The Development of the Performer's Role within Karlheinz Stockhausen's Piano Works

Ellen Corver

Table of Content

1. Introduction

I have had the enormous privilege to meet the composer Karlheinz Stockhausen in 1982 at the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague. In the context of a month-long festival around his music I had, at the time being a first-year piano student, the opportunity to play his first four *Klavierstücke* for him, and this, apart from being a very inspiring experience for me, resulted in a close cooperation that lasted for 20 years. During these years I worked with him on all his piano works, including *Mantra*, and performed them many times on different occasions, almost always in the presence of Stockhausen himself. In 1997–1998 I recorded all the solo piano pieces on the composer's label.

During those years I was asked quite a few times, either by someone from the audience or by students that I taught during masterclasses, if I expected these pieces to become part of the "canon of piano music" in fifty years from then.
At that time, being so involved in the piano pieces and probably not having the necessary distance to reflect on this question, I always answered the question in the affirmative.
So, it came as quite a shock to me when I started to notice a change by myself in relation to the piano pieces, at least to some of them. Normally, the more and longer I work on a piece the more I get attached to it, but now I started to realise that I got more and more detached from some of the pieces, up until the point that I didn't want to play them anymore. However, other piano pieces remained very dear to me, and this up until today.
In short, it seemed that within 20 years I had unconsciously made my own 'canon' with regard to Stockhausen's piano pieces.

What I find intriguing about this experience is to find out what the reason is for this enormous difference in appreciation for the works of one composer. Why am I sure that some piano works of Stockhausen will still be played many years from now while, in my opinion, other works will fade? Can I put a finger on differences between the pieces which can justify this? And if I can find something to justify this for Stockhausen's *Klavierstücke*, could this also be valid for works by other composers?

2. Methodology

In cooperation with the music theorist Paul Scheepers I thoroughly analysed some of Stockhausen's piano pieces to pinpoint possible differences.
Besides that I interviewed other pianists who play or have played works by Stockhausen to see if they recognise my experience and if they have 'preferred' works that would possibly match with *my* canon.
I also interviewed composers to find out how they think about their compositions; are there works within their own oeuvre that they consider to be more successful than others? And if so, why is that?
Finally I spoke with people who worked intensively with Stockhausen as well and I read books about the time during which the piano pieces were being composed.
One book I want to mention specifically is Thomas Mann's *Dr. Faustus,* because of its nuanced view on the development of composing during the 20th century and on music in general. I took the liberty to use some passages as an introduction to certain topics of my research.

After a few months of working, I started to feel that the centre of gravity of my research at that moment didn't bring me answers. Namely, I tried to find possible answers exclusively within the piano pieces themselves, by analysing them and comparing them. And although I found some very interesting matters I started to realise more and more that my experience with the piano pieces of Stockhausen shouldn't be seen separately from my role as performer for 20 years within this repertoire. My whole view on the pieces is based on this perspective. It is music and performer, inextricably linked.

3. *Klavierstücke I–IV*

3a. Music for the Ear or Music for the Eye

> *"He described for us the ravishing joy that just the visual image of a Mozart score provides the practiced eye the clarity of its disposition, the lovely allocation among instrumental groups, the clever command of the rich transformations in the melodic line. A deaf man, he shouted, someone with no experience of sound, would surely have to take delight in such sweet visions. 'To hear with eyes belongs to love's fine wit,' he said, quoting a Shakespeare sonnet, and claimed composers in every age had tucked away some things in their notation that were meant more for the reading eye than for the ear."*[1]

It was during my interview with the composer Gottfried Michael Koenig, that I realised an important matter in relation to the early piano works of Stockhausen. After asking him how much a listener can actually hear of the structure of a composition, Koenig, who worked with Stockhausen many years in the electronic studio in Cologne during the fifties, answered that it is not always appealing to him to listen to a composition. According to Koenig, reading a score can give more understanding of the music as it is sometimes impossible to catch the ingeniousness of a composition with the ear: music more for the eye than for the ear I would argue.

For me as performer/pianist, this is, of course, an ambivalent point of view.
On the one hand it is my task as performer to bring a score to sound, in my case through a piano, but on the other hand, I remember that most of the time, while practicing for example *Klavierstücke I–IV*, I was sitting behind a desk, calculating rhythmic ratios in relation to a chosen base tempo. The time I needed for these calculations and to make a click track of the base tempo to practice with was substantially more than the time I needed behind the piano to bring the score to sound eventually.

I also studied, back then in 1982, an interesting analysis by Stockhausen of *Klavierstück I*, which I found in his *Texte* Band 1; "Gruppenkomposition: *Klavierstück I* (Anleitung zum Hören)".[2]

---

[1] Thomas Mann: *Dr. Faustus*, trans. John E. Woods, (London: Vintage Books, 1999), 67.
[2] Karlheinz Stockhausen, *Texte zur elektronischen und instrumentalen Musik*, Band 1 (Köln: Verlag M. DuMont Schauberg, 1963), 63.

It is a text that he used in December 1955 in the context of a radio programme for the NDR.
Using many sound samples, he analysed this ‘group composition’ bar by bar; the amount of notes per group (played together or separately), the intervals within each group (ascending or descending), the duration and tempo of individual tones and/or the total group, the dynamic range for every individual tone, the register and the relation between the groups.
It is a fascinating analysis and it triggered my curiosity to see if I would be able to reproduce the score through the piano. To a certain extent this turned out to be possible. However, there are clear limitations, of which I will give two examples here.

Example 1.
In his analysis, Stockhausen reflects on the chord in bar 11 (see figure 1); nine different tones, starting at the same time with different dynamics and different lengths, so the chord more or less disintegrates at the end.
He compares and relates this with the chord of bar 1 where the different tones are not played at the same time and not with different endings, but, in an inverted way, are played one by one and, with the help of the right pedal, end at the same time. Then he states that, with attentive listening to the dynamic ratio and the individual and the overall time ratios of bar 1, the listener will experience an unexpected new form of a group in bar 11 that is in fact, when you take the proportions and the individual elements in consideration, very similar and related to the structure of the group of notes of bar 1, because of their combined group length of the duration of five quarter beats at the base tempo.

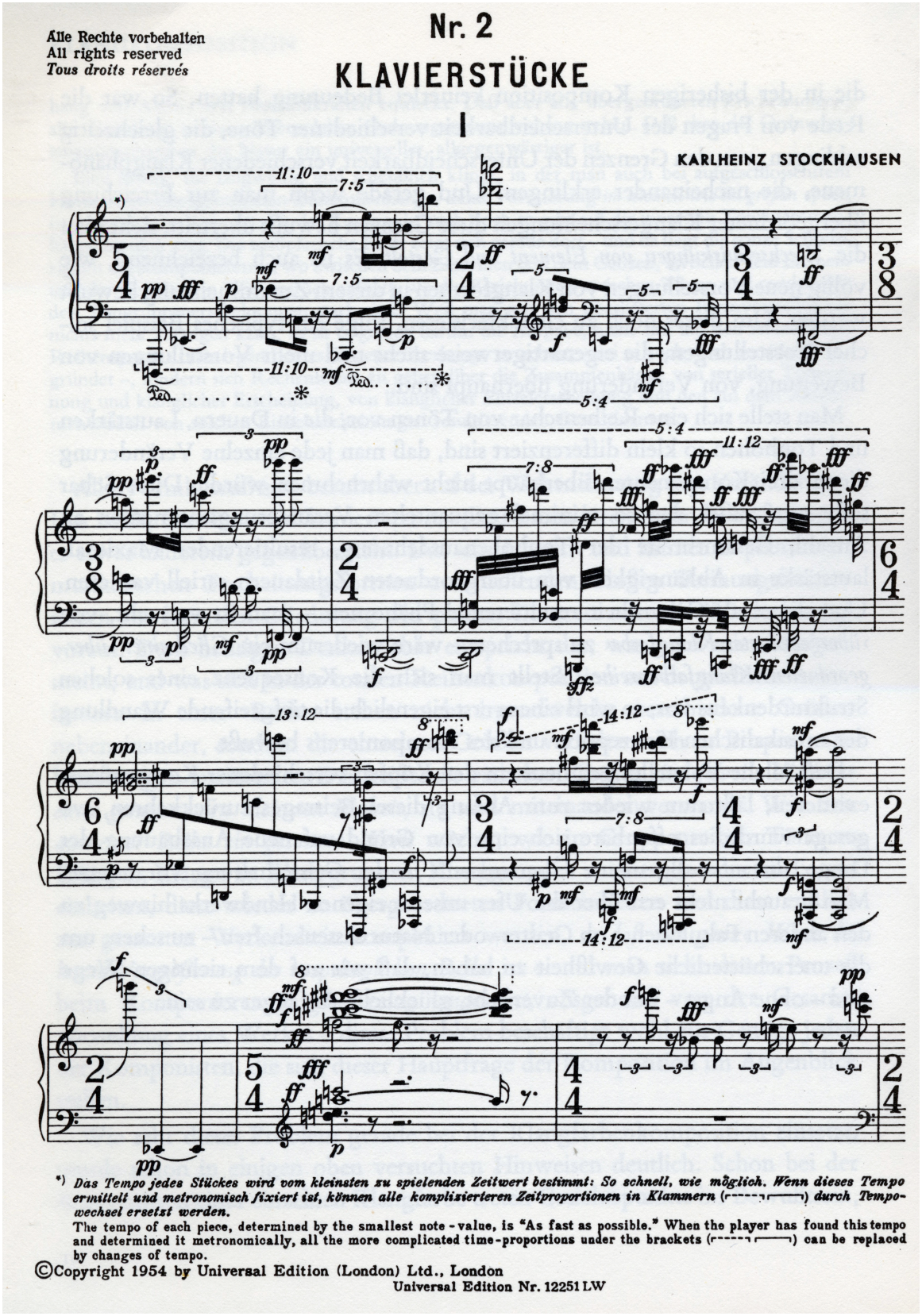

Figure 1: *Klavierstück I*, page 1

If one takes this example into consideration, one will notice that, while reading his analysis, it gives a very clear insight in the structure and idea of Stockhausen's

composing and varying with groups of notes. However, while listening to it, it is extremely difficult to get the same understanding. An important reason is not only the fact that I believe that our ears are probably not ready to perceive the 9-tone chord with 5 different dynamics of bar 11 with our brain in such a way that we can recognise it as such, but also, equally important, it is impossible to reproduce this chord on a piano because of the limitations of both pianist and piano. The 4 top notes of this chord, in such a high register of the piano, will never sustain for the composed 5 quarter notes, let alone that it would be possible to bring out the dynamic nuances in that register.

Example 2.
The same limitation, in this case just caused by the piano, pops up with the chord of 2 notes of bar 5. It needs to be played in the dynamic *forte*, and this sound layer should be audible for 4 quarter beats in total. Normally (hopefully) this wouldn't be a problem, but because of the beginning of a new group of very fast, loud notes after 2 beats, you have to leave this chord with your hand. The only option is to use the middle pedal (if available…) to sustain the 2 notes of bar 5, but, because of the fact that the same 2 notes are to be played in the fast group of notes in bar 6 with another dynamic (*ff*), the sound layer of bar 5 is distorted. So, the clarity of these 2 bars while observing it with the eyes, is lost in the moment that we 'observe' it with our ears.

Of course, there are many cases before the 1950s where you see that composers have to deal with limitations as well, as it is sometimes just impossible for the pianist or the piano to reproduce exactly what has been written in the score. This can occur for instance in the following circumstances;
- a crescendo is written on a single note or chord;
- the size of the keyboard was limiting the compositional material;[3]
- the width of the notated chord demands a larger hand than the performer has available;
- the polyphony of a composition can't be realised by two hands with ten fingers.

[3] Most pianos before 1880 had keyboards with a span of only 5 octaves.

The following three examples will clarify the possible limitations mentioned above:

1)

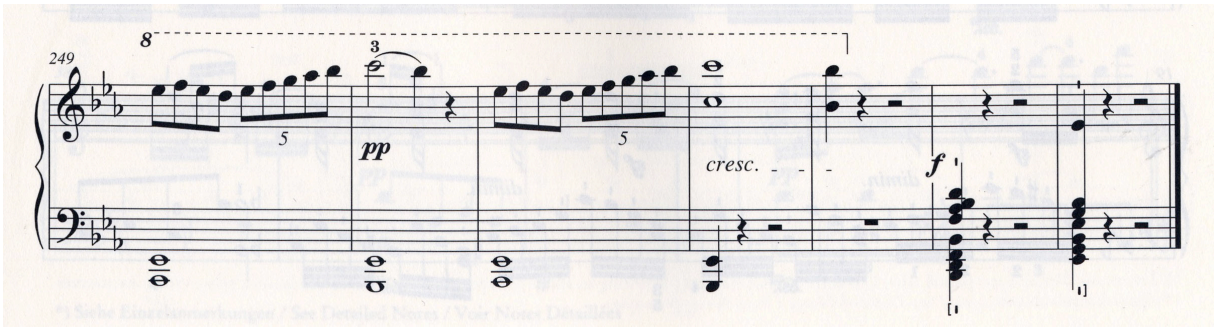

Figure 2: Beethoven opus 81a, first movement, closing bars.

The image above shows the last 7 bars of the first movement of Beethoven's opus 81a,'Les Adieux'. The *crescendo* on the c-octave is obviously impossible to realise. However, the musical thought behind it is clear.

2)

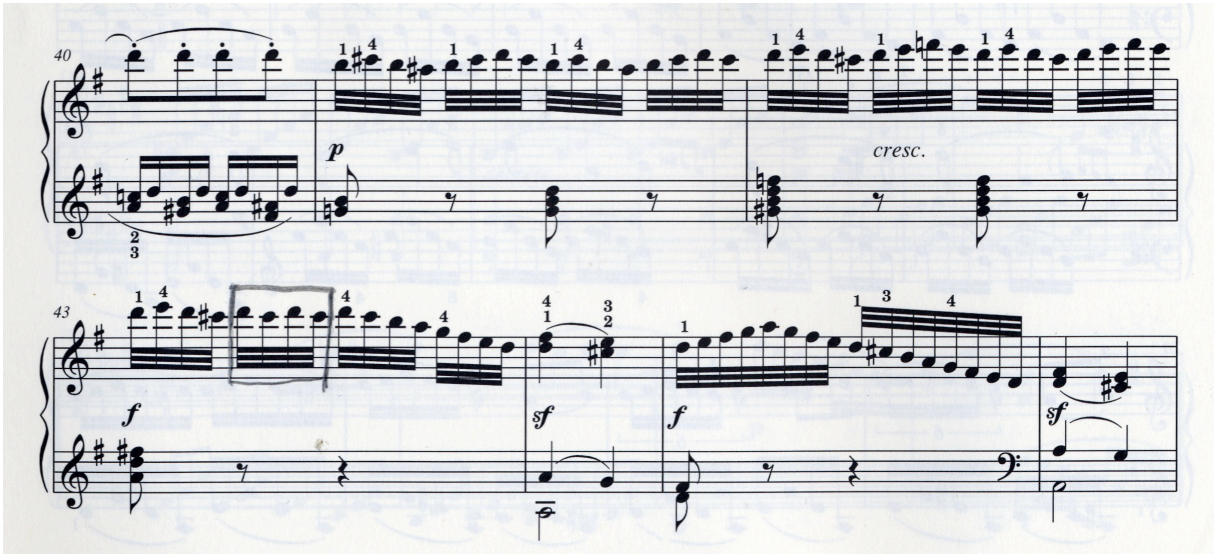

Figure 3: Beethoven opus 14 no. 2, first movement, bars 40–46.

This is a section from the exposition of the first movement of Beethoven's opus 14 no. 2. When you see the way in which the 32nd notes move in the second group of bar 43, and you compare that with the same passage of the recapitulation, you realise that Beethoven could not do in the exposition what I assume he wanted to do, thus does, in the recapitulation.

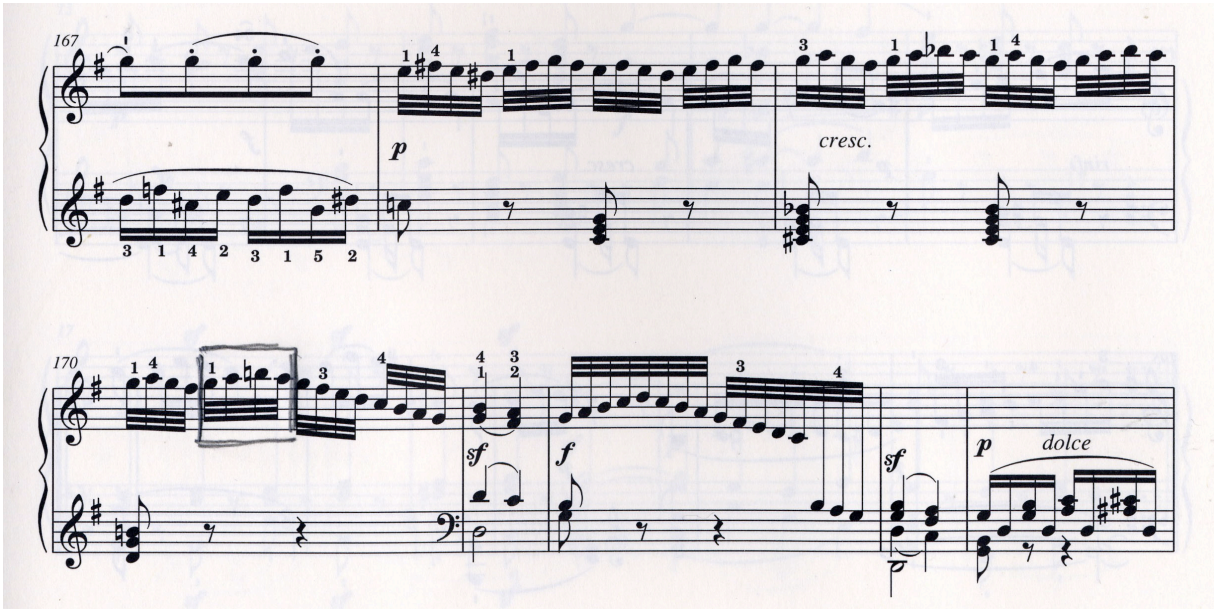

Figure 4: Beethoven opus 14 no. 2, first movement, bars 167–174.

The recapitulation creates an atmosphere of liveliness and direction because of the change from b-flat to the b-natural. In the exposition he couldn't do the same, because the f-sharp in the 3rd octave was not available on the pianos of that time. Nowadays, with our current instruments with the size of seven and a half octaves, you could consider playing the exposition in the same way as the recapitulation.

3)

The next example is a part of the prelude *La Danse de Puck* by Debussy. The composer writes a long B-flat in the bass that needs to sustain for many bars. It is unthinkable to keep the pedal down for all those bars because it would become enormously blurry. The performer needs to find a refined pedal use (pushing the pedal down only halfway and vibrating with the foot) to keep the transparency, without losing the suggestion of the B-flat as fundament of the harmony.

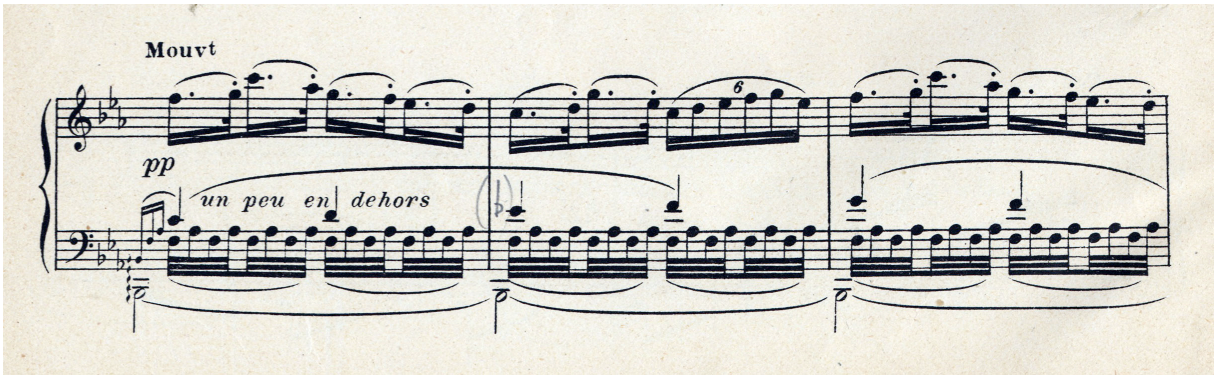

Figure 5: Debussy, *La Danse de Puck* (Préludes pour piano, premier livre), bars 63–65.

However, there is a difference between the consequences of certain limitations. In the cases shown above, you can understand that composers compose these things to serve a bigger musical idea; to create a certain colour, to express a certain feeling, to add more layers, to get more dimensions or to create a certain energy etc., the limitation proves to be a detail within the entire musical thought, and by that, ends to be a limitation.

