

The Concrecence Project: A Short Description

- The *Concrecence Project* aims to bring together musical materials developed over the past half-century. It is an aesthetically orientated research project that intends to bring about innovations in vocal practise and compositionⁱ. The project also includes theoretical research and pedagogical practise.

One important objective is to spread knowledge of a variety of existing vocal traditions in the hope of creating openings for new forms of musical expression based on the unpredictable synergy between them. The point of departure for the forthcoming seminars is an attempt to combine Western classical singing techniques with Mongolian harmonic chant ("diphonic" chant) and Norwegian traditional *kveding*. Models for possible syntheses of these elements may be found within the "sound objects" of the French tradition of *musique concrète*.

- Professor Lasse Thoresen (Oslo) is the artistic director of the project. The *Ultima Festival/Geir Johnson* acts as administrative coordinator of the project, with the support of the Norwegian Academy of Music.
- The project will offer the opportunity to reflect on the compositional possibilities of these vocal innovations. An understanding of the relationship between tone colour/harmonic structure and the movement of the fundamental note requires a study of microtonality. Vocal exercises for improving note accuracy will be developed to help the singers master microtonal intervals more easily.
- The project borrows central elements of phenomenological philosophy and encourages a phenomenological approach – no expectations, clear observation of the moment, focus on concrete sound – rather than *a priori* models of musical organization.
- One important way of working will be to improvise with various sound objects. The possible role of the conductor in improvisation will be discussed.
- 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 second phase of the project involves the composing of works based on the new possibilities which have been established. Georg Friederich Haas (Austria/Switzerland), Guy Reibel (Paris), Bernat Vivancos (Spain/Catalonia), Ragnhild Berstad (Norway); Henrik Ødegaard (Norway) and Lasse Thoresen have been given commissions by Ultima to compose works to be performed 15 October, 2006, during the Ultima festival.
- The third phase of Concrecence is a yearlong pedagogical project at the Norwegian Academy of Music, beginning autumn 2006. Two open seminars during the Ultima festival are integral to the project: October 6: *Dr. Tran Quang Hai* (Paris) will teach Diphonic Chant (overtone singing), 14 October professor *Guy Reibel* (Paris) will teach principles of vocal improvisations ("Jeux vocaux") inspired by *musique concrète*, 15 October dr. *Sven Ahlbäck* (Stockholm) will discuss the ancient modalities of Swedish folk music, *Benoît Aubigny* (assistant professor, Poitiers, France) will discuss what happens when archaic music is used in new contexts, and will eventually lead a discussion in which the six composers present their new works in a pre concert talk.
- As the fourth phase of the project one envisages workshops with Nordic Voices at the Norwegian Academy of Oslo, and locating possible collaborators in the European Community for creating international an international network.
- Both theoretical and applied research projects are linked to the Concrecence Project:
 - dr. Benoît Aubigny: 'Modèles (sonores) et procès élliptiques' (Sorbonne)
 - Senior Lecturer Gro Shetelig Kruse: Microtonal Solfège for singers (The Norwegian Academy of Music)

www.nmh.no/concrecence

ⁱ The word *concrecence* (from Latin *con*=together, *crescere*=grow) was originally coined by the philosopher Alfred North Whitehead and describes the process whereby various characteristics are brought together to form something concrete in the physical world.