

Modernism in Color: Dietrich Erdmann's Emphasis on Tone Color or on anti-avant-garde

Introduction

The German composer Dietrich Erdmann (born 1917) is one of the most important advocates of tone color compositions that specifically limit the instrumentation to traditional (acoustic) instruments. Hereby, his compositional approach is rather "traditional" in the sense of "anti-avant-garde". However, his success within the last two decades has given him much support by colleagues as well as by the audience, which — in turn -- triggered the interest of musicologists and music theorists. This paper will provide biographical information and a stylistic assessment of Dietrich Erdmann's music in general — the music of a composer who is an outspoken opponent of the avant-garde. The paper will also discuss Erdmann's re-interpretation of traditional principles of compositions to achieve a modern music style with rich tone colors and unusual instrumentations. Analytical observations of his solo concertos will be summarized.

Biographical Notes on Dietrich Erdmann

Erdmann's interest in "color" in general goes back to his childhood, strongly influenced by his highly artistically-talented half-brother Walter Macke, the son of the painter August Macke. Growing up in the environments of fine arts as well as of music, Erdmann studied cello with Paul Herrmann and music theory and composition with Paul Hindemith (1931), Ernst-Lothar von Knorr (1932) and Harald Genzmer (1933). During his college years at the Berlin Musikhochschule [conservatory] between 1934 and 1938, he gained insights into different areas of orchestration while studying with Kurt Thomas (choral conducting and composition) and Walter Gmeindl (orchestral conducting). He completed his studies with an artist diploma in choral conducting and the "private-music-teacher exam" in composition. Already during those years, he emerged as a strong supporter of contemporary music as the founder of the "Arbeitskreis für Neue Musik" [Focus Group New Music] in 1935. Shortly after Erdmann was drafted to the army, his father, the well-known social democrat Lothar Erdmann, was murdered in the concentration camp Sachsenhausen. This event became not only very important for his political consciousness, but also for his believe that art and music should develop beyond (and not support) political agendas. This seems important also with regard to his position against the avant-garde, because most developments in avant-garde are politically motivated. During his military years (1938-1945) Erdmann — who resorted to a ruse — received two "vacations" for composition studies with Paul Höffer; he completed these studies with a final exam in 1941.

After the end of the war (and after being held as prisoner of war), Dietrich Erdmann taught music at the Berlin Humboldt-Oberschule [high school] between 1945 and 1948, and starting in 1947 at the Pädagogische Hochschule [Pedagogical University] in Berlin. At the latter institution, he became the director of the music department (1949), associate professor (1954) and full professor (1968). In 1970, he became Prorektor [vice-president] of the university.

Already in 1963, he had founded the "Studio für Neue Musik" [Studio for New Music]. In 1972, he founded the "Arbeitskreis für Kammermusik" [Focus Group Chamber Music] in cooperation with the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). By order of the German government, Erdmann traveled several times to South America (1965-67) to teach music courses and give concerts. Since his retirement in 1982, he traveled to concerts of his music in the Soviet Union (1989) and in the United States (1994).

Dietrich Erdmann received many awards, among others the Bundesverdienstkreuz (1987), the Johann-Wenzel-Stamitz prize (1988), the Humboldt Plaketten [Humboldt Badges] (1998) and the Silesian Culture Prize (2002). His life and work was honored with two Festschriften (Burde 1987, Krause-Pichler / Schüler 1997).

Overview of the Style of Dietrich Erdmann's Music

Dietrich Erdmann was influenced by New Objectivity, Neo-Baroque and Neo-Classicism. Aside the many musical fashions since the 1920s, and aside the many compositional techniques of the avant-garde, he

developed a modern music style with rich tone colors and unusual instrumentations (though with traditional instruments). Already his early compositions — like his *Sechs kleine Klavierstücke* [6 little Piano Pieces] (1933) — show stylistic unity and musical competence as well as individual solutions with regard to musical form. In the middle of the 1960s, he settled on a prose-like musical syntax with the emancipation of dissonances (e.g., in his *Sonate* for oboe and piano, 1965).

Until the end of the 1940s, Erdmann's work was dominated by chamber music, but the cantata *Der Maien* [The May] for soprano, choir, flute, and string quartet (based on a folk song, 1946) was the beginning of numerous vocal compositions (e.g., *Berauschet Euch* for soprano, baritone, choir, and orchestra after Charles Baudelaire, 1953). Erdmann applied the lyrical forming of melodies that he used in his vocal compositions to his instrumental music, specifically to his concertos. The *Concerto* for piano and orchestra (1950 / 1976) was the beginning and the first climax of his work with regard to solo concertos.

In compositions of the 1950s and 1960s, we can often find the use of church modes and neo-classical forms, for instance in his *Concertino* for piano and orchestra 1956. Since the 1970s, Erdmann's music is chromaticized and makes use of the concept of variation. He also started to use unconventional musical forms, clear but demanding rhythmic structures, and very fine instrumentations (e.g., in *Spektrum* for small orchestra, 1975, or in *Musical Multicolore* for oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, percussion, violin, viola, cello, and double bass, 1981-82).

The last three decades are not only characterized by the use of unusual instrumentations, but also by the use of instruments that are traditionally not much used in comparable musical contexts. Erdmann wrote, for instance, many compositions for saxophone (e.g., *Resonanzen* for saxophone quartet, 1984, *Konzertstück* for alto saxophone, string orchestra, two horns, and percussion, 1988, or his *Dialog* for alto saxophone and tenor saxophone, 1997).

