

Prof. Dr. h. c. Peter Weibel

Extracts from his speech held on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009  
At the opening of the solo exhibition "MicroSonical Shining Biospheres No. 1"  
ZKM I Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009 to Jan. 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010

"... Classical aesthetics as both a theory of perception and a theory of arts has practically limited itself to the description of surfaces, of what we see with our eyes, what we hear with our ears. However, in the meantime, we have invented instruments, devices, a technology that penetrate deep under these surfaces we can acknowledge with our own sense organs.

And the artist couple Schäfer and Krebs has actually succeeded in saving and isolating just these aesthetical moments. We can say in a certain way that Krebs and Schäfer are the Hookes (Robert Hooke, 1635-1702) of sound-light art. They offer acoustic microscopes which enable us to perceive new sound worlds as well as new image worlds.

In this respect, Joachim Krebs is correct in having applied the term "sound microscopy" to this technology he has been developing since the nineties of the past century. "Skopeis" is the Greek word for seeing, so that the best term would actually be: Sono Microscopy – to make sounds audible by means of acoustic microtechnology, sounds that come from creatures which are themselves of microscopic size.

In expanding the sound world to the molecular, neuronal elements, the artist couple Schäfer/Krebs has succeeded in supporting a new kind of musical concept. This is what I want to demonstrate in my concluding remarks.

One of the founders of modern music – not John Cage, not Boulez, but a certain Morton Feldman – said that music should no longer submit itself to the tyranny of the metronome. You all know the metronome – that's actual tyranny of time. It never changes. It is a mechanical kind of time. You all know what a check clock is – „Stechuhr" in German, closely related to „Stechschritt", goose step. And it is rather peculiar that music as a so-called free art submits to the metronome. For that means that music submits to time. However, it is a fact that we invented music in order to subordinate time.

And this is exactly the phenomenon you [the recipient] described here: You relaxed. You suddenly let go, and you heard a music that invalidates the rules of the metronome. You haven't even noticed that maybe ten minutes have passed and you missed your next date. You just dissolve. You dissolve in a certain way, just like ink dissolves in water once you pour some of it in a fish tank. If you do that, you will see how clouds form, without any interval. This means, that when listening to this musical example [the „MicroSonical Shining Biospheres No. 1" by the artist couple <SA/JO>], you will find that it subordinates time – by means of EndoSonoMicroscopy – instead of submitting to time. ..."

In addition, you will find here extracts from Peter Weibel's article:

#### **molecular music or: breaking the dictatorship of time ...**

#### **AN INTERVIEW BY PETER WEIBEL WITH PETER WEIBEL ON PETER WEIBEL ... AND ON MUSIC**

„... Music should be something that releases us from the dictate of space and time, from the three bars of this cage: three spatial axes and a time axis. In practical terms, this means that we need a music that is not based on rhythm and not on the big interval theory of music postulated by Hegel..."

„... Sound waves are to me pressure waves in the first place. Music is to me a part of physics. That's what its therapeutical effect is based on. Music is applied mathematics, complex physics. This is why the future of music rests in the computer – the one universal instrument, the best one to calculate music. ..."

„... Music is a temporal, physical code. It enables the human being to retransform into a mere creature. This is the major satisfaction brought upon by music rather than, as is often said, metaphysical transcendence – it is, quite on the contrary, physical immanence. You are part of the material environment. ..."

„... Molecular music is music that treats music as a compository technique, as a cellular machine. The micro range of sounds in which sounds are arrayed in adjacent fields controlling and modulating their dissemination autonomously just like the algorithms by Conways „Game of Life" allows us to forebode a music submitting to time. ..."

„... that good music tries, on an experimental basis, to undermine this dictatorship of time by expanding time, by condensing time, through the interpretation of time, through slow motion, by means of acceleration, by means of all the technical possibilities we have today, and thus to bridge the gap to other acoustic worlds. A penetration of other acoustic worlds in my opinion ..."

„... We as human beings live in a different time cosmos, in a world of intervals different from that of the cricket. The same speed may appear "low" to us in relation to our life-span, but incredibly quick to the cricket in relation to its own lifetime. If we could decelerate these animals or rather their sounds technically, we might be able to conceive just how crickets sound to crickets: probably like angels' harps. Speed and intervals are variable, because they are gauged to the life-span of the related creature. Certainly, music is attached to life. Music is identical with the world describing itself, therefore it is life. This is why I am looking for molecular music that penetrates further into life and its sounds..."

"... This is why we may learn from the music of the animals. We believe that music is adapted to our temporal code – that is, how our brain works, our brain time. But the opposite is true: The brain time has to adapt to musical time. So the challenge is to construct music that, as a timing cycle, goes beyond the scope of our own brain's timing cycle. The intention is to get neuronal timing cycles and the musical beat "out of time".

"... This is the way of the crickets. I presume that crickets .... and therefore also their perception of the same noises are very different from ours. As I said, I also presume they hear angelic choirs. That's why they keep on chirping. They are actually addicted to this noise ..."

"... Thus, music is not only the mother of all time-based arts, it is also the mother of all technological arts. ..."

" ... Thus, music is not only the origin of all digital arts, but also the origin of digital philosophy. ..."

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About the author: [Peter Weibel](#)

