

## Abstracts

Hans-Rüdiger Schwab: »[...] always it is yearning toward something, in my view something eternal«. Remarks on a Central Dimension in Sidney Corbett's Works

As a first step the article briefly describes the spiritual discourse of New Music which shares the common conviction that to a certain extent sounds might approach the Unnamable. Large parts of Corbett's work belong to that context. For him the mysterious process of inspiration and creativity itself implies religious significance. Concerning their subjects, his compositions repeatedly seek the spiritual field, with frequent recourse to literary and artistic models. The article tries to present an overview of exemplary components containing reference on holy scriptures and places, compositional technique in analogy to medieval architecture, confrontation with mystics or contemporary secular witnesses to the Sacred, motifs such as longing, paradise or angels, epiphanies or hierophanies, interlinked often with each other. In all this, his transformations in search of tonal equivalents vary. Finally interpretations of three pieces follow, in which certain procedures of Corbett permeate each other (*Two Quiet Prayers*, *Bentlager Liturgie – Crucifixus* –, and *Absconditus*).

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Manfred Stahnke: Topos and Utopia in Sidney Corbett. Reflections on the work *Utopie und Nähe* for violin and 6 voices with texts by Ernst Bloch

Every tone in Corbett has a possible, but not inevitable, place in the old tonal context. For the listener, Corbett always opens up mental possibilities of placing tones in a known musical linguistic. However, it also opens up, said the other way around, in Corbett's music, in varying degrees of severity, the impossibility of listening into, or extracting widely from, an overarching old tonal context. Corbett's intervallic language is doubly coded: it contains the old places, and it denies them. Both are revealed in this analysis.

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Ralf Waldschmidt: »Topicality« and »Holiness« or: What to write an opera about today?

The composer Sidney Corbett considers himself a bridge-builder between audience and contemporary musical theatre, but also a bridge-builder between ancient cultures and the present times, between transcendency and

our concrete living situation in today's world. His operas are about stories combining current social issues with historical topics, some of them also mythical and religious. Working with the writer Christoph Hein, he created the musical theatre works *Noach* (Bremen 2001) and *Die Andere* (Magdeburg 2016). *Das große Heft* (Osnabrück 2013), based on a novel by Ágota Kristóf, was widely acclaimed. Using the example of *San Paolo* (Osnabrück 2018), which was based on a film script by Pier Paolo Pasolini, the possibilities of comprehensive education projects for the audience are examined.



Frieder Reininghaus: *Experiential Humanity. On Sidney Corbett's Music Theater*

For two decades Sidney Corbett has been composing in a distinctive way for music theater in the Federal Republic of Germany. The suite of (chamber) operas now comprises half a dozen works – beginning with *Noach* (Bremen 2001). Subjects with a religious grounding appear to dominate. The fall of Hagar from Abraham's harem was dealt with in *Die Andere* (Magdeburg 2016), that of Saul/Paulus, who was of central importance for the consolidation of the Christian religion, in *San Paolo* (Osnabrück 2018). Corbett's penchant for surrealist scene sequences sprang from the chamber opera *Keine Stille außer der des Windes* (Bremen 2006), developed from a montage of texts by Fernando Pessoa, and the opera *Ubu* after Alfred Jarry (Gelsenkirchen 2012), written for young people. With *Das große Heft* after the novel by Ágota Kristóf (Osnabrück 2013), Corbett succeeded in creating a work that gained unexpected topicality in 2022.



Sascha Lino Lemke: *Unfortunately ... it's war. On the solistic vocal parts in Sidney Corbett's opera Das große Heft*

Sidney Corbett's opera *Das große Heft* (2011/12) is based on the eponymous french novel by Ágota Kristóf (translated into English as *The Notebook*). It tells the story of twin brothers who teach themselves how to survive the war. This essay is an introduction to the eleven main characters of the opera, and to the means, by which Corbett portrays them musically. It is also an examination of some of Corbett's principles of pitch organisation, and how the intertwining of atonal and tonal/modal elements exemplifies Corbett's very own personal language.



Barbara Busch / Kolja Lessing: In Conversation with Sidney Corbett. Viewpoints of a Composition Pedagogue

In this interview, Sidney Corbett outlines the guiding principles of his work as a professor of composition at the Mannheim Musikhochschule. In his teaching activities, he sees himself more as a learner with a certain head start in experience, which also results from his own different study experiences in the USA and in Hamburg with György Ligeti. In stylistic openness and tolerance towards his students, for whom he repeatedly establishes contacts with performers and organizers, Corbett is committed to an envy-free cooperation and an exchange of ideas that goes far beyond music. Artistically existential for him is the precise inner perception of hearing and sound, which alone justifies writing it down. Corbett's reflections are rounded off by statements from (former) students of his Mannheim class.