

A blue-tinted photograph of a woman playing a cello in a dark setting. She is looking to her right. The scene is filled with strings and lights, creating a dramatic atmosphere.

TRANSFORMATION

Katharina Gross | cello & performance
Aurélio Edler-Copes | composition & live electronics
Theun Mosk | visual design

TRANSFORMATION

**a 45 minute solo piece for cello/voice/performance
with electronics and light**

The collaboration

On the basis of an earlier collaboration, composer Aurélio Edler-Copes and cellist Katharina Gross wish to embark on a large collaborative project.

In 2014/15, Aurélio wrote Rebirth in Sound, a 10 minute work for cello solo and electronics, in the context of Katharina's project cellomondo, which commissions works for cello solo from composers all around the world (www.cellomondo.net).

Performances took place in a.o. Festival Neue Musik Lüneburg/Germany (in collaboration with Gaudeamus and the European Conference of Promotors of New Music), during the cellomondo marathon in the Gaudeamus Muziekweek 2016, and at the ICMC Utrecht 2016, where Aurélio operated the live electronics himself.

The collaboration throughout the creation process of Rebirth in Sound, involving the concept making, the technical realisation and the public performances, has proved to be fruitful for both artists.

Katharina is impressed by Aurélio's musical language and the power of his works: "His music is characterized by an almost hypnotizing tension which fascinates the listener, and moves between powerful explosive „electronic matter“ and sudden stoical tranquility."

Aurélio about Katharina: "Katharina's physical way of playing, her immense sound production, her movements while playing as if moving in water... the best ingredients for the piece."



Concept behind the piece

In the project Pitch Dark, a collaboration with light artist Giny Vos and composer Arnold Marinissen, Katharina dealt with the phenomenon of perception in absolute darkness. When being in pitch darkness for a longer period of time, the visual sense starts producing pictures, the aural sense creating sounds; the perception threshold between reality and illusory world becomes indistinct and one enters a state of hallucination.

Also the work Transformation will deal with the phenomenon of different states of consciousness. The experience and research of Corine Sombrun, a French writer and journalist, is one of the sources of inspiration. She travelled to Mongolia for BBC World Service to make a news report about the shamans there and accidentally discovered her ability to fall into trance through shamanic rhythmic patterns. Through years of training in situ she learned to control these states. She subsequently became involved in neuroscientific research around the phenomenon.

The word "shaman" appears for the first time in the 17th century in the travel report of the Dutch diplomat Evert Ysbrants Ides who visited the Tungus in Siberia. In their language the term "saman" describes someone who is very excited or deeply moved.

Ecstasism is the outward appearance of shamanism: a person with special mental power and gifts becomes ecstatic, thus entering a metaphysical world, aiming to use this state of mind to find knowledge and solve problems within his/her community. So in a way, this person commits himself/herself as a social operative for the well-being of the community. Behind Transformation lies the fascinating thought that a solution for the problem of unbalance, social or else, could be found in an ecstatic state of mind. Correspondingly, in Transformation the cellist becomes the "centre of power" and slips into the role of a mediator between palpable external powers and the audience.

According to Pierre Flor-Henry and Corine Sombrun's research, there is evidence that trance capacity is not culture-bound but may represent an inherent psychological predisposition that could be triggered, among others, by sound. In Transformation, for amplified cello and voice, effect pedals and live electronics, Aurélio Edler-Copes intends to create a large scale work which involves gesture, breath, energy, light and... electricity! The audience will be deeply immersed in sound and light matter and transported across the borders of perception of time, motion and space.



Corine Sombrun

The composition

Transformation will have a duration of 45 minutes and will structurally follow the lines of a long-lasting trance. The performative material consists of analog and digitally transformed live cello and voice through a series of effect pedals controlled by the cellist on stage and diffused by two guitar amps, a chain of eight virtual delays spatialized in real time around the audience, plus choreographed movements of the performer. The composition is planned to be musically massif and powerful, continuous but with stark contrasts, and highly physical on the side of the performer.

