



Bonn, 31 August 2010

## Peter Ruzicka: „Composer and Artist in Residence“ at the Beethovenfest Bonn 2010

The motto of the Beethovenfest Bonn 2010 is “...Into the Open”. “...INS OFFENE...” (“...INTO THE OPEN...”) is also the title of a composition by Peter Ruzicka for 22 strings. This work by the Düsseldorf-born composer, conductor and cultural manager characterizes his compositional works as well as the intention of this year’s festival: in his works Ruzicka questions traditional forms of composing and playing music. The search for the answer is part of the composition. The Beethovenfest has made it its job to overcome conventions and break through boundaries. The Beethovenfest Bonn 2010 is devoting a **four-part portrait** to Peter Ruzicka, as the “composer and artist in residence”. The portrait is supported by Kunststiftung NRW.

Commissioned by the Beethovenfest Bonn 2010, Ruzicka has composed a **cello concerto**, whose world premiere with the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen he will conduct himself. “...**ÜBER DIE GRENZE...**” (“...ACROSS THE BORDER...”) is the name of the new work for cello and orchestra, the soloist will be Daniel Müller-Schott. The “discovering of New Music makes up an important part of my musical work. Especially in music of the 20th/21st centuries soloists are often expected to display entirely new playing techniques, which then open up new worlds of sound, something which also makes the hearing of known works into new experiences,” explained Müller-Schott in May 2009, talking about the significance of New Music for his repertoire. During the rehearsal of Ruzicka’s cello concerto he appreciated the opportunity of direct exchange with the composer. At the same concert in which his cello concerto will receive its world premiere Ruzicka will also conduct Beethoven’s String Quartet no. 11 op. 95 in the arrangement for string orchestra by Gustav Mahler as well as the symphony in E flat major by Beethoven’s contemporary Anton Eberl (15 Sept.).

Peter Ruzicka has a great affinity to **Gustav Mahler**. In his early works in the late 1960s he was mainly influenced by Henze, Ligeti and Stockhausen; later Mahler and Webern were particular reference points for him. For that reason Peter Ruzicka’s second concert at the Beethovenfest Bonn 2010 also includes a Beethoven work arranged by Gustav Mahler. Gustav Mahler re-orchestrated Beethoven’s Ninth between 1895 and 1900 for his own concert use. The Ninth is maybe Beethoven’s most utopian work; a critic said about its first performance that Beethoven had

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“opened up a new world” with his music. And so this symphony, along with Ruzicka’s „...INS OFFENE...“ for 22 strings, are the key works of this year’s festival. Both compositions will be conducted by Ruzicka in a concert given by the Staatskapelle Weimar. In addition the Musikverein Düsseldorf and the four soloists Nadine Lehner, soprano, Anne-Carolyn Schlüter, contralto, Christian Elsner, tenor, and Ralf Lukas, bass, will also take part in the performance of Beethoven’s Ninth (30 Sept). “My composition is based on the idea of an increasingly complex, gradually moving flood of sound that collapses in on itself at the moment of the highest density. The music comes “into the open”, seems to hark back to its own past. Then: traces of the earlier sounds, like an echo, time standing still. Almost nothing. Circling. Silence,” thus Ruzicka’s description of his work. The title, „...INS OFFENE...“, is taken from the beginning of Friedrich Hölderlin’s elegy “Der Gang aufs Land”, in which the poet invites us to set off towards a place in the future in which convention can be overcome.

