

SAMSTAG (SATURDAY) – Karlheinz Stockhausen’s World Theatre

(Translation by Jayne Obst of the transcription of the spoken text in the WDR film about SAMSTAG aus LICHT [SATURDAY from LIGHT], produced in 1984.)

Stockhausen: This union – in certain moments – of placing oneself right within God, the Spirit of the universe, of all universes, when the purpose is to completely unleash oneself from one's task as a human and from this life: those are the most important moments. I can easily imagine that I could compose music without using the means of the traditional European orchestra. Therefore, if most of a new work does not put us in a state of... of surprise and of being moved – even what one might call fear, or the inability to now classify it – if all of this is not there, then it is dead, and one doesn't need to make any more new music.

Speaker: The one who seems to be floating through the mist, is neither sorcerer nor prophet, neither fairy tale prince nor dictator: It is the main character of an opera, *Lucifer* the bearer of light. Milan in May: Along with the pre-summer sun, visitors from all over the world have arrived, to join the uncountable pigeons, and want to see the landmark of the cathedral and the architectural wonders between Gothic, Baroque and Napoleon Bonaparte, study exclusive fashion or sip an espresso under the glass domed roof of the Galleria, the largest covered shopping street in the world, or stand at the Leonardo da Vinci monument and look over to the temple of the great voices and genius conductors, to the *Teatro alla Scala*. But the world-famous opera house has moved house recently, into a hall, which is at best well known among architectural experts, the *Palazzo dello Sport*. Where normally basketball games or bicycle races are held, *Lucifer* now reigns. The *Scala* was forced to be inventive out of necessity. Because the stage would have been much too small in its theatre, it rented the sport palace, in order to stage the world première of a

new part of a work, which, in its complexity, certainly will be considered as one of the most extensive, probably also one of the most important, perhaps even as one of the most consequential events in the history of modern opera, although at first glance, it resembles more a scenic concert than an opera, for example in this duet for bass and piano. The author of this spectacle with the title LICHT (LIGHT) is Karlheinz Stockhausen: born in 1928 near Cologne, residing in the nearby Bergisches Land today, thus a “Rheinländer”. However, he is a musical cosmopolitan, who has had perhaps the greatest influence on the development of western music after 1950. Initially a pupil of Frank Martin at the Cologne Conservatory of Music, he then studied under Olivier Messiaen and Darius Milhaud in Paris, and worked intensively with so-called “musique concrète”. Already his first compositions caused a sensation. As serial and point-music, they attempted to subject all elements of sound, e.g. not only pitch and duration, but also timbre, dynamics and articulation, to mathematical laws. Since the beginning of the 1950’s, he taught at the Darmstadt “Ferienkurse” (summer courses), and also worked at the Cologne Studio for Electronic Music. The GESANG DER JÜNGLINGE (SONG OF THE YOUTHS) was a pioneer work. In 1958, his GRUPPEN (GROUPS) *for 3 orchestras* was world première in the halls of the Cologne Fair and was the first climax of a kind of music in which the sound sources are distributed all over the performance area. As the conductor of his own works, the 30-year old Stockhausen already is esteemed around the world. In the mid-1960’s, he studied far-eastern art and religion. At the World Fair in Osaka, performances of his music 5 1/2 hours daily, six months long, for a total of almost one million listeners.

Interviewer: In the past there have been phases in your work, in which your music has had a stronger objective character, so to speak, than it has today, if I see that correctly.

Stockhausen: That is not correct. I have always felt music, with each new work, primarily as a vision, and I have only been interested in a new piece, if I have heard and seen something –

inwardly – that seemed completely unfamiliar, and fascinating for me, and then a mental process of construction followed, and that is exactly the same today. This mental process of construction is a process of adapting my imagination as flawlessly as possible, or one could also say the reduction of my imagination to the **means**, to the instrumental **world**, that now exists, which, for the most part, I must then even completely unexpectedly expand, in order to somehow come closer to what I imagine. The entire electronic music that I have composed is nothing but the attempt to realise sound-worlds in the environment of traditional mechanical instruments, that come closer to these inner sound visions, and which then again fascinated me.

