

**Paper**

**The disappearance  
of the stage**

**Observations on contemporary music-theatre**

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## 1. Introduction:

Looking at the world of opera in the last decades as a composer, therefore considering basically the music that has been recently written for music theatre, one may be struck by an interesting division in the world of contemporary opera composers. While certain composers, who found themselves rather strongly attached with a classicist aesthetics and simply kept a traditional way of working with stage and music (such as Manfred Trojahn, Aribert Reimann or Hans Werner Henze), other composers, more connected to the avant-garde, propagated "music-theatre" – as Rihm put it – being not merely "theatre with music" but "music-theatre"<sup>1</sup>, "theatre that comes out of the spirit of music".

Also other composers who called their work "opera" instead of "music-theatre"<sup>2</sup> (such as Helmut Lachenmann, Brian Ferneyhough or Luigi Nono) seemed to be concerned about the role of music, worrying that the music may

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<sup>1</sup> *"Theater aus dem Geist der Musik, Musiktheater. Nicht: Theater mit Musik"* (Theater that comes out of the spirit of music, music-theatre. Not: theatre with music). Wolfgang Rihm elaborates this idea in a letter to Peter Oswald (© 1991 Wergo Schallplatten GmbH Mainz), basically claiming, that the text by Heiner Müller, which Rihm used for the libretto, works like music and not like a theatre piece, therefore allowing musical forms to take over the main role, for the whole work.

<sup>2</sup> Despite the fact, that some composers call their works specifically "opera" I would use the term "music-theatre" in this paper, to make the distinction easier. These terms are completely randomly assigned, as a definition of both is not really clear. Thus I use "opera" to refer to traditional operas and "music-theatre" for pieces that put traditional relationships between text, music and stage in operas into question.

just double the text and therefore become redundant. The main focus seemed the complete integration of the textual parameters in the spirit of the music to avoid writing an "opera comme il faut"<sup>3</sup>.

However, seeing these works on the stage and trying to understand their concept of opera writing, I got the feeling that the focus on the role of music and the idea that a textual bases needs to be understood structurally in order to form the bases of a musical art-work, caused one dimension of musical theatre to disappear along the way more and more: the stage...

On the first view, this claim seems strange, as all those pieces have been performed in opera houses and usually had some kind of staging<sup>4</sup>. I don't want to suggest, that these pieces can't be staged, rather, I have the feeling, that the structural importance of the stage for the creative process of composing is more and more disappearing. In short, it seems to me that those pieces are not conceived in relationship with an envisioned stage-representation, instead they only allow staging, but do not necessary need it

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<sup>3</sup> The statement, not being able to write "comme il faut" is obviously a statement "comme il faut" for every avant-garde composer, however, there seems to be a general concept, that the characteristic of the "comme il faut" is basically an approach towards music-theatre, where a character that allows identification goes through a succession of events, that form a narrative, depicted by means of text, staging and music.

<sup>4</sup> A very striking example for me was an introduction Karlheinz Stockhausen gave for the performance of his "Freitag aus Licht" were he said that the ideal way to listen to his opera was to close the eyes and to just listen and associate freely (in fact during the performance almost nothing happened on the stage).

It seems that the focus on the music – as suggested by Wolfgang Rihm’s statement – limits the importance of the staging, and generally Rihm’s statement suggests that he wants to consider opera as a mainly musical genre. However, it seems to me that the disappearance of the stage represents a more general underlying aesthetic choice. Following Rihm’s argument that the music in music-theatre should not simply double the text<sup>5</sup> one could discover an underlying assumption. The idea that music could in fact double a text or double a theatrical event, suggests that music and text are actually working in the same domain. In short, something expressed by the text does not need to be expressed again by the music.

The question that remains is, however, whether music and text actually do work in a similar way, or rather, how a genre like opera changes, if a composer assumes that music and text are working in the same domain. Another question thereby would be also, how one thinks about music, text, or dramatic representation, if those different art-forms can work in the same domain.

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<sup>5</sup> In fact this argument is not only made for opera, but also for songs, etc. and it is an argument that seems fairly typical for the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As soon as a story is involved, the question, what the role of music is, is raised, assuming that music that follows the text would not be based on its own structures.

