

Lasse Thoresen (Nov. 09)

The Concrecence Project: A Brief Description

- The *Concrecence Project* is an aesthetically orientated research project that intends to bring about innovations in vocal practise and composition. The project also includes theoretical research and pedagogical practise. Professor Lasse Thoresen (The Norwegian Academy, Oslo) is the artistic director of the project. The Norwegian Academy of Music has prioritized the project as one of its principal areas of aesthetic research.

- Through the synergy between highly different, seemingly contradictory vocal traditions - ethnic as well as contemporary - new musical expressions can come into existence. In its present form the project attempts to combine Western classical singing with harmonic chant ("diphonic" chant) and Scandinavian traditional singing styles (*kveding, kulning etc.*). To these sources is added a *spectromorphological* perspective (derived from the French *Musique Concrète*). Further reflection on the compositional possibilities of these elements makes evident the need for a theoretical understanding of microtonality and the series of harmonics ('Just Intonation').

-Vocal exercises for improving note accuracy are being developed to help singers master microtonal intervals. Asst. professor Gro Shetelig Kruse (The Norwegian Academy of Music) is working on the development of a Microtonal Ear Training method for singers

- Improvisation is used as a means to exploit musical potentials.

-The project encourages a phenomenological approach – no expectations, clear observation of the moment, focus on concrete sound – rather than *a priori* models of musical organization.

-The *first phase* of the project officially began in Oslo during the Ultima Festival 2005 with a four-day seminar/master class featuring the vocal ensemble *Nordic Voices*. Lectures and courses were presented by Tran Quang Hai, Berit Opheim, Lasse Thoresen, Gro Shetelig Kruse, Guy Reibel, Benoît Aubigny, Georg Friedrich Haas. The *Ultima Festival/Geir Johnson* acts as administrative coordinator of the project, with the support of the Norwegian Academy of Music.

-The *second phase* of the project involved the composing of works based on the new possibilities which had been established. Georg Friederich Haas (Austria/Switzerland), Guy Reibel (Paris), Bernat Vivancos (Spain/Catalonia), Ragnhild Berstad (Norway); Henrik Ødegaard (Norway) and Lasse Thoresen were given commissions by Ultima to compose works that were performed 15 October, 2006, during the Ultima festival.

-The *third phase* of *Concrecence* was the building-up of an elective course at the Norwegian Academy of Music with the *Concrecence* subjects, including lessons in free improvisation with prof. Sidsel Endresen. Open seminars during the Ultima festival have been integral to the project. The elective course is offered every year.

- The *fourth phase* is an ongoing project with *Latvia Radio Koris* and *The Royal College of Music* in Stockholm with support from *Nordic Culture Point (Kulturkontakt Nord, Foreningen Norden)* involving workshops with the choir and seminars with composers. Works by Nordic and Baltic composers have been commissioned, for first performance during the Ultima Festival 2010, Oslo. Workshops and lectures are given by Gro Shetelig Kruse (microtonal ear training), Susanne Rosenberg (ethnic voice), Christian Zehnder (harmonic chant), Valdis Muktupavels (harmonic chant), Sven Ahlbäck (microtonal features of Scandinavian folk music), Karin Rehnquist (folk music and contemporary style), and Lasse Thoresen (microtonality, notation, just intonation).

-The fourth phase comes to an end with the performance of the new works in Oslo during the Ultima festival, 17.-19 Sept. combined with seminars and workshops and lectures beginning 15 Sept.

-To facilitate rehearsing microtonal parts, and composing with microtones, a computer program called *Micropalette* has been developed.

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