

the music of the orgien mysterien theater 1960-74

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the new, non-additive form of the gesamtkunstwerk, which has real events as its course of action or experiences, employs the natural sound of the occurrence as its means of musical-acoustic communication. the ecstasy of abreaction, of instincts breaking through, of the unbridled gratification of instincts through dionysian excess, has need of sounds, has desire for noise. ecstatic noise drives forward the sadomasochistic rending of flayed animal cadavers, raw flesh, and moist intestines. noise is an essential component in a far-reaching gratification of instincts. the maximum possible amount of highly intensive noise bordering on pain is generated. the orchestra is primarily made up of percussion, brass and woodwind, beat instruments and noise-making instruments of all kinds. the guttural ecstatic human scream is an important element of this (naturalistic) expressive music that intensifies the occurrence, the orgiastic event. we should be assaulted and terrified by the impact of sounds such as we have never heard before. the vomited, spat-out sounds of brass instruments (tubas, trombones), noise-making instruments, and human screams present themselves as the expression of repressed areas. aggression, sexual heat, the noise of war and of sexual craving, the cries of battle, death and rage force their way out of us. complexes of noise are expelled from our bodies like soft, warm, blood-enslaved intestines oozing from a wound.

the noise music of the o.m. theater is revelatory in character. it turns and tears repressed feelings outward. it turns internal emotions outward in the manner of an animal being disembowelled. the ecstatic cry activates our entire psychophysical organization, cleanses experience-weary senses of their frustration, rinses what is human in wholly sensuous experience.

my first abreaction play of 1961 already amounted to a detailed exploration of the theory of the scream.

“in the abreaction play occurrences of abreaction are constructed and experienced through the ecstatic release of disinhibition. the return to more unconscious psychic states of the human being exposes values of the tragedy, the state of excitement that is rooted in naked existence and lies in the scream, lies behind the word. in human history the usage of the scream came before the word that developed from the mating call.”

“the scream is a more direct expression of the unconscious, of the instinctual sphere, than the word. the scream situation is generally arrived at when the id asserts its rights, overcomes the intellectual control so that the elementary instinct for life can break through. shock-like torment interrupted abruptly by intervals of extreme enjoyment, any situation that produces a reduction in consciousness, enables the scream to break through. the screams produced directly from ecstasy in the course of the abreaction play should enable us to fathom our deeper psychic circumstances. it is a matter of exposing, by means of excitement and of screaming that images this excitement, unconscious zones of our psyche. it is a matter of a deliberate regression to early states of the human being. the primitive ego was bound more closely to the animal-vegetative side of the unconscious (and therefore also to the mystical-religious), the negation of the word, this regression to the ecstasy of the scream is communication with the unconscious, deliberate analytical immersion in one's unconscious. one entrusts oneself to the intoxication of visceral, often hectic, dynamic laws, one escapes the ‘compulsion’ of the intellect.”

the following text concerning the scream stems from the first abreaction play, which was written in 1961, and provides a brief summary of the revelatory work carried out by the o.m. theater:

“esos runs shrieking through the auditorium onto the stage, disembowels the lamb, rip and tears it apart