Here we return to the question, why the stage disappears. To me it seems that the concept of the traditional opera and the concept of music theatre actually have a different vision of the nature of artworks. The disappearance of the stage could be seen as a symptom of an underlying aesthetic choice and of deeper question about how text, music and theatre work together, namely: how do traditional opera and music-theatre function differently and how is the structure of music-theatre organized compared to traditional opera.

## **2. Opera and music-theatre, two concept of a multimedia-based artwork**

Many traditional operas are based on the interaction of visual, dramatic and musical developments. The visual imagination is sometimes even shared between the music and the stage, as in Rheingold, one could claim, that the limited possibilities of the theatre stage can only express the mysterious underwater world of the Rhein because of Wagner's musical description in the prelude. At the same time, the stage is used to make the abstract nature of the music concrete (by delivering the concrete picture of what the music tries to depict sonically, such as "Waldesweben" or the fire in "Die Walküre"). There is no doubt, that most important opera composers had a strong vision of what they wanted to see, while composing what audiences will hear. As a

consequence operas are full of scenic music, musical thunderstorms, pastoral scenes, forests, etc. as well as pictorial scenes, such as ballet-scenes (as in "Le nozze di Figaro" "Aida", or "Les Troyens" or many others), or other musical visions of a pictures on a stage organized in a form of a "tableau vivant". The theatrical representation and its possibilities and the storytelling on a stage were vital part of the compositional process and the musical inspiration. Therefore, the stage directions in the scores are rather precise and clear.

The first observation about many recent operas is the complete absence of any stage directions, or their replacement by abstract, poetic suggestions<sup>6</sup>. However, trivial this may seem, I would like to suggest, that this expresses a basic attitude towards musical theatre, in which the existence of the stage is not a crucial point any more in the compositional conception of music-theatre.

Another observation while seeing the staging of Wolfgang Rihm's "Die Eroberung von Mexico" or Helmut Lachenmann's: "Mädchen mit den Schwefelhölzern", or Luigi Nono's "Al Gran sole carico d'amore" is that the

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<sup>6</sup> As for instance Wolfgang Rihm at the beginning of "Die Eroberung von Mexico" where the first piece of music is titled as "Melodie einer Landschaft, die das Gewitter kommen spürt" (Melody of a landscape that feels the thunderstorm coming).

staging often appears as another world<sup>7</sup>. In traditional operas, even a deliberately provoking staging, or stagings that overemphasize only one particular aspect of the opera, keeps being related to it. If the story of the staging contradicts or narrows the possible interpretations of the work down to one aspect, there is a resistance of the work, which is clearly perceivable<sup>8</sup>. However, during performances of the abovementioned pieces, the freedom of re-interpretation seems almost limitless and the work can in fact host completely different stories without producing a feeling of uneasiness or inappropriateness that is often the cause for violent rejections of modern stagings of traditional operas.

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<sup>7</sup> In the staging of Nicolas Brieger in Frankfurt, the final scene of the opera (the 4<sup>th</sup> verse of the "Raiz del hombre") shows us a woman and a man in a living room, suggesting that the whole story was about a conjugal relationship. However, this topic is inherent in the opera (by the separation of the male world (Cortez) from the female world (Montezuma) and the neutral dimension of the music), but the staging actually moves the focus away from the historic background story into a complete private domain, even proposing a happy end.

Rihm himself states in an interview he gave to "Die Zeit" that he considers the text of his music-theatre pieces as an offer to a director's fantasy and not as a directive. He implies thereby that any re-interpretation is possible and in a way refuses to give his own vision as a direction with which or against which the fantasy of the director has to interact. To me it seems that the question could be legitimate, if the absence of a direction actually makes interaction impossible... (c/o "Verzweiflung ist etwas Großes" interview with the composer Wolfgang Rihm by Thomas Assheuer und Claus Spahn © Die Zeit October 26<sup>th</sup> 2006)

<sup>8</sup> And the Regietheater often tries to use this very resistance to experiment, how far interpretation can go, but all the re-interpretations seem to be understood against the framework that the opera presents, so that a changing of the story in the staging will be felt as an active intervention into the artwork.

## **2. 1. Opera as an artwork in three dimensions:**

In order to find the characteristics of traditional opera, I would like to propose the following provisional definition: opera expresses a narrative structure by means of text, music and staging.

