

# MICHAEL VETTER

18. 9. 1943 ~ 7. 12. 2013



Michael Vetter: clouds incarnate, Etching

"Just always assume  
that I live,  
even if I should have died already."

(Michael Vetter, Dec. 2013)

Musician, painter, writer and composer Michael Vetter died on 7 December 2013 in Munich. He was buried at Ruheforst Wildenburger Land, Germany.

**Michael Vetter**, born on September 18<sup>th</sup> 1943 in Oberstdorf, Germany, initially got famous in the late 1950s for revolutionizing playing the recorder by experimenting with the timbres and techniques such as multiphonics and microtones. He inspired composers such as Louis Andriessen, Will Eisma, and Rob du Bois in the Netherlands, Sylvano Bussotti in Italy, and Mauricio Kagel and Karlheinz Stockhausen in Germany to use the instrument in their compositions. His technical discoveries were codified in a book: "Il flauto dolce ed acerbo" (1969), which included tables of nearly 2000 fingerings.

Later he gained international fame through his art of overtone singing and his experimental vocal improvisations.

As improvising performer he collaborated with composers like Bussotti, Kagel, Ligeti, and Takemitsu and Stockhausen.

In 1996 Vetter performed in a worldpremiere the 2,5 hours lasting integral version of the Karlheinz Stockhausen piece "SPIRAL"; the 2 volume CD was released at Stockhausen Verlag.

In 1997 Stockhausen composed for Vetter the main role in Michaelion of his opera: "MITTWOCH aus Licht".

In 2008 he continued his contribution to Stockhausens plus/minus scores of the late 60s in realising with his duo-partner Natascha Nikeprelevic "POLE für 2". The CD was published in 2013 at Stockhausen Verlag. In the same year the two musicians worked out the worldpremiere of the integral version of "EXPO für 3" with F.X.Randomiz (electronics). EXPO will be published on CD in two versions in 2014 at Stockhausen Verlag.

Deutschlandradio Berlin has dedicated many nightly hours to his radio plays, including his recent Chamber Operas "DuO", "The Panels of Law," "Speaking Islands - Singing Oceans," "Faust III", "Soto voce, "De Profundis", "Okyo", "Labyrinth" and "At the periphery of J.S.Bach".

As a painter he produced works which he described as script - pieces. The poet Helmut Heissenbüttel wrote the introduction to his two-volume graphic novel "Hand Movements". The Museum of Münster exhibited his "Cosmic Comic". For his ever increasing "Book of Signs" and its experimental calligraphy, he received the Japanese Art Prize of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1982.

In wall-sized paintings he used the play of colours to symbolise a meeting of contrasting instrumental sound levels.

His books "Music," "The Psychology of the Experience of Being" and "Pianissimo" are poetical guides to make the world sing as a chant and to make it speak as a poem.

He described the through and through witty, autobiographical novel "Run " as a "History of the discovery of structural consciousness".

Michael Vetter used a variety of media (speech, painting, photography, theatre, music) to realise that which he called “Transverbal:” Speech is movement is music. A special place is occupied by the vocal organs which, in connection with the ear, are best able to display movement in a musical way and reflect upon it in the most spontaneous and at the same time differentiated way.

Michael Vetter spent thirteen years largely as a Zen monk in Japan, where he completed his book "shijima no oto" ("The Sound of Silence"), a new and revolutionary approach to artistic avant-garde and (Zen) meditation. From the late 90s on he lived a withdrawn life most of the time, painting, writing and gardening amidst his olive plantation on the slopes of Monte Amiata. Here he founded the Accademia Capraia, a “School for the Art of Living” based on his concepts, and home of the paintings and sculptures most dear to him.

As appointed by him during his lifetime, vocalist and performing artist Natascha Nikeprelevic, who has worked since 1996 until his death in a duo with Michael Vetter ([Duo Transverbal](#)), will manage and look after his work, as well as carry forward his intellectual and artistic concepts.

Please direct all questions, wishes etc. to her address in the future. Over the next year she will bring on the road a first archive of his work.

On the night of 2 on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of January 2014 Deutschlandradio Berlin will broadcast in memory of Michael Vetter's work his radio play "De Profundis" for overtone voices a capella (Vetter / Nikeprelevic).

