



SCHWEIZERISCHER NATIONALFONDS
ZUR FÖRDERUNG DER WISSENSCHAFTLICHEN FORSCHUNG

The Performance Practice of Electroacoustic Music: a practice-based exchange between musicology and practice

Pièce électronique No. 3

Introduction

In the fall of 1957 Ligeti began working on a realization score for *Pièce électronique No. 3*. The score contains 11 pages with frequencies and time information for groups of single frequencies that are superimposed to form structures and their distribution on for channels. (cf. Nordwall, *Ligeti-dokument*). First attempts to realize the piece were undertaken at the Cologne studio in November 1957. In April 1958, Ligeti resumed work and also began to work on a volume score (Lautstärkenpartitur) that was left unfinished. The piece itself was never realized. Possibly, this was due to the limitations of the studio technique of the day that would not allow for a practical way to produce and accurately synchronize more than forty separate layers with individual envelopes. The compositional concept for *Pièce électronique No. 3* was strongly influenced by the idea of "Bewegungsfarbe" (movement color), a concept involving auditive phenomena related to micro montage. Ligeti had assisted Koenig in 1957 in the realization of *Essay* which makes use of said concept and would draw on it in his own work (see *Musik und Technik in Ligeti, Gesammelte Schriften*, Vol. 1, p. 237 ff.). Surviving fragments of Ligeti's realization attempts (Paul Sacher Stiftung, Sammlung Ligeti, GL TS 1093 18cm Spule – digitized on GL CD 323 Track 12) consist of a constellation of several layers (possibly found in Nordwall, *Ligeti-dokument*, p. 72, track 1) followed by a transposition of the same in the octave. This is copied twice. It is not known which volume relations were used. However, these fragments give a good idea of the sound quality that could be achieved with the analogue means of the time.

In 1996, Kees Tazelaar and Johan van Kreij undertook a realization at the Institut voor Sonologie am Koninklijk Konservatorium in Den Haag using Csound.

Select bibliography

Iverson, Jennifer, Shared compositional techniques between György Ligeti's "*Pièce électronique No. 3*" and "*Atmosphères*" in *Mitteilungen der Paul Sacher Stiftung*, Basel, No. 22 (2009), pp. 29-33.

Levy, Benjamin R., States of Balance and Turbulence. György Ligeti's *Pièce électronique nr. 3* in *Concept and Realization in Musiktheorie als interdisziplinäres Fach: 8. Kongress der Gesellschaft für Musiktheorie*, Graz 2008, Ed. Christian Utz, Saarbrücken, Pfau, 2010, pp. 427-436.

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