

At this very moment

Audio piece in scenic concerto form based on a text by Xaver Bayer (2016-2018)

On the stage is a narrator; speakers and instruments are distributed across the room. An introspective main text, consisting of observations of daily life in rural surroundings and the reflections, emotions and realisations that they trigger in the narrator. Fragments of music which are fed via speakers, sung by a female voice and accompanied by an oboe, hint at a love affair that has recently ended. The plot is embedded in 'musical stage sets': recordings from the natural environment which, depending on the situation, either transition imperceptibly from one to the other or change abruptly. The instruments connect the 'objective' sounds from the natural environment with the narrator's own 'subjective' sphere. They grow out of the sound feeds, are condensed in places to a layer which contrasts with the sounds from nature, or form a homogeneous field of sound with the recorded feeds.

The recordings of sounds from the natural environment are imported via a special recording and playback process (ambisonics) into the performance space. In contrast to the traditional distribution in fixed channels, acoustic signals are distributed across all the available speakers. The aim is to reproduce the original listening situation as accurately as possible.

The collaboration between the composer, Alexander Stankovski, and the author, Xaver Bayer, takes on elements of a melodrama due to the combination of a speaking voice and instrumental music – and by means of a consciously selected form of verse such as the nature poem. The text is recited to music, although both text and music can exist independently of each other, thereby creating at a given moment a situation akin to a concert or a spoken theatre production.

Its hybrid structure means that the piece can be presented in two versions: live as a concerto-like performance on stage or as a radiophonic audio piece. The feeds from the live version that was first performed at the festival *Wien modern* were created at the Institute for Computer Music and Sound Technology (ICST) in Zurich with the support of the Institute of Electronic Music and Acoustics (IEM) in Graz. The audio version was produced and broadcast via the Austrian broadcaster ORF's programme 'Kunstradio'.

Xaver Bayer's text appeared in the book 'Aus dem Nebenzimmer' ('From the next room') published by 'Korrespondenzen'.

Alexander Stankovski