



KLANGZEITORT

Antje Krog

PREPARING FOR NEWNESS

For me, accessing classical music had always been flanked by intense distress.

Four incidents:

One day my mother, also my German teacher at school during the sixties, read to us in our hot, dusty classroom, as enormous clouds gathered far out over the plains: "Kennst du das Land, wo die Zitronen blühn," and her mouth became strange when forming the words: "Im dunklen Laub die Goldorangen glühn.". Up until today I remember the strong painful aspiration of that h-sound in her throat: "Die Myrte still und hoch der Lorbeer steht?"

But it was when she read: "Es schwindelt mir, es brennt / Mein Eingeweide. / Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt, / weiß, was ich leide!", that something else, something *unbestimmt* entered her voice, something that made my body, as young as I was, turn cold, a sound that I never heard from her ever again, but maybe, after she played Elisabeth Schwarzkopf singing the Wolf composition, spent a life time finding its source.

From then on I began to listen to German Lieder and learnt that my mother's Lieder records were bought in her youth from an old gentleman, Wally Goldsmith, the only record dealer in our small rural town. He would phone to say that "etwas Neues" had arrived. In his shop she listened to her first Schubert Lieder, Schumann, Wolf, Wagner – while he pointed out what things to listen for. Sometimes he was so moved, that he could not speak – only raising his hands in exclamation of beauty.

It was only much later that I wondered where in the world he had fled from with his German knowledge; what he made of this seventeen-year-old Afrikaner girl with her pro-Nazi family ties, his only client truly listening with him and buying his favourite German Lieder? What longing and despair were hanging in that hot cornershop on such desolated rural afternoons?

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Incident two: I took piano and later violin lessons at a university level. My piano lecturer was a well-known pianist in his heyday. Playing a Brahms intermezzo for him one day, he stopped me halfway and sneered at me: "don't ever EVER use music as masturbation!"

Incident three: During the height of apartheid, I heard that the first full production of a Wagner opera, *Lohengrin*, was to be staged in a nearby city – only for one presentation as one night was all the flown-in-from-Europe soprano could present in a culturally boycotted South Africa.

Via the underground activist structures I quickly learnt that the cost of the opera could provide the whole of Soweto, the largest black township, electricity for a year, so as a matter of principle, nobody should go. But as the time drew near, and busy evolving into a Wagner fan, I secretly bought a ticket and found myself in the audience that night tormented by shame and guilt ... until the moment that first soft opening high note began, accompanied by a tiny dot growing on the dark screen. My throat was filled with shards, with ecstasy, with anger, with utter beauty.

Incident four: After democracy finally arrived, my husband and I decided to support the local Cape Town orchestra's weekly performances. But once again, it was a decision fraught with stress. The parking lot was a war zone, swarming with black beggars, scar-faced muggers and white parking attendants "protecting" our cars with leashed Alsatians and racists shouts. Despite the fact that the old City Hall has the famous balcony from which Nelson Mandela made his first speech after his release from Robben Island, the building was falling into disrepair. We were requested not to use the toilets and a story did the rounds that during one performance thieves broke into the back of the building and stole every-thing the musicians left there apart from the instrument cases!

It was clear, as W.B. Yeats wrote: "The falcon cannot hear the falconer, / Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold". Classical music could not live cheek to jowl with the kind of poverty we have in the country. All classical music in South Africa, whether performed by professional musicians or township kids, was eternally ripped apart in the desire and sacrifice for it and the unbearable misery of inequality.

