

Concert 2

Tuesday, 20 October 2015, at 8.00 pm

Preconcert Talk: Vito Žuraj, Márton Illés and Michael Pelzel, at 7.00 pm

Slovenian Philharmonic, Marjan Kozina Hall

Claviers

Conceptual Concert

**We kindly ask you only to applaud at the end of the performance,
and not to applaud between the individual compositions.**



Nicola Vicentino (1511–1575)

Musica prisca caput
for cimbalo cromatico with 36 keys
per octave

Johannes Keller – cimbalo cromatico

Ivan Wyschnegradsky (1883–1979)

Prelude No. 5
for two pianos tuned a quartertone apart*

Marija Skender,
Neus Estarellas Calderón – piano

Vito Žuraj (b. 1979)

Recitatives (2012) – I
for soprano and cimbalo cromatico
with 24 keys per octave

Marisol Montalvo – soprano
Johannes Keller – cimbalo cromatico

Ivan Wyschnegradsky

Prelude No. 3
for two pianos tuned a quartertone apart*

Marija Skender,
Neus Estarellas Calderón – piano

Pierre Boulez (b. 1925)

Notations (1945) – No.1 Fantasque–
Modéré
for piano

Neus Estarellas Calderón – piano

Ivan Wyschnegradsky

Prelude No. 2
for two pianos tuned a quartertone apart*

Marija Skender
Neus Estarellas Calderón – piano

Márton Illés (b. 1975)

Három akvarell/Three Watercolours (2012) – I
for harpsichord
World premiere

Johannes Keller – harpsichord

Michael Pelzel (b. 1978)

Brushing (2009) – Part I
for prepared piano

Marija Skender – piano

Pierre Boulez

Notations – No. 2 Très vif
for piano

Neus Estarellas Calderón – piano

Ivan Wyschnegradsky

Prelude No. 1
for two pianos tuned a quartertone apart*

Marija Skender,
Neus Estarellas Calderón – piano

Vito Žuraj

Recitatives – II
for soprano and cimbalo cromatico
with 24 keys per octave

Marisol Montalvo – soprano
Johannes Keller – cimbalo cromatico

Ivan Wyschnegradsky

Prelude No. 9
for two pianos tuned a quartertone apart*

Marija Skender
Neus Estarellas Calderón – piano

Pierre Boulez

Notations – No. 4 Rythmique
for piano

Neus Estarellas Calderón – piano

Ivan Wyschnegradsky

Prelude No. 11
for two pianos tuned a quartertone apart*

Marija Skender,
Neus Estarellas Calderón – piano

Márton Illés

Három akvarell (2012) – II
for harpsichord
World premiere

Johannes Keller – harpsichord

Ivan Wyschnegradsky

Prelude No. 14
for two pianos tuned a quartertone apart*

Marija Skender,
Neus Estarellas Calderón – piano

Pierre Boulez

Notations – No. 5 Doux et improvisé
for piano

Neus Estarellas Calderón – piano

Helmut Lachenmann (b. 1935)

Guero (1970)
study for piano

Marija Skender – piano

Pierre Boulez

Notations – No. 8 Modéré jusqu'à très vif
for piano

Neus Estarellas Calderón – piano

Ivan Wyschnegradsky

Prelude No. 4
for two pianos tuned a quartertone apart*

Marija Skender,
Neus Estarellas Calderón – piano

Vito Žuraj

Recitatives – III
for soprano and cimbalo cromatico with
24 keys per octave

Marisol Montalvo – soprano
Johannes Keller – cimbalo cromatico

Ivan Wyschnegradsky

Prelude No.17
for two pianos tuned a quartertone apart*

Marija Skender,
Neus Estarellas Calderón – piano

György Ligeti (1923–2006)