Erdmann's oeuvre includes — with the exception of opera and ballet — almost all genres and instrumentations: 16 solo concertos, 12 orchestral compositions, numerous piano and other instrumental solo compositions, chamber music for string and wind instruments, as well as many songs, cantatas, and choral music.

Dietrich Erdmann and The Anti-Avant-Garde

Dietrich Erdmann is one of the outspoken opponents of the avant-garde of experimental music. He mentioned once in an interview: "I believe that there was too much experimentation in the music of this [20th] century — most of which I experienced fully conscious —, so that it got to this point today: If one does not read a famous name in the concert program, the concert halls will stay empty. This is unfortunate, but not the fault of the audience. This is primarily a result of continuous public experiments. Experiments do not necessarily belong into the public life. If one, like here [in Germany], 'invents' and praises a new system every 10 years, then the audience recoils from that and stays away. Then the composers are getting punished, but not just those who are responsible, but also those who tried to write music for the general public and who are interested in enjoying the music. In a personal conversation, Isang Yun told me once: 'What are composers doing here in Europe? There are new fashions all the time. In our country [Korea], developments take 500 years.'" (Erdmann 1997, 39).

Purposely, Dietrich Erdmann does not follow compositional systems of any kind, be it twelve-tone music, total serial music, aleatoric, or tonal music. (He thinks similarly about political and ideological systems.) After all dark experiences throughout the twentieth century, he is skeptical and doubtful: "The spirit of the music, the idea, the formal construction, that what stands 'between the lines,' the personal style of the composer seems crucial to me. It is quite unimportant, if the music is categorized as 'new' or as 'old'. It should be 'authentic'. Everybody knows that 'new' will be 'old' tomorrow. Wagner's remark 'Children, create the New!' was understandable 150 years ago. Today, we could say: 'Children, create the Good, so that people listen to it!'" (ibid., 40). Erdmann wants to create music with which he can connect to his contemporaries. Without cheap popularity, he would like to reach the 'normal' listener. "I strive for pieces that are clearly structured [...] and that can move listeners without literary 'instructions for use' as they are very much in fashion these days." (Ibid.)

Erdmann's Solution: A Modern Style With Rich Tone Colors

The music of Dietrich Erdmann is mainly characterized by lyrical melodies, strong rhythmic support and sound color, while the harmonic organization is highly chromatic. For Erdmann, sound color develops out of harmony and out of the colors of the instruments and its registers. He tries to use musical material sparingly. He is a master of instrumentation, whereby he avoids over-sized orchestras. The musicologist Wolfgang Burde once called Erdmann's music "intimate music" (Burde 1997), because of his clear and economic instrumentation. Often, Erdmann tries to emphasize instruments that are usually not emphasized and that usually do not retain important roles within an ensemble. Examples are his Concerto for bass-clarinet and orchestra (1990), his Concerto for bassoon, contra-bassoon and orchestra (1996), and his Concertino for tuba, string orchestra, and percussion (2000). However, the richness in color not only results from the use of unusual solo instruments, but from the many different instrumental combinations, by use of modern techniques of sound production, and by the use of the different registers of various instruments.

Analytical Observations: Dietrich Erdmann's Solo Concertos

The following paragraphs will summarize some analytical observations with the special focus on Dietrich Erdmann's solo concertos. So far, Erdmann wrote 16 solo concertos:

- Konzert für Klavier und Orchester [Concerto for Piano and Orchestra] (1950 / 1976)
Instrumentation: 2 Flutes (and Piccolo), 2 Oboes, 2 Clarinets, 2 Bassoons, 2 Horns, 3 Trumpets, 3 Trombones, Timpani, Percussion, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, Double Bass
Publisher: Breitkopf & Härtel, Wiesbaden
Recordings: LP Mars 20780; CD Querstand VKJK9806
- Concertino für Klavier und kleines Orchester [Concertino for Piano and Small Orchestra] (1956)
Instrumentation: 1 Flute, 1 Oboe, 1 Clarinets, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, Double Bass
Publisher: Edition Gravis, Bad Schwalbach
Recordings: LP Thorofon MTH 169; CD Thorofon 2145
- Concertino grazioso für Blockflöte und Streichorchester [Concertino grazioso for Recorder and String Orchestra] (1958 / 1987)
Instrumentation: Soprano-Recorder / Alto-Recorder (1 Performer), Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, Double Bass
Publisher: Heinrichshofen, Wilhelmshaven
Recording: CD Thorofon
- Concertino für Flöte und Streichorchester [Concertino for Flute and String Orchestra] (1958)
Instrumentation: Solo-Flute, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, Double Bass
Publisher: Edition Gravis, Bad Schwalbach
Recording: CD Thorofon 2145
- Notturmo für Altblockflöte und Gitarrenchor [Notturmo for Alto-Recorder and Guitar Ensemble] (1962)
Instrumentation: Solo-Recorder (or Flute), Guitar I, Guitar II, Guitar III
Publisher: Edition Gravis, Bad Schwalbach
Recordings: CD Thorofon CTH 2213; LP FSM 54003
- Movimenti für Oboe, Zupforchester und Schlagzeug [Movimenti for Oboe, Orchestra of Plucked Instruments, and Percussion] (1973)
Instrumentation: Solo-Oboe (or Solo-Flute), Mandolin I, Mandolin II, Mandola, Guitar, Double Bass, Percussion
Publisher: Volksmusikverlag Joachim Trekel, Hamburg
Recordings: CD Thorofon CTH 2213; LP FSM 54003 SFB
- Konzert für Mandoline und kleines Orchester [Concerto for Mandolin and Small Orchestra] (1979)
Instrumentation: 2 Flutes, 2 Clarinets, 2 Horns, Timpani, Percussion, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, Double Bass
Publisher: Breitkopf & Härtel, Wiesbaden
Recordings: CD MDG A 3451; CD Chaconne / Japan MTK 003

