

Licht aus *Stockhamen*



Malcolm Ball reveals an exclusive *Avant* interview with the giant of 20th Century contemporary music, Karlheinz Stockhausen.



The name **Karlheinz Stockhausen** conjures up many different things to many different people. To some he is a writer of deliberately 'overly - complex' music, to others he is the butt of the now famous quip by Sir Thomas Beecham which runs: "Have you heard any Stockhausen recently?" "No, but I've trodden in some!".

I, like many other aspiring enthusiasts and students of 20th century music still recall when listening to Stockhausen records in the mid 70s', my dear mother shouting up the stairs "turn that racket down" a remark that I used to take great exception to until later I considered that my mother's musical background was based exclusively on popular / dance music of the 30s, 40s and 50s and that this entirely new music must have seemed as odd as bumping into somebody from Sirius at your local supermarket. Nowadays though, to most, Stockhausen is the single most extraordinarily original composers of the 20th century who challenges not only the ear but the eye, the mind, the spirit and indeed our whole concept of what sonic and visual creation is all about.

Born in 1928 at Modrath just outside of Cologne, Stockhausen was one of three children to father Simon who was a school teacher and mother Gertrud who played piano and was exceptionally talented musically although she suffered severe mental depressions after bringing three children into the world in quick succession and was eventually taken away to a mental institution when Karlheinz was just four years old. Both parents were from farming stock and used to very hard work as was the young Stockhausen who now says that his good health and physical well being are due to him always working in the garden and outdoors from early childhood. His father had a passion for hunting and often the two or three year old Karlheinz used to accompany his father and bring home the catch on a bicycle.

He had his first piano lesson in 1935 and by 1936 his musical ear had developed to such an extent that he only needed to hear a piece of music once and he was able to replicate it on piano. Later he was taught oboe at the local teacher training college where he became second oboist in the symphony orchestra.

During the war he was called up to serve in the war hospital just behind the line. This was to have had a profound effect on him seeing hundreds of badly wounded victims of all nationalities and he has since said that death is nothing he would ever be afraid of. By the time Stockhausen was thirteen he had lost both parents as a result of the war. These early experiences are recounted almost autobiographically in the first act of *Donnerstag aus Licht*.

After the war Stockhausen was virtually penniless relying on his pianistic expertise to earn money from playing in cafes and restaurants to carnival entertainments and night clubs, this enabled him to continue his music studies at the Musikhochschule in Cologne.

Early days at the Musikhochschule saw Stockhausen as a writer of texts and poems as well as composer of music, and this skill of text writing was to manifest itself years later in *Licht*.

He was introduced to Schoenberg's 12 note technique when Else Krauss played the complete piano works at the Musikhochschule and when Herbert Eimert gave him a copy of Atonale Musiklehre a forty page study of 12 note music. The teacher Hermann Heiss also gave a lecture on the technique to which Stockhausen attended. During this time between 1947 - 1951 Stockhausen wrote his first substantial compositions, (compositions that were published and numbered) these were *Choral*, *Choruses for Doris*, *Sonatina* for violin and piano and the *Three Songs* for contralto and chamber orchestra. As a result of a rejection from the Darmstadt Music Course in New Music on the grounds that the selection panel at the time thought that the text of the *Three Songs* were too gruesome and the music too old-fashioned, Stockhausen replaced the first song with a setting of Baudelaire's poem 'Le Rebelle'.

As Europe was still re-building itself after the war, the young generation of European composers which included the likes of Boulez, Xenakis, Barraque and Stockhausen sought to 'wipe the slate clean' musically speaking and re-invent the language of music in the 20th century. The main guiding light to all of these composers was **Olivier Messiaen's** classes in analysis, aesthetics and rhythm at the Paris Conservatoire in the 50s, and in particular, Messiaen's view on the purely pitched based serialism of Schoenberg. Messiaen's composition for piano *Mode de valeurs et d'intensités* (1949) explored not only the serialisation of pitches but also that of durations, dynamics and timbre. Although Messiaen himself chose not to develop this particular compositional technique, it was to prove a decisive turning point for Boulez and Stockhausen in their compositional development. This period produced the first outpouring of works using series and 'sound-points' (point music), these included *Kreuzspiel*, *Formel*, *Schlagquartett* and *Punkte*. Also in Paris from 1948, **Pierre Schaeffer** had

begun experiments with tape manipulations of recorded 'real' sounds which was to become musique concrete. Schaeffer demonstrated this technique in his Club d'Essai at the Paris Radio and while Stockhausen was in Paris attending Messiaen's classes he also conducted experiments at the studio including structural and systematic analysis of the sounds of glass, wood and metal etc. which surely must have sown the seed for his obsession with the 'inner' structure of a sound. This study resulted in Stockhausen's first and only truly musique concrete work *Etude* (1952). A year before (1951) Dr Werner Meyer-Eppler and Herbert Eimert initiated the installation of an electronic studio at Cologne Radio (WDR) with the aim of producing music from purely electronic sources and Stockhausen began work there on his return from Paris in 1953.

