

GOYA II – Yo lo vi (2007) 50'

Memoratorio for boy soprano, deaf mute soloist (male), three instrumental soloists, orchestra, chorus and live-electronics

Music Text

Lorca/Kesten/Weiss, arranged by Stefanie Wördemann (Span/G)

Scoring

soli: db(=speaker), git(=electro-acoustic git,banjo), elec.git; 3(II=afl,III=bfl).2.corA.2.bcl.2.dbn-3.4.3.1-timp.perc(3)-harp-prepared pft(=cel)-strings(16.14.12.10.8)

World Premiere

11/10/2008

Philharmonie, Großer Saal, Berlin

Matthias Bauer, voice & db / Jörg Wilkendorf, elec gtr / Daniel Göritz, gtr / Uwe Schönfeld, deaf soloist / Rundfunkchor Berlin / Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin / Ingo Metzmacher

Programme Note

A child is watching a war. We can see the child's face, and in his face we can see the war. *Yo lo vi – I saw it* is how Francisco Goya entitled picture no. 44 in his series of prints, *Desastres de la Guerra*. They show snapshots of Spain during the Napoleonic Wars, focussing on civilian casualties. Goya is interested in the perspectives of those who experience the terror; those who relate their experiences and those who are reminded by such accounts of what happened and what is still happening.

Focussing on different perspectives is also at the heart of Helmut Oehring's 'Memoratorio' *Yo lo vi*, the second work in his *GOYA* cycle. The work presents snapshots from the Spain of 1937, focussing on the children of Guernica. It is a 'documentary in music', based on portrayals of the victims of the Spanish Civil War by artists such as Federico García Lorca, Hermann Kesten, Peter Weiss, Paul Dessau and Pablo Picasso.

Press Quotes

"With all its drama and, at the same time, poetry, *Eroica* was probably a most unsettling experience for many contemporary listeners. In Oehring's *GOYA II*, this unsettling atmosphere is greatly intensified without detracting from the work's beauty and its wonderful tenderness in any way. Oehring is certainly on a par with the greats of the past. He has immense abilities, is capable of treating music history in both serious and playful ways and knows how to handle large orchestras with the same skill which was once exhibited by Mahler, Strauss and Schönberg, something which the sheer scale of *GOYA II* proves beyond doubt. Above all, he is akin to the great masters both intellectually and technically... The domain of his compositions is always explosive, regardless of the inspirational source. *GOYA II* is literally exploding from within, for the entire duration of the piece. 45 minutes in length, the work is interspersed with abrupt scene changes – shrill choruses juxtaposed with lyrical soloists, thundering improvisations from the solo bass and guitars set against a backdrop of choral-symphonic walls of silence. Bitterly grieving vocal expressivity gives way to passages dominated by the roar of the brass and percussion sections while whining, rasping woodwinds and strings yield to the melancholy of a child's voice that could scarcely be any sweeter. The performance, conducted by Ingo Metzmacher, was a grandiose spectacle, a tumultuous descent into hell on mined territory. *GOYA II* is a composition featuring disruptions, distortions and explosions. Something is blown up at every turn, leaving behind it a note of enormous humanity." (*Stefan Amzoll, Märkische Oderzeitung, 14/11/2008*)

"An electrifying night. *GOYA II* is a colourfully eloquent and lavish oratorio ... The chamber music episodes were especially convincing: the quiet desperation of the concert guitar, the boy's futile calls, frozen pain in slow motion." (*Christiane Peitz, Der Tagesspiegel, 13/10/2008*)