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**CHAYA CZERNOWIN**  
*THE FABRICATION OF LIGHT*

ENSEMBLE MUSIKFABRIK  
ENNO POPPE, CONDUCTOR

# The light

*“Some genius took me away to some faraway place in nature, maybe a desert, and showed me how nature works.”* an audience member, upon hearing the piece.

*The Fabrication of Light* is a one-movement piece with a duration of 65 minutes. When I wrote it, it was a challenging experience, it kept growing longer, and I could not control its unfolding. When I heard it for the first time, it was a discovery for me as a composer. I understood why I could not make it short. It is not a piece; it is a process of creation, happening as one is listening, in front of our ears, as it were. Something is becoming. It doesn't immediately become, and what it should become is also a part of the search. Many things are happening, and at one point, something happens which moves the flow forward. The destination is light, but what light means in this piece will only be discovered by making the light-producing machine. Perhaps, the light itself is not the theme or the aim of this piece, but rather the laborious process of making it happen. Maybe the work is an active meditation. It meditates on our need to bring light into our lives and our belief that our efforts can make this wish happen. Perhaps this meditation suggests that there are many components out of our control in this process. The light-darkness dance is by far more intricate than we rationally like to believe.

The piece is dedicated to Ensemble Musikfabrik, Thomas Fichter and Enno Poppe.

*Text: Chaya Czernowin*

# The machine

To build a machine for the fabrication of light. Utilizing musical, audible, rather than visible means. Once the Israeli-American composer Chaya Czernowin conceives an idea and finds a title for a piece, these words attract other ideas and feelings like a magnet. And the seed of the original idea germinates and grows.

For Czernowin, who was born in Haifa in 1957 and studied composition at the Rubin Academy of Music in Tel Aviv, with Dieter Schnebel in Berlin, and with Brian Ferneyhough and Roger Reynolds in San Diego, it was important to get to know the members of Ensemble Musikfabrik before writing the hour-long work *The Fabrication of Light*. Their individual musical specialities, their respective musical thinking and feelings were considered before the actual sound and structure work or the inscribing of the score.

With these insights and the idea of producing acoustic light as a musical metaphor, the befitting dramaturgical and sonorous details crystallised quite quickly.

The circularly evolving composition *The Fabrication of Light* - Czernowin regards it as a „ceremony“ - consists of four sections from *Spiral I* to *Spiral IV*. Each of the first three begin with the same „Elegy“ (symbol of darkness), whereby *Spiral I* and *II* include a first and later a second „machine of the highs“ and „lows“.

*Spiral III* activates these following a renewed elegiac entree, waits for reactions, and after a fourfold check of its functionality, the spectrum of desired heights and depths is reached. From here on the production of light

takes place rather quickly. The final section, *Spiral IV*, is relatively short - it consists of four attempts at the fabrication of light. These may appear as fantasies or deceptions since these are alternate definitions of „fabrication“, and Chaya Czernowin, who has taught composition at Harvard University since 2009, loves such multiple meanings.

Finally, at the very end of the work, the light, encloded in sound, shimmers and immediately disappears. *The Fabrication of Light* offers a dazzling kaleidoscope of new auditory colours amidst sound and noise. It acts with - as the composer once related - „undercurrents in the air on which it floats. And that's where my music actually originates“. *The Fabrication of Light* leads us out of the darkness into the light, laments and embraces the darkness that surrounds us, materially, socially, metaphorically, individually.

This becomes particularly tangible - and reveals personal, psychological depths of the performers of wood and brass - towards the end of *Spiral II*. Here they are asked to recount individual experiences from childhood into a cone-shaped paper cup, a kind of whispering bag. A brave passage, a courageous sound - according to the score - not ad libitum, but the viscerally spoken content is determined by each and every one themselves.

