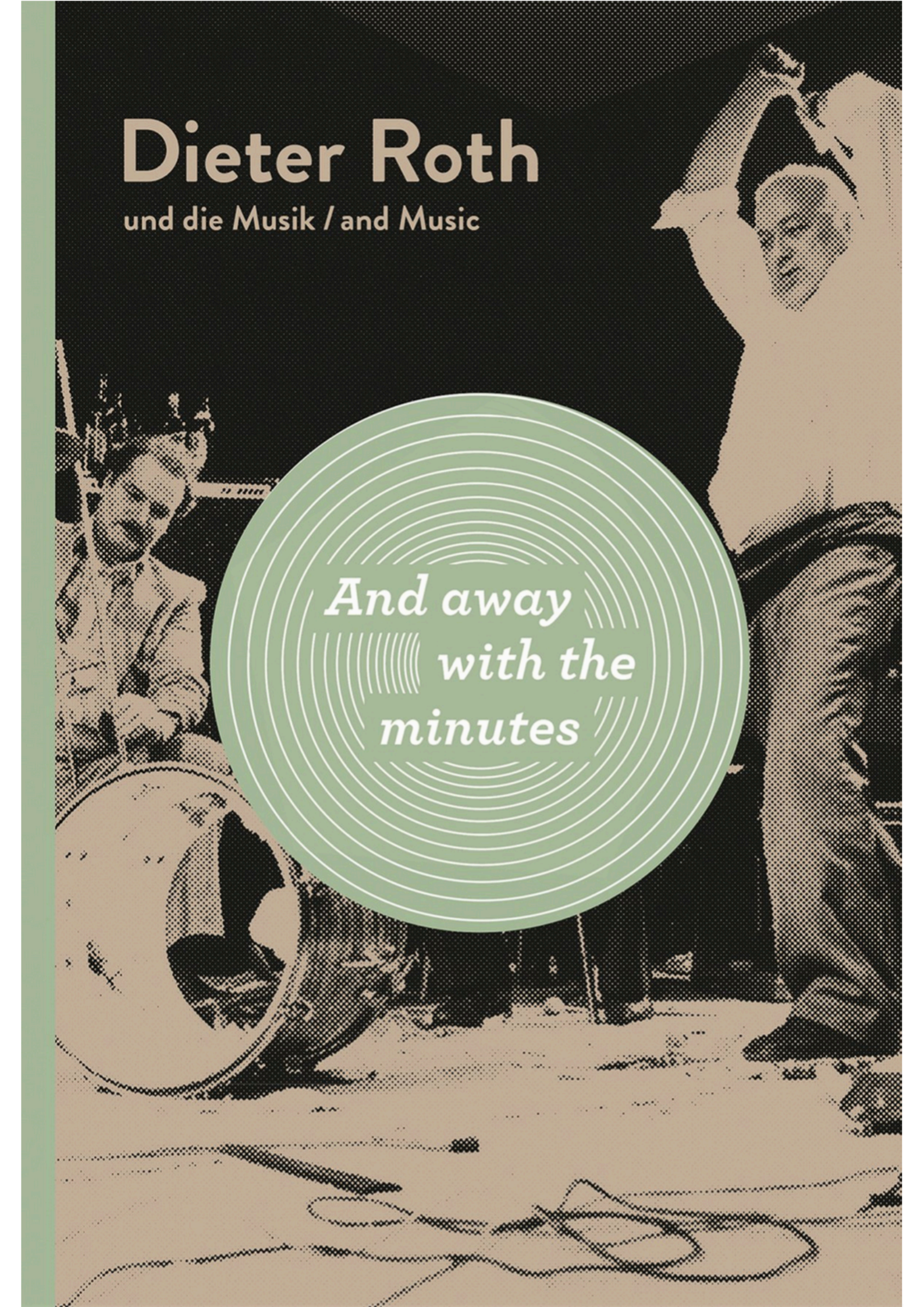


Dieter Roth

und die Musik / and Music



*And away
with the
minutes*

Dieter Roth und die Musik / and Music



And away with the minutes

Dieter Roth and Music

An exhibition of the Kunsthaus Zug in collaboration with the School of Music / University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland FHNW, Musik-Akademie Basel, Edizioni Periferia, Lucerne, and the Nationalgalerie – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

Contents

- 7 **And away with the minutes** *Preface and acknowledgements*
MATTHIAS HALDEMANN and UDO KITTELMANN

Dieter Roth and Music *An E-mail conversation between*
MATTHIAS HALDEMANN and MICHEL ROTH, with SVEN BECKSTETTE,
WALTER FÄHNDRICH, GABRIELE KNAPSTEIN and ISABELLE ZÜRCHER

- 15 **First loop** MATTHIAS HALDEMAN, MICHEL ROTH,
ISABELLE ZÜRCHER

- 19 *Tuning*
21 *Labyrinth*
22 *Triumph and defeat*
29 *Performing*
33 *Language*
36 *Self-reflectivity*
42 *Laments*
51 *Time*

65 **Images I**

- 81 **Second loop** MATTHIAS HALDEMAN, MICHEL ROTH
- 84 *Love of music*
88 *Dabbling failure*
106 *“Dilettantism”*
107 *Cézanne’s failure*
110 *The aesthetic of the ugly*
116 *Reception as production*
123 *Media shifts*

135	<i>Collaboration</i>
147	<i>Consonances and dissonances</i>
149	<i>The destructive principle</i>
156	<i>Dialectic of opposites</i>
161	<i>“Style”</i>
174	<i>Totem</i>
177	Images II
225	Third loop SVEN BECKSTETTE, WALTER FÄHNDRICH, MATTHIAS HALDEMANN, GABRIELE KNAPSTEIN, MICHEL ROTH
226	<i>Concrete poetry</i>
230	<i>Large-scale theatre</i>
240	<i>Shit poetry reading</i>
241	<i>Inner poetry</i>
243	<i>Speech as music</i>
247	<i>Fluxus and the Vienna Group</i>
267	<i>Failure</i>
270	<i>Reception history</i>
276	<i>New Rarely heard music</i>
289	Images III
321	Notes
346	Chronological overview: Dieter Roth and Music <i>Compiled by</i> JANA BRUGGMANN, MATTHIAS HALDEMANN <i>and</i> ISABELLE ZÜRCHER
356	List of works exhibited



Untitled 1945

Pencil on paper, dated and signed,
29.7 × 21 cm, Aldo Frei Collection

And away with the minutes

Preface and acknowledgements

“Dieter Roth and music” is a topic that has received little attention until now, and was initially associated with the records that were published in the 1970s under the title *Selten gehörte Musik* (“Rarely heard music”). The versatile Roth featured here as publisher, cover designer and co-performer for the concert series that went under that name, along with his artist friends Christian Ludwig Attersee, Günter Brus, Hermann Nitsch, Arnulf Rainer, Gerhard Rühm, Dominik Steiger, Oswald Wiener and others.

Our three-year-long research project began there: using *Rarely heard conversations* as our working title, we recorded and analysed a total of 25 hours of conversations with Roth’s co-musicians. We hunted for music-related works, engaged in archival research in Iceland, Hamburg and Basel, and also investigated the corresponding passages in Roth’s diaries, books and letters. Soon it became clear that music was no fringe phenomenon in Roth’s life. As a child and in his youth he did not want to become a visual artist, but a poet or a musician instead. He attended classical concerts, later played the piano and the trumpet, performed jazz, mastered musical notation and also read books about music. He regularly listened to music, and collected and produced records. His diaries and interviews, his extensive works with piano and accordion and also his main filmic work *A Diary* show just how much music accompanied him in his everyday life, and the great significance that it had for him. This interest in music also made itself manifest in numerous works that were little-known (or even completely unknown), such as the *Quadrupelkonzert* (“Quadruple concerto”), the *Accu Sonate* (“Battery sonata”) and *Mikrofonproben* (“Microphone tests”). To be sure, many of his large, well-known assemblages also “sound” and/or include musical instruments – such as *Bar 2*, for example.

Music was a means of emotional expression to Roth, complementary to his work in the visual field and his work with language. As a proponent of a transient visual art, the immaterial, time-bound nature of music naturally appealed to him. And for Roth the melancholic, listening to music and playing the piano remained a comfort to the end. To sum up: music can afford us a new point of access to Roth's overall oeuvre and is an important component of his multiverse.

Dieter Roth listened to, and admired, all forms of music. Classical music touched him deeply, Schubert above all. He saw himself less as an avant-gardist and more of an old-fashioned "traditionalist" ("Alttöner", a "creator of old sounds") who desired to listen intently and who sought in his musical recollections the traces of what was rarely heard. Music was better suited to collaborations with his Viennese artist friends and his children than were the visual or poetic arts. Along with the other exponents of the *Rarely heard music*, he was at the vanguard of the artists-turned-music-makers such as we find in increasing numbers from the 1980s onwards. And in the course of his public performances, he also became an artistic object of "self-depiction".

Roth and his co-musicians turned their "lack of ability" into a "dilettante" art and a philosophy of failure. It makes reference to Roth the "failing" visual artist and word artist, and furthermore touches on fundamental issues surrounding creativity and the status of the artist in the modern world. The art of experimental dilettantism is also an expression of an open, courageous stance at a time of enforced specialisation and commercialisation.

In Berlin, Roth and his colleagues met in the Restaurant Exil from 1972 onwards. Together with the Austrian artists Gerhard Rühm, Günter Brus, Oswald Wiener and others, Dieter Roth held private poetry and music workshops, made the *Rarely heard music* and performed in the *Berlin Concert*. The city of Zug was at the same time his official place of residence in Switzerland. He had several friends in Zug, and it was also his base for his various companies, including a small publishing operation that released several records. And in 1991 he also intended to hold an exhibition at the Kunsthhaus Zug, though he was prevented from doing so by illness. In 1997 he exhibited new works at the Z-Gallery.

The extensive holdings of the Friedrich Christian Flick Collection have in recent years enabled different aspects of Roth's multiverse to be exhibited at the Nationalgalerie im Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart – Berlin, in different contexts. It was thus important to us to present the music-related side of Roth's art at this venue too. The Zug exhibition of his music works will be augmented in Berlin by selected works of younger artists whose work, like that of Roth, engages with musical traditions and conventional performance practice. Reference will be made to both the classical music literature and the rock and pop repertoire, and the virtuosity characteristic of the concert circuit will be given short shrift.

Dieter Roth did everything possible to prompt the viewer/listener/reader/user of his performative works into playing along, thereby dissolving the distance usually inherent in reception. For this reason we approach his creative work process in this book from shifting perspectives in a processual way, in dialogues, and in an interdisciplinary manner. We are grateful to Karlheinz Hein/P.A.P. Kunstagentur for allowing us to publish for the first-ever time an excerpt from the video recording of the Munich *Abschöpfsymphonie* (the *Skimming-off symphony*).

In addition, we refer the reader to the seven-part box set *Dieter Roth and music* that has also been published by Edizioni Periferia. At the website www.dieterrothmusic.ch, hitherto unpublished musical works by the artist have been gathered together in digital format, along with all the video interviews that we have carried out under the title *Rarely heard conversations*.

Where the original German is unusually idiosyncratic and inventive, or where Roth's choice of words is of particular significance, the German is given in inverted commas in brackets. As a rule, we also follow where possible the original orthography of quotations, whether the original is in German or English.

This project has benefitted from excellent teamwork and from immense support and commitment from various parties, whom we would very much like to thank here: Edizioni Periferia, Lucerne, Gianni and Flurina Paravicini, and the Basel School of Music, Michael Kunkel and Michel Roth. We also wish to thank the Dieter Roth Estate/Hauser & Wirth, Barry Rosen and Karin

Seinsoth, Björn Roth and his family, the Dieter Roth Foundation, Philipp Buse and Dirk Dobke, the videocompany, Zofingen, Auf di Aufdermauer and Karin Wegmüller, and our colleagues at the Kunsthaus Zug and at the Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart – Berlin, in particular the curator in Berlin, Gabriele Knapstein.

For their readiness to place important works on loan, we are grateful to the following: Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst, Aachen; Z-Galerie, Baar; MACBA. Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona; the archives of the Musik-Akademie Basel; Dorothy Iannone; Anne-Marie and Alexander Klee-Coll, Klee Estate, Bern; Kunstmuseum Bern, Toni Gerber Collection; Maria És Walter Schnepel Kulturális Alapítvány, Budapest; Weserburg Museum für moderne Kunst, Bremen; Michel Roth, Ebikon; Sammlung Anliker, Emmenbrücke; Sammlung Aldo Frei; BRUSEUM/ Neue Galerie Graz am Universalmuseum Joanneum, Graz; Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg; ahlers collection; Sprengel Museum Hanover, Kunststiftung Bernhard Sprengel and friends; Sprengel Museum Hanover, State of Niedersachsen; Hansjörg Mayer Collection, London; Edizioni Periferia Collection; Klewan Collection, Munich; Rita Donagh Collection, Northend; Living Art Museum Reykjavík; Björn Roth; Collection Frac Alsace; Staatsgalerie Stuttgart / Sohm Archives; Dorle Strobel; Dieter Roth Estate / Hauser & Wirth; Hermann Wankmiller, Zug; Zürcher Collection, Zug.

This ambitious project could not have been realised without generous financial and practical assistance. For this we are very grateful to: Canton of Zug; the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia; Ernst Göhner Foundation, Zug; Landis & Gyr Foundation / Siemens Building Technologies, Zug; Glencore International AG, Baar; Starr International Foundation, Zug; Anliker-Stiftung für Kunst und Kultur, Emmenbrücke; Artepshila Foundation; UBS AG, Zug; Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation, Bern; the city of Zug; Stiftung Sammlung Kamm; Ernst and Olga Gubler-Hablützel Foundation; Dieter Roth Estate / Hauser & Wirth; Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg; videocompany.ch, Zofingen, and all those institutions and individuals who have expressed a desire not to be mentioned here by name.

