

Burkhard Stangl

Precision, Style, Mastery.

On the Lyricist in Music, Katharina Klement.

I.

*To reveal art and conceal the artist is  
art's aim.*  
Oscar Wilde

Nothing is more unusual about Katharina Klement than the self-evident. Trailing the sounds, her music approaches an unnameable place of joy: "Come into the open, my friend!". Her compositions stride through past and present; anticipating things to come they are current as well as timeless through their musical integration of references to different times. Katharina Klement's oeuvre presents itself as an organic combination of acoustic and electronic music – and proves to be a very personal manuscript of the heart.

The present CD is made for an audience that takes time to listen and believes in careful, vulnerable sounds. Just like Alberto Giacometti, who knows how to create a striking wideness even with his smallest figurine sculptures, so does Klement with her most delicate notes that generate such spacious ambiances of sound, inviting the audience to contemplate and listen.

II.

*If you're under ninety, chances are that  
you've spent most of your life listening  
to electronic music.*  
Brian Eno

Brian Eno's comment is a pointed remark on the acoustic-musical socialization of at least three generations. All musical genres are affected by electricity-bound procedures, molded by them, dependent on them. The electronic era has revolutionized the means by which music is created, conveyed, and heard. In the last decades, microphones,

amplifiers, speakers, and recording and playback devices have become the central terms on all levels of music production, reception and perception. Musical performance practices that were centuries old have been pulled into a maelstrom of crisis-ridden changes that can be characterized roughly as rivalry between scriptural musical culture and neo-oral techniques of composition and play. Since that time, composition, improvisation and electronics have eyed each other suspiciously, not only because of their different contents, components and production methods, but also because of their respective positions within societal and socio-cultural hierarchies. And still it is these three musical spheres that represent the three sound axis that run through Katharina Klement's compositional career – three spheres that the composer melds together in marvelous ways, to be heard in the six pieces of the CD production at hand.

III.

*What I have to say - I try to say it in  
my pieces.*

Katharina Klement

Katharina Klement studied the flow of musical and technological developments precisely and analyzed them with a discerning eye; she used different notation techniques to record her compositions, with and without written repositories; in her written compositions she didn't only use traditional notation systems, but took on – and advanced – a number of indeterminate composition techniques and their notation systems as well, styles that were developed in the 1950ies but by-and-large remained relatively unpopular; she contributed to refining the term 'improvisation', to conceive of it also as a form of spontaneous maintenance of one's own creative sound repertoire; and she honed the tones of her musical-electronic equipment for a long time until they assumed a personal, haptic-sensory quality. What sounds effortless now, the composition of musical poems that distinguish her style, is in fact the result of laborious exploratory sound analysis. Over years she probed the triumvirate of composition, improvisation and electronics in painstaking detail, working to loosen the strict parameters of classification (in relation to form, material and content), until they

became one – forming her personal constellation.

IV.

*If there is a key, a gateway to the  
spirit of all music, one should look for  
it in the related fields of art.*  
Curt Sachs

One major theme in Katharina Klement's creative production revolves around "sound installations" and "music in public spaces". These works are distinctly affected and enhanced by her experiences with dance, literature, film and videography as well as with fine arts, especially in plastics and sculpture. In reference to the 10-channel sound installation *Beton* ("concrete") from 2000, which is concerned with the metamorphosis of liquid material to rigid structures, Klement remarks: "Sound transformation – especially with electronic devices – means working with multi-dimensional phenomena, and is comparable to sculptural work". Her space-sound compositions are electro-acoustic sculptures in space and time. She knows that the impact of space cannot be reproduced on tape, so in that segment of her creative work her CD releases are transformations, recreations – in fact, independent works of art.

V.

*But where danger is, rescue grows as  
well.*  
Hölderlin

Klement's impact rests on her unbending aspiration to personal artistic expression. Somewhere inside her pieces – which are often quiet, restrained and introverted, but frequently roughened up by unexpected eruptions – a strong and arousing place of refuge can be found. Her art is a place of comforting insecurity, of danger and conscience, both complex and simple, graceful, concise, enigmatic. Beauty and doubt, perfectly cast into a musical form: That is mastery. Despite all

reflections on composition and ingredients that shape her work, one listening remains quite incapable to discern the secret behind the fascinating power of the sound universes she creates. Nothing is more self-evident about Katharina Klement than the unusual.