

BEYOND INDUSTRIAL DURESS

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Introduction to the workshop **Music in Practice** at Internationales Forum
Theatertreffen Berlin 7 to 20 May 2006, 10/2005

The composer and instrumentalist Mark Polscher studied bassoon before embarking on a concert career as a saxophonist and flautist which took him throughout Europe. All his compositions since 1996 have been conceived as scenic music to be performed live. Polscher creates his theatre music in collaboration with directors who are willing to give his complete musical approach plenty of room in their work: Günther Beelitz (Theater Heidelberg), Thomas Krupa (Schauspiel Frankfurt, Theater Freiburg, Staatstheater Darmstadt, Theater Basel), Thomas Schulte-Michaels (Deutsches Theater, Berlin, Theater Freiburg), Thomas Ostermeier (Münchner Kammerspiele) and others. From January 2006, his music can be heard in the production of "A Long Day's Journey Into Night" at the Deutsches Theater, Berlin. Polscher is currently working on the film opera "Kroll", to be premiered in September 2006 at Berlin's Zeitgenössische Oper.

Mark Polscher on the workshop he will lead:

"The music industry's desire to accompany every single act of everyday life leaving no place on earth free has led to music being heard less and felt more. Permanent accessibility and effortless synchronization regardless of musical style prevent autonomous listening and instead of time-consuming linear processes of perception and understanding, a state of low-data sound has established itself. Music is the central expression of a personal feeling: it is not form or structure or the historical context of the acoustic material but the quality of the emotional reflection of private emotions in the moment the noise is heard which determines aesthetic satisfaction...

In the theatre too there is constant music. Though the theatre of all places has sufficient means at its disposal to resist such ubiquitous entertainment strategies. However, few if any can resist the temptation to fix not just a scenic action but an attitude towards it by adding standardized music to release a specific set of emotional reflections. Music is the ideal means of communicating emotions and the images linked to them. And it is fast: a single tone transforms a space, a simple sound changes a scene...

The theatre is the only place where artists from different disciplines can work together collectively at the same time. Within this collective, musical qualities distinct from normalised emotions and free of industry pressure are able to develop which arise directly from this division of labour and whose methods and techniques can ultimately be absorbed into these autonomous arts themselves. The workshop explores music as a complex acoustic phenomenon. Examples will be used to examine how musical forces affect us as listeners. What music is being used and how? How can we tell? Is it possible to see music? The participants will also rehearse a choral piece specially composed for the international forum.