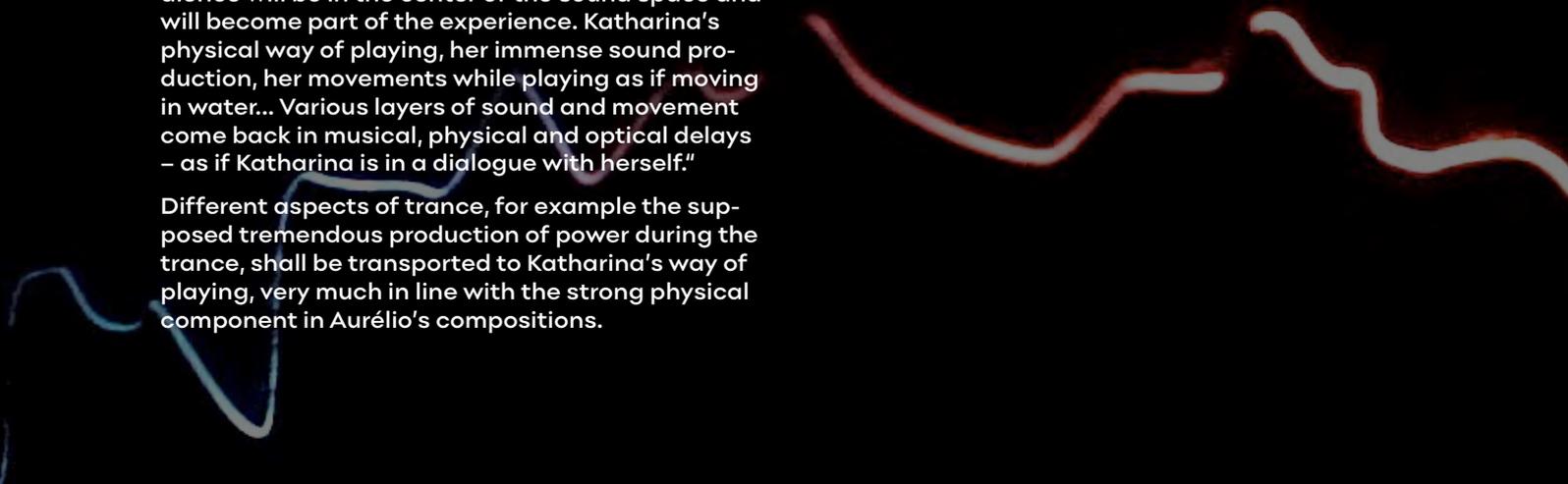
Aurélio about the work: „In Transformation, the performer fuses with the sound she produces. The audience will be in the center of the sound space and will become part of the experience. Katharina's physical way of playing, her immense sound production, her movements while playing as if moving in water... Various layers of sound and movement come back in musical, physical and optical delays – as if Katharina is in a dialogue with herself.“

Different aspects of trance, for example the supposed tremendous production of power during the trance, shall be transported to Katharina's way of playing, very much in line with the strong physical component in Aurélio's compositions.

Structure of the composition

Transformation will consist of ten sections, all interconnected by overlapping delays, and will relate to various feelings and perceptions during trance. The following sections are planned:

- 1) Timelessness
- 2) Less pain
- 3) More strength
- 4) Sharper senses
- 5) Ecstatic trance
- 6) Possession trance
- 7) Dreamlike trance
- 8) Informations
- 9) Sounds beyond a normal state
- 10) Pre-language, pure language?



The music

The concept of sound transformation forms the basis of the piece. Analog and digital musical materials are fused. The cello sound as well as the voice of the cellist will be picked up by a number of microphones, all of them with their own sound characteristics, and sent to a variety of guitar pedals, which will be operated by Katharina. The resulting sound will be partly sent directly to two guitar amps and one bass amp on stage, and partly to the computer for further transformation and spatialization. For that purpose, Aurélio will develop a number of special patches.

The parts for cello, voice and choreographed movements demand utter rhythmical precision from the performer, because of the required synchronisation with the electronic delays. A final remark about the structure of the piece is that at a few points in Transformation, the continuity of the musical flow will be radically disturbed by 'bugs in the system', contrasting kinds of musical material inspired by clicks and parasite electronic noises. Through these gestures a second layer is created. Towards the end of the piece these bugs seem to have taken over the musical discourse, engrossing the entire performance space.

