

Küchensymphonie in fünf Gängen mit Verköstigung

An Interactive Culinary Five Course Kitchen Symphony

Concept

This sensory symphonic art menu is a spacious interactive installation combining action in a staged space, a dining audience as well as musicians wearing hats made of pots or pans which serve as atonal sound sources. Five women composers have selected exquisite international recipes for a culinary and musical menu— aperitif, hors d'oeuvre, soup, main course, dessert – and put these to music. The abstract sounds of a mixer, the washing and cutting of vegetables or of coffee being grounded are all part of the tonal setting. Accompanying this, a large shadow of a chef – in fact a percussionist – depicts the preparation and cooking of the dishes acoustically. As each dish is being prepared behind the scenes, singers and musicians act it out, inviting the audience to embark on an imaginary culinary journey. Waiters then actually serve the dish to the audience in a kind of a ritualistic ballet. Table noises are discreetly amplified at selected times turning the meal itself into an independent sound action, this time performed by the audience. Art is thus not only a shared act which everybody present takes part in – artists and audience alike – it also becomes an internalising experience for all the senses.

Implementation

Five composers and one artist have together composed a menu for their guests, a menu made up of images, sounds and delicious food. The recipes – each from a different country – were selected by the composers and also served as inspiration for the *libretti*, which are sung or whispered by the singers in the various languages. This international menu is like a mosaic reflecting the composers' personal taste on the one hand and the *cuisine* of their countries on the other.

The women artists who have created this Kitchen Symphony come not only from various walks of life, or have different cultural backgrounds, they also represent five generations: Pauline Oliveros (USA, *1932); Gisela Weimann (Germany, *1943); Karmella Tsepkenko (Ukraine, *1955); Ana Maria Rodriguez (Argentina, *1963); Annette Schlünz (Germany, *1964); Mayke Nas (Holland, *1972). This is reflected not only in the music but also in the design of the singers' costumes.

The Kitchen Symphony is also a many-sided metaphor: time, transience, life, death (in the case of food that has gone bad or an empty plate), atrophy (due to a lack of food), growth (due to good food), sensuality and conversation.

The exchanging and discussing of ideas, suggestions, scenes and images was a long and intense process. Many ideas were initially approved only to be rejected at a later stage. Eventually a concept emerged which allowed for an actual feast to be an integral part of the symphony, a symphony where musical and dramatic abstraction are realized through the sheer sensory pleasure of food. In addition to this the symphony travels - in stages - through different cultures and epochs. It covers about half a century and makes stops in Holland, Germany, France, the USA, Ukraine and Argentina.

Stage, Costumes and Props

The tables are laid with white table cloths and together with the chairs they form a geometrical pattern defining the shape of the installation space. The sound and mixing desks are positioned on tables – also covered with white table cloths – somewhere between the other tables. The symphony is primarily in black and white. Various colours – each one representing a specific dish - are created through lighting. Whereas the musicians wear black suits, the singers wear elegant white clothes reminiscent of a chosen vegetable as well as of a particular fashion epoch. Furthermore, the chosen colours represent a certain mood. Mayke Nas, for example, serves her composition of “@Muse” of red pepper in a lively and spirited fashion. The scene and the singer’s cheeky short dress are flooded in bright red light for a short moment which then fades slowly, leaving only a red glow on the dress behind. Pauline Olivero’s “Pea(ce Soup)” playfully explores the sound of rolling peas in its many variations, familiar as well as unexpected. The scene is initially lit by green light and the singer’s dress has a wasp-waist typical of the 1950s. The back of the dress portrays an open pea pod and the round buttons (attached to the dress with Velcro) are reminiscent of peas. As the performance unfolds the musicians pluck the peas off the dress, one by one, and roll them into the room.

The silver and black hats made from pots and pans and fashioned in a realistic-dadaistic style are an important dramatic element. The composers have allocated a special hat for each and every instrument. These hats have in fact been turned into instruments themselves: A frying pan with strings has become a violin, a saucepan crowned with a moveable inset opens up like a petal accompanied by the clinking sound of metal and a baking tin has been turned into a tamburine with the help of metal rings. These atonal hats are moveable parts of the scenery and appear in various scenes and also have a variety of functions. At one stage all the musicians may wear the hats, at another only a single singer wears a hat chosen for that particular scene. Put together the hats form a percussion instrument, placed on a chair a hat becomes one of the guests and put on the table it makes for an odd decoration or even a sculpture.

