

**Freibrief an die Jugend** (Charter for the Youth) was written by K. Stockhausen on June 16th 1968 for the *Journal Musical* (Paris) which had requested a text entitled "Charter for...". It was published in German in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* a few days later and in Volume 3 of Stockhausen's *TEXTE ZUR MUSIK / TEXTS ON MUSIC 1963–1970* (pages 292–295) in 1971.

The original translation into English by Tim Nevill was published in 1989 in the book *Towards a Cosmic Music* by Element Books. This book, now out of print, was a compilation of excerpts from Stockhausen's texts selected and translated by Tim Nevill. At his request, Stockhausen wrote the following preface to the book:

## Foreword

The title of this book, *Towards A Cosmic Music*, and all the headings for its individual sections were chosen by Tim Nevill on behalf of *Element Books*. The sequence of texts and chapters was also not composed by me, but devised by Tim Nevill so as to make my views on God and the world accessible to other people.

I am a musician. All my texts on music are elucidations of my compositions, produced for scores, programme notes, newspapers, journals, radio, and television; or else they were recorded in interviews with journalists, students, and groups of listeners, and then transcribed. Musical questions and general issues thus intermingle in the original texts in response to specific questions and the course of conversation. I never sat down and produced a text as writers do.

My medium is music. The essential thing is what is transmitted through my musical compositions. If commentaries are added to my music, they must always be considered in connection with the music to which they are intended to lead.

That is why I have allowed Tim Nevill to select freely from my texts, assembling a kind of introductory digest of my ideas.

The fundamental purpose of this selection of texts is to make the reader aware that Stockhausen is a composer who has also from time to time expressed himself in words, and that his music expresses what is beyond words in a purer and more universal language.

Karlheinz Stockhausen

22 February 1989

The following is a new translation by Tim Nevill, revised and edited by Suzanne Stephens. It will be included in the forthcoming English translation of *TEXTE ZUR MUSIK*, Vol. 3, which will be published by the *Stockhausen Foundation for Music*.

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## **Charter for the Youth**

(written on June 16, 1968, for the JOURNAL MUSICAL, Paris, which had requested a text entitled "Charter for...")

Once again we are making a revolution – but this time throughout the entire world. Let us now set ourselves the highest possible goal: to become aware that the whole of humanity is at stake.

There was once a time when consciousness became so strong in certain animals that they finally developed into human beings. Now we are passing through an age when supramental consciousness is so strong in some people that they are close to becoming higher beings. Here, on this earth. Only a few will achieve that for the moment. But every human being longs, to a greater or lesser extent, to reach beyond him- or herself, achieving higher consciousness. Hence the crises we are experiencing throughout the world whose nadir still awaits us this century. Everywhere in the world people feel under pressure and experience panic about some imminent development comparable only with the emergence of the first plant life out of inanimate matter, with the emergence of the first animal out of the plant kingdom, and with the emergence of the first human being out of the animal realm: a new stage in the development of consciousness. No matter how strong human longing for the next level of being may be, fear of and resistance to opening up this consciousness are equally vehement. Individuals, groups, political parties, and nations believe they have primacy by right, and can suppress and literally devour others. We are after all unequal in terms of intelligence and power, and we know that only a few will manage, on the basis of their inner resources, to achieve freedom and supramental consciousness – just as only individual animals succeeded in becoming human beings.

One can only become a higher being by surmounting egocentricity and the fear of losing oneself in the process.

Let us not try to erect new systems in opposition to those we want to do away with because they are too restricted, aiming at excluding, suppressing, and eradicating too much alternative thinking. Our concept must be so far-reaching

that we see ourselves and the whole world from above, allowing old systems to run down without replacing them by something new claiming exclusivity.

Systems are products of the reason that our forefathers made the sole ruler of the body. The soul thus became its own prisoner by handing over all power to its former servant, reason. Let us realize that if reason is not constantly fed with higher inspiration from the supra-mental, it incessantly recombines everything stored within itself, and can at any time assert both anything it likes and the opposite. Reason can be utilized for *anything*. It represents any opinion, and can justify, substantiate, and refute anything. And if one has not learned to switch it on and off, it races on without interruption. Reason is neither more nor less than a useful instrument: a model computer. But WHO uses it? And for WHAT?

The Higher Self should provide reason with something to think about, receiving an impulse from the intuitive consciousness which is in turn fed by the higher and highest consciousness, linking every individual consciousness with supra-personal cosmic consciousness.

Why am I saying this when I am a musician, not a philosopher or the like? Because we musicians should, so far as possible, live entirely by intuition. Because I have learnt that everything begins anew when one attains this consciousness and strives to rise ever higher. One is only secondarily a musician, a specialist, a human being with a profession. One is primarily an individual spirit that must first establish contact with the universal spirit before communicating anything essential to other spirits, which, beyond individual interests, concerns every other spirit to some extent.

