

Belma Bešli & Bernhard Gál

Vortex

A search for time distortion

VORTEX

A search for time distortion

by Belma Bešli and Bernhard Gal

Vortex is an interdisciplinary music project by composer / pianist Belma Beslic (AUT/SLO) and Viennese composer Bernhard Gál (AUT). It deals with different aspects of temporal perception, and its implication for our human sensory and cognitive apparatus.

<http://www.vortexproject.org>

In spring 2009, Vortex was premiered in a series of concerts presented in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia.

http://www.bernhardgal.com/balkan-tour_2009.html

Depending on the conceptual and technical framework of the respective presentation venue, Vortex consists of changing combinations (modules) of the following interdisciplinary music projects by Belma Beslic and Bernhard Gál.

HIBERNATION	Belma Beslic music theatre project, 2009
UTOPIA PLANITIA	Belma Beslic music theatre project, 2008
Echo	Belma Beslic for piano and video projection, 2008
relive	Bernhard Gál solo laptop concert, 2008 -
textur #1-4	Bernhard Gál audiovisual performance, 2005 - 2009
88	Bernhard Gál choreographed composition for amplified piano, 2003

Presentations:

Alte Schmiede, Vienna, December 2009 (upcoming) | Tovarna Rog, Ljubljana, May 2009 | SC, Zagreb, May 2009 | SKC, Beograd, April 2009 | Narodno pozoriste RS, Banja Luka, April 2009 | TKT Fest, Tuzla, April 2009.

HIBERNATION (Belma Beslic)

Music theatre for a commanding insomniac and hibernating crew, 2009



[Hibernation_by Belma Beslic, 2009]

SYNOPSIS

Year 2053.

The commander of a space shuttle, a genetically engineered insomniac, freights the cargo: hibernating human beings. In their imposed dreams, they are travelling through an unknown dark space, unaware of their final destination, unaware of the reason(s) of their voyage, unaware of the time that passes. Awakening, so it seems, is impossible and the main question remains an unsolvable enigma: to whom belongs and what is reality?

DESCRIPTION

HIBERNATION aims to explore the limits of the audience's perception. By using intermedial means of artistic expression, its intention is to carry the listener/viewer through different states of awareness. Further, it is a demonstration of belief that our own realities are just our own projections, a result of subjective, personal perspectives. Ultimate truth is unreachable.

In „HIBERNATION“, the sound projection has the function of a bounding tissue between different conceptual components. It is a fundamental parameter, one that directly influences all other components. One main aspect is a voice recording of George Byron's poem 'Darkness'. The video part reflects the subconsciousness of the hibernating beings, the emotional void of the commander, as well as the vortex of time. The minimalist stage lighting symbolizes openings in the space-time continuum.

FURTHER INFORMATION

<http://hibernation2009.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.belmabeslic.com/projects/vortex-opis/english/>

OVERVIEW

Duration:	27 minutes
Video requirements:	Video projector plus projection screen, VGA cable (5m or 10m)
Audio requirements:	PA stereo system (loudspeakers, stage mixer)
Light:	self-provided
Scenography:	height: 180cm, width: 100cm, length: 160cm
Premiere:	Sarajevo, BiH – Sartr, April 21 st , 2009
Add. performances:	TKT festival Tuzla, Narodno pozoriste RS Banja Luka, SKC Beograd - April 09

UTOPIA PLANITIA (Belma Beslic)

Intermedial music concert of a potential future, 2008

UTOPIA PLANITIA is an intermedial music concept that tries to anticipate a potential concert situation of the future. The main components are: music composition (violin, organ, electronics), visualization (video), costume design, light and space exploration. The concept deals with issues of communication, progress, desire, agnosticism, sexuality, loneliness, etc.



[Utopia Planitia at Hörfest 2008, Graz, May 2008. Performed by Annelie Gahl and Klaus Lang. Photo: Peter Jakober]

DESCRIPTION

For the first time in history, a worldwide audience can witness a live performance in a direct TV broadcast with musicians who don't inhabitate the same world. The violin player is on Earth, and the organist is on Mars, in an outpost located in Utopia valley.

The organist starts his performance 3.2 minutes prior to the violinist, This way that the auditory can witness a simultaneous interplanetary performance – transmission signals need some 3,2 minutes to cross the distance from Mars to Earth (on 17.07.2065 - ca. 56.000.000 km; speed of light = 299792458 m/s). Therefore, the performers will never actually play together. His present is her past and her present is his future... This duo is a temporal illusion. A mutual real-time reality doesn't exist. The audience perceives a third time, the temporal insinuation of something that one might call NOW.