*Text: Stefan Fricke*

*Translation: Helen Bledsoe*

# Chaya Czernowin

Chaya Czernowin was born and brought up in Israel. After her studies in Israel, at the age of 25, she continued studying in Germany (DAAD grant), the US, and then was invited to live in Japan (Asahi Shimbun Fellowship and American NEA grant) Tokyo, in Germany (a fellowship at the Akademie Schloss Solitude) and in Vienna. Her music has been performed throughout the world, by some of the best orchestras and performers of new music, and she has held a professorship at UCSD, and was the first woman to be appointed as a composition professor at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna, Austria (2006–2009), and at Harvard University, USA (2009 and on) where she has been the Walter Bigelow Rosen Professor of Music. Together with Jean-Baptiste Jolly, the director of Akademie Schloss Solitude near Stuttgart and with composer Steven Kazuo Takasugi, she has founded the summer Academy at Schloss Solitude, a biannual course for composers. Takasugi and Czernowin also taught at Tzllil Meudcan, an international course based in Israel founded by Yaron Deutsch of Ensemble Nikel.

Czernowin's output includes chamber and orchestral music, with and without electronics. Her works were played in most of the significant new music festivals in Europe and also in Japan Korea, Australia, US and Canada. She composed 4 large scale works for the stage: *Prima...ins Innere* (2000, Munich Biennale) chosen to be the best premiere of the year by Opernwelt yearly critic survey and won the Bayerische Theaterpreis. *Adama* (2004/5) with Mozart's *Zaide* (Salzburg Festival 2006) has a second version written with Ludger Engles, with an added choir which was presented in Freiburg Stadttheater (2017). The opera *Infinite Now* was written in 2017 a commission of Vlaamse Opera Belgium, IRCAM paris and Mannheim Stadttheater. The piece,



combines/superimposes materials of the first world war (Luk Perceval theater piece „FRONT“) with the short story *Homecoming* by Can Xue. Also this opera was chosen as the premier of the year in the international critics survey of Opernwelt. In 2019 Czernowin wrote the text and music to *Heart Chamber* which was premiered and commissioned by the Deutsche Oper Berlin, in the direction of Claus Guth to a strong critical and public acclaim. Czernowin was appointed Artist in residence at the Salzburg Festival in 2005/6 and at the Lucern Festival, Switzerland in 2013. Characteristic of her work are working with metaphor as a means of reaching a sound world which is unfamiliar; the use of noise and physical parameters as weight, textural surface (as in smoothness or roughness etc), problematization of time and unfolding and shifting of scale in order to create a vital, visceral and direct sonic experience, all this with the aim of reaching a music of the subconscious which goes beyond style conventions or rationality.

In addition to numerous other prizes, Czernowin represented Israel at Unesco composer's Rostrum 1980; was awarded the DAAD scholarship ('83-85); Stipendiumpreis ('88) and Kranichsteiner Musikpreis ('92), at Darmstadt Ferienkurse; IRCAM (Paris) reading panel commission (.98); scholarships of SWR experimental Studio Freiburg ('98, '00, '01 etc); The composer's prize of Siemens Foundation ('03); the Rockefeller Foundation, ('04); a nomination as a fellow to the Wissenschaftkolleg Berlin ('08); Fromm Foundation Award ('09); and Guggenheim Foundation fellowship ('11); Heidelberger Künstlerinnen Preis ('16); The WERGO portrait CD *The Quiet* (5 orchestral pieces) has been awarded the Quarterly German Record Critics' Award ('16 ). She was chosen as a member of the Akademie der Künste in Berlin in 2017 and the Bayerische Akademie der Schönen Künste in 2021.

Czernowin's work is published by Schott. Her music is recorded on Mode records NY, Wergo, Col Legno, Deutsche Gramophone, Kairos, Neos, Ethos, Telos and Einstein Records. She lives near Boston with composer Steven Kazuo Takasugi.



## Enno Poppe

Enno Poppe, born in 1969, is one of the most important composers of contemporary music in Germany. Poppe studied conducting and composition at the Berlin University of the Arts, among others with Friedrich Goldmann and Gösta Neuwirth.

In addition to scholarships - including from the Akademie Schloss Solitude and the Villa Serpentara in Olevano Romano - he received the Boris Blacher Prize in 1998, the Composition Prize of the City of Stuttgart in 2000, the Busoni Composition Prize of the Akademie der Künste Berlin in 2002, the Sponsorship Prize of the Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation in 2004, the Schneider-Schott Prize in 2005, the Kaske Foundation Prize in 2009 and the Hans and Gertrud Zender Foundation Prize in 2011.

