

==On Contemporary Music-Theatre==

I do not intend to deliver a learned lecture about "Contemporary Music-Theatre". My intention is rather personal, it is to explain my believe as a composer who sees a challenge in this subject.

"Grand Opera" is still a high level - entertainment for the public at large, based on aesthetical standards of a past, both with regard to music and theatrical performance. Nevertheless, while approaching the 21 century, far reaching inner changes press their way more and more to the surface. The permanent financial crisis of all Operahouses in the world has much deeper reasons than economical ones only. In reality, this 18-19th century entertainment should use today its tools~~x~~ for a different design of artistic expression, not in order to protest or destroy tradition but to answer the need of a meantime quite different consumer. We witness in our days not so much the crisis of opera but the crisis of taste of the broad masses. Those people are not less sensitiv, not less intelligent than generations before, but they are utilized by technological means for modern communication which executes without any scruples a spiritual onslaught on the lowest level for easy perception. Therefore any intellectual attentin^p is diverted by an offer of immediate animalistic digestion. We dont need to cry about that. Nothing new under the sun. There have been similar cultural crises in the history of mankind, but the difference in our situation lies with the result of modern communication-media. The combination of quantity with speed created an entirely new situation with regard to thought-conditioning. For the time being this makes big business for the so called entertainment-industries. But à la not so long it will also form an enormous mass of people, which in previous times has been called a mob. A cultural mob in the service of dehumanization.

The remedy must be prepared by counter-education. Education is a much abused word in our times, because the notion borders a concept of piling up knowledge per se. Basically, education is an artistic idea. It can not be symbolized by sitting in a school-room and assembling dry facts.

Inspired education amplifies mental activity of all three involved participants at the art work: the creator, the performer and the receiver.

One of the most suitable subjects for artistic education for laymen as well as for experts is the art-form called "Opera".

Last year I was invited to the California School of Arts, near Los Angeles. I took a close look at the curriculum and was extremely happy to find out, that the student, specifying in one of the arts, must, during ~~his~~ ^{his} studies, take courses in the other arts too. This approach to artistic education prepares the fundament for another much abused term, namely "Gesamtkunstwerk" and in contrast to the modern equivalent "Multi Media". It educates the creator of an Opera as well as the performer of the work in terms of all the involved arts, to fire his imagination, to increase his sensitivity and to invent new tools for the realisation of the complex art-form.

On the other level it educates the perceiver to grasp, to connect and finally to enjoy the cooperation between the different art expressions, all of them serving the idea of an specific Opera. All receiving senses of the listener are mobilized, delivering to his brain the creators message, demanding full response to emotional and intellectual complexes. Even the traditional Lied-form can be set to music as an Opera in essence. I apologize for quoting myself: from the diaries of Franz Kafka I took a story, told in plain prosa. I wrote the music for one singer, without accompaniment. Singing, speaking, acting is demanded. On the stage is only a small table and a chair. The singer has to visualize all the happenings in this typical Kafkaesian story: the room, the atmosphere etc. The listener is forced to participate at the singers performance, he can not turn off

his attention and switch over to mystical dreaming -, otherwise he loses completely the message. He must be able to concentrate himself.

A basic technique for the art-education in the near future is the adaptation of video - tape. The coordination of oral, visual and acoustic messages, programed for all levels of perception, is an ideal educational tool. It also will help to raise the level of T V = programs in general. It will bring school and home much closer. Expenses for this educational tool for the future should be covered by governements and foundations. It will be repaid by lower subsidies to the Opera-houses and art institutes in general. If we start with such an activity systematically, the outcome will be felt in the timespan of even one generation. Then it will open new vistas for commercial lucrativities too.

I would like to propose for future **ERG** - meetings to put on the agenda:
" Programing of video-tapes for art education on all levels "

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