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Natascha Nikeprelevic, vocalist

In 1996 she began her studies of experimental vocal music at the Accademia Capraia directed by Michael Vetter, where she works as an assistant since 2002. Joachim Ernst Berendt valued her as the best female overtone singer known to him. Besides her performing partnership with Vetter, Natascha Nikeprelevic has taken up the task to bring his music-theatrical work to the stage, as soloist and director of various ensembles.

More than a human synthesizer

I met Natascha Nikeprelevic at the 13th Anseong Juksan International Arts Festival where she performed "Music for Voice and Handmovements" composed by singer, painter and writer Michael Vetter, with whom she realises many of his art-performances, operas and broadcastings since 1996. It was obvious that the audience was totally captured by their spectacular presentation of overtone singing: singing with two voices at the same time, turning the human body into an oscillator, resonator and low-pass filter. But talking to Natascha made clear that for her overtones are just one aspect of the many possibilities of the human voice...

Besides overtone singing you presented different ways of using your voice e.g. an avantgardistic piece of music for voice and recorder in the tradition of composers such as Karl-Heinz Stockhausen, Luciano Berio or Toru Takemitsu, who were exploring the world of electronic music and atonality from the 1950s on. Do these at least two approaches in Vetter's compositions of harmonic and atonal music have anything in common?

For me as the interpreter of his music these two approaches form a perfect circle. The human voice is capable of producing extremely different forms of acoustic expression. I always try to go back to the primordial foundation of my voice: Somehow overtones form the archaic aspect of the voice, the melodic use of voice forms the mythic, the world of noise the existential aspect. Working with all three forms make me feel like I can capture something as a whole. To explore myself in all different kinds of musical expressions is existential for me. Comments like "These sounds are wonderful (overtones) - These sounds are strange (atonal music)" do not impress me. I rather provoke than flatter people, including myself.

In an article for the Danish Magazine "Open Page" you mention the word "universtandable"... What does that mean?

It's a combination of the words "universal" and "understandable". I see my music as universal because it's understandable for everybody. I don't represent anything traditional or ethnic but rather share structural messages which don't refer to a specific culture or use of the voice.

It seems your approach of sharing structural messages and freeing music from all semantic aspects is grounded in the theory of structuralism and the works of Western Avantgarde-composers of the 1950s-70s... How can you claim universalism, keeping in mind that the conditions of structuralism itself - also its applications to music - are historically, intellectually and culturally specific?

"Universalism" in this case means to use materials for uttering sounds which are structural itself and with whom I form musical statements by always focusing on their structural quality merely consisting of energy. For Vetter it is a necessary universal step on the way to understand the world as language in itself, language in the sense of metaphysics. This is what he calls this "Transverbal", getting aware of the world of language behind the semantic one.

writer : U-do Lee



한 목소리에서 또 다른 목소리가 겹
쳐 나오고 한 목소리가 처음으로 지
속되면서 다른 한 권으로 마치 한상
의 소리인양 순수한 음조의 멜로디
가 들려오는 오버톤 공연. 민속음악
의 독특한 발성법이라고만 생각되
었던 이 오버톤을 현대음악의 맥락
과 결목시킨 작업으로 유명한 나타
샤 니케프렐레비치를 테크노 음악 작
업자 우도가 만났다.

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