Already Stockhausen's reputation for thought provoking unconventionality began at Darmstadt in '53 where he gave a lecture on **Webern's** concerto for 9 instruments op.24 saying that the structural proportions of the work are antecedents of timbre (electronic) composition. This sparked off a row with composer **Armin Schibler** who believed that kind of talk and analysis to be dehumanising music into mathematics. Undeterred Stockhausen worked throughout 1953 and '54 on the two *Electronic Studies* based on sine-wave sources and the breaking down of white noise into coloured noise using filters etc. as well as studying acoustics with Meyer-Eppler. During the same period, 1953/55 he wrote the collection of *Klavierstücke* 1-IV and V-VIII and as a result of a grant from WDR he was able to study phonetics, communications theory, philosophy and musicology at Bonn University.

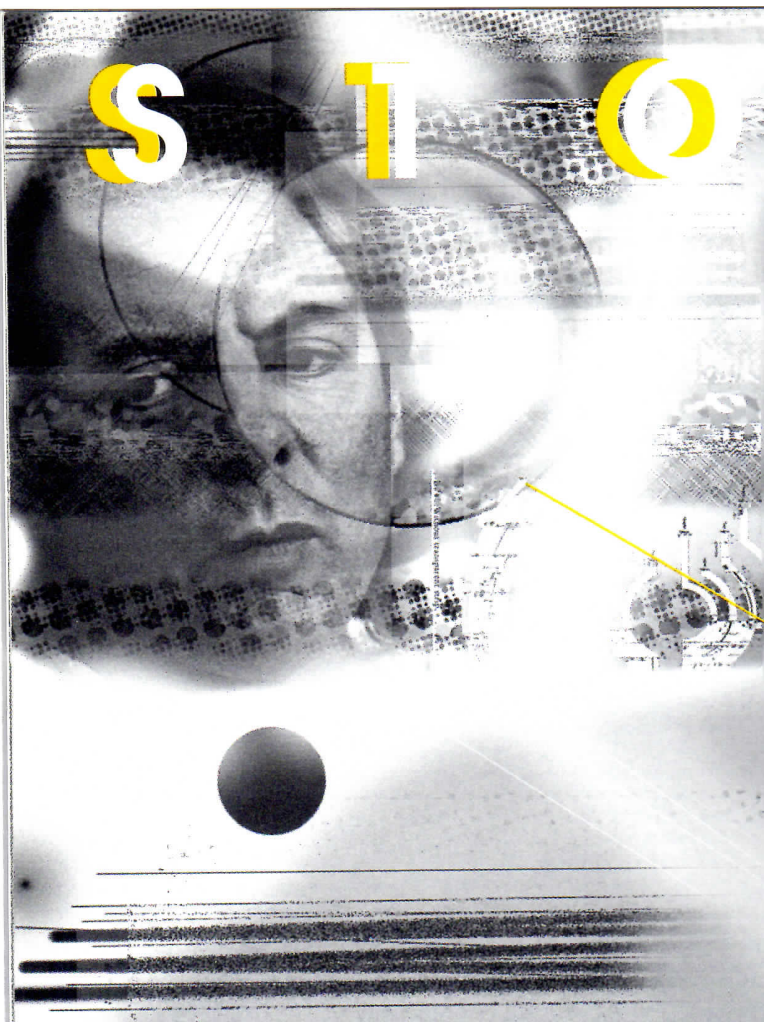
From 1955 electronic technology began to develop from monophonic sound reproduction to stereophonic (2 track) and then 4 track output. This was very exciting for Stockhausen because for the first time he could move the sound around directionally in space. This led to the composition *Gesang der Junglinge* (1955/6) a landmark 'classic' in 20th century music. The piece is actually for 5 groups of loudspeakers and at the first performance the 5th track was played back via a mono tape recorder started synchronously by hand with the 4 track tape. It is also one of the first pieces to combine vocal (non electronic) sounds with electronically produced sounds. (Eimert had made preliminary experiments with speech fragments and variable filters in 1951/2). This preoccupation with movement in space together with the concept of the 'time spectrum' where temporal layers were sub divided, is relatively easy to reproduce in the electronic studio but to transfer the same idea to live musicians proved incredibly difficult, so in his composition *Gruppen* 1955/7 Stockhausen divided a huge symphony orchestra into three smaller groups and used three conductors to synchronise the whole event. In 1959 *Carre* (Squares) was composed for 4 orchestras and 4 choirs again using techniques discovered in Gruppen but with the introduction of 'moment form' a new way of shaping time. Stockhausen had spent many hours in aeroplanes flying between destinations in America and the time perspectives one experiences when flying led to experiments with 'moments' and the concentration of the 'Now'. Moments can be an instant or indeed an eternity, metronomic time becomes more and more meaningless.