Stockhausen states the following about this matter in his text from October 1958 "Elektronische und Instrumentale Musik", first published in *die Reihe* 5, Wien 1959):[4]

> *"Ausgehend vom Studium der Partituren, die in der ersten Hälfte dieses Jahrhunderts entstanden, wurde seit 1950 alles in Frage gestellt, was europäische Musik ausmacht: nicht allein die musikalische Sprache, ihre Grammatik, ihre Vokabeln, sondern auch das bisher verwendete Klangmaterial, die Töne selber. Die historische Entwicklung der Instrumente war eng an eine Musik gebunden, die nicht mehr unsere ist. Schon seit der Jahrhundertwende hatte man die Idee, etwas Neues zu sagen, aber man bediente sich nach wie vor der alten Klangzeichen. So ergab sich ein Widerspruch zwischen der physikalischen Natur der bisher verwendeten Instrumentaltöne einerseits und den neuen musikalischen Formvorstellungen andererseits."*

To come back to *Klavierstück I*, the shortcomings of the piano (the ones discussed on page 7) are real limitations because the 'old' instrument is not able any longer to reproduce the essence of the 'new' musical language, because this language *is* about

[4] Stockhausen, *Texte* Band 1, 140.

durations, groupings, layers, ratios, individual dynamics and the characteristics of sound.

The contradiction between the 'new' music and the 'old' instrument, also mentioned by Stockhausen in the quote above, is a fairly good description of my own experience while performing his early piano music; on the one hand intrigued and challenged by the new musical ideas and techniques, and on the other frustrated by my limited tool and limited role as performer.

3b. Composition versus Construction in *Klavierstücke I–IV*

> *"The mania he developed back then for constantly thinking up musical puzzles to be solved like chess problems could have been cause for alarm, for there was some danger that he imagined that by devising and solving technical difficulties he was already composing"*[5]

Another important aspect of these early pieces is the notation of tempo. Here I focus on the first bar of *Klavierstück I*:

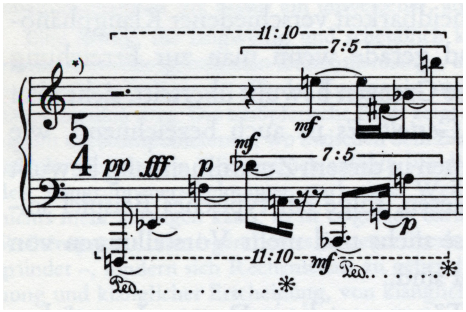

Figure 6: *Klavierstück I*, bar 1.

This bar consists of 5 quarter notes. Above the bar is a bracket with 11:10, meaning 11 in the time of 10. Under this bracket there is another bracket with 7:5: 7 in the time of 5.

The tempo of the quarter note needs to be chosen by the performer. I chose metronome number 45 (Stockhausen himself always took 40 as the base tempo).

If you have to play 11 in the time of 10 it means that you have to realise first that the 10 refers to the eighth notes, which are logically having tempo 90 (2 x 45). To

[5] Mann: *Dr. Faustus*, 81.

calculate in which tempo you have to play the 11 eighth notes in the same time as 10 eighth notes you divide 90 by 10 and then multiply by 11, thus, 90 : 10 = 9 x 11 = 99. So, the bar starts in tempo 99 for the eighths. However, after 6 eighth notes you need to play 7 eighth notes in the time of the remaining 5:
99 : 5 = 19.8 x 7 = 138.6. This is obviously a tempo that can only be played approximately.
The last step in mastering the tempo and the rhythmical subdivisions is to become able to count the 5 quarter notes at the base tempo 45 while playing the various tempi.
The only way to practice this was to make a 'counting tape': I therefore recorded my voice while counting all the beats at the base tempo. I practised by playing along with the tape, which resulted in being able to count while playing.
It is an intensive process to get to the point at which you master all the different tempi in relation to the base tempo. However, it is impossible to grasp this with the ear. What you hear is an *accelerando*. The fact that the lengths of the notes become shorter in combination with a stepwise increasing metronome number makes this bar a perfectly controlled, written-out *accelerando*. According to me, it is impossible to hear the difference between a played *accelerando* or the perfectly calculated speeding up which is composed in this first bar.

In the same text by Stockhausen I quoted before, about electronic and instrumental music, Stockhausen presents some very revealing thoughts:

> "*It is a fact that in the evolution of instrumental music the performing musician has been condemned more and more to converting increasingly complicated scores into tones. Musicians became a sort of machine substitute, and finally there no longer remained any room for 'free decision', for interpretation in the best sense of the word. It was an entirely natural development that the realization of sounds was finally transferred to electronic apparatuses and machines. These apparatuses produce the desired results exactly according to technical data; and besides, one does not have to persuade them for hours on end in discussions about the meaning of new music before they will produce a single note."*[6]

[6] Stockhausen *Texte* Band 1, 48.

The fact that Stockhausen himself questioned the position of the performer in relation to his works says a lot about the development he was going through during the 1950s.
It was a time of exploring, every single piano piece dealing with another compositional aspect, leaving behind the traditional parameters of our western European musical language. In his text "… wie die Zeit vergeht …", written in 1956 and published in *die Reihe* 3 in 1957, he writes about matching the chromatic pitch-scale by a corresponding scale in the sphere of durations, and describes at the end of this very extensive article an ideal, as yet imaginary instrument, a 'band-keyboard' that responds to diverse finger pressure, upfront or at the back of the keyboard, to meet all the requirements for continuous alteration of time-proportions:

> *"*[…] *for fundamental macro-time phases (durations), by the duration of the action; for fundamental micro-time phases (pitches), by the location on the continuous band-keyboard; for micro-time phase-relationships (the transition from 'tone 'to 'noise', by the amount of pressure on the band; for micro-time formant-rhythm ('tone-colour'), by the location of the pressure-point, and the number and distance apart of several pressure-points across the keyboard; for the amplitude of the oscillation (loudness) by pressure on the pedal."*[7]

The last two quotes by Stockhausen prove a 'new' relation with both performer and instrument: "We shall use electronic sound production in the future… and we shall govern the material – it shall not govern us",[8] reflects also on the fact that he had to deal with performers who were not willing or not able to handle the complicated rhythms or the constantly changing dynamics of his serial compositions. When I started to play the early pieces, I didn't mind to experience the feeling of being more or less a "*machine substitute without room for free decision*" for a while, because I received something else in return: I learned to deal with extremely complicated scores and after having worked my way through *Klavierstücke I–IV* as a 17-year-old, there was not much left (at least score-wise) that could impress me. But there is another important aspect about bringing a score to sound, articulated nicely by Richard Taruskin as follows:

[7] Stockhausen, "….Wie die zeit vergeht…" in *Texte* Band 1, 138–139.
[8] Michael Kurtz, *Stockhausen: A Biography* (London: Faber and Faber, 1994), 55.

> *"It seems a curious request to make of a performer, to 'let the music speak for itself. If a performer did not have the urge to participate in the music and, yes, to contribute to it, why then he would have become a performer in the first place?"*[9]

Indeed, I experienced that "letting the music speak for itself" came to a natural end; as soon as the challenge of a score has been mastered to the utmost possible, there is not much left to add or to contribute.

A story that Stockhausen told me, after one of our rehearsals, was quite meaningful to me: he told me that, when he had met Marcelle Mercenier for the first time to rehearse the first four piano pieces, which she was going to premiere in Darmstadt on 21 August 1954, he behaved very badly and rude. He did this to cover his extreme nervousness because, as he said, he didn't have a clue what he was actually going to hear.

It is very likely that this was indeed the case. And if so, it proves that the score wasn't based on the inner hearing of a musical imagination, but more as a construction of theoretical ideas for which a performer was needed in order to transform these theories into sound. This leaves the performer of these piano pieces hardly any room for a personal contribution to the performance.

It is important to realise as well that Stockhausen was not the performer of his own piano pieces: a practice that had been common in centuries before. It is a typical 20th century phenomenon, which is a subject of discussion on its own and which will not be further addressed in this paper.

All the aspects I have been writing about in relation to the early *Klavierstücke* here, make me realise that these pieces are written for the piano because at that time it was still the most appropriate instrument to express his new musical language. Even though it was a limited tool, there wasn't a good alternative yet.

Therefore, it is not surprising that Stockhausen started to explore the electronic music techniques more and more. They provided him with an almost endless new range of possibilities. This technology gave him the opportunity to analyse timbre and sound spectra of all kinds of existing materials such as metal, glass, wood and various musical instruments, but also to create new, synthetic sound spectra by using

[9] Richard Taruskin, *Text and Act: Essays on Music and Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 52.

electronically generated tones. Looking back at subsequent developments, I conclude that the early *Klavierstücke* were ahead of their time.

Here I come back to an intriguing thought: would it be possible to make yourself unnecessary as a live performer by making an electronic realisation of *Klavierstück I*? It would be closer to the notated score, that's for sure, but would you miss something when you compare this version with the piece being played by a living creature?
I remember very well that, after having played *Klavierstücke I–IV* in a concert during the festival in The Hague in 1982, which I already mentioned in my introduction, Stockhausen told me that he was very happy with my performance because "I had turned the pieces into music".
That raises a question I am still unable to answer: what were the early *Klavierstücke* before this 'turn' and what is it that made them 'turn'?

4. *Klavierstücke V–X*

> *"Instrumentalkomposition neben elektronischer Komposition: das führt zu einer ungeahnt neuen Funktion des Instrumentalisten."*[10]

After Stockhausen had worked exclusively on electronic compositions in the studio of the Cologne Radio for half a year in 1953, convinced that the future of music lay in electronic sounds, he nevertheless decided to continue with his series of piano pieces as he had encountered, while composing in the most strict, serial way, musical phenomena that were immeasurable. And for these phenomena he needed again the use of a piano and an interpreter. These immeasurable phenomena had to do with an individual feeling of time, connected with either performer or instrument. For example, indications like 'to be played as fast as possible', or different touch techniques on the piano, are tempo-wise dependent on what a pianist is technically able to do, or how a specific piano responds to a certain touch.
Another consequence of his work in the electronic studio is also clearly perceivable in this new set of piano pieces: he uses techniques to create new timbres on the piano, for example a very specific use of the pedal to create echo-like effects, clusters and harmonics out of undamped strings. To clarify this, I will give several examples with comments of my own experiences with these techniques.

[10] Karlheinz Stockhausen, *Texte zu eigenen Werken: Zur Kunst Anderer: Aktuelles* Band 2 (Köln: Verlag M. DuMont Schauberg, 1964), 44.

4a. *Klavierstück V*

The following four points about *Klavierstück V* refer to the immeasurability and diversity of sound:

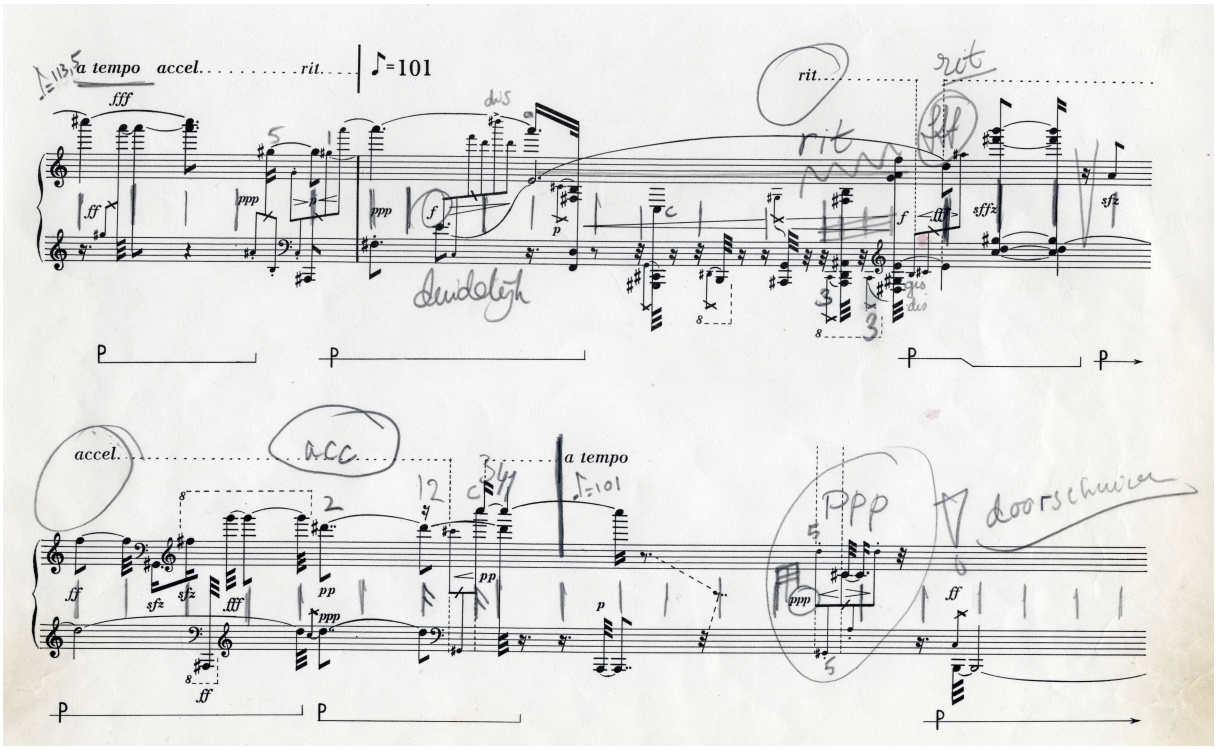

Figure 7: *Klavierstück V*, page 7.

The example above shows the seventh page of *Klavierstück V* with my performance notes included.

- The notation for the use of the pedal is very detailed, thereby creating a different sound world for every group of notes around a central note. This detailed pedaling is new, in the first four *Klavierstücke* you can already find some instructions for the use of the pedal, but still quite rudimentary.
- Compared to the early *Klavierstücke*, the *accelerandi* and *ritardandi* are more free, although Stockhausen still prescribes the way in which the performer has to deal with them: an *accelerando* needs to speed up to the double tempo and a *ritardando* to half the tempo.
- The small notes are to be played “as fast as possible” (this is indicated in the performance instructions of the score). However, this proved to be not so

much an indication relating to the available skills of the performer, but – as I experienced myself – much more for the size of the room where the piece is performed: every tone needs to be clearly audible and an over-reverberant room forces the performer to play the piece substantially slower.

- A new element is formed by the small notes between the dotted vertical lines. They are outside of the continuous pulse, so they are not a part of the rhythmical structure.

4b. *Klavierstück VI*

The following two points about *Klavierstück VI* refer to the diversity of sound and control of speed and movement.

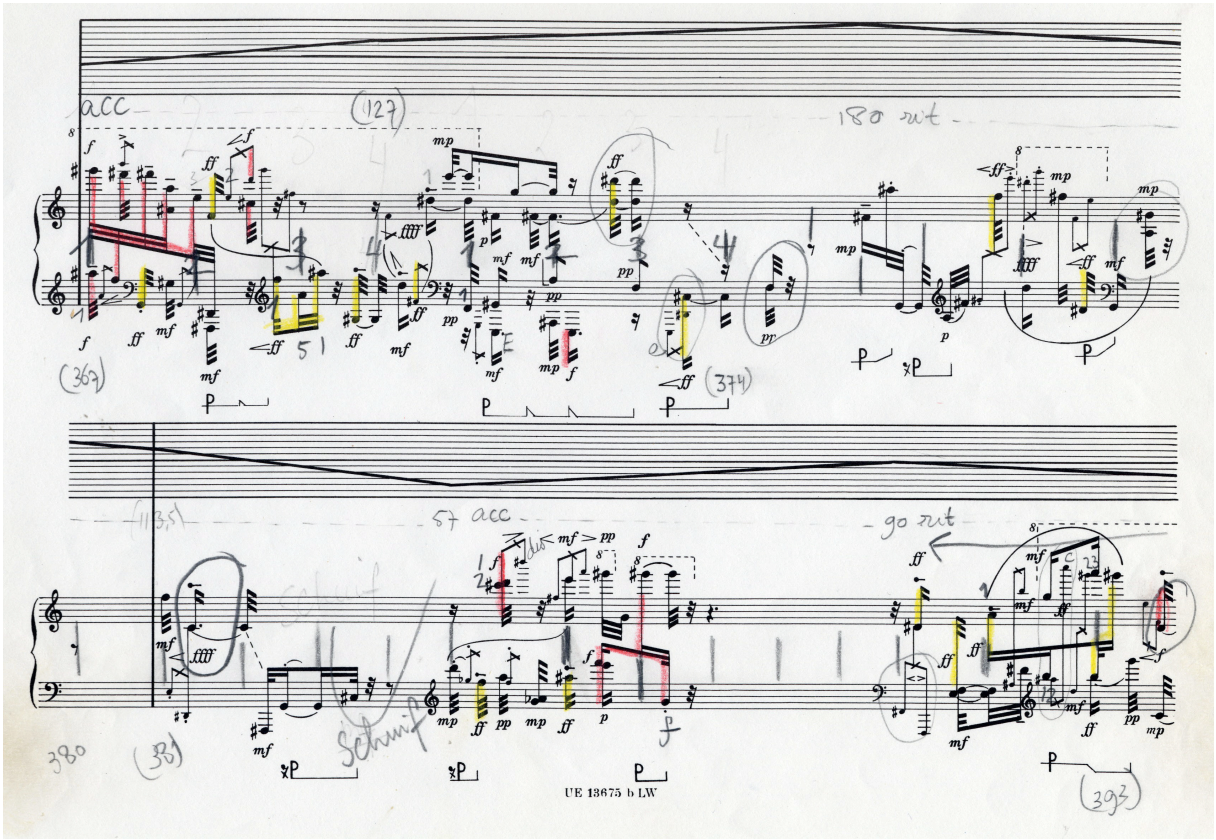

Figure 8: *Klavierstück VI*, page 13.

This example shows page 13 of *Klavierstück VI* with my own performance instructions, partly in colour.

- It shows the use of very diverse playing techniques: the double attack of a tone to create an ‘echo’ sound (for example the first ‘central’ c at the second line), and this double attack is immediately followed by pushing the pedal down for another ‘echo’ effect. *Portato*, *staccato*; almost every note has its own character. As soon as the tempo gets fast it often becomes impossible to play the right attack, especially the double attack, which takes extra time.
- The use of tempo is very detailed and very complicated to perform precisely. Above the piano staves are 13 lines, which correspond with 13 different, although related, tempi: 45, 50.5, 57, 63.5, 71, 80, 90, 101, 113.5, 127, 142, 160, 180. You have to follow the thick black line while playing, knowing exactly between which tempi you have to accelerate or to slow down. The only way to practise this is to calculate the speed of every individual eighth note and then make a click track accordingly. But still, even though you can come close to master the 13 tempi, it will always be an approximation.

4c. *Klavierstück VII*

The following 3 points show the differentiation in timbre as well as the experimentation with time.

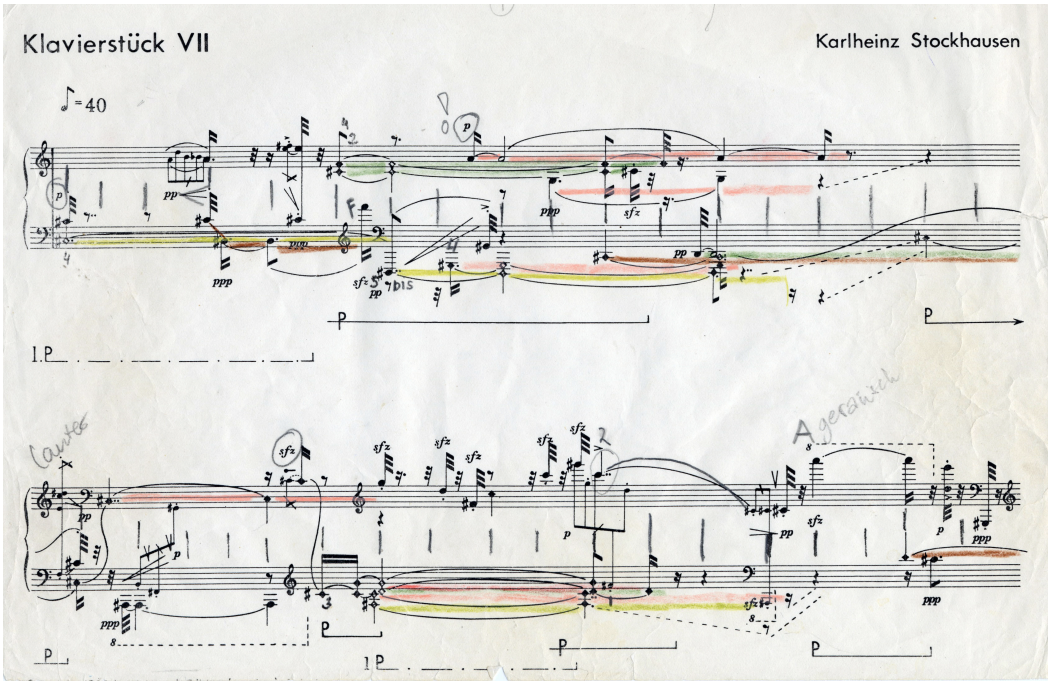

Figure 9: *Klavierstück VII*, page 1.