Music should not merely be a wave-bath for body massage, a sonic psychogram, or a thought-programme comprising tones. It should principally be a current of supra-conscious cosmic electricity transposed into sound.

Most practicing musicians today act automatically and without awareness. They have lost the enthusiasm they perhaps once briefly had during early youth when they decided to become professional musicians. We must start again right from the beginning, reawakening that original enthusiasm within ourselves, or give up being professional musicians. That is why all orchestras and choirs should be disbanded for a considerable time, allowing each musician an opportunity to

reflect, meditate, and discover what he or she is actually living for, why he or she makes music, and whether that is an absolute necessity. We would see that most musicians – who have been at work for years and expect things to continue in the same way until death or retirement without anything essential changing in their lives any longer – would give up and do something else. Perhaps they would do nothing for quite a while – if they continued to be paid and thus had no material reasons for working – and that could be wonderfully fruitful. The usual reasons for earning money – providing for material needs and satisfying established demands – are just lame excuses.

In India, on a country road between Agra and Jaipur, I met a musician who sang and played for me on a small string instrument he had himself made. He was one of the few really wonderful musicians I have ever encountered. He owned literally nothing; and just looked at me blankly when I asked him whether he would sell me his instrument for 20 dollars, a sum it would take him many years to earn. At best he got something like 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> cents a day from passers-by or villagers – according to the Indian driver, translating for me. Tears ran down his cheeks and he shook his head. I felt utterly ashamed.

Those who want to be musicians, following their higher voice, must start with the simplest meditative exercises, at first just for themselves. 'Play a sound in the certainty that you have any amount of time and space' – and so on. First, however, they must achieve awareness of what they are living for, what we are all living for: to attain a higher life, allowing the vibrations of the universe to penetrate our individual human existence. Musicians must prepare the way for arrival of the higher human being still concealed within ourselves, setting in motion the entire body right down to its least component so that everything becomes relaxed and receptive to the vibrations of the highest consciousness.

I sense in advance rejection by those who encounter this "Charter". That does not upset me. The situation would, however, be bad if you did not have a sense of being inspired by intuition in your best moments, accompanied by some inner presentiment of the possibility of a higher existence keeping you alive. You shouldn't want to continue leading a hollow existence. You should achieve certainty. Become aware of where you're heading and why. And you should know that our incapacity and imperfection are only a sign of our being drawn

upwards, and of *the future within ourselves* – which is the supramental consciousness – endlessly raising us upwards, ever higher.

Great power is given to us musicians. Our sounds can kindle in other human beings the fire of longing to rise above themselves. Let us not abuse this power ! More is at issue than individual musicians vibrating in the heights. The vibratory field around them must also become so strong, so supercharged, that anyone entering this field will vibrate in sympathy.

Let us therefore participate in humanity's great revolution since we know what we want. It is worth staking our lives when everything is at issue. That is no longer the case for partial truths, or for private, group, national, and unilaterally political problems. Let us no longer accept that this is a French, Vietnamese, Czech, Russian, African... revolution. This is the revolution of world youth on behalf of the higher human being. Such a higher being will not be born out of destruction, atomic fission, or the closing of borders. This higher being will emerge from growing consciousness that humanity is a single body, which remains sick and incapable so long as even just one of its limbs is beaten, kicked, oppressed, and violated.

The struggle – and struggle is unavoidable – will be hard. Holders of power have lost faith in humanity. They believe themselves to be the elect because they possess means of physical power; because they dispose over moral, political, and religious systems and dogmas which exclude more than they make viable; and because they can judge over the weak and exploit them as they wish. But they are the prisoners of their own reason, which dismembers everything so as to 'understand' it and thereby rule it; prisoners of the reason that recklessly penetrates the subconscious and unconscious ignorant of the higher awareness whose supremacy should first be acknowledged.

The engineers of reason will ultimately lose their unholy wars because they are ossified and are not winged by the supra-consciousness of the higher being. We are ruled by generals, business magnates, statisticians, political functionaries, religious fanatics, trade union leaders, and specialists in administration – what else can we expect?

Let us begin with ourselves. Only when we have attained higher consciousness will we no longer need to be 'ruled', and we will seek advice from saints – not ecclesiastical saints but spirits who serve the whole of humanity, who have achieved a universal consciousness extending beyond differences of religion and race, and no longer confuse universality and uniformity.

How is music involved in all of that? The whole is at issue here. If we comprehend that, we will also produce the right music, making people aware of the whole.