This was developed in *Kontakte* (1959/60) for piano and percussion with electronic tape, perhaps the most seminal work of the 20th century to combine live musicians with electronic tape. Here Stockhausen was producing sounds of complete originality, sounds that lie somewhere between wood and metal, skin and wood etc. Through electronics he was able to analyse the acoustical microstructure of a sound which led to the synthesising of sounds as well as the 'decomposition' of sounds where for example, a sound begins as a continuous timbre then gradually slows right down until it becomes a pulsed rhythm. He created a special 'rotation table' to record these sounds moving intricately around the 4 channel speaker system. One of the most important aspects of Kontakte is where one timbre is transformed into another and during these transformations completely new sound colours are heard.

The work that took 'moment form' to its limits is *Momente* which Stockhausen worked on and off during the period 1961/72. The work uses three different kinds of 'moments': K-moments (klang, sound or timbre), M-moments (melody) and D-moments (duration). Apparently it is no coincidence that these moments bear the initials of key people in Stockhausen's private life at the time where considerable personal conflict had arisen. D is *Doris*, Stockhausen's first wife and mother to his four children, M is *Mary Bauermeister* an artist who Stockhausen met in 1960 and resulted in a relationship developing which was to culminate in the termination of his marriage to Doris, and K is obviously Karlheinz. (It is perhaps interesting to note that years later, the super-formula of *Licht* also is based around the three characters of Eve, Michael and Lucifer).

From 1963 through to 1970 Stockhausen began to give his performers less and less fixed musical notation using instead symbols such as plus +, minus and equal signs, so the interpreter is to use his own musical skills to transform events using these signs and relating them to various parameters such as dynamic levels, duration, pitch etc. So plus (+) would be louder, higher, longer and minus (-) could be shorter, lower, slower, broadly speaking. This period also saw the

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introduction of live electronics in performance in works such as *Mixtur* for orchestra, sine-wave generators and ring modulators (1964), *Mikrofonie I and II* (1964/65), *Prozession* (1967) and *Kurzwellen* (1968). Throughout this period events in Stockhausen's life were taking dramatic changes and turns. One such event was his trip to Tokyo in 1966 and the realisation of *Telemisk* in the NHK studio. Stockhausen has said that he lived in a kind of dream world and was fascinated by all things Japanese and soon became 'more Japanese than the Japanese'.

His longest studio based work up to now (1965/67) was *Hymnen* for electronic and concrete sounds. That favourite musical 'buzz' word of the 1980's 'world music' really starts here with *Hymnen*. Here Stockhausen weaves about forty national anthems from all around the world with electronic sources discovered throughout his time at WDR and concrete sounds such as breathing and the sounds of short wave radio waves which adds an almost extra terrestrial quality to the near two hour long piece. *Hymnen* exists in three versions: 1 *Hymnen* Electronic and concrete music, 2 electronic and concrete music with soloists, and 3 *Hymnen* electronic music with orchestra (third region). Each of its four 'regions' has a dedicatee and key 'centres': region 1 is dedicated to Boulez and has the Internationale and Marseillaise as its centres, region 2 is dedicated to Pousseur and has West Germany and several African anthems, region 3 is dedicated to Cage and its centres are the American, Russian and Spanish anthems and the 4th region is dedicated to Berio and has two centres, one being the Swiss anthem and the other is a hymn associated with the Utopian realm of Hymunion in Harmondie unter Pluramon.

Since 1960 Stockhausen had been literally travelling the world giving lectures, talks and concerts and many experiences of other cultures are reflected in his work from here right through to *Licht*.

From March 1968 he travelled to Connecticut to start work on a commission from the Cologne vocal group Collegium Vocale. This became *Stimmung* for 6 vocalists. The piece required intensive rehearsals and a new way of vocalising. Again Stockhausen was attempting vocally what he had achieved electronically to get to the 'inner' of the harmonic spectrum and to the 'inner' of the vowel, not so much the spiritual inner but the acoustic microworld of the sound. The piece consists of a single static chord that is sustained for over an hour where the singers freely bring into play 'sound models' and 'magic names'.