Somewhere in between our political turmoils, the work of Glass, Górecki and Pärt reached us via CD's, but the first full live experience of work by a composer still alive that I attended was a contemporary opera *MASQUE* (2003-2005) by a German/South African composer, Hans Huyssen:

MASQUE ist ein dichtes und vielschichtiges Opernspektakel mit lebensgroßen Masken, Tänzern, schwarzen und weißen Sängern in jeweils spezifisch europäischen und afrikanischen Partien und einem dreigeteilten Orchester: ein Kammerensemble von konventionellen modernen Instrumenten wird um eine Gruppe traditioneller afrikanischer Musiker, als auch ein europäisches Barockensemble (auf alten Instrumenten) erweitert. — Dieses mit Unterstützung der Pro Helvetia Stiftung für das Opernhaus Kapstadt geschriebene südafrikanische Werk nähert sich den Herausforderungen interkultureller Begegnung auf eigenwillige Weise. Anders als bei den inzwischen häufig anzutreffenden und oft etwas willkürlich zusammengewürfelten "cross-cultural" Potpourris, beleuchtet es vor allem die Unterschiede zwischen 'afrikanischer' und 'europäischer' Musik mit dem Anliegen, beiden Seiten ein Forum für einen authentischen Ausdruck in unmittelbarer Nachbarschaft zu ermöglichen. In diesem Spannungsverhältnis bleiben große Kontraste bestehen und werden für eine musikalische Form fruchtbar, die grossteils gerade davon bestimmt wird. Kein vorab postulierter gemeinsamer Nenner wird beschworen, sondern die Gemeinsamkeiten nach und nach erst durch die Gegenüberstellung entdeckt und durch detaillierte Behandlung des äußerst vielschichtigen Materials herausgearbeitet.^[1]

Although this kind of approach was supposed to engage with all these ambivalent emotions around classical music, my only thought after what felt like a very long evening, was: thank God I

never ever have to listen to this again! Neither the 'afrikanische' nor 'europäische' part of it meant anything to me nor could I engage with any 'new' expression. I accepted that the 'fault' was entirely my own for not having an 'ear' for contemporary music.

Of course an 'ear' is always a developed ear, but one couldn't get rid of the implicated enormous chasms: a case could be made for the positive values of classical music training in South Africa, but contemporary or *avant-garde* somehow signalled something shamefully frivolous and elitist. The demand *not* to be elitist is a very real one to all South African artists: if one is fighting on the side of the poor, one is bound to respect them as an audience and write poetry, tell stories, sing songs that they could access albeit sometimes only partly.

Arriving in Berlin for the Wissenschaftskolleg fellowship 2007/08 however, I immediately felt what I imagine a closet gay must feel in a tolerant city: for the first time I could be openly myself and without qualm brazenly devour the classical music scene of Berlin, joyfully blowing the generous stipendium at the Philharmonie, Konzerthaus, churches or Kulturkaufhaus Dussmann, always leaving so moved of heart, light of arms and free of feet that I preferred to walk (although it felt like dancing) all the way back to the Villa Walther in Grunewald.

With me, as a fellow that year, was Heiner Goebbels. I quickly became aware that he and Reinhart Meier-Kalkus^[2] were talking about composers and works that I had never heard of, so when I

[1] — <http://www.huyssen.de/Masquedutsch.htm> (letzter Zugriff: 24.3.2015)

[2] — Der Germanist Reinhart Meier-Kalkus ist außerplanmäßiger Professor für neuere deutsche Literaturwissenschaft an der Universität Potsdam und betreut am Wissenschaftskolleg Berlin das Fellow-Forum.

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could get a free ticket to attend Heiner's *Stifters Dinge* (2012), I thought it was maybe time to try re-entering contemporary music. Although visually the performance was interesting I left completely non-plussed. What was this? How does one listen to it? How does one listen to it on a CD in your car on South African roads? It felt particular tools were needed to be able to 'insert' oneself into this music.

Persevering, I attended Heiner's *Surrogate Cities* (2000) and although the music was completely different, I could remember a moment, a first moment, of suddenly feeling caught up in the beautiful solo entries of a kind of cantor voice. But it was a mere minute or two. So what was this? What constitutes such a moment? A grippingness? A physical engagement? An awareness of something bigger than oneself? Or was it political? The sensitive way in which a German composer used the voice of a cantor?

