

Jürg Frey

The Architecture of Silence

There is a music in which the time-space of sound and the time-space of silence appear in their own particular realms. Even when the sounds are often very soft, the music is not about falling into silence. The sounds are clear, direct and precise. Because they have left musical rhetoric behind, there is instead a sensitivity for the presence of sound and for the physicality of silence. There are long time spans for the presence of sound, and long time spans for the absence of sound. The two together form the "time present" of the piece.

In the silence a space is opened which can only be opened with the disappearance of sound. The silence which is then experienced, derives its power from the absence of the sounds we have just heard. Thus the time-space of silence comes into being, and then comes the physicality of silence.

Permeability, which is the physicality of silence itself, consists of the impossibility of saying anything about its content. Sounds can approach this permeability, but cannot achieve it. Sounds always occur as a formation or a shaping. They come into being by crossing a border which divides them from all others. At this border, everything formed becomes particular. Silence does not know this border. There is no silence through production. Silence is just there, where no sound is.

There are pieces in which the absence of sound has become a fundamental feature. The silence is not uninfluenced by the sounds which were previously heard. These sounds make the silence possible by their ceasing and give it a glimmer of content. As the space of silence stretches itself out, the sounds weaken in our memory. Thus is the long breath between the time of sound and the space of silence created.

Silence can also be present *in* the sounds. In order to have silence in sounds, one must let go of everything which gets in the way of this silence. This sound is a sound without the idea of what it can mean or how it should be used. This sound achieves a hint of permeability, which otherwise belongs only to silence. This sound is the *Da-sein* (being there) of sound. Its presence and charisma make themselves felt in the composition.

Silence requires *one* decision: sound or no sound. Sound requires a great many more decisions. These shape the sound and give it its quality, feeling and its content. Thus silence, in its comprehensive, monolithic presence always stands as *one* against an infinite number of sounds or sound forms. Both stamp time and space, in that they come into appearance, in an existential sense. Together they comprise the entire complexity of life.

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