Translation: Christina Nicholson

©: Idea and audiovisual concept Gisela Weimann 2005

International menu of an interactive culinary five course Kitchen Symphony

Mayke Nas, Holland

Aperitif: „@-muse“ (Dutch dish)

Voice: alto

Instruments: trumpet, trombone, double bass

Preparation sounds: mouthwatering, playing with peppers in a tub of water, slow pepper melting sounds in the oven, opening of jars and tins, plucking leaves from herbs, chopping up of ingredients.

Main colour: bright red

Annette Schluenz, Germany/France

Hors d'oeuvre: „Tricolore“ (German/French dish)

Voice: soprano

Instruments: bass clarinet/sax, tuba, violoncello

Sounds: washing noises, cutting, electric mixer

Main colour: red-white-green

Pauline Oliveros, California

Soup: „Pea(ce Soup“ (Maya Dish)

Voice: Alto

Instruments: percussion and trumpet

Sounds: washing noises, stirring, mixing and the crunching noises of eating chips

Main colour: light green

Karmella Tsepkenko, Ukraine

Main Dish: „Brtutschi“ (Armenian Dish)

Singer: mezzo soprano

Instruments: flutes, violine, small percussion

Sounds: rolling out dough, cutting and frying

Main colour: orange-beige

Ana Maria Rodríguez, Argentinien

Dessert: „Kindim“ (Brazilian dish)

Singer: high soprano

Instruments: viola and percussion

Sounds: opening of eggs, water sounds and beating

Main colour: yellowish white

Composers' Biographies

Mayke Nas (the Netherlands, *1972) studied piano and composition at the conservatories of Amsterdam, Tilburg and The Hague with, among others, Martijn Padding and Gilius van Bergeijk. She has been commissioned by e.g. VPRO Television, the Dutch Fund for the Creation of Music, Festival November Music, Nieuw Ensemble, ASKO Ensemble, Schönberg Ensemble and Slagwerkgroep Den Haag. For her piece "(w) here", she was recently awarded *De Matthijs Vermeulen Aanmoedigingsprijs 2003*. Furthermore, Nas has a particular interest in working in the field of theatre. In 1998 she composed "SPELD", a music production for children with the Aquarius Ensemble and in 2001 she collaborated with graphic designer Annelys de Vet, bassoon-player Alban Wesly and violinist Bas Wiegers for the scenographic-music-performance "DiGiT 1t/m10". In May 2003 she wrote the monologues "One Way Bedroom, a modern communication-technological dramatic harpsichord-solo" for Anne Faulborn, and "Dido, for double-bass, voice and slide projector" for Swiss doublebass player Cristin Wildbolz, both directed by Adelheid Roosen. Nas has also organized concerts for the chamber music platform 'De Link' in Tilburg (www.delink.nl) since 1977 and keeps a weblog of dead birds and other treasures (www.xs4all.nl/~mayke/australia).

Pauline Oliveros (USA, *1932), composer, performer and humanitarian, is an important pioneer in American Music. Acclaimed internationally, she has explored sound and forged new ground for herself and others for decades. Through improvisation, electronic music, ritual, teaching and meditation she has created a body of work with such a breadth of vision that it profoundly affects those who experience it and eludes many who try to write about it.

"On some level, music, sound consciousness and religion are all one, and she would seem to be very close to that level." (John Rockwell)

"Through Pauline Oliveros and Deep Listening I finally know what harmony is.... It's about the pleasure of making music." (John Cage 1989)

Pauline Oliveros has been honoured internationally with awards, grants and concerts. Whether performing at the John F. Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., in an underground cavern, or in the studios of West German Radio, Oliveros' commitment to interaction with the moment is unchanged. She can turn the sound of a sweeping siren into an instrument part of the ensemble. Through "Deep Listening Pieces" and earlier "Sonic Meditations" Oliveros introduced the concept of incorporating all environmental sounds into a musical performance. In order to turn this into a pleasurable experience focused concentration, skilled musicianship and strong improvisational skills are required, all of which are the hallmarks of Oliveros' form.

