

I.

- There are 6 billion people. How many of them know the music of Ravi Shankar or Cage or Nono or Bach?
- Will 1.3 billion Chinese be hearing Beethoven incessantly, too?
- The universe is supposed to be about 15 billion years old. The first primeval human beings appeared about 600,000 years ago (= ca. 1/25,000 of the universe's previous existence). Culture has existed for about 5000 years (= 1/3,000,000) and European music for 1500 or 1000 years. How much longer?
- The dinosaurs suddenly died off and became extinct 30,000 years ago.
- How many people have already been passionate about the music of Wagner? How many more will hear Wagner?
- A happy second that one never forgets, the long years of boredom that one never thinks about.
- Stockhausen proudly noted that at the World's Fair in Osaka, 1 million people heard his music (each for how long, with how much interest?) How many billions have never heard Stockhausen?
- At the premiere of *Winterreise*, it's said that 50 people were present – or perhaps just 20.
- La Monte Young, *Composition 1960/15*: "This piece is little whirlpools out in the middle of the ocean."

Christian Kesten*UNTITLED* (BREATH TONGUE LIPS)

is a breathing solo (31:30 min in full length), divided in four monochrome textures of breathing sounds (ex-/inhaling) in fixed proportions. The longest texture is 21:51min and the shortest 45sec long.

I : 00:00 – 21:51, II: 21:51 – 24:45, III: 24:45 – 25:30, IV: 25:30 – 31:30.

The composer, theologian, teacher and musicologist **Dieter Schnebel**, born March 14, 1930, in Lahr/Baden, grew up in Lahr and Villingen, studied music in Freiburg, then theology, philosophy and musicology in Tübingen, graduating with a doctoral thesis on "Dynamics in Schönberg". With Webern as his starting point, he has been composing since 1953. Formative experiences as a young composer came at the Kranichsteiner (today Darmstädter) Ferienkursen für Neue Musik, where he met Adorno, Boulez, Messiaen, Nono, Stockhausen and Varèse, among others. His first personal encounter with Cage was in Hamburg in 1961. Among the decisive influences on Schnebel's reform theological thinking were Karl Barth, Martin Buber, Ernst Bloch and Albert Schweitzer.

Following his student years, Schnebel worked as a pastor and teacher in Kaiserslautern, Frankfurt am Main and Munich. In 1976, a professorship in experimental music was established especially for Schnebel at the Hochschule der Künste Berlin (today Berlin University of the Arts), a post he held until retirement in 1995. During this period, he founded the ensemble "Die Maulwerker" (now independently run), with which he premiered many of his vocal experimental works.

Schnebel counts among the most innovative and influential avant-garde composers of the second half of the 20th century. Even in compositions from the early 1950s (*Versuche I-IV*), he already had unleashed open sound processes, between tone and noise, and strove to use space in new ways. His conceptual pieces from the 1960s to 1980s (e.g. *Orchestra*, symphonic music for mobile musicians) aimed to release their material using emancipatory processes, revealing many paths for new music beyond the rigid serial system. His sound and language compositions from the 1950s to 1980s were pioneering: the choral cycle *Für Stimmen (...missa est)* and *Glossolalie*; so, too, were experimental works for music theatre that created scandals: *Maulwerke* and *Körper-Sprache*. Here language is treated as music, processes of vocal articulation and mute physical gestures attain the level of music theatre. Schnebel's early interest in the visual aspects of music made him, moreover, a forerunner of synaesthetic composition. Works from the 1960s: *Visible Music I* for conductor and instrumentalist, and *Nostalgie* for solo conductor, as well as *Ki-no*, soundless picture-music conceived as a slide show, and the book *Mo-No*, are signposts of visual music. They were followed in the 1990s by prototypes of a synaesthetic, music-theatrical spatial music: *Museumsstücke I* and *II* (MoMA). Schnebel became an innovative border-crosser between music theatre, vocal performance art and sound poetry in the 1980s and 1990s with cycles such as *Laut-Gesten-Laute* and *Zeichen-Sprache*, in which he condensed vocal sounds and gestures into music-theatrical miniatures or audiovisual sound poems. With the work group *Psychologia* (1978-96), in which he transformed classical instruments into emotional, music-articulating, almost mythical beings, he provoked a new form of sensuality in what was still a consistently "abstract" phase of instrumental music.

Yet Schnebel the composer and theologian has always been an innovator linked with tradition – and as such, a forerunner of post-modern music, as shown in his extremely extensive work groups *Re-Visionen* (1972-92) and *Tradition* (1975-). In humorously satirical or sublime manner, works and forms from the baroque to modern music are rediscovered, revealed, exposed, re-composed and further extended using means both traditional and new. Such works include: *Schubert-Phantasie*, *B-Dur-Quintett*, the chamber-theatre piece *Jowaeagerli*, the song cycle *Kaschnitz-Gedichte* and the *Streichquartette* I and II.

Schnebel's large-scale late works from the 1990s and the first years of the 21st century bear witness to his striving to summarize and set out all-embracing testaments to his musical language and music-theological world view. This is apparent in works such as the oratorio *Ekstasis* and the colossal, more than three-hour-long *Sinfonie X I-III*.