Many individuals have placed their knowledge at our disposal and demonstrated great dedication in helping us to negotiate the labyrinth that is Dieter Roth. For this, we are grateful to:

Peter F. Althaus, Basel; Christian-Ludwig Attersee, Vienna; Georg Bak, Zurich; Sven Beckstette, Stuttgart; Jana Bruggmann, Berlin; Günter and Anni Brus, Graz; Hannelore Ditz, Vienna; Friedhelm Döhl, Lübeck; Walter Fähndrich, Brione sopra Minusio; Stephan Fiedler, Berlin; Marlene Frei, Zurich; Aldo Frei, Frankfurt; Bill Furlong, London; Renate Ganser, Vienna; Roman Grabner, Graz; Herbert Hossmann, Celle; Anna-Laure Jean, Zurich; Beat Keusch, Basel; Christine König, Vienna; Peter Kogler, Vienna; Anne-May Krüger, Basel; Michael Kunkel, Basel; Karin Mack, Vienna; Hansjörg Mayer, London; Hermann Nitsch, Vienna; Maja Oeri, Basel; Claudine Papillon, Paris; Camillo Paravicini, Lucerne; Arnulf Rainer, Vienna; Klaus Renner, Zurich; Gerhard Rühm, Cologne; Jürg Scheuzger, Steinhausen; Martha Schildorfer, Vienna; Guy Schraenen, Paris; Dieter Schwarz, Zurich; René Simmen, Stäfa; Dominik Steiger, Vienna; Jan Voss, Amsterdam; Andreas und Kathrin Walser, Gordevio; Bernadette Walter, Bern; Chris Walton, Solothurn & Törbel; Hermann Wankmiller, Zug; Franz Wassmer, Ennetbaden; Derrick Widmer, Aarau; Barbara Wien, Berlin; Oswald and Ingrid Wiener, Kapfenstein; Lukas Willen, Oberbüren; Dadi Wirz, Reinach; Maria Ziegler, Baar; Isabelle Zürcher, Zurich; Pascal and Elsbet Zürcher, Zug.

Our gratitude also extends to all those who have preferred to remain anonymous here.

As always with Dieter Roth, this “endless” project has taken us into a world broad and wide, offering many new insights and posing ever-new questions. For this, too, we are grateful.

MATTHIAS HALDEMANN

Director and Curator, Kunsthaus Zug

UDO KITTELMANN

Director, Nationalgalerie – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin



Postcard to Dorothy Iannone 1972

Overpainted Polaroid photo,
ca 8.5×10.8 cm, Ahlers collection



The music-related works by Dieter Roth that are discussed in the following text are listed and shown in the work catalogue on the website www.dieterrothmusic.ch. Please go to this site for further information; it is kept up to date regularly.

Works marked ® are in the exhibition and are listed in the catalogue of exhibited works in the appendix. The chronological overview on pp. 346–353 also serves as an aid to orientation.

Besides the present book, Edizioni Periferia has also published a *Discography* of Dieter Roth's work as a musician and music publisher, three monographs on the *Quadruple concerto* (including a 3-LP set), the *Harmonica Curse* and the *Splittersonate* respectively, and a DVD on the *Disklavier*.

Dieter Roth and Music

An E-mail conversation between
 MATTHIAS HALDEMANN *and* MICHEL ROTH,
with SVEN BECKSTETTE, WALTER FÄHNDRICH,
 GABRIELE KNAPESTEIN *and* ISABELLE ZÜRCHER

First loop

MATTHIAS HALDEMANN We're setting out here on an extensive E-mail conversation about Dieter Roth and music. Three years have passed since the project began. It was Flurina and Gianni Paravicini who invited us to meet, and I still remember how we first spoke of what might interest us about Dieter Roth's music with a view to a possible project. Several LP records of the *Rarely heard music* lay on the table, and we listened to them.

It's well known that Roth is seen as an innovative, intermedia artist, especially with regard to the relationship between his visual art and language and literature. But music? Research on Roth has until now only mentioned music in passing.¹ Was it really relevant to him?

I was fascinated by my initial impressions of what I heard. But was this really "music"? And if so, what would be our criteria for it? We began to discuss two concepts: "collaboration" and "dilettantism" – "amateur dabbling".

Michel Roth, you're a lecturer in music and a composer, and you started out from a different perspective. What was it like for you at the start?

MICHEL ROTH It was thanks to the Swiss composer and improviser Walter Fähndrich that I first stumbled upon the *Rarely heard music*. I took the subject "free improvisation" with him

when I was a student. We made music together, and we also listened to a lot of music – including on one occasion a record by and with Dieter Roth. Although I can't remember exactly what it was, I still remember the circumstances in which I heard it. Of course, the *Rarely heard music* had never before been a topic of discussion during my music studies, nor was it ever again. At best I would have registered it as a matter of marginal curiosity while studying music history. But in free improvisation I was in a less protected state, as it were, beyond the certainties of the compositional process and of musicological knowledge. Often I tried out instruments and playing techniques of which I had but a rudimentary mastery. The question as to whether the result was actually music was completely unimportant to me in the moment that I was engaged with it – but I was certain that I was indeed “making music”. And this is how I understood the *Rarely heard music*: these recordings document a kind of soundtrack of acts and practices that are both musical and unmusical, individual and collective. To ask whether this is music – or perhaps conversely to use it to question our notions of music itself – therein lies a fundamental appeal of our research project to me today. But the act of “music making” fascinates me just as much – in other words, a specific artistic practice that is situated behind these records, and this leads me, too, to the concepts of “collaboration” and “dilettantism”.

M. HALDEMANN The transient, processual nature of Roth's oeuvre already fascinated me when I was a student of art history in Basel. But before I got to know his work he had already impressed me by his very personality when I heard him on the radio. In 1990 I got to know him personally in Zug, along with his son Björn Roth. We met several times in order to discuss an exhibition planned for the Kunsthhaus Zug in 1991. Among the works Roth wanted to exhibit was the large *Gartenskulptur* (“Garden sculpture”, 1968 ff.) [[↗] Fig. 24], which he wanted displayed in the museum garden. Regrettably, he had to abandon the project later on grounds of ill health. When the new Kunsthhaus was opened in 1990 I had already exhibited his assemblage *Relief mit 2 Trompeten* (“Relief with 2 trumpets”, 1962–1992[®]) that I had discovered in his Basel studio on the Heggenheimerstrasse [[↗] Fig. 27]. He told me he regarded it as one of his main works.² We would gladly have acquired it for our collection, but financial reasons compelled us to buy another piece. Out of gratitude

he donated several books and records to us. Some of them had been published in the 1970s by Dieter Roth's Familienverlag (his "family publishing house") or Dieter Roth's Verlag in Zug, and afterwards they slumbered in the archive cabinet of the Kunsthaus. Our current project has given them new meaning.

Then Walter Fähndrich, who comes from Canton Zug himself, realised the installation *Musik für Räume* ("Music for rooms") in the Kunsthaus Zug in 1997. So there are many different strands that now come together for me in this Roth project.

So how does music make itself manifest in Roth's oeuvre? It spans a broad arch from the early collages with guitar motives to the large-scale installations with music instruments and the innumerable recording and playback machines. There are prints, drawings, pictures and objects with musical titles, notations, instrument objects, sounding assemblages, photos and videos of his studio with pianos both upright and grand, and studio equipment. Music plays a role in his poetry, in his notebooks and diaries and in the later film and video works. He made music in public and in the studio, together with artist friends and his children, but also often on his own. When he was still a child he listened to classical music and later played the piano and trumpet himself. He built up a comprehensive record collection and produced and published records himself. To sum up: music was always of great significance in his life.

M. ROTH The range of his record editions alone is remarkable! The series of *Rarely heard music* stands out in the 1970s, when Roth played together with various artists such as Gerhard Rühm, Oswald Wiener, Günter Brus and Hermann Nitsch. There are the studio productions they made (such as the *November symphony* or the *Romenthal quartet*) and live concert recordings (especially the *Berlin concert* and the *Abschöpfsymphonie*). The recordings of other, unedited concerts (the *Karlsruhe concert* and the *Hamburg lithograph workshop*) have been appraised for the first-ever time in the course of this research project.³ He made shorter records in collaboration with Richard Hamilton (*Canciones de Cadaqués*), Emmett Williams and Hansjörg Mayer (*The Kümmerling Trio plays No 1 & 2*) and with Arnulf Rainer (one LP and one single). The *Radio sonata* stands out as the only solo production, though Roth also gave a solo performance at the Basel Music Academy with his *Quadrupelkonzert* ("Quadruple concerto"), whose recording was thought to be lost,

but which resurfaced again in the course of our research.⁴ Up to that point, most of the records were released by edition hansjörg mayer (*sic*). Besides mini-editions of works on tape from the label Audio Arts (including *Lorelei*, *the long-distance sonata* and *Harmonica Curse*), Roth later used Dieter Roth's Verlag or Dieter Roth's Familienverlag to publish three symphonies and music for an "action" by Hermann Nitsch, André Thomkins's *Bösendorfer* and compositions by Friedhelm Döhl; then there were records by Roth's children, Icelandic pop and rock, Dominik Steiger's *Wiener Lieder* and even Swiss accordion music. Despite this impressive range of music, we must not forget Roth's own evaluation of his live concert recordings released on record: "I usually don't listen to them. Who does. That's only something ... the record is far removed from the real thing, from what happened in the concert. It seems to me as if you were eating something a second time that has been canned. It doesn't taste good any more".⁵

M. HALDEMANN Now I'd like to ask our research intern, Isabelle Zürcher, about her first impressions of hearing this music. She only began working at the Kunsthaus Zug two weeks ago.

Was this music new to you? What did you actually hear, in concrete terms? Did you perceive this to be music, did you feel it that way? As an art historian, what's your own relationship to music?

ISABELLE ZÜRCHER The first pieces that I heard by Dieter Roth were recordings of Roth, Gerhard Rühm and Oswald Wiener from the Second Berlin Music Workshop that were released on record under the title *Novembersymphonie* (1973), and then the solo production *R adio sonata* (1976). My first impression was astonishment at how unusual this music was, and I found myself asking: "Do they seriously mean that?" I played the violin for eight years – Bach, Vivaldi, Schubert, Dvořák ... and now and then I like going to classical concerts or to the opera. For everyday listening, however, I prefer rock music from the 1980s to the present day. Music is of great importance to me, and is never just background noise. When I listened to the *R adio sonata* I was surprised how quickly you get used to the newness of it, and how within the seemingly random "tinklings" you discover harmonies that can engage you just as much as a beautiful melody. There are no song texts to this music, just fragments of conversation, wheezings, heavy breathing. When I listened

for a longer stretch, I got over my initial irritation and noticed how well this interplay functions – Roth’s words add rhythm to his piano playing and determine the dynamics. In part, complex structures emerge that make me doubt just how “dilettantish” his dabbling really was.

The same dialogues surface in the *November symphony* rather like a theme that runs through a concert, or like a chorus to a song. Roth, Rühm and Wiener make derogatory remarks about what they’ve just played, but the way they sometimes repeat word for word their own invective about their performance makes one doubt just how seriously they mean it. What’s impressive are those moments when a sequence emerges out of the chaotic, random juxtaposition of ideas – a sequence in which the sounds and rhythms coalesce and everything becomes coherent, “attuned” to itself (“stimmig”) – and then it dissolves again into individual islands of sound.

Tuning

M. ROTH That’s an important observation, also methodologically speaking. Perceiving that “coherence” presupposes an aesthetic experience, an “attunement” or “mood” (“Stimmung”). It “has an integrative function with respect to objects and their characteristics, it unites them in a coherent whole without allowing rules to be formulated for that act of coalescence”.⁶ This concept, which describes a kind of atmospheric unity of what in itself is disunited,⁷ came repeatedly to mind when I listened to Roth’s music-making, and it is often found among the protagonists themselves, being prominent in their discourse on the record *TOTE RENNEN Lieder* (“DEAD RACES songs”, 1977).⁸ Rühm wrote about their first joint music production, the 3rd *Berlin poets’ workshop* (1973[©]): “moods [‘Stimmungen’], whims, inspirations, emotions should be brought to expression just as they are, unrevised, and documented as the ‘whole truth’. We achieved various moods in sound simultaneously, for example when one of us played in his own world, enraptured, while another ‘let rip’ and the third fooled around, grumbled or laughed. That way, a multi-layered thing emerged ...”.⁹ [↗ Fig. 1] It is striking here how the concept of “mood” describes both a sensibility and a collective achievement.

