

FREMD

Hans Thomalla

Opera in three scenes, intermezzo and epilogue

Commissioned by the Staatsoper Stuttgart

Recording of the premiere performance on 2 July 2011 and from 6 July 2011,

Staatsoper Stuttgart

Conductor	Johannes Kalitzke
Director, Set and Costume	Anna Viebrock
Assistant Director	Ludivine Petit
Chorus	Michael Alber
Light	Reinhard Traub
Sound	Dieter Fenchel
Video	Hans-Peter Böffgen Judith Konnerth
Dramaturgy	Sergio Morabito
Live Electronics	Forum Neues Musiktheater Andreas Breitscheid
General Director	Albrecht Puhlmann
Medea Soprano	Annette Seiltgen
Jason Bass	Stephan Storck
1st Child Soprano	Julia Spaeth
2nd Child Tenor	Carlos Zapien

Staatsorchester Stuttgart

Staatsoperchor Stuttgart

Argonauts

Ancaeus I Heroic contralto	Barbara Kosviner
Idmon Dramatic contralto	Cristina Otey
Laocoön Dramatic contralto	Naomi Behr
Meleager Boy alto	Pia Liebhäuser
Menoetius Boy alto	Simone Jackel
Acastus Bourgeois alto	Gudrun Wilming
Hylas Coloratura contralto	Ines Malaval
Canthus Melancholic contralto	Maria Tokarska
Ancaeus II Operetta tenor	Ivan Yonkov
Heracles Heroic tenor	Metodi Morartzaliev
Idas Russian tenor	Alexej Shestov
Calais Fantasy tenor	Young Chan Kim
Mopsus Melancholic tenor	Alois Riedel
Polyphemus Heroic tenor	Ivan Ivanov
Zetes Fantastic tenor	Bo Yong Kim
Aethalides Ensemble tenor	Urs Winter
Butes Heroic tenor	Johannes Petz
Erginus Operetta tenor	Juan Pablo Marin
Lynceus Russian tenor	Alexander Efanov

Argonauts

Tiphys Coloratura tenor	Shoung Ho Shin
Amphidamas Heroic bass	Daniel Kaleta
Argos Coloratura bass	Matthias Nenner
Erytus Ensemble bass	Henrik Czerny
Euphemus Coloratura bass	Steffen Balbach
Jason Coloratura bass	Stephan Storck
Coronus Heroic bass	Sebastian Bollacher
Orpheus Epic bass (narrator)	Siegfried Laukner
1st Bass	Kenneth John Lewis
1st Bass	Ulrich Wand
Echion Ensemble bass	Sebastian Peter
Cepheus Sub-bass	Saša Vrabac
Nauplius Oratorio bass	Ulrich Frisch
Periclymenus Multifunctional bass	Kristian Metzner
Phlias Oratorio bass	Johannes Wieczorek
2nd Bass	Tommaso Hahn
2nd Bass	Yehonatan Haimovich
2nd Bass	William David Halbert
2nd Bass	Heiko Schulz

FREMD

Fremd is about an encounter and its consequences.

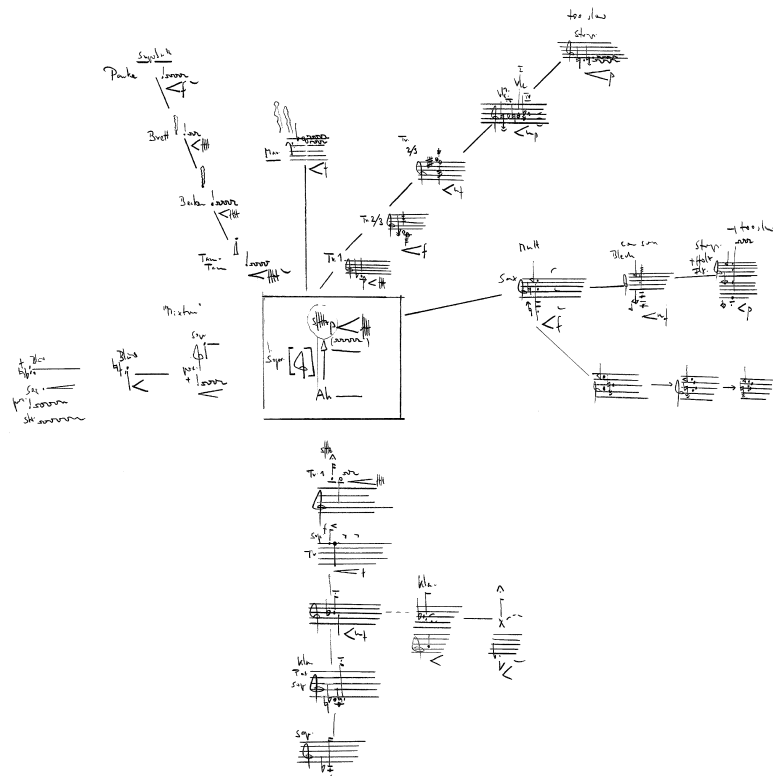
The Argonauts are Greek seafarers, their ship, after which they are named, is the Argo. At the eastern shore of the Black Sea they encounter Medea. The incomprehensible, non-systematic world of the 'barbaric' sorceress is alien to the Greek heroes and their rationalised self-concept. Medea's forms of articulation – more sound than idea – and her attitude towards others – guided more by curiosity than any concrete purpose – leave their marks on the Argonauts. The foundations of their very own identity are shattered. 'I have become a stranger to myself. Somebody else thinks inside me, somebody else acts for me', says Jason, their leader.

Below the surface of the confrontation between the Greeks and Medea lies a conflict, that pinpoints the contradictions of Western thought: the conflict of nature and concept. The process of objectification of the Other – of nature inside and outside ourselves – begins with the Argonauts' disembarkation in Colchis, the strange and unvanquished land.

The myth of Medea cannot simply be 'set to music', as if 'music' were a malleable medium for any narrative. The conflict of nature and concept is intrinsic to music itself. It is the contradiction of temporary, irreproducible sound, and the attempt to conceptualize and systematize it in any musical idiom (whether that idiom is the expressive syntax of bel canto opera, the naiveté of children's songs, or the technical organization of chromaticity). It is the central conflict of musical language.

Therefore, an opera that dramatizes the conflict of Medea and the Argonauts will always be a reflection on music itself and will have to stage the tragedy of music itself.

Hans Thomalla, June 2011



Plot

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First Scene – Drift

Text: Excerpts from the Argonautica (3rd Century B.C.) by Apollonius of Rhodes
The first scene crossfades the 'Catalogue of Heroes', in which all members of the Argo's illustrious crew are named, with episodes from the first two parts of the epic. They describe events from the beginning of the heroes' journey – their gathering at Iolcos – up to their disembarkation in Colchis on the eastern shore of the Black Sea. Episodes include their stay with the seductive women of Lemnos; their fight with the elements; Heracles breaking his rudder; Hylas' abduction by a nymph and Heracles' and Polyphemos' frantic search for him; the death or loss of further Argonauts, including Idmon the seer and their pilot Tiphys; and finally the successful passage through the violent rocks of the Symplegades into the Black Sea. There the shadow of Sthenelus appears before them bearing weapons. For many of the heroes their first appearance is also their last: neither their names, their knowledge nor their abilities are mentioned in any of the four books of the epic again.

