

Klaus Huber

From Time – to Time: The Complete Œuvre

in Conversation with Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf

Translated by
Wieland Hoban

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Preliminary Note

The idea for this book came about in May 2003, when I conducted the interview that was published the same year in *Musik & Ästhetik* and opens this book.¹ It became clear in the interview just how precisely this composer understood his own work—from the outset, not simply in recent times—how much of it is still unknown, and how valuable it would be for this knowledge to be made available to the public in a concentrated form. I formed a plan to carry out systematic interviews that would encompass not only Huber’s entire musical output, but also his activities and artistic positions; and, very importantly, there would also be a focus on details of compositional technique.

The conversations took place between spring 2004 and spring 2008 in Basel and Panicle, Huber’s Italian residence. For the interviews that took place at the Paul Sacher Foundation, the corresponding sketches were present; in Panicle, we worked with the scores and what was in the house. I transcribed the recordings and edited the text, which went back and forth between the two of us a number of times until we arrived at the final version. The conversations can therefore be considered authentic, even if their published form is not identical to the words actually spoken.

As far as the music is concerned, the account presented here essentially follows the chronology of Huber’s oeuvre, with certain works being assigned chapters of their own. *ERNIEDRIGT – GEKNECHTET...* is not examined in detail, as a profound analysis already exists in print.² *SPES CONTRA SPEM* was likewise not treated in any of the conversations.

Where Huber’s sketches and scores are cited, the old German and Swiss orthography has been used. Footnotes have been added sparingly, both by Huber and myself.³

This book would have been impossible without the support of numerous friends and institutions. First of all Younghi Pagh-Paan, Klaus Huber’s wife, whose constant involvement was essential to finishing the book so quickly. Institutional help came first and foremost from the Paul Sacher Foundation, especially Heidi Zimmermann, who is responsible for Huber’s documents there. The editorial work was funded with the help of the Pro Helvetia foundation (with

1 The present version is slightly modified (original: “Gegen die Verdinglichung des Menschen und seiner Musik. Gespräch mit Klaus Huber,” in *Musik & Ästhetik* 28 [2003], pp. 91-99).

2 Max Nyffeler, “Klaus Huber: ‘Erniedrigt – Geknechtet – Verlassen – Verachtet...,’” in *Melos. Vierteljahresschrift für zeitgenössische Musik* 1/1984, pp. 17-43.

3 I have refrained from adding a personal afterword; see Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf, “Laudatio auf Klaus Huber,” in *Musik & Ästhetik* 50 (2009), pp. 5 ff.

special thanks to Thomas Gartmann), the Ernst von Siemens Musikstiftung and the Gesellschaft für Musik und Ästhetik. The Paul Sacher Foundation contributed substantially to covering the printing costs, as well as kindly permitting the printing of sketches. The publishing houses of Bärenreiter, Schott and Ricordi made the scores by Huber in their catalogues (and numerous recordings) available to me over a long period; I am grateful for their permission to print the musical examples.⁴ Finally, my thanks go to Peter Mischung, head of the Wolke Verlag, who agreed to this book project after a very short time for consideration.

After a long period of preparation, the original German edition of this book appeared in an eventful year: in 2009, Klaus Huber received the Salzburg Music Prize, the Ernst von Siemens Music Prize, and celebrated his 85th birthday.

Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf
Leipzig, January 2009

4 Bärenreiter: JAMES JOYCE CHAMBER MUSIC, ORATORIO MECHTHILDIS; Schott: ALVEARE VERNAT, ...INWENDIG VOLLER FIGUR..., TENEBRAE, TEMPORA; Ricordi: "A VOICE FROM GUERNICA," AGNUS DEI CUM RECORDAZIONE, CANTIONES DE CIRCOLO GYRANTE, DIE ERDE DREHT SICH AUF DEN HÖRNERN EINES OCHSEN, DIE SEELE MUSS VOM REITTIER STEIGEN..., ECCE HOMINES, LA TERRE DES HOMMES, LAMENTATIONES SACRAE ET PROFANAE AD RESPONSORIA IESUALDI, L'OMBRE DE NOTRE ÂGE, METANOIA, MISERERE HOMINIBUS, ÑUDO QUE ANSÍ JUNTÁIS, ...PLAINTE..., QUOD EST PAX? – VERS LA RAISON DU CŒUR..., SCHWARZERDE, SENFKORN, ...VON ZEIT ZU ZEIT..., WINTER SEEDS.