Arriving five years later at a DAAD salon organised by the never-sufficiently-praised Katharina Narbutović,^[3] I walked into an event of a woman making sounds. It was singing and it was not. It was chaotic but somehow pure in those empty rooms. After a conversation with Boris Filanovsky that same evening, I attended a performance of a work by him: *Collectivision* (2011) for seven harmonicas and button accordion and together with Christian Wolff's *Changing the System* (1973) in the St. Elisabeth church. I think that event was the real turning point... within a space-mixture of industrial and ancient, a large audience rapt at the edges of their chairs, the unusual arrangements of where musicians were,

[3] — Katharina Narbutović leitet seit 2008 das Berliner Künstlerprogramm des DAAD.

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how different their instruments sound, the combination of word and sound and when looking at the score, there were no bars. It was therefore not so much finding an entry-point, but being caught up with others in an event that had the potential of thrillingly sloshing over the brim. I looked, listened, felt, even smelt...

The music presented a freedom that was hypnotic. I felt involved in something that was pushing edges and found myself running behind, curious about whether (and then how and when) it would break! From then on I attended as many of these events as possible with the 50 year celebration of DAAD as a magnificent and flabbergasting highpoint. During the composition of Øyvind Torvund I was absolutely breathless and moved and involved in the way bird sounds, city sounds, electronic sounds, musical instrument sounds momentarily intertwined. One felt the uniqueness of the moment. I listened in amazement to the Splittergruppe, Les Femmes Savantes and faint noise and returned to my flat in Uhlandstraße that evening ... changed, somehow. New.

With hindsight one can trace how my ear became 'prepared': first, I could finally leave the South African context of privilege, poverty and race behind and give myself up to music within the coherent western context that gave birth to it, of which the roots went back to the origin of its civilisation while at the same time being financially carried by most of its European citizens. Both Western and Eastern Europe contributed for centuries important venues, composers, conductors, soloists, orchestra musicians and audiences. In fact it felt to me that the orchestra itself was the culmination of this civilisation: every instrument took

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centuries to develop, every musician in it had a lifetime of training and community support behind him or her, playing music that profoundly deepened the soul of that world. Within this context it was normal and right to continue deepening the width of the soul by pushing comfortable and safe boundaries. Being aware of music-as-masturbation, I was prepared for this "newness" in exactly the way Homi K. Bhabha describes.

Using Fredric Jameson's words on newness, Bhabha suggests that newness enters the world through structures of splitting and displacement. It is only through "the fragmented and schizophrenic decentering of a self" that the architecture of the new could emerge.^[4] One needs to grow what Bhabha calls "new organs" to be able to cross frontiers and borders. Being in Berlin with its open embrace and support for the foreign, the strange, especially that which split and decentres, prepared my ear to become part of an audience which passionately opens itself up to the true challenge of all creativity – demanding new organs. [FIN]

[4] — Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*. London und New York: Routledge, 1994, S. 309.

Antjie Krog, geboren 1952 in Kroonstad, ist eine der engagiertesten Journalistinnen und wichtigsten Lyrikerinnen in Südafrika. Die Dichterin und Autorin, die in Kapstadt lebt, hat mit ihren Büchern den Wandel ihres Landes vom Apartheid-Regime zur Demokratie über Jahrzehnte unerschrocken begleitet und gilt in ihrer Heimat als das »weiße Gewissen Südafrikas«. Als Dichterin hat sie seit ihrem Debüt 1970 bislang elf Gedichtbände vorgelegt, die in viele Sprachen übersetzt wurden. Mit dem Lyrikband *Körper, beraubt* erschien beim Verlag Matthes & Seitz 2015 endlich eines ihrer Werke auf Deutsch. In berührenden Texten erzählt Krog von dem Versuch der Versöhnung nach Ende der Apartheid, von der Suche nach einem neuen Gebrauch der Unterdrückersprache Afrikaans und von sich selbst. Antjie Krog war 2007/08 Fellow am Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin und 2013/14 Gast des Berliner Künstlerprogramms des DAAD.

