

Trauma

Trauma was composed at the request of Radio Stuttgart during my Berlin stay. It was premiered on 23 April 1981 at Cassel and was performed by the Radio Stuttgart Choir conducted by Klaus Martin Ziegler. In 1985, after touring the Federal Republic, Trauma was also given at the Warsaw Autumn.

Trauma is a musical attempt to critically reveal Christianity's paradoxes ; on the one hand denouncing past cruelties and on the other conjuring up the hope of a better, more humane future. For Christianity, being intolerant and uncompromizing, has spread more hatred and bloodshed than peace. The degradation of woman to the role of prostitute or witch, and her ambiguous elevation in the Marian cult have influenced men's behaviour for centuries. Life after Death, lux aeterna, in exchange for suffering, repentance, or simply instant happiness on earth? These thoughts constitute the spiritual basis of the work, founded on readings of Ernest Bloch (Atheism in Christianity) and Karl Marx. It therefore consists in demystifying Christian obscurantism so as not to have to rely on Divine Providence, a passive state in which mankind expects nothing from itself and everything from Heaven. Thus mankind will succeed in fighting and overcoming life's contradictions. The work is made up of a series of collages with a sacred source on the one hand, (quotations of the Latin liturgy and Bible texts, Ave-Maria of St-Victor of Paris and of Josquin des Prez) and of a secular one on the other (Helmut Heissenbuttel : the future of Socialism, or else this jarring quotation by Wilhelm Raabe: "Oh God, give me my daily illusion!". This set of quotations constitutes an autonomous text, running parallel to the actual music, giving off a certain aura and creating a favourable climate in which to show up Christianity's ambiguity. Religion and society's connivance is crystallized in the accusation represented by the record of Katharina Lips' torture in Marburg in 1672.

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(Translation: Elisabeth Buzzard)