

Hidden Beauty

by Robert HP Platz

In the early 80s, Detlev Gojowy invited me to conduct a studio recording for the WDR of Klaus's *Notturmo*, a very quiet, poetic piece for chamber orchestra. It is a hushed, insistent, very beautiful work written in a highly individual sonic language that captivated me immediately. Klaus was very happy with the recording, and we became friends... and he finally asked me hesitantly if I would be willing to cast a glance at a 'completely different' piece, after the intended ensemble had cancelled the premiere for reasons of supposed unplayability.

This piece turned out to be *'Feuerzauber' auch Augenmusik* for three flutes, harp and amplified cello. A music like no other I had seen or heard – in fact, there is no piece in music history that sounds remotely similar to it. That was reason enough for me to take on the project. The 'project': Klaus had dissolved/decomposed the act of playing each of the instruments involved into its component parts and recombined the individual actions. To the uninitiated, each instrumental part looked like the full score for a complex work of chamber music.

I forget how many rehearsals we had. Carin Levine was happy to be breaking new ground with two colleagues, or rather students; we lost our harpist over the piece, found and then lost a second one, but in the end we were able to show people: it wasn't unplayable, see the CD recording. We would have liked to play the piece on more than just one tour, but the line-up was expensive and the piece was as brief as it was beautiful... and so I asked Klaus whether he wanted to write a new piece for Ensemble Köln in our standard formation: flute, clarinet, piano, violin and cello. He took up the offer... and sent us a score of darkly glowing beauty for solo viola, bass flute, alto flute, basset horn, bass trumpet, lute, three cellos and double bass: *Arie dissolute*. After the successful premiere, Klaus went from strength to strength with each new piece and we almost became a team. His *opus maximum*, *Epiphyt* for flute and chamber orchestra, was likewise written for Ensemble Köln.

But, just as horror films often take a perfectly innocent or idyllic scene as their point of departure, I can see us together with our families at the artists' colony in Schreyahn in the spring of 1989. Klaus was there with his wife Maria and his little daughter Barbara, who became the darling of the whole village; I can still see her, surrounded by friends outside on the swing. Later, back in Munich, Klaus complained on the telephone of a cold and fever. A few days later he was in a coma, and would stay in that state for nine months. Maria literally sacrificed herself for him: his condition was just improving when she died of an illness that she had neglected to treat out of concern for him. Barbara, now at a critical age, was consumed by the

contradictions of her role as carer and housekeeper for her father and a stand-in for her mother. He lost her too.

I ask myself how much suffering... and how much forbearance and magnanimity fit into one human life. Klaus was brave, he accepted everything as it was, never lost his zest for life, never complained... not even about the neglect shown by concert organisers towards the works he had composed after his illness, which he wrote against all odds with an unprecedented, tireless energy, highly idiosyncratic and uncompromising towards himself and others: hidden beauty. The presentation of the works written after his illness which I realised for the Schreyahner Herbst festival was a triumph.

I see/hear his music as a triumph over fate, a constant 'and yet...' that still finds a reason for the tender discovery of unexpected beauty even in the deepest sorrow. The art of living, even in death, and a testament to a profoundly human greatness.