

**HOLLAND  
FESTIVAL 2015**

english



**NOW I LAY  
ME DOWN**

**SABRINA HÖLZER  
SOLISTENENSEMBLE KALEIDOSKOP  
INTO THE DARK**

# INFO

**SAT 20.6, SUN 21.6**

**starting time**

4.30 pm, 8.30 pm

**venue**

Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ

**running time**

80 minutes, no interval

# CREDITS

**idea, concept, staging**

Sabrina Hölzer

**musical direction, co-concept**

Michael Rauter

**set, light**

Ladislav Zajac

**mobilitytraining**

Petra Kieburg

**advice on darkness**

Roland Zimmermann

**guide**

Silja Korn, Regina Vollbrecht

**guide assistance**

Judith König

**general- and productionmanagement**

Jost Lehne

**stage management, project assistance**

Mareike Trillhaas

**assistance set, grass keeping**

Timo Behn

**performed by**

Solistenensemble Kaleidoskop:

– violin: Rebecca Beyer, Daniella Strasfogel, Dea Szücs, Mari Sawada, Paul Valikoski

– viola :Charlotte Dibbern, Yodfat Miron

– violoncello: Boram Lie, Michael Rauter

– double bass: Clara Gervais

**ensemblemanagement Kaleidoskop**

Volker Hormann, Lisa Mitschke

**production**

Into the Dark

**in cooperation with**

Berliner Festspiele

**with support by**

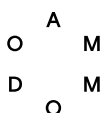
German Federal Cultural Foundation

**world premiere**

Berlijn, 11 December 2014

Hoofdbegunstiger / Patron

**FONDS 21**



# PROGRAMME

**Johann Sebastian Bach** (1685-1750)

*Sinfonia*

from the cantata: Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis, BWV 21 (1714)

adaptation: Michael Rauter

**E.E. Cummings** (1894-1962)

*i thank You God for most this amazing*

recitation: E.E. Cummings

recording from 1953

**Michael Rauter /Solistenensemble Kaleidoskop**

*NILMD 1* (2014)

with material from the cantata: Ich habe genug, BWV 82 by

Johann Sebastian Bach

**Michael Rauter** (\*1980)

*Eintondings* (2014)

**Johann Sebastian Bach**

*Sinfonia*

from the cantata: Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis, BWV 21 (1714)

adaptation: Michael Rauter

**Johann Sebastian Bach**

*Choral: Erfreut euch ihr Herzen*

from the same cantata, BWV 66 (1724)

adaptation: Michael Rauter

**Johann Sebastian Bach**

*Andante* from the violin sonata Nr. 2, a-Moll, BWV 1003 (1724)

**Michael Rauter**

*EINATEM* (2014)

**George Crumb** (1929)

*Pavana lachrymea*

from Black Angels. Thirteen Images from the Dark Land.

for electric string quartet (1970)

**Samuel Barber** (1910-1981)

*Adagio for Strings*, op. 11 (1938)

adaptation: Michael Rauter

**Benjamin Britten**

*Moto perpetuo e canto quarto: presto*

from the cello suite Nr. 1, op. 72 (1964)

**Solistenensemble Kaleidoskop**

*NILMD 2* (2014/15)

with material from the cantata Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis,

BWV 21 (1714) by Johann Sebastian Bach

# BACK IN THE ACOUSTIC LIGHT

## In conversation with Sabrina Hölzer

**Now I Lay Me Down takes place in a total darkness, just like your earlier trilogy, Into The Dark. How did these projects originate?**

The idea arose in 2001, when I was directing *Tragedy – The Invisible Room* by Adriana Hölszky at the Hebbel Theatre. The aim was to make music theatre without using the physical accoutrements of the theatre – a purely acoustic theatre, as it were. I eliminated external images by blacking out the light, in order to make it possible to more intensely concentrate on listening. In 2009, I became acquainted with the Solistenensemble Kaleidoskop within the scope of my production *Anaparastasis*, and I immediately noticed that these musicians like to push boundaries, try things out. Together with Michael Rauter, I experimented with what you could do in a dark space. Among other things, we developed a foot-guiding system that enables the musicians to orient themselves in the dark.

**The musicians felt that not being subjected to the watchful eyes of the spectators while playing the music was liberating. Is there a corresponding newfound sense of freedom for the spectators?**

Indeed, the spectators are also in a situation where they don't have to be seen and don't have to watch. People often tell me later that it was a relief not to have to process images all the time. Of course, to a certain extent, darkness is also a slowing down. That's a major theme in this piece.

