

## **INTERVIEW VOLT FESTIVAL, HUNGARY JULY 07<sup>th</sup> , 2006**

Giving meaning to noise, sound becomes communication.

**A living legend, people say about you. Isn't it extremely difficult to live and create with such an amazing past behind you?**

KB: The past is a foreign country, they say. It really doesn't help me with my life and I don't think about it too much, though.

**What makes you go on musically today? What gives you new ideas? By the way, what kind of music do you listen to at home?**

KB: It is our soundscape – our auditory reality – what drives me and, of course, the phenomenon of music itself: Unlike words and pictures music is not representing the world to us. A chord doesn't mean anything – a melody makes no sense, music is basically pure mathematics – airwaves whose frequencies work together in layers within a matrix of logical rules. But somehow – through a secret process – we can experience a wonder: Physical frequencies turn into feeling. The German composer Karlheinz Stockhausen said: „Musik ist reine Zauberei“ – music is pure magic. Although it's not a language – it is universal. And I think it is so important to any culture on our planet that no-one really can imagine life without it.

At the present time I am listening to Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Die Zauberflöte; Claude Debussy, Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune; Maurice Ravel, Daphnis et Chloé; Igor Strawinsky, Le Sacre du Printemps.

**I know that visuals play a big role in your shows. Is it because we got used to the combination of visuality and music so much that if there were no screens, we wouldn't enjoy a gig?**

KB: The world today – sometimes we call it a global village – is depending a lot on cross-cultural visual and auditory messages. Pictures become more important than words because they can easily bypass semantic borders. And right now I'm really interested in the convergence of image and sound, that's true.

With our audio-visual performance we're referring to the classic form of cinema as well as to media art. The large screens (most of the times we're using an electronic triptych) are home to films, video loops and animations of cleanly simple pictograms – emphasizing the surrealistic flow of information within our media. One can dance to the music and look at the screens at the same time. As for the cut-up images, we use fragments of what I call medium flow and give new perspectives to everyday images, which provides a different way of dealing with reality.

But you know, I'm a musician and not a director, and I always consider music to be acoustic films anyway, which you can see if you close your eyes. Attending to our show, you will have the chance to experience some of my past and present works; The KW classics in which I took part as co-author like „The Robots“, „Numbers“ or „Computer World“ as well as samples of my recent solo work „Communication“.

I refer to our concerts as multi-sensory events, but if you close your eyes you might see your own genuine movie.

**What were the most exciting collaborations you've been part of in the past few years? Who are the musicians you plan to work with in the future?**

KB: I really enjoyed working with Bernard Sumner from New Order. We're still friends and in communication. I am looking forward to work with my students at the UdK (Berlin University of the Arts).

**How did the idea of teaching come along? Where do you teach these days and how much is it different to meet students in different countries? Are we a big globalized nation or you still see differences in the way they approach to things?**

KB: Some years ago the Berlin University of the Arts approached me. They were working on a new course of studies: Sound Studies – Akustische Kommunikation. The program focuses on the critical assessment and creative design of sound environments. The course of study comprises the following four areas: Anthropology and Ecology of Sound, Experimental Audiomedial, Auditive Media Design and Acoustic Concepts.

Today I am a guestprofessor teaching Auditory Media Design. We are using audiovisual forms of expression from various electronic media to design professional medial environments. The different types of design include advanced sound design of spaces intended for work or leisure, film, DVDs, Internet and different possibilities for generating a system of orientation or an emotional response through sound.

**What do you think of today's music industry? Major labels are complaining, net labels are flourishing, download sites are playing a more and more important role in legal sales. Where is it all going in the future?**

KB: It was in 1877 that Thomas Edison recorded the first „Hello“ in the world. It was not exactly quadrophonic sound, but it was a start: the beginning of the recording industry. Electricity, the microphone, records and the taperecorder made possible, that music could overcome distance and time. And now we're living in this brave new computer world. In

terms of human history, computer technology is a relatively new phenomenon, and music software – or even the idea that a computer can be employed as an instrument, like a piano, drum or guitar – is so new that we are still getting used to it. At the moment we can only guess where the binary code is going to take us...

Nevertheless, the recording of sound is always an „one way“ communication chain. If I’m playing live gigs the communication is, of course, „two way“ because of the audience attending the concert. The fact that people come together at a particular place and time makes a live concert unique. That means a lot to me, because it reminds us that everything must pass.

**Thank you for the interview.**

You’re welcome – I’m looking forward with anticipation to the next issue of VOLT Festival.