

Karlheinz Stockhausen (1928)

KLAVIERSTÜCKE I-XI

CD 1

(1) aus Nr. 2: KLAVIERSTÜCK I (1952/1953)	3'46
(2) aus Nr. 2: KLAVIERSTÜCK II (1952/1953)	1'03
(3) aus Nr. 2: KLAVIERSTÜCK III (1952/1953)	0'23
(4) aus Nr. 2: KLAVIERSTÜCK IV (1952/1953)	1'59
<i>(für Marcelle Mercenier) © 1954 Universal Edition (London) Ltd., London</i>	
(5) aus Nr. 4: KLAVIERSTÜCK V (1954)	5'06
(6) aus Nr. 4: KLAVIERSTÜCK VI (1954/1955, rev. 1961))	24'40
(7) aus Nr. 4: KLAVIERSTÜCK VII (1954)	7'47
(8) aus Nr. 4: KLAVIERSTÜCK VIII (1954)	1'35
<i>(David Tudor gewidmet) © 1965 Universal Edition (London) Ltd., London</i>	

CD 2

(1) aus Nr. 4: KLAVIERSTÜCK IX (1954/1961)	11'27
(2) aus Nr. 4: KLAVIERSTÜCK X (1954/1961)	25'05
<i>(Aloys Kontarsky gewidmet) © 1967 Universal Edition (London) Ltd., London</i>	
(3) aus Nr. 7: KLAVIERSTÜCK XI (1956)	12'50
<i>(David Tudor gewidmet) © 1957 Universal Edition (London) Ltd., London</i>	

Herbert Henck, Klavier

Literaturhinweise

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Karlheinz Stockhausen wrote his KLAVIERSTÜCKE I–XI [Piano Pieces I–XI] – his “drawings” as he once called them – in the ten years between the ages of 24 and 33. His ideas during this period were stimulated by such issues as “electronic music”, “pointillistic music”, “spatial music”, “group form”, “chance”, “silence”, “noise”, “notation”, “statistical composition”, “musical processes”; in many cases these issues were so confidently formulated and exemplarily applied by him that the unmistakable results attracted immediate attention. These were Stockhausen’s pioneer years, the years between his studies and world-wide recognition; formed and strengthened by Schönberg’s twelve-tone teachings, Messiaen’s orderly assemblage of material, and Webern’s model for consequent structural principles, he arrived at a fundamentally new definition of the elements of music and their relationship to one another. This “serial” way of thinking influenced by methods and precision of the natural sciences enabled him to design compositional systems of a previously unattained rationality, especially by assigning to musical elements measurable values, numbers, and arranging them in tabulated predetermined sequences.

Above all he was guided by the intention of creating works of art in which all levels of material and form would be permeated by a unifying row of proportional values and its permutations producing works that embody as a whole the highest possible harmonic coherence. This esthetic position – which not only has ideological implications, but is partly formed from them – required a radical, sometimes utopian objectification of the compositional material as well as an obviously increased visionary capability; these alone made it possible to cross the dividing line between the ideas that originally may have triggered composition and the technical craft of composing. Stockhausen has adhered to the requirements of a painstakingly formed compositional totality up to now; he insists on the absolute responsibility of the composer whose striving for consummation is expressed in every work. He has been able to sustain this principle even when he has used rather uncommon indications such as graphic depictions, symbolic systems, or verbal instructions that more or less specifically outline the idea of a work and indicate what the interpreter is to do.

To this basic interpretation of the ends and means of composition (then generally accepted by serial composers), Stockhausen brought a particular way of thinking in pairs of opposites which are mediated through gradual processes. In this context the often quoted mediation between black and white through a scale of grey values describes pictorially the means which Stockhausen has on occasion used to form an entire work: his KLAVIERSTÜCKE IX and X mediate between periodicity and aperiodicity or between order and disorder with the extremes in each case at the beginning and end of the piece and everything in between serving as a part of the higher structural process. Similarly a characteristic compositional feature of Stockhausen is the technique of "insertion" with which he limits the strictness of serial construction and interrupts it in places where he wishes to insert something into the musical text, be it to hold on to some preceding aspect, to comment, to relativize, or to introduce into the piece some new level of perhaps a verbal or scenic nature.

Stockhausen recognized very early the significance for his compositional purposes of electronic resources which were then becoming practical: here one entered a sound world limited in principle only by physiology, in which one might build and direct sounds with unprecedented exactness, in which structures beyond human practicability became possible, moreover a sound world which could be used as a mediating link between all things audible. After extensive work in the area of electronics, however, these advantages were balanced on the other hand by the complete unchangeability of compositions fixed on tape, illuminating in turn the value of a dynamic interpretation which, using prepared as well as spontaneous nuances, breathes life into a fixed musical text and serves to retain the work's freshness. Parallel to this one became aware again of the diversity of sound and the range of expression possible with conventional musical instruments, and discovered alongside the familiar, traditionally produced sounds a hidden treasure of new colors. If the initial excitement in the electronic medium had been the ability to adequately define for the first time the parameter of timbre through the construction of overtone spectra and to integrate this aspect into serial structures, then this same research into the nature of sounds in-

fluenced his work with instruments and later with the human voice in particular. The piano was however the only instrument to which Stockhausen always returned in the 1950's and from which he extracted, as no other, a wide range of colors of an unsuspected and original beauty.