Second Scene – Colchis

Text: Excerpts from act 2, scene 3 of Franz Grillparzer's Die Argonauten (1821); quotations from Luigi Cherubini's Médée (1797) in the version by Franz Lachner (1858) with the Italian text by Carlo Zangarini (1909)

During the encounter between the barbarian princess Medea and the Greek Argonauts at Colchis identities drift: Self becomes Other and the Other becomes familiar. Medea falls in love with the Argonauts' leader, Jason.

Intermezzo for Orchestra – Flight

After capturing the Golden Fleece Medea and Jason flee from her father's prosecution. Their flight turns into a coming together. Two children are born.

Third Scene – Finale (Corinth)

Text: Medea's monologue from the 3rd act of Cherubini's Opera Medea (1797) in the Italian translation by Carlo Zangarini; Hush, Little Baby (American lullaby)

Jason betrays Medea by remarrying to gain a right to stay in Corinth. In the light of his betrayal Medea continues the path of destruction he has begun: she murders their children.

Epilogue

Attempts at articulation after the loss of language – fractured, tentative, halting.

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Scene from *Fremd*

Libretto

First Scene – Drift

Argonauts, marching band and instrumental soloists (saxophone, trumpet, trombone, percussion) in the auditorium (marching band later also on stage), orchestra

1. Introduction – recitativo secco

Orpheus: With thee, Phoebus, I will begin and record the famous deeds of those heroes who rowed the Argo through the Cyanean rocks to fetch the Golden Fleece at the bidding of King Pelias. Pelias had heard an oracle predict the following: He would be overthrown at the instigation of a common man wearing but one sandal. Not long afterward Jason came on foot across the swollen torrent of the Anaurus.

enter Jason

There he had to leave behind one sandal which was held back by the flood. The instant Pelias saw Jason, he was wary of him, and conceived a task for him: a dangerous sea journey by which he would die at sea or among strange folk. Mine shall it now be to name these heroes and report on their passage across the sea, and all the deeds that they performed.

2. Barcarole 1

So they smote the wide expanse of the sea with their oars and let it surge up. On both sides the dark brine seethed with foam under the work of the strong men. Then they set sail and a breeze blew exceedingly fresh into it. But with the setting of the sun the wind left them, and it was by the oars that they reached the rocky Sintian isle.

First shall I mention Polyphemus, who battled against the Lapiths when he was young.

enter Polyphemus

By now his limbs had become rather sluggish.

enter Aethalides, Erytus, Echion

Both Erytus and Echion, also, the rich sons of Hermes, well skilled in stratagems, lingered not in Alope. And a third brother, Aethalides, arrived to join them.

Coronus!

enter Coronus

He was, to be sure, a brave man, yet scarcely his father's match.

Phlias ...

enter Phlias, Nauplius

... thanks to his father a wealthy man.

Actor sent his son Menoetius.

enter Menoetius

While Canthus came from Euboa.

enter Canthus

2a. Cadenza 1 – Lemnian Episode

The Lemnian women took their guests into their houses: willingly, for Cypris had woken their sweet desire, so that Lemnos would not become deserted. Soon, the whole city revelled in dances and banquets, and everywhere was the scent of roast meat. And so the sailing was delayed from one day to another; and they would have lingered long there, if Heracles had not gathered together his comrades apart from the women and addressed them with reproachful words.

3. Barcarole 2

But Argos loosed for them the hawsers from under the seabeaten rock. Whereupon they mightily smote the water with their long oars. And in that night, as the ship sailed on with the wind, they passed right through the Hellespont dark-gleaming with eddies.

The warrior Butes.

enter Butes, Tiphys

Tiphys, who was able to foretell a storm at sea.

Mopsus.

enter Mopsus

Periclymenus.

enter Periclymenus.

3a. Cadenza 2 – The Earthborn

There is a lofty island inside the Propontis. The inhabitants call it the 'Mount of Bears'. Lawless and uncivilised men, Earthborn, live there. Thither pressed on the Argo. In the morning they climbed the mighty Dindymon that they might

themselves behold the various paths of the sea. But the Earthborn men on the other side rushed down from the mountain and with crags below blocked up the mouth of the harbour.

3b. Cadenza 3 – Adverse winds

The heroes loosed the ship's hawsers to the breath of the wind and pressed on through the sea-swell. But adverse winds blasted it back in a blustery whirl.

4. Fermata 1 – Rough Storms

Thereafter a mighty storm blew for twelve days and twelve nights and kept them from continuing their journey.

5. Barcarole 3

When the winds had calmed they left the island by oar. Nevertheless when the sea was stirred by violent blasts which were just rising from the rivers about evening, they slowed down, completely exhausted. But Heracles by the might of his arms pulled the weary rowers all along together. Heracles, as he ploughed up the furrows of the roughened surge broke his oar in the middle. And one half he held in both his hands as he fell backwards, the other the sea swept away with its receding wave. And he sat up in silence glaring around, for his hands were unaccustomed to lie idle.

Not even the mighty Heracles could refuse Jason's request.

enter Heracles, Hylas, Idmon

With him came Hylas, his still very young companion. Idmon came, although he knew his fate would be death. Lynceus and Idas.

enter Lynceus, Idas, Euphemus

Euphemus.

enter Amphidamas, Cepheus.

Amphidamas and Cepheus.

enter Ancaeus

Ancaeus.

6. Pastorale

Meanwhile Hylas with pitcher of bronze in hand had gone apart from the throng, looking for a sacred spring, that he might be quick in drawing water for the evening meal and make everything ready for Heracles' return. Hylas came to the spring quickly. But as soon as he held the pitcher in the water a nymph laid her left arm above upon his neck yearning to kiss his tender mouth, and with her right hand she pulled on his arm. And so he fell into the midst of the eddy.

exit Hylas

7. Barcarole 4

Polyphemus alone amongst the comrades heard Hylas' cry. He drew his great sword at once and went to look for him. Like a wild animal the son of Elatus wailed and wondered around, shouting.

enter Erginus, Ancaeus (II)

Erginus and Ancaeus – both praised themselves.

When Heracles heard of this, sweat in abundance poured down from his temples. In panic he threw the pine to the ground and hurried along the path wherever his feet carried his impetuous soul. He raced on; here with fleet un-stopping steps, now and again he would cease from toil and shout with a loud voice.

exeunt Polyphemus, Heracles

8. Fermata 2

Aeson's son just sat there as if lamed with helplessness, eating out his heart in his bewilderment.

Jason.

Meleager, although still a youth, and Laocoön.

enter Meleager, Laocoön

Zetes and Calais, a wonder to behold their dark tresses, shaken by the wind, fall over their neck and shoulders.

enter Zetes, Calais

8a. Cadenza 4 – Huge Wave Episode

Acastus – the son of the powerful Pelias himself.

enter Acastus

9. Barcarole 5

Argos.

enter Argos

9a./9b. Cadenza 5/6 – Canthus' Death/ Mopsus' Death

But thee, Canthus, the fates of death seized in Lybia. You met pasturing flocks, and there followed a shepherd who in defence of his own sheep, slew thee by the cast of a stone. Thereupon on the same day a pitiless fate seized Mopsus, too. In the sand lay a dread serpent. Mopsus stepped on the end of its spine, and it writhed round in pain and bit and tore the flesh between the shin and the muscles.