It was also in May 1968 that Stockhausen learnt that Mary

Bauermeister had ended their relationship whereupon he fell into suicidal depression. He began a hunger strike in the hope that she would return, this continued for seven days and on the second day of living completely alone and without food and in a highly alert and sensitive frame of mind, wrote a composition based entirely on text instructions to the players (Right Durations). During these seven days he wrote fourteen more texts which became *Aus den sieben Tagen* (*From the seven Days*). Influenced by the writings about Sri Aurobindo on essential thoughts of yoga, Stockhausen was able to transfer these ideas into musical performance with his own group of highly trained musicians that he had been working with, to clear one's mind of thoughts and stimuli that normally fill our consciousness and to think nothing and thereby induce a state of pure intuition..., then playing. This is not improvisation as that often implies reproducing elements of ones previous musical experiences, Stockhausen's aim is to be able to recall one's intuition at any given time and react solely on that. This is perhaps the first time that Stockhausen became aware that his work and music required a new type of musician. Another set of text compositions appeared between 1968/70 entitled *Fur kommende Zeiten* (*For times to Come*). The major event for Stockhausen in 1970 was the World Fair in Osaka where for six months his music was performed every afternoon and evening in the spherical auditorium of the German Pavilion. The audience sat on cushions on a sound-transparent platform just below the equator level and Stockhausen was able to move the sounds in many different directions around the audience from his centrally placed mixing desk.

Suddenly, the next four years saw a reversion to exactly notated scores such as *Mantra* (1969/70) for two pianos and ring modulators, *Trans* (1971) for orchestra and *Inori* (1973/74) for soloists and orchestra, to scores with just text instructions such as *Ylem* (1972) and *Alphabet fur Liege* (1972).

From 1974 theatre and theatrical elements begin to take a much firmer grip on Stockhausen's music beginning with *Aimen gibt das Leben...* (*Breathing gives life...*) *Herbstmusik* (*Autumn Music*) (1974), *Musik im Bauch* (*Music in the Belly*) (1974/75) and *Harlekin* (1975).

From 1975 to 1977 Stockhausen composed *Sirius* a work that represents the annual cycle, a sort of 20th century 'Four Seasons'. This was to be the big leap into theatre proper, scored for electronic and concrete sounds and four soloists representing the four seasons, times of day, the four points of the compass, the four elements, the four stages in the growth of plants as well as man, youth, woman and beloved. Stockhausen has these soloist in full costume at four different positions in the performance space, ideally a planetarium or in the open air under a night sky. *Sirius* is the key work that leads to his magnum opus *LICHT (LIGHT)*, a cycle of seven operatic/theatre works, some lasting up to 5 hours, each representing a 'day' of the week which Stockhausen expects to complete in the first years of the 21st century. Unlike most traditional operas, many individual scenes and indeed acts from *Licht* can be performed separately as quasi concert pieces.

Any Wagnerian parallels end here. *Licht* is a summation of musical and religious thought that draws inspiration from many sources including cosmology and in particular, elements drawn from 'The Urantia Book' a cosmogony of the Urantia Brotherhood of Chicago USA. In it, the persona of Archangel *Michael* is described as the "visage of Christ" and "Creator Son", ruler of our local universe, and in Stockhausen's plot represents the progressive forces of development, *Lucifer* is the antagonist, and *Eve* works towards a renewal of the 'genetic quality' of humanity through the re-creation of an essentially 'musical' human race, whereas it was political theories and racial domination that preoccupied Wagner's compositional life. As *Licht* progresses, it becomes evident that it is Stockhausen's wish to bring cosmic music to humans and visa versa.

It was from this point in Stockhausen's oeuvre that I decided to begin our meeting, since much has been written and documented on all the above mentioned works.

I have to say that I was filled with some apprehension as we drove up the narrow secluded lane towards Stockhausen's house in Kurten on a dull damp December day. The thought of coming face to face with this giant of 20th century music became more and more daunting, however any feeling of anxiety was soon dispelled as we were greeted most warmly and cordially first by Kathinka Pasveer then Stockhausen himself. Sporting a bright blue woolly cardigan, possibly worn as this was a Thursday (Donnerstag) and the principle colour associated with Thursday in Stockhausen's *Licht* cycle is blue, his dominating presence filled the room set aside for our meeting. (I believe he has colour co-ordinated cardigans for

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each of the seven days!)

I began by asking him to outline his first ideas and inception for *Licht* and to explain the 'synopsis' to coin a traditional operatic term.