Speaker: Having to expand the existing sound possibilities, a mysterious inner motivation to invent something that does not yet exist, but has been heard by the inner ear. This is the basic situation of the composer, Karlheinz Stockhausen, also in the conception of this new piece, that, among other things, includes a skeleton dance with the piccolo as the solo instrument.¹ The orchestra is an instrumental ensemble that is very popular in America and which plays all kinds of music: from the entertainment at football games and public election events, to avant-garde chamber music, the *Symphony Band*. This particular orchestra comes from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. For his opera, Stockhausen divided it into ten groups, each with its own timbre and its own characteristic rhythms.

The dancing Death, a mystical vision as a scenic expression of a musical phenomenon. The inward necessity of a renewal of sound. In addition, one must understand Stockhausen's second basic prerequisite: his religious conviction that by far surpasses the Christian-occidental understanding of God.

Stockhausen: Originally, I always had a single vision of GOD, of a godly being, while praying several times a day, and very often in short fervent prayers – independent of where it was, ever

¹ Refers to the 3rd scene, LUZIFERs TANZ (LUCIFER'S DANCE), of **SAMSTAG aus LICHT** (SATURDAY from LIGHT)

since I became conscious as a small child. And I have sometimes described it, that I saw myself on ... on a step of an endless staircase, and there was a completely white light, into which I couldn't look, and I knew, GOD is there, and I was not in GOD, in the body – as an atom in a large body, the feeling that I now always have for example when I feel that I have integrated myself correctly, then I feel that am suddenly inside, that I myself am a small part, a tiny particle of GOD. Then, that suggested itself parallel to and also developed with my awareness of my guardian angel, who stands directly behind me and who immediately functions when I say: “*You take over. Please do this. I cannot.*”

This hierarchy was further supplemented in 1977 by the figure of MICHAEL, of whom I had not been aware until then. It came gradually, and it joined in with the traditional world of pictures and thoughts surrounding Christ, an historical figure, with *Michael*, the creator of our local universe, and that both of them are integrated with each other and have become one for me now, that is, the *figure of Christ* was an emanation of *Michael*. Because *Michael* placed himself into one of the lowest creatures of his universe, in order to deliver the message how one can escape *Lucifer's* rebellion by himself. Sometimes, in particular moments, *Michael* is now my partner, and I speak to him personally.

This union – in certain moments – of placing oneself right within God, the Spirit of the universe, of all universes, when the purpose is to completely unleash oneself from ones task as a human and from this life: those are the most important moments.

Speaker: God, the Spirit of our universe as **white light** makes the title of the complete new work comprehensible: LICHT (LIGHT), a world theatre, a mysterious play about human life and its main question: “*What is the purpose of existence in this universe?*”

A play in seven parts, named after the seven days of the week. Each of these days, according to its name, is associated with particular planets and the spiritual powers connected with them. The Moon-Day, the Mars-Day, the Mercury- or Wotan's Day, the Donar- or Jupiter-

Day, the Day of Freia and Venus, Saturday as Saturn-Day or *Lucifer*-Day, Sunday as the Sun-Day.

Three main characters are present throughout the cycle:

First, MICHAEL, Mikael – the face of God, as he is called in the earliest sources – the creator of our local universe, also of our Milky Way galaxy. In the opera, he is partly danced, partly sung or personified by a trumpeter. The extremely virtuoso trumpet part is played by Stockhausen's son, Markus.

Michael voices his own understanding of his role in a phase of the opera segment DONNERSTAG (THURSDAY), when he sings: “*I became a human to see myself and God the father as a human vision, to bring celestial music to humans and human music to the celestial beings, so that Man may listen to God and God may hear his children*”.

