

# Georg Hajdu

“His perspective of music is fresh und independent, and more than once he amazed me with unusual concepts and creative ideas which he realized in a consistent manner.”

Krzysztof Meyer

Georg Hajdu ist 1960 in Göttingen als Sohn ungarischer Eltern, die aus ihrer Heimat während des Aufstandes 1956 nach Deutschland geflohen waren, geboren. Seine Kindheit und Jugend waren geprägt von dem wissenschaftlichen Denken des Vaters, eines Physikprofessors, und den künstlerischen Neigungen der mütterlichen Linie. Er zählt den israelischen Komponisten André Hajdu zu den nächsten Verwandten. Es sind diese vielfältigen, kontrastierenden Einflüsse, die das kompositorische Werk Georg Hajdus, das von traditionellen akustischen Kompositionen bis hin zu nicht-notierbaren medialen Realisationen reicht, bestimmen.

Seinen ersten Instrumentalunterricht erhält Georg Hajdu 1973 in klassischer Gitarre. Mit 17, zwei Jahre nach seinen ersten Versuchen, bekommt er in Köln bei Georg Kröll an der Rheinischen Musikschule in Köln

Theorie- und Kompositionsunterricht. Bei ihm bleibt er auch bis 1985, als er sich nach dem Abitur entschließt, molekulare Biologie zu studieren. In dieser Zeit entstehen bereits die ersten Werke, in denen ein Wesensmerkmal sichtbar wird - eine Technik, die man als „Attraktionsverfahren“ bezeichnen könnte: Intuitiv skizzierte Musik wird einem Analyseprozess unterworfen und die dabei sichtbar gewordenen rationalisierten Strukturen in algorithmischen Verfahren weitergesponnen. Dabei nähern sich die rationalen und intuitiven Aspekte zunehmend an, bis sie ein organisches Ganzes ergeben. Das Klavierstück *LogaRhythmen* (1983) ist ein frühes Beispiel für diese Haltung. Die Einbeziehung von mathematischen und naturwissenschaftlichen Prinzipien prägen zunehmend seine Haltung und konsequenterweise beschäftigt sich Hajdu sich nach seiner Aufnahme an die Kölner Musikhochschule (1985) mit Computern und algorithmischen Verfahren. Von Bedeutung sind jetzt seine Lehrer Johannes Fritsch, Krzysztof Meyer, Klarenz Barlow, sowie György Ligeti, dessen Seminar er als Gasthörer besucht. Hajdu beginnt sich ab 1987 systematisch, kompositorisch wie auch theoretisch, mit Mikrotonalität auseinanderzusetzen. Seine Wahl fällt zunächst auf das 17tönig temperierte Tonsystem, in dem er gleich mehrere Kompositionen schreibt, darunter die *Heptadecatonic Drops* für zwei Disklaviers (1989) und *Klangmoraste* für Kammerorchester (1990). Für dieses Werk erhält er den IBM-Preis des Ensemble Modern. Im selben Jahr beginnt er als DAAD-Stipendiat ein fünfjähriges Promotionsstipendium an der University of California in Berkeley. Er verbringt jetzt die meiste Zeit unter der Obhut von David Wessel am *interdisziplinären Center for New Music and Audio Technologies*. Daneben setzt er seine Kompositionsstudien bei Andrew Imbrie und Jorge Liderman fort. In diese Periode fallen das für das Kölner Trio Ugly Culture geschriebene Stück *Riots* (1991-92), eine Erinnerung an die von Berkeley ausgegangene Studentenbewegung der 60er Jahre, die Klavierkompositionen *Fingerprints* (1993) sowie sein bisheriges Hauptwerk, die Oper *Der Sprung* (1994-98), die er in enger Kollaboration mit dem bekannten Berliner Schriftsteller und Filmemacher Thomas Brasch verfaßt. *Der Sprung* faßt in seiner pluralistischen Herangehensweise die kompositorischen Interessen Hajdus zusammen. Dabei ist ganz wesentlich, dass sich alle disparaten Ereignisse auf einen gemeinsamen Nenner zurückführen lassen: Aus einem Textsample leitet er in verschiedenen Destillationsschritten zunächst die Zeitstruktur und Harmonik und schließlich den klingenden Vordergrund der Oper ab.

1996 gründet er mit seiner Frau Jennifer Hymer das Ensemble WireWorks, das sich auf die Aufführung interaktiver Computermusik mit akustischen Instrumenten und Stimmen spezialisiert hat. Multimedia, sei es Live-Elektronik, Internet oder Videoprojektionen, wird zunehmend stärker zur Inspirationsquelle in seinem Werk. Seit 2002 unterrichtet er als Professor für multimediale Komposition an der Hochschule für Musik und Theater Hamburg.