Passacaglia Ungherese (1978)
for clavichord

Johannes Keller – clavichord

Michael Pelzel

Brushing – Part II
for prepared piano

Marija Skender – piano

Pierre Boulez

Notations – No. 11 Scintillant
for piano

Neus Estarellas Calderón – piano

Ivan Wyschnegradsky

Prelude No. 18
for two pianos tuned a quartertone apart*

Marija Skender,
Neus Estarellas Calderón – piano

Márton Illés

Három akvarell (2012) – III
for harpsichord

World premiere

Johannes Keller – harpsichord

Ivan Wyschnegradsky

Prelude No. 20
for two pianos tuned a quartertone apart*

Marija Skender,
Neus Estarellas Calderón – piano

Pierre Boulez

Notations – No. 12 Lent – Puissant et
âpre
for piano

Neus Estarellas Calderón – piano

Ivan Wyschnegradsky

Prelude No. 23
for two pianos tuned a quartertone apart*

Marija Skender,
Neus Estarellas Calderón – piano

Vito Žuraj

Recitatives – IV
for soprano and cimbaló cromático with
24 keys per octave

Marisol Montalvo – soprano
Johannes Keller – cimbaló cromático

Michael Pelzel

Brushing – Part III
for prepared piano

Marija Skender – piano

Nicola Vicentino (1511–1575)

Madonna il poco dolce
for cimbaló cromático with 36 keys
per octave

World premiere

Johannes Keller – cimbaló cromático

* The preludes by Ivan Wyschnegradsky are part of the collection *24 Préludes dans tous les tons de l'échelle chromatique diatonisée à 13 sons, pour 2 pianos en quarts de ton/24 Preludes in all of the notes of the chromatic scale diatonised at 13 tones, for two pianos tuned a quartertone apart, Op. 22 (1934, rev. 1960)*

Nicola Vicentino (1511–1575)

Musica prisca caput

for cimbalò cromatico with 36 keys
per octave

Madonna il poco dolce

for cimbalò cromatico with 36 keys
per octave

World premiere

In 1555, Nicola Vicentino published a treatise entitled *L'Antica musica ridotta alla prattica moderna (Old Music Adapted to Modern Practice)*. Vicentino was looking for the fullest possible expression in music. He believed that the three existing ancient tunings (genera) – enharmonic, diatonic and chromatic – no longer had a role to play in the music of his time, although in early texts their effect was described as extremely powerful. Therefore, he attempted to define the tunings so as to make them compatible with the modern practice of music making. He came up with a solution in which he established the diesis (for example, the distance between the tones E-flat and D-sharp) as one fifth of a tone in the meantone temperament that was customary at the time. He then used this fifth of a tone to define enharmonic tuning. From the perspective of composition, in order to be able to move freely in all of the three tunings, he had to adjust the diesis interval so that it could be universally transposed. This led to the division of the octave into 36 equal parts. The whole tone thus contained five dieses, while the diatonic semitone consisted of three and the chromatic semitone of two dieses. With such a division, the meantone circle of fifths concludes after 36 steps and there is no “wolf”.

The short four-voice madrigals entitled

Musica prisca caput (Old Music is Primary) and *Madonna il poco dolce (Madonna So Merciless)* are included in Vicentino's treatise to illustrate a way of composing in all of the three tunings. *Musica prisca caput* consists of three parts, the first of which is written strictly diatonically. For Vicentino, this not only means that only the white keys can be used, but also that the melodic intervals are derived exclusively from the diatonic tetrachord, i.e., whole tones and semitones. Being part of the chromatic genus, the minor third is only applied in the second part of the piece, as is the chromatic semitone. In the enharmonic genus, Vicentino uses the diesis melodically, while the vertical sounds always remain in meantone tuning.

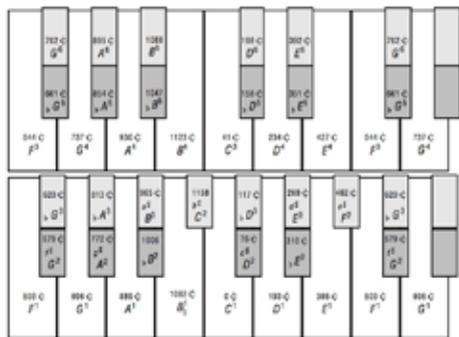
The madrigal *Madonna il dolce poco* combines all three tunings. Thus the composition demonstrates the expressiveness that lies in the transition from one genus to another. Vicentino obviously devoted a lot of attention to the melodic quality of the intervals. In many of his writings, he describes the operation of specific intervals that together enable multi-voice progression. While the intervals of the diatonic genus are dull and hard for Vicentino, those of the chromatic genus are considered elegant and soft, while those of the enharmonic genus are noble and majestic.

