

## ***Spaces I-IV* for spatially distributed ensemble and electronics (2000)**

### **4 commentaries**

#### **1. Like a sound of nature**

Mahler's indication in the score 'Like a sound of nature' is paradoxical: the musicians are instructed to produce sounds on their instruments which refer to a sphere which is beyond the boundaries of music. Tone sequences are not exposed as themes or motifs but appear as sounds that are external to the symphonic discourse, even though they are also – and this is where the paradox comes in – part of Mahler's hypertrophic networks of derivations, variations, evolutions etc. Mahler transplants artistically alien sounds and the aura surrounding them to the realm of art music – an approach that both diverges from and relativises art.

#### **2. Total sound space/arbitrary borders**

Following the radical blurring of musical boundaries during the course of the last century (from the emancipation of dissonances to sampling), fresh demarcations seem unavoidable. Cage's 'total sound space' needs to be measured, subdivided and filtered. The difference to earlier times is as follows: borders may be freely defined, only apply temporarily and can be shifted at any moment – nothing can guarantee their stability. If they are to be perceptible at all, the available material must be reduced to a typical excerpt from it, which remains stable enough for a certain amount of time (in other words, redundant), so that it may be differentiated from other excerpts, if required.

#### **3. Mind the gap**

In my view, composing requires me to take decisions, set boundaries, and stake out areas. I am unable to compose if I do not have a defined space for taking decisions. The definition itself – the limitation of my decision-making scope – can vary from piece to piece, from movement to movement within any one piece, from one musical layer to the next or from section to section. What interests me is the juxtaposition of differently defined spaces. My intention is not to convey opposites but to experience incommensurability.

#### **4. Why electronics?**

I regard electronic and traditional instruments as two fundamentally different things. The electronics in *Spaces I-IV* are not designed to be blended with the ensemble but to implant alien spaces in the concert hall.