KS In 1977 I was commissioned to compose a work for the National Theatre of Tokyo, and I composed *'The Course of the Years' (Der Jahreslauf)* for gagaku orchestra and gagaku dances, and during the work on this one day, the vision came to me that this 'Course of the Years' could become one scene in a large work and I made sketches while in a temple in Kyoto of *Licht*. At that time I had called *'The Course of the Years'* *Hickari* which in Japanese means 'Fast Light'. The sketches that I made are still valid because I composed what I call now a 'super-formula' a musical nucleus in which three formulas are vertically connected. The super-formula in its original form lasts one minute and has all the chromatic tempi between 60 and 120, twelve steps of metronomic tempi which are important, and then it has 3 times 12 pitches. If one analyses all three formulas vertically, the three formulas have three very different characters. One I call the *Michael* formula which is a descending melody and has mainly descending fourths and ascending fourths. Second is the *Eve* formula which ascends with a break in the middle and then descends and is predominantly major thirds. The third formula is called the *Lucifer* formula it starts with a major seventh very aggressively and ascends with several tritones (dissonant intervals). These three formulas together contain far more characteristics than the traditional series (as described above) that I have composed with starting in 1950, and up to *Licht* where the formula is used in three layers, these serial qualities and quantities have enormously increased work by work so by the end of the 60s these quantities and qualities were no longer only different measurements of the characteristics which we perceive when we listen to music (melody, rhythm, harmony, timbre, movement in space and speed of the sounds in space) but also qualities as for example degrees of renewal, degrees of surprise, degrees of decay or degrees of growth. So these characteristics came very organically into the composition. In the formula of *Licht* there are also qualities which originally I had to insert into serial composition which I called 'bridges' or 'inserts' but now they are already an integral part of the 'super-formula', for example: Scales. In each of these three formulas there is a different kind of scale from one to another, descending or ascending which is very characteristic. Then echoes - double echoes, triple echoes and in one case quadruple echo. Then, what I call modulation, say for example if one note is modulated either dynamically or in timbre or in pitch glissando etc. Then anticipation of a coming note which I call an anti-echo or 'coloured silence' (breathing sounds, whistling and all sorts of voiceless consonant sounds etc.). So the formulas of *Licht* contain a lot of musical qualities which the previous series did not have, and with this I have composed over the last 21 years day by day always developing new organisms with this nuclei formula.

I asked Stockhausen about the types of auditorium required to stage *Licht* successfully and this led on to explanations of some of the scenes from the seven operas themselves.

KS Monday from Licht deals with all the different states of water and when we performed it at La Scala Milan the stage designer and the technicians of the opera house tried to realise what was written in the score but it was very hard for them because it starts with the ocean at the beach where an enormous figure of Eve like a monument, sits in the sand and is washed and cleaned by women (female choir) after the winter and they prepare it for a spring festival. Later Eve gives birth to children and they are washed, so water is very important and later in the second act there is ice and the ice is broken and melted and this becomes distilled water and is put into glass containers like large chemical jars with pipes as in a laboratory and later this distilled water is used to transform sand into green grass. So there should be an auditorium that can deal with the element water primarily and should be able to make a boat appear over the ocean where sailors are singing and bringing fruit and animals to the newly born children and women etc. so it should be a very special house where all the aspects of glass and water can be exhibited in parts of this building.

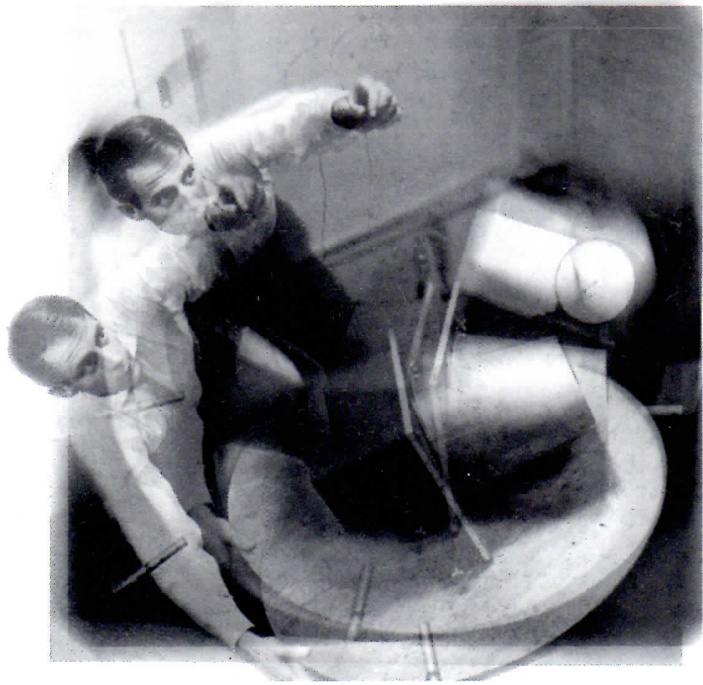
Tuesday from Licht has the theme of war where musicians fight with trumpets, trombones and synthesisers which they carry on their body with speakers on the body and moveable percussion instruments which are electronically transformed, running through the space and invading the space where the public are. This happens in the second act, *Invasion* where the composed movements in space are through the public from left to right, front to back and finally invading from the front where there are three big walls between this world and the beyond and these three walls are destroyed by the musicians who attack these walls. The first one is of rock the second of chrome (metal) the third is a whole wall of mountain crystals which are finally exploding and very strange transparent beings from the beyond appear, singing, and the musicians are so amazed that they don't dare go any further. So this whole part of *Licht* should take place in a building that allows the musicians to pass through the public and allow the octophonic speaker system to be set up in a satisfactory manner. It is very difficult to find an auditorium that is 18 metres to house a cubical set up of 16 speakers (8x2 speakers) for the projection of the electronic music for **Tuesday from Licht** (In this music, vertical and diagonal movements are composed for the first time, in addition to the horizontal movements of earlier 4 or 8 channel electronic music). All halls are designed basically for monophonic listening which

