

Music is pure energy
- Fritz Hegi about the CD 'Lichtungen'

Music is pure energy. At an elemental level, it is an event fashioned from vibrations and oscillations, an event taking place between the sound source, the field of resonance, and the human ear. When the physician and psychotherapist Rolf Verres turns into a musician and immerses himself in daydreams at his Fazioli concert grand, the result is elemental energy of this kind.

He releases sounds from the resonant body of the instrument, loving them, as it were, out of the piano. Player and instrument merge into one. Sometimes we hear his breath or the work of his feet on the four pedals, the sound of the felt disengaging itself from the strings. The subtle recording communicates the entire range of these resonances. Sound in the vicinity of silence creates closeness.

This intimacy takes me on a musical dream journey between a radiant sky and fruitful earth, somewhere between the divine translucence of Arvo Pärt's *Alina* and the earthy mysteries of Abdullah Ibrahim's African folk songs. But Rolf Verres' song-like pieces are improvisations, inspired essays toward a musical attitude that can turn into an attitude to life. Stressed listeners, be warned! Hurriers and scurriers may find these essays in sound nightmarish. But the daydreamers will breathe a sigh of relief and perhaps even hum along with the music.

In the first piece, "At the Source of Longing," I listen to the arpeggios, the broken chords changing their form in a process of slow metamorphosis and finally becoming a melody resembling a calling voice. Longing is expressed by the tension, the fiery nature of the almost Hispanic semitones, rising and falling. But the calm modal progress of the accompanying chords turns the feeling of forward impulsion into one of quiet waiting – a luxury all but forgotten in these harassed times! Once, briefly, an abortive cry of protest. Then back to melodies like a handwritten letter, reminiscences of the blues style.

The second piece, "Grief," tells me a story about reconciliation with loss. The final note of one motif rounds out into the next, as if into a new life. Tears flow slowly. The courage to be simple, the conscious use of pauses are both very special challenges to the player. The music stops, waits, recalls things hidden. How can music achieve beauty as it dies away? In the sound of consolation!

The third piece, "The Discovery of Slowness," grows logically from the second. Slowness here is a product not of indolence or inertia, it comes from the art of discarding the unnecessary. Economy is not renunciation but the ability to wait – as such, it turns into simplicity. Sometimes two notes are enough for a song. What I hear reminds me of Rilke:

My finest song was not in my playing.
It was in my silence.

The fourth piece, "From Afar," comes flowingly, as if carrying a secret. As I listen, I hear the march of time – and I can march with it, it takes me along, I am taken by the sumptuous abundance of empty time, timeless emptiness.

"Lights in the Dark" is the title of the fifth piece. First I find myself descending to the depths, to the realm of shadow. Here each repetition adds to the profundity. Every breath seems to arise from a calm tonal subsoil, from the warmth and softness of the ground-tone, and then disintegrates in the upper tones. On the dark minor chords, the lights of eros and thanatos shimmer, exploring a further dimension of life and experience.

In the sixth piece, “Dorothea – A Gift from God,” the figure in the title descends toward me through a sequence of chords from H for Heaven [in German the note B is called H] to E for Earth. The subsequent half-tone shift upward and then down again is like an extension of the sensation. The octaves that follow take us down to a low H (B). Does it stand for Hell this time? At all events it invites us to use our imagination to cross the frontiers. In the course of the music a few ideas flutter up into the blue like birds, remain static, motionless as clouds, then return ...

“Between Heaven and Earth,” the last piece, takes me gently and slowly to the center. First come a sequence of fourths, as if suspended in the air, then fifths, rising from the deep like bubbles, as though drawn up by the sun, finally dissolving. Once more the dynamic tension between high notes and low. Then I am gradually left to my own sensations. What will the next breath sound like? What comes after silence?

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Source:

<http://www.rolf-verres.de/musician/lichtungen.html>