Canthus. Mopsus.

exeunt Canthus, Mopsus

9c. Cadenza 7 – Symplegades Episode

The thud of the crashing rocks ceaselessly struck their ears, and the seawashed shores resounded. The foam leapt up in a mass like a cloud, awful was the thunder of the sea, and all around them the mighty welkin roared.

The current held the ship from all sides. Trembling with fear they rowed on, until the same current came again and drew the ship between the cliffs. Then most awful fear seized upon all. And now the broad Pontus was to be seen, when suddenly a huge wave rose up before them, like a steep rock. At the sight they ducked their heads. But in between the Symplegades the eddying current held the ship, the cliffs came threateningly closer from both sides, and the ship was held fast. Then Athena with her left hand thrust back one mighty rock and with her right pushed the ship through.

10. Barcarole 6

Periclymenus.

Tiphys wasn't to sail on. He died far away from home, after a short illness. Butes threw himself into the sea prematurely, his soul melted by the clear ringing voice of the sirens.

exeunt Tiphys, Butes

From there they saw Sthenelus, who had died there after being struck by an arrow. Persephone herself sent forth the spirit of Actor's son which craved with many tears to behold men like himself, even for a moment. He looked just as he had when he went to war. His fair helm with four peaks gleamed with its blood-red crest. And again he entered the vast gloom.

Idmon.

And here destined fate smote Idmon, son of Abas. For in the mead of the ready river lay, cooling his flanks and huge belly in the mud, a white-tusked boar, a deadly monster. But the son of Abas was passing along the raised banks of the muddy river, and the boar leapt from somewhere out of the reed-bed and



hit his thigh with full force: it gashed his thigh and severed in twain the sinews and the bone. Idmon died in his comrades' arms.

exit Idmon

They sped past the land of the Tibareni. Here when wives bring forth children to their husbands, the men lie in bed and groan with their heads close bound; but the women tend them with food and prepare baths for them as they are usual for women in childbed. Next they past the sacred mount and the land where the Mossynoeci dwell. Whatever it is right to do openly before the people, this they do in their homes; but whatever acts we perform at home, these they perform out of doors in the midst of the streets, without causing public outcry. Like swine in a herd they lie on the earth with different women.

11. Fermata 3

Quickly they entered under oars the mighty stream of the river Phasis. On the advice of Argus, Jason bade them enter a shaded backwater and let the ship ride at anchor off shore.

Second Scene – Colchis

Medea, Argonauts,

solo instrumentalists in the auditorium, orchestra, electronics

Aria

A wild landscape with cliffs and trees. A forested area by the road that leads to the Argonauts' camp.

1.1 Aria

Jason: When I stand in before you and behold you,
I am seized by an almost miraculous feeling,
As if I had crossed life's border,
And stood upon an unknown star,
With different laws of being and acting,
And where all that happens is without cause or effect,
Being simply because it is.

1.2 Aria "Da capo"

I have travelled across a wild ocean,
From countries so distant and isolated
That wishes almost did not risk the journey
I arrive prepared for battle,
And I see you, and I feel familiar with you.
This foreign land almost seems a home to me.
And adventurous as I am, I regard this
Without amazement, as if it must be so,
The adventures of this strange land.

And as the strange has become familiar to me.
That which was familiar becomes strange:
I have become a strange object for myself.
Another being thinks and acts within me.

II. *Recitativo accompagnato*

Now come – But there she sits, cheerless and gloomy.
A harsh “no” towards my mild words,
The dagger still in her closed hand.
Away from here!

(Touching her hand and removing the dagger)

Medea *(jumping up)*: Away!

Jason *(holding her back)*: Stay! [...]

Does the woman dare defy the man?

(He holds her arms with both hands.)

Medea *(falling to her knees)*: [...]

(Medea on the ground on one knee, the other supports her arm, she hides her face with her hand.)

(He helps her up, she sits upon a grassy bank.)

Jason: You are not what you pretend to be, Medea!

In vain do you attempt to hide, I know you!

You love, Medea!

(Medea tries to jump up. Jason, pulling her down.)

Stay – You love, Medea!

You love me as I love you! Yes, as I love you!

(He kneels before her.)

Open your eyes and deny it, if you can!

Look at me and say: “No!” You love, Medea!

(He holds her hands and turns her, against her resistance, towards him, looks her in the face.)

You weep! In vain, I know no mercy!

Look in my eyes and say: “No”! – You love!

I love you, and you love me! Say it, Medea!

(He has turned her around to face him completely. Her eye meets his.

She looks him deeply in the eyes.)

Your eyes have said it, now let the tongue follow!

Speak it aloud, Medea, say it: I love!

Is it so difficult? I will teach it to you, my child.

Speak after me: I love you!

(He pulls her towards himself; following his pull, she hides her face on his breast.)

– And still no word!

(To Medea.)

But you, who lies here silent and trembling.

Your face turned away, so full of menace,

Farewell! We part forever.

There was a moment when I believed

That you could feel, that you could do more than hate.

She won't. Well then. So be it!

You will never see me again in this world,

Goodbye, Medea, forever goodbye!

(He leaves quickly.)

Medea *(turning to face him and holding her arm out after him)*: Jason!

Franz Grillparzer, Die Argonauten, from act 3, scene 2



Third Scene – Finale (Corinth)*Medea, Child 1, Child 2,**solo instrumentalists and marching band in the auditorium, orchestra***Medea**

E che? Io son Medea! Io sono madre
e li lascio in vita? Che mai fu?
Dove son? Son ciechi gli occhi miei!

Pei figli di Giason
potrei aver pietà?

Son figli miei! ...

Se sono figli a me,
padre è Giasone a loro!

Infelice! Infelice!

Come puoi tu pensar d'esser madre?
Come puoi ascoltar
del cor la voce arcane?

Come mai puoi sentir

materne ebbrezze al cor?

Or che far? Ah! Vo' fuggir! ...

**Io lascio i figli miei,
il sangue mio diletto,**

in man del infame!

Preceder ei mi può,
può ferir pria di me!

Medea

But how? I am Medea! Me, a mother,
letting them live? What happened?
Where are they [Where am I]? My
eyes are blind!

Me pity Jason's children?

They are my children! ...

If they are my children,
then Jason is their father!

Unhappy me! Unhappy me!

How can you think to be a mother?
How can you listen to the voice of
your heart?

How could you wish to harbour
motherly love in your heart?

What is to be done? Oh! I will flee! ...

I will leave my children,
my beloved blood

in the power of the dishonourable!

He may precede me,
may strike before me!

**No! Compirò l'impresa
che il fato mi diè!**

Oh, fosca Erinni! Implacabile Dea!

Distruggi nel mio sen

l'amore e la pietà!

Rendi il pugnol
che di man mi sfuggì!

Ben io scordar farò
un vile istante sol d'incertezza!

Oh debil cor! **Tremante man!**

Non sempre tu sarai dubbiosa!