-Concerto für Violoncello und Kammerorchester [Concerto for Violoncello and Chamber Orchestra] (1985)

Instrumentation: Solo-Violoncello, 1 Flute, 1 Oboe, 1 Clarinet (and Bass-Clarinet), 1 Bassoon, 1 Horn, Percussion (1 Performer), Violin I, Viola, Violoncello, Double Bass

Publisher: Breitkopf & Härtel, Wiesbaden

Recording: CD Thorofon 2104

-Concertino für Viola (oder Englisch Horn oder Klarinette) und Zupforchester [Concertino for Viola (or English Horn or Clarinet) and Plucked Instrument Ensemble] (1985)

Instrumentation: Solo-Viola (or English Horn or Clarinet), Mandolin I, Mandolin II, Mandola, Guitars, Double Bass

Publisher: Volksmusikverlag Joachim Trekel, Hamburg

Recordings: CD Inbal Music 981121; CD Telos Music Records TLS 032

-Konzertstück für Altsaxophon und kleines Orchester [Concert Piece for Alto-Saxophone and Small Orchestra] (1988)

Instrumentation: 2 Horns, Percussion, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, Double Bass

Publisher: Breitkopf & Härtel, Wiesbaden

Recordings: CD Thorofon 2104; CD Thorofon 2269

-Concerto für Violine und kleines Orchester [Concerto for Violin and Small Orchestra] (1988)

Instrumentation: Solo-Violin, 1 Flute, 1 Oboe, 1 Clarinet (and Bass-Clarinet), 1 Bassoon, 1 Horn, Percussion, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, Double Bass

Publisher: Breitkopf & Härtel, Wiesbaden

Recording: CD Bella Musica, BM 31.2337

-Konzert für Saxophon und Orchester [Concerto for Saxophone and Orchestra] (1989)

Instrumentation: Solo-Saxophon, 1 Flute (and Piccolo), 1 Oboe, 1 English Horn, 1 Clarinet, 1 Bass-Clarinet, 2 Horns, 2 Trumpets, 2 Trombones, 3 Timpani, Percussion, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, Double Bass

Publisher: Ries & Erler, Berlin

Recording: CD Thorofon CTH 2269

-Konzert für Baßklarinette und Orchester [Concerto for Bass Clarinet and Orchestra] (1990)

Instrumentation: Solo-Bass-Clarinet, 1 Flute (and Piccolo), 1 Oboe, 1 English Horn, 1 Clarinet, 1 Bassoon, 2 Horns, 2 Trumpets, 2 Trombones, Timpani, Percussion, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, Double Bass

Publisher: Ries & Erler, Berlin

Recording: CD MDG 624 0556-2

-Concerto für Flöte und kleines Orchester [Concerto for Flute and Small Orchestra] (1993)

Instrumentation: Solo-Flute, 1 Flute, 1 Oboe, 1 Clarinet (and Bass-Clarinet), 1 Bassoon, 2 Horns, 2 Trumpets, 2 Trombones, Timpani, Percussion, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, Double Bass

Publisher: Breitkopf & Härtel, Wiesbaden

-Konzert für Fagott, Kontrafagott und Orchester [Concerto for Bassoon, Contra-Bassoon, and Orchestra] (1996)

Instrumentation: Solo-Bassoon, Solo-Contra-Bassoon, 2 Flutes, 2 Oboe, 2 Clarinets, 2 Bassoons, 2 Horns, 2 Trumpets, 2 Trombones, Timpani, Percussion, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, Double Bass

Publisher: Ries & Erler, Berlin

Recording: CD Querstand, VKJK 9806

-Concertino für Tuba, Streichorchester und Schlagzeug [Concertino for Tuba, String Orchestra, and Percussion] (2000)

Instrumentation: Tuba, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, Double Bass, Percussion (1 Performer)

Publisher: Ries & Erler, Berlin

Unfortunately, the space limit for this paper does not allow detailed analytical remarks, nor does it allow the discussions of all of Erdmann's concertos. Thus, the following analytical remarks can only refer to selected solo concertos.

Initially, Dietrich Erdmann composed mainly for instruments he had played himself — piano, cello, flute, and piccolo — or at least for instruments he had available for performances. Although demanding art music was his main goal, he also composed for amateur ensembles, for instance for orchestras of plucked instruments which consist of Mandolin I, Mandolin II, Mandola, Guitar, and Double Bass. His first composition for such an ensemble was his *Divertissement für Zupforchester* [Divertissement for Orchestra of Plucked Instruments] from 1968. In 1973, he combined his interests in demanding music, unusual instrumentations, and amateur music with his *Movimenti for Oboe, Orchestra of Plucked Instruments, and Percussion*. The sound of the oboe and that of the plucked instruments clearly mix very well — Erdmann's main motivation for this work —, while the percussion instruments (hanging cymbal, side drum, Chinese wood block, and 3 bongos) add a rhythmic flavor to the concerto. The third movement (*allegro assai*) is only 'orchestrated' for the two soli: oboe and percussion. It is embedded between the slow second and the fast fourth movement, and its important function is to replace the missing solo cadenza. This third movement is an excellent example of Erdmann's use of musical parameters: we find experiments regarding sound color and timbre, the sensitiveness and delicateness of the melodies with varied phrasings and pithy rhythmic emphasis.

