



Heiner Goebbels

A House of Call

my imaginary notebook

Material Counter

English translation: Naomi Boyce

140 pages | with 49 color & 30 b/w images
 softcover | 16 x 24 cm | € 9
 ISBN 978-3-95808-414-8

JULY 2022

In recent years, composer and theatermaker Heiner Goebbels has regularly collected recordings of voices during his travels, chance encounters, projects, and research. Unique, peculiar voices that have touched, disturbed, excited, alienated him. These are voices from very different contexts, soundscapes, musical traditions, and languages, folk material, rituals, literature, recorded in the course of the last hundred years or so. This phonographic collection in an imaginary notebook has now become two things:

A House of Call as a full-evening concert for the Ensemble Modern Orchestra, in which these voices will often be heard on a concert stage for the first time and set the tone: cries, calls, invocations, incantations, prayers, speech acts, poems, songs. The orchestra presents, supports, accompanies them, responds to or contradicts them – like a secular “responsory.”

A House of Call. Material Counter as a book that uses numerous documents, texts, images, and sources to try to trace what distinguishes these voices. About half of these voices were recorded on wax cylinders with historical phonographs, and their origins are often ambivalent. Many reasons may have led to the recordings: ethnomusicological or music and linguistic research, sociological or anthropological interests.

Heiner Goebbels’ music is a direct answer to the complexity and grain of the voices, their vibrancy and the history of these recordings. The book discusses the heterogeneous contexts of how they were created and explores the question, for example, of whether these voices were recorded at concerts or under questionable, for example colonial, circumstances and what makes them unique.

The original edition in German was published on August 30, 2021 for the concert’s premiere at the Philharmonie in Berlin. In 2022 and 2023, the Ensemble Modern Orchestra will continue its tour on international stages.

For all dates see: www.heinergoebbels.com

Heiner Goebbels is a composer and theatermaker living in Frankfurt am Main. He completed his studies in sociology and music. He has composed radio plays, staged concerts, compositions for ensemble and large orchestra, music theater works, and has received numerous awards for his work. From 1999 to 2018, Goebbels was professor at the Institute of Applied Theatre Studies at Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen, from 2012–2014 artistic director of the Ruhrtriennale – International Festival of the Arts.

REVIEW COPY

Dr. Jessica Nitsche, presse@neofelis-verlag.de

Neofelis Verlag GmbH, Kuglerstr. 59, 10439 Berlin

www.neofelis-verlag.de



HEINER GOEBBELS

A HOUSE OF CALL
my imaginary notebook

Material Counter

A research project of the Georg Büchner Professorship
at the Centre for Media and Interactivity
with generous support from the Justus Liebig University Giessen

Collaboration: Astrid Schenka, International Research Center
“Interweaving Performance Cultures” at the Freie Universität Berlin

English translation: Naomi Boyce

Neofelis

PRÉLUDE	7
HOUSE OF CALL <i>James Joyce, Finnegans Wake, multiple senses of scripture, demilitarization, John Cage, Roaratorio, music as geography</i>	9
I STEIN SCHERE PAPIER [STONE SCISSORS PAPER]	17
INTROITUS (A RESPONSE TO RÉPONS) <i>Pierre Boulez 1981, Cassiber 1982, lightning strikes, home organ</i>	19
IMMER DEN GLEICHEN STEIN [ALWAYS THE SAME STONE] <i>Sisyphus, Heiner Müller, Robert Wilson, Ilse Ritter</i>	25
UNDER CONSTRUCTION <i>Iitti 2018, Seattle 2019, construction sites</i>	32
II GRAIN DE LA VOIX	35
NU STIRI / ნუ სთირი <i>Echoes from the past, Mannheim camp, captured voices, Britta Lange, Giorgi Nareklshvili, Platon Machaidze</i>	37
AGASH AYAK / АҒАШ АҒАҒЫ <i>Almaty, Genko-an, Frankfurt 1927, Amre Kashaubayev</i>	48
1346 / ۱۳۴۶ <i>Taxi to Tehran, Hamidreza Nourbakhsh, Rumi / Maulana</i>	57
KRUNK / ԿՐԱՆԿ <i>Komitas, Armenak Shahmuradian, Zabelle Panosian, cranes</i>	61
INTERLUDE	67
PECULIAR VOICES <i>Acousmatic voices, the grain of the voice, Roland Barthes, The Hilliard Ensemble</i>	69

III	WAX AND VIOLENCE	75
	TOCCATA (VOWELS)	
	<i>Wax cylinders, phonographs, Carl Stumpf, Erich von Hornbostel, Rudolf Trebitsch, Inuit, Judith Barseleysen, Abigail Bolars</i>	77
	ACHTUNG AUFNAHME [ATTENTION RECORDING]	
	<i>Namibia 1931, Hans Lichtenecker, sensitive collections, Anette Hoffmann</i>	82
	NUN DANKET ALLE GOTT [NOW THANK WE ALL OUR GOD]	
	<i>Schoolchildren from Berseba, Nama, missions</i>	89
	TI GU GO INÎGA MÎ (SOME OF THEM SAY)	
	<i>To speak, not to give information, Farm Lichtenstein, Haneb, Gertrude Stein</i>	92
IV	WHEN WORDS GONE	99
	BAKAKĪ (DIÁLOGO)	
	<i>Stifters Dinge [Stifter's Things], a Murui ritual, Luciano and Victor Martínez</i>	101
	SCHLÄFT EIN LIED IN ALLEN DINGEN [A SONG SLEEPS IN ALL THINGS AROUND]	
	<i>Joseph von Eichendorff, Margret Goebbels, Polivoks</i>	106
	KALIMÉRISMA / Καλημέρισμα	
	<i>Samuel Baud-Bovy, Kalymnos, sponge diving</i>	109
	WHAT WHEN WORDS GONE	
	<i>Samuel Beckett, Worstward Ho, Maurice Blanchot</i>	115
	CODA	119
	BIOS	125
	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	129
	TEXT AND FIGURE REFERENCES	130

Handwritten draft by James Joyce: the earliest surviving version of the
“Roderick O’Connor” passage from FINNEGANS WAKE (1939).