La sposa di Giason

da lui appreso avrà

a non tremar d'alcun delitto!

No, giammai, no,

non trionfi l'amor!

*(Giungono dalla reggia grida
di terrore disperato.)*

Coro (dentro)

Oh Dei, pietà di noi!

Orribile vendetta!

Orror! Traditi siam!

Oh feroce vision!

No, I shall do the deed
that fate has given me.

Oh, dire Erynis! Unforgiving Goddess!

Destroy in my breast

love and pity!

Give me back the dagger
that slipped from my hand!

I shall forget for ever the one cowardly
moment of hesitation!

Oh weak heart! Trembling hand!

You shall not hesitate for ever!

Jason's bride

will have learned from him not to
shrink back from any crime!

No, no, never,

shall love triumph!

*(Screams of terror and despair
from the palace)*

Chorus (within)

Oh gods, have mercy upon us!

Terrible revenge!

Horror! We are betrayed!

Oh horrible to behold!

Medea (*con gioia selvaggia*)

Oh grido di dolor!

Oh voce dolce al cor!

Dolce al cor più del canto!

Giasone (*dentro*)

Trista Glauce fedel,
qual crudel sorte, ahimè,
questo amor diede a te!

Coro (*dentro*)

Muoia la fosca maga!
O sacra folgor, piomba!

Giasone (*dentro*)

Qual misfatto crudel
te condanna a morire,
e strappa a me la tua carezza!

Medea

Tu Clauce piangi sol,
spietato! E i figli tuoi? ...
A lor non pensi più?
Scordato hai forse tu
ch'ei sono in mio potere?
Risparmia lor più lunghi pianti ancor!

Medea (*wildly jubilant*)

Oh scream of pain!

Oh voice, sweet to the heart, to the
heart sweeter than song!

Jason (*within*)

Unhappy faithful Glauce,
what a horrible fate, alas,
my love has brought over you!

Chorus (*within*)

May the sinister sorceress die!
O holy bolt, come down!

Jason (*within*)

What horrible deed
condemns you to death
and tears away from you my love!

Medea

You are only mourning Glauce,
horrible! And your children? ...
Have you forgotten them?
Have you forgotten
that they are under my power?
Save longer laments for them!

No, sospettar non puoi
dove andrà la vendetta!
Non più dubbiezze né timor;
Sorpassar io mi vo',
vo'compir l'opra mia funesta!

**Atre Furie, volate me,
la man a piombar già s'appresta!**
Atre Furie, atre Furie, **a me!**

Date, orsù, questo sangue!
A me, figli miei, ch'io v'uccida!

(Medea corre a chiudersi nel tempio.)

Als sacro fiume io vo.
Colà ti aspetta l'ombra mia.

No, you have no idea
where my revenge will lead!
No doubts or fears any more,
I will outdo myself,
will complete my deadly work!
Dismal furies, fly to me,
my hand is ready to strike.
Ghastly furies, ghastly furies,
to me!
On, give me this blood!
To me, my children, that I might
kill you!

*(Medea hurries into the temple and
locks herself in.)*

I go to the holy river.
There my shadow shall await you.

*Medea's monologue from the 3rd act of Cherubini's opera Médée (1797)
in the Italian translation by Carlo Zangarini (1909); the passages highlighted
in bold are quoted by Hans Thomalla.*

Hush, Little Baby

Hush, little baby, don't say a word,
Mama's going to buy you a mockingbird.

If that mockingbird won't sing,
Mama's going to buy you a diamond ring.

If that diamond ring turns brass,
Mama's going to buy you a looking glass.

If that looking glass gets broke,
Mama's going to buy you a billy goat.

If that billy goat won't pull,
Mama's going to buy you a cart and bull.

If that cart and bull turn over,
Mama's going to buy you a dog named Rover.

If that dog named Rover won't bark,
Mama's going to buy you a horse and cart.

If that horse and cart fall down,
You'll still be the sweetest little boy in town.

So hush little baby, don't cry,
Daddy loves you and so do I.

American Lullaby

Epilogue

Argonauts

Jason
I Jason
Jason I

myself

am me myself

I



The Composer Hans Thomalla Talks about His Opera FREMD

Sergio Morabito: Hans Thomalla, let me ask you first about the various instrumental groups in your score and their spatial disposition.

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Composition sketch

Hans Thomalla: In general operatic singers perform on a box set stage. The audience is seated opposite the stage – separated by the famous fourth wall –, and the orchestra is in the pit. One theme of my piece is ‘opera’ as an institution and as an art form. If I want to tell a story in which this order becomes fragile, starts to drift and finally disintegrates, then the spatial order has to be part of this, too. So I distribute various instruments around the audience: percussion, three solo wind instruments (trombone, trumpet and saxophone) and a marching band, which sits in the royal box. They undermine the traditional spatial hierarchy and represent in the first instance a kind of alternate world that attacks the world of the Argonauts. This setup has not only the dramaturgical function of narrating the story, it also has an aesthetic function. If you are sitting in the auditorium and the music is being performed around you, then you are really sitting in the midst of the action, in a literal sense. It was very important to me to create this listening experience, an experience that I found so fascinating in Helmut Lachenmann’s *Das Mädchen mit den Schwefelhölzern*. Lachenmann took his cue from Nono’s *Prometeo*, who explicitly refers to the architecture of auditory perception.

The various sound levels interact very plastically, and the marching band wanders onto the stage in the course of the first scene.

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The spatial disposition of the instruments is indeed a central structural element of the first scene. To give an example: the scene begins as a 'recitativo secco', that is, there are chords, and a singer declaims the text. But the chords from the pit are not a discrete accompaniment, but rather a cementation of ordered sound: extreme chords that span the entire harmonic spectrum. The music for the instruments in the auditorium is the exact opposite: glissandi, soft fades, beatings, no clearly contoured rhythm or pitch articulation, a constant flux – an ocean, as it were, in which the Argonauts find themselves. The orchestral chords are like oar strokes with which the Argonauts strike into this natural world. There is flotsam, too, that's what I called it in my sketches: suddenly chords or rhythms appear, the Argonauts' waste products, so to speak. But this clear point of departure – extremely ordered sound from the pit and extreme flux from the auditorium – is upended in the course of the first scene. The natural world through which the Argonauts' cruise becomes more and more orderly, right up to the extreme of the Symplegades, the 'sheer cliffs', which I interpret not as an untamed force of nature, but on the contrary as a man-made force of nature. The Symplegades chords, which arise gradually from the orchestra in the auditorium as huge beats, are basically gigantic echoes of the chords from the pit.

The sheer cliffs in the saga of the Argonauts move towards each other and threaten to smash the Argo to pieces as it enters the Black Sea. What led you to Apollonius' relatively unknown text?

