

Dolly

Composition for Video, Sound-track and Viola

The composer David P. Graham and the painter Harald Klemm developed together the 17-minute composition Dolly for projection and live-performance. A second version exists purely as video.

The theme of the project is an artistic discussion of opinions, hopes and fears relating to Genetic Technology which have been publicly articulated. Foreground material covers: natural reproduction and evolution; technical reproduction and the meaning of the word "original"; man's interference with nature. Dolly can equally be seen as a musical and visual appendage to the creation story from the Bible. Our aim has been to produce a commentary to these concepts which can only be formulated within the world of art.

The artistic principles behind the music and the video are based on: theme, mutations, (some primeval, some advanced), background and foreground, past and present, relationships in varying degrees of comprehensibility.

Regarding the music: the first decision was to work with a solo instrument (Dolly stands alone). The choice of Viola is not only a joke, the composer was going through a viola-love-phase. Dolly being Scottish led to the choice of "Bal nan grantich", an ancient gaelic tune, as fiducial point. This is heard at the end of the video: so all previous music leads to but comes from that moment.

The music to Dolly is heard at several levels, representing the various levels at which our awareness (of cloning or of anything at all) works. The most present level is the music played live by the viola player, as if Dolly were articulating in the performance-room (this effect is weaker in versions of the video where the viola-player does not play live but is recorded). A second level includes recorded but not altered sounds. A third level has viola-sounds which have been altered (metaphor for genetic engineering) by computer.

The video is based on images from the first chapter of the book of Genesis. Material for the reconstruction and re-creation of this image-world comes partly from film-sequences, documentaries, teaching and news material and television advertisements. Some new video-sequences were produced especially for this project, and a third source was images from the World Wide Web. All this material has been edited and animated by computer.

The seven scenes of the video are clearly separate, but the music occasionally blurs the borders. Further, the separate levels of the video are not identifiable: the layered levels, each made up of familiar images, serve only as the reflection of an eclectic unification and thus actually of a non-creative process. An example: levels are used to recreate images from the first book of Genesis, more or less literally, or to represent farcical fantasy visions. Thus a generally naive video results, covering the spectrum from simplistic to romantic, counterpointing the more abstract forms of the music.

The first scene of the video is an anticipation of the following six scenes. The video works here in opposition to the music, which sets it's main theme at the end. Our

creation story is sketched, the timing and quantity of the images being based on the golden section and running into a flood of animated pictures from the World Wide Web. The scene ends in Nietzsche's sense with it's beginning, leaving the field free for a new creation as mutation. This first scene is accompanied by primitive viola-sounds (knocking, plucking) from the computer-generated sound-track. The viola is introduced live with a pre-variation using the lowest possible notes.

The second scene, the creation of light and the firmament of the heavens, is characterised by film of geysers; the timing of their eruptions has been varied. To the music of the first scene is now added a spiral-motif (equally low) which is reminiscent of the DNA Spiral. As light is created (spectral colours) the viola plays Mutation 5 of the gaelic tune, a harmonics variation in the highest possible register.

The third scene concerns the division of land from water and thus the second and third day of Creation. The Video brings together documentary images, new material (e.g. cranes) and pure surface animation. The music begins with seven short motifs and their culmination, during which the world turns seven times and an arch is formed to divide water and land. These motifs are optically and audibly one side of a sine-wave or spiral. To pictures of water and lava one hears the viola, live, with a flowing variation, the Mutation 2.

In the fourth scene, the creation of the heavenly bodies as stars, the video adds human intervention to the Genesis-content; thus images from space-travel are laid over film of a spinning-top which spins within the sun's cosmic wind and within ink-strains in a glass of water. This scene is musically in two parts which overlap slightly: the galactic feeling of space with a Fanfare for the common sheep (sound-track) and the taming of space by astronauts with mutation 4 (live), violent, difficult, dangerous.

The creation of the world of plants, in Genesis belonging to the third day, is the subject of the fifth scene of the video. The manipulation of the Flora-images is a play on the beginnings of genetic technology and breeding-research. Musically it begins in silence but sounds are "injected" to experiment on the landscape. Surprisingly a personality enters the woods: mutation 3, a passionate, gutsy variation.

The sixth scene - Dolly's - represents the creation of all animal life. Here the manipulation in the video is clearest. An animated combination containing photographs of toys, film-footage and music-video-clips leads into a crazy, ridiculous media-world. In the music a star is born and rocks her way into posterity, quoting fragments of "Bal nan grantich", of the Fanfare, anything available.

In the seventh scene Man creates Man anew. Pictures of genetic operations on cells show through everyday street-scenes culminating in a randomised, kit-like array of body parts against a background of uncrackable number-codes. The music quotes the Fanfare, and tracks from the first (creation) scene, reversed; mutation 1, pizzicato, plucking at the heart-strings, counterpoints this last; just as this variation is becoming clear the theme itself is heard (live), playing out all other tracks and leaving us with ancient but unplumbed familiarity.

Harald Klemm was born in 1960 in Mönchengladbach, Germany. He studied History and Philosophy in Aachen and worked on Picture-restoration in Mönchengladbach. From 1987 to 1989 he was assistant lecturer in Recent History in Aachen, and since then has been active as a freelance painter.

From 1994 to 1996 he worked with the New York painter Theo Lipfert on the exhibition project "Bridge Without Pylons". In 1996 he won a De Grandmaison scholarship at the Banff Centre for the Arts, Canada, a year later finalising the exhibition "The big paintings are too big and the small prints are not the big paintings" (also with Theo Lipfert).

To the music of H.W. Henze's *El Rey de Harlem* (played by the Henze Kammerensemble) Klemm produced as a further collaboration with Lipfert the 30-minute Video "Make Sure Our Address Shows Through window": this project has been performed in Bonn, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt and New York.

In 1999 he began working with the Banana-sprayer Thomas Baumgärtel on "German Unity".

The Video Project "Dolly", with music by the British composer David P. Graham, was shown in Bonn, Berlin, Cologne, and Salt Lake City.

Klemm has numerous and regular exhibitions in Germany and abroad, his works can be found in public and private collections. He lives and works in Cologne.

David P. Graham was born in Stratford-upon-Avon, England, in 1951. He studied at Reading (UK) University and in Hans Werner Henze's master-class at the Music Academy in Cologne (Germany).

His compositions range from solo works to opera, with emphasis on chamber-music: he is particularly at home in the realm of song, small music-theatre pieces and rarely-used instruments like the accordion. He enjoys regular performances throughout Europe and in Latin-America.

He is active in the didactic field, writing pieces for young players and initiating projects in which young people become involved in all aspects of the genesis and production of music-theatre. Such projects have taken place in Germany, England, Italy (where Graham lived and worked for three years) and Cuba (where he is an organiser of an international Music Festival). His composition class at the music-school in Düsseldorf has been the subject of a film on German TV.

Graham has written film music for Bill Douglas and Volker Schlöndorff and works closely with the artist Harald Klemm on Video/Music compositions. He lives and works in Bonn.