**Broadcast:** DeutschlandRadio Kultur – Vetter: de profundis – night 02/03.01.2014 - 00:05 am

Natascha Nikeprelevic  
for Michael Vetter  
TRANSVERBAL

<http://www.natascha-nikeprelevic.de/vetter-transverbal/>

## MICHAEL VETTER

- 1943** born in Oberstdorf, South Germany
- 1949 ff** plays recorder, paints and writes poems.
- 1960 ff** Concerts with baroque and avant-garde music (L. Andriessen, J. Baur, G. Becker, R. du Bois, S. Bussotti, John Cage, W. Eisma, L. Foss, K. Hashagen, N.A. Huber, M. Kagel, D. Schönbach, M. Vetter). First exhibitions of his paintings.
- 1964** 6 months in the Franciscan monastery La Verna, Italy („quadri del paradiso“).
- 1964 ff** Studies of philosophy and Christian Theology (Münster, Umpumulu (South Africa), Göttingen, Tübingen).  
„il flauto dolce ed acerbo“ (experimental recorder-method, in combination with a LP containing works of Baur, du Bois, Hashagen, Schönbach and Vetter).  
Graphic and verbally notated compositions for the realisation of musical communication phenomena: „Constellations“ for piano; „Rezitative for a recorder player“; „Figurations I-III“ for any instrument, „New incussions for two“, „Reactions to Revolutionaries - for a recorder player and his amplifier“, „Orzismus: Enthusiasm against Choirs“, „the poet and the girl“ (chamber-opera).  
Experimental music with children (workshops, films, records).
- 1969 ff** Concerts with Karlheinz Stockhausen in St. Paul de Vence, La Rochelle, La Sainte Baume, Paris, Rome, Bonn, Darmstadt, Berlin, Stockholm, Shiraz (Persia), Jeita (Libanon), Osaka. Wergo-LP with solo-works of K. Stockhausen („Spiral“ for a soloist and shortwave-receiver) and main role in S. Bussotti´s opera „RARA dolce“.
- 1970 ff** 90 Concerts at Expo'70 in Osaka/Japan, mainly interpreting works of K. Stockhausen („Spiral“, „Poles“, „From the seven days“). Starts to perform as a vocalist. Basic experiments with overtones.
- 1970-73** Concerts, performances and exhibitions of his own works in Rome, Palermo, Athens, London, Edinburgh, Dublin.
- 1973** Vetter-Books: „Hand Movement I/II“: a novel without words; „Love-

Play“: verbally notated musical conceptions and photographic scores; „Play of Lines“: musical graphics - graphical music; „Writing without Words“: examples for graphical communication.

Vetter-Records: „Informations“: an avantgarde musical lesson for children; „Talks without words“ for children; „Variations - Lines“ for ensemble; „Zwischenräume(Trio)“/Stimmen(Solo)“; „Schwebungen(Duo)/Übung I(Solo)“.

Stockhausen-Records (participating): „Goldstaub“, „Sternklang“.

**1973-83** Lives in Japan as a zen-monk (Kyoto, Sapporo, Tottori, Obama). Practises music, writes for the magazine „episteme“ conceptions on „experimental zen art“ (later collected in the book „shijima no oto“, Asahi-Suppansha); paints the sequence „Cosmic Comic“, starts with „the book of signs“.

**1975** Landes-Museum Münster: Retrospective („Cosmic Comic“, „the book of signs“, „Light“, „Hand Movement“. „Sounds“).

**1977/8** Scholarship „Atelierhaus Worpswede“.

**1978 ff** Concerts, performances and exhibitions in Tokyo, Seoul, Delhi, Bombay, Kabul, Zürich, Wien, Graz, Paris, Düsseldorf, Stuttgart, Bremen, Worpswede and Berlin.

Coloured Etchings: „Two part inventions“, „Mandalas“, „Tantric Mandalas“. „Codex Aureum“: 180 brush-paintings (slow and fast movements reflecting each other).

Award of the ministry of foreign affairs for his transverbal project of „the book of signs“.

**1983** Returns to South Germany. Settles down in Freiburg.

**1983 ff** „Zen-Center for meditative communication and communicative meditation“ in Todtmoos-Rütte and Ober-Ibach (Black Forest).

Records (Schott-Wergo): „Overtones“, „Provocations“, „Tambura-Meditation“ and „Tambura-Preludes“. „Zen-Glocken“, „Zen-Gong“, „Zen-Koto“, „Zen-Klavier“, „Zen-Tambura“, „Zen-Flöte“. „Missa Universalis“. „Entfaltung - Liebeslied (Senanque)“. „Gesänge der Nacht (Thoronet)“, „OM - a method in overtone singing“.

Records (Jecklin-disco): „Wind“ for recorder. „Spaces“ for 11 Chinese gongs. „Light“ for three Indian tamburas. „Clouds“ for two

Japanese kotos. „Flowers“ for piano. „Silence“ for eighty Tibetan bells. Records (Amiata Records): „Ancient voices (Senanque)“ for overtone choir. „Nocturnes (St. Antimo)“ for voice, tambura and recorder. „Open secrets“ (Zweitausendeins). „Musik aus Stein“ (pro musica nova).