The question whether the text or the music is more important in operas is an old one (where the staging is often considered as belonging to the text). In "Capriccio" by Richard Strauss this question even became the topic of an opera. This opera resolves the question towards a coexistence in which both parts interact equally, as they affect different dimensions of experience. Richard Strauss would be probably a good reference to define the concept of classicist opera writing. His idea outlined in Capriccio proposes a balance in which text (including the staging) and music interact to form an artwork that is the sum of both, as neither text nor music can grasp all the dimensions that form an opera.

Thus, one could argue that the operatic representation of a narrative has three dimensions, which interact and complement each other. Traditionally it seems, that the text is in charge of the plot, the music deals with the emotions and the stage acting adds the visual and the dramatic dimension.



In general the three dimensions can interact in different ways, so that the text can also add up the emotional dimension, the music can express the whole drama, the stage can show the plot, or the music can suggest pictures. There is a possibility of interaction and space for each dimension to comment on the other dimension. The music can contradict or confirm the text, the staging can contradict or confirm the music or the text, and so on. Even though each dimension has a role, there is flexibility and each dimension can be independent to a certain degree. This independency is actually also the justification for the existence of opera as an art form<sup>9</sup>.

In a way, we have three texts<sup>10</sup> expressing different dimensions of the narrative, which produce a new text that is the sum of the three. I want to emphasize here, that to me, each dimension of the traditional opera is somewhat capable of producing a text of its own and the interaction can suggest interpretations.

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<sup>9</sup> This is also the reason, why the argument that music (or text, or the stage) might be redundant in operas, does not really affect the traditional concept of opera, as it is precisely the interaction that defines the art-form.

<sup>10</sup> I am using the term "text" in an emphatic sense, referring to any given object that can be read or interpreted. Text in this respect is a source material for interpretation and can refer to the musical text, but as well to the libretto, or the staging. The important point for me is distinguishing a 'text' as a source material from interpretation.

This system of interaction is not hierarchic and each dimension can take a different degree of importance in different moments<sup>11</sup>. Therefore, they can reinforce each other, comment on each other, or contradict each other. The work is always the resultant of the interaction of the three dimensions. This situation, in which each of the dimensions is seen individually, allows their coexistence and their interaction. It seems that the traditional concept of opera would not ask itself the question, which underlies Rihm's statement about music-theatre, as the three dimensions do not compete about the content, but contribute from different angles, as their way of expression or representation is different.

## ***2.2. Music-theatre or a hierarchic system of layers of meaning:***

In the music-theatre, it appears to me, however, that the textual level is integrated in the musical structure. It is thereby not a mere coincidence that in all the works I am referring to, the composer also compiled the texts<sup>12</sup>.

Wolfgang Rihm's "Eroberung von Mexico" for instance combines different texts

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<sup>11</sup> In fact, in some interesting stagings, the music loses its importance. For me the staging of "Die Entführung aus dem Serail" by Hans Neuenfels was staged so intelligently that the music was often not the driving force, thus putting into question whether the opera is only and exclusively a musical genre.

<sup>12</sup> Of course we can also find the composer writing the texts in traditional operas (such as Richard Wagner, Franz Schreker or Hector Berlioz), however, the difference is, that those texts were written as dramas first and not compiled specifically for a musical vision. In many cases, those composers wrote the text long before setting them into music, separating the two steps, to create independent texts.

that do not really suggest a staging at all, but that are related to an underlying narrative development, which is the conquering of Mexico by Cortez, of which they are rather instances, or interpretations. The same is true for the textual basis of Helmut Lachenmann's "Mädchen mit den Schwefelhölzern", in which different texts are related to the underlying story of the Anderson fairy tale (The little Match-seller), of which different instances are used to open up associations that can be grouped around Andersons story.

The main point here is, that the textual basis in these pieces is already an interpretation that refers to an underlying story that is not directly represented. This procedure opens a vast space of possible associations. We have a hierarchic system of connections: an underlying narrative, that provides the background for a textual basis that is put on top of it, opening the space for different interpretation, and the compositional interpretation of this textual basis. Therefore the level of abstraction increases from each level to the next one. The underlying story features as the most graspable part and as the subtext of its possible interpretations, which provide the libretto. The musical level adds another layer of interpretation. The staging would therefore be another layer defining another interpretation of the work<sup>13</sup>. The system of these

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<sup>13</sup> One example could be the staging of "Die Eroberung von Mexico" in Frankfurt (c/o, footnote Nr. 7). In most cases directors usually add up pictures, as like in the staging of Lachenmann's "Mädchen mit den Schwefelhölzern" in the opera in Stuttgart, pictures of a girl, were

works is a line of interpretations: a subtext that works as the bases for an interpretation, which itself is again the subtext of another interpretation, which again is the subtext of a new interpretation and so on.

