

Nikolaus Gerszewski

Composer and concert organizer for experimental music¹, currently lives in Hamburg and Budapest. He studied liberal arts at Hochschule für Bildende Künste (HfBK) Hamburg and Kunstakademie Düsseldorf in the 1980s. He was engaged in non-representational art², before he, as a consequence of a dematerialization process, switched to the medium of sound.

Since 2013 he has been teaching experimental sound production at the University of Fine Arts Budapest (MKE) and at the University of Sciences Pecs (PTE). The focus of his teaching is on graphic³ and verbal scores⁴, as media in the transitional area of visual, conceptual⁵ and acoustic art.

In 2004, at the age of forty, he decided to become a composer and began learning sheet music. When a friend introduced him to Cornelius Cardew's graphic score *Treatise*, he joined the ensemble *serve music*, with whom he worked on an interpretation of this work over the course of a year. In parallel, he developed his own graphic and symbolic notation.

In 2006, together with Milo Lohse, he founded the concert series *Forum Neue Musik* at Christianskirche in Hamburg, where in the following years he presented international greats of experimental music, including Peter Ablinger, Sven Åke Johansson, Keith Rowe, John Tilbury, Christian Wolff, Janos Négycs, Eugene Chadbourne, Frieder Butzmann, Alvin Curran, Phil Corner and Chris Newman.

Meanwhile, his own music is performed in Europe and the United States. In 2011, his ensemble work *Kodam Gobar* was awarded first prize at *Hamburger Klangwerkstage* and performed by *work in progress* Berlin.

In 2008 he introduced his own genre term *Ordinary Music*. He developed semi-improvisational musical concepts that can be performed by amateurs, sometimes even by children. However, the term *Ordinary Music* is not reserved solely for non-professional performances, but moreover refers to a music that can be classified neither as 'classical' nor as 'popular'; it is neither committed to a particular tradition nor produced for entertainment purposes, and yet it excludes no one.

Since 2014 he has been writing mainly microtonal music. While he used to work with chance generated material, he has recently been using more simple geometric principles or number sequences.

Since 2020 He has been a member of the composer collective *Frog Peak Music*. His piece *Sustain*, for solo vibraphone, was included in the anthology *Vibraphone Century* published by Smith Publications.

¹ Experimental music is a form of sound design that is independent of musical tradition, based on autonomous artistic procedural models.

² Non-representational art is art that breaks away from the principle of imitation and instead makes the creative act itself the object of observation.

³ A graphic score is an abstract graphic intended to serve as a formal template for a musical process.

⁴ A verbal score is the linguistic formulation of a musical process; whether in the form of concrete playing instructions, social rules of behavior, or poetic metaphors.

⁵ Conceptual art is the creation of imaginary objects mediated by a symbolic act.