

CURATING ISLANDS

This text describes the concert “From Karlheinz Stockhausen to Esaias Järnegard” performed by ensemble Gageego! at Stenhammarsalen in Gothenburg Concert house on the 18th of November 2018. The concert was curated by me and the project belongs to my current PhD- project at the Academy of Music and Drama at Gothenburg University.

THE CONCERT

In my work with ensemble Gageego! I assist in the choice of repertoire. Essentially, I try to find a wide range of work which – according to different themes decided by the ensemble – then are put in a definite program. In total the season comprise of four concerts. For the season 18-19 the theme was to find a core work which was a composer or a specific piece which the musicians of the ensemble had a special relationship with and then let the rest of the program follow this work/composer as a trace of inspiration/context – legacy or precedence.

For the concert on the 18th of November 2018 clarinetist Ragnar Arnberg wanted to perform a bass clarinet piece from the cycle *Klang* of Karlheinz Stockhausen. From that piece me and Johanna Persson (violist of Gageego!) created a chain of work which in different ways related to the actual piece or the compositional legacy of Karlheinz Stockhausen.

In the end, this led to a program consisting of solo or ensemble pieces of (apart from Stockhausen) Helmut Lachenmann, Pierluigi Billone, Simone Movio, Brigitta Muntendorf and me, Esaias Järnegard,¹ thusly creating a wide plethora of aesthetics emanating or relating to Stockhausen’s universal (utopian) idea of music. The scope of selection limits itself (as a generalization) to kind of “post-war”- continental approach to music, but in relation to the whole concert series (4 concerts during the season 18-19) it gives one piece of a bigger puzzle of contemporary musical expressions and its diverse. We viewed the series as an archipelago, where each concert was not only one island, but in itself made up of constellation of small island, reefs, peninsulas. Some stretching further, others as more periphery. In this particular concert, it was not by chance that my own work, *Isola* (Island in Italian), finished the concert. *Isola* consist in itself of a myriad of musical forms and gestures, which in different forms and under their own specific conditions are present in the aligned work of Lachenmann, Billone, Stockhausen, Muntendorf and Movio.

The music on this concert does not only attach to one another through geographical or social factor’s, but even more on the specific methods of sound and their own – respectively – poetic/ ideological approach to the discourse of contemporary instrumental music.

Comment on selection

Helmut Lachenmann did not formally study with Stockhausen, but exemplify – in many ways – a hereditary aspect. In Darmstadt during the 70s the decline of Stockhausen’s presence coincides with the emergence of a new ideological force during the festival (and of the coming decades), that of Helmut Lachenmann. The legacy of Stockhausen is very much present in the music of Lachenmann, although its articulation takes on a quite different path. As can be seen in the choice of works during this concert. *Guero* by Lachenmann is a clear example of the re-thinking of the instrument (or anti-instrument) achieved by the idea of the musique concrete instrumentale.

¹ See attachment, the program and associated program notes (written by me). In Swedish.

Pierluigi Billone marks another phase in the evolution of the music of both Stockhausen and Lachenmann. Billone, a previous student of Lachenmann, embraces to a large extent the phenomenological approach to instruments introduced by Lachenmann, but channels it through a completely different aesthetic. The notion of an archeology of sound comes more easily to mind (than Lachenmann's more *dialectic* notion of sound). The performer – instrument relationship is key.

The final panorama of composers has a less clear artistic connection. Simone Movio, Brigitta Muntendorf and myself represent three very different approaches, but we connect all to a scene highly affected by the legacy of Stockhausen, Lachenmann and Billone. Muntendorf symbolizes the new direction of a musical scene in which multimedia and art practice in a more general sense is growing. The choreography of sound, the dissemination of sound (not necessarily viewed as acoustic, but equally much in light, staging and movement) is shifting – stressing the composer to view sound (and composition) as an intermediary form of expression.

Simone Movio, on the other hand, although a composer closely affiliated with a deep spiritual relationship to sound (c.f Stockhausen) represents a musical school which more aligns itself to tradition. Sound is in center, extended techniques (many of which was introduced by Stockhausen and Lachenmann) is always used as a logical extension of the instrument, or a sense of *chiaroscuro*, instead of, for instance, Lachenmann's antithetical use. In this sense it more resembles Billone's use, but the sensibility of sound is articulated in a completely different universe.

My own work is impossible to imagine without the backdrop of Pierluigi Billone. His solo piece *Mani. De Leonardis* (of which the piece performed on the concert mani. Matta, has many connections with, not only the prefix, mani) constitute in many ways the starting point of my evolution as a composer in the last 10 years. Coincidentally, the *mani-suite* (it comprises, to date, of 5 solo pieces), is one of the examples, both in terms of sound and aspiration, which was a large part of my application to the PhD- program at the Academy of Music and Drama at Gothenburg University.

The work of mine which was presented at the concert, *Isola*, marks one of the first pieces which address certain aspects of my current research project *techniques of ecstasy* (working title). Although it takes few explicit *techniques* in consideration, it uses a wide material owing to sketches and previous pieces in which transcription of rhythmic and timbral material from several disparate traditions:

- *NOAIN. NOAIDI for solo viola* (transcriptions of the voice of Diamanda Galas, present in ISOLA in many places)
- *ISOLA. PHAROS* for percussion and ensemble and *INSULA. PHAROS* for solo violin (transcriptions, but essentially completely extended/transformed transcriptions of the Whisper singing of the Burundi – tribe)

More importantly, *Isola*, departs from a rich material for each individual instrument which I have been gathering for a period of about three years, but here put in motion in a formal way which orients itself to what could be considered a hermeneutical interpretation of material. One in which each singular part (ideally) reflect the whole, and in which each singular part has the ability (or this was rather the aim) to transform or *become* any other part of the piece. The relationship between temporalities (the *moment/newness* and the constructed form) is pushed towards a non-linear consideration. The final proposition of its evolution in time, I propose, is the one which the *forces* of sound established by their "own" accord, but in reality, the parts could easily have been placed in a completely different order.