The difference to the traditional approach is, that there are not different texts that are interdependent, but only one text, that is the underlying source of interpretations. Thus, all performed dimensions are interpretations. In a way, the method is the opposite of traditional opera: while the traditional opera assembles different dimensions to create one work (text) out of their interactions, the music-theatre could be considered as taking one text and opening up its different possible interpretations.

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projected against a screen on the stage. In case of the staging of Nono's "Al gran sole carico d'amore" in Stuttgart also mainly static pictures were used and the singers on stage were arranged in different geometric shapes on the stage. So in fact, the visual dimension is often reduced to a very basic level that seems rather illustrative than functional.

### 3. Opera between immediacy and reflection

*“Die Oper die wir haben, ist die kulinarische Oper. Sie war ein Genußmittel, lange bevor sie eine Ware war. Sie dient dem Genuß, auch wo sie Bildung verlangt oder vermittelt, denn sie verlangt oder vermittelt dann eben Geschmacksbildung. Sie nähert sich selbst jedem Gegenstand in genießerischer Haltung. Sie erlebt, und sie dient als ‘Erlebnis’.”<sup>14</sup>*

In Brecht’s essay about the opera, which he published in connection with his collaboration with Kurt Weill, Brecht tries to integrate new concepts into the ‘old’ idea of opera. In the essay, Brecht contrasts quite precisely, how a new – epic – form of opera should work in comparison to the old concept.

In order to describe the direction in which a ‘contemporary’ opera should go, Brecht lines up a number of oppositions to contrast, what he understood as the characteristics of the traditional opera with the concepts he felt necessary to renew the opera. These oppositions he mentions (acting vs. narrating;

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<sup>14</sup> The opera, which we have, is the culinary opera. It is a stimulant long before it became a commercial product. It is made for enjoyment, also were it requires or conveys education, in which case opera then requires or conveys education of taste. It approaches every matter with an enjoying attitude. Opera experiences and serves as an ‘experience’. (Berthold Brecht: “Anmerkungen zur Oper ‘Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny’ in Brecht: Werke Volume 6 © Suhrkamp Verlag Frankfurt am Main 1997)

entangling the audience in a stage action vs. making the audience the observer of a stage action; experience vs. world view; emotion vs. ratio), try to refute one basic feature of the traditional opera: its immediacy. Brecht's intention is to methodically break the immediate effects an opera experience has on the public towards a reflection on what has been seen and heard.

By replacing immediacy by a more reflected attitude shifts the main focus of the artwork. While one could think of a traditional opera as a closed cosmos, being its own message and its own text, the Brechtian approach, moves the emphasis away from what is happening towards, what does the music-dramatic activity that is happening causes to happen in the listener. The content of the artwork is not the artwork itself any more, but its potential to make the audience think. The artwork is not an end in itself, but the source for the message.

Another consequence is that, while the focal point in a traditional opera is usually concrete, as it is the represented story and the participation in it, which opera tries to achieve, the Brechtian vision of opera focuses on an abstract message, which is necessarily abstract, because it is the indirect interpretation the audience should ideally make while experiencing the work.

This focus on the reflection is in fact a change of a paradigm. The artwork does not incorporate its message any more, it provokes reflection. The focus is shifted from experience towards thought, from the guts to the brain.

### **3.1. Music-theatre as a medium of reflection**

Let's return to the initial observation about music-theatre pieces. In all the above-mentioned pieces the same structural similarity was observed. Lachenmann's "Mädchen mit den Schwefelhölzern" as well as Wolfgang Rihm's "Eroberung von Mexico" also "Al gran sole carico d'amore" by Luigi Nono refer to an underlying story, of which they are an interpretation or an association<sup>15</sup>. Such as the fairy tale by Anderson in case of Lachenmann, the historic conquest of Mexico in Rihm work, or the concept of revolutionary

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<sup>15</sup> In case of Nono, the reference to Brecht is the strongest and one could actually consider his first two works – "Intolleranza" and "Al gran sole carico d'amore" – as almost idea types of the Brechtian approach. In "Intolleranza", Nono even puts a poem by Brecht to the end of his work. Generally, Nono presents in both works scenes and situations that exemplify intolerance (in case of "Intolleranza") or revolutionary potentials (in case of "Al gran sole carico d'amore"), which do not work in a story that allows identification, but rather exemplify crucial moments to allow the audience to react to it.