Visual concept / Performance

Concerning stage design, Katharina and Aurélio will work with Theun Mosk, concerning performance with Antoine Cegarra.

Showing transformations of the movement choreography will make part of the piece. The type of movements will be inspired by motion sequences observed during states of trance.

The audience will be located in the centre of the auditory and visual space, merging – just as the performer – with the surrounding sound and image.

CVs

AURÉLIO EDLER-COPES (COMPOSER)

Composer, guitarist and performer in electronics. Aurélio Edler-Copes's work is recognized for its intensity, dynamism and dramatic force. His artistic research has led him to merge electric and amplified acoustic instruments, creating new real-time electronics set-ups whilst integrating live electronics, live video and light in his musical writing.

A highly active creator, he collaborates regularly with prestigious soloists and ensembles (Ensemble Intercontemporain, Klangforum Wien, Musikfabrik, Quatuor Diotima, Quatuor Béla, Nieuw Ensemble, L'itinéraire, Mosaik, Vortex, Orchestras of São Paulo, Minas Gerais, Bilbao, Euskadi, Lorraine, et al.) and has received some thirty international composition prizes, in particular the New Forum Jeune Création Prize, the "Premio de Roma" of the Spanish Foreign Affairs Ministry, and the Georges Wildenstien Prize of the French Académie de Beaux Arts.

He has been composer in residence at the Royal Academy of Spain in Rome, the Casa de Velázquez-Académie de France in Madrid, and Kultur-Kontakt-Federal Chancellery of Austria, in Vienna. He has also worked in residence at the GRAME studios in Lyon, GMEM in Marseille, and SCRIME in Bordeaux, as well as the Phonos Foundation in Barcelona and the Royaumont Foundation.

From 2018 to 2020 he develops a series of residences at IRCAM in collaboration with the ensemble United Instruments of Lucilin for the premiere of Mental Radio Mcahin, a large work for amplified ensemble, samplers, effect pedals and live electronics.

Aurélio Edler-Copes earned a bachelor degree in guitar with Daniel Wolff at the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, and in composition with Gabriel Erkoreka at the Centro Superior de Música del País Basco—MUSIKENE. He also earned a master's in composition and musical theater with Georges Aperghis at the Hochschule der Künste Bern, Switzerland, and completed his training in the Coursus of Composition and Computer Music at IRCAM-Centre Pompidou in Paris.



KATHARINA GROSS (CELLIST AND PERFORMER)

Katharina Gross studied at the Musikhochschule Lübeck with David Geringas, Musikhochschule Köln with Frans Helmerson (Diploma) and at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester with Ralph Kirshbaum (Diploma in Professional Performance). She is prizewinner of several international competitions. She was soloist with the Philharmonic Orchestra of Kiev, the Philharmonic Orchestra of Klausenburg, the Staatsorchester Kassel, the Symphonic Orchestra of Thüringen and with the Salzburg Chamber Soloists on tour to the USA (Kennedy Center/Washington DC a.o.).

Katharina performed as a soloist and chamber musician at the at the Berio Festival in Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Musikverein Vienna, Konzerthaus Vienna, the Kennedy Center in Washington DC, Bodenseefestival, Nafplion

Festival, Cello Biennale and Berio Festival Amsterdam, Europäische Wochen Passau, the Al Bustan Festival, the Fadj Festival in Teheran and at the Omnibus Laboratorium in Tashkent amongst others.



CDs with cello solo repertoire by Ligeti, Kódaaly, Cassadó and Harvey were released by AULOS/Musikado and concertello records.

Especially for Katharina Gross scenographer and media artist Marion Traenkle created the Cello Box, a "micro theater" with ledlight. The Cello Cello Box featured in the Cello Biennial Amsterdam, the Dutch Cross-Linx Festival, Architecture Film Festival Rotterdam, Celloherbst am Hellweg in Germany, and in many other places.