Roth and his co-musicians also on occasion thematised “Stimmung”, “attunement”, in its musical sense, even though their mostly disparate actions would hardly require them actually to get their instruments “in tune” with each other.¹⁰ In any case, this discourse exemplifies the exploration of a tension-laden, overall quality of unconnected, at times unformed things. Roth said this with regard to the productivity of such opposing forces: “I have the same mood and the same sense of satisfaction when I sit down quietly and write these diaries as when I succeed in writing a poem. Just to write what’s there, what you feel or have experienced, and then the text assumes a kind of poetic quality. But you can’t give expression to the unhappiness and the struggles that go on underneath because if

you put that into a correct sentence, you blur their incorrectness and their terribleness. I don’t succeed in this because in certain deep situations the technical means simulate something. They simulate a harmony and correctness that the situation doesn’t actually possess. I have decided to depict ‘inability’ in perfect sentences and to describe my boundaries. You can’t do any more than that”.¹¹

This describes the dialectical situation of the recipient and also of the researcher: do we fail to recognise what is artistic about it, if we find this music (to use Roth’s word) “shit”? If we acknowledge “inability” as an artistic stance, do we belittle it aesthetically? To be sure, every attempt to find points of contact

with familiar forms, traditions or playing techniques turns into a balancing act that risks “simulating harmony” and blurring the “terribleness”. Even if we find the *Rarely heard music* in particular to be “attuned” at times, it at the same time seems to “describe its boundaries” to us and to present in drastic form its own failure. The fact that this once again seems to us coherent, “attuned”, carries on the dialectic *ad infinitum*. But already the next trap is lurking for us: “the more I understand, the more I distance myself from ‘reality’; the higher the level of interpretation, the greater is its distance from events in ‘real time’”.¹²



Fig.1 *Selten gehörte Musik. 3. Berliner Dichterworkshop*, 12" vinyl LP, edition hansjörg mayer, 1973

Labyrinth

M. HALDEMANN Now we're already in Roth's labyrinth! I'll try and find my way out of it a little in order to get some distance. Clearly, this music cannot be completely disengaged from either its author or its recipient and thereby evades the usual act of objectification through scholarly analysis. In advance of our project, criticism was voiced about it from respectable quarters. What methodologies do we possess for this? Who is responsible, the art historian who is a musical amateur, or the music specialist? Aren't we both overextending ourselves here? On the one hand because with Roth, music is a kind of ball of string that can hardly be disentangled into all its different strands. On the other hand because even in this "subsidiary" field in Roth's universe, the material with which we're dealing is well-nigh endless – as we have also noticed in the course of our intensive research. His music is aesthetic and at the same time unfathomable with regard to its context. Where does it begin? Where does it end? Where does its core lie? There is much to say – much too much, perhaps, so that quite possibly everything will disintegrate again if we get carried away by all the detail and suddenly absolutely everything seems important.

Roth sets traps for us,¹³ as you rightly say, also because he answers us openly, self-critically and usually cleverly; at times he says things that touch us, and corresponds willingly to the desire of every interpreter to obtain authentic information from the author – and yet in the process he creates yet more confusion. Because his openness also leads us astray, concealing things that are in fact fundamental; he contradicts himself and talks "nonsense". Even after reading 629 pages of artist interviews and 8486 pages of diaries, our thirst for knowledge must ultimately remain unquenched.

M. ROTH Dirk Dobke summed this up aptly: "Roth resists an iconographic reading or interpretation of his work. This approach, by which he expressly evades any scholarly access, is immanent in the work ... More than with most other artists of the 20th century, every individual artistic statement from Roth must be seen as part of the overall work context. Isolated analysis exclusively of a single work of this composite structure

comprising visual arts, poetry and music would be reductive of Roth's concept of art and thus falsify it".¹⁴

M. HALDEMANN So how should we act here? Our endeavour is to engage with this topic from different perspectives in an open, discursive, dialogic form that also reflects our own individual stance – this could be a possible approach. When you speak of “failure” by Roth, then we should include ourselves in it. After all, our joint project *Harmony and dissonance. Gerstl, Schoenberg, Kandinsky. Painting and music at the crossroads* was a comparable interdisciplinary experiment that we survived unscathed.¹⁵

Triumph and defeat

M. HALDEMANN “Failure” brings me back to music. At first, it strikes one that Roth's “clumsy” music-making contrasts with his success in drawing, painting and writing. Whoever knows his early work knows the immense talent for drawing and writing that he displayed in his youth. He pitted himself against van Gogh, Cézanne and Klee, and didn't disgrace himself [↗ Fig. 36]. Then his graphic gifts came to the fore [↗ Fig. 69].¹⁶ He made all kinds of designs and art books [↗ e.g. Figs. 2 and 60], op-art objects [↗ Fig. 58] and so on. Whatever he touched, the results were brilliant.

As for music, we know how seductive and dangerous such immense gifts can be, and how false virtuosity can damage artistic expression. Roth was aware of this himself: “There was this ambition to achieve mastery in all fields”.¹⁷ So he made repeated demands of himself and everywhere explored his own boundaries: by leaving many writing and typing mistakes, by placing printing machines under stress through overuse, by using rubbish and decomposing materials, by risky collaborations with rival artist friends, by drawing at very quick speeds with both hands simultaneously, by “artless” everyday descriptions and by using alcohol to achieve different states of mind while working. Roth the painter/draughtsman and the poet ciphered in failure as a corrective to triumphant brilliance. Time and again he described the tension that existed between ambitious triumph and humiliating defeat.¹⁸ He did not have this problem as a musician. Here it was more a matter of wresting some kind of quality from his “non-ability” (“Nicht-Können”).¹⁹

M. ROTH Although Roth admitted: “you only get full satisfaction when you can do everything completely, when you can just sit there triumphantly and everything just bubbles along”.²⁰

M. HALDEMANN This “failure” was conceived and staged as such by Roth the artist and poet; for the musician Roth it was very real – a proper “struggle” and a straightforward “disgrace” (“Blamage”).

M. ROTH That’s the question! All the same, it’s noticeable that Roth’s musical abilities vary from record to record in the chronologically concentrated phase of the *Rarely heard music*, especially in the solo productions *Radio sonata* and *Quadruple concerto* (1977[®]), which were only a few months apart.²¹ The former was made as part of the radio series *Authors’ music*; Roth became a piano-playing “author” for it and struggled through the broadcasting time as an overwhelmed musical dilettante. The latter took place in the Great Hall of the Basel Music Academy, before a gathering of prominent local musicians; Roth accordingly followed an ambitious plan and even improvised encores at the request of the audience [↗ p. 211]. You naturally hear straightaway that he was an amateur, but one who can fall back on a broad background of musical experience. Wiener called this principle the “underhandedness ... of being more than you seem”.²²

Here I think of Roth’s schema of a step-like ascending link between “talent” and “irony” as two “mutually reflecting and determining”²³ concepts. Dieter Schwarz offered the following comment: “If talent strives to occupy a new space that has not yet been determined, then irony has aspiration run on the spot and displaces it in another sense. By interrupting the movement of talent, it in fact enables it to be recognised”.²⁴ I think this is a very fundamental creative mechanism for Roth. Ultimately it is derived from the need that you articulated before: a need to free himself, to gain distance.²⁵ Even the “labyrinthine”, “entangled” nature of his works seems to me to be a conscious act of nullifying technical, narrative or aesthetic interpretations that might simplify things. What is furthermore unsettling is that fact that the substances used to carry out this act of distancing are themselves everyday, domestic things: chocolate, shit, mould – or, in the case of Roth’s music-making: a mangy accordion, a clumsy-handed piano technique²⁶ and skewed farts on a tenor horn.

In what ways does this art still stand out from the platitudes of everyday life? One could perhaps speak of “indifference as a means of creating distance to one’s environment”,²⁷ which can be both liberating and at the same time many-layered and impenetrable by “declaring banality to be the substance of things”.²⁸ Roth himself invented a dizzying verbal formula for this: “IT IS EVERYTHING | AND THIS MOST OF ALL: EVERYTHING | BECOMES LITTLE | BECOMES IT LEAST OF ALL”.²⁹

This motto, which is placed at the beginning of Roth’s important *Copley Book* (1965), leads me back to the artists’ books and op-art objects that you have mentioned. If we consider the

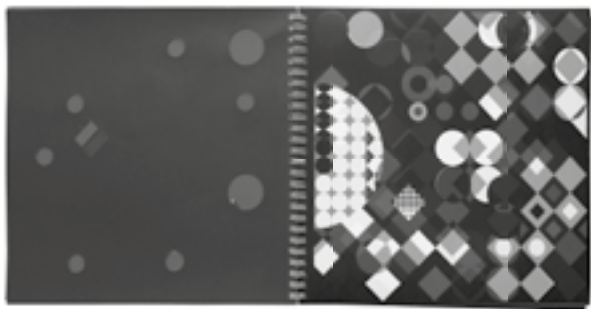


Fig. 2 *Bilderbuch*, ca 30 coloured, printed leaves with holes, spiral binding, forlag ed, Reykjavík, 1956

early *Kinder- or Bilderbücher*³⁰ [↗ Fig. 2] or the *2 Books*³¹ (1976) and their dozens of variants, the accumulated world of memory of the *Copley Book*³² up to *MUNDUNCULUM*³³ [↗ Fig. 21] that is based on a collection of stamps that Roth also gave over to his readers in the form of boxes of rubber stamps³⁴ [↗ Fig. 3]: all these objects are conceived in an open way in some manner or other. They

play with ambiguity, they invite observers to explore for themselves, to exchange certain elements for others, to order them anew, to try out other directions and ways of reading, to experiment and to improvise.³⁵ “Dilettantism” and “collaborating”, which we have already declared here to be artistic methods, are also factors of reception, as it were.

Roth’s works are often conceived as a kind of instrument that wants to be played actively.³⁶ His artists’ books are undoubtedly brilliant, but they don’t function as hermetic entities in which an artistic idea has been captured skilfully and could now be explored by us. Instead they are a concretisation that takes place in real time. I see an essentially musical quality in this, which clearly makes these works stand apart from the op-art conceptions that were mostly elaborated carefully. The following anecdote can serve to illustrate this – it refers to a variant of Roth’s *Book* (1958/1964) [↗ Fig. 60]: “Dieter was teaching at Yale in 1965. Josef Albers, who was also teaching at Yale, was impressed with this experiment in geometric-optical art and

offered to trade one of his paintings for a copy of Dieter's book cum portfolio. When Albers came to Dieter's studio to pick up his copy (Dieter was not there at the time) he saw it was not bound. He was disturbed that the artist had not prescribed the order of the sheets; this surely was, in his exalted opinion, the master's responsibility. Unable to accept Dieter's conceptual premise, Albers refused to consummate the exchange".³⁷

Although Roth the visual artist, the writer and the musician possessed palpably different degrees of skill, I would hesitate to assign his music-making to a delimitable realm of his oeuvre in qualitative terms, and I see the open-endedness of your question regarding a precise definition of "Dieter Roth and music" also as a challenging precondition of our interdisciplinary discourse.

M. HALDEMANN And yet Roth confronts us with this question, time and again. He awakens expectations, only to thwart them straightaway. With work titles such as "symphony", "quartet" or "sonata", he's playing a game with us and asks: "What do you expect? What am I doing? Who am I? Who are you?"

At the outset, Isabelle Zürcher mentioned the irritating commentaries in the *November symphony*. Who are we as listeners if they promptly disqualify their own embarrassing efforts? Where is the music they've promised? It's striking that the concerts in the series of *Rarely heard music* have neither a clear beginning nor a definite end. It's like before the beginning of a rehearsal when people arrive, trickle onto the stage, find their place on it while chatting to their colleagues, play the first notes on their instrument, have a last snack to give them energy, and look around, laughing and waiting. Only: it never begins properly! There is no music and no conductor arrives.

M. ROTH But it is noteworthy that the group very often discusses beginning or talks about having a good ending!³⁸ Hansjörg Mayer claimed that Roth was something along the lines of the



Fig. 3 *Stempelkasten*, stamps, ink pad, ink, with instructions, 27 × 27 × 6 cm, 1967/1973, Museum Ostwall Collection, Dortmund

“conductor” of the *Rarely heard music*,³⁹ but Roth thought up a more subtle variant of “conductor” for himself, calling himself instead the “inductor”.⁴⁰ Is this a form of concert as never-ending rehearsal?⁴¹

M. HALDEMANN Although the concert never begins, paradoxically it also never ends either. They rehearse – yes – but the question remains: “What are they rehearsing?” Their hustle and bustle is well-nigh endless, it’s without any progress or result. The “poor” audience meanwhile has to sit things out on their seats while the “musicians” can come and go as they see fit. They smoke and eat on the podium, clown around, get drunk, and unashamedly have fun.

This is a very different situation from that of John Cage, for example, where the everyday noises imperceptibly segue into the sounds of the musical performance. Before you’ve noticed, the concert has already begun. To be sure, with Cage, too, the boundaries between the everyday and the artwork are blurred, but for aesthetic reasons. Because the world of taxi sounds and whirring refrigerators is already music to him. Because all of that is music to him. For Roth and his friends, however, “everything” also means “nothing”, “nonsense”, “shit”.

M. ROTH I ought perhaps to explain that briefly. Cage was a great liberator of the material, of form and of the performer, but he firmly remained the composer and thus remained the authorial instance who by means of a great body of aesthetic texts also has a claim to the prerogative of interpretation. It is not by chance that this was why Roth called him a “moralist”⁴² – though we must certainly still look more closely at his relationship to the American avant-garde. In purely material terms, “nothing”, “nonsense” or “shit” were not impossible with Cage, but in contrast to Roth they would have been produced by highly specialised performers by means of a methodologically sophisticated, subtle musical score ...

M. HALDEMANN ... and in the case of Roth and his friends, this “nothing” is also a “failure”. They themselves laugh and get annoyed on stage at the very inanity of their musical activities.

M. ROTH Wiener wrote the following about this: “Real ‘shit’ is only achieved through the grudging rejection of one’s own

quality standards. To accept real ‘shit’ is difficult for him who’s producing it because it is situated below (outside?) the usual values that he has linked to ambition and gratification; it makes him red-faced with shame and gives him a depressed feeling that is lasting (shame and discomfort drive him away – he travels). Shame and discomfort, humiliation⁴³ and affront must be accepted (reluctance and boredom on the part of the recipient) if one wishes to appropriate these new qualities. Then the enjoyment of disengagement becomes possible behind the protest character of the ‘shit’ – which it uses to distract him who superficially wishes to understand it”.⁴⁴

M. HALDEMANN This humiliating failure on account of lack of ability, this imposition on a paying audience, this charlatantry, this impudence! Where is the music if those on stage behave in a manner that would never be allowed on the part of a respectable audience? Sometimes they even curse the audience. What’s happening here? What I mean by this is: the art, the primary matter, cannot be separated from the commentary, which would normally be the secondary matter, even though this expectation is awakened by the protagonists. Let’s not forget the *Quadruple concerto*, when Roth gave a public performance at the Music Academy before an audience of experts, but offered up something completely un-academic. It was scandalous. And there’s another anecdote that comes to mind. After he sent his parents a photo of the *Berlin concert* (1974), they answered: “If only we’d known that you were musical – we had an inkling of your being involved in a quartet or a trio – but what’s bad is that we’ve never heard any of it! ... We would be delighted if you’d bring some of your tapes the next time you visit, and if you would do a proper Roth concert for everyone in Gerlafingen”.⁴⁵ One wonders how the family circle in Gerlafingen would have reacted if they’d expected a “proper concert” from their son and then got to hear *Rarely heard music* instead!