In order to be able to study this type of music with a vocal ensemble, special instruments were required. Vicentino describes in detail his *archicimbalo* with 36 keys per octave as well as the *archiorgano*, a corresponding portable organ with wooden reeds. These two instruments are proven to have existed in different versions, but they have not been preserved. Luzzascho Luzzaschi played

Vicentino's *archicembalo* in Ferrara, where it was heard by Gesualdo, who possibly drew inspiration from it for composing in a chromatic-enharmonic manner. Another virtuoso on the *cimbalo cromatico* was Luzzaschi's pupil Frescobaldi. Emilio de' Cavalieri provides a description of the enharmonic organ, an instrument that was part of the musical inventory of the Medici family.

Traces of enharmonic instruments and music written for them can be found throughout Europe right until the late 17th century, while Vicentino, with his uncompromising ideas, can be said to have written a chapter of the history of music.

Johannes Keller



Nicola Vicentino's drawing of the *archicembalo*, an instrument he designed specifically for his 36-note system.

Ivan Wyschnegradsky (1883–1979)

24 Préludes dans tous les tons de l'échelle chromatique diatonisée à 13 sons, pour 2 pianos en quarts de ton, Op. 22 (1934, rev. 1960)

Russian composer Ivan Wyschnegradsky once wrote: "I could have been a poet, a philosopher or a musician. I chose music, so I became a composer." This thought makes it possible for us to comprehend how committed Wyschnegradsky was to his culture and the creative spirit. He was convinced that every composition must first be rooted in *musical consciousness*, only then can it manifest itself in *musical space*. Even more, Wyschnegradsky strove for his music to address the cosmic consciousness through its fusion with the *sonic continuum*. To achieve this almost utopian objective, he took to creating a sonic space in which smaller and smaller intervals coalesce into an ever greater, almost infinite density. He filled this space with micro-intervals: intervals smaller than a chromatic semitone, first measuring a quartertone, and later a third, sixth and even a twelfth tone, thus creating a whole new world of chromaticism that became known as *ultra-chromaticism*.

In establishing this continuum, Wyschnegradsky needed an instrument that could maintain such refined intonation; this was, of course, the piano, which the composer exploited throughout his life. He sought an instrument that would allow both the study of microintervals and their performance at concerts. He therefore first tuned two pianos a quartertone apart, but he was not satisfied with this solution. In search of a new, different instrument, Wyschnegradsky decided to leave his

native St Petersburg at a very young age and move to Paris, in order to obtain a suitable instrument from one of Europe's leading piano manufacturers. Although A. Förster was able to produce such an instrument, Wyschnegradsky failed to find good pianists who were willing to practice on it. Consequently, he was forced to abandon his original plans and arrange most of his microtonal and ultra-microtonal works as pieces for two, three or even four pianos tuned a quartertone or less apart.

These "arrangements" include a collection of preludes entitled *24 Préludes dans tous les tons de l'Echelle chromatique diatonisée à 13 sons, pour 2 pianos en quarts de ton, Op. 22 (24 Preludes in all of the notes of the chromatic scale diatonised at 13 notes for two pianos tuned a quarter tone apart, Op. 22 (1934, rev. 1960))*.

The preludes in this collection use an ultra-chromatic quartertone scale that contains 24 equally spaced notes per octave. Wyschnegradsky achieved this tuning with the use of two pianos: the first was tuned to the normal pitch and the other a quarter tone lower. He produced two types of notation: the original score with special, newly invented symbols, and a so-called revised version for two pianos.