Most passages of this composition have tonal implications, a characteristic of much of Erdmann's earlier music. In addition, the duration of this work — about 11 minutes — does not allow us to categorize this work as a real solo concerto. This aspect is certainly reflected in the formal organization: thematic material is always based on one theme or on elements of this theme. The percussion instruments pick up rhythmic elements of phrases or are contrasting them. The orchestra of plucked instruments usually takes part in motivic-thematic developments and has clearly more than just accompanying tasks.

While *Movimenti* was not quite a real solo concerto in terms of its duration, Dietrich Erdmann's *Konzert für Mandoline und kleines Orchester* [Concerto for Mandolin and Small Orchestra] certainly is. It attracted attention throughout Europe and is probably the most famous mandolin concerto of the 20th century.¹ It was composed in 1979 for the mandolin virtuoso Masayuki Kawaguchi and had its world premiere under Hiroyuki Iwaki with the Japanese Symphony Orchestra Sapporo in Sapporo on Dezember 23rd, 1979. Its European premiere was in 1982 at the International Festival for Plucked Instruments in Mannheim. Dietrich Erdmann orchestrated this concerto for a small orchestra: 2 flutes, 2 clarinets, 2 horns, timpani, percussion (side drum, Chinese wood block, 3 bongos, and hanging cymbal), violin I, violin II, viola, violoncello, and double bass. The necessity of a small orchestra seems clear: the characteristic fine-metallic sound of the mandolin should not be completely covered by the orchestra. In addition, the small orchestra makes colorful musical developments possible.

Already in 1978, Erdmann had composed a piece for solo-mandolin: his *Sonatine für Mandoline und Klavier* [Sonatina for Mandolin and Piano], so that the composer knew very well the technical and melodic possibilities of the (Neapolitan) mandolin. He used these possibilities in his mandolin concerto sensitively and in a virtuous manner. The aspect of virtuosity is especially given with the solo cadenzas: one in each movement! The soloist is required to use various striking and plucking techniques as well as difficult glissandi and double stops in all registers.

The formal organization of the mandolin concerto is rather classical in the sense of the 18th century — the time when mandolin music was at its peak. The three movements (*Allegro - Adagio - Allegro*) provide the basis and the frame for fine melodic and rhythmic ideas that are combined with sound color nuances. These colorful nuances are a result of an orchestration that emphasizes the diversity of instrument combinations, especially of the various wind instruments with the mandolin. The percussion instruments, which are used sparingly, provide additional 'flavor'. The slow second movement, for instance emphasizes transitions from one (!) clarinet to the mandolin or to their colorful fusion. Hereby, the rhythm plays an important role: combinations of sixteenth-eighth-figures, double-dotted notes, or even transitions from sixteenth to triplets or quintuplets, together with finest dynamic differentiations, create a piece of music that is everything else than monotonous. On the other hand, long trills on the solo instrument create tremulants through the two-choired mandolin.

Throughout the years of composing solo concertos, Dietrich Erdmann's musical style changed: tonality is more and more avoided through chromaticism, finer sound colors are created, and rhythmic elements become more dominant. The mandolin concerto was an important step towards a 'revolution' of sound

color, using traditional instruments. Compositions that followed display these characteristics more and more.

The concertos that followed were the Concerto für Violoncello und Kammerorchester [Concerto for Cello and Chamber Orchestra] from 1985, the Concertino für Viola und Zupforchester [Concertino for Viola and Orchestra of Plucked Instruments] from 1985, and the Konzertstück für Altsaxophon und kleines Orchester [Concert Piece for Alto Saxophone and Small Orchestra] from 1988.

Erdmann had composed chamber music for saxophones already since the early 1980s. In 1984, he met the saxophone virtuoso Detlef Bensmann, for whom Erdmann composed many other pieces, for instance Saxophonata für drei Saxophone [Saxophonata for three Saxophones] (1 performer, 1986) und Fantasia Colorata für Tenorsaxophon solo (1987). The first saxophone concerto — the one-movement Concert Piece — was premiered by Bensmann and the Merck orchestra under the direction of Zdenek Simane on November 27th, 1988 in Darmstadt. This is the first composition, in which we can find the performance practice of the “Schlagzunge” [percussion tongue], which is a pizzicato effect that was initiated by Detlef Bensmann.²

While Erdmann asked for only two horns, percussion and string orchestra in his Concert Piece, one year later he wrote a full concerto for saxophone and orchestra (Konzert für Saxophon und Orchester, 1989). In this concerto, the composer could better reach his goal to use the saxophone for new sound experiments. The saxophone specifically balances the sound between the strong brass and the delicate woodwinds. The orchestra in this concerto includes each one woodwind instrument, including a bass clarinet, two of each brass instrument, furthermore percussion, timpani, and strings. This “large saxophone concerto” was dedicated to Detlef Bensmann, and was premiered in Bremerhaven by the city orchestra under the direction of Leo Plettner on Dezember 4th, 1989.