You offered a quotation about writing a diary being in itself poetry. With Roth, everything comes together via language and speech: the music and the pictures, the books and poems and films. In concrete terms, the *Rarely heard music* emerged out of the 1st *Berlin Poets’ Workshop*, which confirms the connection between word and music in the development of Roth’s art [↗ pp. 190–192].⁴⁶ But Roth is not concerned with language and literature in and of themselves, but with “speaking” and the

“speaker”. And in his own music, too, it’s always important who is playing. Analogue to this, his visual art was not just intended to “depict what you see, but also the person who sees”.⁴⁷ The first case of that is the pictures that show the back of Roth’s head [↗ Fig. 4]. Later, he would use Polaroid photos of himself [↗ p. 222].

If I have differentiated between his dilettante music and his activities as a visual artist and a writer, then this has yet another reason. In his *Rarely heard music* he left the “shelter” of his studio and stepped onto the stage – full of inhibitions, as he said.⁴⁸ But it was not the first time that he had performed as a musician, because he had already played trumpet in a jazz band in the 1950s. [↗ p. 69] He had given this up after hearing the unattainable Chet Baker.⁴⁹ In Munich, twenty years later, he appeared once more on the concert podium, this time as a famous

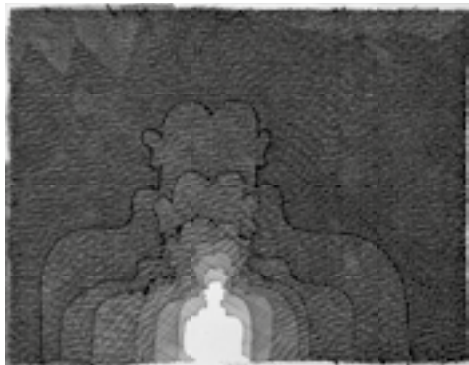


Fig. 4 *Selbstbildnis als Loch*, pen and ink drawing in black, on paper, 29 × 37 cm, 1973, ahlers collection

artist, but to “dabble”. In secret, he was able to play more than the trumpet, for as a child he had also been given piano lessons in the Zurich guest house of his foster parents, the Wyss family. During the war, the guest house had been home to people working in the theatre and to musicians and artists, of whom many were emigrants.⁵⁰ To what extent Roth’s music-making can thus truly be called “amateur dabbling” is something that will still occupy us here. But in any case, Roth began his second “musical career” as a visual artist and practised music as a part of his extended oeuvre. His “stage”

experiences from the late 1960s onwards also included several author readings. In photographic terms he had put himself in the limelight, already in 1972, in his posters [↗ Fig. 5].⁵¹ And in the year after that he began to make music and to speak in public.⁵² The boundary between his person and Roth the artist was thus annulled, and from now on there was no going back. Through his music and later through his performance collaborations with Arnulf Rainer, Roth became an active, speaking figure of and for his art: a self-depicter.

Furthermore, his musical practices and the accompanying writing of a literary diary provide a connection to his late visual works from 1980 onwards. In those works processuality is no longer realised using transient materials. With his new works,

Roth documented their genesis with Polaroid photos, with written notes and by building up his images in comprehensible layers. One of the key works of this time is the sounding/speaking *Chicago wall* (1977–1984), of which he was particularly fond [↗ pp. 300–301]. It contains loudspeakers and 32 tape machines with recordings of radio programmes, conversations and music by Dieter and Björn Roth.⁵³ Such works also include archive files with conceptual notes, correspondence, receipts for material purchases and garbage – as a “documentation” and a “manual” for it.⁵⁴ This development culminated in his exhibition piece *A Diary* at the Venice Biennale in 1982.⁵⁵ This was an installation comprising film projections, diary pages with Polaroid photos and a copy of the diary, given free to visitors. In most of the films we see and hear the artist whistling, listening to music on the radio, and playing the piano. [↗ pp. 290–291].⁵⁶

In parallel with this artistic-literary diary practice and the *Rarely heard music*, the performative/theatrical aspect of his collaboration with Rainer also became important to Roth. Rainer had been the first to recognise Roth’s slapstick talent and to make productive use of it.⁵⁷

Performing

M. ROTH Mayer, on the other hand, had the impression that Roth was interested in the different characters of his collaboration partners and often adopted attitudes exclusive to each of them.⁵⁸ This fits in with what Roth later said about his interplay with Rainer, namely that he did it “only to do him a favour”.⁵⁹

M. HALDEMANN Whatever may be the case, the result was an intensive collaboration that lasted for several years. On the photos, in their films and in their public performance *Attrappen-tappen* in Munich (“Dummy blundering”, 1979),⁶⁰ they played themselves, blabbering, clowning around, passing the time,



Fig. 5 Poster for the touring exhibition *Dieter Roth, Grafik und Bücher*, offset, 90 × 84 cm, 1972, Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg

painting or nursing their hangovers. This slapstick was also linked to their musical performances. On the evening before the *Abschöpfungsymphonie* (1979⁶⁰) in the Lenbachhaus in Munich, Rainer/Roth were on stage as a duo for their *Attrappentappen*

[⁷ Fig. 6]. Roth sat at the piano several times and improvised. The next day, Rainer was fetched onto the stage by the protagonists of the concert in order to perform his grimaces and his grotesque postures. Roth also gave a substantial performance, climbing a ladder, destroying a violin then a chair and a drum,⁶¹ disturbing his colleagues while they were playing and mimicking a solo entertainer in the midst of their ensemble [⁷ pp. 220–221 and DVD]. So the acts of speaking and commenting are to be understood in general as a performative, clowning act in the *Rarely heard music*, not merely as a secondary discourse or as an incidental disturbance. Comparisons with the *commedia dell'arte*, the German improvisatory *Stegreiftheater* and modern improvisatory theatre would be appropriate, but would take us too far from the topic here. The concert series is thus also to be understood as a theatrical action. And the participation of Brus, Nitsch and



Fig. 6 Dieter Roth and Arnulf Rainer, *Attrappentappen*, performance, Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich, 1979, photo: Roland Fischer

Wiener meant that important protagonists from Viennese Actionism were also involved. Rühm and Wiener had already realised cabaret-like performances with the Vienna Group in the late 1950s. And we know that Roth himself was very interested in Karl Valentin.⁶²

M. ROTH Yes, Rainer and Roth made fun of the popular comic duo of Karl Valentin and Liesl Karlstadt – but at the same time held up a cabaret-like anti-actionism as a foil to Viennese Actionism. And the concerts of the *Rarely heard music* also unfolded on at least three levels: dilettante improvisation and corny verbal pirouettes in the commentaries have a certain spontaneous, intrinsic value and take place as individual acts on the spot. Events such as that in the *Munich concert* (1974) when Brus and Rühm for a while didn't want to play any longer in protest against Roth⁶³ leave us in no doubt just how personal and emotional things became among the protagonists – the video

recording of the *Abschöpfungsymphonie* quite clearly displays such interpersonal friction (which was often already there from the start) and the productive energies it unleashed [↗ Fig. 7 and DVD]. Thirdly, in all the media they use, the players refer back to specific schemata or clichés that were anchored as if in a collective memory.⁶⁴ This compelled the audience to adjust and accommodate themselves⁶⁵ – because, for example, when a “symphony” or an “elves’ dance”⁶⁶ was announced, this naturally awakened expectations that were far removed from what they then actually got to hear. While admitting that this led to an “unpopular” form of art, Wiener measures the artistic quality of a work by the degree of accommodation actually shown by the audience. Consequently, the titles and commentaries acquire a particular steering function in the reception of their work.

M. HALDEMANN In any case, humour plays an important role. But in connection with the issue of “failure”, it would be better for us to speak of tragicomedy. Thus I come back to irony, which you have described as being a means of creating distance and a corrective to talent.

These performative experiences altered Roth’s visual and linguistic work to a profound degree, as I said. The Biennale exhibition is a good example; its sole topic is the actual preparation for it, from the invitation to the opening. For the first-ever time, Roth here turned the work process, exhibition practice and his everyday life into a single whole. Where the concert podium had already become a platform for the everyday, now the everyday became a stage for art. The processes of work and life would from now on be interlocked in a dialectical relationship within his works. The *Solo Szenen* (“Solo Scenes”, 1997–1998) are a late example of this. In the many films he made of himself when he was ill and weak, we discover shots of him playing the piano [↗ pp. 316–317]. In the twilight, he flinches suddenly; according to his son, this was due to a sudden cardiac insufficiency.⁶⁷



Fig. 7 *Selten gehörte Musik. Abschöpfungsymphonie. Die Abschöpfung* (still from the film), Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich, 1979

Despite all the authenticity here, almost up to the point of his own death, this video work is also a staged reality.⁶⁸ The title awakens associations of theatre and film. So when quoting

Roth's formulations we may never be quite sure who is really writing or speaking. The information could actually be art! It is a trap. For Roth, his statements, independent of their content, were above all one thing: language.

Let me give an example of this. His text annotations for the doctoral thesis of Dirk Dobke have impressed us with their objectivity.⁶⁹ Roth is here concerned with correctness of content and language in a manner he never otherwise displayed. He acts like a copyeditor and a corrector for this scholarly study of

his work. And then in *Solo Szenen* we discover him reading and making comments on this very thesis for hours on end.⁷⁰ The meticulous discourse turns into an object of artistic self-observation and self-staging. It is a secret triumph of art over scholarship, with the latter falling into the trap.

M. ROTH Though such “strange loops”, i.e. a weird, sometimes counter-causal interdependence of subject and object, ultimately of art and life, are very typical of Roth. That reminds me of the spaghetti junction of many of his sounding assemblages such as *Keller-Duo* (“Cellar-duo”, 1980–1989[®]), where you can hardly tell any more which machine is controlling which, or precisely which machine is playing and which is recording [[↗] Fig. 8 and p. 303]

M. HALDEMANN Or the cords of the same works that could either be elements of the work or something to hang them from. Such metafunctional elements (handles, doors, rolls, covers, painting utensils) are characteristic of his visual works [[↗] e.g. pp. 189, 217, 305].

M. ROTH The single *Ratio-Konditio* (1979) functions in a similarly convoluted manner. Together with Rainer, Roth writes a



Fig. 8 Dieter Roth and Björn Roth, *Keller-Duo* (detail), 1980–1989, Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg

letter to the gallery owner Helmut Klewan that is intended to force him to exhibit precisely this record as a work of art and to sell it – “so that we can pin ourselves down”, as Rainer aptly describes the situation during the recording. But this is not just Dada: such contortions can undoubtedly be utilised in a knowledge-oriented manner, as Wiener explains: “our own possibilities of fantastical understanding can at present – given the limitations of scholarly methods that claim universal validity – clearly only develop as *art*, and the art of the future will experiment with the parameters of understanding ... – truth must stop bullying our understanding; instead more pictures have to be produced; many models for ‘the same’ (so that ‘the same’ can stop being an entity); there must be different hierarchies of interpretation of which those that are incompatible will be the most valuable. in general, we must seek out what is incompatible, which will be a beginning: delusion must be rehabilitated as an endeavour to liberate understanding, to be an idiosyncrasy of the *projection of meaning*”.⁷¹ Although the *Rarely heard music* is characterised by witty puns and convivial moments, during our conversation Wiener was insistent on relativising the significance of humour by referring to just this search for knowledge: “I am basically completely dogged and embittered; I want to achieve something!”⁷²

M. HALDEMANN For Roth, humour was crucially important and art is not a kind of “faute de mieux” scholarship for want of something better. In any case, the music commentaries on stage are to be understood as artistic self-observation and self-reflection. Roth and Wiener exemplify this in the *TOTE RENNEN Lieder*. Their discourse, which also deals with the concepts of “primary” and “secondary”, here bears the title “Lieder”, i.e. “songs”.

Language

M. ROTH Roth also speaks explicitly of “conversations as songs”.⁷³ This brings us closer to the topic of “language” as the central foundation of Roth’s work. We mustn’t forget that he wanted to be a poet and suffered by being regarded primarily as an artist and a graphic artist.⁷⁴ As a representative of concrete poetry, which he later called “visual poetry”⁷⁵ (in order to

differentiate what he was doing from it), language was for him never just a vehicle but always also an object; the mystifications, ramifications and deformations of its signs and sounds are just as characteristic of his poetry as they are of his diaries and interviews and of his heckling in his concerts. They do not represent any fixed, prefigured system of signification and do not use any one-dimensional modes of communication, but “arise in the intermediary realm of social interaction”,⁷⁶ and open up for him – along with music, by the way – the “social space” in artistic terms.⁷⁷ Wiener, referring to Roth’s acceptance of typing mistakes, calls this “no simple theory of meaning, but rather an act of observing what a third party gets back when a second party is given something, e.g. the print worker”.⁷⁸

The *Berlin poets’ workshops* are characterised by similar mechanisms. Dieter Schwarz has observed that, with Roth, “it is precisely when he moves into new fields of activity, such as music or video, that he uses collaborative work as a technique. Venturing into the realm of music, for example, is easier when it is less a matter of conquering a new means of expression and more as a conversation about that means of expression. His step into a new realm thereby loses any sense of uniqueness and the significance of this step is discussed; it is not the music itself but the act of venturing into it that is represented. Dialogue releases the act of representation from its supposed identity or at least from its connection to what is represented and describes it as a part of a discourse carried out by two or more”.⁷⁹ This is a very apt description of moments such as the self-commentary you mention from the fourth movement of the *November symphony* with the title “Subito (72 bagatelles)”. The excerpts from their own music-making that Roth, Rühm and Wiener are listening to are far too brief and fragmented for the quality judgements made to be carried out “subito”. Thus, despite their reflections being occasionally pregnant with meaning, their conversation itself becomes a “bagatelle” – a “triviality”. This is all the more true when a second layer presents a commentary on the commentary.⁸⁰ Here, Wiener says: “I find both the commentary and the music crushing!” Rühm adds: “One just doesn’t have any idea what to say to that”. And Roth: “But something has to be said!”⁸¹

The act of “saying” is thus decisive, less what is actually said. Wiener calls this their “bullshit style”.⁸² And for Roth, often just filling up a record or a tape was the primary musical goal, with

the content itself of lesser importance. It is through this that the medium has a poeticising impact on its form; the act of production gives the “bullshit” a framework, making it tangible. Wiener added the following commentary to Roth’s book *Frühe Schriften und typische Scheisse*: “the purest poetry would be to restrict oneself to what has taken place (a lot of sense)”.⁸³

M. HALDEMANN It is precisely this that Roth does several years later with his diary-like writings, where he consciously eschews poetic mastery and romantic content in order to “render” only everyday life.

