

LISTEN 2x | ... deep dive into new music

Tuesday, April 2, 2024 @ 7:30pm | Studio Hrdinů

Oscar Bianchi – Permeability (Czech premiere)

BERG Orchestra

Anna Veverková, Anna Romanovská Fliegerová – violin, Kateřina Lískovcová – viola, Helena Velická – violoncello, František Výrostko – double bass, Jana Jarkovská – flutes, Kamila Moťková – oboe & english horn, Tereza Kosková – clarinet & bass clarinet, Hanuš Axmann – clarinet, bass clarinet & contrabass clarinet, Rudolf Krula – bassoon & contraforte, Barbora Šimůnková – horn, Tomáš Dabrowski a Jan Červenka – trumpets, Štěpán Janoušek – trombone, Martin Opršál a Radek Doležal – percussion instruments, Pavol Praženica & Veronika Jaklová – keyboard instruments, Jiří Lukeš – accordion

Peter Vrábel – conductor

Patrik Herman – electronics, Jiří Lukeš – technological collaboration

Michal Hodan – sound design

WHAT IS LISTEN 2x?

Once is good, twice is better! Another evening in our original and popular concert format offers deep dive into new music. Discover the musical world of Oscar Bianchi, Swiss-Italian composer living in Berlin. Czech premiere of a work that includes live electronics or rare instruments like contrabass clarinet.



Oscar Bianchi (*1975) was born in Milan and holds both Italian and Swiss citizenship. He has played piano since the age of eight, studied composition, choral conducting and electronic music at the Verdi Conservatory in Milan, spent a year at the IRCAM experimental studio and sound research institute in Paris, and received his PhD from Columbia University in New York under Tristan Muraile. Thanks to a prestigious DAAD scholarship, he lived for a year in Berlin (2009), and creative residencies have also taken him to Johannesburg (2010), Warsaw (2011) and Cairo (2016). He has won numerous prizes at international competitions (Gaudeamus, International Rostrum of Composers, Music Theatre Now) and the German Critics' Prize. His work is extremely diverse and varied, with all kinds of compositions from solo pieces to stage works. His first opera *Thanks to my Eyes* (2011) premiered at the Aix-en-Provence Festival. He works regularly with voice and singing, last November he premiered *Pozzanghere | mezzo seccate* for soprano, ensemble and electronics, and in June he will premiere a new work for soprano and trumpet in Rome. Interesting recent compositions include the concertos *Plenty for two* (2022) for double bass, trombone and ensemble and *6db* (2021) for 6 double basses and orchestra, while the participatory work *Orango* (2018) for ensemble and audience is also worth mentioning. Oscar is the founder and artistic director of the International Summer Composition Courses in Ticino, Switzerland. He lives with his family in Berlin, and from last September to this June he is on a creative residency at Villa Massimo in Rome.

www.oscarbianchi.com

Oscar Bianchi: Permeability (2013)

for 19 instruments and electronics

Thanks to all the technological developments of music-making after World War II, profoundly influenced by the exploration and the foundation of electronic music, history showed us that we would never be able to listen to sound in the same way we were used to before. As lively and complex music phenomena were unveiled, from the decryption of microscopical dimensions of sound to its physical nature, the sound explorer - the composer - had access to another level of comprehension of sound and, along with it, another meaning of it.

For someone who has always embraced the greater magnitude of sound's interactions with humans, I interpret this historical 'new' access to sound as access to an 'other' state of consciousness. As an homage to this historical groundbreaking shift, a groundbreaking enhancement in the eternal relationships between being and sound, I composed Permeability.*

The titles refer to the quality used to describe the transcendence between categories (human, animal, things) that in ancient times represented an accepted and shared vision of existence (as seen in the Chauvet Cave's wall paintings, the world's oldest art, Aurignacian period, approximately 30,000–32,000 BP). The hidden law that allowed these bonds across categories is commonly named Permeability.

Technology in music have been contributing to return us the grandiosity of sound in all its dimensions (physical, structural, emotional and intellectual). This allowed composers and creators cross boundaries between musical styles and states of mind. These diverse musical dimensions are here celebrated in their being intertwined, complementary and above all permeable.

Oscar Bianchi (06.05.2013)

*) Here the composer has confused the terms "fluidity" and "permeability", which are used in connection with the understanding of the world of ancient cultures. Fluidity = unity of everything (a person can become a dog, a dog can become a tree, etc.). Permeability describes the absence of boundaries between dimensions and states of mind, between our world and other worlds (including the afterlife). Thus, the composition should properly be called Fluidity. However, since the title of the piece has been in use for more than 10 years, it would be difficult in practice to change it now.

IN SHORT

The essence of this piece is transformation and the search for an existential stillness that we sometimes seem to achieve, but which is fragile and fleeting.

... from an interview with Oscar Bianchi (March 31, 2024)

The world premiere took place on 14 May 2013 in Frankfurt am Main, with Ensemble Modern conducted by Stefan Asbury. Subsequent performances followed in Portugal, France and Switzerland, and recordings of the concerts were also broadcast by radio in each country. The work was jointly commissioned by the German Ensemble Modern, the Portuguese organisation Casa de Música and the Namascae Lemanic Modern Ensemble with the support of the Geneva Archipel Festival.

INTERESTING FACTS

WEDDING GIFT

This work bears a dedication to painter and visual artist Anna Schuleit and composer Yotam Haber. It is a wedding gift, so the parts of the accordionist and one of the percussionists include the text recited with the help of megaphones: O TU L'AMA. In Italian it means "oh, you love her/him".

LIVE ELECTRONICS

The electronics play an important role in this composition. The sound picked up by the microphones directly from the individual musicians goes to the computer, where it is edited and transformed with the help of a specially tailored program. The result sounds from the speakers around the audience. The ensemble also includes an electronics player who - like the other musicians - has a clearly defined part. But this does not mean that the electronics always sound the same. It all depends on the musicians, who interpret their part a little differently each time (or so the computer reads it).