The **second main character**: EVA (EVE), the spirit who always cares for the improvement of the physical conditions of the living beings on the inhabited planets. She is sung, danced or played (usually on the basset-horn, or as here – in a transformation – on the flute).

The **third character**: LUZIFER (LUCIFER). *Lucifer* is played by a trombonist or danced (as here) by a dancer on stilts, and sung by a bass or baritone singer, until now, by Matthias Hölle.

The seven stations of the world theatre, the seven operas of the LICHT-cycle, will show: MONTAG (MONDAY), the *Eve*-day, is the day of re-birth of a new mankind. On DIENSTAG (TUESDAY), *Lucifer* and *Michael* will carry out an intellectual conflict. On MITTWOCH (WEDNESDAY), the three search for a world in which everyone understands each other. DONNERSTAG (THURSDAY), world première three years ago, showed how *Michael* became a human being and his travels around the Earth. On FREITAG (FRIDAY), *Lucifer* will try to convince *Eva* to join his rebellion. After SAMSTAG, the *Lucifer*-day, SONNTAG (SUNDAY) will make the rebirth of man possible through the mystical union of *Michael* and *Eva*.

Stockhausen: Lucifer as the angel of light is often portrayed in a very ugly way. In my imagination (and in many pictures that I have had on my desk for years, which friends have sent me), *Lucifer* looks like an angel of light, like a wonderful being. Even when he is painted as a human figure, he is one of the most beautiful that one can find among the portrayals of the great artists. *Lucifer* called out a rebellion, demanded self-government of the planets, self-administration and secession from the central administration of the universe. And *Lucifer* openly claimed in his resolutions, that the idea of a God-Father, of a single and one spirit of the universe, is a phantom, because no one has ever seen this Father, and the children of paradise had invented this concept to fool the living beings: this is therefore *Lucifer's* rebellious idea.

Speaker: And the opera SAMSTAG, that was world-premiered in Milan in Luca Ronconi's staging, concentrates once again in a very subtle way on this light-bearer and the consequences of his rebellion.

In the first scene *Lucifer* dreams of a new kind of music. *Lucifer* would like to have a new piano piece, so he calls a pianist up from the depths, *Majella*, Karlheinz Stockhausen's daughter. She is to play him a piece, as he says, in "five time-layers of increasing compression of figures..., extensions and pauses to nullify time." So, *Lucifer* takes a seat on floating chair, listens to and enjoys the music he dreams, a music that is no longer related to humans, but rather conjures the elements.

What *Lucifer* hears here is, however, an independent concert piece, KLAVIERSTÜCK XIII, that easily fits into the series of existing twelve piano pieces Karlheinz Stockhausen has already composed. A piece that demands all modern pianistic virtuosity as well as quite a few distortion techniques. By shooting off little rockets at hated mankind, *Lucifer's* ideology is again realised.

Whether the unfamiliar playing methods or the alien sounds, *Lucifer* enjoys them, defends himself, lets himself be bewitched, slowly dies. Can *Lucifer* die, does he really die?

Majella has fulfilled her task, and so she returns to the unknown depths, from which her master had called her. However, and this becomes the second scene of the opera, a requiem is chanted for *Lucifer* by *Eva*, who has slipped into the figure of a flute-playing cat, played by the Dutch virtuoso Kathinka Pasveer, after whom this scene was also named, KATHINKAs GESANG (KATHINKA'S CHANT).

With her chant, *Kathinka* protects the souls of the dead from temptations and leads them to clear consciousness. She is accompanied by six percussionists, the mortal senses, who react to KATHINKAs GESANG with their self-made magic instruments. This chant has 24 stages. The elements are indicated on a mandala disc like the numbers on a clock. When *Kathinka* has fulfilled her task, she must, like *Majella*, return to the depths. She disappears down into a dark grave in the shape of a grand piano.