Above is an image of the first page of *Klavierstück VII*:

- The essence of this piece is to create a large series of overtones. By pressing certain keys of the piano without producing sound (the square notes) you lift the dampers of those strings. Those strings vibrate as overtones while you play other chords or tones. In combination with a nuanced use of the pedal this creates a rich sound world. Stockhausen decided to always amplify the piano during concerts in order to make all the different colours clearly audible.
- Almost every note has a different technique, which gives this composition a unique atmosphere with large amounts of different colours.
- Longer sections in one tempo (as opposed to the previous *Klavierstücke*).

The technique of the 'silently' played notes is very much influenced by the mechanics of the piano. Unfortunately, on some pianos the key needs to be pushed down too slowly to avoid the hammer from touching the strings. As a result it is then impossible to play the piece strictly in tempo.

4d. *Klavierstück VIII*

The following example shows the disruptions of the ongoing pulse and a different approach to polyphony. It refers clearly to the composition of electronic music, in which the layering of individually composed materials is common practice.

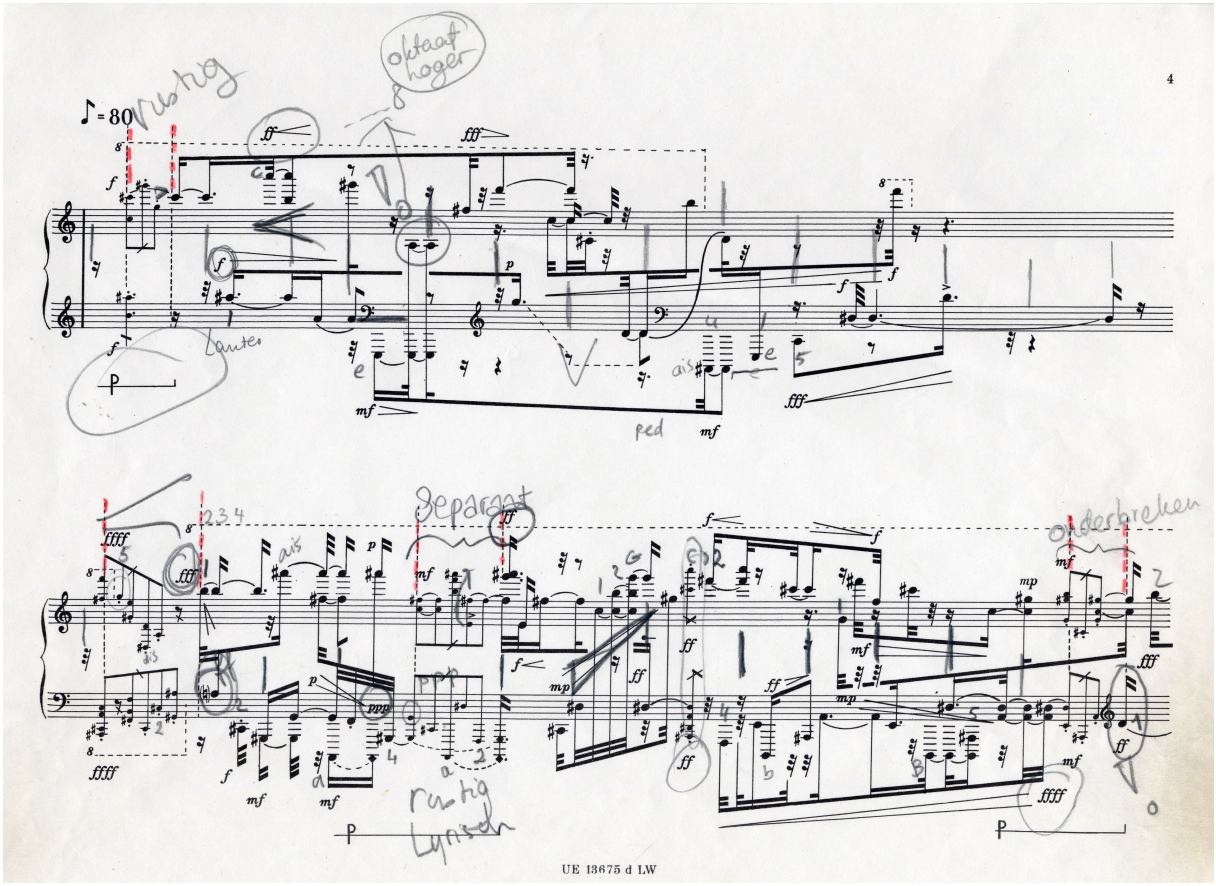

Figure 10: *Klavierstück VIII*, page 4.

- The main issue here is the insertion of fast groups of chords and groups of individual tones, which interrupt the underlying continuous tempo. These groups are notated between the vertical, dotted lines. Stockhausen used this technique already in *Klavierstück V*, but in this piece these groups interrupt and interfere rudely with the rest of the notes by their sudden change of dynamics, colour and/or speed.
- Stockhausen stresses here the individual 'voices' with their individual dynamics.

4e. *Klavierstück IX*

The following examples show a new use of musical elements (sound, time, colour and freedom of speed and tempo) in relation to *Klavierstück IX*. They clearly indicate the new compositional insights at which Stockhausen arrived in this period (1958–1962).

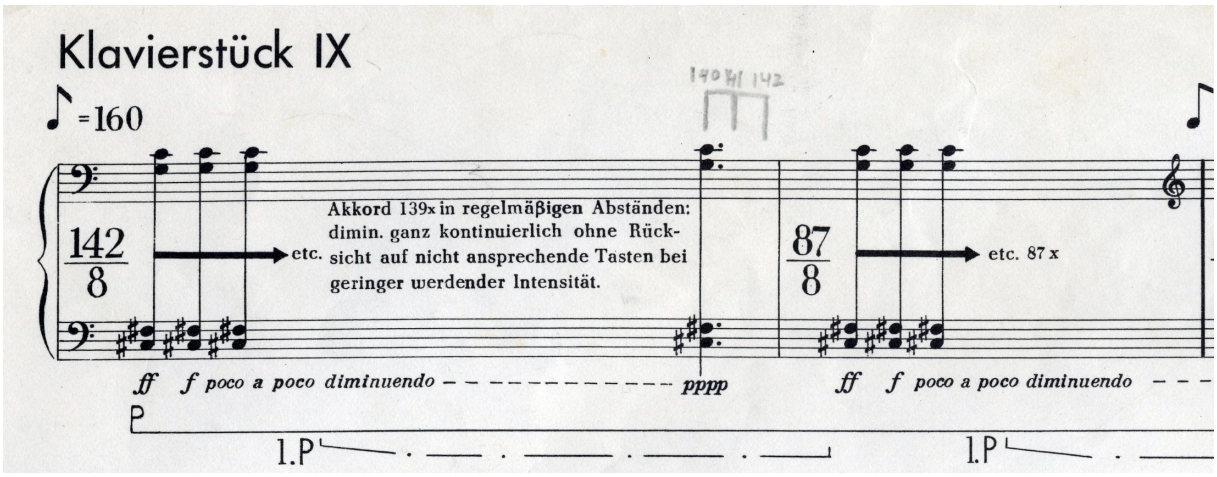

Figure 11: *Klavierstück IX*, bars 1 and 2.

Above are the two opening bars of *Klavierstück IX*. Although it was composed in 1954 in combination with the other pieces of *Klavierstücke V–X*, it wasn't completed until 1961. Periodicity and a whole series of degrees of aperiodicity are alternated. Rigid and monotonous events turn into flexible events in either a brusque way, or they connect fluently. All the pianists I spoke with mentioned this piano piece as one of their favourite *Klavierstücke* to perform. I have the same experience, and I am convinced that this is because of the variety within the piece:

- The first 2 bars are quite a statement and unheard before within the *Klavierstücke*; one chord being repeated 139 times! The first chord being *ff*, the second already half as loud, *f*, and then an extensive diminuendo until *pppp* at the end of the bar. In the second bar, the same chord occurs 87 times with the same diminuendo.
  It requires an enormous control of the performer to play this diminuendo gradually over such a timespan. But the fact that Stockhausen doesn't want the chords to be played uniformly, but on the contrary very colourfully by

freely bringing out individual tones of the chord, gives the performer the opportunity to play these opening bars always in a different way.
This chord returns many times in different forms during the piece.

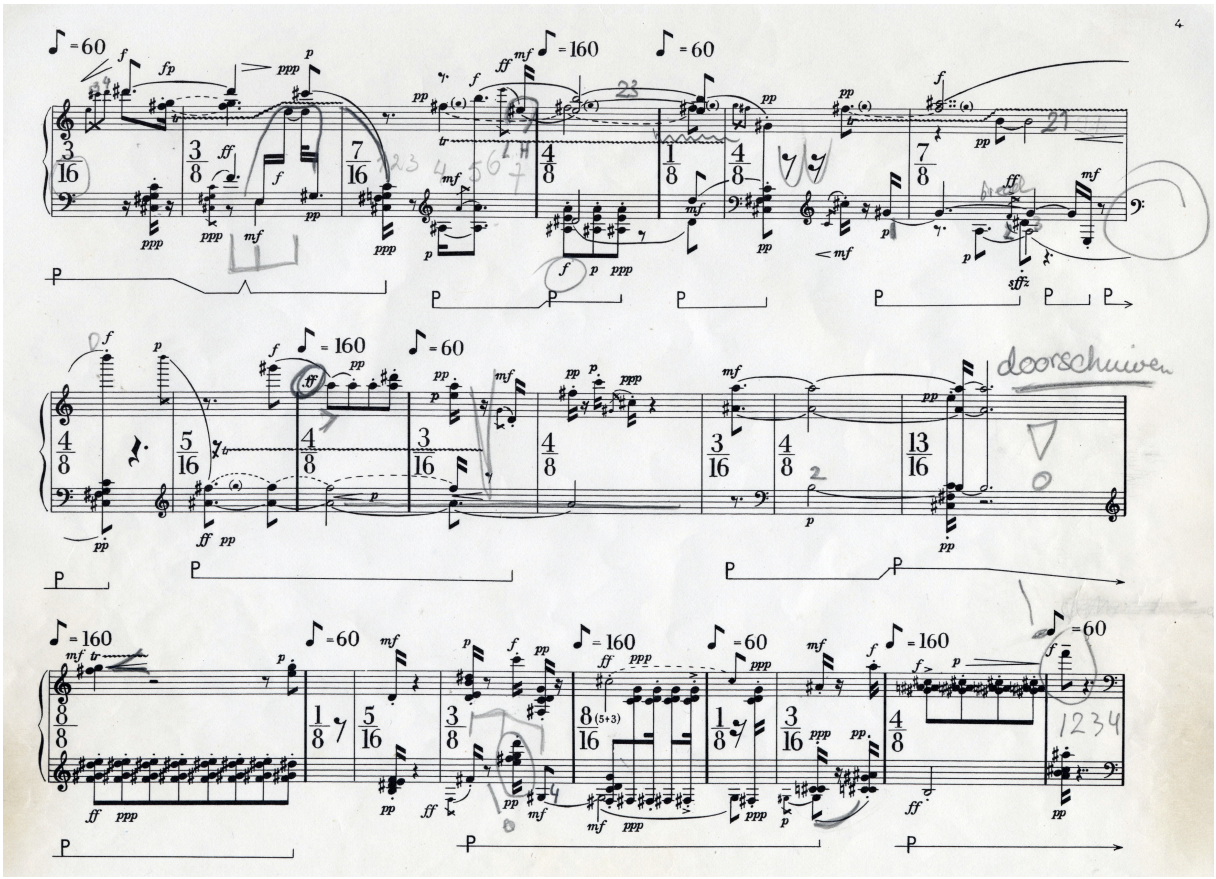

Figure 12: *Klavierstück IX*, page 4.

This example shows page 4 of *Klavierstück IX*.

- The three metronome numbers used in this piece are 60, 120 and 160. In the example above the, change of tempo occurs frequently, but because of the very clear relation between the tempi you can still feel a continuous pulse. In fact, you can practise and play the whole piece by setting the metronome on 120**,** while playing 4 over 3 in the bars with tempo 160. So, although the variation of tone material and tempo occurs frequently coherence is established through the underlying pulse.

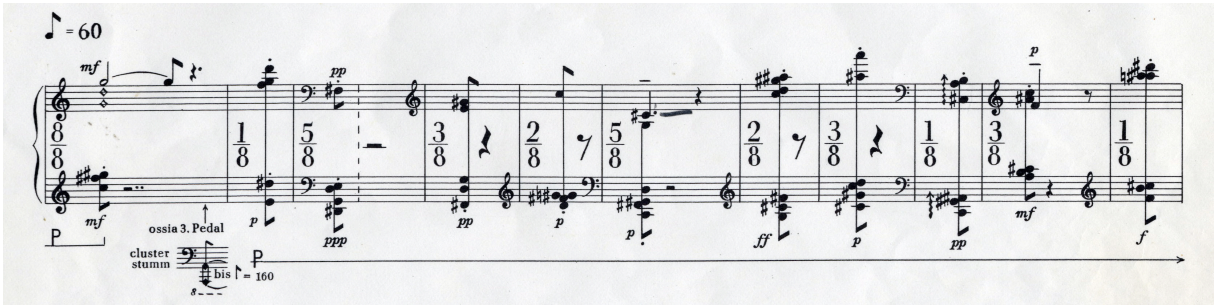

Figure 13: *Klavierstück IX*, page 5.

This example shows the second system on page 5.

- By playing the lowest octave cluster silently, immediately followed by pushing down the middle pedal, you produce an unexpected sound world while playing the subsequent chords. The influence of the Stockhausen's experiences with electronic music here is again obvious.
-

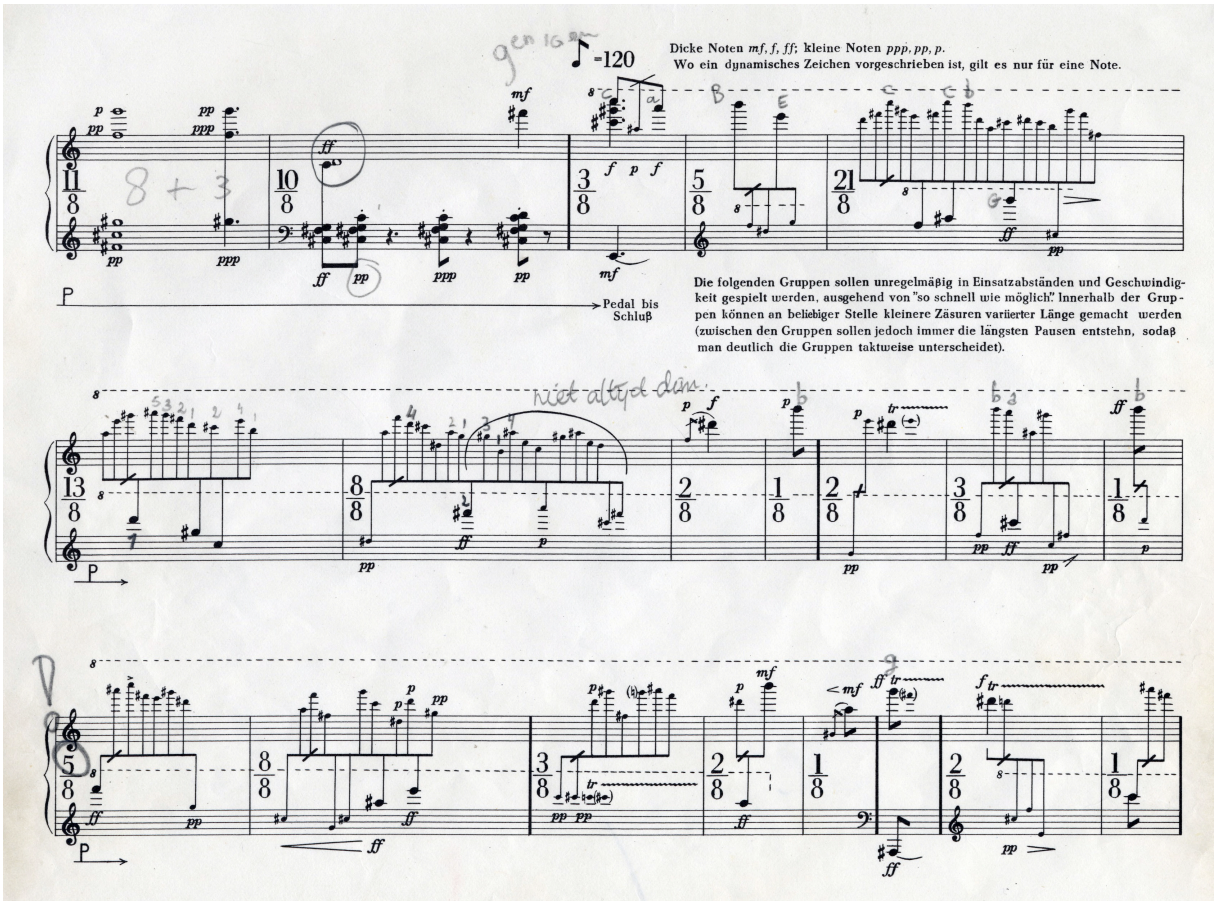

Figure 14: *Klavierstück IX*, page 6.

The example above shows page 6 of the piece, which is the last section.

- This whole last section consists of groups of notes, to be played freely within the given duration of the bar. There is a strict twelve-tone structure, which consists of many overlapping transpositions of the series: the same series that Stockhausen used to compose *Klavierstück IX*:

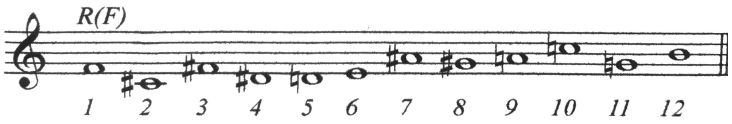

Figure 15: basic series of *Klavierstück IX.*

- However, there is no logical order in the accentuated notes when you compare them with the series (see figure 14). It seems as if Stockhausen composed intuitively with the material. Pianist Herbert Henck, who performed all the piano pieces up until *Klavierstück XI*, informed me about the remarkable change of the last section, which proves a different approach of Stockhausen compared with earlier works:

"You might know that the two last pages of PP IX were initially thoroughly notated and not like later to a certain degree free, but I never saw myself this rhythmic notation. (I might have described it shortly in the analysis of the piece. Maybe not.)

A nice weekend for you too, and all the best
Herbert"[11]

[11] Email from Herbert Henck to author, 20 January 2017.

4f. *Klavierstück X*

The following examples show elements that relate to Stockhausen's experiences and concepts about musical duration, and diversity of colour of different composed groups of notes with their resonance.

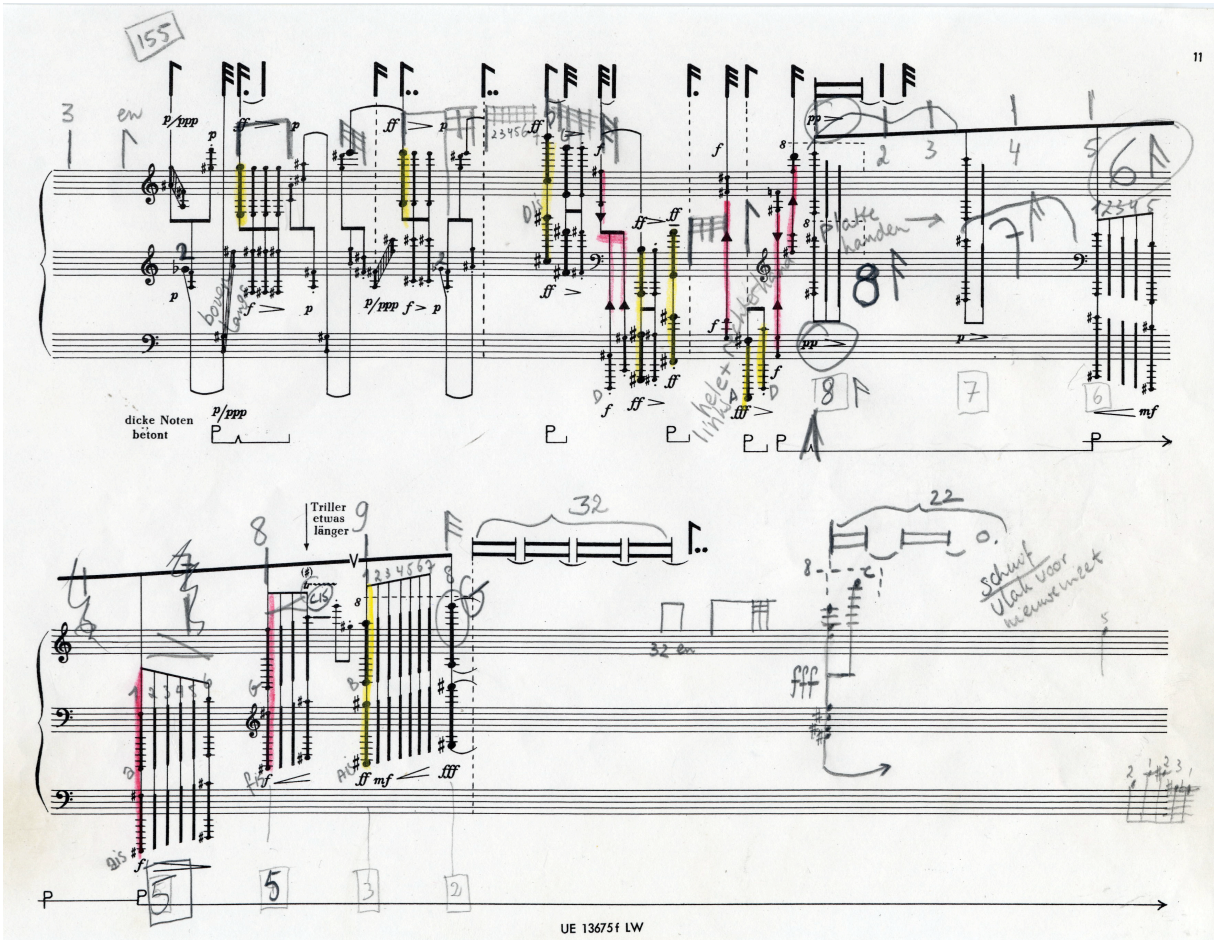

Figure 16: *Klavierstück X*, page 11.