The music composition formally consists of three parts: electronic Introitus, ac/el. Main and electronic Exitus. The composition technique focuses on creation of minimal sound bubbles. The general form is flow, while subformal structures (phrases which are actually openings and closings of the formal and dynamical circles) are simulating ebb and flow.

The violinist is dressed in a purist, minimalist suit. The astronaut suit which the organist wears is not just conceptual costume design: it symbolizes the urgent need for an independent micro space, a personal biosphere which protects from the nightmares of the modern world's society, from the constant bombardment of information. It is a symbol of bodily and emotional isolation. An escape from time.

OVERVIEW

Duration:	ca. 16'
Video requirements:	version 1: video projector plus projection screen, vga cable (5m or 10m); version 2: same as above, plus video camera for live transmission
Audio requirements:	PA stereo system (loudspeakers, stage mixer, cd player)
Light & Scenography:	self-provided
Premiere:	Hörfest, Graz, May 4th, 2008
Performers:	Annelie Gahl (Vi.), Klaus Lang (Organ), Belma Beslic (electronics)

ECHO (Belma Beslic)

Composition for piano and video projection, 2008



[B. Beslic performing 88 at SKC, Belgrade, April 2009]

DESCRIPTION

With **Echo**, I strive to test interactions between visual projections and generated shadows, real and false images, live-generated and pre-produced sounds. The final goal was to create a picture of a parallel reality. The analysis of the movie "La dolce vita" brought three different sound layers to light. Each one represents a specific visual component of the movie. The music is a reflection of the story, focusing on its philosophical, psychological and sociological aspects. It reflects the emptiness and false happiness of the postwar jet-set society.

OVERVIEW

Duration: ca. 9'
Video requirements: video projector plus projection screen, long vga cable (5m or 10m)
Audio requirements: piano, possibly amplification
Premiere: Graz, AUT – KUG, December 6th, 2008

relive (Bernhard Gál)

Solo laptop performance



[Gal live in Taipei 2007 (1+2) and Mendoza 2006 (3)]



[CD 'relive', Gromoga, 2008]

relive

In addition to his work as a composer and installation artist, Bernhard Gál also performs live, using a laptop computer along with additional electronic devices. Gál's solo concerts are comprised of elements from recent music and art projects as well as new field recordings, which he takes apart and reassembles in a quasi-improvised, live context. In many cases, the performances also reflect the respective concert venue, with its distinctive acoustic and sociocultural characteristics.

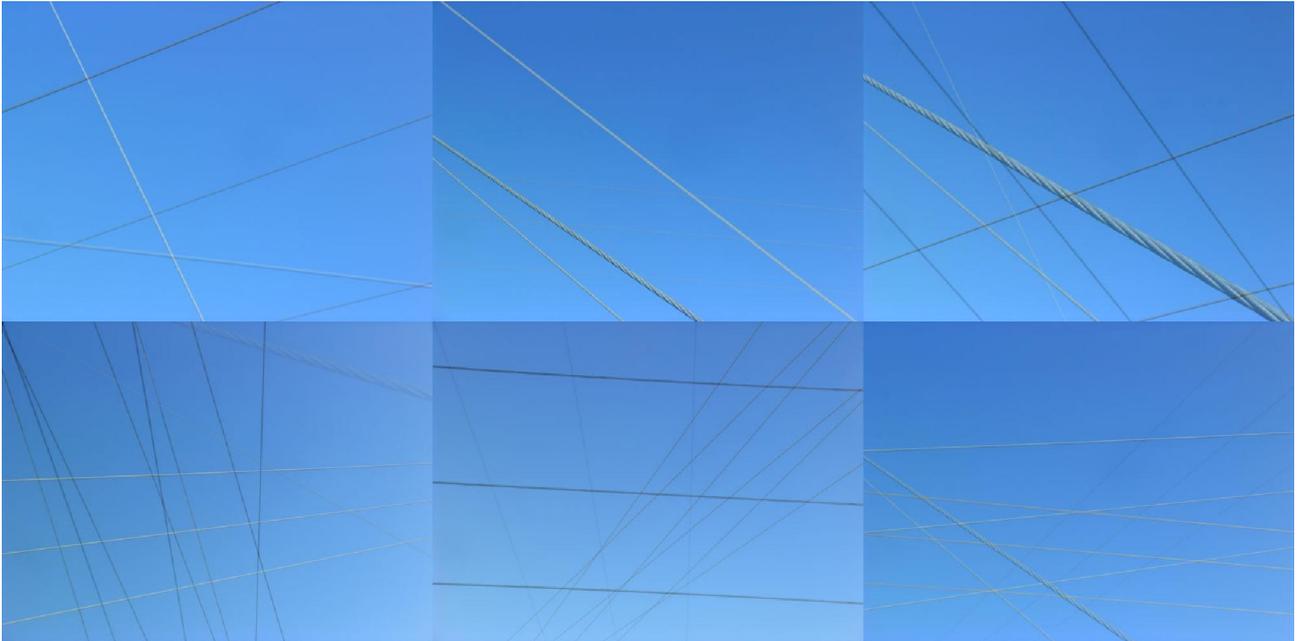
relive (Gromoga Records, 2008) is Bernhard Gal's eighth solo production, after several CDs, a catalogue book and a DVD released on a variety of labels such as Durian, Plate Lunch, Intransitive, Klanggalerie and Gromoga.