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APRIL 2015 — VERANSTALTUNGEN

26. — 18 Uhr — Konzert »De natura sonorum«

HfM Hanns Eisler Berlin, Charlottenstraße 55, Studiosaal

Konzert des Berliner Lautsprecherorchesters mit neuen Werken von Meyer, Hidalgo, Milosevic, Visier, Feigel, Danzeisen, Nocci

und anderen Kompositionsstudierenden der Berliner Hochschulen und der Zürcher Hochschule der Künste.

Leitung: Kirsten Reese und Wolfgang Heiniger

30. — 19 Uhr — Konzert »Take off« mit dem Zafraan Ensemble

HfM Hanns Eisler Berlin, Charlottenstraße 55, Studiosaal

Das Zafraan Ensemble spielt Uraufführungen u.a. von Studierenden der HfM Hanns Eisler und UdK Berlin.

Die Komponisten sind beim Konzert anwesend.

Programm: Lula Romero, »Ins Offene« (Fassung mit Elektronik)

Arturo Fuentes, »Space Factory V«

Oscar Piniella, »Nonett«

Milos Tadic, »Neues Werk«

Roberto Fausti, »Neues Werk«

MusikerInnen: Liam Mallett (Flöten), Miguel Pérez Iñesta (Klarinetten), Martin Posegga (Saxophone), Anna Viecht (Harfe), Daniel Eichholz (Schlagwerk),

Yejin Gil (Klavier), Emmanuelle Bernard (Violine/Viola), Josa Gerhard (Viola/Violine), Martin Smith (Violoncello),

Beltane Ruiz (Kontrabass).

Information: www.zafraan-ensemble.com

MAI 2015 — VERANSTALTUNGEN

7. — 14 Uhr — Vortrag von Karen Power (Irland)

UdK Berlin, Bundesallee 1–12, Raum 203

Karen Power, Komponistin und Klangkünstlerin aus Irland, stellt im Seminar von Daniel Ott und Kirsten Reese eigene Werke vor.

Zurzeit ist sie Gast beim Berliner Künstlerprogramm des DAAD.

In Kooperation mit dem: Berliner Künstlerprogramm des DAAD.

21. — 19 Uhr — Echo Konzert

HfM Hanns Eisler Berlin, Charlottenstraße 55, Studiosaal; Karten: 6 / erm. 4 Euro

Programm: Johannes Boris Borowski, Fagottkonzert, 2012/13

Elliott Carter, Klarinettenkonzert, 1996

Eun-Hwa Cho, Konzert für Oboe, Harfe und Ensemble (UA), 2015

I-Sang Yun, Flötenkonzert, 1977

Ensemble: Echo Ensemble für Neue Musik

Leitung: Manuel Nawri

30. — 17 Uhr — Hanns Eisler KomponistInnenforum und Hanns Eisler Aufführungspreis

HfM Hanns Eisler Berlin, Charlottenstraße 55, Studiosaal; Eintritt: 4 Euro

Programm: Josep Planells Schiaffino, »Vier Stücke«

Milos Tadic, »STAV«

Florian Wessel, »Doppelflügelfenster«

Jonas Siepmann, »19552015«

Eiko Tsukamoto, »Pero fue el último: fue el eclipse eterno«

Lea Danzeisen, »que yo salgas de mi«

Michaela Catranis, »deux poèmes de Nadja Tuémi«

Roberto Fausti, »Oktett«

Malte Giesen, »TUM«

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JUNI 2015 — HINWEIS

22.–25. — Intensivwoche für KomponistInnen

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Anmeldung bis 7. Mai an: martin.roever@udk-berlin.de



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Kontakt — KLANGEZEITORT

Institut für Neue Musik der UdK Berlin und HfM Hanns Eisler Berlin

Bundesallee 1–12, 10719 Berlin

www.klangzeitort.de, contact@klangzeitort.de

Tel. 030/3185-2701