This example shows page 11 of *Klavierstück X* with my performance notes, partly in colour.

- In this piece, Stockhausen places 'order' against 'disorder', yet in a very organised way. Above the piano part the superscript indicates the periodicity of the overall time-structure. The tempo of the quarter note has to be chosen by the performer.
- The cluster technique is new within the *Klavierstücke*, creating enormous sound clouds, sustained for very long periods of time. The clusters are to be

played with the underarms and hands in cotton gloves with cut-off fingers, as to be able to play glissandi of clusters fluently and without hurting the hands.

-

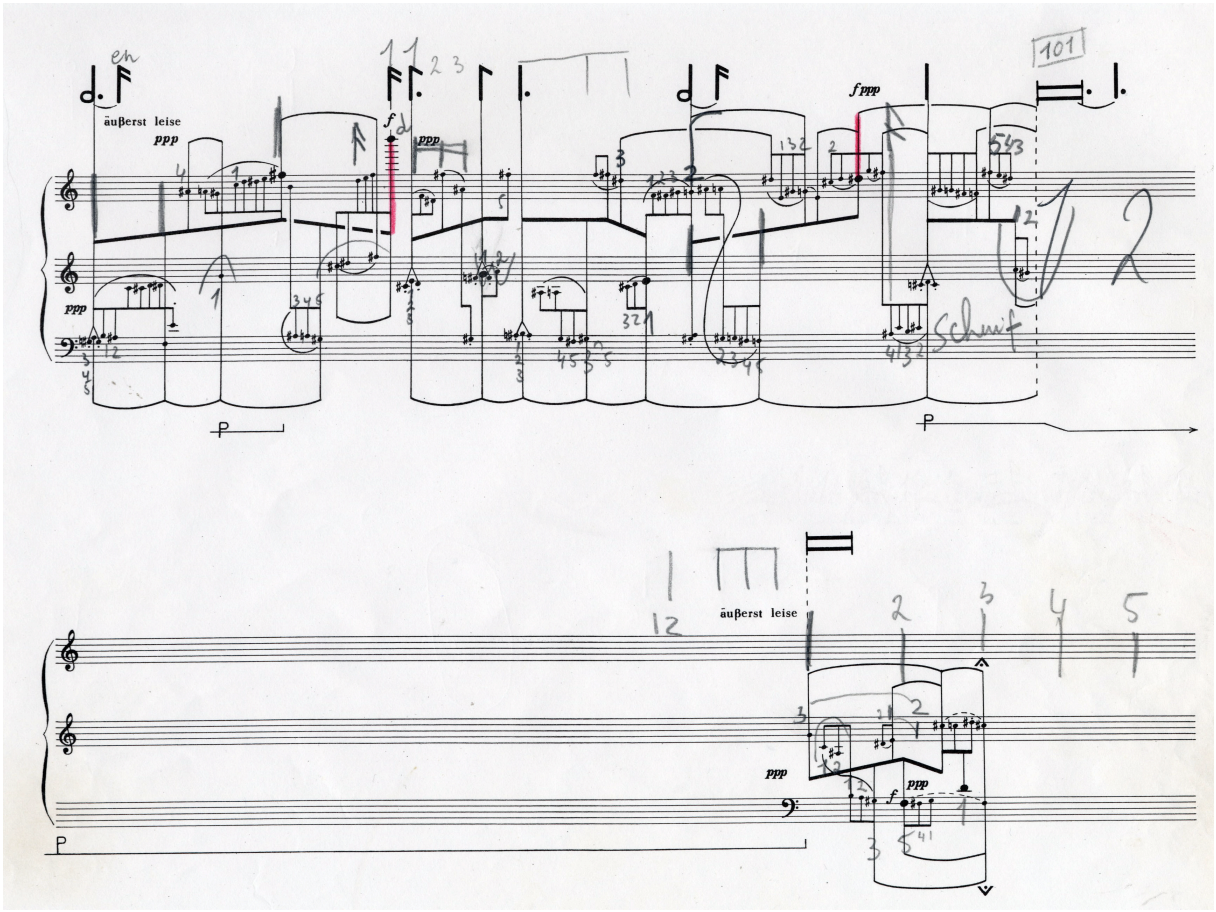

Figure 17: *Klavierstück X*, page 6.

This example shows page 6 of *Klavierstück X* with my performance notes.

- The contrast between the 'cluster blocks' on page 11, and the fast, light groups of notes around a central tone on page 6, is extreme. As a result of this, the 'echo' of both types of groups through the use of pedal, is always completely different and rich. This 'echo' could be heard in a very detailed way because of Stockhausen's use of amplification.
- The freedom within the periodicity gives the performer a lot of room to play with colour or vary with timing.

Can you speak of a change in the position of the performer in relation to this set of piano pieces? Stockhausen writes in the program book of the summer courses in

Darmstadt in 1955 ("Klavierstücke: Instrumentalmusik 1954/55"*)* about the performer: "Seine für ihn typischen Kriterien der Klangverwirklichung werden zu Reihen-Faktoren der Komposition." He subsequently mentions the "Approximationsgrade", "Empfindungs-Maßeinheiten – im Gegensatz zu den mechanischen Maßeinheiten bei der elektronischen Komposition", and "Zufallskriterien", which then lead to his conclusion that these are all "Unsicherheitsrelationen als Formqualitäten!"[12]

In the same text he also discusses the use of the instrument:

> "*Es geht darum, die ganz eigenen nur instrumentalen Bedingungen auf ein Maximum ihrer Wirksamkeit in der seriellen Struktur zu bringen. Die musikalische Vorstellung verlangt in diesem Fall so ausschließlich nach dem Klavier, dass die erfolgte Realisation tatsächlich dieses Instrument und die Komposition für Klavier neu erschließt."*

It is extremely interesting to observe Stockhausen's new approach with regard to the pianist and his/her instrument within these new works. I observe that in the *Klavierstücke I–IV*, the performers and their instruments were just factors that Stockhausen would have preferred to ignore, however, at that time there were no (electronic) alternatives. However, after that he developed the opposite: an appreciation for the individual characteristics of the performers and their instruments. But something remains ambiguous about it; Stockhausen states that he appreciates the immeasurability of certain factors (different live performers and different pianos), but on the other hand he wants to control that immeasurability firmly by making these factors part of the parameters of his composition. In relation to this he writes in the same Darmstadt programme notes:

> "*Für den Spieler heißt das allein: so genau wie möglich die notierten Zeichen mit den korrespondierenden Spielarten seines Instrumentes beantworten. Die Grenzen der Streuungsfelder werden direkt durch die Art der notierten Zeichen graduell formuliert. Es wäre zu wünschen, dass die ausführenden Musiker besonders unserer Generation gleichzeitig beginnen, ihre bisherige Auffassung von >Interpretation< zu überprüfen und sich mit unserer Musik auseinanderzusetzen. Mit einer Musik, die für sie geschrieben ist und ihnen in besonderer Weise die höchste Aufgabe zuweist: Noten in Musik zu verwandeln.*

[12] Stockhausen, "Beilage zum Programmheft der Darmstädter Ferienkurse 1955" in *Texte* Band 2, 44.

> *Die Zeit von der Prognose des untergehenden Instrumentalisten, von mechanischer Musik-Reproduktion und – Produktion an den Rand unserer Gesellschaft gedrängt, ist vorbei."*[13]

The ambiguity becomes clear again here: the pianist needs to be as precise as possible to let the notation come to sound *and* the pianist needs to transform the notation into music and isn't considered any longer a 'drowning' phenomenon.
For the performer it means balancing on a very thin line; being true to the score and finding the space for expression, making tones come to life.
Of course, this question also arises in any other repertoire, but I experienced that the more a score contains extreme, complex constructions, the more you face the difficulty to find space for expression. I think that in *Klavierstücke V–X* you can feel clearly that Stockhausen was 'limping on two thoughts' in regard to his composing and thus to the role of the performer; moments of extreme strictness are alternated with moments of space and freedom where, as a performer, you can really experience the freedom to make a personal artistic contribution.
Also the expanded sound world, through the use of different techniques within these pieces as described in this chapter, was for me as performer a new creative challenge, because the influence from my part became substantial. Remarkable was the approach of Stockhausen himself while we were working on these pieces together: whenever something didn't have the effect or sound he was looking for, because of a different instrument or a different room, he could change the score on the spot. For example, *Klavierstück VII* was composed behind an old Bösendorfer grand piano. The reverberation of old instruments in general but especially of a Bösendorfer is incomparable with a modern Steinway, so when we rehearsed at his house with a modern Steinway B the audibility of the harmonics and their lengths was far from sufficient. Then we started to experiment to come to a solution by adding silently played tones, thus getting more undamped strings, to find the right timbre and sound cloud. It was a very 'fluid' way to deal with a score and proved to me his strong imagination of this specific piece.

[13] Ibid.

4g. The Influence of Anton Webern's Music on Stockhausen

After having discussed the two sets of *Klavierstücke* (I–IV and V–X) and the influence of the newfound discoveries within the electronic music on them, it is important also to mention the influence of Anton Webern on Stockhausen. In the early 1950s (probably in 1951) he got the first score of Webern's music from a friend who knew about his enormous interest in Arnold Schönberg. A year later, the director of Universal Edition sent all available Webern scores and even manuscripts and sketchbooks to Stockhausen as to enable him to study them thoroughly. In many of his texts, Stockhausen mentions the works of Webern; he analyses them and writes articles about them. By studying the music of Webern he discovered that actually no one creates something radically new, a new development is always a next step in an already existing process. He writes in June 1955 in *die Reihe* 2:

> "[…] *und wenn wir eine Ahnung davon bekommen haben, dass wir nicht vom Himmel gefallen und unabänderlich mit unserer Tradition – nicht mit irgendeiner – verbunden sind, so erkennen wir, dass Webern am stärksten in die Zukunft gewiesen hat."*[14]

When you realise that Stockhausen became familiar with Webern's music only after he had composed the very radical *Klavierstücke I–IV* and before composing the *Klavierstücke V–X*, and then read the following, you can only conclude that Stockhausen was inspired much more by Webern's works up until opus 20 than by his later works.

> "*Wenn man Weberns Werke bis op.20 studiert, vor allen Dingen hört, so fällt auf, wieviel Flexibilität auf kleinen Raum in die Musik kommt, durchhörbare Ritardandi, Acellerandi* [sic]*, ausgehörte Pausen. Ab op.21 wird die Musik Weberns zunächst einmal sehr starr, fast mechanisch, aufgrund dieses ganz strengen Geistes, der sich als läuternde objektive Haltung wichtiger empfand als das Musik gewordene Ausdrucksbedürfnis, das sich in seinen Werken von op. 6 bis op. 20 gezeigt hatte."*[15]

[14] Stockhausen, "Anton Webern" in *Texte* Band 2, 142.
[15] Karlheinz Stockhausen, "Webern-Seminar: 'Da Hatten die Leute kaum aufgehorcht, und schon war alles wieder vorbei'" [3 Juni 1985] in *Texte zur Musik 1984–1991: Über LICHT: Komponist und Interpret: Zeitwende* Band 9 (Kürten: Stockhausen Verlag, 1998), 532.

All the important characteristics of the earlier works he mentions are precisely the elements that will play a prominent role in his, at that time, still to be composed piano works.

It's fascinating to conclude that, whereas Webern was forced to stop due to his unfortunate death in 1945, Stockhausen composed, unconscious of Webern's music, his *Klavierstücke I–IV* in an even more radical style by rationalising every single element of the compositional structure. In the *Klavierstücke V–X*, he started to search again for the *flexibility* of the compositional elements by introducing *accelerandi*, long *ritardandi* and 'musically filled pauses', i.e. silences with a musical meaning.

5. *Klavierstück XI*

> "*In electronic music, generators, tape recorders 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.*"[16]

Klavierstück XI was composed in 1956. It is the first piano piece where Stockhausen used so called aleatoric principles or chance operations. Influenced by, among others, John Cage and David Tudor, the factor 'chance' became part of the composition ('alea' being the Latin word for 'dice'). Chance can determine the choice of notes but can also define the method of performance. In this case, nineteen different musical phrases from different lengths and compositionally connected, are printed irregularly on a big sheet of paper. The performer selects randomly where to start the piece by looking without prior intent at the paper, finding at the end of each phrase new playing indications (dynamic, mode of attack and tempo) for the next phrase. Every new phrase is again randomly chosen. The piece ends whenever you arrive at a certain phrase for the third time.

It seems to be an enormous freedom for the performer and Stockhausen spoke indeed about the "irreplaceable significance of the interpreter, set next to music in which only measurement, the ruler and the clock hold sway". However, I experienced this freedom as rather limited, because I found out very soon that starting a new phrase randomly entailed great dangers.

There are in fact quite some phrases which are impossible to play – when you are (un)lucky enough to get there (randomly) – with the fastest tempo indication, and/or with the most difficult mode of attack as playing mode (the previously mentioned double-attack), which is assigned to you at the end of the phrase you played before. So, there is no other choice than to cheat on the aleatoric principle of the piece, at least if you are a sensible performer.

[16] Stockhausen, quoted in Michael Kurtz, *Stockhausen a Biography*, 79.

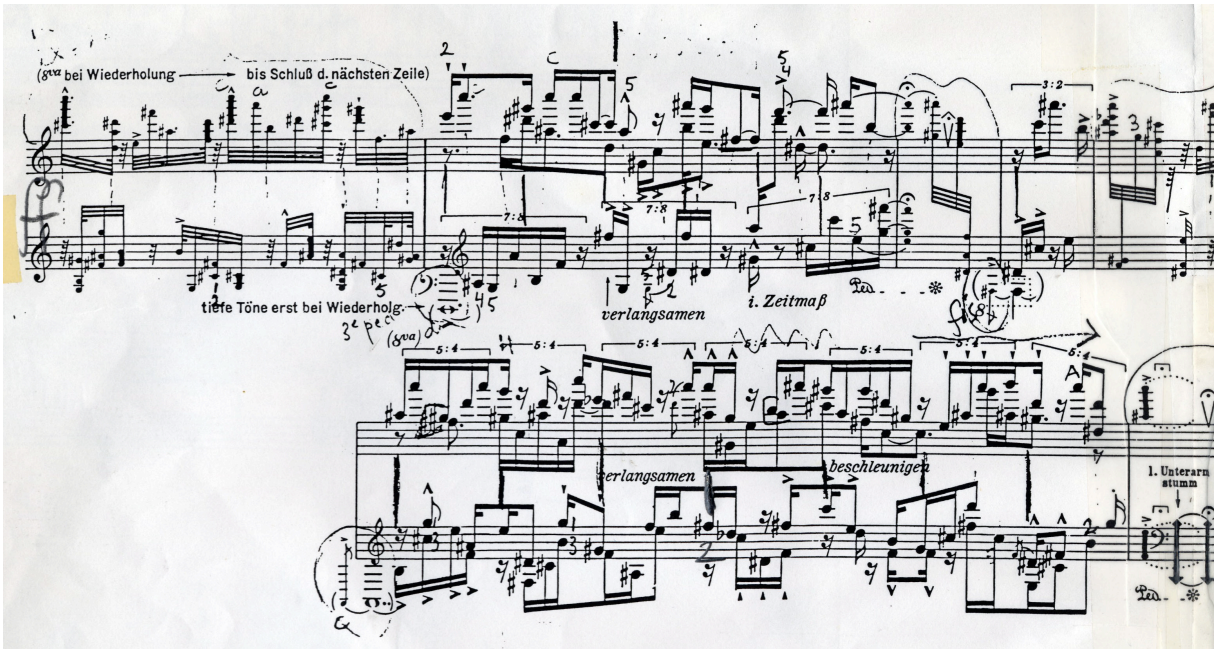

Figure 18: *Klavierstück XI*, excerpt.

This is an example of a part of one of the nineteen phrases, which is impossible to play when you happen to get there with a fast tempo indication and/or with the double-attack as playing mode.

The reality is that I made two different versions of *Klavierstück XI* together with Stockhausen, and I always played them both in concerts. In this way the audience could listen to two totally different pieces, which were created out of the same nineteen groups of notes, as to get an idea of the 'chance' aspect of this composition. For me it meant, after the two versions were made, that *Klavierstück XI*, even with its completely different musical concept, didn't stand out anymore from Stockhausen's previous piano pieces because the aleatoric aspect wasn't any longer part of the performance.

6. Dehumanization of Music?

> *Perhaps, Kretschmar said, it was music's deepest desire not to be heard at all, not even seen, not even felt, but, if that were possible, to be perceived and viewed in some intellectually pure fashion, in some realm beyond the senses, beyond the heart even.*[17]

I want to come back to the fact that, during my research, I started to feel that I wouldn't find answers to my research question by analysing and exploring exclusively the music of Stockhausen or any other composer. Even talking with other performers or living composers wasn't enough to get an insight in what determined my personal 'canon'.
I realise more and more how strongly I am influenced by my role as performer within this repertoire and it needs to be clear that everything I write in this paper is coming from that perspective.
The fact that I am not able anymore to motivate myself to perform some of Stockhausen's piano pieces doesn't mean that I doubt their quality or their importance: it is just that I can't find my role anymore within them. The force of the break in the 1950s with the musical tradition of the 19th century where man and his emotions were worked out to the limit, reaching its peak in the beginning of the 20th century, was sometimes so absolute that it seems almost as if music had to go through a phase of 'dehumanization'.
I think that the Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset is very right in his essay "The Dehumanization of Art" when he states;

> *"The art of which we are speaking is not only not human in that it does not comprise human things, but its active constituent is the very operation of dehumanizing."*[18]

I remember very well the first time that I became aware of the fact that there was such a thing as 'pure cerebral music', a music to be perceived purely intellectually, a music beyond the senses. I was fifteen and a student at the School for Young Talent

[17] Mann, *Dr. Faustus*, 68.
[18] Ortega y Gasset, *The Dehumanization of Art and Other Essays on Art, Culture, and Literature* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968), 71.

at the conservatoire in The Hague, where I had a piano duo with another student of the same teacher. We had to perform Jan van Vlijmen's work for two pianos *Costruzione per due pianoforti* (1961) during a concert of the Composition Department. As the title indicates, the main subject of the piece is its construction, it consists of very complicated, calculated rhythms, fast groups of notes divided over the two pianos, each note having its own dynamic value. As I understood later, this composition was influenced by Van Vlijmen's admiration for Stockhausen. My fellow student and I worked for weeks to be able to perform the piece perfectly: it was a real challenge for us to get the puzzle complete, and we really liked that aspect. What we also liked very much was that there was one moment in the piece where we played a beautiful major chord after all the dissonants we had already worked our way through.

Finally, the day came that Van Vlijmen, who was the director of our school at that moment, attended a rehearsal to work with us on his piece. It was the first time that we played it without interruption and according to us, it went very well. Afterwards we looked at the composer, who kept silent for a while, and then said to us; "Thank you, it's really very good, but… but… you made a big mistake, here you're playing an octave!" He pointed with his finger in the score exactly at the bar that we found so beautiful, which was the place where we had played the major chord. And indeed, we had misread the chord, and our teacher hadn't noticed it either. We could all tell by seeing Van Vlijmen's shocked and upset eyes that we should have been extremely ashamed of ourselves for not being able to understand yet that a major chord was now excluded from the new musical language in which Van Vlijmen was expressing himself.

