

# Addendum

## Kathinka Pasveer about immersion in Kathinka's Gesang

In march 2017, six master students of the The Hague Royal Conservatoire's percussion department and flutist Karin De Flyt have been working on Stockhausen's 'Kathinka's Gesang'. All rehearsals during this intensive week were led by Kathinka Pasveer. She's an internationally renowned flute player and the wife of Stockhausen. She was the inspiration for this composition and many of his other works. She worked and lived with the composer for many years, which probably makes her the greatest expert of his music.

Kathinka's Gesang as Luzifer's Requiem is the second scene of Stockhausen's dramatic music work Samsdag aus Lich. Luzifer's Requiem was originally designed to be a work for percussion and supplementary "magic instruments", but with the addition of an integral flute part, it gained the additional aptly-chosen prefix Kathinka's Gesang. The flautist, costumed as a black cat, performs the Exercises while navigating around 2 large mandala-diagrams with musical figures of each of the Exercises on them. The 6 percussionists each have 1 or 2 pitched metal plates which together form the Nuclear tones of the Lucifer formula. During each Exercise, a different combination of percussionists (arranged around the auditorium) strike their sound plates, creating a combined melody of 2 to 12 tones. A whistle is also blown once for each sound plate strike in different timbres and rhythms.

In addition to these primary tones the 6 percussionists make a certain number of sounds with "magic instruments" - unconventional home-made instruments strapped to their costumes. These magic instruments are basically small percussion objects being struck, rubbed, scraped, shaken, buzzed, etc... The attacks of the magic sounds weave with the flute part and otherwise follow the general behavior of the current Exercise (tremolo, irregular duration, etc...). During the "Release of the Senses" each sound plate is struck in a repeating sequence matching the final measure of the LUCIFER formula, along with whistling, humming and 7 magic sounds each. At the end they drop their sound plates into LUCIFER's grave and then fly away (or walk).

(taken from: <http://stockhausenspace.blogspot.be/2014/12/opus-52-kathinkas-gesang.html>)

## Interview

J: I decided there's two forms of immersion. The one is where the immersion is composed (incorporated immersion), the other one is when you have a piece written and you (as a performer) decide to make it immersive (additional immersion). I realised yesterday that Kathinka's *Gesang* is actually a very immersive piece since we have the percussionists surrounding the audience and I wanted to ask you what you think about that. How important is this immersive element of the percussionists surrounding the audience to you?

K: Very important!

J: So you think the piece is not the piece if you only hear it?

K: Yeah, also. The recording is also nice but it is something different if you experience the spatialisation, the sound around you. That's something typical for Stockhausen. In everyday life we have sounds above us, behind us, everywhere... and in concert halls we only have mono-stereo sound? He (Stockhausen) always wanted spatialisation, sound around us, so of course you get this feeling of being more part of the music, not like an outsider. He also said, when you see interpreters, it should always be 'artful'. So the people feel as in some kind of ritual. Not just sitting on your chair and something is always the same. But you have the feeling, what's this? So always movement, always costumes, always lighting – to get the people more involved in the ritual. Everything should be a ritual.

J: What happened this week is that our sound engineer made it (our performance of Kathinka's *Gesang*) even more immersive with his decision to move the sound through the speakers.

K: Ha! That was my decision, because I came here and I didn't hear it. I see something but I don't hear it and if you are not touched by the sound... They said "the hall will be small", but it doesn't matter, it has nothing to do with small. So I have to hear the sound as if I were a percussionist and that's what sound projection is about. It's not about making it loud, it's about making it audible so everyone in the hall has the same experience. So if you are doing (imitates a percussion sound) I should have the feeling that it's here. And if you just see something and don't hear it, I don't feel immersed, I feel just 'ok, maybe it's like a gag?'. It (amplification) is very important, always! Stockhausen writes it in his score and that's not for nothing. It doesn't matter how large the hall is. Of course when a hall is larger you have to amplify more. In a small hall, still you have to amplify small things.

J: So you think Stockhausen was one of the first ones to experiment with this elements of immersion/immersing the audience?

K: I think so! He started, the first piece is, uh, well he composed the first four-track work in history (which was '*Gesang der Jünglinge*', for the first time people were surrounded by loudspeakers. But also in the early 50s he made like '*Kreuzspiel*'. He made a special set-up for the instruments, they were all two meters high to have a totally different experience of a concert. Then he started with '*Gruppen*' with the orchestra around the public, or '*Carré*' with

four (orchestras). So I think he was one of the motors behind this. Then he started with moving instrumentalist. At first, everyone feels stupid and laughed about it and now every composer is composing for moving musicians. So I think he was one of the first to push this, because it's much nicer.

J: In general he (Stockhausen) has been quite specific about these immersive elements in scores, instructions. Do you think he'd mind performers to chose to add different or new things when they believe it can make the performance even more immersive. Do different thing with lights or movements...

K: Well, if he (Stockhausen) has prescribed something, that should be realised. But of course, like in the operas, there's a lot of freedom for lighting, for adding videos... Of course that's possible. For instance Renée (Jonker J.B.) said: can't we leave out the sound plates and produce them electronically or something? I said no, this is composed/fixed in the score, you should not ever change the score. But of course you can make the surroundings of this Kathinka's Gesang performance magic. Could be fantastic. Of course this is a concert stage, and the mandalas are not so nice, so of course you can make it even more special, with lighting...

J: Because at the time he wrote it, the possibilities were...

K: not so much no.

J: yeah, less than today, now there's much more technology...

K: Yes, BUT the danger of visual things is... Because the eyes are much stronger than the ears. If the visuals get too strong, you don't listen anymore. If the visual helps the listening, that's wonderful but if they're adding some film to the music, than they (the audience) are just watching and not listening. If it helps the listening, that's fine.

J: Ok, that's it. Thank you very much!

K: Thank you!



Interview with Kathinka Pasveer (10/03/2017, The Hague)