But is she even able to chant a requiem for *Lucifer*? Can she lead his soul to an even clearer consciousness? In the depth of the grave, the answer is waiting for *Kathinka*, and it is shocking. *Lucifer* is alive, rises up out of the grave, amused and ridiculing. Was he not really dead? Has he risen from the dead? Reborn? Karlheinz Stockhausen's philosophy about human existence goes beyond our familiar views and beliefs, but refers to respectable witnesses between Plato and Sri Aurobindo.

Stockhausen: Yes, I don't have any particular thoughts of my own on that – or, none at all, but very much has been written, told, passed on by people who tell how one incarnates into a human body and how one goes through his own school as a human being in a particular milieu; how one chooses a certain activity, or several, for this very short time, and how one then prepares for the departure from the body. What one can do to correctly prepare for this moment of farewell and new beginning, and that one then, for a certain amount of time determined by one's own will and behaviour, may either remain in a corporeal form – indescribable by our human imagination – as a spiritual being, or completely abandons the idea of needing a body defined by space and time.

Thus, this passage of life has been, I must say, the central purpose of my life from the first day of my conscious life. As soon as I was able to write, I was only interested in writing about what I think about birth and death. Also the first poems that I wrote were only about that, and the first stories and a novel entitled “*Geburt im Tod*” (“Birth in Death”). That is the most fascinating, because it is the most mysterious.

Speaker: Lucifer, that is the light angel and rebellious spirit, lives on, and now he, who already dreamt his own music in the first scene, will fight against the music of humans in the third scene, proclaiming his message: “*If you, Man, have never learned from LUCIFER how the spirit of contradiction and independence distorts the expression of the face, . . . you cannot – in harmony – turn your countenance to the LIGHT*”, as we hear later on. But Stockhausen waits until the end of the scene for the musical continuation of this luciferian credo, because first, the distortion of the facial expression is to be shown, in LUZIFERs TANZ (LUCIFER’s DANCE). A mixture of pantomime and sacred ballet, musically performed in a 19-part orchestra concerto that *Lucifer* tries to direct, but also to disturb.

One orchestra group plays against another, and with that, timbre against timbre, rhythm against rhythm. In each group, the musicians seem to fight against each other, dancing to *Lucifer’s* hand signals: nose against cheek, lip against nose, tongue against lip, chin against tongue.

But *Lucifer’s* dislike for human music has deeper reasons.

Stockhausen: Lucifer is (as he says) against ascension through death, and that is *Lucifer’s* central theme as *Michael’s* antagonist. *Michael*, who stands for the process of learning and for the human as he is, and who has endless love for the sick and imperfect human, who knows so much more about what he could do and how much better he could be than he is, and who therefore sometimes also suffers under his imperfection. *Michael* has compassion for this human, and this

is where the connection to Christian tradition originates. While *Lucifer* finds it disgusting that something like this was created at all, like these (as he says) half animal, half angel creatures, which are dualistically torn back and forth between aspirations and abilities – between dreams and life – forced to live in imperfection, above all in physical illness. And then there is *Eve*, the mediator who wants to try to improve the physical being, so that humans are not ill, living beings are no longer ill, but can do exactly whatever corresponds to their intelligence and the abilities of their souls. Again, on SAMSTAG, *Lucifer* does not want human music; he says it is banal, it is primitive.

Speaker: Michael the trumpeter who loves humans also values human music, so he shows his solidarity by playing a virtuoso solo cadenza with the human orchestra. *Michael* is able to fend off *Lucifer's* first attempt to divert his sympathy with the humans and their music, but *Lucifer* is tricky, and the stilted dancer overruns the trumpeter.

The different rhythms of the orchestra seem to confuse *Michael*. He tumbles and in the end, it is easy for *Lucifer* to ridicule how naive *Michael* is, to gradually force him back and chase him out of the hall. Is *Lucifer* the great winner?

SONNTAG, the last opera of the seven-part cycle, will reveal the answer, even if this millennium will almost be over by then.