means the sound happens at the front like a T.V. set and that's it. Even in traditional opera or scenic music the singers have to look at the conductor and the musicians are in the pit, so there is a concept of monophonic music even not of left right movement of sound, though I have tried in **Thursday from Licht** to have musicians come in from the back of the hall and through balcony and being lowered by elevator in the middle of the auditorium, even in Covent Garden we were able to do that but it poses incredible technical problems. (already in **Donnerstag** we see the move away from conventional operatic form by the entire second act having no singing, it's actually a four de force for trumpet and orchestra - 'Michael's Journey around the world'). So Tuesday should be performed in a special type of building especially for the realisation of the octophonic electronic music.

Wednesday from Licht poses another problem which we now have as two opera houses are interested in doing it eventually but I have not found any opera house suitable. The first scene is called **World-Parliament** and delegates from all over the world come together for a World Parliament, they sit at tables and sing and the president is a singer himself and they all sing comments on the subject of what **Love** is. So they make different statements and the president responds by singing comments etc. so this is still possible but I wanted this to take place in a special auditorium that is very wide from left to right, but up to now we have to put a big traditional microphone in front of the mouth of every singer and it doesn't look right and they are also not free enough. They should all have 36 transmitters (radio mics) and that should be very easy - alright, in musicals they do that but it is very difficult to project the sound in a traditional opera house in front of the public. They should be in a half circle and the sound projected very neatly on 36 speakers so you can hear very clearly what each singer is singing.

The second scene is even more difficult and nobody knows at the moment how to do it. For example 12 musicians are flying in from afar and they hover above a city, we see the night skyline of the city, so first an oboe hovers in over a vast acoustical and optical church and then it transforms into a scene above airports, then the





second musician arrives (a cello) and so on and so forth until finally there is a scene above an African jungle where you hear also all these sounds associated with these musicians but on a different panoramic level, so you hear the sounds at different positions and the musicians play in contacts with these scenes and disappear to the back where they are flying around in a half circle. So this poses enormous problems for the opera people. The third scene is even more complicated. It is the **Helicopter String Quartet** where the four musicians of a string quartet are presented then driven to an airport or even better to an opera house such as the one in Bonn where there is a lane around the opera house where four helicopters are waiting and the musicians board the helicopters with their instruments and fly into the air and the music is transmitted by several microphones and a camera providing a video link to the auditorium where multiple video screens are set up so the public can watch and hear the four musicians playing perfectly synchronously in four helicopters. This is possible through click track and inter-com technology. We presented this scene in Amsterdam two years ago and for the first time people were confronted with the fact that music doesn't always need to be performed in one room, but that these musicians were flying off in different directions above the city of Amsterdam and you could see through the windows of the helicopters, the city below and all of a sudden realise that they are playing perfectly synchronously a very polyphonic and a very demanding music. It is a wonderful feeling to envisage music in the future which can happen in completely different places synchronously for example in space-ships where performers could be playing with other performers in other space-ships! So this is the first time in history where musicians have been flown for a performance in order to perform synchronously for a public who are watching and listening in an auditorium.

The next scene which I am composing now is probably the most demanding musically. It is called **Michaelion** and **Michaelion** is a sacred futuristic meeting place of delegates from different galaxies where first, in the form of a camel, (which sounds ridiculous) communicates via a short wave receiver, short wave events, to delegates who are dressed in different ways and sing in different styles and in different dialects not of this planet and they present themselves from where they come from (e.g. Alpha Centori etc. many star names are used). Finally the camel transforms in a humorous way by fighting with its assistant, a trombone player, they pretend to have a bull fight and finally the bull sits on the Torero and all laugh etc. then the women open the zips of this camel and out comes a zen monk who is put on a stool and he begins to imitate with his voice, short wave programmes that he receives from all over the world from noises to morse code to languages from all over the world and also sounds that we don't know where they come from etc. and the choir singers learn from him and imitate what he does, in solos, duos, trios and different groupings, when finally six go around the