M. ROTH But he does this again with a new, wayward poetry – I’m thinking, for example, of his 176-page “one-word play” *Murmel* (“Mumble”, 1974) or of this idea of his: “You see, it gives us this fantastic pleasure to write a book, and we do it as if we had more words than just one. But animals don’t even write. If they were to write books, I think they wouldn’t look very far. An animal would write its name and then tell its publisher how thick the book should be ... one thousand five hundred pages. So the animal writes its word – the pig writes ‘pig’ twenty million times. And then they’d have one of the most wonderful books. That would describe their life in its essence, even humorously”.⁸⁴ Quantity is here raised into quality and can even “describe life” – we find similar things in his *Tibidabo-Hundezwinger 24 Stunden Gebell* (“Tibidabo dog pound 24 hours of barking”, 1977–1978[Ⓢ]) or in the almost forty hours of *Lorelei, die Langstreckensonate* (1978[Ⓢ]) [*↗* pp. 212–213, 219].⁸⁵



Fig. 9 Andy Warhol, *Thirty are better than one*, silk-screen on canvas, 279.4 × 238.8 cm, 1963, The Brant Foundation, Greenwich (CT)

M. HALDEMANN Yes, that sheer quantity! Roth seems to be of one opinion with Andy Wahrol, who gave his paraphrase of da Vinci’s *Mona Lisa* the title *Thirty are better than one* (1963) [*↗* Fig. 9].⁸⁶ The endless talking, playing and producing of things creates the distance of which we have already spoken. Whoever will remember what I say today? I can just as well say the opposite tomorrow.

M. ROTH But oddly, Roth circumvented precisely this ease of forgetting and took his “self-archiving” to extremes. You just have to think of the innumerable work catalogues ...

M. HALDEMANN ... that are also large works themselves, if I think of *Flacher Abfall* (“Flat garbage”, 1975) or of his numerous, large-scale artists’ books [↗ Figs. 10, 11]

The content changes, but the language remains the same. Roth mistrusts its truth, even its meaning. His radical critique of language fits the linguistic-analysis concept of poetry among his Viennese artist friends.⁸⁷ You have quoted Gerald Hartung, who refers back to Fritz Mauthner’s critique of language. As a philosopher and writer who was critical of language, Mauthner was also important to Konrad Bayer and the Vienna Group.⁸⁸ Above all to Wiener, whose ground-breaking works of the 1960s, situated between verbal art, verbal criticism and linguistic philosophy, also included speech. Besides Mauthner, he also oriented himself on the “linguistic games” of the late Wittgenstein.

Self-reflectivity

M. ROTH Whereas the Vienna Group consistently “sawed off the branch on which they sat”⁸⁹ and did this to the point of rejecting language⁹⁰ and falling silent, Roth’s linguistic critique fuelled an expansion of his work with language to the point of boundlessness. Wiener mentions Roth’s “worse relationship to language”,⁹¹ but qualifies this. He used “the ambiguity of words not like that of images – he

sees images vaguely and ambiguously, language clearly and unambiguously; when writing he prefers to express himself in a complicated manner in order to become unambiguous through the accumulation of corrections. He listens closely to expressions to discern their authentic meaning, and uses complication at the same time in order to take back what has been said, so as not to appear responsible for it”.⁹² This implies that Roth’s



Fig. 10 *Flacher Abfall*, 1975–1976/1992, from the exhibition *Books, graphic works (2nd part) and And. M. from the years 1971–81* in the Helmhaus, Zurich, 1981, photo: Niklaus Stauss

scepticism regarding language was directed at what is fixed in written form – at what is thus removed from the active process of formation and for which one might be held responsible.

Roth, “by his very nature a fluid aggregate”,⁹³ no longer believed in “meaning in itself, but there are meaningful signs. and the signs, not that for which they stand, can be brought into a meaningful combination – inasmuch as they are parts of a regulated system of signs”.⁹⁴ It is precisely such conventional, fixed systems of signs and their everyday, practical meaning that are modulated by Roth in so many ways and that are thereby annulled – just think of the artists’ book *MUNDUNCULUM* (1967), his *Tonalfabet* (“Note alphabet”, from 1965 onwards) and its concrete application in his musical typing machine *Olivetti-Yamaha-Grundig Combo* (1965–1982[®]) [p. 298]. By simply transferring one figure into a new sign-system, one can suddenly “allow incredibly complicated figures to blossom”,⁹⁵ said Roth. His diaries are characterised by similar productive mechanisms: “I can’t speak of misfortune if a sentence is correctly constructed because the terror of it disappears. In this sense what I’ve written is not so terrible as I would like it to be. That is to say, I don’t say the truth because it can’t be said – with perfect syntax. I have tried to make mistakes and to leave orthography to one side and just cross out things – but these are merely very small, cosmetic interventions”.⁹⁶ Verbal blemishes thereby become eloquent characteristics.⁹⁷

M. HALDEMANN When speaking, writing, drawing, painting, filming, performing or playing the piano, Roth was concerned about their (pre-)conditions (incidentally, he regarded Wiener as the most intelligent person he knew).⁹⁸ The conditions of the material, the technique, the situation in which something happens, and of the person carrying it out (with their body). Speaking also belongs here, which is subjected to criticism as much as the language that is fixed in writing. He does not believe in the possibility of linguistic or pre-linguistic knowledge. He said that Wiener often just did not want to admit that there “was



Fig. 11 *Collected works*, vol. 13, 472 pages, offset and letterpress printing, stitched, softback, edition hansjörg meyer, 1972

nothing to declare”.⁹⁹ For Roth himself, thinking was merely speaking about thinking,¹⁰⁰ and speaking was a “superstition”: “It’s like a prayer wheel that’s moving round”.¹⁰¹ For, ultimately, only a “tone” is conveyed, although one believes one is hearing something else.¹⁰² Thus “the whole of scholarship and of speaking – that’s a ritual ... that’s how I regard it: you can’t say anything, you don’t speak about something, you just emit sounds from the tip of your tongue”.¹⁰³ He preferred speaking to the written or the printed word, to literature, not because it enabled more knowledge but because of the opposite: “because it still sounds”.¹⁰⁴ It became for him an alternative literature that you read “with your ears instead of your eyes”.¹⁰⁵ And so we come back to music: can speech be music?

M. ROTH For the moment, we can easily switch around the wording “reading with the ears”, and then it fits in perfectly with Roth’s dilettante music notation in his diaries [[↗] e.g. p. 289 and Fig. 31] and his only music score, the *Splittersonate* (“Splinter sonata”, 1976–1994[®]): a music that you hear with your eyes! [[↗] pp. 296–297] In the second *Bastel-Novelle* (“Homemade novella”, 1974), Roth wants to “write down a music that has not yet gone through the ears” (*sic*).¹⁰⁶ Although he and several of his co-musicians have their roots in concrete poetry, the “speaking as music-making” on their records occurred initially only in extended experimental vocal actions (especially in the 3rd *Berlin poets’ workshop*), later more and more as an inherent self-commentary in the form of conversations with co-performers, occasionally also with the audience.

The dynamic flow of Roth’s instrumental playing is also characterised by a certain similarity to speech. As an example, I’d like to mention a passage in the *Quadruple concerto*,¹⁰⁷ where Roth announces “The concert’s over!”, repeating it quickly, alternately spoken and snorted into his horn. The horn that he liked to play is similar to the tuba, which makes it ideal for grotesque, voice-like articulations and sounds [[↗] Fig. 12]. The instrument becomes a kind of megaphone: Roth and his whole physicality never recede into the background (as is the case with classically trained musicians). Instead, the tension inherent in the situation, the breathlessness, the drunkenness or the hangover all clearly play a role, sounding out with the “strength of a boar”.¹⁰⁸ Roth wrote in his diary about this as follows: “What is wild (e.g. in Schoenberg) cannot be so wild because it’s composed for a

player who has to discipline it (he who hasn't mastered the instrument can be the wildest of all)".¹⁰⁹

M. HALDEMANN In his Biennale exhibition, he turned the everyday conditions of his art production into the topic of his art. This work product comprises only the visible, audible and readable conditions of its creation and presentation: it is a spatialised narrative of his social contacts and actions while preparing for the exhibition, in combination with everyday domestic tasks. All this belongs to this anti-heroic artist's life and his art production, even the most trivial and banal things. To present the international art world with the de-mystified everyday life of the artist, all in the form of "art", was a statement. A "wild" artist, to come back to your quotation, is no Bohemian. A "true wild" artist, paradoxically, would – in Roth's sense – be he who against all expectations fails in his artistry and only succeeds in bringing forth commonplaces.

In the linguistic context of Roth, the title occurs to me of Heinrich von Kleist's article "On the gradual construction of thoughts during speech". Because when Roth says things in his diary that are incorrect, imprecise or extreme, or breaks off his sentences, ignores the rules of syntax or orthography, strikes through things or puts them in brackets, varies them, writes over them or glues things over them, turning the pages as he works – then he is illustrating precisely that process of gradually constructing thoughts while writing his inner monologue. The same is true for his "clumsy" film-making and music-making. It's always about the process and his conditions of living.

M. ROTH I can add a wonderful example of this, where Roth – using outrageous orthography – reflects on just this process of thinking while doing:



Fig.12 *Quadrupelkonzert*, solo concert at the Basel Music Academy, 1977, archives of the Basel Music Academy, photo: Hannes-Dirk Flury

Duing sumething that cums eesy
 Eg leeving vne page emty
 it has enuff meening frvm uther pages wear thers svmething
 or frvm its jampakd svrrowndins
 it has envff aktivitie in culor vnd eggspanse

pvttng svmething eesy on vne page
 eg lynes
 vne gets meening frvm uthers
 is aktiv in culor and too the ayes
 simpl objekts reveel cleer mekanizms vf ther uppeerince
 ermong anvther on the page
 sensashuns ar inventud maid thaut bye the reeder
 meenings tuu owt ov hobbit

impvlsis wot mayk these simpl tings appeer
 cum owt ov thee aelimentary mekanix ov thee evrydae
 eg hee hoo mayks thvm
 frvm these sensashuns heer - ther strvng - week lots - littel
 vnd so vn
 they aym fvr the evrydae
 in heumin diemshuns
 butt can bee thort ov as
 the seddyment of mvre reemoat or commprihensuv
 ivents
 [...] ¹¹⁰

M. HALDEMANN Roth binds the product to the perceptual, reflective producer and his everyday living conditions. If I repeat the same thing over and over, like an animal, then in this banality of the ever-same, life forms itself in “real time”. This reminds me of the Warhol film *Sleep* (1963), in which we watch the beat poet John Giorno sleeping for five hours [→ Fig. 13]. This was a work that was presumably also prompted by Erik Satie’s *Vexations*, namely his instruction for a pianist to repeat the same melody 840 times. There is also a connection here to Warhol’s interest in the music of Cage and La Monte Young. The last of these was very important to Roth in New York in the 1960s.¹¹¹ We’ll come back to that later. Just like Warhol, Roth leaves his interviews, films and music recordings unedited wherever possible. Everything is valid, everything is used, as in the *Flacher Abfall* and his *Review for everything* (1975–1987).

Furthermore, his *R adio Sonata* is a real “vexation” when he plays the piano, agonising through the 45 minutes of broadcast time, adding the commentary: “And away with the minutes here / and away with the minutes and the hours too / and away and away and away”.¹¹² And there’s the music and Polaroid work *Harmonica Curse* (1981[®]), whose title refers to the tortuous accordion playing of the self-taught performer [↗ p. 222]. And then there’s the title of *Lorelei, die Langstreckensonate*, which brings together music and endurance sports. Because hardly anyone is ever going to listen to the whole of this 40-hour “Sonata”. Soon, you just go back to your everyday activities. The excess of “real time” prevents objectivisation and refers us back to the life process of the producer and the recipient. Like *Harmonica Curse*, *Lorelei, die Langstreckensonate* is for me ultimately a sounding, tortuous diary of loneliness.



Fig. 13 Andy Warhol, *Sleep* (film still), 1963, The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh

M. ROTH And it’s one that is again united with the everyday situation of the owner – for the integrated cassette recorder allows us to hear the radio in parallel with Roth’s piano playing.¹¹³

M. HALDEMANN In *D.R.: Ein Lebenslauf von 5C Jahren* (“A Curriculum vitae of 5C years”, 1980), he describes life as a “race” into which you’re pushed by your birth parents.¹¹⁴ His overlong pieces are thus the products of a “long-distance runner” in the “race of life”. A postcard he sent to Dorothy Iannone shows a photo of Roth’s record player with a runner drawn on top of it, who seems to be running on the turntable as if on a conveyor belt [↗ pp. 12–13].

