consider whether I want to support this texture "emphatically" (in Chion's sense), "paraphrase" it (à la Raffaseder), or work with sharp contrasts.

For working with layers, I believe the "orchestra" as a sonic apparatus is particularly well-suited. And that is exactly what fascinates me about composing for orchestra: in no other instrumentation is it possible to work vertically in this way—simply because of the sheer mass. These layers can be further "reinforced" but also spatialized through sophisticated miking and well-placed loudspeakers. This is the case in *Dislocations*. (Side note: This also makes it possible to eliminate the typical

"beautiful" orchestral sound—the "nostalgic" element—to a certain extent.)

The piece bears the subtitle "for orchestra, solo piano, and sampler" and is dedicated to the pianist of the premiere, Christoph Grund. He plays both the solo piano and the sampler. (Christoph Grund is one of the few pianists who not only plays the piano fantastically but also possesses the technical and performance know-how to operate samplers.) He has two keyboards to operate: that of the grand piano and, mounted above it, that of the electronic keyboard. At the same time, the score repeatedly calls for actions inside the piano. Added to this is another dimension: vocal actions that he has to perform at the end of the piece. This means he is involved with every fiber of his body, placed at the center of the action as a "performer" with all his capabilities.

It would go beyond the scope of this presentation to go into all the aspects that were significant to me regarding the role of the "solist." Let me just briefly mention that the inclusion of the sampler (I have been working with samplers since the late 1980s) allowed me to incorporate very concrete audio sounds into the composition, thereby bringing the "world" or the "outside" into the piece in a very tangible way. *Dislocations* was shortlisted for the "Rostrum of Composers" and has been broadcast in over 30 countries worldwide. It has reached a wide audience, and surprisingly, I repeatedly receive messages from listeners who want to know more about the piece.

[LISTEN TO THE FIRST APPROX. 5 MINUTES OF THE CD]

As you can hear, the piece establishes many references to tradition and specific musical eras, yet tries to generate something "third" from them. It is not a piece of mere quotation, nor a collage. Allow me to show you one passage in more detail.

Unfortunately, the format of the score did not allow for PowerPoint, so I must ask you to look at the sheet music. You will find it on page 11 ff. (at approx. 4:40 of the CD of the Berlin version): There, in the high strings, specifically the 1st and 2nd violins (please note the German orchestral seating and the resulting spatialization), you have a melody—more precisely: a rather "cheesy" melody. This is coupled with the typical "percussive gestures" (impulses) of New Music (note the constant syncopations), such as those found throughout Marc André's orchestral work *Auf*. The whole thing is further counteracted by a triggered sample, in which one hears something like "having sex...". In addition, the piano plays a kinetic figure connected to the winds, producing stereotypical "expressivo" figures of New Music (extreme

crescendos and frullato). From page 13 onwards, the high strings also add the "beautifully sweet" Lachenmann-esque bottleneck technique...

What does all this do together? Is it kitsch, slapstick, malicious destruction, arbitrariness, or something else? One thing is certain: if you took away one element, the entire passage would no longer function.

Two more examples: on page 5 (at 2:50 on the CD), I combine a short, pre-processed Mahler quotation with a "rock-like" figure, while the other layers support (paraphrase) or counterpoint these two materials. And on page 30 (at 12:25 on the CD), I combine, among other things, a heavily alienated part of a Varèse piece with a passage from the end of Ligeti's *Horn Trio*, while members of the orchestra have to sing along "live."

A word on form... I have tried to organize and shape the various parts of this piece using rhetorical figures—certain tropes. The question of form is a significant one for me, time and again, even if the term is currently not "en vogue" or plays hardly any role in certain compositional movements, such as process-based composition. Yet, as early as antiquity, "rhetorical" techniques were developed for specific speech or performance situations, intended to structure a presentation in such a way as to ensure the greatest possible "affect" on the audience. Behind this was the realization that only a performance that touches and captivates the listener can be absorbed and remembered. In contemporary debates on art, especially in "pathos research," this idea is being revisited and expanded.

The core question is whether the much-maligned "affect" might still possess critical potential in art. For reason alone—and the very dichotomy of reason and affect shows the intellectual tradition we reside in—reason alone offers "too little" in artistic processes. In art, not only knowledge and reason, but also affect and emotion have critical potential—specifically when art manages to disturb, when it manages to invent unknown feelings.

END

Due to time constraints, I must come to a close. Let me therefore bring it back to the concept of "dialogic composition." One could speak here, with Julia Kristeva¹, of a radical intertextuality: As I said at the beginning, I am of the fundamental opinion that contemporary music must open itself up—to other media, techniques,

¹ Julia Kristeva: „Bakhtine, le mot, le dialogue et le roman“, 1967

disciplines, spaces, processes, and other artists. In Kristeva's sense, it is about understanding the work as a crossroads of textualities (an intersection of texts). Today, it should be more about "reference" (e.g., to the collective hearing of the present) than about self-referentiality; more about "contemporaneity" than about "eternity"; more about collaboration (the pooling of forces) than about maintaining the cliché of the lonely author.

Ultimately, such a pooling of forces seems more important than ever in our totally individualized society, where everyone can, should, and wants to celebrate their own style, their own music, and their own individuality—for instance, to test possibilities of resistance against a power that incessantly demands significance and subjectivity from all individuals, not least to ensure omnipresent identifiability and control. A power of which we are all a part. Which we ourselves are.

Thank you.

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