public and sing the final message. So he 'trains' his pupils to bring the news to the world, the news that he tries to translate to them, and he is called the 'operator', so that is his new function after having been a camel! What's difficult in this piece is that the number of choir singers on the stage constantly changes from 36 that are present plus 5 soloists (trumpet, trombone, bass horn, flute and the 'short wave singer') to nobody on the stage but singing coming from back stage and there are 13 what I call partitions or Spanish Walls which are set up in a very special way, and through the slits between the parts of the Spanish walls they appear and disappear constantly, so sometimes there is nobody on stage, then a single singer or 15 or 36 etc. so the number of singers on stage change all the time and they all have to sing from memory. This places almost impossible demands on singers. In Stuttgart we are going to train the choir for two months this coming year and the world premiere will take place on the 26th of July in Munich and nobody knows whether we can achieve a decent performance or not. Every singer needs to be able to sing individually precise notation from memory. Right now we have the problem with **World Parliament** because in Manchester next year there is the World Music Festival for new music where they had chosen my work **World Parliament** and had asked the BBC choir to sing it but I got a message a week ago that the BBC choir could not do it as it would take much too much time to learn, so they asked the Stuttgart choir who did the recording and world premiere and the Radio Copenhagen choir who did a very good performance, but both are not free. So you see, Licht is constantly demanding new techniques and new abilities.

Friday from Light which was premiered last year, definitely needs a new auditorium. Friday is so limited in an opera house, though there were a lot of objects flying in the air at the Leipzig opera but everybody new that it was impossible to realise this part of Licht around the public with the twelve very different objects like a rocket flying, a woman in the moon,, a giant syringe moving towards a woman like a pencil sharpener about 4 metres high, a man who is a pencil pushing himself into the pencil sharpener, an enormous raven flying around etc. etc. - how can we do all this in the 'box' of an opera house? I can imagine an auditorium but it should be built specifically for Friday from Light. (**Friday from Light** is driven entirely by time-code on the tape which includes lighting cues and cues for the soloists, dancers and mimes etc. together with a 12 channel speaker distribution for the electronic music))

Saturday from Light is so special that in Milan, Ronconi, an excellent director and Gai Aulenti who did the stage design and costumes, had to go into the sports palace which usually seats 36,000 people for sports events, but the auditorium was in a way good for this part of Licht as the public were sitting in the centre on cushions which were arranged to look like the beard of Lucifer and around the public the first scene took place half left the second scene took place at the right where two giant mandalas about 9 metres in diameter were, and the black cat (flautist) is moving around the numbers on the mandalas which are 1 - 12 & 13 - 24. It is very necessary to use these visual elements in order to make the music become clear. The third scene (**Lucifer's Dance**) was again very difficult to realise. It is a huge human face 25 metres high and divided into five floors (levels) above each other with 82 musicians. The musicians sit at various points of the face for example left eye, right eye, left eye brow, right eye brow, left cheek, right cheek, nostrils etc. etc. and all these parts of the giant face begin to move musically as well as visually so the musicians had to learn the choreography and movements with their instruments. So just to build that in the sports hall needed such an effort that a special hall should be built just for **Saturday from Light**.

Sunday from Light is not yet composed but I see an enormous planetarium system with a sun in the centre with the planets of our solar system, but the planets are inhabited with traffic between the planets, a traffic of musicians, singers, dancers and performers etc. So this would need an enormous auditorium like an exhibition hall, there is a new one in Leipzig now which has a glass roof in a semi circle shape. It's beautiful to see the sky through this glass roof and I would say that it is at least 200 yards from left to right and 400 or 500 yards from front to back and there one could perform, and we intended to perform **Wednesday from Light**, because the space is big enough to make objects move and **Sunday** needs at least such a hall if not larger. So I think the whole demand on music theatre for the future is totally different from what the traditional opera houses (even those built since the war) can provide, so Licht is a very experimental undertaking.

MB It strikes me that not only does Licht require special auditoriums but special musicians too.

KS Yes yes. We don't know for example if the choir from the opera in

Bonn can sing **Wednesday from Licht**. I don't see that possibility because even if they rehearse what they want, one and a half years, everyday, two and a half hours, they also have to sing tradition operas so they could never make it even if they were the best choir in Germany. So it needs totally different training, they have to start at the conservatories to learn the music and also to sing from memory and move, not like the choirs in Europe. If you look at the choir at La Scala they stand there like trees and it's just awful that they cannot really move well. Whereas in Japanese Noh theatre the singers can move extraordinarily art-fully, but there are only very few, 2 or 3. Or in Kathakali in South India you can see 3 or 4 performers moving in a way that they have learnt since they were six years old everyday up to 19 or 20 years until they are allowed to perform. If only our European performers could see this or see films of how important it is to learn art-full movements in a special style for certain works not just for all works but for certain works, specific movements. I write these movements in the scores and add photographs and designs because every piece is more and more original.