The *Lebenslauf* also has a connection to playing the piano: “He came with gentle fingers on the piano of the seasons, played by a virtuoso of the friendly kind, that kind that neither practises nor dulls the eye of the audience with the brilliance of his fame”.¹¹⁵

It was on his “piano of the seasons” that *Lorelei, die Langstreckensonate* was conceived, which is comparable to Dorothy Iannone’s earlier etching *The Lorelei* of 1971/2010 [↗ Fig. 14].

Heinrich Heine's poem of the same name (of 1824) is written around the rim of the etching, and within it we also see the Bruarfoss, the ship that the American artist took from New York to Iceland in 1967, where she then fell in love with Roth.¹¹⁶ On the etching, we can also read: "And yet it was I who came on this ship and you who sang to me". So Roth "is" the Lorelei here. But in the second area of text, she sings for him. So both are seducers and the seduced. In Roth's *Lorelei, die Langstrecken-sonate*, the Lorelei myth, however, figures as a metaphor of existence through art, without any direct biographical connection. Heine, whom he admired, might have been close to him though the famous "Lorelei" poem, as Iannone had also been close to him – though he had meanwhile separated from her: "I know not what it means / that I am so sad".¹¹⁷ Yearning for fulfilment, Roth's abortive/melancholic, endless music perishes continuously of its own accord.

Laments

M. ROTH You mentioned the *Vexations* just before. In a literal sense, the title indeed suits Roth, but rather in that he brought Baroque topoi up to date, not Satie's dadaistic *Vexations* or (vice versa) the urban esoterics of minimal music. If Roth ever creates trance states, then it's through the liquid found in his "vessel of ecstasy" that he kept to hand,¹¹⁸ not through any anodyne art. His repetition of what always remains the same is something I experience as emotionally and situationally charged¹¹⁹ – quite the opposite, for example, of Satie's *Immobilités sérieuses*.¹²⁰ Just think of the *Scheisselesung* ("Shit poetry reading", 1966, 1967, 1973). Roth's compulsive new beginnings and "varied" verbal repetitions, along with his joy in declining,¹²¹ all create an impetus that reminds me of writers such as Robert Walser and Thomas Bernhard. Both have a predilection for complex infinitive constructions, just like Roth; they work with an interwoven polyphony¹²² of interlaced speaking and narrating situations, consistently manoeuvring around each other, contradicting each other, and thereby compensating each other verbosely for their inner emptiness, the state of "not-being-able to speak". Roth's *A Curriculum vitae of 5C years* is precisely the opposite of a continuum – it is a single pile of broken fragments.

He himself speaks of “shreds”,¹²³ and in other circumnavigations of his self he uses the word “Splitter”, “splinters” or “fragments” (*Splittersonate*).

Just before, I used the word “Baroque” to refer to the unmistakable “lamento” gestures of many of his works. For example, the ambiguous record cover for the *Radio Sonata* bears the title *Radiohaus-Kla=ge=Musik* (“Radio house-La=ment=Music”), though “Kla=ge” can be read as “Kla-4” (“Kla-vier” in German, thus “piano”) [↗ Fig. 15]. Two years before this recording, Roth had already made evident the existential dimension of this self-experiment in a letter to Hansjörg Mayer: “Have made piano recordings, just as a try-out and am preparing myself inwardly for a recording where I’d like to go from sober to completely drunk in a step-by-step process. Beforehand, I got completely drunk very quickly, it was really unpleasant, that heart business was a clear sign to stop, it couldn’t be clearer. Well, one more piano recording into the drink, and then to end for ever - - -”.¹²⁴

M. HALDEMANN Though this musical lamentation and what you call trance states don’t have to exclude each other. To my mind, Roth’s language and his music take us beyond language and music. He describes speaking by using concepts such as “litany”,¹²⁵ “ritual”,¹²⁶ “prayer wheel”, “hypnosis”.¹²⁷ He also often uses the term “ecstasy”.¹²⁸ I am reminded of Wiener, who speaks of the “pleasure of letting go” in the *Rarely heard music*. That leads us back to the special “mood” or “attunement” of this music. This mood in everything they say and play goes beyond it on account of the excess of information and its dilettante means of performance. It has something to do with a feeling of sadness, a sadness that Roth claimed was present in all his work. He would like to give a piano concert for a thousand people, but without being able to play properly: “It promises to be a very melancholy artwork. Something truly worthy of tears”.¹²⁹ He often speaks of melancholy. And when, in the *TOTE RENNEN*



Fig. 14 Dorothy Iannone, *The Lorelei*, etching, blue ink on paper, 15 × 18.2 cm, 1971 / 2010

Lieder, he speaks with Wiener about Albrecht Dürer, it makes me think of Dürer's famous copper etching *Melencolia* (1514). As we know, melancholy has been associated with art since the Renaissance. With Roth, the melancholy mood is linked to his tortuous playing. It is thus at one and the same time a metaphor of art and an expression of human existence.

Roth is playing for his life, as it were. The title *R adio Sonata* with the dual meaning of "Radio" and "addio" (= "farewell") means: "Farewell Roth". In many recordings of the *Rarely heard music* – in the *Quadruple concerto* and the *Attrappentappen* – we hear or see him say farewell. He leaves the performance with Rainer before its actual end in order to get to the pub in good time.

In Italian, "addio" means literally "to God". "Roth to God" thus refers to his own existence. As a pianist in the recording studio, he truly comes across as isolated and "captured". He calls for Villinger, the recording engineer, as if he were calling his jailer. "Can you hear my voice?" "It seems to me as

if I have to speak loudly the whole time because you're so far away".¹³⁰ The tragicomic performance is turned into an existential metaphor and a "song of lament".¹³¹ It becomes a *memento mori* in sound of an absurd, drunk man battling in vain against artistic incompetence, against his body and against time.

M. ROTH At the same time it's a "music for drunks",¹³² and Wiener rightly recommends listening to this kind of music in a drunken state.¹³³

M. HALDEMANN In Dieter Roth's *Die letzte Lesung* (1996), this figure goes up onto the podium in front of the cameras one last time.¹³⁴ As in the silent *Solo Szenen*, he no longer fights against time. The Heine poem he recites about a ship disappearing in the darkness refers to Roth himself. Even his comic chatter about time becomes a metaphor for waiting for death: "Now I've used up the time ... How much time do I still have? ... I have a little time, don't I? ... It's over. Please? I think I don't have any more time, do I. Five *minutes* ... Forgive me, I couldn't carry on reading. Time has been emptied away".¹³⁵



Fig. 15 *Die R adio Sonata*, 12" vinyl LP, edition hansjörg mayer, 1978

In this context, I am reminded of the humorous/sad character who has become a symbol of the modern artist: Don Quixote. Roth used the name to describe himself,¹³⁶ and Richard Hamilton described his collaboration with him as a duo between Don Quixote (Hamilton) and Sancho Panza (Roth).¹³⁷ This duo also appears in their texts *Collaborations of Ch. Rotham* (1977).¹³⁸ And the title of an assemblage by Roth also refers to the anti-hero doomed to failure: *Hesturinn, riddari og myllur* (“The stallion, a knight and mills”, 1986–1989[©]) [↗ Fig. 16].

Being “entrapped” for Roth isn’t just a matter of personal sensitivities. It is founded generally in the unbridgeable difference between the subject and reality. Ultimately, everything of which we can speak is only something that “springs from the lips” and “runs into your ear”.¹³⁹ He does not doubt the existence of reality, but the restricted sensory-cognitive instruments of human knowledge are problematical for him: “What I say now, it’s not even sure that I thought it. It’s only what I am saying now. Who knows what a man thinks? ... You can at best see what you say and not even that, because if you say something, then again you’ve only heard it. You don’t know what you’re saying, you have to hear it. And when you hear it, then you don’t know what you’ve said, because you’ve only heard it”.¹⁴⁰ It’s the confusion in the human sensory organs and the brain, not his emotional sensitivities, that awaken the deep feeling of sadness that leads him to compose “songs of lament”. In his collaborations with his artist friends, at least his songs are heard: “You’re not so alone. They can understand the sound. I’m interested in the echo”.¹⁴¹

Whatever his friends may have said about the *Rarely heard music* – however substantial, intellectually superior or brilliant their commentaries may be – the epistemological/existential aspect of it is something that drove only him to make indivisible the figure in art and the person of the author. He does not just stage himself as a “figure”, which is something that many visual artists did in the 1960s and ’70s with their photographic, performative and



Fig. 16 *Hesturinn, riddari og myllur* (*Der Hengst, ein Ritter und Mühlen*), mixed media, 169 × 145 cm, 1986–1989, Kunsthaus Zug

filmic works (the Viennese Actionists in particular). Instead Roth exposes himself as a person and links his creative work with himself and his life. With all the fissures, contradictions and abysses of his personality, his offensiveness, his yearnings, his fear and his love, rage and envy, his craving for recognition, his shyness, his ecstasy and depression, his physical urges, his asceticism and excess, his ambition, his self-doubts and his death. Unlike the sphinx that was Andy Warhol or the “instructor-priest” Joseph Beuys, he does not merge into any stable role



Fig. 17 *Wer war Mozart?*, cover illustration by Peter Roesch, Verlag Reykjavik, 1971

as an artist, but explores the multiple sides of his dissociated, “nebulous” self in his *Selbstalsmehreregespräch* (“Self-as-several conversation”) – thus the title of a work from 1975.¹⁴² There are supposed to be five or six Roths, the “drunkard”, the “whore hunter”, the “calm writer, such an ascetic”, the “father” and “a musician too, he who does concerts with his friends”.¹⁴³ “What I write is for me always speaking with these people whom I imagine. That’s simply a band of beings who live in me and continually pursue me”.¹⁴⁴ Because he takes self-observation to extremes, he succeeds in creating distance to himself, and produces art.

M. ROTH And this art is not a “staging of real events”¹⁴⁵ as Nitsch has described his own work. Roth no doubt recognised the paradox behind this and tried to do the exact opposite, “letting real things, that are staged, just happen”. This means accepting all the consequences and an unsparing provocation and utilisation of personal emotional states.¹⁴⁶

M. HALDEMANN Reality and what is “staged” can no longer be differentiated clearly. His artistic self-observation goes too far for it to be “true”, and it is probably precisely because of this that it moves us. When Wiener speaks of the “ideology of failure”,¹⁴⁷ this ideology in Roth’s case does not just refer to the music, but above all to the man. His human failing universalises him through his art to make him into an “Everyman”.¹⁴⁸ He makes himself a “human figure” in his own work.

M. ROTH Joseph Beuys's (often misunderstood) statement that "everyone is an artist!" prompted Roth to reply: "No, no. 'Nobody is an artist'. That's what I mean".¹⁴⁹

M. HALDEMANN For Roth, the artist is even a "copy" of a normal person: "What an everyday person does all the time, he organises the whole time, he designs, he builds up, he tears down, he's always doing something. The artist only copies this, really, just in a primitive manner so that you can see it more clearly".¹⁵⁰

In his library in his isolated studio in Hellnar in Iceland we noticed that he owned very many autobiographies and volumes of letters. He read intensively about the life and thought of his literary, musical and artistic "colleagues" Berlioz, Mahler, Mozart, Spohr, Verdi, Walser, Warhol, by means of their writings. So he engaged with them at first hand, not as they have been communicated by historians.¹⁵¹

M. ROTH Roth refers pejoratively to musicologists as "Musikvokabelfechter" ("people who duel with musical words") and "Musikdenkmalssockelbauer"¹⁵² ("people who build the pedestals of music monuments"). But his diaries make it clear that he was an avid reader of books about music. That is why his question – framed as an essay – *Wer war Mozart?* ("Who was Mozart?", 1971) [↗ Fig. 17] and his subsequent reply: "I don't know" might well reflect an authentic train of thought in Roth, including his embarrassed doubling: *WER IST DER DER NICHT WEISS WER MOZART WAR?* ("WHO IS HE WHO DOES NOT KNOW WHO MOZART WAS?", 1971).

M. HALDEMANN These studies are linked to his conception of his overarching creative process as a "diary". He admired the artists' diaries of Delacroix, Kafka, Léautaud and Renard and he often read Lichtenberg.¹⁵³ It was also in his isolated retreat in Hellnar that he wrote most of his texts. [↗ Fig. 18].