I had to think about this event again when I read Ortega y Gasset's essay *The Dehumanization of Art*, which I mentioned earlier in this text:

> "*A large part of what I have called 'dehumanization' and the loathing of human forms arises from this antipathy to the traditional interpretation of reality. The vigour of the attack is in indirect ratio to the distance in time: what most repels the artist of today is the predominant style of the past century, despite the fact it contained its own measure of opposition to older styles. On the other hand, the new artist apparently feels an affinity towards art more distant in time or space – the prehistoric, the primitive and exotic. What is probably found pleasing in these primitive works is – more than the works*

themselves – their ingeniousness and the absence of any recognizable tradition in them"[19]

Also Stockhausen recalled during the Webern Seminar in 1985:

"*Ich habe während des Studiums oft mit Ekel reagiert auf manche Musik von Strauss, von Wagner, von Mahler, von Schönberg, weil sie mir einfach zu vulgär war, zu platt, zu physisch, manchmal auch zu bestiales (es gibt ja viele äußerungen in der Musik, die das Schreien, Brüllen, Wüten, Stampfen, Zerreißen benutzen).*"[20]

The affinity with music "more distant in time or space" we can also find with Stockhausen as he becomes during the sixties more and more influenced by for example, music of India, Japan and Africa, or the cadence technique of the classical times.
The fact that this element of dehumanization in music has placed the position of the performer under pressure seems not more than logical to me now. The performer, being human, within a dehumanized musical world is a situation which sooner or later will lead to conflicts.

I won't continue with the next chapter before I quote once again Ortega y Gasset, whose text I would like to use here to illustrate my admiration for Stockhausen's works, even though I don't feel the urge to perform some of them anymore:

"*It is commonly believed to run away from reality is easy, whereas it is the most difficult thing in the world. It is easy to say or paint a thing which is unintelligible, completely lacking in meaning: it is enough to string together words without connection, or draw lines at random. But to succeed in constructing something which is not a copy of the 'natural' and yet possesses some substantive quality implies a most sublime talent.*"

[19] Ortega y Gasset, *The Dehumanization of Art*, 76.
[20] Stockhausen, "Webern-seminar 3. Juni 1985" in *Texte* Band 9, 555.

7. Stockhausen in the 1960s

> *"For my painting, Stockhausen meant structure and form… Something like the* Sand-Stein-Kugelgruppe *would be unconceivable without Stockhausen's* Momente*… Conversely, what he saw in my work was the possibility of loosening rigid structures. He was really drilled in strict composition. So I brought a certain freedom by saying: if you have made a schematic form, you can unmake it too."*[21]

The sixties was a time where Stockhausen moved in his composing from one extreme into the opposite one: from the most controlled, strict compositions of the fifties towards the point where he probes the creativity of the performers to the extreme in works like *Plus-Minus* and the text compositions of *Aus den sieben Tagen* from the late sixties. This happened under the influence of many factors; the ever-continuing development of his electronic music, his travels and encounters with all kind of different cultures and other artists, including his second wife Mary Bauermeister, different life events and of course his own, never-ending urge to explore and renew.

I will not go too much into details about this decade but in relation to this I have to mention *Kontakte* (1958–1960, premiered in 1960),[22] originally planned to be performed by four musicians: three percussionists and a pianist, interacting with synchronically played electronic music in a 'variable' way, from performance to performance differently, but the musicians felt insecure with the aleatoric indications and, like in *Klavierstück XI*, Stockhausen decided to fix every singe detail in the score. He reduced the number of percussionists to only one and the pianist got to play some percussion instruments as well.

It's always a great event to perform this piece and very exciting: to keep 'contact' with the tape, trying to blend in or just the opposite, simultaneously with keeping track of what the percussionist is doing and synchronize with that as well, while playing a difficult piano part plus some percussion instruments with different sticks. This complexity demands for an in-depth dedication to the composition. Although I consider *Kontakte* a very important work within the Stockhausen's oeuvre, I decided

[21] Mary Bauermeister, *Aspekte eines Phänomens*: exhibition catalogue for the Kunst- und Museumverein Wuppertal 1981–1982, 202.

not to go into it any further in this text because in my research I want to focus on the solo piano works and *Mantra* for 2 pianos.

I would like to give an example of the complete other side of Stockhausen's compositional spectrum. Stockhausen once told me about the despair he felt after Mary Bauermeister broke up with him in the late sixties. He didn't want to live anymore and had to suffer the pain of a broken heart. He didn't eat for a week and in this overly sensitive state of mind he wrote his first composition based exclusively on text;

play a sound
play it for so long
until you feel
that you should stop

again play a sound
play it for so long
until you feel
that you should stop

and so on

stop
when you feel
that you should stop

but whether you play or stop
keep listening to the others

at best play
when people are listening

do not rehearse

This text became part of Stockhausen's composition *Aus den sieben Tagen.* It contains nothing more than these sentences: no other instructions were given. Performers have to construct their own composition based on this text, and must rely on their musical inspiration while doing so.

After one of our first rehearsals of the *Klavierstücke* in his house in Kürten, always a quite nerve-racking event for me, Stockhausen gave me the last of these text compositions, the album *Goldstaub*, as a gift. The text goes as follows:

live completely alone for four days
without food
in complete silence, without much movement
sleep as little as necessary
think as little as possible

after four days, late at night,
without conversation beforehand
play single sounds

without thinking which you are playing

close your eyes
just listen

One could not imagine a larger contrast than that between an 'instruction' like this text and the score of the *Klavierstück* I had struggled my way through during the rehearsal just before! I could not relate a single instruction for *Goldstaub* to my own performance practice, on the contrary.
In all the years after *Klavierstück XI*, Stockhausen did not compose new solo piano works. The emphasis was more on a common creative process in which groups of musicians cooperated.

During the Webern seminar in 1985 Stockhausen stated the following:

"*Es gibt ja ausser dem Mentalen das Intuitive, das ich in den sechziger Jahren stark gefordert habe, weil auch in meiner eigenen Musik das mentale überbewertet wurde und man von aussen nur das gesehen hat. Man hat ja noch gar nicht richtig bemerkt, dass seit beginn der siebziger Jahre meine Werke vorwiegend intuitiv inspiriert waren und nicht nur das Mentale enthielten, weil ich vorher immer nur das Mentale genannt und kaum über das Intuitive gesprochen hatte*."[23]

It's so interesting to see and to notice the consequence of this movement from the dehumanized, cerebral composing towards the intuitive composing.

[23] Stockhausen, "Webern-seminar" in *Texte* band 9, 556.

It has a direct effect on the role of the performer. From a 'machine-like' performer almost towards the point where the performer transforms into the composer.
Two larger extremes are hardly imaginable.
In his memoires, published in 2015, Konrad Boehmer (1941–2014) asked himself the following related question:

> *Wie war es zu vereinbaren, dass ein Komponist Graphiken fertigte, deren klingendes erst vom Interpreten festgelegt wurde? War der dann ein Mit-Komponist? Konnte er das überhaupt?*[24]

[24] Konrad Boehmer, *Nach Köln: Eine Auswahl aus Konrad Boehmers Memoiren* (Amsterdam: Konrad Boehmer Foundation, 2015), 76, 78.

8. *Mantra*

> *"When the consciousness is transparent, the sound can be heard distinctly, and it is a seeing sound, as it were, a sound-image or a sound-idea, which inseparably links hearing to vision and thought within the same luminous essence."*[25]

The common creative process for the realisation of a text composition by a whole group of musicians, which I mentioned earlier, turned out not to be satisfactory for Stockhausen. The musical dependency on others made him feel that he wanted to develop further a compositional language for which only he himself was responsible: a music in which he could develop a new sort of inner balance within his compositional practice.

> "*Das Physische, das Mentale, das Intuitive in ein Gleichgewicht zu bringen, sehen wir überhaupt erst wieder seit 30 Jahren als die Hauptaufgabe – und 30 Jahre ist sehr wenig Zeit. Wenn Sie diesem Prozess 100 Jahre geben, um ein harmonisches Gleichgewicht zu erreichen, so werden Sie sehen, dass eine gereinigte zweite 'klassische Musik' herauskommen kann, die die verschiedenen Aspekte der Himmels- und Menschen-Musik vereinigt und die das Gefühl gibt, dass eine ausgewogene Musik alle Aspekte des Menschen ins Gleichgewicht bringt und keinen Aspekt auslässt."*[26]

In 1970 Stockhausen started to work on "Mantra für 2 Pianisten". The main idea was to compose a small form, a structure, being the germ to build an expanded form with the exclusive use of the material from this germ-structure.

> "*I was sitting next to the driver, and I just let my imagination completely loose… I was humming to myself… I heard this melody – it all came very quickly together. I had the idea of one single musical figure or formula that would be expanded over a very long period of time, and by that I meant fifty or sixty minutes. And these notes were the centres around which I'd continually present the same formula in a smaller form… I wrote this melody down on an envelope."*[27]

This melody consists of eight bars and they form a 'mantra', or 'formula'.

Stockhausen chose the name *Mantra* to avoid terms such as 'theme', 'series', 'row',

---

[25] Satprem, *Sri Aurobindo, or the Adventure of Consciousness*, retrieved online 2 February 2018: http://www.connieleemarie.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Satprem-Sri-Aurobindo-or-The-Adventure-of-Consciousness.pdf (no page numbers).
[26] Stockhausen, "Webern-seminar" in *Texte* band 9, 557.
[27] Jonathan Cott, *Stockhausen: Conversations with the Composer* (Glasgow: HarperCollins Distribution Services, 1974), 222.

or ‘subject’, like we use when analysing a fugue. *Mantra* means something similar but with more of a spiritual connotation: it is a series of tones or syllables which are repeated, in different tempi and intensities, not only concretely audible but also inwardly experienced. It is a sort of meditation, not meaning to enter a state of spiritual ‘emptiness’, but to arrive at the highest possible state of concentration as to achieve complete awareness.

> *“But there is a higher magic, which also derives from handling vibrations, on higher planes of consciousness. This is poetry, music, the spiritual mantras of the Upanishads and the Veda, the mantras given by a Guru to his disciple to help him come consciously into direct contact with a special plane of consciousness, a force or a divine being. In this case, the sound holds in itself the power of experience and realization – it is a sound that makes one see.”* [28]

For what it is worth, I consider *Mantra* to be a masterpiece. It is the complete balance of all the different phases within the composing of Stockhausen, the perfect synthesis. The use of; 1) construction, 2) electronics, 3) additional sound worlds, 4) theatrical aspects, 5) freedom of expression, it is all coming together in this piece of around 70 minutes. It is important to get an insight in the piece by examples of these 5 different aspects, and the impact of these aspects on the role of the performer:

1) *Construction*

The “Mantra” is made up of 13 different notes, starting with A and finishing with the same A: it is a twelve-tone series with the addition of the repetition of the first note at the end. (Listen to sound example 1 on the Research Catalogue.)

[28] Satprem, *Sri Aurobindo, or the Adventure of Consciousness* (no page numbers).

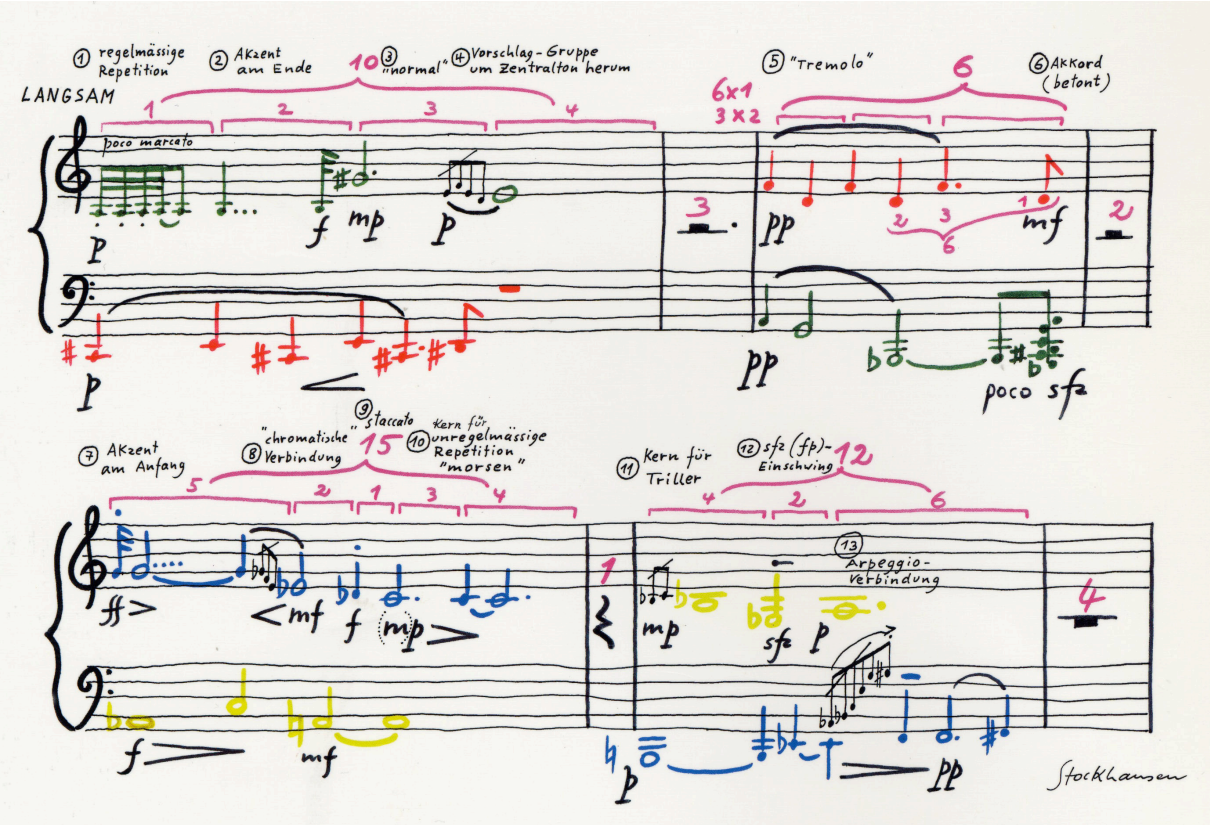

Figure 19: *Mantra*, front page of score with the 'mantra'.

The mantra itself consists of 4 different tone 'limbs': the first one starts with an A (fig. 20) and is followed by a pause of 3 beats. The second limb starts on F (fig. 21) and is followed by a pause of 2 beats. The third limb starts on G (fig. 22) and is followed by a pause of 1 beat. And finally the fourth limb, which starts with a B flat (fig. 23), and which is followed by a pause of 4 beats.

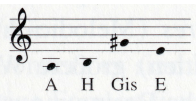

Figure 20: limb 1.

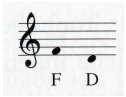

Figure 21: limb 2.

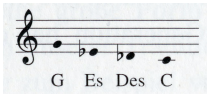

Figure 22: limb 3.

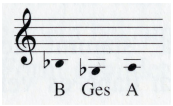

Figure 23: limb 4.

These together are the 12 chromatic tones within one octave, with the 13th tone of the mantra being the same as the first.

In the image of the complete mantra on this page you can see the different lengths of every individual note and every individual pause, creating different time proportions. These time proportions are flexible: they are increasing or decreasing.

Stockhausen wanted to personify every individual note of the 'Mantra' by giving them their own 'character'. The image of the 'mantra' on page 42 will clarify this. The A at the beginning has another tone 'form' (repetition) than the last A (linked by an arpeggio), which results in 13 different characters, all becoming dominant in one of the 13 big cycles of the work.

The 4 limbs of the mantra appear also 'mirrored', an octave lower, starting on the same A. However, the order of the mirrored limbs is changed, so that the first limb is combined with the second mirrored limb, and the second limb is combined with the first mirrored limb, etc. Because of this, he had to adjust the note lengths of the mirrored mantra. He also changed the last note of the first mirrored limb. If he would have been consequent, this last note would have been an E. But purely for artistic reasons, he changed the E into a D-sharp as to avoid an octave, which would have occurred together with the last note of the right-hand limb. Because, as he stated, with this octave, the suggestion would have been created that the piece was coming to an end. (watch the video excerpt on the Research Catalogue.)

The mantra can be considered as the seed that comes to blossom: there is literally not one note during this 70-minute work that is not an element of it.

The mantra is built out of the 12 chromatic notes within one octave. Stockhausen then composed 12 subsequent scales with ranges larger than an octave, but always consisting of 12 notes. If the mantra is transposed to these new scales, the result becomes a mantra with completely different intervals, though related by their proportions. He does the same with the lengths of the notes: they can be contracted or expanded, resulting in mantras of a few seconds, or mantras of several minutes.

This is of course a very brief analysis, but it does reflect the essence of this extensive work, namely its strict construction. It is often said that *Mantra* is a theme with variations, but Stockhausen was strongly against this concept of the piece, because, according to him, a variation means to vary, to change, to add, to leave out. In *Mantra* nothing is varied, changed, added or left out. This strictness re-establishes links with the exactly notated piano works of the fifties. However, for me as performer of all Stockhausen's piano works, there is an enormous difference: I would never ask myself if I could be replaceable by a 'machine' for a performance of

Mantra. It is exactly this question that I asked myself – and so did Stockhausen – in relation to the early works from the fifties. So, it proves to me that it is not the aspect of 'construction' that is creating a conflict between the composition and my role as a performer. Apparently, it is the material with which such a construction is made. And looking at the material you can find crucial differences between *Mantra* and the early *Klavierstücke*:

- In the fifties, the elements of the construction were single notes, 'points', in a certain order, determined by a row, without further 'audible' relationships, as opposed to *Mantra,* where the elements of the construction are linked, resulting in a very easy to sing, recognisable melody.
- In the piano works before *Mantra,* the combined rhythmical layers are extremely complicated, diverse and constantly changing. However, the audible outcome is not a rhythmical clarity, or a feeling of pulse, but rather a rhythmical vagueness: a constant *accelerando* and *ritardando* within the musical language can be fascinating, but can also create a sense of incoherence and arbitrariness when the acceleration and de-acceleration are not perceivable in relation to an audible, stable pulse. *Mantra* has long sections in one tempo and one pulse: as a result, the listener can associate these sections with a familiar musical language.
- The use of dynamics is essentially different: the dynamic changes per note or group of notes in the fifties against the use of the same dynamics for whole sections in *Mantra.*
- The elements of the construction of the early works (tones of the chromatic scale with their corresponding lengths, register and dynamics) are limited, when compared with the added elements used by Stockhausen to compose *Mantra*. I will specify these additional elements later.

All these differences are leading to a completely different position of the performer: the performer now has to shape the structure, sing the melody on the piano, give sections a certain colour, articulate the rhythmic profile, etc. In my *Mantra* rehearsals with Stockhausen, the difference with the early *Klavierstücke* became very clear; all his remarks and comments were now 'expression-related', describing characters such as "invitation to a dance", "humour", "swinging", "dressage", "anger", "inner

calmness". (Listen to sound example 2 on the Research Catalogue.) All these comments used by Stockhausen I pencilled down in my score. In the scores of the early pieces I highlighted many notes with 'more', 'less', 'longer', 'shorter', 'too late' or 'too early', which was also based on Stockhausen's comments made during our rehearsals. The first set of comments consists in a way of 'open' comments, open to an interpretation. 'Humour' for instance does not have a universal connotation: performers can have their own, different association with it and this association can change from day to day. However, 'too early', 'longer' and 'less' are examples of 'closed', absolute comments, which hardly leave any room for a personal approach.

2) *Electronics*

Mantra has its unique sound world, just as any other work by Stockhausen. Together with the idea to compose for two pianos he planned to use his experience with electronic music production to transform the traditional piano sound with the use of ring modulators. The sounds from both pianos are each sent to their corresponding ring modulator, which is also connected with a sine-wave generator that can produce frequencies between 3 Hz and 6000 Hz. This generator sends sine waves (to be tuned and changed by the pianists) to the modulator. A sine wave is a pure electronic sound, which only consists of a fundamental frequency and has no harmonics. The output of the ring modulator produces a new tone, which consists of the sum and the difference frequencies of the sine wave and the piano tone.
To explain what happens technically, let's for a moment take the example of two simple sine waves at the inputs of the modulator, instead of one sine wave and the more complex piano sound, as is the case in *Mantra*. When two sine waves of for instance 500 and 100 Hz are sent to the modulator, the output is a mixture of 600 Hz (the sum) and 400 Hz (the difference).[29] When a sine wave is ring modulated with a piano sound, then not only do we get the sum and difference frequencies of the sine wave and the fundamental frequency of the piano tone, but also the sum and difference frequencies of the sine wave and every harmonic of the piano tone. When the sine wave frequency and the fundamental frequency of the piano tone have a harmonic relationship (for instance 1:1, 2:1, 2:3), the result is still relatively

[29] Should the difference of the two inputs result in a negative value then the absolute value is given. In other words, when the two frequencies of 500 Hz and 100 Hz in the example are interchanged, the difference (-400) would still be audible as 400 Hz.

harmonic, but as soon as inharmonic relationships occur, the modulation process results in a category of metallic, bell-like sounds of which the pitches are related to but different from the pitches notated in the score. The overtone structures of the sounds are also very different from those of the original piano tones.
For piano 1 the prescribed sine waves are the 13 tones of the mantra, in the same order, and for piano 2 the sine waves are the 13 tones of the 'mirrored' mantra.
An additional effect is achieved by tuning the sine wave oscillators to frequencies lower than 20 Hz. Such frequencies fall below the human hearing range, but in combination with the ring modulators they produce tremolo-like effects on the piano sounds.[30] (Listen to sound examples 3–6 on the Research Catalogue.)