Books: „Seinserfahrung“: „experience of being“ (Bauer-Verlag, Freiburg). „Die Psychologie der Seinserfahrung“: „the psychology of the experience of being“ (Lüchow-Verlag, Freiburg).

„Pianissimo“ (Atlantis, Zürich). „Musik“ (Verlag Via Nova).

Concerts, workshops, exhibitions and TV-presentations in Montreal and San Francisco. Stockhausen's „Spiral“ in London's Barbican Center.

- 1989 ff** Spaces and paintings for meditation. Exhibitions in Berlin, Hamburg, München u.a. ("symphonies", "the crossway of light", "the panels of the law").
- 1994 ff** Transforms his „Zen-Art-Center“ into the „Accademia Capraia“ near Seggiano on the Monte Amiata in Italy with it's constant exhibition of „the panels of the law“.
- 1995 ff** Publishes on two CDs the first integral version of K. Stockhausens „Spiral“ for the Stockhausen-CD-edition. Performs with „healing theatre“ Köln his experimental theatre-trilogy „Die Betuchten“.
- 1997 ff** Together with Natascha Nikeprelevic: broadcasting-recordings at DeutschlandRadio Berlin („DuO“ (1997), „the panels of the law“ (1999), „soto voce“ (2000), „de profundis“ (2000), „Okyo I/II“ (2003), „At the periphery of J.S. Bach“ (2009).
- 1998** Plays the main role („world-president“ and „Luzikamel“) in Stockhausens „Michaelion“ from MITTWOCH aus LICHT. Worldpremiere at Residenztheater München.
- 1999** Performance-Tour to Korea („white line on white ground“) at Jooksan-Festival Korea.  
Workshops in structural language for Eugenio Barba's Odin-Teatret. „Faust III“ (Hannover, Expo 2000). Performances: „Phoenix“ (Darmstadt). „Flow“ (Karlsruhe), „Cosmic Comic“ (Freiburg).
- 2001** „Projections“ - improvised opera for dancing instrumentalists

(Paris, Espace Fleuret).

- 2002 ff** „Requiem“ (Baden-Baden). „Missa Dialogica“ (Köln). „Zen-music“ (Autigny), „Open secrets“ (Hamburg), „Shamanism“ (Frankfurt).
- 2004/5** „Stein-Spiel II-VI“ in the Daucher-Atelier, Oggelshausen.
- 2005** Starts with performing the solo-sonatas and partitas for violin of Joh. Seb. Bach, transcribed for alto recorder.
- „meditative overtone-singing“: three workshops („OM“, „Okyo“, „Mantra“) and two concerts („Okyo“, „Speaking Islands - singing oceans“) in the Taipei National University of Arts (Taiwan). Exposition of „Tantric Mandalas“, „The Taiwan Encounter“ and „Red Icons“ (photographed by Natascha Nikeprelevic) in the KuanDu Museum of Modern Art. „Okyo“-Conference and performance in the Dharma Drum Mountain Sangha University. Donates 1500 brush-paintings of his „Taiwan-Encounter“ to the KuanDU Museum and 300 brush-paintings to the Dharma Drum Mountain Monastery.
- 2007** 5 CD´s for two voices and soundstone sculptures at the Soundstone Atelier of E. Daucher: (Labyrinth, Regenlied, Drama, Requiem, Okyo III).
- 2 month on East-Asia-Tour with Natascha Nikeprelevic. 16 Concerts and Performances in Taiwan, Japan and South Korea (Taipei, Osaka, Tottori and Seoul).
- 2008** Worldpremiere of “POLE für 2” (K. Stockhausen) together with Natascha Nikeprelevic in Autigny, Zürich, München and Palermo.
- 2009-12** Performances of “POLE für 2” in Trier, Köln, Bochum, Weimar, Siegen and Kürten.
- “Sola Fide” for 6 musicians (2 voices, piano, trumpet, cello and electronics) with “Ensemble for intuitive Music” in Weimar.
- Solo piece: “Missale dei Venti” for voice and instruments in Weimar.
- 2013** CD-Release: “POLE für 2 “ at Stockhausen Verlag.
- Worldpremiere of “EXPO für 3” (K. Stockhausen) in Kürten, together with Natascha Nikeprelevic (voice) and F.X.Randomiz (electronics).
- CD Production of “EXPO für 3” at Stockhausen Verlag.