THE HOUSE OF CALL FOR ACTORS,
drawn and etched by Theodore Lane (1800–1828) in 1825.

house of call *n.* (a) a place, usually a public house where journeymen of a particular trade assemble, where carriers call for commissions, or where a person may be heard of or contacted (now *historical*); (b) (*gen.*) a house (or, in extended use, a place) that a person visits regularly, or that is often visited (now *rare*).

WEBSTER'S DICTIONARY 1909 / OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY 2020

To go to countries whose languages one can never master.

Elias Canetti · DIE PROVINZ DES MENSCHEN [THE HUMAN PROVINCE]

A HOUSE OF CALL is a cycle with calls, invocations, appeals, incantations, prayers, speech acts, poems, and songs for a large orchestra. But it is not the orchestra making the call; it is confronted with voices. It presents, supports, accompanies them, answers or objects to them – as though in a secular “responsory.” As an orchestra’s collective response to the many individual voices with their own distinct sounds and languages. They are solely acoustically present. Either they call from the past or from my personal environment: peculiar voices, traditional material, rituals, literature.

A HOUSE OF CALL is not an academic media archive, but rather a phonographic collection from my imaginary notebook. It doesn’t follow any system. Its sources arose from many trips, chance encounters, scattered research for artistic projects, some of which were never realized.

Voices that touched, unsettled, impressed, and alienated me are given a chance to speak in this concert, and most of them are heard for the first time on a concert stage. Around half of the voices were recorded on wax cylinders using historical phonographs and their genesis is often ambivalent. A range of reasons may have led to these recordings: ethnomusicological or musical and linguistic research, sociological, anthropological interests, but also racist motives whose colonial contexts shaped them. Sometimes the motivations can’t be singled out.

I can’t eliminate the contradictions; I can only work on them artistically: what connects or separates the recordings made of an Armenian opera singer in the 1910s in Paris from the recordings of the voices of Georgian prisoners of war in the camp in Mannheim around the same time? What separates the recordings of the music scholar Samuel Baud-Bovy, who spent time traveling through the islands of Greece and recorded Ekaterini Mangoúlia, from those

of a self-proclaimed anthropologist who, at the same time, summoned people to a police station in South West Africa, measured them, violently made casts of their faces and took recordings he was never interested in again? What could the ritualized forms of language in the shamanic discourse of Luciano and Victor Martínez have in common with those of Heiner Müller, Gertrude Stein, or Samuel Beckett? And what happens during the many shifts in media – from the historic cylinders into the digital samples, from the samples into the concert, the concert into the book?

The music is a direct answer to the complexity and rawness of the voices, their auras and the histories of these recordings.

This book offers a look into the material and its backgrounds – and into questions they give rise to between preservation and appropriation.

Both works – the composition of the orchestral work and the material counter of the research in book form – were completed in March 2020.

A HOUSE OF CALL is a songbook for an orchestra, divided into four chapters:

STEINE SCHERE PAPIER

GRAIN DE LA VOIX

WAX AND VIOLENCE

WHEN WORDS GONE

Singing is, perhaps, to resume an ancient practice of mammals or whales, which consists, if not of seizing, of at least marking the passing through of a place. Music, as a traversal of a certain number of places, would be a geography of humanity before it is and has a history; and perhaps this geography now needs to be reinvented. Though what would such a reinvention be but giving its peculiarity back to each timbre or – using Roland Barthes' expression – to the grain of the voice, which it has because of all the found elevations and irregularities in the ground?

Daniel Charles · LA MUSIQUE ET L'OUBLI [MUSIC AND OBLIVION]

A HOUSE OF CALL. my imaginary notebook
Material Counter

A research project of the Georg Büchner Professorship at the Centre for Media and Interactivity with generous support from the Justus Liebig University Giessen



Collaboration: Astrid Schenka, International Research Center “Interweaving Performance Cultures” at the Freie Universität Berlin

English translation: Naomi Boyce

Bibliographical Information in the German National Library

The German National Library registers this publication in the German National Bibliography, detailed bibliographic data may be found on the Internet under <http://dnb.d-nb.de>

© 2022 Neofelis Verlag GmbH, Berlin

www.neofelis-verlag.de

All rights reserved.

Editing: Neofelis Verlag (mn)

Design & Typesetting: Hauptsatzbüro, Susanne Lomer

Cover: Marija Skara, using the close-up of an Edison gold moulded cylinder, around 1906/07,

Photo: Norman Bruderhofer.

Press: Drusala s. r. o., Frýdek-Místek (CZ)

Printed on FSC-certified paper.

ISBN: 978-3-95808-414-8