The saxophone concerto has four movements (Sostenuto / Vivace - Allegretto scherzando - Adagio molto espressivo - Allegro assai). The full orchestral sound and the use of both, soprano and alto saxophones as solo instruments, provide opportunities to manifold sound experiments that support as well as balance thematic-motivic developments. The ‘concertare’ — the organization of the concerto — is carried out on several different levels: The orchestra either creates a sound background for the expressively expanding saxophone or it uses thematic material; in the latter case, single orchestra instruments or groups of instruments are brought out. Finally, the saxophone can shine on solo passages and especially during the solo cadenza with unusual performance techniques and sound effects: from different types of pizzicato to ‘laugh effects’ and overblow-techniques that create three-tone chords (for instance, at the end of the solo cadenza of the first movement). Important dramaturgic principles are used in this concerto: contrasts and developments. Contrasts are, for instance, expressive-dramatic passages versus quiet-contemplative ones or aggressive versus balancing-regular rhythms. Developments are developments of thematic ideas, including variations, and dynamic developments. Chromaticism is the basis for the continuous change of short-lived tonal centers. The probably most important structural interval is the minor second.

The emancipation of percussion is made possible by the manifold use of different percussion instruments: not only in the dialogue between saxophone and percussion in the fourth movement, but also, for instance, through the use of a melody instrument — the xylophone.

I would like to discuss the melodic organization separately, because it is of greatest importance for Erdmann’s music. Back during his study years, he studied with the famous choral conductor Kurt Thomas, who taught him principles of melodic design and the ‘breathing’ in music. At that time, he already knew of Paul Hindemith’s teaching of melody. Since then, Erdmann’s music is characterized by clear melodies that are well-structured and balanced — not just in his vocal music, but also in his instrumental compositions. An excellent example is, for instance, the initial melody of the saxophone in the first movement of his saxophone concerto.

One of his many solo concertos is dedicated to a member of the clarinet family: the Konzert für Baßklarinetten und Orchester [Concerto for Bass Clarinet and Orchestra] from 1990. This four-movement composition (Adagio / Vivace - Andante, quasi sostenuto - Poco adagio, cantabile - Allegro grazioso) was commissioned and premiered by the Merck Orchestra Darmstadt and performed with Renate Rusche as the soloist on November 30th, 1991. The solo instrument is characterized by a broad spectrum of sound colors: changes are possible from clear-metallic sounds to mild-soft sounds. Sharp sounds can be created by overblowing the higher registers.

Erdmann's melodies in his bass clarinet concerto are especially singable and memorable, although not simple, with balanced (equal length) phrasings. Into these melodies, the composer sometimes inserts one or two measures that are performed by a group of instruments, while the solo instrument is pausing. These melodies are often continued by the clarinet, by the bass clarinet in high registers, or by the horn; the variety of solutions are responsible for the continuous change in sound color and timbre.

In the spring of 1996, Dietrich Erdmann composed his *Konzert für Fagott, Kontrafagott und Orchester* [Concerto for Bassoon, Contra-Bassoon, and Orchestra] and is, thus, dedicated to two instruments that have clear differences in their sound characteristics. Interestingly, both solo instruments are seldom playing by themselves, but most often together. The orchestra is relatively large: all wind instruments are doubled.

The last solo concerto composed so far is the *Concertino für Tuba, Streichorchester und Schlagzeug* [Concertino for Tuba, String Orchestra, and Percussion] (2000).

I chose to specifically focus on Dietrich Erdmann's solo concertos for two reasons: First of all, several musicologists have categorized Dietrich Erdmann as a composer of mainly chamber music. This is certainly not true, considering the fact that he composed 16 solo concertos and a dozen orchestral compositions. Second, his solo concertos are exemplary of most of his compositions regarding harmony, melody, rhythm, and sound color.

The analytical observations of several of Erdmann's solo concertos included the most important characteristics of Erdmann's music. However, there are certainly several developments over the many years of his career as a composer: Regarding the instrumentation, Erdmann initially composed for instruments that he had played himself: piano, flute instruments, and cello; later, he expanded his pool of instruments by focussing on solo instruments that are traditionally rarely used as solo instruments and that offered the opportunity of new sound experiences: such instruments are recorders, mandolin, bass clarinet, contra bassoon, and saxophones. Stylistically — and this is certainly not only true for his solo concertos —, the melodic as well as the harmonic organization were chromaticized, from an expanded tonality to free tonality. Erdmann's interest in sound color is based on his love of visual arts, specifically painting, which is a result of the strong influence that August Macke had on him during his youth. This love of color was the starting point for a more and more delicate differentiation of the orchestration — an orchestration that became, at the same time, clearer over the years. The clear orchestration is also the reason for using a small orchestra in many of his compositions. As part of this development, sound color became the most important part of the harmonic design; sound color and harmony create a unity in the music of Dietrich Erdmann.

Another development within Erdmann's solo concertos is the development of musical form: while his first concertos used a relatively traditional formal design with three movements, Erdmann used different, untraditional forms in his later compositions to express his musical ideas. Sociological aspects are also important for Erdmann's music. The basis for any of Erdmann's compositions is his cooperation with performers. This aspect is reflected by the structure and organization of the music: performance techniques and virtuosity are usually tailored to specific musicians. This is especially important for the solo cadenzas in his concertos and for Erdmann's music for orchestras of plucked instruments.

The relationship between solo and tutti is never schematic, but inventive and dependent on the musical material. Erdmann lets the solo instruments present more thematic material or opens many virtuous opportunities. Passages that employ chamber-musical textures usually integrate the solo instrument and one of each orchestral wind instrument.

Thematic development is, next to sound color and harmony, very important in Erdmann's music. In this respect, variation becomes one of the most important dramatic components.