MB Part of my work is in music education and I see students going through the same style of music education that we have had for the last 200 years more or less. We need to change at pre-college or conservatory age.

KS Yes, but you can only change it if there are scores that demand certain changes, you cannot say that we are open for the future lets change.... but in which direction? I have to say that Pop music nowadays is not very inventive. I have several pop magazines with groups from Germany, England, America and Scandinavia who are very interested in my work, but when I see these bands and how they look with their chains and black dress, they all look the same. I imagined that they would all look incomparably different, but their grim look is the same all over the world now, it's so uniform and I don't like uniformity. Then the public become uniformed so to speak, by these public images or models. Art is based on invention and incomparable originality and newness.

MB Thinking about this brings to mind Harry Partch and corporeality. Not just making music but making ritual.

KS Yes, I met him in California when I was travelling with David Tudor and we went to his house where he played and explained his instruments and music. He was a very original person.

MB The fact that you have taken the musician 'out of the theatre pit' and put them on the stage is what Partch was very adamant in doing when conceiving his pieces.

KS Yes, I don't need a pit anymore. Only in the very beginning I had an orchestra in **Donnerstag**, but even then in the second act they are all penguins sitting at the South Pole under an enormous globe.

Stockhausen has always moved with technology, never being afraid of new devices and equipment. This is reflected in his use of synthesizers and samplers used live in what he calls a 'modern orchestra' in **Dienstag** and **Montag**. His long term interest in microtonality which began with electronics in the 50s and 60s, makes a reappearance in **Licht** with microtonal scales in pieces like **Xi**, **Ypsilon**, **Flautina** and **Pieta** as well as encouraging performers to invent their own 'fantasy instruments' in **Dienstag** for example, Andreas Boettger's MIDI-Lyre and Renee Jonker's Tambour Mititaire in **Dienstag**. Sadly the only complete opera to be seen in the UK was **Donnerstag** which was staged at Covent Garden in 1985. I can remember being incredibly moved and stunned at this performance when in the third act the entire circular stage, peppered with coloured flashing lights, began slowly to rise from horizontal to vertical, accompanied by the most transcendent celestial music, and also in the second act by Markus Stockhausen playing this very demanding, virtuosic music on the trumpet while walking through a space age globe which was turning continuously on its axis.

Each day from **Licht** has associated colours, symbols, plants and animals etc.

Monday - EVE day - opal & silver - light green - the day of Birth

Tuesday - red - Day of dispute - war - conflict

Wednesday - bright yellow - Conference/collaboration day

Thursday - MICHAEL day - light blue - purple- the day of Life

Friday - Eves temptation by Lucifer - orange

Saturday - LUCIFER day - black - Day of Death

Sunday - gold - the mystical union of Eve and Michael

Whether we feel that this music actually puts us in touch with the cosmos or not, this new way of perceiving opera, or more accurately, creative art-full expression, must surely move the spirit of any receptive musical mind.

KS. Whenever we hear sound we are changed, we are no longer the same, and this is even more the case when we hear organised sound - music.

New - means change the method - new methods change the experience - new experiences change man.

Karlheinz Stockhausen will celebrate his 70th birthday in August 1998 and to mark the occasion the town of Kurten together with the Stockhausen Foundation for Music, are to initiate yearly courses for Karlheinz Stockhausen, its only honorary citizen, where students and music lovers worldwide are invited to attend the concerts and courses.

Stockhausen has composed over 250 works since 1950 and each new piece introduces elements not found or heard in previous music. This constant striving for things new and un-played has become the hall mark of one of the most original voices in 20th century music.

Stockhausen gave us a lot of his time, and we spoke on many other subjects including his earlier intuitive musical performances and his experiences with recording and publishing companies which led to him setting up his own company where he produces the sumptuous scores and immaculately produced CDs of his entire compositional output.

Despite the confrontation with **Schibler** in 1953, Stockhausen has always believed that: "In electronic music, generators, tape recorder and loudspeakers should yield what no instrumentalist has ever been capable of. In instrumental music, on the other hand, the player, aided by the instrument and the notation, should produce what no electronic music could ever yield, imitate or reproduce". (Malcolm Ball)

Stockhausen CD's, books, videos and scores can be obtained through Stockhausen-Verlag direct. See page 42 for catalogue and order form.

Photo: Kathinka Pasveer



Stockhausen in the studio for electronic music in Cologne in 1994 preparing FREITAG aus LICHT