In any case, Karlheinz Stockhausen knows the end, as it has long since been compositionally conceived. As in all scenes, it is contained in the nuclear cell from which the entire opera grew: the so-called super formula. It consists of the basic tone material in three lines for the three main characters. From its course, the composer derives all details. Thus, the tones are distributed over the seven days of the week and their operas, and become the nuclear tones, from which the formulae of the days and the characters are formed.

In working out the triple formula, the structures for each scene result, e.g. on SAMSTAG for LUZIFERs TRAUM (LUCIFER'S DREAM), REQUIEM and TANZ (DANCE), as well as a so-

called nuclear formula. The *Lucifer*-formula enlarged more than 22 times, became, for example, the nuclear formula for KATHINKAs GESANG. The elements correspond to the figurations prescribed on the mandalas.

In Station 18, for example, the formula contains groups of rhythmic periods. In the fully composed chant, the phase becomes an exercise for the soul in listening to timbres and pitch changes in every rhythm. KATHINKAs GESANG is not being performed in the opera SAMSTAG from LICHT for the first time. Already a half year before the staged world première it was performed in a concert version at the *Donaueschinger Musiktagen (Donaueschingen Musik Days)*.

This method of composing and performing single parts first and then putting them in their final context later is not at all new. In the medieval and baroque periods it was completely normal. In the LICHT cycle this practice has been upgraded to a principle, and the sound setting as well as the gestures or scenic contents can change between the individual stages of performance.

Stockhausen: For example during the second scene with the percussionists I first had the idea of a nocturnal situation, in which one can hardly see anything, in which one hears pulses, electric pulse signals in the night. Almost like ... animal cries that go back and forth between these six points, whereby nothing can be seen. It wasn't until later that I had the idea that there are also these black figures that also produce other tones. The pulses remained. They are now produced by the whistles that the figures hold in their mouths, produced mechanically, making such strange sounds that then continue on throughout the scene. Each one has a whistle, and other instruments are added. Thus, what you say is true: there are different versions that I worked out for concert performances; whereby the second scene KATHINKAs GESANG, for example, can also be played by solo flute and not only by flute and six percussionists. Or, this year in Paris I will be producing the rest of a version of this second scene which I began last year for flute and

electronic music. In it, six channels with electronically produced sounds replace the six percussionists, and these sounds are completely different.

Speaker: Only LUZIFERs TANZ (LUCIFER'S DANCE) was also musically new at the world première of SAMSTAG, except for a sonic greeting for the audience. The structure of this section had been known and determined from the beginning because of its derivation from the formula, but its musical realisation was actually determined much later, namely when the *Symphony Band* from Michigan gave Stockhausen a commission for a work.

Stockhausen: In other words, the instrumentation (as it is traditionally called) is actually an interpretation that I make on the spot. It even depends on the commission. I would never have thought of using a *symphony band* for this particular scene if it hadn't been for this commission. But in the first scene, for example, where the basic idea was that *Lucifer* dreams a 13th Piano Piece, a piano is mandatory. Do you understand?

Speaker: But this scene also existed as a composition already. It was commissioned for the Festival for Contemporary Music in Metz and world premièred there by the same interpreters in concert two and a half years before the staged performance. However, its form, its five time layers and all musical large-scale structures, the various details, the parameters, as specialists say, were all determined by the formula. Similar to the way that characteristics or body shapes of a living being are pre-determined by a gene or the chromosomes.

Also the scene LUZIFERs ABSCHIED (LUCIFER'S FAREWELL), with which the opera SAMSTAG aus LICHT closes, was world premièred independently of the opera. In August of 1982, one and a half years before the opera première, these monks moved into the *San Ruffino* Cathedral in Assisi, Italy, to sing the music composed to Saint Francis' LODI DELLE VIRTÚ,

hymn to the virtues, on the occasion of his 800th birthday celebrations. In the *Palazzo dello Sport* in Milan, the monks psalmodize in an imaginary, magical temple surrounding the audience.

“*O Queen Wisdom, the Lord save you with your sister, the pure Simplicity*” the monks sing.

