

Der Einsame

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

*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,
seh'n 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.

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