

Gerhard Nierhaus *Editor*

Patterns of Intuition

Musical Creativity in the Light of
Algorithmic Composition

 Springer

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Elisabeth Harnik/Improvisational Re-assemblies

Elisabeth Harnik, Hanns Holger Rutz and Gerhard Nierhaus

Elisabeth Harnik was born in Graz, Austria, and received her first musical education at the age of five.¹ At the age of 10 she started playing the piano, an instrument that became a constant companion during her musical development. After finishing school she initially studied piano at the Music University of Graz. During her student time she turned at first to jazz and jazz-singing, working with Ward Swingle (Swingle Singers) and continued her education with Ines Reiger, Sheile Jordan, and Jay Clayton in the field of vocal improvisation. Harnik received further important impulses as a pianist by studying the repertoire of contemporary music, participating at the Vienna days of contemporary piano music and she continued to work as an improvisation musician. Harnik did not find until her intrinsic approach of the instrument with free improvisation until meeting the French double bass player Joëlle Léandre, whose musical journey from classical music to improvisation she shared. In the following years she worked as a pianist in various areas of improvisational music and participated, amongst others, in the classes of Peter Kowald, Lauren Newton or David Moss. As a pianist, Harnik looks for the challenge to dissolve or disperse the long-established norms and apparently fixed boundaries of the instrument, where she considers it her task and challenge to permanently re-invent her playing and her instrument.

¹ Biographical introduction and texts from the composer translated from the German by Tamara Friebe.

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Eva Reiter/Wire Tapping the Machine

Eva Reiter, Hanns Holger Rutz and Gerhard Nierhaus

Ever since her early childhood, Eva Reiter has nourished an affinity to art and especially to music, in particular to the presentation of musical ideas and art works.¹ For a long time she thought that her professional future was going to be in the realm of fine arts, yet she eventually found her place in music. Reiter has always felt the urge to express and play out her artistic ideas. For a long time the question of genre played no primary role to her. As a child she produced a large amount of paintings, sculptures and music. The value of experience and inner satisfaction that presented itself to her in the following through of firstly an idea, secondly, an arrangement and implementation of this idea, and thirdly, a presentation of the result, was of great importance to her. Whether or not these pieces were able to claim a high artistic significance was secondary to the energy created personally for her in the artistic endeavour. During her childhood and teens she was first taught recorder and piano, and later also learnt viola da gamba.

After finishing school she was confronted with two options. Reiter had prepared both for the music entrance exam at the Viennese University of Music and Dramatic Arts and at the Viennese University of Applied Arts in painting. As the date of the music entrance exam was earlier and she received a place, Reiter took a path in music from this point on.

¹ Biographical introduction and texts from the composer translated from the German by Tamara Friebe.

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Orestis Toufektsis/Chords in a Black Box

Orestis Toufektsis, Hanns Holger Rutz and Gerhard Nierhaus

Orestis Toufektsis was born in Tashkent in the former Soviet Union.¹ The family originates from Greece but was forced to emigrate to Uzbekistan after the civil war of 1946–49. In his youth he made his first contact with music through learning piano in the local music school. After the return of his family to Greece in 1977 he continued piano lessons at the conservatory in Alexandroupoli. After finishing school he enrolled at the Technical University of Thessaloniki as a student of surveying technologies, mostly to escape the two years of military service and to continue his musical studies. During this time Toufektsis earned his living as a musician in nightclubs and worked as a keyboarder in several jazz- and rock bands.

However, Toufektsis received a crucial impulse for his musical career from his counterpoint studies at the Conservatory of Thessaloniki; he also made a decision at this time to dedicate himself entirely to composition in the future. In counterpoint he was less fascinated by the various techniques of composers like Dufay, Palestrina and Bach, but far more in the inner logic and the corresponding ideas of the equality of multiple layers of pitches, rhythms and different sound colours. This concept liberated his musical intentions and led him in search of his own musical language. Through his teacher Dimitri Papageorgiou, Toufektsis also came in touch with, at this time in Greece, unknown pieces of Scelsi, Nono, Cage, Ligeti and Xenakis.

¹ Biographical introduction and texts from the composer translated from the German by Tamara Friebe.

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Matthias Sköld/A Topography of Personal Preferences

Matthias Sköld, Hanns Holger Rutz and Gerhard Nierhaus

Matthias Sköld grew up in Stockholm in the 1980s in a family of musicians. His father was a cellist at the opera of Stockholm, his mother was a singer and also a violin teacher. Also his larger circle of relatives consists mostly of musicians. The career wish of Sköld was already early settled on becoming an orchestra musician, right in the line of the family tradition. In the beginning he took clarinet lessons, then violin, piano, and saxophone, yet true enthusiasm emerged only from e-guitar, an instrument, which interestingly is played by many Swedish composers.

At this time Sköld received also important stimuli from regularly choir singing, which was extensively practiced at his secondary school with music focus. After high school Sköld studied first English and looked at this time intensively into the subject of literature theory in particular with phenomenology and poststructuralism. At the same time he applied for a two-year course in radio journalism. The training contained cutting, editing, and arranging of analog and digital audio in a professional studio-environment, an ideal addition/complement to his private experiments with different computer software and various synthesisers. After finishing his training Sköld started to work as a radio-reporter, yet at the same time the performing and composing of music became more and more important for him, which brought him finally to the Gotland School of Composition, where he studied under Sven-David Sandström and Per Mårtensson. Inspired by Per Mårtensson, Sköld engaged himself at this time extensively with various methods and software to analyse and synthesise sound.

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