Since 2002, Gál has performed over 150 concerts on four continents. This is his first live-cd, featuring excerpts from concerts recorded between autumn 2007 and summer 2008. No sounds were added or edited afterwards, so that the live character of the original recordings would be maintained.

Duration: flexible, 15-30'
Audio requirements: PA stereo system (2 or 4 loudspeakers), stage mixer, table, chair
Light: darkened environment, no light or just very dim light
Infos & audio excerpts: http://www.bernhardgal.com/relive_cd.html

textur (Bernhard Gál)

Series of audiovisual performances, combining phonography and photography, 2005 - 2009



[stills from textur #4, 2009]

textur is a series of audiovisual works by Bernhard Gal, combining phonography and photography in installations or live performances.

In an attempt to integrate textures from the visual and acoustic realms, **textur** is based on snapshots from the 'real world' that show a certain textural quality, i.e. either repetitive, rhythmic elements or amorphous, static qualities. **textur** is considered as an ongoing exploration, a work-in-progress in the best sense. Depending on context and possibilities, it may be presented as a live performance, a video projection, or a site-specific installation.

textur #1	2005	based on photographs from several flights between Vienna and Berlin.
textur #2 (radio ears)	2006	based on photographs of satellite dishes in Istanbul.
textur #3	2009	based on photographs of a water surface from Niterói, Brasil.
textur #4 (stromlinien)	2009	based on photographs of electricity wires from Oman.
textur #5	2009	based on images from the excavation site of Troy, Turkey.

Past Presentations: Banja Luka, Beograd, Budapest, Frankfurt, Istanbul, Ljubljana, Mendoza, Montevideo, New York City, Nitra, Opava, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Sarajevo, Timisoara, Tuzla, Vienna, Zagreb.

Duration: textur #1: 12', textur #2: 18', textur #3: 6', textur #4: 8', textur #5: 14'

Audio requirements: PA stereo system (2 or 4 loudspeakers), stage mixer, table, chair

Video requirements: video projector, projection screen, vga cable (5m or 10m)

Infos & audio excerpts: <http://www.bernhardgal.com/textur.html>

88 (Bernhard Gál)

Composition for (amplified) piano and light projection, 2003



[B. Beslic performing '88' at SKC, Belgrade, April 2009]

In **88**, each key of the piano is only hit once. The sustain pedal remains pressed down during the entire performance. Depending on dynamics and pitch, complex tonal combinations of varying duration and intensity emerge. In this composition, the order of tones is of no essential importance, and was determined in a strictly incidental selection process. To further the acoustic awareness of the audience, Gal often strives to uncouple the acoustic and visual layers of a musical performance (and sometimes recombines them later in a more composed manner).

Below are two suggestions for a choreographed presentation of **88**:

Performance option 1)

The concert space is dark. The only light source is a lamp on the piano's music stand which dimly lights the score. The piano is positioned with the pianist's back facing towards the audience. In front of the piano stands a translucent screen, the performer can only be seen as a distorted shadow.

Performance option 2)

The concert space is dark. The only light source is a bright spot light positioned on the floor behind the pianist's chair, turning the performer into a black silhouette (direct light needs to be blocked). The piano is positioned with the pianist facing the audience. The pianist tries to play without any visible gestures, only moving the forearms which cannot be seen by the audience. Thus a visual connection with the sounding tones can not be established.

