INTRODUCTION

Les îles des nombres II

Les îles des nombres II for 11 instruments, written in 2017/2018 on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Ensemble Wiener Collage, is based on two harmonic ideas. One of these ideas can first be found in the composition for piano solo *Postscriptum (2x11x12): The Melancholy of Perfection(ism),* the last piece of my piano cycle *cycle: 25 easy pieces* (2014-16). This composition harmonically consists of the eleven (11) intervals (2) – from small second to large sept –, played on each chromatic pitch (12). *Postpostscriptum (2x11x12x4): Les îles des nombres* expands this initial idea; each interval can be found four times on each chromatic pitch. The piece comprises 120 interval islands (îles); each island consists of 3-5 intervals which are either played consecutively or constitute, quasi amalgamated, the harmonic material of an island. Two different types of islands can be distinguished: Islands that are built by the same sort of intervals, and islands that contain different intervals. Both pieces could be subtitled "in search of perfect structures": perfect in the sense of a „perfect" arrangement of „perfect" (complete) material, with the aim of a highly balanced frequency distribution with regard to several parameters.

Basically, the harmonic structure of *Postpostscriptum (2x11x12x4): Les îles des nombres* serves as the basis for *Les îles des nombres II*. The arrangement of the intervals is the same in both pieces. But *Les îles des nombres II* is more than simply a larger instrumentated version of *Postpostscriptum (2x11x12x4): Les îles des nombres*, as in the newer composition a second, quite different harmonic idea is of equal importance: microtonal harmony, derived from the intervals or interval islands by a certain operation I like to call the division of intervals. Each interval can be divided right in the middle; the resulting tone is equidistant from the two tones of the interval. This operation, applied to certain intervals (small second, small third, perfect fourth, perfect fifth etc.), leads to quarter-tone harmony. The easiest operation is to divide one interval; but this division principle can also be applied to more than one interval. The most extreme case is the division of each intervallic relation of an island. Applied to an island that consists of five intervals, this operation leads to 45 division tones.

The composition of *Les îles des nombres II* was supported by the SKE-Fonds and the Federal Chancellery of Austria. The piece was premiered by Ensemble Wiener Collage at Arnold Schönberg-Center Vienna on October 3rd, 2018.