

with voice - 1992  
Duration: 9', for voice solo  
*Text by R-M Rilke*  
*To Martine Kivits*

## Der Einsame

Wie einer, der auf fremden Meeren fuhr,  
so bin ich bei den ewig Einheimischen;  
die vollen Tage stehn auf ihren Tischen,  
mir aber ist die Ferne voll Figur.

In mein Gesicht reicht eine Welt herein,  
die vielleicht unbewohnt ist wie ein Mond,  
sie aber lassen kein Gefühl allein,  
und alle ihre Worte sind bewohnt.

Die Dinge, die ich weither mit mir nahm,  
sehn selten aus, gehalten an das Ihre -:  
in ihrer großen Heimat sind sie Tiere,  
hier halten sie den Atem an vor Scham.

*Rainer Maria Rilke, 2.4.1903, Viareggio*

The poem *Der Einsame* by Rainer Maria Rilke is remarkable in every respect, not only from a formal viewpoint, but in the relation of form to content. The systematic choice of closed sonorities (i,e, ai) in the context of the interior exile described; the subtle repartition of oppositions between the solitary one and the 'others', contained within a classical form of three quatrains; the richness and homogeneity of the rhythmic invention in each ten-foot verse; the progressive opening up of the rhymes toward the sound -ahm, a projection contained in an immense intimacy – the whole fashioned like a piece of music. This is not to imply that the text demands musical treatment; on the contrary perhaps... And so it's with respect, like a reader impregnating himself with a poem by reciting it out loud, that I've imposed on this admirable structure the latticework of a sound reading, where a musical value is associated with each particular element of the text: the sonority of the vowels and diphthongs are associated with respective pitches; the percussion and vocalization of consonants affects duration; and the emphasis of tonic accents, the position of syllables and semantic oppositions... It remained to find a discrete and simple singing style, as opposed to conventional classic technique, which could be considered inappropriate for a text that is in many respects 'asocial'. No accompaniment, little vibrato, a great reserve in intensity, a preference for adjacent intervals (particularly intrachromatic intervals), a restrained ambitus.

Jean-Luc Fafchamps

To Martine Kivits who premiered *Der Einsame* in Brussels in 1992.