3) *Use of added sound worlds besides the piano sound*

Besides the transformation of the piano sounds by the two modulators, the sound world is enriched even more by 24 antique cymbals (12 for each pianist) and two round woodblocks: Japanese *Boku-sho*, with diameters of 15 and 17 centimetres.

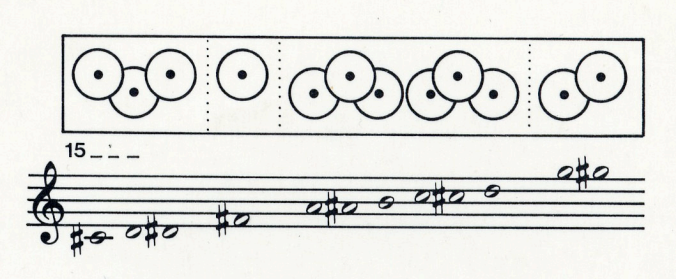

Figure 24: *Mantra*, pitches of the antique cymbals played by pianist 1.

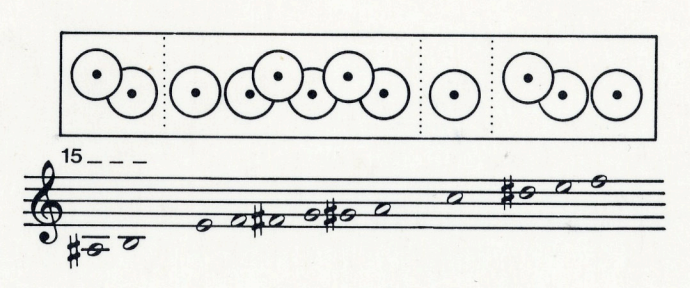

Figure 25: *Mantra*, pitches of the antique cymbals played by pianist 2.

[30] This is in fact amplitude modulation.

In addition to these instruments pianist 1 uses a tape recorder with volume control to add a short-wave sound from bar 578 until bar 637 of *Mantra.*

4) *Theatrical aspects*

There are 3 sections in *Mantra* where Stockhausen composed musical 'scenes' in which the performers need to act besides their 'normal' playing:

- From bar 212 until 238: a musical 'fight' between the pianists about the right notes.
- From bar 324 until 435: a musical dressage by pianist 2 of pianist 1 with the use of the woodblock resulting in a climax of chords.
- From bar 638 until 640: a free section where the pianists, standing, shout 'Japanese-inspired' cries with the use of the woodblocks.

5) *Freedom of expression*

Besides the fact that *Mantra* is a 'constructed' work in the sense that every single tone is related to the mantra, it is striking to experience the 'freedom' for the performers. The following examples will clarify this:

a) The way in which Stockhausen deals with the factor tempo. Usually the tempi are very strictly dictated with metronome numbers, which are related to a row. In *Mantra* the tempi are flexible:

Figure 26: *Mantra*, tempo indications, page 1.

b) The section from bar 492 until 530 where piano 1 plays freely within the metric part of piano 2:

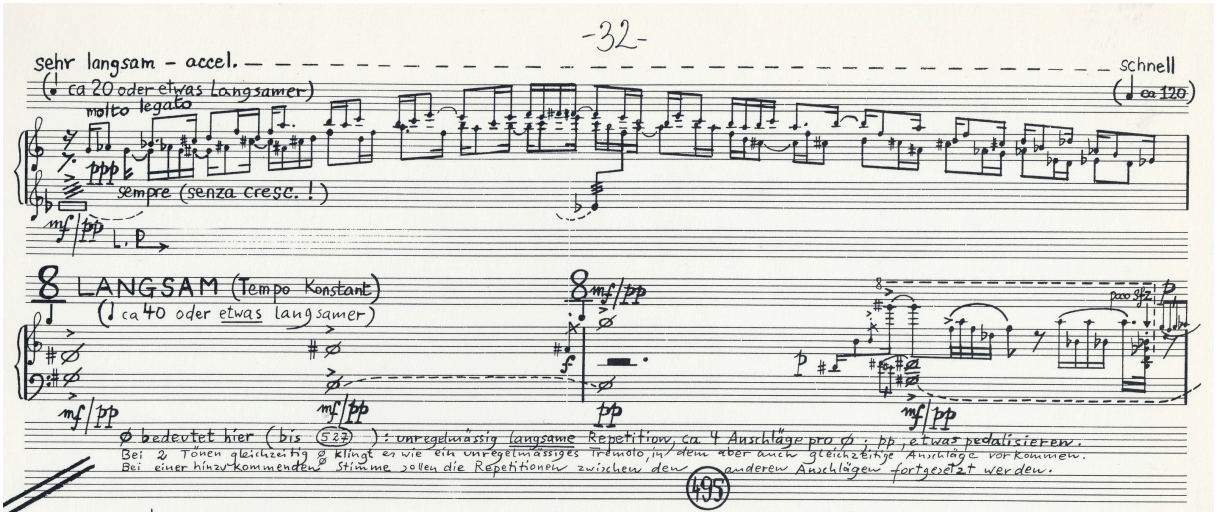

Figure 27: *Mantra*, page 32, bars 492–493.

c) The free, improvisation-like use of 'morsing', meaning to play note repetitions that suggest Morse code signals, on the piano or the antique cymbals:

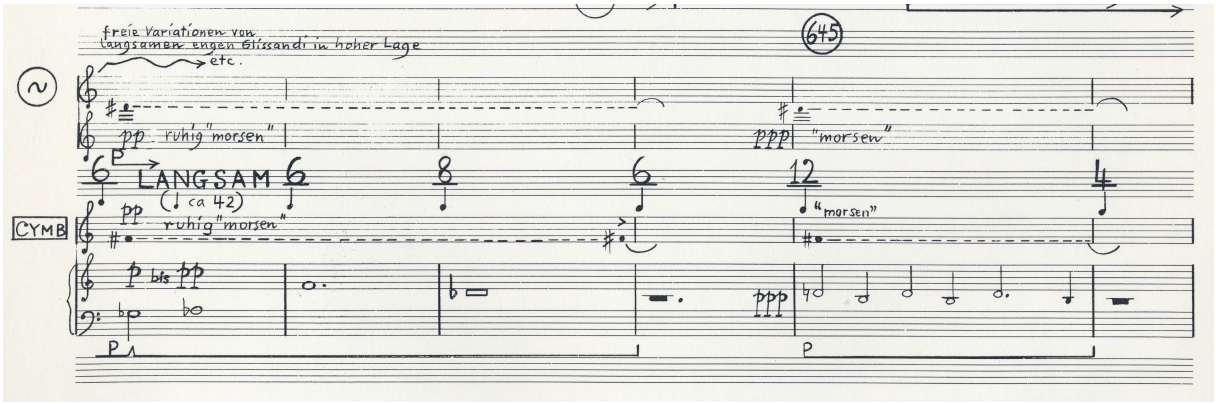

Figure 28: *Mantra*, page 45, bars 641–646.

d) The room for creativity in the use of the modulators:

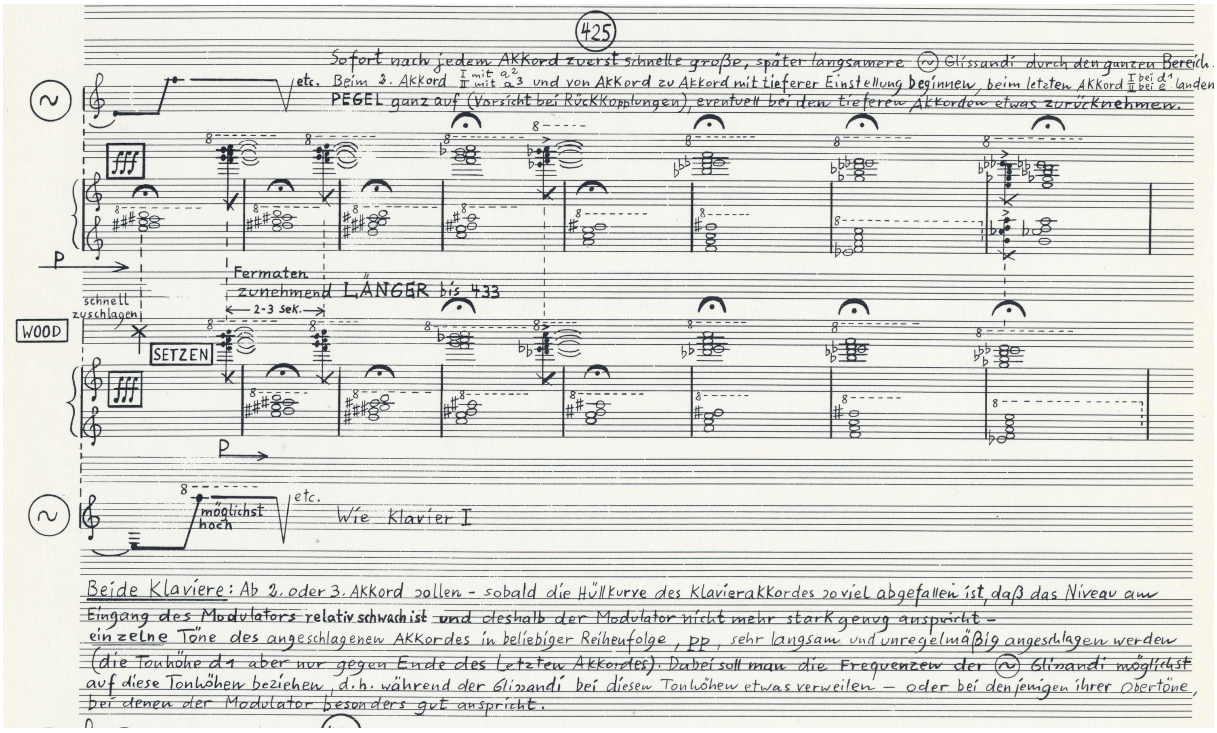

Figure 29: *Mantra*, page 27, bars 421–428.

e) The use of *fermata*, *ritardandi* and *accelerandi*:

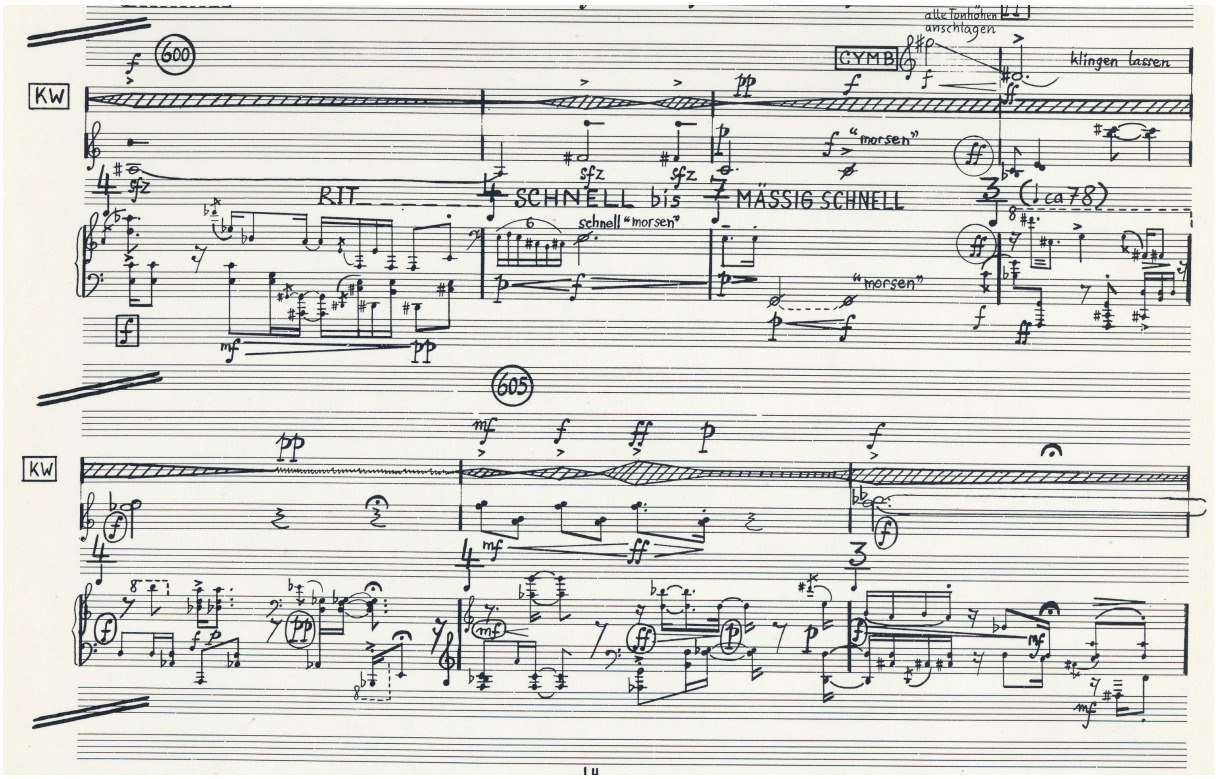

Figure 30: *Mantra*, page 41, bars 600–606.

To perform *Mantra* is a very special experience every time because of the 'uncontrollability' of many of the aspects described here. Yet another fascinating aspect is the experience of time while performing this work. *Mantra* has a duration of around 70 minutes, which for a work without any interruptions is relatively long compared to other piano literature. What is intriguing to notice is that these 70 minutes can be experienced totally different from performance to performance. I also noticed this in performances of other repertoire, but always to a much lesser extent. It seems indeed that the concentration needed to follow the transformations of the 'mantra' into all its different forms, results into a state of consciousness which makes you lose a realistic feeling of time. Because of that it has happened to me that I experienced the total length of the piece as not more than 10 minutes, while at other occasions – sometimes with, but also sometimes without a clear reason – the piece felt 'endless'. This uncontrollable factor always turns a performance *Mantra* into a kind of adventure.

9. Piano Compositions as Part of the Opera Cycle *Licht*: *Klavierstücke XII–XIV*

In 1977, Stockhausen started his seven-part opera cycle *Licht*, in which every part is named after a day of the week. *Licht* is about music and religion, the destiny of mankind, the earth and the cosmos. The main characters of the cycle are the spiritual 'essences' Michael, Eve and Lucifer: Michael being the Creator, Lucifer the Revolter and Eve the Mother.

Each opera in this cycle is related to one of these divinities to which Stockhausen also referred as 'spiritual essences': Monday is the day of Eve, Tuesday is the day of the confrontation between Michael and Lucifer, Wednesday is the day of collaboration between all three, Thursday is Michael's day, Friday is the temptation of Eve by Lucifer, Saturday is Lucifer's day and Sunday is about the mystical union between Michael and Eve.

Michael, Lucifer and Eve appear in three different forms: as singers (tenor, bass and soprano), as instruments (trumpet, trombone and basset horn) and as bodies (dancers).

Just as in *Mantra*, the whole opera cycle of *Licht* is based on a formel, in this case a 'Superformel':

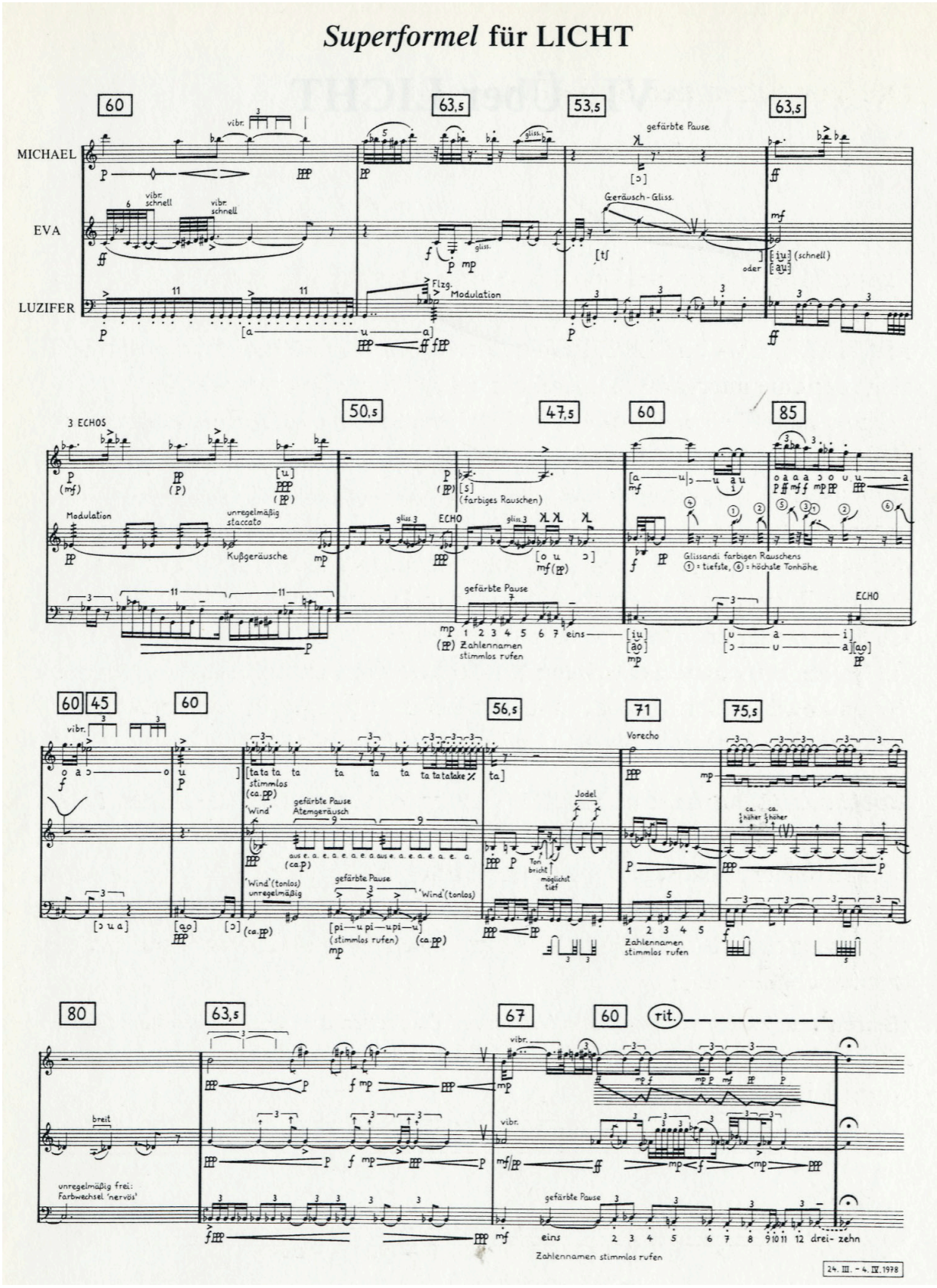

Figure 31: *Licht*, 'superformel'.

Each divinity has its own melody or *formel*:

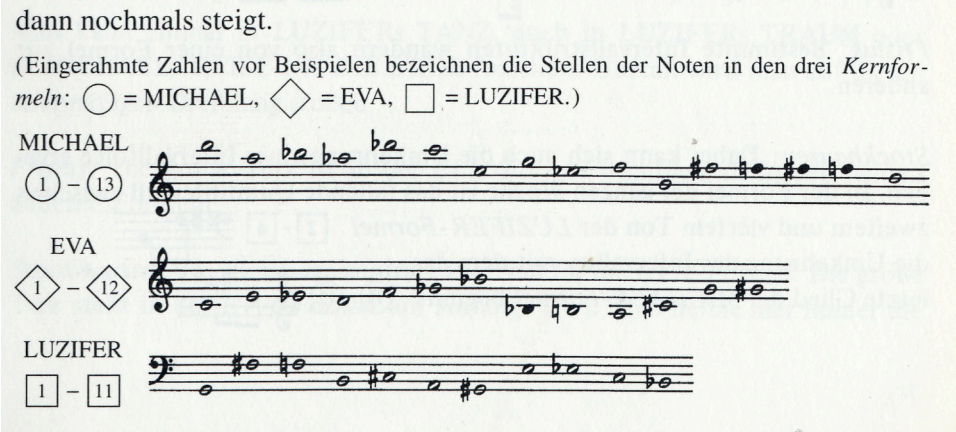

Figure 32, *Licht*, 'kernformeln' for Michael, Eva and Lucifer.

