

Crossroads/Sho-w

2013
20'48"

for flute, viola, oboe, double bass, sho and synthetic voices

Crossroads/Sho-W is a dialogue between two different cultures, which connect through music; communicate with each other."

As indicated, the quartet Crossroads/Sho-w is both a summary and a continuation of the four solo works Path, Lane, Street and Avenue. The same instrumentalists play together this time. In the solo pieces, the instrumentalist was accompanied by specific sounds; for example, the oboe by humming drums. In the quartet, this concept is abandoned. This time, it is no longer about the movement; a journey, but about the arrival in two worlds: the Western and the Japanese.

Whereas the four solo pieces were about sung melodies, now it is the sound processes of the Japanese instrument Sho, a kind of wooden mouth organ with bamboo pipes, played by Naomi Sato. These sounds are changed electronically. In some passages of Crossroads/Sho-w, the Sho is played live: the guest who comes forward from the audience accompanies the quartet.

The Japanese atmosphere is also emphasised by synthetic vocal sounds, which are usually used for Manga productions, generated by the software programme Vocaloid. The vocal sounds have their origin in Japanese. The Manga culture that is often exaggerated and artificially manifested in Comic Strips contrasts sharply with the classical traditional Gagaku, the music of the Japanese court, in which Sho is played. This contrast is one of the arcs of tension in Crossroads/Sho-w.

Following Japanese words were used:

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| 1. 交差点 | Kōsaten | crossing |
| 太陽 | Taiyō | sun |
| (運行 | un·kō | movement, circulation |
| 動き | Ugoki | movement, travel |
| 2. 巷路 | kō·ji | path, road |
| 道 | michi | bumpy road |
| ストリート | sutorito (storita) | street |
| 3. 大通り | Ōdōri | avenue |
| 4. 歌曲 | Kakyoku | melody, song |
| 5. 疎外 | Sogai | alienation |
| 6. 独楽 | Koma | spinning top |
| 7. 回りくどい | Mawarikudo | roundabout |
| 道 | michi | street |

通り	Tōri	street
メロディー	Merodī	melody

Spoken text:

待っている	Matte iru	to wait, hope
交差点	Kōsaten	crossing
記	Nikki (nichi)	diary

Crossroads/Sho-w is a quiet, meditative, sometimes fragile composition, which is therefore deliberately written in one style and needs few highlights. Crossroads/Sho-w takes the listener into its own individual, sometimes quirky exotic sound world. The sound spectrum of the Sho and the traditional chords act as an impulse. With or without electronic means, musical structures emerge, which the quartet either interprets and responds to or develops further. In this way, the Sho forms the sound source, which partly generates the final music. However, the quartet can also play its own sound process, to which the Sho then responds. In this way, Crossroads/Sho-w is a dialogue between two different cultures, which connect through music and communicate with each other.

Crossroads/Sho-w is a composition in its own right that, while referring to the earlier works, opens up new musical spaces. For me, it is the logical and necessary conclusion to the entire Crossroads project. This conclusion not only places the four solo pieces in a different light; in Crossroads/Street, Japanese influences could already be heard through the playing of the Shakuhachi. Other connections/crossroads are also shown (Show), which rise above the familiar, regional and allow us to experience an aural perception that broadens our perspective.

Crossroads/Sho-w is not only a musical creation but also requires extreme concentration in performance practice. Impulses from the Sho help to create new structures in musicality, whether or not reinforced by electronic means. As a composer, I am expected to leave space in the performance that is further filled in by the quartet. This transformation requires a musical dialogue to be constructed, without falling back on the idea that the written composition must completely guide the performance.