In 1991 Schnebel was awarded the Lahr Cultural Prize, and in 1999 the European Church Music Prize, which was awarded for the first time. His works have been premiered at the major international festivals of new music including the Berliner Festspiele, Biennale di Venezia, Donaueschinger Musiktage, Festival d'Automne Paris, and Warschauer Herbst. Concert tours with ensemble "Die Maulwerker" have taken him to Brazil, Canada, Japan, Korea, the USA, and elsewhere. The composer is a member of the Berlin Academy of the Arts, the Free Academy of the Arts, Leipzig, and the Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts. He is the author of several books on new music (*Mauricio Kagel, Denkbare Musik, Anschläge-Ausschläge* and *Signatur 33*) and has written numerous musicological lectures and essays on Beethoven, Janáček, Schubert, Wagner, Mahler, Webern and Cage, and on the questions of newness, beauty, physicality and visual imagery in music.

(Theda Weber-Lucks)

<http://www.d-schnebel.com> and <http://www.schott-musik.de/shop/artists/1/17066/index.html>

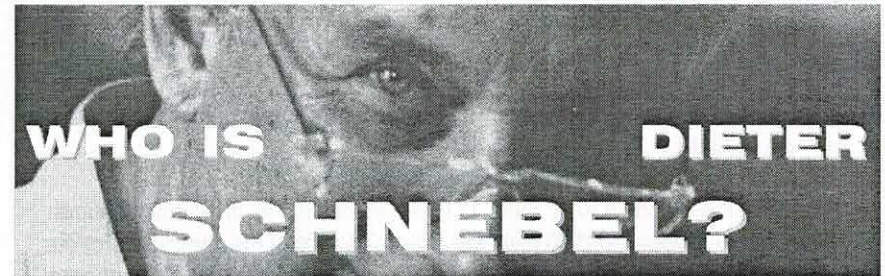
The composer and performance artist **Christian Kesten**, born in 1966, is a congenial interpreter of works by Schnebel. Since his studies at the Hochschule der Künste in Berlin, he has been closely connected to Schnebel. Their common interest for experimental music and performance practice lead to a steady collaboration. Kesten has been performing music-theatre pieces by Schnebel since 1987 and works currently with the ensemble „Maulwerker“ and as a soloist. The compositions and sound installations of this versatile artist, represented internationally in sound art since 1990, deal with the theme of the space-in-between and indefinite transitions, whether it is between music and theatre, music and language or music and the visual arts. Since 1992 he has also been working as a stage director for new music-theatre. He realized amongst others Mauricio Kagel's *Staatstheater* (chamber version) and *Mare Nostrum*, Tom Johnson's *Riemannoper*, Dieter Schnebel's *MoMA* and John Cage's complete *Song Books*. Kesten has conceived and curated the series "maulwerker performing music" (since 2005) in Berlin and is co-curator of the experimental music concert series Labor Sonor at KULE Berlin. He was composer-in-residence at amongst others: Künstlerhaus Lukas Ahrenshoop 2000 and Villa Aurora Los Angeles 2007.

Website: <http://www.christiankesten.de/>

Theda Weber-Lucks, born 1965 in Rendsburg, Germany, studied musicology and literature in Munich. Since 1994 she has been working as a freelance musicologist, music journalist and music educator, based in Berlin and Quebec (Canada). From 1995-1999 she worked as a private assistant of the German composer Dieter Schnebel. Since 1994 she has been working as music educator and project coordinator at the Leo Kestenberg music school Berlin. Since 1995 she has constantly been writing for the most important German new music magazines and broadcasting stations. In 2005 she completed her PHD "KörperStimmen. Vokale Performancekunst" at the Technische Universität Berlin/Prof. Dr. Helga de la Motte. She planned and coordinated several musical events as for instance the music festival "Gehörlose Musik" (Berlin 1999) and the "Leo Kestenberg Project" (Berlin 2005). She did her main research on new music theatre, sound poetry and Vocal Performance Art.

Website: <http://www.primartic.de>

The Goethe Institut, New Music Concerts and Gallery 345 present



Monday March 10, 7:00 pm | Gallery 345, 345 Sorauren Avenue, Toronto

Dieter Schnebel: *Poem für einen Springer* | Performed by **Christian Kesten** [5']

Dr. Theda Weber-Lucks: *Who is Dieter Schnebel?* | Audio-visual lecture [15']

Dieter Schnebel: *Stimmungänge* (World Premiere) | Performed by **Christian Kesten** [10']

Dieter Schnebel: *Zeitfragen* (Questions of Time) | Performed by **Christian Kesten** [15']

Christian Kesten: *Untitled (breath, tongue, lips)* 2005 | Performed by **Christian Kesten** [11']

Dieter Schnebel: *Avantgarde Composition 1950 – today*

Excerpts of a video interview with Dieter Schnebel [15']

Dieter Schnebel: *First String Quartet – "In Space":*

Scherzo and *Adagio with Coda* (Diotima Quartet Paris)

Video documentary of last rehearsal before the premiere on Feb. 17, 2008 [25']

Reception

Dieter Schnebel *Poem für einen Springer* from *Zeichen-Sprache* [1987–89]
for Nikolaus A. Huber on his 50th birthday

Poem for 1 Jumper (1988–89) (translation: A. Lerner, Berlin)

1 person is situated in a narrowly defined field;

and within it, performs stamping jumps

with both legs at the same time

or on one leg, successively alternating the legs in certain patterns,

with the body moving in concert – as a restless entity, so to speak,

striking different postures that can be varied;

and utters shouts, or gasps

that form a multifarious counterpoint to the jumping motions

Notation

upper (head) range

middle range (hips)

floor

voice

height of the rump (when stooped), stretching motion during the jump

jumps of various heights

shout when taking off or landing the jump

Performance character:

always with the utmost force – "with rage!"