In fact, it is interesting to compare "Intolleranza" and "Wozzeck" in this respect, as both operas deal with an individual in a situation of prosecution and/or exploitation. In Alban Berg's opera, the focus is still on the psychology and the situations are put together in an almost dreamlike sequence to allow the audience to experience the tension and madness in the character of Wozzeck. The social issues are communicated through empathy. In Nonos opera, however, the main character is even deprived of a name. He functions as a means of exemplification and not identification and the focus is shifted towards the situation as such to make the audience reflect those situations.

potential in Nono's opera. In either case, the focal point lies outside and the artwork is the means to reflect on this point.

However, this structure adds one layer to Brecht's ideas, which he described in his essay. In the music-theatre pieces mentioned above, the textual base is already the result of interpretation and reflection. Thus, it is not only the audience, which would need to reflect on a certain artwork, it is the artwork itself, that presents the reflection of the composer on a certain given text. The level of immediacy is further removed.

The role of staging in an approach like that becomes tricky. As the musical artwork itself already presents and exhibits the interpretation in its own structure, the stage can only add up a new layer. However, it cannot present a different role, nor can it re-enforce the work itself, as the piece does not make any suggestion about the staging. While a traditional opera would simply have obvious choices for the staging, music-theatre pieces do not provide those obvious solutions. At the same time, it is also not possible to re-interpret those pieces in the staging, as they are already by themselves representations of interpretations.



While the traditional opera was an expressive art form, music-theatre is a reflexive art form in a Brechtian sense. It exhibits the movement of thought and interpretation of a subtext. The consequence is that thereby the dimensions of the stage, music and text fall together. The textual basis is conceived as a reaction to and an interpretation of a subtext. The music has the same function and in fact, the stage also would simply work in the same way. Each parameter (or dimension) works as a layer of interpretation<sup>16</sup>.

It appears that the concept of art is a form of reflection instead of expression functions as a basis for music-theatre. If music, or text, or staging can be understood as different ways of reflection, it becomes clear, why a statement as the one by Rihm could have been made. In fact, in this concept, music, text and staging do not simply co-exist; they exist in the same domain.

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<sup>16</sup> Which is possibly what poses the difficulty in making a staging necessary, as the question is, how many layers are needed... at the same time, one could be polemic and say, that one layer more would not harm...

#### **4. "Regietheater" or the battleground of immediacy and reflection**

For any observer of operas in the last decades, another phenomenon should not be ignored: the "Regietheater". Concerning the question of the role of the stage in many recent music-theatre works, it seems to me that the appearance and the concepts of Regietheater would have a strong influence on what is written for the music-theatre nowadays.

Generally, Regietheater uses the stage for reinterpretation. The staging is no longer a means to support the musical drama and does not necessarily work in the same direction as the artwork, it provides an active interpretation. In a way, one could argue, that Regietheater tries to discover in which way traditional operas have always been Brechtian, insofar as they make us think. However, this reflective potential is not limited to one single audience member, but it is made visible by a stage director, who thereby wants the audience, to follow, or reject the presented interpretation. In any case, the artwork is challenged in order to make the work being part of a discourse, rather than simply a culinary experience.

The role of the stage director is quite interesting in this respect, as he is in a space between an author and an interpreter. He can change the work and suggest completely different readings, at the same time; he can only do so based on the work. In a way the original text is needed – even in its absence – to define the degree of alienation and the energy of reinterpretation to create a situation in which, the interaction of a given text (the ‘original’ opera) and its reinterpretation in the staging becomes productive<sup>17</sup>.

The role of the staging in Regietheater is; however, only interpretation, as seen before, it needs the resistance of the original work in order to reinterpret it. The Regietheater is dependant on a given musical and dramatic structure to obtain interesting results. In any case, Regietheater has a clear role for the staging, as the staging is the means by which a reinterpretation can be realized.