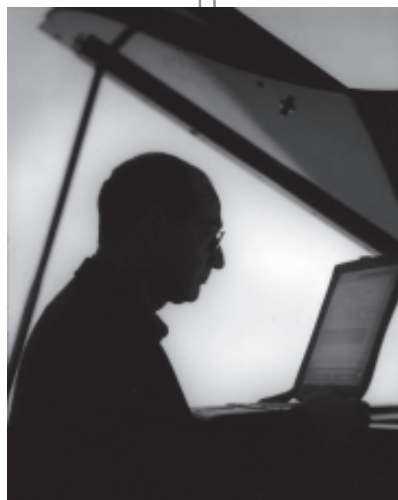
Georg Hajdu was born in 1960 in Göttingen, Germany to Hungarian parents who fled their country during the uprising in 1956. His childhood and youth were affected by the scientific interests of his physicist father and the artistic inclinations of the maternal lineage. The Israeli composer André Hajdu is one of his closest relatives. It's these various and contrasting influences that shaped Georg Hajdu's compositional oeuvre which ranges from acoustic works to medial realizations that defy conventional notation.

In 1973, Georg Hajdu received his first music lessons in classical guitar. At age 17, two years after his first attempts in composition, he studied theory and composition with Georg Kröll at the

Rheinische Musikschule in Cologne. He continued his music studies until 1985 while getting his Master of Science degree (*Diplom*) in molecular biology from the University of Cologne. During this period a typical trait of his compositions is starting to become noticeable—a technique that could be dubbed “attraction method”: Intuitively sketched music is subject to analysis and its rationalized structures further developed using algorithmic principles. Consequently, the rational and intuitive aspects attract each other until they form an organic whole. His piano piece *LogaRhythmen* (1983) shows early proof of this approach. Hajdu started to increasingly integrate mathematical and scientific principles in his pieces, and after being admitted to the Cologne

Musikhochschule, put an emphasis on working with computers and algorithmic processes. He received stimulation from his teachers Johannes Fritsch, Krzysztof Meyer and Klarenz Barlow, as well as from György Ligeti whose seminar he visited regularly. In 1987, Hajdu begun his exploration of alternate tunings both in his theoretical and compositional works. His tuning of choice is 17-tone equal temperament in which he wrote several compositions, *Heptadecatonic Drops* for two Disklaviers (1989) and *Klangmoraste* (1990) among them. For the latter composition he was awarded the IBM-prize of the Ensemble Modern. In the same year, 1990, he entered the UC Berkeley graduate program in composition. He spent most of his time at the interdisciplinary Center for New Music and Audio Technologies under the auspices of David Wessel while simultaneously pursuing his composition studies with Andrew Imbrie and Jorge Liderman. In this period he wrote his pieces *Riots*, which commemorates the Berkeley student movement of the 1960's, *Fingerprints* for piano (1993) as well as large parts of his opera *Der Sprung*, which he developed in close collaboration with Berlin author and filmmaker Thomas Brasch. In its pluralistic attitude, *Der Sprung* epitomizes Georg Hajdu's compositional approach. Every detail is, despite the heterogeneity of the musical expressions, based on a common denominator: From a text sample he distilled in several steps the temporal and harmonic structure as well as the sounding foreground of the opera.

In 1996 he cofounded with his wife Jennifer Hymer the Ensemble WireWorks - an ensemble specializing in the performance of interactive computer music with acoustic instruments and voices. Multimedia, whether it's live electronics, Internet or video projection was increasingly becoming a source of inspiration for his work. In April 2002, he started working as a professor of multimedia composition at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Hamburg.



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## Reviews

[On Sleeplessness]:

"The melodrama, a psychological account, left the flute much leeway to play: hereby showing Hajdu's use of live electronics aiming at the spatial control of the instrument by compositional means. Carin Levine mastered the perilous flute part."

(Westfälische Nachrichten, October 1997)

"Ugly Culture played original compositions such as 'Rukus' by Christian Wolff or 'Riots' by Georg Hajdu. While Christian Wolff amalgamates closed song-like figures to an arbitrary patch-work, Georg Hajdu's work consists of bizarre composers' portraits: The machine-like stratification of rhythms á la Conlon Nancarrow clash together in the heterogeneous instrumentation, the 'stile barbaro' Béla Bartók's is emphasized with blasting bass power."

(Kölner Stadtanzeiger, October 1991)

"Modern repertoire continued the Hungarian lineage. The variability of fingerprints was the theme of Georg Hajdu's composition with the same title. A musical kit which allowed the pianist to build the composition from acoustic fragments and segments... Contrasting dynamic and sound effects went along with planned goal-orientedness. A work that—unlike many other modern piano pieces—didn't fail to exhibit individual expression."

(Westfälische Nachrichten, October 1997)

"At the end of the evening the listeners were absorbed by Georg Hajdu's 'Die Stimmen der Sirenen' [Voice of Sirens]. ... Along with the music of the saxophones, in many ways derived from jazz, synthesizer and saxophone sounds, as well as Morse code rhythms were played from tape, symbolizing the unfulfilled need of human communication."