The advantages of the piano as an instrument for the avant-garde does not need to be discussed again here; however one can point out that its capability to easily produce structures of great complexity made it particularly suitable for serial composition, so that in spite of the overwhelming amount of historically significant literature for this instrument, in spite of the necessary concessions to the fact that the duration of pitches varies in the different registers and the volume diminishes after each attack, the piano could nonetheless be adopted as a usefully neutral, abstract medium. With few exceptions even the traditional equal temperament of the instrument did not seem an obstacle to serial composition. In his search for new sounds and playing techniques, Stockhausen strictly refrained from using not only scordatura, but also any sounds which could not be produced with the 88 keys and three pedals or in other words with the hammers and dampers, thus avoiding the somewhat fashionable practice of playing on the strings, frame, or casing of the instrument until 1979 in the piano part for EX-AMEN from MICHAELs JUGEND out of which he derived KLAVIERSTÜCK XII in 1983.

Especially in the second group of his KLAVIERSTÜCKE (KLAVIERSTÜCKE V-X), Stockhausen experimented with different modes of attack and pedaling which modify the vibration of the strings and with silent depression of the keys which frees particular strings to resonate. In this way he achieved a "filtering" of the sound spectrum that comes after the attack; the qualities of the spectrum are determined on one hand by the amount of pressure the damper brings to bear on the strings and on the other by the timing of the application of the damper. The result was a rich palette of overtones and echo sounds which emphasized as never before the piano's characteristic resonance and its unique ability to suggest sound effects in perspective.

A remarkable situation occurred when a sound dying away revealed the indivi-

dual voice of the instrument, for only in this period of decreasing vibration was there time enough for the listener to immerse himself in all the components of the sound's gradual shifts in color. In the KLAVIERSTÜCKE VI and X one encounters this phenomenon several times, where owing to the strings' different periods of vibration the high pitches fade sooner than the lower ones, thereby offering in effect an immediate analysis of the sound spectrum. In KLAVIERSTÜCK VI this phenomenon produces structural resting points, whereas in KLAVIERSTÜCK X it is one end of a scale of which the other extreme consists of the fastest possible speed and maximum density. For this other extreme Stockhausen also developed an original piano technique, the so-called cluster glissando in which the pianist wearing fingerless cloth gloves moves lightly over the white and black keys and by depressing the pedal is able to produce unusually dense and yet easily playable "sweeping" sounds.

All these innovations of piano technique – among which the highly refined use of clusters in widely varying width could be counted – were derived by Stockhausen from the idiosyncratic characteristics of the instrument as effortlessly as he was able to unify organically its special sound aspects with serial structure and to integrate these elements into the particular concept of a piece. Just this capability to bring material and form into a purely reflecting correspondence with the particular idea of a piece, this ultimately utopian congruence of intelligence and material is what determines the rank of a composer in our culture, and almost no other composer has confronted this challenge of utopia with as much strength as Karlheinz Stockhausen.

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In 1954 Stockhausen worked out a plan for 21 KLAVIERSTÜCKE which would be arranged in groups of four, six, one, five, three, and two pieces. In addition to the number of pieces in each group, they were to be unified serially by further considerations such as the pitch organization and the number of tempo groups; however Stockhausen only partially realized this plan. The KLAVIERSTÜCKE I–IV,

written earlier, were incorporated into the cycle after the fact. At this point it should be noted that the composer's numbering of the pieces is not always chronological. The KLAVIERSTÜCKE III and II date from 1952, I and IV from 1953, V–VIII from 1954/1955, XI from 1956, and IX and X both from 1961, the year Stockhausen thoroughly revised KLAVIERSTÜCK VI. Then he discontinued work on the 21-piece cycle though he had already further sketched variable formal processes for future pieces; however he continued the numbering without reference to the old plans when he arranged for concert performance individual scenes from his opera, "LICHT – Die sieben Tage der Woche" on which he had been working since 1977. Three new KLAVIERSTÜCKE have appeared, whose structures are derived from the many-layered cells, the so-called super formulas which differentiate the whole opera complex; that these new works differ from the earlier KLAVIERSTÜCKE is immediately apparent from the inclusion of the human voice and actions performed on the strings and the body of the instrument. The complete titles are: "KLAVIERSTÜCK XII – EXAMEN aus DONNERTAG aus LICHT als Klaviersolo" (1979/1983), "LUZIFERs TRAUM oder KLAVIERSTÜCK XIII als Klaviersolo" (1981) and "GEBURTSTAGS-FORMEL (KLAVIERSTÜCK XIV) vom MONTAG aus LICHT" (1984).

The following is a short description of the KLAVIERSTÜCKE played here; the literature list above provides sources for more detailed discussion. KLAVIERSTÜCKE I–IV: In these pieces according to Stockhausen "a transition from pointillistic structures (KLAVIERSTÜCK IV) to more complex and more highly organized forms (KLAVIERSTÜCK I)" takes place, through which he introduced so-called "group composition". Single "tone-points" are joined together by superimposed regulations – such as direction of movement, position in a register, constant speed, crescendo or diminuendo, etc. – and combined into larger formal entities. By using pedal effects, individual sounds form complex blocks of sound, and blocklike sounds fan out in "negative melodies" owing to the different durations of the components, a method taken over from his work with the processes of "attack" and "decay" in electronics. This technique is closely connected to the differentiation of rests which in these pieces are as carefully composed as the