Within the opera *Licht*, the piano plays only a very limited role: in *Donnerstag aus Licht*, the piano is part of a quintet in *Examen,* a scene from *Michaels Jugend*, written for tenor, trumpet, dancer, basset horn and piano. In *Samstag aus Licht* the piano appears in the scene *Luzifers Traum* for bas singer and piano, and in *Montag aus Licht* in *Befruchtung mit Klavierstück*, a scene of *Eva's Zweitgeburt,* together with a girls choir. Stockhausen later arranged these works into three solo piano works: the *Klavierstücke XII–XIV*.

9a. *Klavierstück XII*

Klavierstück XII is an arrangement for solo piano of the scene *Examen* in the opera *Donnerstag.* The character Michael has to do an entrance examination, which is divided into three parts: in the first exam Michael appears as a tenor singer, in the second exam as a trumpet player and in the third exam as a dancer. Behind a curtain, not visible for the audience, is a basset horn player, and the pianist is the accompanist of Michael during all three exams. A jury, sitting behind a table, is making all kinds of noises and comments as a reaction to the Michael's performances.
When Stockhausen arranged this opera scene for piano solo, he tried to keep the musical and theatrical material intact as much as possible. Consequently the arrangement is a very virtuosic piano piece, highly polyphonic and not always pianistic. Additionally the pianist needs to replace almost all the sound effects of

Michael, the singer and trumpet player, and the comments and sounds of the jury by whistling, singing, whispering, tongue clacking and producing hissing sounds. Even the feet are used to produce sounds.

Klavierstück XII is the first piano piece by Stockhausen where the pianist also plays inside the piano by plucking or tapping the strings or by making glissandi on the strings. It is evident that in this piece, Stockhausen is making maximum use of both the pianist and the piano.

I will give some examples to show the transformation from the original quintet to the solo piano piece:

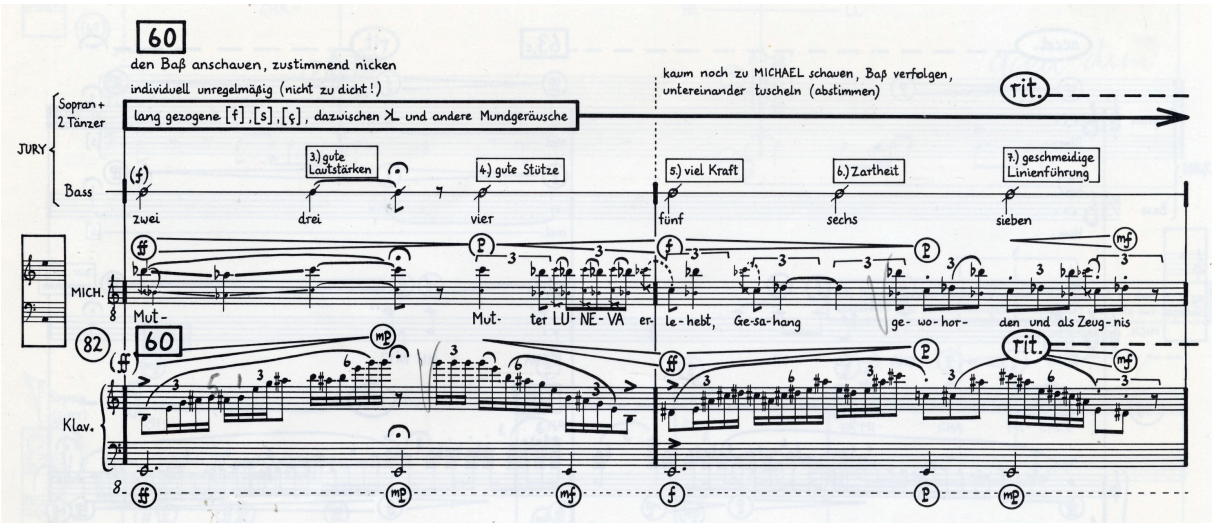

Figure 33: *Examen*, page 10, bars 82–83.

Above are the last two bars of the first exam with Michael as tenor (the printed octaves in the part of the singer is an 'ossia'). When you compare these bars with the same bars of the solo version (next page), you will notice that the part of Michael is played in octaves in the left hand of the pianist while keeping the low E bass notes in the pedal. The pianist should make all kind of diverse sounds with the mouth to reproduce the parts of the jury members.

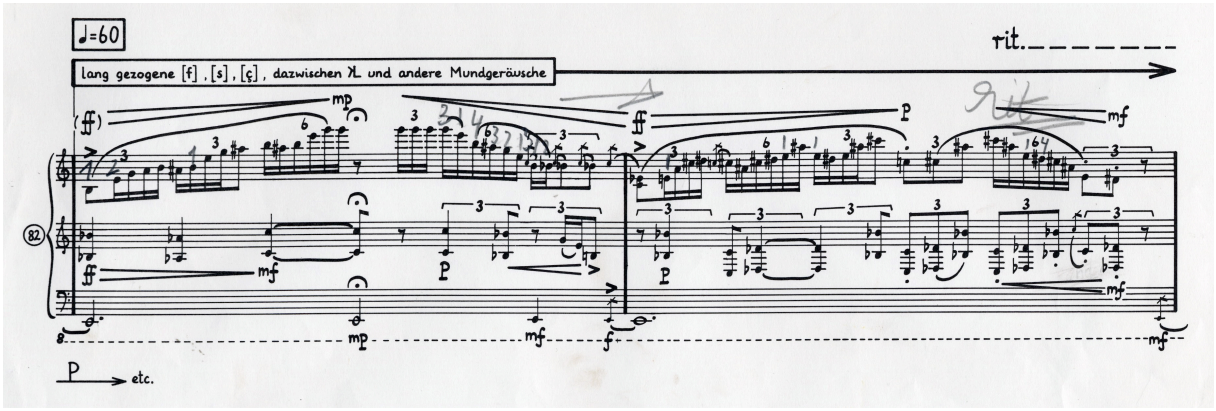

Figure 34: *Klavierstück XII*, page 12, bars 82–83.

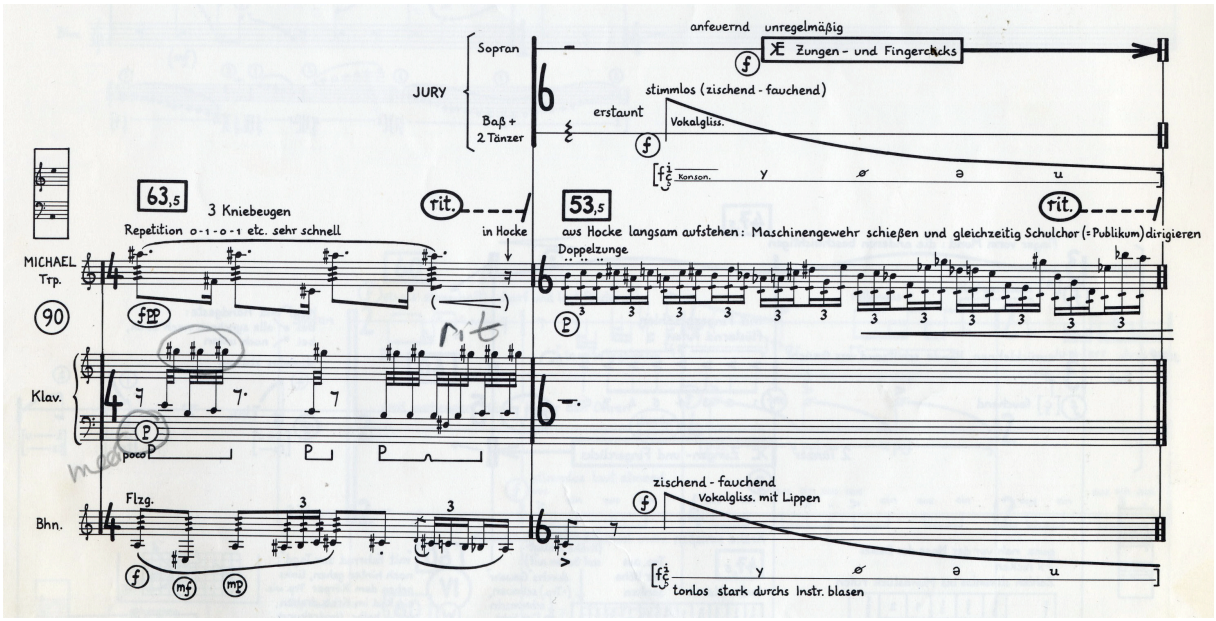

Figure 35: *Examen*, page 11, bars 90–91.

Figure 35 shows two bars from the second exam, where Michael plays the trumpet with the accompaniment of the piano, and the basset horn has a line as well. In *Klavierstück XII*, the pianist plays almost all these parts, as you can see below. The double notes of the trumpet are written as very fast repeated notes on the piano, which is not very pianistic.

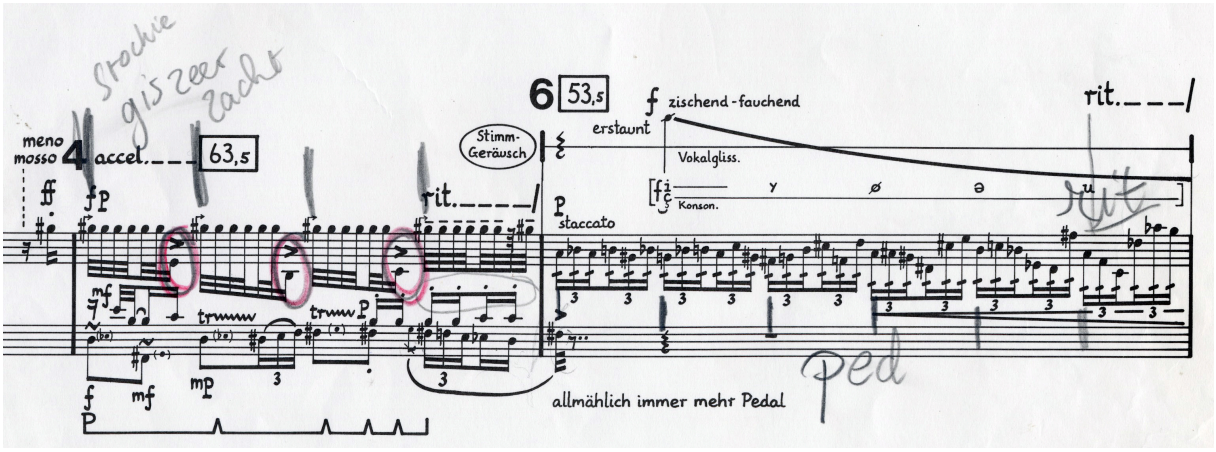

Figure 36: *Klavierstück XII*, page 13, bars 90–91.

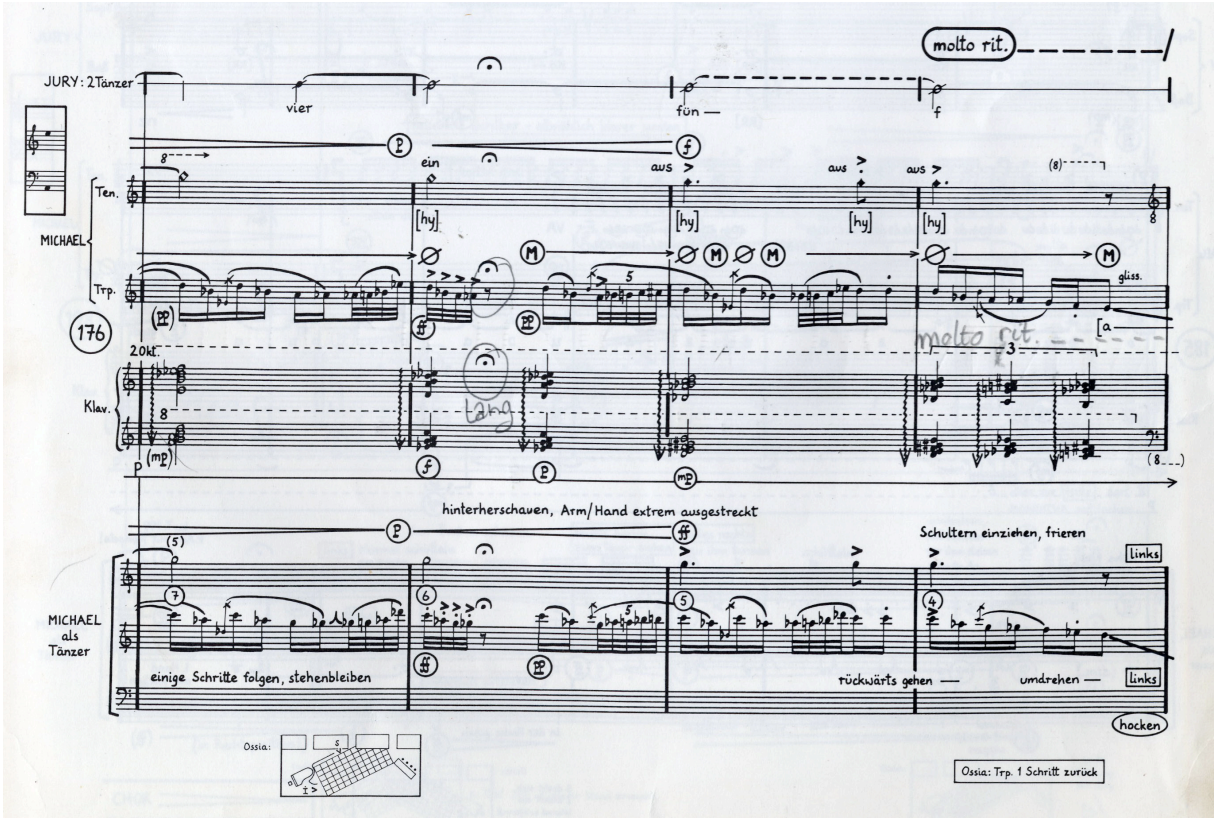

Figure 37: *Examen*, page 27, bars 176–179.

The example above shows four bars of the third exam. All the 'Michaels' are now on stage, but the main focus is on Michael as dancer. In the solo version, the *arpeggios* of the accompanist are played with the right hand, while the left hand is playing the trumpet part. The mouth of the pianist takes over the part of the tenor.

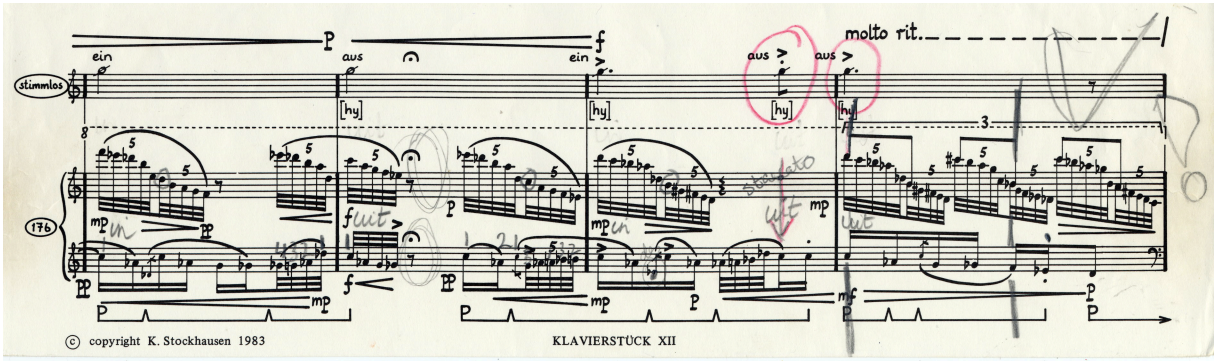

Figure 38: *Klavierstück XII*, page 24, bars 176–179.

Although *Klavierstück XII* is quite complex as a result of the transformation from *five* players plus jury into only *one* player at the piano, the musical language is comparable with what we already saw in the score of *Mantra*. In a way, it is even more traditional. There is no rhythmical complexity, no extreme use of dynamics, and there are no different playing modes. What Stockhausen adds to all three piano pieces derived from the *Licht* opera cycle is theatre. The pianist performs as actor and as singer, and there is also an extended use of the piano as instrument by using the wood, strings, lid, soundboard and pedals, producing a large variety of sounds. It is without question that the 'disturbed' relation with the performer – as I have described in relation to the early piano pieces – is now complete restored again. The performer even has an extended role: just being a virtuosic pianist isn't enough anymore for Stockhausen. If you are not able to whistle or sing the prescribed pitches, you can't perform these pieces.

9b. *Klavierstück XIII*

I do not want to go into the details of the last two piano pieces, because that wouldn't add something new to my research. *Klavierstück XIII* is comparable with number *XII* regarding the musical language, which is understandable because the piano pieces derived from the opera are all based on the same *Super-formel* of the whole *Licht* cycle. However, the theatrical aspect of *Klavierstück XIII* is even more extensive. *Luzifers Traum oder Klavierstück XIII* was composed in 1981 as an important scene for the opera *Samstag,* the day of Lucifer. During the opera it has to be performed with a bass singer. However, in this specific case the part of the singer is rather limited: he mainly sleeps on stage, dreaming this piano piece and appears to be dying

at the end. The score mentions that the piece should be performed “like a magic spook”, meaning that the pianist has to be able to add all kinds of extended playing techniques, and to be able to sing, whistle, shout, stamp, move and act. I will give some striking examples:

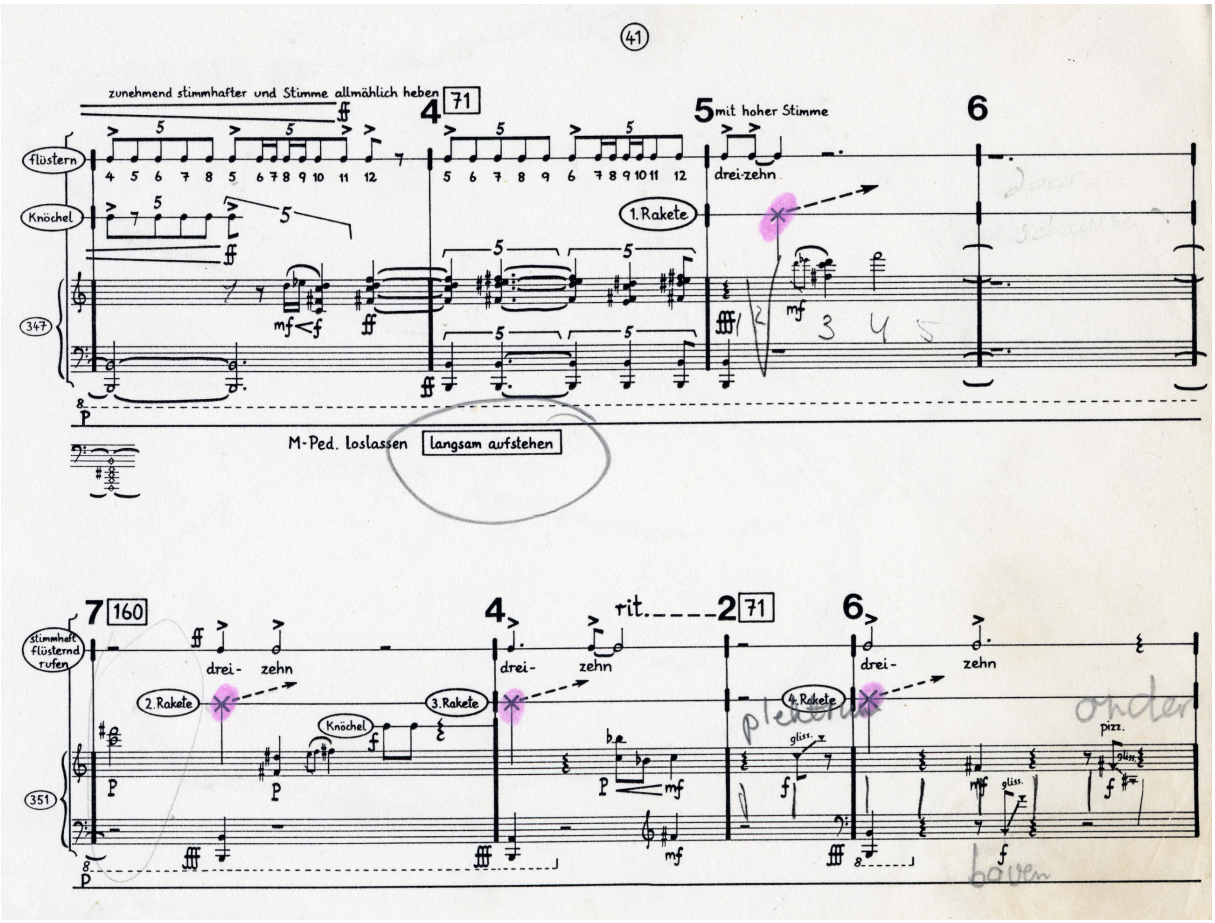

Figure 39: *Klavierstück XIII*, page 41, bars 347–354.