Of course, the structure of the piece is much easier to identify in the original musical score, which, however, is impossible to perform. Wyschnegradsky developed new symbols for sound clusters (groups of simultaneously sounding neighbouring notes), as well as to indicate the precise pitch of individual notes and even the dynamics. He thus used the dynamic marking *mezzo*, for example, which in his music denotes a degree

between the dynamics *mezzo piano* and *mezzo forte*.

In the time that he realised his visions, Ivan Wyschnegradsky had few supporters, as his ideas seemed barely possible to realise, if not impossible. Nevertheless, his endeavours were understood and supported by two French composers, Charles Koechlin and Olivier Messiaen, while pianists Yvette Grimaud, Yvonne Loriod, the young Pierre Boulez and Serge Nigg were all amongst those who performed his compositions in Paris in 1945.



A quartertone piano manufactured by August Förster

Vito Žuraj (b. 1979)

Recitatives (2012)

for soprano and cimbalò cromatico with 24 keys per octave

The *Recitativi* are a series of four recitatives for voice and cimbalò cromatico (a microtonally tuned harpsichord) set to texts that were created as part of Alexander Stockinger's libretto to Žuraj's opera *Orlando: Das Schloss*. Beginning in the manner of Baroque recitative, the four

movements progressively depart from this anachronistic pretence and take up a new habitat in the harmonic and melodic world of Žuraj's own style.

The first recitative begins with the customary sixth chord of Baroque recitative and makes exclusive use of harmonies that are conceivable on a standard, evenly tempered keyboard. Quartertones are used to expand the palette of chord progressions available in a tonal harmonic context, a technique reminiscent of the works of the early 20th century composer Alois Haba.

The second recitative also begins with the obligatory sixth chord, but departs from the sonorities of tonal harmony, making use of spectral harmonies and microtonal dissonances, while largely retaining the affect and gestures of its Baroque models. Occasionally, the more impassioned vocal style of the late Romantic and Expressionist periods bursts through.

Although the third recitative begins with an expansive arpeggio in the harpsichord, the latter is no longer even remotely reminiscent of a sixth chord. This recitative quickly dispenses with all pretence of Baroque gesture, making liberal use of microtonal trills and frantic bundles of cluster chords. The vocal part, too, experiences a transformation, with passages in the half-spoken *Sprechgesang* style often associated with Arnold Schoenberg.

In the fourth and final recitative, the traditional framework of the recitative is turned on its head, with the singer given a florid solo line. The relationship of solo singer and keyboard accompanist is nullified, with the entire recitative being an equal dialogue between singer and

keyboard, in which the two strive to outdo each other with acrobatics and glissandi. The cycle is brought to a startling close with a warning shriek of "Alarmglocke" ("alarm bells") and a monumental cluster in the *cimbalo cromatico*.

Vito Žuraj

Pierre Boulez (b. 1925)

Notations (1945)

for piano

It is no less than 70 years since the early miniature pieces of one of the most influential and multifaceted figures of contemporary music of the 20th and 21st centuries were written. It is interesting to note that they came into being roughly 25 years after Arnold Schoenberg introduced the twelve-tone technique into his musical language, thus making a radical break with tonal music. Boulez's pieces were written in 1945, when the war had just ended everywhere in Europe and the avant-garde was nowhere in sight.

At that time, the 20-year-old Boulez was studying twelve-tone music under the supervision of Olivier Messiaen at the Paris Conservatory. Messiaen was an important advocate of Schoenberg's numerical organisation of pitches, a concept that he also applied to other musical elements – rhythm, duration, articulation and dynamics – giving rise to so-called serialism. A model example of the consistent application of serial technique is Messiaen's *Mode des valeurs et d'intensités* (1949), which had a strong impact on the development of Boulez's total serialism, even to the extent that Boulez once declared that "any composer

who composes outside serialism is useless.” *Notations*, a twelve-movement twelve-tone piece, received its premiere performance on 12 February 1945 by pianist Yvette Grimaud.