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Heiner Müller's *Landschaft mit Argonauten*. And eventually Heiner Müller's sources interested me more than his text. Grillparzer, for example, who develops a critique of the enlightenment. And then the first extant narrative of the *Argonautica* by Apollonius, which is already a critique of the epic and treats Homer's narrative ironically. It is very interesting to see the idea of the hero do an aboutface, and that the so-called heroes are actually complete anti-heroes who are never in control of their destiny, but rather roamers, adrift and aimless. In addition to the individual episodes of the journey, the external form of the catalogue of heroes in Apollonius' *Argonautica* appealed to me. I found here a perfect example of an attempt at totally ordering reality. The list of the heroes is really a catalogue, a telephone book, as it were, that becomes absurd because many of the qualities attributed to the heroes don't matter any more. Or the heroes are allocated ironic predicates that show they are actually not suited to the journey. And so I gave each hero a musical label or 'jingle'.

You worked closely with individual members of the Stuttgart chorus to find these.

Yes. The idea of the hero in opera is occupied by the heroic tenor, or at least by a soloist who has some unique aspect. I wondered how to represent this 'other' idea of the hero from the Argonautica in the allocation of the roles and in the way the singers sing. I always knew that the Argonauts are a collective, so they were to be given the role of a chorus and not individual roles, or to be more precise: the chorus as soloist. That's how I had the idea of meeting up with each and every singer, with all the men and with the altos, too, who are breeches roles. I asked each singer to sing something that interested him or her above and beyond the operatic chorus repertoire.

These elements then became a departure point for your composition.

I quote them or allude to them. The Silcher settings are quoted almost literally, and there are chansons, Bach cantatas and moments that are clearly borrowed from Wagner, Verdi, Puccini or from *Die Fledermaus*. But not intact, always as if frayed at the edges. Like with the heroes of Apollonius you can sense that they've been through a lot. Gradually these vocal identities become caught up in the momentum of the journey. In the end none of the Argonauts really knows who he actually is. By abandoning their own specific vocal characteristics they form a group identity with a kind of homogenous sound: a chorus has come into being.

You took the title of this first scene from Richard Sennett?

In Sennett's book *The Corrosion of Character* from the late 1990s he describes tattered biographies of the so-called New Economy. His analysis can be directly applied to the financial crisis and what it does to people. I actually found these biographies from all walks of life interesting and a very good description of the situation I found myself in as an artist. Artists today don't have as much to do with rigid authority regulating and restricting the individual as it was experienced by the generation of artists before us; we are exposed to a nebulous drift of our own circumstances, a drift of the conditions for our own work and also a drift in our own biographies. Like the Argonauts, who really don't have a chance to be genuine heroes, but who drift through an environment on which they have hardly any influence and that they can't figure out.

Nevertheless, you repeatedly fan out the vocal collective in the second scene by using certain soloistic vocal actions.

The second scene begins where the first scene left off, in an extreme collective sound. But then there is a break, suddenly you hear quotes, fragments of choruses from Cherubini's *Medea*. As if this group, which feels completely insecure in this foreign county, falls back on that which seems to them to be the most accessible identity, i.e. all these stereotyped set-pieces from the operatic repertoire. It is like a conditioned reflex.

How would you define the relationship between the Argonauts, their leader Jason and Medea?

It is always the relationship between a male group and an individual woman: high soprano against 16 basses. Jason functions on several occasions as the *primus inter pares*, but never as a soloistic heroic baritone in the sense of the operatic genres. He is the leader who steps out from the chorus, for example when he delivers the long Grillparzer monologue.

*How much freedom do you give him as speaker of this text?
May he recite it like an actor?*

The second scene has two large sections. The first is the 'aria' and 'aria Da capo' and the second is the 'recitativo accompagnato'. You can see that I intentionally use operatic forms and schemes dialectically. The 'aria' in *Fremd* is defined by vocal and non-linguistic articulation, all forms of noise articulation and so on, and it makes its way towards song. Jason's speaking is always integrated in a musically determined time structure. It is the other way around in the 'recitativo accompagnato', however, the music follows the speaker for a while, until here, too, the temporal corset of a musical setting takes effect.

One moment of this encounter is the Argonauts' big glissando which goes beyond the range of the 16 basses.

That is my attempt at musically expressing the loss of self-determination. Jason says: I myself have become another in this strange land.

This release from his own identity has, it must be said, a euphoric aspect.

It is ambivalent. There is something infinitely liberating about it, but it also brings danger: what takes the place of this identity? Pitch and rhythm define the core of western music's identity. A prolonged glissando undermines both. Time is no longer articulated, because everything is in flux, pitch cannot be differentiated, and suddenly the basses are singing falsetto in the descant register.

This loss of control is intolerable ...

... and they try to use Medea as a means to an end, to steal the Golden Fleece.

There follows an interlude for orchestra as an intermezzo.

I have spent nearly seven years on this opera. Very early on I started wondering how a large form can be imaginable in the theatre where a linear narrative has become meaningless in relation to our reality, and where a clear order of formal elements, arias and ensembles and so on, no longer makes any sense. How can a large form be conceived under such circumstances? It became clear to me: only by confronting the various formal elements with each other. And one important formal element along with aria, recitative or a cappella choral movement, is a purely orchestral movement, the overture in a traditional sense, or the interlude. And quite early on I was sure that I would put the interlude between the second and third scenes. Of course it stands in the tradition of the symphonic interlude as an 'epic bridge'. In the story, ten years pass.

From the flight with the Golden Fleece from Colchis up to the return to Iolcos in Greece and the subsequent flight to Corinth.

The intermezzo was an attempt to deal with the idyllic aspect of the string sound. Before, there has been a lot 'going on', to put it quite simply: it is loud. Just as the Argonauts are drawn into the maelstrom of all these experiences, the listener, who is sitting between the marching band, the auditorium musicians, the percussionists and so on, is drawn into a maelstrom of often very rough, violent acoustic events. Here, in the Intermezzo the sound should come to rest. And these ten years are actually the only happy time that Medea and Jason have together. During the flight the two children are born. I found that to be symptomatic, that the time where they find inner

peace together is the time of the flight. The orchestral piece describes this inner peace in constant movement. So it is an inner peace that never becomes quite complete. The strings play constant glissandi, not only the pitch, the bow positions are in constant movement, there are transitions into a breathy flautando, and back again. Amongst all this, chords represent 'buoys' or 'lighthouses'—moments of orientation. Chords from Medea's final aria from the second scene appear as memories, only to move off in another direction. It is an attempt to deal with the operatic tradition of the idyll, but precisely as an anti-idyll.

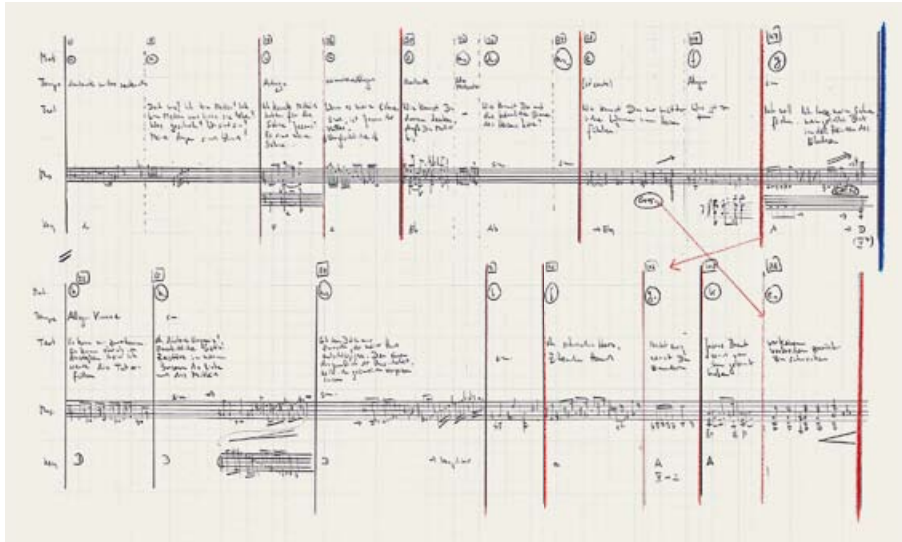
And after the idyll comes the catastrophe?

