

INTERVIEW WITH MANFRED WERDER ABOUT HIS PIECE IN /2009/

**Could you try and describe what you heard on the recording? In what situation and how often did you listen to it?*

I listened carefully to the recording three times. First and foremost I experienced a composed, self-contained form. My impression was that this form was intentionally fitted in the given timeframe of 7 minutes. I thought the sounds were carefully considered and appealing in this respect.

I didn't listen to the recording again after that.

**Did you wonder where the sounds came from, how they were made and was the fact that you knew the piece was the result of various mutations significant? You mentioned form first of all and quality, but did you notice any other aspects whilst others weren't important to you? What do you mean by 'carefully considered'?*

By 'carefully considered' I mean the composer works on a sound that to a certain extent - with regards to its content and weight - contains a certain poetics.

The relationship between this composed, poetic content and that to which my attention is drawn as a listener, seems rather simple to me and perhaps too obvious.

This clearly stems from the fact that in my work it's the relationship of these issues that I'm interested in - *What is happening to music?* What is the listeners' attention drawn to? - with my strategy probably having a conflicting view: Both questions have their own repercussions, and a possible area of overlap would only arise by chance, as an accidental and momentary combination.

Obviously people are more aware of the aspects they work on themselves, whatever they may be.

Perhaps I wasn't concerned with how the sounds had been made just because of their poetic weight.

In a certain sense, all works are the result of mutations that have taken place. I didn't consider that aspect while listening to the recording, I think I even forgot.

I do find one issue interesting in this respect: the potential for contextuality which all works have in varying degrees and qualities.

Does a work emerge by specific conditions being accepted as a kind of void waiting to be filled with something, with a world?

Does a work emerge by specific conditions being accepted as material in terms of a potential that lets the world appear?

Obviously these questions are very complex and difficult to answer, however I do think they come up in our project.

**Now in terms of your own contribution:*

How did you decide to react and how did you choose the material you used in the end?

Had you considered certain possibilities before (before hearing the previous piece), and if so did you stick with them or change them?

Early on I decided on a strategy which left various realisations and reactions open.

As I decided to make an outdoor recording on site, i.e. at the q-o2 workspace (which would have also been possible in the workspace) - with or without my own performative contribution - , it wasn't just

the recording I had to respond to in a certain way, I also had to think about the unfamiliar location, the q-o2 workspace and Rue de la Buanderie 28.

What sort of relationship can there be between two tracks next to each other on a CD, these being among a large number of unfamiliar tracks?

This can sometimes be a classic question of form.

To what extent does this question have potential for contextuality, as represented for me for example by the performers and their sources of sound, and the site of the performance with its own sounds?

As I listened to the earlier recording, my questions weren't answered, but I was reassured. Maybe because the recordings would be very different and so there was still sufficient space in my 'reaction' to expose myself to the second unknown, the location. Once there I decided on an unedited recording without my own performative contribution due to the richness of sound present.

Obviously the question arises in this project of what 'reacting' can mean. The least that can be said is that everything is a reaction, even if someone doesn't listen to the earlier recording. Perhaps a reaction can be measured by its necessity. If there's no need, there's no reaction. It would then be more a case of coexistence or concurrence. It seems natural to me that people aren't always aware of whether and how they will stay in areas of a reaction or coexistence.

**You asked the question of how a relationship forms between two tracks that are next to each other (or one behind the other) and in response said that it can be a question of form. Do you mean that you intentionally reacted to the form or that a connection is established anyway as a result of the given form?*

Also, don't you think that it does make a difference that a reaction was needed in this instance, in contrast to everyday reactions, and that if someone didn't listen to the recording, that itself would be a special and perhaps provocative statement? Is that what you mean by 'necessity'.

Did you think about whether you liked the previous piece when you listened to it, did you judge it in any way?

I think that when reacting, there's a process which first and foremost can clarify our own potential and then lead to a decision.

To a certain extent, the formal relationship between the tracks is the development of various parameters from one track to the next, and between all the tracks as a whole.

Whatever people do, a dynamic form is created.

For a brief moment I did think about using the previous recording as concrete 'found material': as the previous condition which would become the material and thus new potential. Then I sensed a problem because this reaction seemed too exclusive and one-dimensional. Day-to-day and artistic reactions seem to happen like a constant drifting. The parameters involved in the drifting are extremely complex and also often unknown.

I think I actually reacted based on compositional decisions, not just in terms of form but also the material and its 'atmosphere'.

However, I can't say that my decisions were made with reactive inevitability, but rather by intuitively weighing up different issues.

The fact that we're faced with a specific task - the project - obviously makes a difference: I consider a lot of things and the resulting options lead to specific decisions.

If somebody didn't listen to the recording, it'd be a very specific reaction, in fact out of a need to break rules.

I mean people's own need to react, even if they fail to respond to a certain extent, because answers can only ever come from within.

I haven't really thought about judging it. In fact I'd put this question together with necessity. I can like something yet not give a reaction or be forced to react.

**What does a misunderstanding mean to you, and do you think it's a term that can be used in the artistic field? Concerning the planning and creation of your piece, did you think about how the listener would or should interpret it?*

Language is like a viscous mass, by its very nature having an intrinsic pressure for standardisation, and at the same time subject to permanent change.

The ability to sign and its nature are both permanent repetition and change. Language and speech are constantly forcing us to say something. Anybody talking with 'incomprehensible sense' is immediately seen as crazy. Consequently, 'meaning' and therefore 'understanding' are generally taken for granted when talking, and misunderstandings only describe the apparent failure of an encounter.

(How universal the power of the explicit content of language has become today is manifested in, among other things, our dealings with people who for different reasons cannot use that language: they're ruthlessly locked away and isolated from society, as if explicitly 'being able to speak about something' were the only measure of a social bond).

It may be that our own speech is more of an endless monologue, originating from a long common closeness of the species.

Consequently, we hear the dense, integral sound of a multitude of monologues around us.

This is where the importance lies, in this common closeness, not in the biological and sort of collateral product of speech itself.

This is where my objections stem from to the type of art that explicitly communicates based on an idea of language and focuses on explicit effect.

In this sense I generally object to terms such as understanding and misunderstanding.

I think a work of art forms part of my relationship with the world, and is something that happens between the world and me as a part of this world.

All possible worlds meet and drift apart again.

Thus we get closeness, over and over again and in all possible and random configurations, which is ultimately followed by artistic activity.