Márton Illés (b. 1975)

Három akvarell csemlalóra/Three Watercolours for Harpsichord (2012)
World premiere

The first piece is an extremely filigree formation of lines, sketching a single large, upturned arch. It consists of soft, repeating arpeggios; rather than exerting full pressure on the keys, the harpsichordist only depresses them to the point where the quills just touch the strings rather than making them genuinely vibrate. This generates soft, gentle and somewhat glassy pitches, enriched with gentle noises.

The second piece engages playfully with virtuosic assemblages of lines that are distributed between the two manuals in a *quasi hoquetus* manner. The different registration of the manuals (the use of the lute register in the upper manual) and the diverse application of unequal octave positions, conjure up a changing colour and the strong shape of the line.

The intimate third piece depicts the various possibilities of eliciting sounds in a small space. The harpsichordist combines *ordinario* playing and the dampening of the lute register with sliding his fingers on the strings behind the bridge of the harpsichord, so that we can hear their ethereal flicker. The contours of an allusion to folk song appear, leading to a lyrical fade out.

Márton Illés

Michael Pelzel (b. 1978)

Brushing (2009)
for prepared piano

In *Brushing* for solo piano, *ordinario* playing occurs very rarely, only very briefly, indeed almost imperceptibly, at the very end of the composition. Much like a piano sonata, the composition is basically divided into three parts. In the first movement, the pianist adopts a variety of techniques, such as playing with brushes, wooden barbecue sticks and combs, while in the second movement electronic bows (*Ebow*) sound like a chorale with extended sustained notes. The third movement is a virtuosic *Toccata with brushes*, a hybrid between a composition for piano and a composition for percussion, demanding a great deal of virtuosity from the performers.

Michael Pelzel

Helmut Lachenmann (b. 1935)

Guero (1970)
a study for piano

At the end of the 1960s, Lachenmann developed a musical language that he himself described as *musique concrète instrumentale*, a derivative of Pierre Schaefer’s term *musique concrète*. This term designates a music consisting of concrete sounds from the human environment, rather than an abstractly notated structure. Lachenmann’s term thus represents a music of all of the sounds that can be produced by a specific instrument and that do not appear in the classical notation system.

Developing this kind of music, Lachenmann created a series of studies for

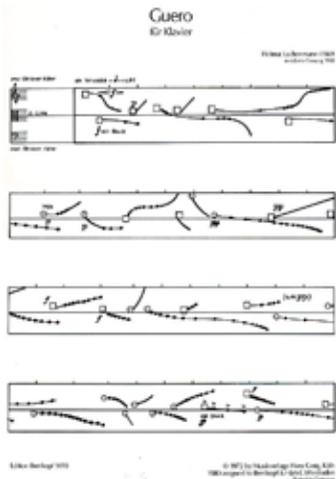
solo instruments: *Guero* for piano, *Pression* for cello and *Dal niente* for clarinet. All of these pieces have as their starting point a thorough study of the acoustic possibilities of each instrument: their potential to generate noises, pops and any type of sound.

Lachenmann describes *Guero* as a “six-manual” version of the eponymous Latin American instrument. The composition passes from the vertical surfaces of the white keys to the horizontal surfaces, via the black keys, into the piano, past the tuning pegs, to fingernails scraping on the strings. In this way, Lachenmann has created a musical structure in the opposite direction: rather than following from specific formulas to their execution, he proceeds from a concrete unconventional sound that determines or leads to the structure.

György Ligeti (1923–2006)

Passacaglia Ungherese (1978)
for clavichord

At this evening’s concert, the gap between the early harpsichord music of Nicola Vicentino and the contemporary music of Vito Žuraj and Márton Illés is bridged by *Passacaglia Ungherese* (*Hungarian Passacaglia*) for harpsichord from 1978 by Hungarian composer György Ligeti. This virtuosic composition is an example of contemporary composers flirting with Baroque music. In the Baroque period, the musical form *passacaglia* had an ostinato bass divided into a tripartite meter, which in turn provided a basis for the development and variation of the upper voices. This Baroque compositional method remained popular with some modern composers, including Shostakovich, Stravinsky, Berg, Lutosławski, Ligeti, Holliger and others.



The first page of Helmut Lachenmann’s score: Guero (Ed. Breitkopf)