Yes, of course. The third scene is also an attempt to deal with the various operatic formal elements. It is clearly modelled on Cherubini's famous monologue for Medea before she murders her children. I have always read this scene – as terrific as it is – in the iconic interpretation by Maria Callas as being stereotypical.

By that you mean, if I am not mistaken, a compendium of emphatic emotional gestures and their rhetoric?

Yes, the 19th century operatic tradition.

Although these can be traced beyond epochs, national schools and genres.



Compositions sketch, 3rd scene

That's right – some of my contemporaries still make use of these resources. I have always read the pathos displayed in the gestures as a kind of external determination over Medea. In Corinth she is forced into a self-definition and self-representation which isn't really her own. The perspective I gained by reading the text you gave me on Medea in Corinth ...

... Albrecht Dihle's analysis of Euripides' Medea as a "tragedy of passion", a view that is based on a mistranslation, one might even say 'occidental misinterpretation' ...

... this analysis was fundamental to me while composing the piece. Precisely because Medea does not act out of despair or overpowering emotions, but because she takes the rationality of the society she comes across to an extreme. The murder of the children is the radical consequence of external determination and foreign definition of purpose. That is why I see the murder of the children, as it happens in the opera, in the broadest sense as the destruction of a culture. As the destruction of an entire operatic language through its radicalisation as functionally rational display of emotional clichés. The coloratura passages that race up and down mechanically and compress all multiplicity of sound and expression into a primitive chromatic chain continue an attitude that Medea encounters when she meets the Argonauts at the beginning, in the second scene. The catastrophe not as an overemotional eruption, but as something extremely mechanical. While composing I imagined a centrifuge turning mechanically around itself until it eventually breaks apart.

The coloratura passages at the end become so big and so broad that their mechanical chains absorb all forms of sound, right up to brutal noise, sound clusters, chords from the first part, individual words and, finally, silence.

The children – you were wondering whether to let them speak at all. In a normal performance of Medea these roles are ‘covered’ by extras.

I had the feeling something wasn't quite right there. What are we to do with the children? For Medea they become objects, objects for her revenge or whatever: she instrumentalises them for the functional rationality I described earlier. In the context of musical emotionality it seemed almost mandatory to include the children, and have two proper ‘numbers’, where they can function as child performers with all the artificial naivety and innocence we associate with the cliché ‘child’. They twice sing a children's song, but it is a children's song that the mother sings to her children: *Hush, little Baby*.

And here, too we experience an increasing mechanisation of certain singing techniques that one usually sees as an expression of authenticity. In the end the lullaby stops on an octave. A song that somehow comes to a halt.

Some thoughts on the electronics, playback tapes, the loudspeakers and microphones?

In the second scene there is a recording I made in Georgia, where Colchis once was, on the coast where the Argonauts perhaps landed. It is nature in the broadest sense, the noise of civilisation, lots of cars driving by, and so on.

The recording is heard and for one moment it becomes an acoustic space confronting the Argonauts. As far as live electronics are concerned, some instruments and some of the Argonauts are equipped with microphones. They are either unnaturally amplified or the sound comes from a loudspeaker which is in a different position to the singer, a dislocation, as it were. A very curious moment of loss of identity through technology, in other words, by an apparatus that the Argonauts bring with them. To put it simply: all of this technology they have goes crazy, goes against their intentions and starts to lead a life of its own. Just as Heracles' oar breaks in the first scene. Similarly the acoustic technology in the second scene falls apart.

Where did the idea of finishing with an a cappella chorus come from?

The destruction that has taken place throws the protagonist back on himself, and he no longer has any instruments at hand that obey him. So in a very literal sense he has no orchestra in which he is embedded. Vocally, he is totally naked – with no instrument. And, at the same time, individuality has suffered an injury so that collective music is now the only possible sound. No single performer is able to speak for himself any more. The Argonauts are only able to come to anything like expression very slowly. They have to start from scratch. ‘Scratch’ is the test tone that is left over at the end of the third scene amongst all the ruins, the test tone we know from television. That gives them an initial pitch and by cautiously joining together individual tones they create something like language. In a way it is actually a positive end. It doesn't end in ruins; the ruins are carefully put together again.

III.

(C)

1:31

2/3 (2)

2

3

4

2

4

Modes

A handwritten musical score consisting of five staves. The top staff contains a melodic line with various notes and rests. The second staff contains a more complex rhythmic or harmonic line with many notes and stems. The third staff is labeled 'Modes' and contains a line of notes. The bottom two staves contain dense handwritten notes and symbols, possibly representing a figured bass or a specific performance technique. The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines. There are several annotations in red ink, including a circled 'X' in the second staff and a circled 'X' in the third staff. The overall appearance is that of a working draft or sketch.

59

80

4-2 T-1

Hans Thomalla

Born in Bonn in 1975, Hans Thomalla studied composition at Frankfurt's music and performing arts university Hochschule für Musik und darstellende Kunst. Following his studies, he went to Stuttgart Opera House where he worked as Production Dramaturg and Musical Consultant from 1999 to 2002. From 2002 to 2007 he continued his studies as a DAAD and Stanford University grant recipient under Brian Ferneyhough in Stanford, California, graduating with a Doctorate of Musical Arts. Since September 2007 he has been on the Composition faculty of Northwestern University in Chicago.

Hans Thomalla has received numerous composition prizes including the Kranichstein Music Prize, the Christoph Delz Prize as well as Stanford University's Geballe Dissertation Prize which comes with a one-year stay at Stanford Humanities Center. He received grants from the MacDowell Colony, New Hampshire, and the SWR-Experimentalstudio.

Portraits of his music were presented at the Paris Festival d'Automne, at the Darmstadt International Summer Courses for New Music, at the Festival Sommer in Stuttgart and at Zurich's new music festival Züricher Tage für Neue Musik. Wergo released a CD with Hans Thomalla's chamber music performed by the ensemble recherche and Lucas Fels on its contemporary music label Edition Zeitgenössische Musik.

