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University of Cambridge

Faculty of music

INDIVIDUAL PAPER

„ABOUT THE THIRD DIMENSION IN MUSICAL CREATIVITY –

Contemporary demands for future concepts in classical music structures”

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If one spoke about musical creativity in former times, one would have primarily thought of the original act of composition, leading to a new piece of music, that did not exist before. This act stands as a “first dimension of musical creativity”. But Composition only takes place when there exists a system of symbols which represent ideas in written signs. Doubtlessly the conference in July will come to the result, that the retranslation of signs into sound, which we normally call “interpretation”, is also strongly connected with creative acts, which stand as a “second dimension of musical creativity”.¹

That the highly reputable University of Cambridge takes the effort of organizing a conference dealing mainly with this second dimension, is a noble gesture for all practical musicians. It will give self-confidence to those who are normally trained to serve the musical geniuses. On the other hand this certain topic reveals that our focus seems to have gone more and more from the first to the second dimension in general. It has been one of Cambridge's most famous professors, Dr. George Steiner, who criticized the lack of originality in contemporary European artistic production.² In music we have come to a point, where we do not only lack original creativity, but where we also lack answers to the somehow terrifying question, why we still perform music, that has been invented so many years ago.³

If we normally try to justify this more or less back looking perspective, we are used to strain the term “cultural heritage”. But as we all know, the European culture has been changing totally within the last 100 years. What shall the word heritage mean in a globalized world and to what traditions shall we stick in an uprooted society?⁴ One may object, that there has never been a time before, where more talents have been raised to such a high musical level; where classical music has been more promoted and sold than today. But there has also

¹ See also: Höllwerth, Stephan: „Musical Shaping – About a phenomenology of interpretation of tonal music“, Peter Lang Verlag, Bern, 2007

² Steiner, Georg: „Real presences“, Faber and Faber, 1989

³ Compare: Schweitzer, Albert: „We epigons“, C.F.Beck, München, 2005

⁴ This question is related to aspects of cultural pessimism since the beginning of 20th century, that is connected with philosophers like Simmel, Freud, Spengler and Schweitzer.

never been a time before, when musical professionals have had fewer chances to find jobs than today and when the cultural fundamentals and the sense of playing classical music have been less stable than today as well.

To the speaker's mind we urgently need new perspectives and a new consciousness, that will guarantee not only the surviving of classical music in future, but also that classical music will still be related with feelings, thoughts and needs of present human beings. When we have degraded classical music from "art" to "article", music has to become fertile again in many respects. Otherwise we will suddenly lose the "holy treasures of our musical heritage" as we have lost thousands of books in the library of Alexandria before.

What these new perspectives in future could be, we can only sense today from very small hints. Possibly the new music culture will be based more on idealistic concepts in politics, pedagogy or ethics. The Venezuelan "Sistema", the "West-Eastern-Division Orchestra", initiatives that try to give an instrument to each child in Germany, new methods in music therapy, scientific investigations about the positive effects of playing classical music on the functions of the human brain are only some examples for that. But doubtlessly the search for new fundamentals in classical music longs for another sort of creativity: a creativity, that looks through given structures into human hearts. And is this "third dimension of musical creativity", the speech will be about.