There are 39 of them, three times 13, which was a holy number for Stockhausen. And in the same way, in 13 periods, they praise the other virtues of the life that is not naive, but oriented towards other, higher goals: poverty and humility, love and obedience.

The mystical character of the monotony of their hymns seems to be suggestive to the brothers themselves: they also gradually arrive in a trance, in rapture, ecstasy.

LUZIFERs ABSCHIED is the name of this fourth and last scene of the opera, but *Lucifer* doesn't even appear in it. Is he afraid of the holy men and their naive virtuousness? He is only present musically, in staccato chords of an electric organ, and from the distance as trombone chords sounding from up high, in which the changing chord accents make up the Lucifer melody.

Thus, the monks proceed, fortified, out into their simple life. For them, the text says, “*holy Poverty confounds all the preoccupations of this world.*” They can further engage themselves in the care of this world, for example in environmental protection, by planting trees and allowing animals the amount of freedom they require. Whatever can be performed in advance without opera-scenery, will retain its musical independence afterwards. LUZIFERs ABSCHIED has been in fact performed several times in concert since then, as it was here in the Cologne church *Groß St. Martin*, where the architecture of the former Benedictine Monastery from the late 12th century lends the sound mysticism a special effect.

This method of composing using the principle of building blocks with extensive autonomy of the single sections certainly has its advantages in terms of the work involved, as well in a financial sense. In addition, it offers more performance possibilities for New Music and guarantees the optimum musical interpretation. Can Karlheinz Stockhausen imagine that this

principle could become an innovation for him as well as for the future, for the composition as well as for the reproduction in general?

Stockhausen: Yes, but with the modification that always the same construction material is respected and that I just already know the large proportions for the whole work LICHT. If I then receive a commission for a particular ensemble, I definitely know whether or not I can accept it, because it fits into my plan. The German Chorus Contest is a current example. I was asked if I would compose a piece for choir that a hundred choirs in Germany could sing, thus in the respective difficulty. I said that this would fit into my plans very well, because in MONTAG there is a scene called BOTSCHAFT (MESSAGE); that will be a very special work for choir; it wouldn't have occurred to me if I had written a piece for choir without this stimulus.

Speaker: It goes beyond his certain priest-like charisma, behind which we perhaps suspect blind trust, or also deep faith, shamanism or the authority of a genius' fantasy. Over and above this mixture of self-confident prophecy and optimistic cheerfulness, Karlheinz Stockhausen occasionally risks a socially critical element. Just as *Lucifer* leaves the stage in his triumphant manner, something is brewing up amongst the orchestra musicians that is realistic and resembles our mentality of wage agreements and of serving only according to rules and regulations.

The musicians go on strike, don't want to continue playing (*"weilerspielen"*), because they say they have long since worked beyond their working hours (*"ihre Dienstzeit hätten sie längst überschritten"*). But the composer argues that there are only a few more bars to play, and besides, they had begun much too late because of their own lack of discipline. "It doesn't matter", the musicians say, "we want overtime" (*"Egal, wir wollen ein Überstundengeld"*), and legally, they are right. The manager of the theatre is called, but he has no money (*"hat kein Geld"*) and is not willing to pay. A marginal episode, but for insiders fraught with meaning.

Behind this serious but also grotesque scene, Stockhausen recognizes a more general, ethical problem.

Stockhausen: It is an age-old tradition that the law stands on the one side – and it is considered the Good by those who keep the laws (whether churches, religions or lawyers) – and the one who destroys the law or any forms is considered evil. But that is actually the question, because I have constantly experienced moments during the course of this work when I say to myself: “*Yes, Lucifer is actually right; it is really miserable the way people work.*” Simply yielding to a stiff form until it no longer moves leads to crystallisation that keeps life from continuing to develop. Does one define even the destruction of a whole universe or of part of the cosmos, or the destruction of a planet as something evil?