He is a member of the Akademie der Künste Berlin, the Akademie der Wissenschaften und Künste in Düsseldorf and the Bayerische Akademie der Schönen Künste in Munich. His works are performed worldwide by almost all renowned ensembles and at most festivals for contemporary music. Enno Poppe has lived and worked in Berlin since 1990. He works as a conductor with numerous ensembles for contemporary music such as Ensemble Musikfabrik, Ensemble Modern, Klangforum Wien, ensemble resonanz and Ensemble Intercontemporain. He has been conductor of the ensemble mosaik since 1998.

## Ensemble Musikfabrik

Ever since its formation, Ensemble Musikfabrik has had the reputation of being one of the leading ensembles for contemporary music. Following the literal meaning of its name, Ensemble Musikfabrik is particularly dedicated to artistic innovation. New, unknown, and often personally commissioned works in unusual media are typical of

their productions. The results of their extensive work, usually taking place in close collaboration with the composers, are presented by the Cologne-based international soloist ensemble in about 80 concerts a year in both Germany and abroad, at Festivals, in their own series “Musikfabrik in WDR” and in regular radio recordings and CD productions. In 2014 the online Label Musikfabrik was founded.

The musicians themselves take the responsibility for making all-important decisions. Exploring forms of modern communication, and new possibilities for expression in musical and theatrical areas, are a focal point. Interdisciplinary projects that can include live electronics, dance, theatre, film, literature and creative artists, along with chamber music, and the confrontation with works using open form and improvisation, extend the traditional conducted ensemble concerts. Lecture concerts and the experimentation with alternative concert forms involving audience participation are also part of this. Thanks to its extraordinary profile, and its superb artistic quality, the Ensemble Musikfabrik is sought after world wide and is a trusted partner of renowned composers and conductors. Since 2013 the ensemble owns a complete replicated set of the Harry Partch instruments. Furthermore, the double bell brass instruments are another outstanding trait of the ensemble’s eagerness to experiment.

The ensemble’s guest list is as prominent as it is long: It includes Mark Andre, Louis Andriessen, Stefan Asbury, Sir Harrison Birtwistle, Unsuk Chin, Péter Eötvös, Brian Ferneyhough, Heiner Goebbels, Toshio Hosokawa, Michael Jarrell, Mauricio Kagel, Helmut Lachenmann, David Lang, Liza Lim, Benedict Mason, Mouse on Mars, Carlus Padrissa (La Fura dels Baus), Emilio Pomarico, Enno Poppe, Wolfgang Rihm, Peter Rundel, Rebecca Saunders, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Ilan Volkov and Sasha Waltz.

Ensemble Musikfabrik is supported by the state of North Rhine-Westphalia. The Kunststiftung NRW supports the series “Musikfabrik in WDR”.



# Ensemble Musikfabrik

Susanne Peters, flute (doubling piccolo)

Peter Veale, oboe (doubling cor anglais)

Carl Rosman, clarinet in Bb (doubling bass clarinet in Bb)

James Aylward, bassoon (doubling double bassoon)

Christine Chapman, horn in F

Marco Blaauw, trumpet in C

Bruce Collings, trombone

Melvyn Poore, tuba

Dirk Rothbrust, percussion

Rie Watanabe, percussion

Benjamin Kobler, piano

Ulrich Löffler, keyboard (Sampler)

Hannah Weirich, violin I

Sara Cubarsi, violin II

Axel Porath, viola

Dirk Wietheger, violoncello

Florentin Ginot, double bass

Maximiliano Estudios, preparation sampler/electronics

Marrie Carroll, preparation sampler/electronics

Enno Poppe, conductor

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Chaya Czernowin  
The Fabrication of Light  
for large ensemble (2020)

58'16

Ensemble Musikfabrik  
Enno Poppe, conductor

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Recording Assistant and Editing: Daniel Friedrich  
Recording Technicians: Klaus Niegsch, Lutz Rameisel  
Executive Producer: Werner Wittersheim  
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