Finally, we can group Dietrich Erdmann's solo concertos in periods of his overall compositional work. At specific times, Erdmann composed for specific instruments: we find, for instance, a recorder period at the end of the 1950s and early 1960s, a saxophone period during the 1980s, and a bassoon and contra bassoon period during the 1990s.

Final Remarks: On Modernism, Avant-Garde, and Post-Avant-Garde

Webster's Third New International Dictionary — the "definite Merriam-Webster unabridged dictionary of the English language" — defines "modernism" as "the philosophy and practices of modern art; a self-conscious and deliberate break with the past and a search for new forms of expression in any of the arts."³

In discussions on modern music, Erdmann's music would probably not necessarily be regarded as "modern," because it is rather "conservative" in its harmonic structure and in its use of traditional instruments.

In this paper, I tried to show that Erdmann is clearly a modern composer, who self-consciously and deliberately broke with past musical traditions and searched for new forms of expression in music. However, his focus on the search for new expressions were sound color and timbre experiments. In this respect, Erdmann can be seen as an experimental composer, although not in the sense in which "avant-garde" is usually understood. However, if we search for a definition of "avant-garde" in the most comprehensive dictionary of the English language, we find "those who create, produce, or apply new, original, or experimental ideas, designs, and techniques in any field"⁴. With this definition, Erdmann would even be an "avant-garde" composer, which Erdmann himself would never agree to. The second meaning of the term "avant-garde," found in the same dictionary, would, however, not apply to Erdmann: "a group (as of writers or artists) that is unorthodox and untraditional in its approach: [sometimes]: such a group that is extremist, bizarre, or arty and affected"⁵. The fact is that Erdmann's aesthetics is directed at a broad audience. He writes music for people with little background in modern music, for people with an average general education. In this sense, his music could be called "conservative". But this would not quite reflect Erdmann's instrumental, sound-color-oriented experiments. The best adjective to describe his music would be "non-avant-garde" in the best sense: Erdmann focuses on different aspects in music than the "extremist avant garde" composers, but his music is highly artistic and experimental with regard to orchestration and sound color.

Dietrich Erdmann is a successful composer, a composer who emphasizes the making of the music and its reception by a broad audience, and a composer who is an outspoken opponent of "avant garde" music. I am sure, he would be proud to be called an "non-avant garde" composer — in the most positive meaning of the term.

Notes

¹ See articles by Marga Wilden-Hüsgen (1997), Peter Rummenhüller (1997) and Wolfgang Burde (1997).

² See D. Erdmann in the CD booklet to "Musik für Saxophon", Thorofon CTH 2269.

³ Gove, Philip Babcock. Ed. Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language. Springfield, MA: Merriam Webster, 1993. p. 1452.

⁴ Ibid., p. 150.

⁵ Ibid.

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Nico Schüleris

Spalvos modernizmas: Dietricho Erdmanno išskirtinis dėmesys garso spalvai, arba apie antiavangardą

Įžanga. Vokiečių kompozitorius Dietrichas Erdmannas (g. 1917) yra vienas iš pačių svarbiausių toninės koloristikos kompozicijų, kuriose specifiškai apsiribojama tradicinių (akustinių) instrumentų instrumentuote, gynėjų. Tad jo kompozicinė nuostata antiavangardo prasme yra gana „tradiciška“. Vis dėlto dėl per pastaruosius du dešimtmečius jį lydėjusios sėkmės Erdmannas sulaukė nemažos kolegų bei publikos paramos, kuri savo ruožtu paskatino muzikologų ir muzikos teoretikų susidomėjimą. Nors savo pranešime aptarsiu, kaip D. Erdmannas naujai interpretuoja tradicinius kompozicijos principus, idant modernios muzikos stilių praturtintų kuo turtingesnėmis garso spalvomis bei neįprastomis instrumentuotėmis, šioje įžangoje konferencijos dalyviams pristatysiu būtinas bendrąsias žinias apie patį kompozitorių, kad pagrindiniame konferencijos pranešime būtų galima labiau susitelkti į pačią muziką ir pateikti kelių D. Erdmanno kompozicijų analizę. Konferencijos pranešime taip pat aptarsiu skirtumus tarp modernizmo, avangardo ir postavangardo, kadangi D. Erdmannas atvirai oponuoja avangardui.

Šioje „įžangoje“ aš dėmesį skirsiu biografinei ir stilistinei informacijai bei Erdmanno kūrybos estetiškiems aspektams.

Biografijos faktai. D. Erdmanno dėmesio „spalvai“ ištakos iš esmės slypi jo vaikystėje, kuomet jam didelę įtaką padarė jo nepaprastai talentingas pusbrolis Walteris Macke, dailininko Augusto Macke's sūnus. Augdamas dailiųjų menų ir muzikos persmelktoje aplinkoje, D. Erdmannas griežti violončele mokėsi pas Paulių Herrmanną, o muzikos teorijos ir kompozicijos jį mokė P. Hindemithas (1931 m.), Ernstas-Lotharas von Knorras (1932 m.) ir Haraldas Genzmeris (1933 m.). Svarbių išvalgų įvairiose orkestruotėse srityse studijų Berlyno konservatorijoje (*Musikhochschule*) metais (1934–1938) jam suteikė Kurtas Thomas (chorvedyba ir kompozicija) bei Walteris Gmeindlis (orkestrinis dirigavimas). Studijas jis užbaigė gaudamas chorvedžio diplomą ir išlaikydamas „privataus muzikos mokytojo“ kompozicijos egzaminą. Jau per tuos metus jis atsiskleidė kaip tvirtas šiuolaikinės muzikos rėmėjas – 1935 m. įkūrė „Naujosios muzikos draugiją“ (*Arbeitskreis für Neue Musik*). Netrukus po to, kai D. Erdmannas buvo paimtas į armiją, jo tėvas – žymus socialdemokratas Lotharas Erdmannas – buvo nužudytas Zachsenhauzeno koncentracijos stovykloje. Šis įvykis buvo nepaprastai svarbus ne tik jo politiniam sąmoningumui, bet ir sutvirtino įsitikinimą, kad menas ir muzika turi plėtotis šalia politinių santvarkų/programų, o ne remti jas. Šis pastebėjimas svarbus ir jo pozicijos, nukreiptos prieš avangardą, atžvilgiu, kadangi didžia dalimi avangardo plėtotė buvo politiškai motyvuota. Karo metais (1938–1945) D. Erdmannas griebėsi gudrybės, ir gavo dvejus „atostogas“ kompozicijos studijoms pas Paulių Höfferį, kurias užbaigė 1941 m., išlaikydamas baigiamąjį egzaminą.