(Kölner Stadtanzeiger, June 1986)

## Recordings

**Riots** • Ugly Culture. Missionare Neuer Musik. KMZ Musikverlag und Produktion.

**Der Sprung** • NUR/NICHT/NUR. Berslton 199 11 27

**Drei frühe Lieder** • Annette Kleine. MUSICOM 010308

**SLEEPLESSNESS** • Carin Levine. Flute Experience. Cantate • Musicaphon M 55712



## Works

### Orchestra

**Klangmoraste** (1990). 6'

- Version for chamber orchestra in 12-tone equal temperament. 2-2-2-2, 1-0-1-0, 2 percussion, piano, 2-1-1-0
- Version for chamber orchestra and electronics in 17-tone equal temperament. 2-2-2-2, 1-0-1-0, 2 percussion, 2 keyboards, 2-1-1-0, computer.

### Chamber Music

**Verzweigungen** - Sonata for violine and piano (1979-81). 15'

**Die Stimmen der Sirenen** for saxophone quartet and tape (1986/89). 18'

**Notorisch-Motorisch** for string quartet (1985-87). 16' (manuscript)

**Xylis und Phloë • Leibeslied** for double brass quintet (10 players) (1988/2000). 7'30"

**Spuren in der Kälte** for accordion, plucked instruments and electronics (1991/95). 7'

#### Riots

- Version for saxophone, electric guitar and double bass (1991/92). 11'30"
- Version for flute/clarinet, violin, cello/double bass, vibraphone and piano (1992/93). 11'30"

**Nacht** for string quartet (1993). 4'30"

### Piano

**Vier Charakterstücke** (1979/82). 4' (manuscript)

**LogaRhythmen** (1983). 4'30"

**Fingerprints** (1992-93). 9'

**Blue Marble** (2002). 4'

### Compositions for Voice

**Drei frühe Lieder** for (mezzo-)soprano and piano (1981-84). 4'

**Eine andere Sprache sprechen** for mezzo-soprano, harp and piano (1997). 8'30" (manuscript)

### Solo, also with Live Electronics

**SLEEPLESSNESS** for flute(s), narrator ad lib. and live electronics (1988/1997). 10'

**Re: Guitar** for guitar (1999). 8'

**Exit** for violin and live electronics (2001). 11'30"

### Compositions for Electronic Media

**Heptadecatonic Drops** for MIDI instruments and computer in 17-tone equal temperament (1989/90). 8' (Thürmchen Verlag)

**Two Cartoons** for MIDI instruments and computer in 17-tone equal temperament (1989/92). 7'

**Liebeseklärungen** for two player pianos and video projection (1999-) 1' 25"

**Quintet.net**, a quintet on the Internet (2000-).

### Music Theater

**Der Sprung**. Multi-media opera. Libretto: Thomas Brasch (1994-98). 90' (manuscript)

[On Exit]:

"The piece by Georg Hajdu made the strongest impression... The effect of his arrangement was fascinating... a music that jumps the audience."

(Westfälische Rundschau, April 2001)

[On 'Der Sprung']: "Each scenic moment is clearly defined in terms of its exact episodic content. The horizontally oriented plot has been constructed vertically (simultaneity) in order to make the drama of the heterogeneous events vivid and clear. This is achieved through the use of electronic music. But Hajdu's musical style, as indicated by his instrumentation, is meant to offer a cross-section of styles. Thus, each scenic moment has its own language of sounds. The 'water music' in the prolog, which deals with the dive from the diving board, uses specific sounds from a swimming pool, which are transformed and heightened by live electronic effects. The text is projected into this sound scape and becomes part of the transformation brought about by the sounds. The sensual result is a static, ornamental and fluctuating music."

(Eberhard Hüppe, MusikTexte 12/1999)

"With the opera 'Der Sprung' Georg Hajdu turns the conventions of opera upside down. The scenes appear static, dramatic effects were kept to a minimum; only the music propels the plot ahead. Yet that alone was clearly enough to portray an emotional state of madness. Hence, Hajdu's music is emotional, his gestures sometimes highly romantic... Music listeners that sporadically listen to new music once or twice a year should have no problems with comprehending 'Der Sprung.' Technically, the music is so well crafted that the listener is simply compelled along."

(Westfälische Nachrichten, October 1999)

## Awards

1996 Prize of the "Neue Akademie Braunschweig" synthesizer competition Honorable mention, Blaue Brücke Dresden 1995

Prize for algorithmic composition Callejón del Ruido, Guanajuato, Mexico, 1995

UC Berkeley Provost's Research Fund award 1993

UC Berkeley DeLorenzo prize 1992

DAAD Scholarship for studies in North America 1990-92

IBM Prize of the Ensemble Modern 1990