M. ROTH Our many conversation partners also spoke about his being very widely read.¹⁵⁴ Since you mention the library in Hellnar, I would also like to mention Roth's impressive record collection, which today stands in Björn Roth's studio in Álafoss. Roth seems to have been particularly interested in prolific artists – Haydn, Mozart and Schubert – and to have preferred the rather comprehensive genres from their oeuvres such as string quartets or songs with piano. When you consider the constantly high quality

of these “classics”, you naturally can’t talk about “bulk goods”. But it is notable that it is precisely these bodies of works that are usually published in the form of collections, and were thus created as a kind of “series”. Björn Roth told us how his father often told him of “tricks for life” that were also helpful when producing large-scale series of works.¹⁵⁵ This makes me speculate that Roth also studied these biographies and biographical documents to find tricks for an artistically productive existence ...¹⁵⁶

M. HALDEMANN ... or a productive human existence, thanks to art.

The *Rarely heard music* and his own musical works are for me, conceptually, a kind of music game about music; a meta-music or a non-music music. But at the same time they are also expressive/existential statements. Up on the concert podium they don’t just laugh. They also complain, they whinge, moan, sob, howl and scream. A “pervasive howl of lament” as Roth described his diaries.¹⁵⁷ Time and again this music reminds me of deep breathing. It is a testament to physical efforts to the point of exhaustion. In the *Berlin concert*, Günter Brus even hyperventilated while playing.¹⁵⁸ Earlier, he had made so-called “breath compositions” on the boundaries of what was physically possible for him.¹⁵⁹ Despite all the joy and the ecstasy, they are ostentatious about their “passionate suffering”. This is also communicated by the dragging of the music that tries in vain to get going, or seems to stand still or go in circles. Often, melodies “hang” in the air and seem “trapped” because they just can’t get moving. Like a record pickup arm that gets stuck. Boredom occurs, which the protagonists themselves also often talk about on the podium. Sometimes they even make noises as if they were sleeping. In Roth’s immobile *Solo Szenen*, hardly anything happens. He sits around, lies around, does this and that, reads a lot, irons or eats, shits and writes, and in between he briefly plays the piano [pp. 316–317]. He tries “to show this whole sadness, the absurdity and the boredom of life”.¹⁶⁰ A hundredfold return of what remains ever the same, in different places. Trapped in our everyday rituals, we wait until death. It is a haunting image of “vanitas”.¹⁶¹

M. ROTH These works are no “psittacism”,¹⁶² but an up-to-date form of expressive art that operates with sensual realities that are directly experienced and then made manifest.¹⁶³

M. HALDEMANN Here I'm reminded of the work you've already mentioned, *Tibidabo-Hundezwinger 24 Stunden Gebell* [7 pp. 212-213]. Here, Roth recorded the dreadful sounds of dogs barking in a Spanish dog shelter. From a distance he initially thought it a "wonderful music". He had his sons photograph 1 400 dogs that had been caught and were destined to be put down, then he drew himself 2 000 times as a dog.¹⁶⁴ In exhibitions later, the dog barks were joined by recordings of the gallery visitors.¹⁶⁵

M. ROTH That's exactly what I meant! Ultimately, however, he enables the observer to identify with the work object, even if in a non-traditional manner – more as a kind of existential experience.¹⁶⁶ It is noteworthy that Roth later said proudly that the gallery staff were unable to bear it for long: "They find it too sad. The dogs express such overwhelming sadness".¹⁶⁷ In the same breath he called *Tibidabo-Hundezwinger 24 Stunden Gebell* his best work.¹⁶⁸

M. HALDEMANN In many other works, too, he engaged with the topic of dogs and pigs. It was the "Literaturhund" – the "literary dog" Günter Grass – who with his book *Hundejahre* ("Dog years") gave him the idea for the *Literaturwurst* ("Literature sausage").¹⁶⁹ On his record *Canciones de Cadaqués* (1976[®]), a collaboration with Hamilton and the dog Chispas Luis, it's not always possible for the amateur ear to tell which of the singers is human and which is the dog. And in the *Quadruple concerto*, Roth intermittently barks while playing the piano and the organ. In 1970, he and Robert Filliou had the idea of making a record with their own squealing and barking, along with a living pig: "I always think that animals are far wiser than humans. They accept all vulgarity without making a big noise about it. For example: pigs. They sometimes squeal, and that's all. They don't argue with people. When they are going to be slaughtered, then they go, they squeal a little, and then they go. That is wise; I can imagine that they don't want to have any choice".¹⁷⁰



Fig. 18 Dieter Roth's house in Hellnar on the Snæfellsnes peninsula in Iceland, Dieter Roth Estate

Accumulating artistic material is thus also a process of amassing and archiving a lifetime. It is an existential activity. Tape by tape, layer by layer, record by record, drawing by drawing, object by object, book by book. It's not by chance that Roth called one of his piano works *Accu Sonate* ("Battery sonata", 1992[®]) [Fig. 19]. His life was a constant process of production that did not even stop at night. Pliny's motto "nulla dies sine linea" ("Not a day without a line [drawn]") applies to Roth both as an artist and as a musician. And Kleist's words can also be remodelled and expanded for this: it is a gradual production of art in life and a gradual manufacture of life through art. Art production is a "trick for life", and "comforts" Roth during difficult phases of his life.¹⁷¹



Fig. 19 *Accu Sonate*, 10 endless cassettes with Polaroid photos in a cardboard box, 1992, Dieter Roth Estate

In 1980, Roth adapted his working methods to his life because he was compelled to do so. His powers were waning and he was unable to concentrate properly on any large works any more, so he began creating "casual" works of a cumulative nature such as the *Splittersonate* or *Harmonica Curse*, "in which playing badly was part of the plan; half an hour of inability 75 days in a row".¹⁷² He no longer expects "redemption" from his work, unlike his artist friend André Thomkins, but from peace and calm. "Sitting there calmly and working carefully, slowly – not

work: it has to be more, it has to be a kind of melancholic purring".¹⁷³ When he lacks the energy necessary to work or when he can't sleep, he practises this "melancholic purring" on the piano, "dragging himself through broad expanses of time in the tiniest of steps (but without any exertion, just letting yourself drift)".¹⁷⁴

M. ROTH Ina Conzen once described it as follows: "The knowledge of the dubious nature of the artistic creative myth and the search for the real are reflected in the late 1970s in a deconstruction of the work concept in a manner that is increasingly without compromise. The processual nature and indeterminacy of form had long been characteristic of Roth's approach, but the act of 'letting himself go' into the abyss of the real now leads

to an accumulative boundlessness that aims to abandon all composition and control. Even determining the end of a work becomes a problem: there is no longer any authority for this, except death".¹⁷⁵

M. HALDEMANN Death did put an end to the *Solo Szenen*. However, by failing through death, Roth "triumphs" as an artist inasmuch as he has subsumed his own dying into this work. But he would never reach the planned second part of this project, "where people enter".¹⁷⁶

It is thanks to this art's relation to his life that the concepts "dilettantism" and "collaboration" acquire additional meaning. They are both linked by time. Music, an art existing in time, was a good match for Roth's interest in processuality, transience and the temporality of life.

Time

M. ROTH Let's open up this broad topic with a song that the participants struck up towards the end of the *Berlin concert*: "A Minuterl hamma wieda hinter uns gebracht und schon wieder näher uns das offne Graberl lacht. A Minuterl is a ganz a schöne Zeit! Und das Graberl is ja au nicht mehr so weit"¹⁷⁷ ("We've put another minute behind us and the open grave smiles closer to us again. A minute is quite a time! And the grave isn't so far away"). Wiener quoted these lines during our conversation and was of the opinion that thoughts of death "were naturally always in the background".¹⁷⁸ In analogy to this, he finds the ticking alarm clock on the record *TOTE RENNEN Lieder* "a fundamental element",¹⁷⁹ and told us of the Vienna Group's ideas of confronting their audience with a speaking clock for a tortuous length of time.¹⁸⁰ Rühm called time "absolutely the key phenomenon".¹⁸¹

Earwitnesses and eyewitnesses of Roth's music remark strikingly often on the (overlong) duration of his concerts. For example, a review of the *Quadruple concerto* wrote that "The musical concept is the evening itself: three carefully crafted hours; sonorous, whimpering, belching, yet gossamer hours. A player plays. A performer plays. A man wants to play".¹⁸² Here, time becomes personified as a kind of co-performer of the

playing player, and the three hours deliver a quantitative framework in which the amorphous event can be situated.

This is by no means incongruous for music, which is an art existing in time, and the paradigm of duration is something that is also often discussed in contemporary music – just think of Morton Feldman.¹⁸³ But the temporal shaping of a work of art remains mostly in the normative authority of the composer as artist. Even when Cage submits himself to an externally imposed duration in his *45' for a speaker*¹⁸⁴ (seemingly as in Roth's *Radio Sonata*), he clocks this up by means of a precise time grid and unfolds his poetic, spiritual exercises over it. One could join with Friedrich Schiller in saying: "Art gives itself laws and commands time: the dilettante follows the inclinations of the time".¹⁸⁵ Accordingly, the musical dilettante Roth bids farewell to all mastery of time while he risks his neck playing for three hours on the podium of the Music Academy in Basel. His co-performer "time" reveals itself as his dual antagonist who in embarrassing moments seems relentless in his refusal to pass and ultimately and irretrievably runs away as the time of one's life. Roth replaces elapsed time with "filled" time; he "forms" the three hours by filling up tapes and overlaying them on each other up to a point of acoustic excess.¹⁸⁶ The fact that the starting time of the concert was unclear on Roth's concert poster [↑ p. 210], plus his repeated re-commencements of the concert, are both in stark contrast to the fact that he was quite unable to end it. This also corresponds to his behaviour in his other concerts – which was perfectly in the spirit of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who wrote of dilettantes that "to be sure, they can never be finished, because they never knew how to start properly".¹⁸⁷

As in the first movement of the *November symphony*, which was conceived in a similarly multi-track way, time becomes something one can experience because Roth becomes exhausted¹⁸⁸ and also gradually gets somewhat better by practising. According to Mayer, Roth was very interested in such learning processes.¹⁸⁹ In the *Radio Sonata*, Roth even undergoes a schematic process of "maturing" by tackling time: initially he is completely overwhelmed, rushing forwards in the treadmill of time, his forearms cramping, and then there is a brief, somewhat pensive passage, which he declares to be "by Brahms's successor".¹⁹⁰ Then we hear Roth the balladeer, scanning "And away with the minutes", who aims to master time by imposing his own metre on it and by means of stubborn repetition. And,

finally, there is time filled with narrative: Roth assigns his tactile pieces little roles and describes their nature and their progress as a story. At the close, he cuts off the piece confidently (though too early!) with a clap.

M. HALDEMANN He is describing a biography in metaphorical terms – one that breaks off abruptly. And when he talks about editing the recording and at the end says: “Let’s cut it off!”, he is treating time as if it were something corporeal and material. Note by note, minute by minute, it’s put aside in “chordal work”; “and away with the minutes”. That also applies to the listener: “The author is an assassin, he wants your time. He doesn’t even want it for himself, after all he can’t take it for himself, he just wants to take it away from you”.¹⁹¹

Thus the dilettante literally plays as a “pastime” – to pass away the time.

M. ROTH Behind this collective wasting of time we also find Roth’s credo once more (in his own English): “[...] INSTEAD OF SHOWING QUALITY (surprising quality) WE SHOW QUANTITY (surprising quantity). [...] ‘QUALITY’ is BUSINESS (f. i. advertising) is just a subtle way of being Quantity-minded: | Quality in advertising wants expansion and (in the end) power = Quantity. | So, let us produce Quantities for once!”¹⁹² Out of these ingredients, Roth makes his very own genealogy of art: “When man invented himself, he invented himself as a work of art. And then he invented himself once more, this time as time. And he saw this constellation: Man Artwork Time, sometimes arranged so that Time got stuck between him and the Artwork, and when Man on top of this also started to say: Time is Space – then he saw Space sitting between himself and the Artwork. And he became even more set on this: Time is Money – and there lay a pile of money between him and his Artwork, and then he started to meditate, i.e. he sat between himself and the Artwork (thereby pushing Time, Space and Money out of their intermediate positions, so to speak) and he felt how he became at one with himself on the one side and at one with the Artwork on the other side. And he saw that Man and the Artwork and he himself are the same thing, and he reflected on how he himself had invented all three – as himself. And then he felt better. And because he feels good while meditating, that’s why he meditates in quietness before Artworks (especially in front of Artworks. Because

he initially always feels unwell in front of Artworks – because of Time, Space and Money)".¹⁹³ As so often with Roth's pronouncements, this can be read at one and the same time as mocking sarcasm and a shrewd strategy. In concrete terms, the "displacement of space and time" is made manifest in him through "himself", through a process of accumulative self-documentation, as for example in *Lorelei, die Langstreckensonate*, which contains 37 cassette tapes marked with place and date like a kind of log-book ...

M. HALDEMANN ... this act of displacement also takes place in the interleaving of artist's studio, work and exhibition. Thus the studio desk in Stuttgart over the years turns into the space-displacing installation *Grosse Tischruine* ("Large table ruin", 1978–1998), and conversely a usable studio is installed in the exhibition in the Vienna Secession (1995) [*↗* p. 313 and Fig. 20]. In both cases, the intermediary realm between artist, space, time and work is annulled.

M. ROTH In *Lorelei, die Langstreckensonate*, Roth improvised at the piano according to how he felt every day. Sometimes it was energetic and toccata-like; sometimes he indulged in old pop hits; often he tinkled aimlessly; and occasionally he was brooding. But he always moved forwards, sometimes tentatively, sometimes rushing. The reference to the Lorelei makes evident the ambivalence between life's longings and the proximity of death – time that is both fulfilled and trickling away at the same time. This is far removed from the stressful situation of the *Radio sonata*, however. Instead, rather as in the *Solo Szenen*, we here have the feeling that someone is playing because he has to kill time. Roth's son Björn took part in this production and on one occasion as he sat through the daily recording session we can hear him watching the TV broadcast of the 1978 World Cup (second round, Holland – West Germany, 2 : 2).¹⁹⁴

As we have already discussed, it is mostly not the content but the medium that determines the parameter of duration, and the recording each time ends abruptly at the end of the tape. It is similar with the *Rarely heard music*, where in the *Romental quartet* (1975[®])¹⁹⁵ Roth and Nitsch fill things up with a "filler", a so-called *Musikattrappe* ("dummy music")¹⁹⁶. In *The Kümmerling Trio plays No 1 & 2* (1979)¹⁹⁷ and in *Ratio-Konditio*, Roth ponders during the production whether what they

have recorded will suffice for a specific record format or not. When he lived in America, Roth is said to have advised his students: “why don’t you set a clock, a timer so that it would go off after half an hour, or hour and when the timer goes off you are finished”.¹⁹⁸

In Roth’s archives we found unpublished music works that in quantitative terms are even bigger than *Lorelei, die Langstreckensonate*, including 530 endless tapes of 30 seconds each.¹⁹⁹ Roth in each case recorded only in units of 7.5 seconds and quadrupled them in the studio in order to fill the tapes. This creates a chaotic mixture of copying processes and tape repeats – especially in moments where the attack of the piano has been cut off because of these manipulations and where the piano sound as a result seems to be constant, as if divorced from time. As a listener, you get a presentiment of sheer endlessness, three times over: in the disembodied continuum of this music, in the endless winding forwards of the tape loop and in the immeasurable quantity of the 530 cassettes.²⁰⁰

M. HALDEMANN Roth describes the conditions necessary to make three “very long sonatas”, for which he needed two to three years in each case. It was supposedly only in Iceland that he found the calm he needed, so that when he could not sleep at night he could go and play the piano in short bursts, quite alone.²⁰¹

From 1974/75 onwards, his favourite instrument – a Viennese Bösendorfer from 1906 – stood in the centre of his studio in Bali in Iceland, near the kitchen and surrounded by several working tables [↗ pp. 318–319].²⁰² He had microphones and a tape recorder installed permanently, so he could record at any time. The *Solo Szenen* show how the artistic everyday life of Roth played around this grand piano. Perhaps it was because of this that the audience-shy studio pianist Glenn Gould was particularly dear to him. In any case, he had numerous records by Gould.