Pasibaigus karui išėjęs iš karo belaisvių stovyklos, D. Erdmannas nuo 1945-ųjų iki 1948-ųjų metų dėstė muziką Humboldto vidurinėje mokykloje, o nuo 1947-ųjų – ir Humboldto pedagoginiame universitete. Vėliau jis tapo šio universiteto muzikos katedros vedėju (1949 m.), docentu (1954 m.) ir profesoriumi (1968 m.), o 1970 m. tapo universiteto prorektoriumi.

Dar 1963-aisiais jis įkūrė „Naujosios muzikos studiją“ (*Studio für Neue Musik*) kaip VDMK padalinį. O 1972-aisiais įkūrė „Kamerinės muzikos draugiją“ (*Arbeitskreis für Kammermusik*). Vokietijos vyriausybės pavedimu D. Erdmannas keletą kartų keliavo į Pietų Ameriką (1965–1967), kur mokė muzikos ir rengė koncertus. Išėjęs į pensiją (1982 m.), jis keliavo koncertuodamas po Sovietų Sąjungą (1989 m.) ir Jungtines Amerikos Valstijas (1994 m.).

D. Erdmannas pelnė nemažai apdovanojimų, tarp jų Vokietijos federacinės tarnybos kryžių (*Bundesverdienstkreuz*, 1987 m.), Johanno Wenzelio Stamitzo premiją (1988 m.), Humboldto ženklelį (*Humboldt Plaketten*) ir Silezijos kultūros premiją (2002 m.). Jo gyvenimas ir kūryba apžvelgta dviem straipsnių rinkiniais (*Festschriften*) – vienas sudarytas Burde's ir išleistas 1987-aisiais, kitas išleistas 1997 metais (sudarytojai Krause-Pichler/Schüler).

D. Erdmanno muzikos stiliaus apžvalga. Dietrichas Erdmannas patyrė naujojo objektyvumo, neobaroko ir neoklasicizmo įtakas. Neatsižvelgdamas į muzikos madas, prasidėjęs po 1920 m., ir į daugumą avangardo kompozicinių technikų, jis išplėtojo savitą šiuolaikinės muzikos stilių, pasižymintį turtingomis toninėmis spalvomis ir neįprastomis instrumentuotėmis (nors ir naudodamas tradicinius instrumentus). Jau ankstyvieji jo kūriniai – pavyzdžiui, *Sechs kleine Klavierstücke* („Šešios mažos pjesės fortepijonui“), sukurtos 1933 m. – atskleidžia stilistinę vienovę ir autoriaus muzikinę kompetenciją bei individualius sprendimus muzikinės formos požiūriu. Septintojo dešimtmečio viduryje jis rašė kompozicijas, pagrįstas prozinio stiliaus muzikine sintakse bei disonansų emancipacija (pvz., tai matyti jo Sonatoje obojui ir fortepijonui, 1965).

Iki 1940 m. pabaigos D. Erdmanno kūryboje vyravo kamerinė muzika, tačiau su kantata *Der Maien* („Gegužis“) sopranui, chorui, fleitai ir styginių kvartetui (pagal liaudies dainą, 1946 m.) jis pasuko vokalinių kompozicijų rašymo keliu (paminėtinas kūrinys *Berauschet Euch* sopranui, baritonui, chorui ir orkestrui, pagal Charles'io Baudelaire'o žodžius, 1953). Melodijų lyrinio formavimo principus, naudotus savo vokaliniuose kūriniuose, Erdmannas pritaikė ir instrumentinėje muzikoje, ypač koncertuose. Pradžia ir pirmoji jo instrumentinių koncertų kulminacija buvo Koncertas fortepijonui ir orkestrui (1950/1976).

Šeštojo ir septintojo dešimtmečio kūriniuose jis neretai naudojo bažnytines dermes ir neoklasicistines formas, pavyzdžiui, tai matome jo *Concertino* fortepijonui ir orkestrui 1956. Nuo 1976 metų D. Erdmannas rašo chromatizuotą muziką ir naudoja variacijos sąvoką. Drauge jis pradeda naudoti ir nekonvencines muzikos formas, aiškias, tačiau sunkias ritmines struktūras ir

nepaprastai rafinuotą instrumentuotę (pavyzdžiui, *Spectrum* kameriniam orkestrui, 1975, ar *Musical Multicolore* obojui, klarnetui, fagotui, valtornai, mušamiesiems, smuikui, altui, violončelei ir kontrabosui, 1981–1982).