(with the aid of butcher's tools). his ecstasy, which is possibly genuinely felt, is accompanied by screaming of an intensity appropriate to the situation and corresponding with an extremely human state of excitement. it is the expression of orgiastic, sadistic, ecstatic jubilation heightened to the point of excess. the utmost state of excitement in the play has been reached. the screaming of esos has its deepest point of reference in buried layers of the psyche that have been exposed through sensually intensive feeling (contact with the ID, regression to a deeper state of consciousness) and of which the energies are transformed into ecstatic states of release and excited screaming. a surplus of vitality became the unconscious build-up of energies that developed a need for abreaction leading to pleasure in suffering. the will for existence is so strong that it can even intoxicate itself on suffering (greek tragedy). as well as provoking ecstatic states of screaming, which are produced through the excitation of unconscious areas of the psyche, the tearing apart of the lamb touches upon the earliest, most elementary forms of human abreaction (the rending of totem animal). the situation of pure basic excess is represented, sexual heat and lust are turned into sadomasochistic forms of abreaction. the rending of the lamb, this most intensive assault on the senses, is the core of the abreaction play. during the process of disembowelment, elementary sensory stimulations are cultivated most intensively and radically, taken to their logical conclusion. there occurs a process of stimulation of which a concomitant phenomenon is penetration through to the roots of mythical abreaction and sacrificial procedures concealed in the collective unconsciousness. the origin of sadomasochistic sacrificial rites lies in the need for the occurrence of pure abreaction (communication with the unconscious). the need for abreaction is a crucial factor in the formation of myths defined by the unconscious. the o.m. theater's rending (disembowelment) of the lamb reduces ritual abreaction to its psychological core. the experience of basic excess is revealed, the paradoxical nature of sadomasochistic forms of experiencing. destruction, the elementary sadomasochistic situation of tearing apart, shows itself most directly in the pleasure taken in destroying organic, living matter (the tearing apart of flesh). the situation of basic excess is the expression, end, and inhibiting point of the elementary need for abreaction (for releasing instinctual tensions), of the need that may be explained in psychological terms as the origin of religious sacrificial rites and the sadomasochistic end points of those myths and rites whose abreactive character is clearly demonstrated. via the collective psyche the general need for abreaction finds its expression in the cruelty of mythical occurrences. starting with the rending of the totem animal, a line of development can be identified that stretches all the way to the transubstantiation rite of the catholic church. (jesus christ sacrifices himself for humankind - his body, the host, is eaten by everyone, analogously with feasting upon the totem animal). the application of psychological and anthropological findings to essential elements of the eucharist shows them to be based on the human need for abreaction. the sacrifice of the mass merely represents the urge for abreaction, refined and concealed by the rite. the rending of the lamb in the o.m. theater aims to touch the collective-psyche roots of the eucharist."

the character of my music is not in the least illustrative, let alone painterly, my music defines occurrences, just as it is defined by occurrences. For me, it goes without saying that the noise designed for my actions should be described as music.

the scores are recorded on graph paper. each millimeter represents one second of playing. the duration of play of individual instruments is recorded by horizontal strokes. there are three noise levels (which are noted above the horizontal strokes). the musicians required to generate noise with their instruments must comply with a stated intensity that corresponds with the intensity of the occurrence. the musicians are not permitted to borrow from music of the past, and, for that reason, professional musicians display little understanding or aptitude for my music. they confuse their playing with improvisation. i prefer to use amateur musicians, or ones who do not master the instrument they play. this lack of knowledge of a particular instrument produces new, hitherto unheard, tones that break out of the familiar patterns. i have little time for what purports to be the new music of our times. a music that is derived from webern, the genius, is reduced in its preordained development to the production of preordained figures of sound i find intolerable in their restricted nature and lack of perspective. my music does not know the neurotic compulsion of post-webern music. john cage's name must be included among those few who opened up the possibility of my music. no prescribed rhythm, no tonality or atonality is important. the pure sound (the

timbre) is decisive, the intensity of the noise produced on the instrument. rather, a relation to mahler, scriabin, ives, bruckner and wagner results once again. the sound-rapture, the usage of the timbre, lends itself to expanding the amorphous noise-music and makes possible epic-symphonic structures with inconceivable escalations. i think of symphonies with large numbers of vast orchestras and choirs whose performances last several days. the festival of the o.m. theater too must be grasped as a vast symphony of which the performance takes six days.

equally, however, my concept of music, which is based on dionysian ecstasy, knows tranquil sounds, tones and noises. the adagio is contributed by nature itself. matter-of-course sounds and tones otherwise perceived subconsciously rather than consciously are recorded, fathom the nirvana of silence. the falling silent of the timbres that enrich and heighten the orgy brings forth the tranquil, expansive, infinite sonic space of the night. tones and noises detach themselves, almost vegetatively, from the vast life zone of the vegetative human-creaturely, penetrate the silence, veil it, fill it up with a finely tuned aural world. music has become the perceived reality. **THE NOISES OF THE NIGHT**, a bird-cry, bird-calls, barking of dogs, music drifting from some far-off public house, the noise of distant road traffic, the sound of an airplane, unlit in the darkness high up in the sky, human voices shouting and calling, the singing of drunk people, the hum of a distant city, the smell of watered flowers, wet earth, of rain, of blossoming shrubs, the taste of fruit flesh, of fruit, the light of the clear stars, the orbital laws of the stellar trajectories, all this becomes music. the course of creation clamors and clashes, is sound, the thundering, whooping, light-loud mating call of the universe, the cry of the one who has risen once more, his **LIGHT** body is music.