In 2011 Hans Thomalla was awarded the Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation's Young Composer Prize



Annette Seiltgen, Soprano

Annette Seiltgen began her career as a mezzo-soprano at Staatstheater Kassel. After this she moved to Munich's Staatstheater am Gärtnerplatz, and this was followed by a one-year appointment at the opera house Deutsche Oper am Rhein Düsseldorf/Duisburg. At this time she sang key mezzo-soprano roles including Brangäne (*Tristan und Isolde*), Sesto (*La clemenza di Tito*), Octavian (*Der Rosenkavalier*) and Venus (*Tannhäuser*). She made guest performances on German stages such as Mannheim, Dortmund, Hannover, Essen, Leipzig, Stuttgart and Munich and international guest performances in Madrid, Nice, Santiago de Chile, Amsterdam, Strasbourg and Buenos Aires. Concert work included recordings with the German broadcasters ZDF, Hessischer Rundfunk and Bayerischer Rundfunk as well as Vara Radio Amsterdam. After her change in specialization soprano roles followed like Leonore (*Fidelio*), Cassandra (*Les Troyens*) as well as the main role in *Salome* at Staatstheater Mainz. She sang this role in 2010/11 at the Komische Oper Berlin. In Stuttgart she sings Medea in the premiere staging of *Fremd*.

Stephan Storck, Bass

After graduating from high school Stephan Storck initially studied school music but then changed to the artistic majors music theory, composition and singing. 1988 saw him embark on a postgraduate in composition under Helmut Lachenmann. He was a grant recipient for composition from the study foundation Studienstiftung Baden-Württemberg and Indiana University Bloomington, USA. He took on solo engagements at such venues as the Landestheater Detmold and at Oper Leipzig. Since 1996 he has been a member of the

operatic choir Staatsoperchor Stuttgart. 2006 saw him sing the role of Jason at the Forum Neues Musiktheater in Hans Thomalla's *Fremd*, a fragment of the opera premiered in 2011. His composition *Melophonie – Musik für zwölf Instrumentalisten* was premiered at one of the chamber concerts of the state orchestra in Stuttgart. In 2010/11 Stephan Storck once again sings the role of Jason in the premiere staging of *Fremd*.

Julia Spaeth, Soprano

Born in Donaueschingen, Julia Spaeth completed her Lied Diploma (2009) and her Opera Diploma (2010) under Prof. Ingrid Kremling at the Hamburg's music and theater university Hochschule für Musik und Theater Hamburg. Her studies continued in Natalie Karl's soloists' class/opera school at Stuttgart's music and performing arts university Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst Stuttgart. She followed master classes under Angela Denoke, Sonia Turchetta and Robert Gambill. In 2010 she received a grant from the foundation Richard-Wagner-Stiftung Bayreuth. Spaeth received the 1st prize in the Mozart competition from the Hamburg foundation Absalom-Stiftung (2004), 1st prize in the Elise Meyer Competition (2006) and the promotional prize of the Walter and Charlotte Hamel Foundation as part of the music week Maritim Musikwoche 2006. In the role of Serpetta (*La finta giardiniera*) by W. A. Mozart she performed at the Wilhelma Theater Stuttgart in February 2011. She played different guest roles at Osnabrück municipal theaters Städtische Bühnen Osnabrück, at the Eutiner Festspiele festival and at Hamburg's state opera house Staatsoper Hamburg. At Stuttgart's opera house Oper Stuttgart she sings one of the two children in the premiere staging of Hans Thomalla's *Fremd*.

Carlos Zapien, Tenor

Carlos Zapien was born in Sonora, Mexico, where he initially studied piano and organ. 2002 saw him embark on singing studies in Oregon under Erich Mentzel moving in 2007 to the Stuttgart's music and performing arts university Staatliche Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst Stuttgart under Prof. Francisco Araiza (singing) and Robert Hiller (correpetition). 2007 saw his European debut as Belfiore (*La finta giardiniera*) with Gotha's philharmonic Thüringen Philharmonie Gotha. This was followed by Alfred (*Die Fledermaus*) in Jena and Pisa. Concerts took him to Austria, Mexico, Taiwan and the USA. 2009 saw him make guest performances as Jarba in Jommelli's *Didone abbandonata* with Stuttgart's classical philharmonic Klassische Philharmonie Stuttgart under Frieder Bernius. In the 2009/10 season Zapien was a member of the Opernstudio at Oper Stuttgart and he appeared in two opera productions, in the role of Don Curzio (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Ruiz (*Il trovatore*), Niko (*Gegen die Wand*) as well as in the premiere line-up of the production *Pinocchio's Abenteuer* as Mason and Arlecchino. In 2010/11 he sings one of the two children in the premiere staging of *Fremd*.

Johannes Kalitzke, Director

Johannes Kalitzke studied church music, piano, direction and composition. 1984 saw his first engagement at the Musiktheater im Revier Gelsenkirchen (Chief Director 1988–90), in 1986 he was head of Forum für Neue Musik, in 1991 he was Artistic Director and Conductor at the MusikFabrik (Landesensemble NRW). He performed regularly as guest conductor with ensembles (Klangforum Wien, Ensemble Modern), symphony orchestras (NDR, SWR,

BBC, RSO-Wien, Sinfonietta Basel) and at festivals (Salzburger Festspiele, Wiener Festwochen, Steirischer Herbst, Münchener Biennale, Dresdner Festspiele). Johannes Kalitzke is an internationally acclaimed expert of contemporary music and has conducted numerous premieres (including Misato Mochizuki's *Die große Bäckereiattacke* in Lucerne, Vienna and Tokyo), as well as the premiere of his own compositions (*Bericht vom Tod des Musikers Jack Tiergarten* at the 1996 Münchener Biennale, *Molière oder die Henker des Komödianten* at Theater Bremen in 1998 as well as *Inferno* at this same venue in 2005, in addition to *Die Besessenen* at Theater an der Wien in 2010). He was Musical Director in Stuttgart in *Giuseppe e Sylvia* in 2000/01, in *Prima* in 2009/10 and in *Fremd* in 2010/11/12.

Michael Alber, Choir

Michael Alber comes from Tuttlingen and after his studies (piano, conducting and jazz in Stuttgart, Trossingen and Vienna) he initially worked as a répétiteur and teacher of choral and orchestral conducting at the Stuttgart und Trossingen music academies. In 1993 he started as Deputy Choir Director and since 2001 he has been First Choir Director at Staatsoper Stuttgart. In a critics' survey conducted by the opera magazine *Opernwelt* the choir of this state opera was already voted 'Opera Choir of the Year' as many as eight times. In addition to his opera and choral symphonic repertoire he also fosters Early Music, a cappella music and works of the avantgarde. Michael Alber conducts many premieres – most recently the premiere of Stephan Storck's *Melophonie* in the 2nd chamber concert of Stuttgart's state orchestra Staatsorchester Stuttgart during the 2008/09 season. He also conducted Hans Thomalla's preview of *Fremd* at the Forum Neues Musiktheater at Staatsoper Stuttgart

as well as Schmucki and Roth premieres at the new chamber music festival Wittener Tage für neue Kammermusik and the Lucerne festival Luzerner Festwochen. With the chamber choir RIAS Kammerchor he held a Brahms evening in Brussels. In addition to his work at Staatsoper Stuttgart he has had obligations conducting concerts, with productions and at many rehearsals with the SWR-Vokalensemble and the choirs of the NDR and the Bayerischer Rundfunk for many years now. In the summer semester of 2012 Michael Alber will be Professor for Choir Conducting at Trossingen music academy Musikhochschule Trossingen.