Paskutiniai trys dešimtmečiai išsiskiria ne tik tuo, kad jis naudoja gana neįprastą instrumentuotę, bet ir tuo, kad pasitelkia instrumentus, kurie panašios muzikos kontekste ne taip dažnai naudojami (pvz., *Resonanzen* saksofonų kvartetui, 1984 m., *Konzertstück* altiniam saksofonui, styginių orkestrui, dviem valtornoms ir mušamiesiems, 1988, ar *Dialog* altiniam ir tenoriniam saksofonams, 1997).

D. Erdmanno kūrybiniame repertuare – beveik visi žanrai ir instrumentuotės (išskyrus operą ir baletą): 17 instrumentinių koncertų, 12 orkestrinių kūrinių, daugybė kompozicijų fortepijonui ir kitiems solo instrumentams, kamerinė muzika styginiams ir pučiamiesiems instrumentams, taip pat daug dainų, kantatų, chorinės muzikos.

D. Erdmannas ir antiavangardas. D. Erdmannas yra vienas iš aršiausių eksperimentinės muzikos avangardo oponentų. Kartą viename interviu jis pasakė: „Aš įsitikinęs, kad šio [dvidešimtojo] amžiaus muzikoje buvo pernelyg daug eksperimentų – daugumą jų išbandžiau visiškai sąmoningai – tai ir atvedė į tokią šiandienos situaciją. Jeigu koncerto programėlėje neperskaitai kokios nors garsios pavardės, tai koncertų salė lieka tuščia. Apgailėtina, tačiau tai ne klausytojų kaltė. Visų pirma tai nuolatinio viešo eksperimentavimo rezultatas. Eksperimentai nebūtinai turi priklausyti viešajam gyvenimui. Jeigu kas nors, kaip kad yra čia [Vokietijoje], kas dešimt metų „išranda“ ir išaukština kokią nors naują sistemą, publika nuo to atsoka ir pasitraukia į šoną. Tada jau baudžiami kompozitoriai, ir ne tik tie kaltieji, bet ir tie, kurie bandė rašyti muziką plačiam publikai ir kuriems tiesiog patinka muzika. Kartą asmeniniame pokalbyje Isang Yunas man pasakė: „Ką kompozitoriai Europoje veikia? Visą laiką čia atsiranda naujos mados. Mūsų šalyje [Korėjoje] plėtra vyksta apie penkis šimtus metų“ (Erdmann, 1997:39).

D. Erdmannas sąmoningai neseka jokios rūšies kompozicinėmis sistemomis, ar tai būtų dodekafonija, ar totali serijinė muzika, ar aleatorika, ar tonali muzika. (Lygiai tokios pačios nuostatos jis laikosi ir politinių bei ideologinių sistemų atžvilgiu.) Po visų tų tamsių per visą dvidešimtąjį amžių vykdytų eksperimentų jis nusiteikęs labai skeptiškai ir įtariai: „Muzikos dvasia, idėja, formos konstrukcija, tai kas glūdi „tarp eilučių“, asmeninis kompozitoriaus stilius – štai kas man atrodo svarbiausia. Visiškai nesvarbu, ar muzika priskiriama „naujos“ ar „senos“ kategorijai. Ji turi būti „autentiška“. Visi žino, kad tai, kas šiandien „nauja“ rytoj bus „sena“. R. Wagnerio replika: „Vaikai, kurkite Nauja!“ – buvo suprantama prieš 150 metų. Šiandien galėtume pasakyti: „Vaikai, kurkite Gera, kad žmonės klausytųsi!“ (ibid., 40). D. Erdmannas nori kurti muziką, per kurią jis galėtų susisiekti su savo amžininkais. Nesiekdamas pigaus populiarumo, jis norėtų pasiekti „normalų“ klausytoją. „Aš stengiuosi rašyti geros struktūros kūrinius [...] ir kurie jaudintų klausytoją be jokių literatūrinių „naudojimo instrukcijų“, labai madingų šiomis dienomis.“ (ibid.)

D. Erdmanno sprendimas: modernus stilius su turtingomis garsinėmis spalvomis. D. Erdmanno muzikai būdingiausia lyrinė melodika, stiprus ritminis fonas ir garso spalva, harmonija labai chromatizuota. D. Erdmannui garso spalvos išsirutulioja iš harmonijos bei iš instrumentų ir jų registrų tembrinių spalvų. Jis stengiasi taupiai vartoti muzikines priemones. Jis yra instrumentuotės meistras, instrumentuotės, kuria išvengia pernelyg „išpūstos“ orkestro sudėties. Muzikologas Wolfgangas Burde kartą D. Erdmanno muziką pavadino „intymiaja muzika“ dėl pastarosios aiškios ir taupios instrumentuotės. Neretai jis bando sureikšminti tuos instrumentus, kurie paprastai nėra išryškunami ir neatlieka svarbaus vaidmens ansambliuose. Iš pavyzdžių minėtini Koncertas bosiniam klarnetui ir orkestrui (1990), Koncertas fagotui, kontrafagotui ir orkestrui (1996) ir Koncertino tūbai, styginių orkestrui ir mušamiesiems (2000). Tačiau garso spalvos turtingumą lemia ne tik neįprastų instrumentų naudojimas, bet ir įvairios instrumentinės kombinacijos, sukuriamos panaudojant šiuolaikines garso išgavimo technikas bei skirtingus įvairių instrumentų registrus.