Ana Maria Rodriguez (Argentina, *1963) studied composition, piano, history and philosophy in Buenos Aires and then went on to Phono Studio in Barcelona where she studied electronic music as well as algorithmical composition. In 1993 the GMD St. Augustin (Germany) invited her to develop several audio projects for its "Artificial Intelligence" faculty. Rodriguez has since produced many pieces of work for a range of instruments using live-electronics and computer technology. In addition to this she has produced many sound installations (e.g. Brückenmusik IV Köln; Donaueschinger Musiktage 2001/2004; Musik im Dialog, Konzerthaus Berlin; Musique Action Vandoeuvre Nancy 2004; space+place Oberbaum City Berlin; Berlin-Buenos Aires 2004) and WDR (West German Radio) acquired several of her works in 2002. Between 2002 and 2003 she was on the executive committee of the Berliner Gesellschaft für Neue Musik (the Berlin Society for New Music). Rodriguez has cooperated with improvising musicians such as Annette Krebs, Andrea Neumann, Alessandro Bosetti and Axel Dörner. Furthermore, she has published many articles as well as held seminars on the subject of "Music and Technology". She has been awarded grants by the following institutions: Hauptstadtkulturfonds (2002/2004), Landesmusikrat NRW (2000/2001), Ministerium für Städtebau und Wohnen, Kultur und Sport des Landes NRW (2003). Rodriguez has lived in Berlin since 1997.

Annette Schlünz (Germany *1964) started studying composition, piano and conducting in 1983 at the University of Music Dresden (composition with Udo Zimmermann, conducting with Rudolf Neuhaus). Her classical studies were complemented by her work in a studio for electric music. Following graduation she taught at the University of Music Dresden until 1992 and also worked for the Dresdner Zentrum für Zeitgenössische Musik (Dresden Centre for Contemporary Music). Her work for this centre – realizing international projects – is still ongoing. In the late 1980s Schlünz spent three years as a master-class student with Paul-Heinz Dittrich at the Akademie der Künste. This led to an intensification of her work with text and stage. Encounters with Xenakis und Lachenmann in Stuttgart also influenced her work. Schlünz has worked as a free-lancer since 1993 and divides her time between Provence, Strasbourg and Germany. In 1994 she founded the German-French Compagnie de quatre, a company devoted to projects combining music, plastic art (Daniel Depoutot) and stage (Helfried Foron). Her work „das • das • das andere ufer“, music for the ferry traffic across the Rhein in Basel, was

commissioned by the Europäischer Musikmonat Basel (text by Ulrike Draesner). Schlünz was invited to work as a lecturer for the Brandenburg Colloquium for New Music in 1995, to Argentina, Chile and Brazil in 1996 and to Hanoi in Vietnam in 2001. In 1998 a cd portraying her work was published by Wergo as part of the German Music Council's contemporary collection.

Karmella Tsepkolenko (Ukraine, *1955) started studying music with Prof. Stoliarsky, piano with Prof. Buchyns'kyj and composition with Prof. Kogan from 1962-1973 at the Special States Music School Odessa. She continued her composition studies with Prof. O.Krasotov as well as her piano studies with Prof. L.Ginzburg from 1973-1979 at Odessa State A.V.Nezhdanova Conservatoire (now Odessa State A.V.Nezhdanova Musical Academy). Furthermore she attended master-courses for composers in Darmstadt (1992 and 1994) and in Bayreuth (1993).

Tsepkolenko is a Professor of Composition at Odessa State A.V.Nezhdanova Musical Academy since 1980 and is the founder of the first school of modern composition in southern Ukraine. She has published several articles and reviews dedicated to the method of composition teaching. Her *"Tonocolori"* piano cycle was awarded the *"Rendez-vous international du piano en Creuse"* prize in 1990 (Gueret, France), and she has participated in many international festivals and forums. e.g. "World Music Days" of IGM (Bucharest, Rumania, 1999; Yokohama, Japan, 2001), "Mitten am Rand" (Die Höhe, Germany, 2003), "Wien Modern" (Vienna, Austria, 1997, 1998), Internationales Pianoforum für Neue Musik "...antasten..." (Heilbronn, Germany, 1995), "Summergarden" (New York, USA, 2000).

Tsepkolenko has been awarded many grants, prizes and scholarships: Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung (Germany, 1995), DAAD (Germany, 1996), Brahms-Haus Stiftung (Germany, 1996), Künstlerhof Schreyahn (Germany 1998), Künstlerhäuser Worpswede (Germany, 2000), Die Höhe (Germany, 2002, 2003) the National Endowment for the Arts (New York, USA, 1996). The International Renaissance Foundation (Ukraine) and the foundations KulturKontakt (Austria) und Pro Helvetia (Switzerland) have also awarded her grants for her creative and cultural projects.