Which *Lucifer* would perhaps have preferred in order to arrive at pure figures of light, pure existence of light, the white light, as the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* describes it. That is the question. For some, it is even the good.

Speaker: Thus, one of the quietest and least noticeable moments in LUZIFERs REQUIEM, the *Exchange of the Senses*, is perhaps the most morally challenging.

Just as *Kathinka* takes the symbols from the mortal senses and exchanges them, thus producing new qualities, we must, as Karlheinz Stockhausen tells us, transform into new, more humane humans.

Stockhausen: These are processes that are very important to me. Destruction and education have become musical themes because of this world theme, if you like, because of this life theme. For me, death has been an unbelievably important moment for the past seven years. I am now at the end of the [7 year period designated as the] house of death. I will turn 56 this year, and then a brand new phase of life begins. Then I am truly one with death and finished with it and past it.

The last three years only had to do with the theme of death and resurrection: KATHINKAs GESANG, the 24 exercises of the soul **after** the death of the body. How can I repel attractive visions – or visions that are either **attractive** because of their beauty, perfection or their gruesomeness? By concentration, by listening to music, to musically constructive processes. That is the theme of the second scene.

Speaker: Here, at the very latest, Karlheinz Stockhausen entered the area of Utopia. Neither our musical educational institutions nor our social state wealth system seem to have been able to offer even a small chance of this kind of world improvement through music, through music theatre. Neither our progressive thinking nor our exaggerated, demanding mentality will be so easily irritated by the tender sounds of magic percussion. Doesn't that disillusion a composer who is imbedded in all his necessary idealism?

Stockhausen: In any case, for me it would be pointless to continue making music if I didn't hope to produce in each piece, even in each part of a composition, also sound effects and forms, figures, form effects, figure effects that also make possible what you are missing. That one sometimes feels goose-bumps and does not simply stand above it all, judging: "*Yes, it is all familiar to me; this is very intelligently done, this is less so, this is a bit naive, and this comes from here, that comes from there.*" Something like that is awful: then art is dead, dead as a doornail. If most of a new work is not able to surprise or move us, or even to frighten us, i.e. renders us unable to now classify it; if all that is not awakened, then it is dead; then one no longer needs to make any more new music.

Speaker: For a long time there has been no question that Karlheinz Stockhausen gave the impulses for a new development of music in almost all of his works. Undoubtedly, the parts of the LICHT cycle composed so far have supplied new criteria of organisation for this abstract art,

by the fact that their musical conception is based on a basic formula. It is also clear that the genre of opera in its consistent return to autonomous musical structures poses an extremely strong counter-weight to the so-called literature opera.

However, we may and must sceptically ask: is it sufficient to drape musically self-sufficient sections with a scenic concept, in order to make a unit of plot, a real organism, music theatre out of them? Is LICHT truly an opera?

Stockhausen: As soon as I made contact with reality, I discovered that actually only opera houses can perform it, and all the professionals told me: “*Why don't you just call it an opera, then one knows that it traditionally belongs in the opera, in the opera house, and then you will receive all the necessary technical and musical help.*” I am now even satisfied that this term receives a totally new meaning as the continuation of a tradition of music theatre in Europe. By choosing this place, by the disposition of the organisation of time, by this theme, by the collaboration with other disciplines. Thus, later it will become evident that opera in Europe took a different turn because of LICHT.

Speaker: “*Salve Satanelli !*” (“*Greetings, you little children of Satan !*”) sings *Kathinka*, and she means us, the audience: “*Greetings to you, who learned from Lucifer that only when the spirit of contradiction and independence have been conquered, does God let us see the light, the white light.*”

The question will remain whether we are ready for this lesson, whether we are able to learn.

Karlheinz Stockhausen, the prophet of this new knowledge of God, knows: “*If you have tried out your ten-part face in all dissonances, grimace rhythms, it will decay, empty and hollow, before it resurrects on SUNDAY in the realm of souls, invisible to human eyes.*”