These are bars 347 until 354 of the version for piano solo. The centre of gravity of this work is evidently on the theatrical part through the use of extended techniques. In the first bar the pianist has to play chords on the keys of the piano, needs to count (from whispering to eventually shouting) and plays a rhythm with the knuckles on the wood of the piano as well. Thereafter the pianist needs to stand up slowly, needs to start launching (self-built) rockets from bar 349 onwards, while shouting the number thirteen, in the meantime playing on the keys, hitting the wood with the knuckles and playing glissandi on the strings inside the piano.

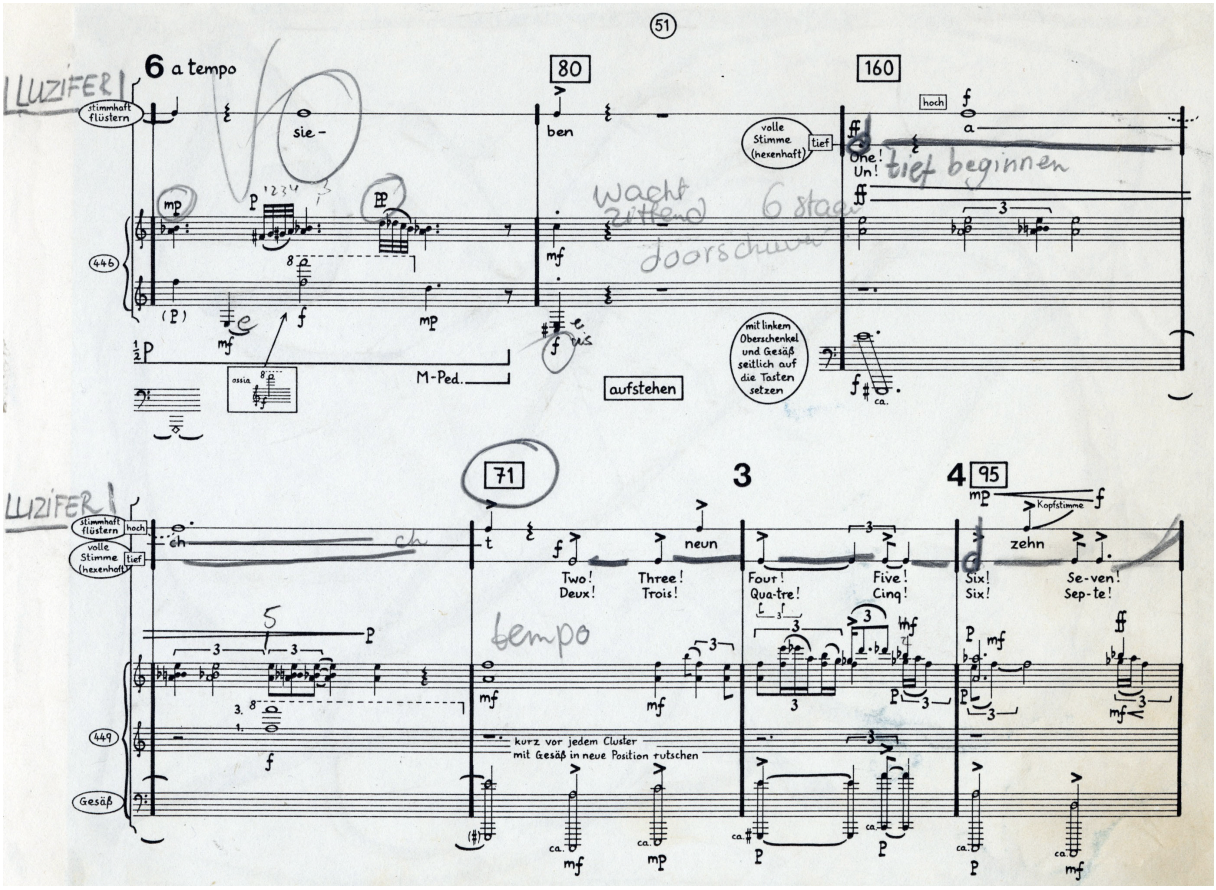

Figure 40: *Klavierstück XIII*, page 51, bars 446–452.

The image above shows bar 446 until 452. A new extended technique is added in bar 448: the clusters in the bass are to be played with the left upper leg, a technique pianists are normally not trained for. The two lines for the voice (low and high) are a consequence of the original duo piece's arrangement into a solo version: the pianist needs to overtake the line of the bass singer (Lucifer) as well.

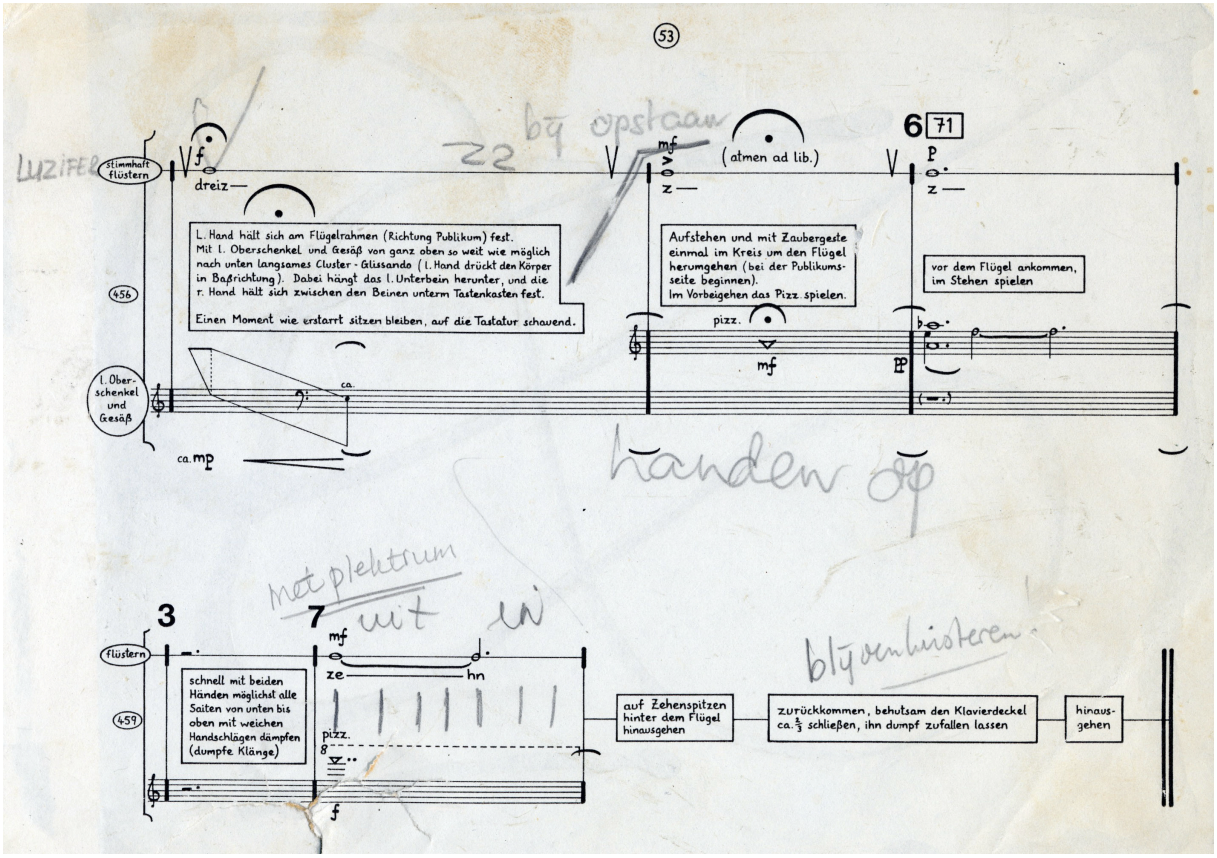

Figure 41: *Klavierstück XIII*, page 53, bars 456–end.

The image above shows the last page of the piece. After a last glissando with the left upper leg (the bar before a stick has to be put in the pedal to keep the pedal down) the pianist must make a tiptoed circle around the piano, pluck a string, play a chord and pluck the last note of the piece while whispering. Then he/she leaves the stage, thinks up and comes back again to close the lid over the keys with quite some noise. Because of the 'stuck' pedal, this makes the piano resonate for a very long time while the pianist leaves the stage again.

It is interesting to recall a quote here of Stockhausen I used in a previous chapter of my text, which is the quote about the dehumanization of music:

> "*Ich habe während des Studiums oft mit Ekel reagiert auf manche Musik von Strauss, von Wagner, von Mahler, von Schönberg, weil sie mir einfach zu vulgär war, zu platt, zu physisch, manchmal auch zu bestiales (es gibt ja viele Äußerungen in der Musik, die das Schreien, Brüllen, Wüten, Stampfen, Zerreißen benutzen).*"

All expressions (*Äußerungen*) in the music of some composers around 1900 Stockhausen describes in the quote above as being bestial, and which made him, as a student, react with disgust, all are expressions he literally uses in *Klavierstück XIII*. The 'human' element has now fully returned into his art.

9c. *Klavierstück XIV*

Klavierstück XIV is a part of the second act of the opera *Montag aus Licht*, *Evas Zweitgeburt*: *Befruchtung mit Klavierstück.* Eve is 'fertilised' by this piano piece: during the opera the piano is moved into an enormous Eve figure on stage, and the seven boys of the seven days are born as a result. All this happens with the accompaniment of singing girls.

The solo version, *Klavierstück XIV,* is the same piano part as in the opera, however, the singing girls are left out. It is a relatively short piece, only six minutes, very colourful, with rapidly changing musical gestures, from lyrical to almost jazzy. The theatrical aspect is limited. The pianist must whisper or add some sounds with either mouth or strings only a few times.

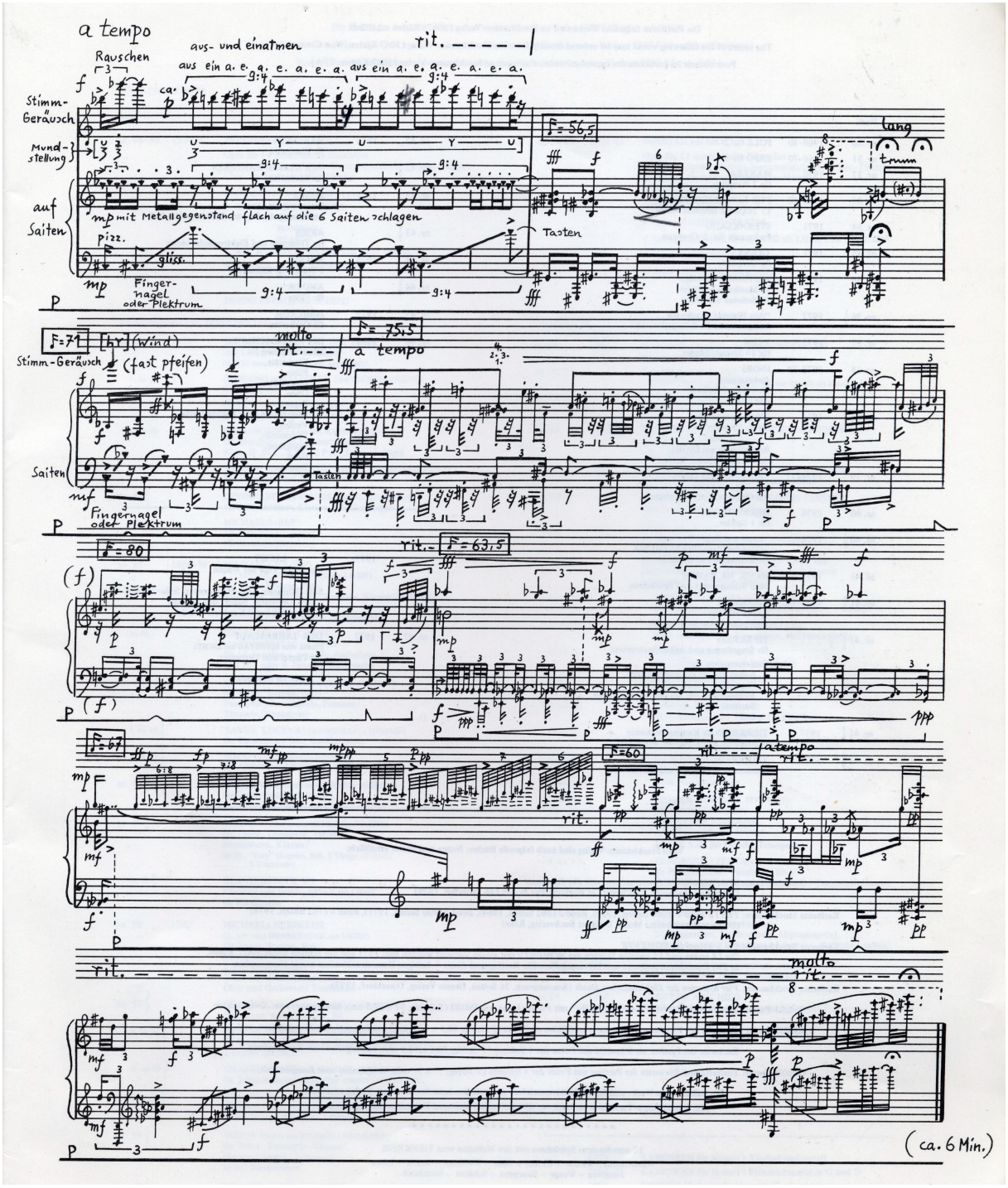

Figure 42: *Klavierstück XIV*, page 2.

Klavierstück XIV is the end of an era. Again, Stockhausen realised that he had reached the limits of the conventional piano. Stockhausen had rejected the use of synthesizers for a long time, in the 1950s he had even removed an electronic keyboard instrument (the Bode Melochord) from the electronic music studio in Cologne. However, from the moment they became technically and financially feasible, they provided him with a range of new possibilities for live performances.

Certain possibilities of the 1950s electronic studio had now become portable and as a result, *Synthi-Fou* for synthesizer is the next piano piece, *Klavierstück XV*.

Stockhausen's move from the piano to the synthesizer also meant the end of an era for me. Stockhausen asked me to join him into the new sound world and to become a synthesizer player as well. However, I decided not to follow him.

10. Conclusions

During the last two years, my research went through different stages. To find an answer to my question what had caused the unconscious emergence of a 'canon' in the piano literature, I mainly started to explore Karlheinz Stockhausen's oeuvre in order to find my answers. Besides that, I interviewed other composers about their works and their views on the influence of Stockhausen on 20th Century music and I read books, articles and analyses about his works in general and his piano pieces in particular.
After a few months, I started to realise that my own role as performer of Stockhausen's piano pieces for several decades, was an indispensable factor for my research: the music and the performer are inextricably linked, as I already stated at the beginning of this paper.
While my research project developed, it became more and more clear to me that there is yet another indispensable factor to be considered here, which is the *perceiver* of the music, the *listener*. And as the composer and the performer are inextricably linked, the performer is linked in a similar way to the listener. The relation between composer and listener is transmitted through the performer: the listener can only receive the sonic translation of the composer's thoughts through the actions of the performer. So, my research can best be described as the construction of a triangle wherein all legs (composer, performer and listener) relate to each other and contribute to the overall shape and content.

With this in mind, during my research I tried to find out how, in the course of two decades, my appreciation for Stockhausen's piano pieces developed and what had caused this development. My conclusion is that the development of my appreciation is closely linked to the development of Stockhausen's awareness of the performer's role in relation to his compositions. Stockhausen's piano pieces show an enormous development, from the early till the later pieces, from the *Klavierstücke* to *Mantra* to *Licht*, with a constant changing role of the performer. I conclude that

- Stockhausen composed the early piano pieces (I–IV) without a 'sound imagination'. He tried to construct a music in which he could keep complete control over all the musical parameters of his choice. At the same time, as mentioned before, Stockhausen saw the performer as a 'machine substitute' and the piano as an insufficient tool for his musical language.

- Due to his growing familiarity with electronics and the electronic sound world, he gradually started to revalue the performer and his/her instrument within his compositions exactly because of the immeasurable factors they introduced: in the subsequent piano pieces (V–X) he therefore started to create room for a personal contribution from the performer again.
- In the next piano piece (XI) Stockhausen added a new aspect of freedom for the performer: he introduced aleatoric elements. Even though this concept turned out to be impossible to realise, Stockhausen showed an increasing awareness of the performer's role, a development that further increased in the 1960s and resulted in compositions in which the performer almost became the co-composer of Stockhausen's compositions.
- In *Mantra,* Stockhausen combined all the aspects mentioned above in a perfect synthesis. He enriched and enlarged the performer's tasks by adding other instruments, electronic sound transformations and theatrical actions.
- The last three piano pieces (XII, XIII, XIV) became increasingly theatrical. The performer needs to sing, act and whistle, and has to use all kinds of extended piano playing techniques.

I consider all Stockhausen's piano pieces as being equally historically important, and their influence on the development of music composition should not be underestimated. However, when I look at them from the point of view of a performer, I see strong differences between them.

Initially I started to perform all these piano pieces with the same degree of intrigue and a feeling of challenge, combined with a strong sense of responsibility towards the composer and towards the historic importance of these pieces. However, while performing them over the years, I started to feel increasingly 'empty-handed' with some of them. I do realise now, after having done this research, that the piano pieces in which I feel empty-handed are the same pieces in which Stockhausen still focused mainly on the exploration of sound itself, on series and the construction of the series, and much less on the position of the performer or the listener.

The triangle 'composer, performer and listener' forms the basis for the result of my research. I did not find the answer to the question about which position Stockhausen's piano pieces might have 50 years from now in the 'canon' of piano literature in those pieces themselves. One can analyse them and one will find an intriguing construction, but the answer to my question is not there.

My research brought me along concepts such as ‘dehumanization’, ‘music for the eye’, ‘construction or composition’ and a music that was not based on an ‘inner hearing’. All these concepts were discussed in relation to my role as a performer. And the role of the performer cannot exist without the listener. No matter what the composer creates and how much the performer tries to turn this creation into sound, music only establishes a meaning when the listener can turn the sounds into music. Stockhausen became very aware of this.

In 1973 (just after composing *Mantra*) he asked himself the following questions in a documented conversation with members of the Dutch music society Nea Mousa, printed in his *Texte* Band IV:

> *Man* könnte *ja auch eventuell einmal eine Aufführung von TRANS machen, bei der überhaupt keine Musiker hinter den Streicherreihen sind und die Musik nur vom Tonband wiedergegeben wird … Und was dann? Merken die Leute das? […]* Oder*: Senden die Musiker wirklich Schwingungen aus – im Moment, wo sie spielen –, die absolut wichtig für Musik sind? Ich glaube fest daran!*[31]

He continued in the same conversation:

> *Was wir bisher Musik genannt haben, war nur ein Ausschnitt der Musik und nie die ganze Musik! Das waren nur die akustischen Wellen. Aber wir wissen ganz genau, daß, wenn wir einen Musiker ‘live’ spielen hören und* wenn *er inspiriert ist, immer noch etwas dazu kommt (meistens leider nicht sehr viel).*[32]

To summarise Stockhausen’s phrases I just quoted: a performance is never complete without an inspired musician sending out vibrations, which is vital to music. Stockhausen is obviously aware of the importance of a performer and the third indispensable element in the triangle: the listener. Why would a musician otherwise have to send out ‘inspired vibrations’ if there would be no one there to perceive them?
In the last quote he complained about the fact that the musician’s inspiration, necessary to give the performance something ‘extra’, is often missing. I find this complaint interesting, also because it raises the question that every performer has to try to answer on a daily basis:

[31] Karlheinz Stockhausen, “Zweites Gespräch” in *Texte zur Musik 1970–1977* Band 4 (Köln: DuMont, 1978), 545.
[32] Ibid., 545–546.

where do you get your inspiration from while performing? I think there are many answers to that question, while at the same time there is a lot of ambiguity about this subject.
But what I do realise now is that there must be a *source* from which the performer can draw his or her inspiration. A source that provides the performer with the opportunity to re-investigate, to transform, to vary, to renew, in short, there must be room and freedom for a performer to stay inspired over a long period of time. Only then a performer will be able to transmit the ideas of a composer to a listener in an inspired and lively way. And only then the listener, also the inexperienced one, can be convinced.

I understand my 'unconsciously emerged' canon better now. My understanding enables me to substantiate my choice to perform only a part of Stockhausen's piano works without feeling guilty about it.
However, I will always support pianists who are willing to study any of Stockhausen's piano works and provide them with all the valuable and precious information and lessons I received directly from Stockhausen. This information and these lessons made me the performer and teacher I am today.

11. Sources of Illustrations

Figures 1, 6–18: Universal Edition, Vienna.

Figures 19–42: Stockhausen Verlag, Kürten.

Figures 2–4: Schott / Universal Edition, Vienna.

Figure 5: A. Durant & Fils, Paris.