Friedrich Hölderlin’s work moved Ruzicka to write many compositions, the highlight of which may be his second opera “**Hölderlin**”, which had its world premiere in Berlin in 2008. Hölderlin’s thinking has increasingly occupied Ruzicka since 2002, before which he mainly focused on the poet Paul Celan, which led to the composition of his first opera “**Celan**”, which had its world premiere in Dresden in 2001. The poets Celan and Hölderlin have also influenced Ruzicka’s **string quartet** compositions. He composed the first work of this genre in 1970, the last for the time being in 2008. Also dating back to 1970 is the string quartet no. 2, called „...FRAGMENT...“, five epigrams for string quartet. Ruzicka wrote it as a requiem for Paul Celan. The fragmented nature characterizes Peter Ruzicka’s compositions and can also be found in his string quartet no. 6. “ERINNERUNG UND VERGESSEN” (“MEMORY AND FORGETTING”) is the name Ruzicka gave it, also adding a soprano to the quartet. That part is followed by text fragments from Hölderlin’s song “Mnemosyne”, which the composer describes as a “dark evocation of transience and eternity: ‘remembering’, not the overcoming, but the ‘consciousness of finiteness’”. Ruzicka dedicated his string quartet no. 6 to the Minguet Quartett, who will perform it together with the soprano Mojca Erdmann at the Beethovenfest Bonn. For their recording of Peter Ruzicka’s complete string quartets, the Minguet Quartett were awarded the 2010 Echo Klassik prize in the category Chamber Music Recording of the Year (20th/21st centuries) Strings. Between the string quartets by Ruzicka the Minguet Quartett will play Schumann’s string quartet in A major op. 41/3 in the Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, in order to then perform together with Mojca Erdmann his six songs for one voice and piano op. 107 in the transcription for soprano and string quartet by Aribert Reimann (19 Sept.). Ruzicka, like many other composers of the post-1950 musical avant-garde, confronted Schumann; they all discovered utopian potential in his music.

During a **song** recital Hölderlin texts form the framework: “...UND MÖCHTET IHR AN MICH DIE HÄNDE LEGEN...” is the name of the Five Fragments by Hölderlin for baritone and piano which Ruzicka composed in 2006. Counterpoint and complement to the Hölderlin cycle, so to speak, are the “Acht Gesänge nach Fragmenten von Nietzsche” (“eight songs after fragments by Nietzsche”), composed between 1993

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and 2007. In addition to these cycles there will be two further songs based on words by Eduard Mörike under the title “LEBEN UND TOD” (“LIFE AND DEATH”), which were composed in 2009. In the further programme the baritone Dietrich Henschel and the pianist Michael Schäfer will perform Hanns Eisler’s Six Hölderlin Fragments for Voice and Piano, which are also based on Hölderlin texts, as well as “Liederkreis” by Robert Schumann based on words by Joseph von Eichendorff op. 39 (18 Sept.).

Together with Jan Müller-Wieland, Peter Ruzicka will discuss “Into the Open – Inside Views of Two Composers” with Dr Ulrich Mosch at the symposium of the Beethovenfest Bonn on 17 September, where the festival motto “Utopia and Freedom in Music” will come under the spotlight. The film series accompanying “Look at Beethoven 2010”, will include the portrait by Klaus Voswinkel “Ins Dunkle, ins Offene. Der Komponist Peter Ruzicka” [“Into the Dark, Into the Open: the Composer Peter Ruzicka”].

Peter Ruzicka was born in Düsseldorf on 3 July 1948. After an instrumental and theoretical training in piano, oboe and compositional theory at the Hamburg Conservatory, he took compositional studies under Hans Werner Henze and Hans Otte. He studied law and musicology in Munich, Hamburg and Berlin and graduated in 1977 with an interdisciplinary dissertation on the “eternal copyright and personal privacy laws”. The composer is a member of the Bayerische Akademie der Schönen Künste and of the Freie Akademie der Künste Hamburg. From 1979 to 1987 Peter Ruzicka was the director of the Radio-Symphonie-Orchester Berlin and from 1988 to 1997 the director of the Staatsoper Hamburg and of the Hamburger Philharmoniker. In 1996 he took over as the artistic director of Munich’s Biennale, succeeding Hans Werner Henze. It is a position he still holds today. Between 2002 and 2006 he took over the artistic direction of the Salzburg Festival.

Since 1990 Peter Ruzicka has been a professor at the Hochschule für Musik and Theater Hamburg. He has won several prizes and awards for his compositions, including the UNESCO prize in the “International Rostrum of Composers” and the Louis Spohr Music Prize.

As a conductor Peter Ruzicka has conducted almost all the well-known orchestras in Europe as well as the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, the Orchestre symphonique de Montreal, the Yomiuri Symphony Orchestra Tokyo and the China Philharmonic Orchestra.

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