Duration: 6-8'
Audio requirements: 2-4 microphones inside piano, PA stereo system (2 or 4 loudspeakers)
Light: see performance options above.
Premiere: Xenia Hu; Kunstverein Alte Schmiede, Vienna, March 2003
Audio Excerpt: http://www.bernhardgal.com/sound/88_excpt_1m13.mp3



The Austrian artist, composer and musicologist Bernhard Gál has become internationally known as one of the most prolific sound artists of a younger generation. During the past ten years Gál has created around 50 sound installations and media art projects, combining sound, light, objects, spatial concepts and video projections into intense and often site-specific interdisciplinary art works. He also composes music for acoustic instruments and electro-acoustic music, as well as performing live as a (laptop) musician.

Born in Vienna, Austria in 1971, Gál began to nurture his interest in music and (sound) art around 1985. After studies at Vienna's University of Music (Sound Engineering) and the University of Vienna (Musicology), and a year-long residency in New York City in 1997–98, he has focused on his compositional and artistic activities. He runs the record label Gromoga Records and is director of the Austrian art organization 'sp ce'. Together with Ernst Reitermaier, he curates the Viennese Festival 'shut up and listen!'. Currently, Gál lives as a freelance composer and artist in Vienna and Berlin where he also taught sound art at the University of Arts in 2006-07.

An important aspect of his work is the combination of music with other art forms, in solo projects as well as in collaborations, e.g. since 1997 with the Japanese architect Yumi Kori ('audio-architectural installations'). As a laptop musician, Gál has been performing live in around 150 concerts on four continents and has worked together with musicians such as Tung Chao-Ming, Kai Fagaschinski, Jennifer Walshe and i8u (France Jobin).

Gál's work has been presented in concerts, sound installations, exhibitions, and radio portraits in Europe, Asia, and the Americas. He has been invited to international music and art festivals (including Wien Modern Vienna; MaerzMusik Berlin; Donaueschinger Musiktage; Nuova Consonanza Rome; MATA Festival New York; Mutek Montreal; Musicacoustica Beijing; FILE São Paulo) and frequently gives lectures and workshops.

For his music and art projects Gál has received several awards, including the Karl Hofer Prize Berlin 2001, an Annual Grant from SKE-Fonds Vienna 2002, a composer fellowship from the DAAD Artists in Berlin Programme 2003, and the Austrian State Scholarship for Composition 2004. Bernhard Gál's music has been made available on more than 25 audio publications. In 2005, the German publishing house Kehrer Verlag Heidelberg published the comprehensive catalogue book 'Installations', documenting Gál's intermedia installations since 1999.

For additional information visit: <http://www.bernhardgal.com>

Belma Beslic

Born 1978 in Tuzla (BiH), Belma Beslic is a Slovenian/Bosnian composer, artist and pianist, residing in Vienna, Austria.

During the past ten years, Beslic had over two hundred concerts, performances, and exhibitions across Europe, won 13 prizes on Yugoslavian and international art competitions (piano, video production), and composed over twenty acoustic, electro-acoustic and intermedial works. Her graphic design works were presented in exhibitions and contemporary art festivals. She is the creator of the only existing creative industries strategy document for the City of Tuzla (British council project 2006), was head of public affairs services of the Austrian Space Forum in 2008 and is a member of several art associations and space exploration organisations, such as Manufaktra, Andere Saite, ELGRA, IAF, ÖWF. Together with Lejla Mazlic (humanrights.org), she runs the „ProCen“ association for contemporary arts, based in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Beslic received her first piano lessons at the age of 6, and not much later, at the age of 8 she was considered a „Wunderkind“ by the Yugoslavian press: winning competitions and prizes and having numerous radio and television broadcasts in Yugoslavia and abroad. In 1993, she left Bosnia and came to Germany, where she attended the Thomas Gymnasium in Leipzig and continued her piano studies with Prof. Taubert at the Mendelssohn Hochschule fuer Musik in Leipzig, and, later on, with Prof. Otto, pianist Lazar Berman and Prof. Torger at the Hochschule fuer Musik „Franz Liszt“ in Weimar (1996-2001). During this time, she formed the „Revolucionario“ chamber ensemble; presented her first multimedia art projects, won her first prize for video production and started writing music arrangements and compositions. This led her to Graz in 2003, studying composition at the University of Arts, with Bernhard Lang, Gerd Kühr and Klaus Lang.

During the last years, her artistic concepts focus mainly on cultural problematics of postwar/transitional societies, classical concert sterility, nihilism, futurism and aspects of space exploration/science, manipulation and psychology in (intermedial) music constructions.

www.belmabeslic.com