

Dear Listeners,

If anybody takes an interest in what Stockhausen has created, it must be with the understanding that each individual work represents only a 370th of his total output, and that it consequently cannot give a complete answer to the question about the meaning of his music. One work is one small fruit from a large tree. Students ought to try, as quickly as possible, to become familiar with many different works in order to obtain a musical image of the world that is the real subject of inquiry. Contrary to composers of earlier periods, Stockhausen did not have the time to write variants of works so that they essentially speak only *one* language, like for example, a series of symphonies numbers 1 through 9, or string quartets numbers 1 through 6, and so forth. Of course, there can be significant changes within such categories of works, with respect to themes, developments and formal divisions, but essentially it sounds like a typical language, like a personal style. Stockhausen was aware of far too many tasks that were all parts of his role in history. This was something that could not have been done by somebody else at another time, but which determined by the great changes in the cultural history of Europe and of the planet at large. An electronic revolution is not just something that occurs every 100 years. Stockhausen emerged as a composer precisely at the boundary between two great epochs of cultural history, and his work has been realized under these conditions. Consequently, Stockhausen could only make the prototype of each project he undertook, it was not possible to make a second, third and fourth version in addition for each jump ahead; He had to go further and constantly realize new projects for as long as he lived. He saw many new challenges that he should meet in order to expand his craft and widen the scope of composition. The array of new challenges was seemingly unlimited, certainly far greater than ever

before, and that is reflected in the radically different appearance of each of his many works.

Now we come to the film of his lecture *Fremde Schönheit*: "Alien Beauty".

At the Stockhausen Courses Kuersten in 2002, Stockhausen gave a lecture entitled *Fremde Schönheit* (Alien Beauty) in which he explained to the audience that the word *fremde* (alien) was originally associated with the meaning of 'far', or 'far from'. The English word 'from', that reflects the original meaning of *fremde*, indicates not only 'from' far, as in 'he comes from', but also away 'from' here, as in 'he goes forth from'. So, *fern*, 'far', and *fremd* are related, just as a *Fremder*, 'an alien', comes from afar.

Schönheit, 'beauty', is derived from *schôn*, *scono* or *skaun*. It is related to the English 'sheen', which means shine. The earliest source for the word *Schönheit* is the courtly poetry of the 13th century. What was called *schôn*, was already *schon*, 'finished', 'perfect'. So, *schön*, 'beautiful', implies something both perfect and shiny. This remains true, and it presupposes that we are sensitive to that which is finished and perfect. And there is yet another implication: Since Old Norse *skyn* means 'good order' and Old German *skaun* means something 'graceful' to behold, there are indications that *Schönheit* also implies something graceful. So it is not only perfect and shining but also graceful. It denotes luminous spirituality, it shines. *Fremde Schönheit* thus defines the essence of art.

Stockhausen went on to explain that in this sense, the truly free artist will create incessantly manifestations of the longing for this *fremde Schönheit*. By way of an example, Stockhausen mentioned his work **Xi**. The word, **Xi**, means 'unknown quantity', 'unknown beauty'. This composition is for any instruments that can produce microtones. The piece is developed from the nuclear formula of

LICHT which is just a couple of notes. All the tiny intermediary steps that the performer can possibly find between these notes are to be played. In that way, each instrumentalist may find different numbers; the flute finds a certain number, while the basset-horn finds many more. The number of these steps is the unknown factor in **Xi**.

Expanding on this, Stockhausen spoke about the possibility of working within a very narrow range. This is what happens in the work, YPSILON, which is the letter **Y** in the Greek alphabet and stands for a 'variable quantity', as in mathematics. Herein lies, again, something that's alien. In the case of an instrument with microtones, the unknown is the number of micro-steps one can find between the usual steps of the chromatic scale. In the score of YPSILON it is indicated that the player must find 16 steps clustering, as closely as possible, around an A-flat in the second octave. For different instruments the distance between these steps varies. They also produce different timbres. The score also prescribes that the performer's body must be hung with tiny bells, and that the player from time to time must shake all over.

Xi and YPSILON were the two examples of *fremde Schönheit*. At the end of the lecture, Stockhausen summed it all up and mentioned that the criteria in question have been applied to all aspects of the new sound articulation in the work AVE for basset-horn and alto flute. After his explanations of the new possibilities for sounds and the new language for instrumentalists, the two players performed AVE.

At issue is the eternal and unlimited expansion of our concept of beauty in terms of the alien, the perfect and new experiences.

(Excerpts from a conversation between Anders Beyer and K. Stockhausen on November 8th, 1991, in Kürten for the Danish Radio.)

I will now show you the end of Stockhausen's lecture and then jump to the last 8 minutes of *AVE for basset-horn and alto flute* of MONDAY from LIGHT which lasts in its entirety approximately 23 minutes. Following AVE, Stockhausen will say a few more words. As I have been given only 30 minutes for this introduction including the film excerpts, it is not possible to show you the performances of *XI for basset-horn*, *YPSILON for flute* and the entire performance of AVE. But the film is available from the *Stockhausen Foundation for Music* for all those longing to experience „Alien Beauty“...