

# THE MAULWERKER

## SCHNEBEL 80

### maulwerker performing dieter schnebel

compositions for voice and body by Dieter Schnebel

***Kafka-Dramolette* (2006-2008, premiere) 25'**

***Blinzeln* (from: *Schaustücke* (1995-99)) 6'**

***Kopfschütteln* (from: *Schaustücke* (1995-99)) 5'**

***Maulwerke* (1968-74, new version 2010) (25')**

Dieter Schnebel is considered one of the most important composers of his generation. Initially shaped by serial thinking, in the 1960s he advanced to the status of a luminary of European experimental music. With *Maulwerke* (1968-74) he created a groundbreaking work of modern vocal music, with *Körper-Sprache* (1980) the equivalent for modern music theater. He went on to elaborate his approach, which views gestures and body movements as compositional material that can be treated the same way as sound material, in the cycles *Laut-Gesten-Laute* (1981-85), *Zeichen-Sprache* (1986-90) and *Schaustücke* (1995-99), in which he links the compositions for body with voice and sets both into contrapuntal relationships.

In 2010, Dieter Schnebel will celebrate his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. Occasion enough for the Maulwerker – the ensemble that Schnebel founded and reared and which now, all grown up into a collective of composers, vocalists, performers, directors and music theater-makers, is an integral part of the international experimental scene – to honor their teacher with an all-Schnebel program.

Schnebel himself has written three new pieces expressly for the ensemble that are devoted to short stories by Franz Kafka: *Der plötzliche Spaziergang* and *Entschlüsse* (both 1913) and *Gib's auf!* (from the estate). Investigating these stories through a combination of gesture, language and singing, Schnebel has created three intensive works of “chamber-music-theater”.

## ***Kafka-Dramolette***

*Der plötzliche Spaziergang*

*Entschlüsse*

*Gib's auf!*

Schnebel's mini-dramas set three short stories of Franz Kafka to music. The composer dissolves the text into spoken or sung fragments, which he counterpoints with steps and gestures or movement sequences taken for the most part from the stories themselves. The text is presented in episodes so that the audience can follow the subject matter.

The first two *Dramolette* are solos, the third is a duet (with a small ensemble choir). Schnebel here creates musical studio theater that combines narrative and experiment in a compellingly new way.

## ***Blinzeln***

A composition made up of tics: brief, seemingly involuntary motoric contractions of individual muscles or muscle groups or vocal tics, exactly notated in regularly repeating rhythms, wander through a group of people posed as if for a group photo. Occasionally these are interrupted by soloistic eruptions, which then culminate in a virtuoso polyphony of different areas of the body.

## ***Kopfschütteln***

Five performers standing next to each other move nothing but their heads – producing gestures that are partly meaningful, partly absurd verging on abstruse. Their voices, simultaneously active, insert idiosyncratic counterpoints. A 10-voice polyphony of five heads and five voices in free and at times strict rhythms.

## ***Maulwerke (1968-74, premiere of a new version in 2010)***

*Maulwerke* is an open score that presents interpreters not with a finished work, but instead offers them vocal material organized in parts titled: *Atemzüge (breaths)*, *Kehlkopfspannungen (laryngeal tensions)*, *Gurgelrollen (throat rolls)*, *Mundstücke (mouth pieces)*, *Zungenschläge (tongue strikes)* and *Lippenspiel (lip play)*. These are rehearsed in *practice exercises* and, using *formative schemata* and *behavior patterns*, are developed in *production* and *communication* processes for presentation in a finished *opus*.

During their many years of collaboration, the *Maulwerker* have worked out many different versions of *Maulwerke*. The major scenic version from 1977/78 was followed by chamber music trio versions, all under Schnebel's direction. The ensemble composed its own collective version for the first time in 1995. After smaller trio and quartet versions, a new collective version was again created in 2006. In 2008, the *Maulwerker* dared to embark on a new kind of experiment: improvising on stage with the material they have known for years or, if you will, composing live. In 2010, a new version will be presented in which improvised and prearranged elements encounter each other.

## **THE MAULWERKER**

Michael Hirsch, Ariane Jeßulat, Henrik Kairies, Christian Kesten, Katarina Rasinski, Steffi Weismann, Christian Kesten

existing in their present form since 1993, are specialised in the common territories between music and theatre, music and language, music and space, sound and silence. The ensemble shows its repertoire of contemporary (vocal) music and experimental music theatre on an international level, i.e. works by Schnebel, Cage, Kagel, Fluxus... In addition, they frequently work with young composers, radio play authors, sound artists and directors.

The ensemble members' backgrounds vary between classical singing, acting, composition, performance, instrumental music, costume design and direction. All members have studied experimental music with Dieter Schnebel at some point in their higher education. They all work as soloists beside their activity with the ensemble.

Over the last years, **The Maulwerker** have performed in Benelux, Bulgaria, Germany, France, Israel, Italy, Japan, Macedonia, Russia, Scotland, Switzerland, Slovakia, Spain, Czech Republic and the USA; at Maerz-Musik Berlin (2006), Musica Viva Munich (2005), Festival UltraSchall Berlin/ Deutschland-Radio (2006), Festival Stimme+ ZKM Karlsruhe (2006), KKL Luzern/Switzerland (2006), Theater Basel/Switzerland (2006), Festival Jeunesse, MUMOK Museum Moderner Kunst Vienna/Austria (2005), Festival Klangraum/Raumklang Cologne/Germany 2004 und im TESLA Podewils'sches Palais Berlin (2005/06/07).

**[www.maulwerker.de](http://www.maulwerker.de)**

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