Andreas Breitscheid

Andreas Breitscheid first studied percussion at Cologne's state university of music Staatliche Hochschule für Musik Köln under Christof Caskel followed by composition under Luigi Nono in Venice and then under Alvis Vidolin at the local conservatory for electronic music. In 1984 he received a Heinrich Strobel Foundation grant from the broadcaster Südwestfunk at the Freiburg Experimentalstudio. As Nono's assistant he amongst other things coordinated the premiere of *Prometeo* at the 1984 Venice Biennale and in 1986 the premiere of *Risonanze Erranti* at WDR Cologne. From 2000 to 2002 he returned to studies of music and media technology under Karlheinz Essl at SAMT (Studio for Advanced Media Technology) in Linz, as well as in 2001 and 2002 at the IRCAM in Paris. He produced his own compositions focusing amongst other things on theater and stage scores. Detailed knowledge of acoustics as well as electronic sound modification and processing has made him a sought-after specialist in this field. As a Sound Director he has supervised numerous premieres and productions at international opera houses and festivals such as

Oper Frankfurt, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Teatro alla Scala in Milan, Staatstheater Stuttgart, Théâtre de la Monnaie Brussels, Bolshoi Theater Moscow, Vienna's Staatsoper, Opera Bastille in Paris, Semperoper Dresden, Venice Biennale, Salzburger Festspiele and Festival d'Automne Paris. From 2003 to 2006 he was Artistic Director of the Forum Neues Musiktheater at Staatsoper Stuttgart where he has also worked since 1992 as Artistic Assistant. Since 2006 Breitscheid has worked as a Media Technology Consultant and in the employ of William Forsythe and has, since 2008, held courses at Munich's theater school Bayerische Theaterakademie 'August Everding' in the field of theater and new media.

Staatsorchester Stuttgart

With its over 400-year history Württemberg's state opera Staatsorchester Stuttgart is one of the oldest and most tradition-rich bodies of musicians in Germany. Every year it can be enjoyed in over 200 ballet and opera performances per season as well as in a symphony and chamber concert series at Stuttgart's Liederhalle venue. Furthermore, the orchestra is intensifying its presence in the field of vocal-instrumental chamber music as part of a *Lied* (song) series in collaboration with the Hugo-Wolf-Akademie. Star conductors like Carlos Kleiber, Vaclav Neumann, Silvio Varviso, Janos Kulka, Dennis Russell Davies, García Navarro, Gabriele Ferro, Lothar Zagrosek and Manfred Honeck have influenced the orchestra as Musical Directors and Kapellmeister over the last decades and are thus amongst the line-up of conductors leading the orchestra in the first half of the 20th century. From the 2012/13 season Sylvain Cambreling will take on the role of Chief Musical Director at Staatsorchester Stuttgart.

Already early on, the Staatsorchester transposed the findings of historic performance practice into its operatic productions. The stylistic brilliance of the Staatsorchester is not least also expressed in a long list of key performances of contemporary music including Luigi Nono's *Al gran sole carico d'amore* and Helmut Lachenmann's *Das Mädchen mit den Schwefelhölzern*. In 2002 the Staatsorchester was voted 'Orchestra of the Year' by the magazine *Opernwelt*. This 'innovative tradition' reaches right back into the 19th century: in addition to the German premiere of Verdi's *Falstaff* in Stuttgart it was one of the first orchestras in Germany to stage its own production of the entire *Ring cycle*, *Ring des Nibelungen*. The tradition carried on with the premiere of *Ariadne auf Naxos* under Richard Strauss in 1912, the premieres of Paul Hindemith's one-act pieces in 1921 and the German premiere of Hindemith's opera *Mathis der Maler*. Premieres of past decades include works by Carl Orff, Krzysztof Penderecki, Philipp Glass, Hans Zender, Rolf Riehm, Wolfgang Rihm, Adriana Hölszky, Gérard Pesson and Hans Thomalla.

Staatsopernchor Stuttgart

The Staatsopernchor Stuttgart is one of the most successful opera choirs in Europe. Already eight times now its 73 singers were voted 'Opera Choir of the Year' by the specialist magazine *Opernwelt* – most recently in 2011 for their outstanding achievements in the premiere of Hans Thomalla's opera *Fremd*. Prior to this they were voted the best opera choir in 1999, 2000, and 2001 under Prof. Ulrich Eistert as well as in 2002, 2003, 2005 and 2006 under Michael Alber. In addition to appearances at Stuttgart's opera house Oper Stuttgart the choir also regularly performs in concerts alongside the city's state orchestra Staatsorchester Stuttgart.

The Staatsopernchor Stuttgart is one of the oldest opera choirs in Germany: the 'Hofkapelle' or court orchestra was already mentioned in 1552 under Herzog Christoph and grew between 1736 and 1750 to include nine choir singers and eleven choir boys for opera performances. Worth mentioning in more recent times are the scenic premieres of Nono's *Intolleranza 1960* and *Al gran sole carico d'amore* as well as Lachenmann's *Das Mädchen mit den Schwefelhölzern*, in addition to the world premiere of Adriana Hölszky's *Giuseppe e Sylvia*. In the last decades the Staatsopernchor was conducted by Heinz Mende (1946–1980), Ulrich Eistert (1980–2001) and Michael Alber (2001–2012). From the 2012/13 season Johannes Knecht will follow on as new Choral Conductor at Oper Stuttgart. The history of the Staatsopernchor is also marked by intense collaborations with outstanding directors, including more recently Peter Konwitschny, Martin Kušej, Jossi Wieler and Sergio Morabito and in past decades Günther Rennert and Wieland Wagner. Performances of Luigi Nono's *Intolleranza 1960* and *Al gran sole carico d'amore*, Arnold Schönberg's *Moses und Aron*, Richard Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*, *Parsifal* and *Der fliegende Holländer*, Franz Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten* or Fromental Halévy's *La Juive* particularly highlighted the vocal and performing qualities of the Staatsopernchor. Hans Thomalla also dedicated to this choir the first scene of his opera *Fremd* which premiered in 2011.

The Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation's Young Composers Prize

The Ernst von Siemens Music Prize, awarded for composers, performers and musicologists of note who have made an outstanding contribution to the international music scene, is just one award made by the Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation. Each year, beginning in 1990, the Foundation has awarded three prizes to promising young composers to foster their talent. The prize winners so far have been from over twenty countries, and the list includes such well-known names as Beat Furrer, Enno Poppe, Olga Neuwirth, Jörg Widmann und Mark Andre.

In cooperation with outstanding contemporary music ensembles and soloists and with the public broadcasting networks, the Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation began presenting the work of this up-and-coming generation of composers in a series of CDs from the Vienna label col legno in 2011. In many cases this is the first opportunity the composers have had to present recordings of works for larger ensembles. Each CD is conceived as an individual portrait of the prize winner, whose artistic position is presented to the international public by way of introductory comments, analysis and additional background information.

Over time, the Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation's CD series will unfold a broad panorama of serious contemporary music, discovering and documenting current developments.

In 2012, portrait CDs of the following composers will be appearing:



Steven Daverson



Héctor Parra



Hans Thomalla



Luke Bedford



Zeynep Gedizlioglu



Ulrich A. Kreppin

For further information please go to:
www.evs-musikstiftung.ch and www.col-legno.com