**In the dark, when your visual orientation falls away, you perceive direction and distance differently. Does all orientation fall away for the listeners?**

What especially changes is a sense of the boundaries of the body. With light, you have a stronger feeling of separation from other people. At the moment that the light is gone and there is not yet any sound, I am thrown completely back on myself in a seemingly boundless space. After all, you have nothing 'facing' you – also nothing acoustic, as long as there still is silence. There is a similar boundless quality to sound: you can't quite distinguish where it begins and ends. When a sound arises after the silence, I again have a reference point: suddenly I can perceive a certain distance. Then comes another sound and I begin to perceive space. We play with these phenomena. Continually being able to switch from one space to another is very exciting. Because I no longer have that differentiated feeling of boundaries and separation in this special situation, a collective body seems to manifest itself.

**Terms like 'slowing down', 'separation' or 'profusion of images' automatically seem to have social implications. Is *Now I Lay Me Down* also a reaction to the way we experience the 'self' nowadays?**

I personally sometimes experience today's pace and the reversion of the physical as very frightening. Often I can't keep up with it. My rhythm is much too slow for the rapid pace

of the media and ever-increasing linear speed – even though that can be very exciting and full of possibilities. That's why I seek space, rest and corporality in my work. When I cannot see, I very quickly am in my body, because I now have to 'track' everything through hearing instead of sight. When I started working with this theme, it was a kind of aesthetic reset for me as a director. For me personally, it was about the question: What if I were to dial everything back to zero, switch off the lights, and start all over from scratch...

**What form of art have you ended up making since then? How would you describe your style?**

My style is reduce, reduce, reduce. Dietrich Steinbeck once said to me that Wagner invented the invisible orchestra, and I was inventing invisible directing. I'm often really annoyed by the pushy directing ideas in music theatre, and I think it's incredibly important to let music have its own movement and its own space. That's also why I'm conducting these experiments with darkness and acoustic spaces built up in lightless rooms.

**How is *Now I Lay Me Down* different from your previous trilogy?**

The trilogy still revolved around how to deal with darkness as a handicap and how you can rid yourself of that handicap. In *Now I Lay Me Down*, darkness is only another element of the work, just like the instrumentation of an orchestra is an element for a composer. What's more, the works before this had a clearly narrative structure, while we now have been more improvisational, both musically and spatially.

**Was there nonetheless something like a goal or theme that you focused on during the improvisations and rehearsals?**

What interests us is how movement becomes traceable. Even if you don't hear the musicians moving, you still can perceive something. When someone is standing there, you detect heat, for instance, or a change in the flow of air – nothing esoteric, simply sensory perceptions. It was exciting to investigate how you can design with this, by using collective physical movements or by creating noise with your body. At the same time, this work has become much more quiet, the musicians move less, and instead the music seems to make the space move. We are focusing more and more on how to evoke the feeling of a 'collective body', the feeling that you are *within* the music and that the music is not out there. How to work with that musically, so that you get the feeling of being part of a single body that is moving, without the musicians necessarily having to move for you to feel that way.

**Can you give a specific example in relation to the music?**

**What do the musicians actually play?**

There is a phase in which the musicians work with clusters of quartertones for almost 30 minutes. During that time, you can get the impression that the entire space is moving in layers. That's an incredible experience – you can become completely swept away in it. The clusters resolve into a sequence of chords borrowed from the Bach cantata *Ich habe genug*, and those are the reference points which bring you back from that infinity of quartertones to a clearly defined harmony – almost as if you are returning from the boundlessness of the dark space into the acoustic light.

**What are your criteria for choosing the music?**

That's an intuitive process. In our setting, the listeners cannot

move away from their divans on their own and are considerably at the mercy of the situation. They therefore undergo an extreme manipulation in order to be able to experience a very great freedom. Taking this acceptance as a theme, we came for instance to the Bach cantata *Ich habe genug* ('I have enough' or 'I am content'), which expresses a similar ambiguity in relation to death and its acceptance. Another related theme is the acceptance of powerlessness, of not having control, and finding peace precisely because of that.

**Yet at the same time, you adapted the pieces extensively...**

The lyrics of *Ich habe genug* don't appear in our production at all. Michael Rauter used the piece only for its chord sequences. We did something similar with Samuel Barber's *Adagio*, a timeworn piece of music always associated with 'terrible sorrow'.

**That Barber piece in particular has been played to death...**

Yes, certainly! However, for me it is exciting to find out what you experience in this imageless situation when confronted with a 'classic hit'. It then becomes your own cinema... (laughs).

The interview was held by Barbara Barthelmes and Christina Tilmann on the occasion of the world premiere of *Now I Lay Me Down* at Haus der Berliner Festspiele in december 2014. © Berliner Festspiele