In fact the Regietheater occupies a space of conflict. On one hand, the original work imposes its immediate effects, its sentimentality, and its dramatic energy,

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<sup>17</sup> A very striking example for this ambivalence in the role of the stage director, is the libretto of “Guiseppe e Silvia”, which Hans Neuenfels wrote for Adriana Hölszky. Neuenfels, one of the most distinguished stage directors in Germany, who always tries to find new readings for canonic operas, wrote a libretto, which appears almost like a re-interpretation of a non-existing traditional opera. Everything in the libretto is symbolic, interpretative, as if there was a subtext underlying it. The experience seeing the piece, directed by himself in Stuttgart, was also striking, as it – again - looked like an interpretation of a non-existing text, like an interpretation of an interpretation of a non-existing opera, a kind of meta-meta-opera.

which is directly communicated to the listener. Despite all efforts of the staging, there will always be a remainder of the opera's impact. This is why the interventions of some stagings cause such strong effects, as the remaining immediate power persists. The Regietheater depends on the immediate effect the opera maintains. This is probably also the reason, why this concept of staging often yields the most striking effects when a very canonic work is used, where the difference the staging makes is most easy to observe<sup>18</sup>.

However, the Regietheater suggests a separation of work. It seems that its structure has two dimensions: the staging and the text (here text, music and staging suggestions) of the original work. Thus, a separation of dimensions still remains possible. Two different approaches work together; one is the immediacy of the traditional opera and the other one is the reflexive approach in the staging. Thus, those stagings of operas bridge the reflexive concepts of the Brechtian approach and the immediate impact of the traditional concept of opera writing.

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<sup>18</sup> It is in fact interesting; people do not tend to refer to Regietheater stagings as cases of a contemporary performance experience, even if the staging differs from the "original" work quite significantly, but still view it basically as the performance of a canonic piece.

However, their possibilities are bound to the immediate nature of the traditional opera to which it can function as a commentary. As music-theatre is structurally itself a commentary to a subtext, it does not provide the resistance that would enable the staging to work against it. As a consequence, even intended reinterpretations of music-theatre pieces do not provoke in the same way as an unusual staging of a traditional opera. A reflexive and interpretative staging loses its impact if it is confronted with an artwork that is based on the same aesthetic concepts as the staging.

### **5. Conclusions:**

Music-theatre challenges the idea of immediacy, which is the main feature of the traditional opera. It rejects the culinary nature and the experience of music theatre. At the same time, it tries to establish a concept of art, in which art is defined as reflexion. As the reflexive attitude permeates the whole artwork, from the textual bases through the musical structure, the role of the stage is put into question. How can we make such a reflexion visible and if a director tries, how can he add to the work, if already everything is abstract interpretation? Also, stagings can't easily occupy a conflict role, as long as they just add a layer of interpretation. Thus, many stagings just add images.

It is not surprising that the staging does not play such a role in the conception of those pieces, as any staging appears in some way possible. The disappearance of the stage appears to be the consequence of Rihm's vision of a "theatre that comes from the spirit of music". His idea of music as the most important structure produces an aesthetic choice in which all dimensions are expressed in the reflexive nature of the music. Thus there is no interaction possible any more as the music governs all parameters.

A musical artwork that reflects on a subtext outside is, however, not an idea of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In a way, the romantic tone poems by Liszt or Berlioz already tried to work in this domain, such as the "scène d'amour" in Berlioz "Roméo et Juliette", in which the whole structure of the text is rebuilt in the musical structure. The question, how a piece like Rihm's "Eroberung" or Lachenmann's "Mädchen" differs from tone poems or from oratorios, would be tricky to answer.

### ***The rebirth of opera out of the spirit of the theatre...***

Another question that emerged to me was also the development of theatre and opera. In many ways, it seems to me that the reflexive nature of music-theatre is

somehow related to a Brechtian concept of art. At the same time, recent developments on the theatre stage suggested other approaches towards theatre that do not relate to a Brechtian concept any more, while retaining some of its possibilities.

The dramas of Botho Strauss, Peter Handke, Edward Bond or Sarah Kane – just to name a few – preserve a sense of immediacy in the theatric action, while also using methods of alienation, and maintain a reflexive attitude towards the stage. Maybe a new approach to opera could be based of the rediscovery of the stage and of the immediate dramatic action, which, at the same time, allows a balance between a reflexive and an immediate approach towards the musical theatre.

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