The project Pitch Dark (in collaboration with composer Arnold Marinissen and visual artist Giny Vos) can be heard and seen at Festival November Music, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Oranjewoud Festival, Bach Festival Dordrecht and Zentrum für Internationale Lichtkunst Unna during the season 2017–2019.

In 2014 Katharina Gross started the project cello-mondo: composers from all around the globe and their students write pieces for cello solo. In 2016, Katharina performed 14 cello-mondo pieces in a 5-hour-long "cello-mondo marathon" at the Gaudeamus Muziekweek in Utrecht/Netherlands.

In autumn 2018 she premiered the 50 minutes long solo piece "Vorsicht, Katharina!" by Jan van de Putte in which she plays the cello, sings and acts.

THEUN MOSK (THEATRE MAKER AND SCENOGRAPHER)

Theun Mosk (1980) is deeply convinced that accumulating ideas as well as never confining yourself to one particular style or technique should be the basis of creative productivity. 'Somebody makes a comment, you react to it, and eventually ideas evolve and get better.'

After graduating at the Amsterdam Academy of Theatre and Dance (Technical Theatre Arts) Mosk has worked as a theatre maker, and designer of sets, light and autonomous installations. He likes and encourages creative collaboration and often works with an artistic team towards specific and unique means of expression. In 2007 Mosk was awarded the prestigious Dutch Charlotte Kohler Prize and was selected to participate in the Prague Quadriennale that same year, as well as in 2011. In 2009 he won the Proscenium Prize for his substantial contribution to the Dutch theatre.

Mosk has worked with Michel van der Aa, Robert Wilson English National Opera, Jetse Batelaan, Piet Paris, Ann van de Broek, Design Museum Den Bosch, David Mitchell, Nederlands Dans Theater, Medhi Walerski, Maritiem Museum, IFFR, Toneelgroep Oostpool, Boukje Schweigman, Arnhem Fashion Biënnale, Mattijs van Bergen, Nederlands Fotomuseum Rotterdam, Oerol Festival, Ballet BC Vancouver, Theaterfestival Boulevard, Veenfabriek/Paul Koek, Toneelhuis Antwerpen, Theater Rotterdam, Touki Delphine and the Fries Natuurmuseum for Leeuwarden-Friesland European Capital of Culture 2018.



Clip about Transformation

> watch the clip

Links to earlier projects

- > Impressions Pitch Dark (Katharina Gross & Arnold Marinissen - music, Giny Vos - light art)
- > Rebirth in Sound (Aurélio Edler-Copes - composition & electronics, Katharina Gross - cello)
- > Mental Radio Machine (Aurélio Edler-Copes - composition, United instruments of Lucilin)
- > Ricercare una melodia (by Jonathan Harvey, Katharina Gross - cello)

Reviews / Quotes

Ensemble Intercontemporain – 'Presence' at the Wigmore Hall, London " ...it takes some of its inspiration from sound recording and playback techniques, including pause, repeat, loop, fast forward and rewind. It lasted around 15 minutes and proved a surprisingly attractive work." (MusicOMH)

„Bravo, Katharina, this is one of the best I've heard - beautifully judged, exquisitely played. Thank you so much." (Jonathan Harvey about Katharina´s recording of Ricercare una melodia)

"Radio Bass by the Brazilian composer Aurélio Edler-Copes commissioned by the Biennale di Venezia. In 8 short movements Edler-Copes leads us through an amazing sound world in which an extremely low computerized voice competes with babblings, shouts, and whisperings." (I Care If You Listen)

"Die Cellistin Katharina Gross begeisterte mit ihrer Performance das Publikum in Vaduz. Die perfekte Virtuosa wählte ein sehr homogenes und schillerndes Repertoire aus: Neue Musik mit frischen Ästhetikvorschlägen. Für sie kein Problem. Sie beherrscht verschiedene Epochen und Stilrichtungen mühelos." (Volksblatt Liechtenstein)

STEPS

1. Pre-production (September–December 2019)

- conceptual discussion between the artistic staff
- acquisition fundings for the composition commission and the project
- appointments with co-producers

2. Production (2020/21)

- Residency 1: research, experimentation, development
- Residency 2: rehearsal, technics, stage direction
- Preview

3. Presentation 2021/22

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