Fig. 20 Dieter Roth & Björn Roth, *Pictures, apparatus, books, records, films*, exhibition, Vienna Secession, 1995, photo: Margherita Spiluttini

It was not just recording the sonatas, but also the numbering, singing and packing of the cassettes that supposedly took him years. The *Solo Szenen* also show this “melancholic purring” in Roth’s studio in St. Johann in Basel.²⁰³

M. ROTH According to Björn Roth, his father worked throughout his artistic life with a “crazy drive”²⁰⁴ and organised many things so that they continually grew and ultimately had to remain unfinished. Now subsequent generations can work further on them and continue Roth’s artistic practices in the future.²⁰⁵

At the same time, Roth’s work is known for the precise opposite: time is thematised through the provocative transience of his art (which of course is problematical when it comes to conserving it in a museum)²⁰⁶ and through its correspondingly controversial reception.²⁰⁷ Paradoxically, ageing processes, mould and insect attack keep a work “alive”, precisely through the “chance and process”²⁰⁸ of its dissolution. They act as “elaborating forces”.²⁰⁹ Roth’s many ways of making visible the process of creation also contribute to this vitality.

Furthermore, Roth conceived numerous works as instruments that offer a concrete invitation to play, to improvise and to spend time with them.²¹⁰ I’m thinking here of the *Olivetti-Yamaha-Grundig Combo*, the *Keller-Duo* or *Gebläse* (“Blowers”, 1987–1993) [↗ pp. 298, 303, 309]. In the last of these, the observer can blow into a tuba mouthpiece that has been fixed to it, and can record endless tape loops and thereby play himself into the acoustic layers of this complex work – one might also say: into the history and future of this work. Roth and his sons do just this on cassette No. 15, when they “accompany” an excerpt from Arnold Schoenberg’s First String Quartet by playing on their sculpture. As in the case of the *Keller-Duo*, this gives the work a dual character: it becomes a materialised “souvenir” of an ephemeral musical event and at the same time prompts one to use the musical instrument at a later date too.

Such sensory experiences of the “presentness” of the past and the future are a central topic in Roth’s “stamp cosmos” *MUNDUNCULUM*. This unique artist’s book evades the usual reading process and compels one to leaf through it forwards and backwards spasmodically in a continuous act of seeing and remembering.²¹¹ Roth here creates intentionally different readings by means of the ambivalences of the typeface and the pictograms: the linear deciphering of the ideogrammatical

hieroglyphs repeatedly tips over unexpectedly into a vivid continuum; the text becomes a “VIDEO FICTION”²¹² – and vice versa [→ Fig. 21]. The writer-cum-performer naturally has an edge in knowledge compared to the “reading fate of the reader as second-hand instance”,²¹³ and stages his authorial mastery in playful variations. Thus he is able to offer the observer or the reader different depictions of a motorbike accident, simultaneously of its terrible ending and of its ill-fated beginnings; subjectively, memory and the present become one. Roth sums this up as follows: “The simultaneity of everything temporal here has meaning; the simultaneity of what is early. That is the indistinguishability of what we have believed to be temporally distinguishable. That is the timelessness of what we thought was temporal. But that is also the feeling of temporality of what was known to be timeless – the distinguishability of what we thought was temporally indistinguishable. And then: the temporality of everything timeless, the true tragedy, indeed the untrue tragedy at the same time, the temporality of untimeliness, etc.”²¹⁴



Fig. 21 *MUNDUNCULUM*, a tentative logico-poeticum, Dumont, 1967

M. HALDEMANN If there is no “fulfilled” time that unfolds freely in his music, if even in its cheerful execution it seems to splinter off, to become blurred or to freeze, and if Roth understands life in its progression towards death, then he proves to be deeply related in spirit to his music-making friends from Vienna. The “Sprechgesang” of “and away with the minutes” in the *Radio sonata* also fits in here. The longing for death that is part of the Viennese culture of life is something he answers here with an art of death that longs for life.

This dialectic of temporality and timelessness is characteristic of all his work. While his static object art is temporalised by its transient materials, even becoming “mortal”, his music works balk at their specific temporality. Both media are driven into their opposites.

At the end of the *Romenthal quartet*, Roth varies the words “Meister” (“master”) and “Scheibenkleister” (literally “disc glue”). These circular motives accompany the musical deceleration. “Scheibenkleister” presumably refers to the record, because it holds the music for ever fast. Consequently, the “master with the disc glue” is Roth himself. In his dual role he creates the temporal event as a musician, which in his guise as record producer he materialises into an art object.



Fig. 22 Nam June Paik, *Schallplattenschaschlik*, radio, wood, records, 172 × 58 × 40 cm, 1963/1980, Museum Ostwall Collection

From 1973/74, wood glue is an important means of production and of expression for Roth’s “shit style”. Thus, for example, the *Schallplattenturm* (“Record tower”, 1979[®]) is made of copies of the single *THY QUATSCH est min Castello* (1979[®]) that have been pasted together, and is a veritable “disc glue object” [p. 215]; it is a Schoenberg “monument”.

M. ROTH And at the same time this is a dual reference to Nam June Paik – the tower refers to his installation *Schallplattenschaschlik* (“Record kebab”, 1963/1980) [p. 22], and the records that Roth glued together for it had been published by him as a reaction to Paik’s record *MY JUBILEE IST UNVERHEMMET* (1977) on which he took the string sextet sound of Schoenberg, wilfully “destroyed” on Paik’s own record, and “repaired” it again [p. 214]. In contrast to the two aforementioned works by Paik, Roth’s (re-) constructions lose the playfully experiential exuberance of Paik: the “restored” sound of Schoenberg sounds pale and anaemic, and the gluing of the records into a tower means they are for ever withdrawn from any concrete listening experience.

M. HALDEMANN Roth’s Schoenberg “reconstruction” is instead like an echo from a distant time, a “repaired Schoenberg”. In any case, his records are for him like something “canned” that is eaten a second time by being listened to, and he does not like that at all.²¹⁵

In the series of *Kleiderbilder* (“Clothes pictures”, 1984–1987) Roth used lots of white glue to fix his worn-out clothes and shoes

to a wooden board [↗ Fig. 23]. The glue functions as a colourful design medium and at the same time in its bulkiness it is itself part of the topic. When Roth conceives the transience of his artworks as a “process of dying”, he stresses its iridescent “deadness” with the bright overpainting by the glue. For this reason I see his material pictures and assemblages as “still life”, or rather as “nature morte”. Even his “sticky” piano playing, which never gets going properly, is a “nature morte” in sound.

In the case of *Grosse Tischruine*, the tables are so laden with rubbish that no one can use them any more [↗ pp. 306–307].²¹⁶ In this unmanageable pile of materials comprising broken equipment, machines and accessories, several films nevertheless are running, and the ruin also makes sounds. It reproduces the sounds of it being made, which Roth had recorded.²¹⁷ In a film, we see Roth singing and playing the violin.²¹⁸ It is presumably for this reason that the same violin and its violin case are in one of the piles of material. Roth remarks that he several times mounted a functioning film camera on top of its broken predecessor, meaning that a tower was gradually created out of them.²¹⁹ Despite all its “deadness”, this accumulation of machines also stores the assembled time. The repeated assembling and dismantling of these cumulative large-scale installations in different places is something he compared to a tour by a rock band: “And it’s almost like a concert, isn’t it. Somehow there’s always a rumpus and something’s happening”.²²⁰ Even the *Garden sculpture*, whose overlarge size makes any hope of permanent exhibition difficult if not impossible, was for him a temporal “object of assembly and dismantling”²²¹ [↗ Fig. 24]. Paradoxically, it is precisely their monumentality that hinders any monumentalism in these giant works.

M. ROTH And this processuality determines the manner of conservation of these works. In our conversation, Björn Roth made a simple suggestion as to how one might let these apparatuses sound again in their museums: if a machine breaks down, a new one should simply be put on top of it. That way, the work



Fig. 23 *Kleiderbild*, pieces of clothing, glue, garbage, wood on plywood, 190 × 100 cm, 1984–1987, Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg

survives and remains playable. For his gigantic apparatuses are important and can't be replaced by today's (digital) media without suffering some kind of loss.²²² The haptics and the aura of the mechanics are undoubtedly a central factor – perhaps precisely because these are physically tangible, corporeal, even “vulnerable”. The fact that the lifespan of the integrated cassettes and the other media is not endless was something of which the artist was very much aware, according to his son.²²³



Fig. 24 Dieter Roth & Björn Roth, *Images, apparatus, books, records, films*. Exhibition at the Vienna Secession, 1995. Besides the *Gartenskulptur* and parts of the *Grosse Tischruine*, we can here also see part of the *Ringgebilde* on the right edge of the photograph. Photo: Margherita Spiluttini



Fig. 25 Jean Tinguely, *Hommage à New York*, 1960, Museum Tinguely, Basel

M. HALDEMANN Roth's first encounter with Jean Tinguely's self-destructing machine sculptures in 1960 was a key artistic experience for him [→ Fig. 25].²²⁴ And two decades later, he described his own body as a “life apparatus”.²²⁵ Speech was for him a blind, dumb “speech apparatus”,²²⁶ and it would be a “nightmare” if he “had to turn off my loudspeaker”.²²⁷ He said: “I'm a machinist after all, still, an art machinist, an art and literature machinist. I am still working the machine, it's still running”.²²⁸

There is a vital, mechanical tension that determines many of his works, besides the *Grosse Tischruine*.²²⁹ Visual/auditive reproduction techniques heighten the productivity and distribution of his oeuvre. Furthermore, it triggers off a confusing interplay of original and reproduction because there is no edition

without variation, individual revision or addition. It also contributes to the tension that exists between authenticity and copy, between the individual part and the edition as a whole, between man and machine, individual creation and mechanical product. With Roth there is no reproduction that is ever conclusive. His reproductions always signify a possible new beginning within the creative flow. The one goes into the other in a processual manner.

You have shown that in the *Quadruple concerto*, music too is closely linked to its technical, mechanical manipulations. The boundary is blurred between “natural” music produced by the body and its machine-made alienations and reproductions. The subjective act of playing reveals itself to be an aesthetic component of the technical means by which it is reproduced. *Olivetti-Yamaha-Grundig Combo* is such an example [\nearrow p.298]. The same is true of the electronic alienations and layers of the *Rarely heard music*. In the *November symphony*, we notice the mechanical pumping, stamping and wheezing, and in the *Berlin concert* there occur rigid, automated repetitions. Even the ambiguous work title *Gebläse* (“Blowers” or “what is blown”) for an object refers both to the natural, physical use of the wind instruments in it, and industrial ventilation [\nearrow p.309]. The *Grosse Tischruine* with its opened apparatus and cables also has the appearance of a group of relics with disembowelled “corpses”. To be sure, this is no act of memorialising a saint’s skeleton, but the everyday life of a consumer.²³⁰ This “nature morte” is an exaggerated, tragicomic “howl of lamentation” of consumer society.²³¹ And when I think of Nitsch’s actions, then Roth’s work seems to me even to be a consumerist “Orgies Mysteries Theatre”. The violin belongs here too, which as a “perished” instrument will certainly never sound again. In other works since 1980 we also encounter discarded violins, horns, trumpets and accordions [\nearrow pp.304, 305]. The “master” of the *Rarely heard music* and the *Harmonica Curse* with his “Scheibenkleister” glue is ready to put an end to their playing. These silent instruments are fixed “for ever” in the large-scale works *Ringgebilde* (“Ring structure”, 1986–1993) and *Bar 1 (silent picture with bar)* (1983–1997[®]) [\nearrow pp.310, 311].²³²

The *Relief mit 2 Trompeten* is another such example [\nearrow p.293]. Initially it only comprised a plank of wood on which a trumpet had been fixed [\nearrow Fig.26]. When I showed this work in Zug in 1990, by which time it had grown considerably, all that was still missing from its final form was the foghorn that Roth added at the last [\nearrow Fig.27]. According to Björn, his father had had it made in Austria. It had been used in various concerts of the *Rarely heard music* and in *ISLAND: a symphony in 10 movements* by Nitsch [\nearrow p.292].²³³



Fig.26 *Trompete*, trumpet, poured over with acrylic, 1970, later integrated in the assemblage *Relief mit 2 Trompeten*, 1962–1992

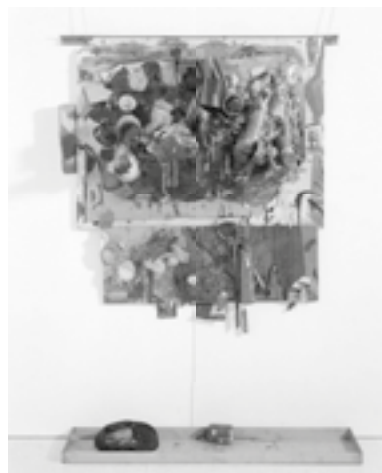


Fig.27 *Relief mit 2 Trompeten*, as in 1990

And it ended up in *Relief mit 2 Trompeten*.²³⁴ So this work really ought to be called *Relief mit 2 Trompeten und Nebelhorn* (foghorn). It is possible that the trumpet originally mounted on the wooden plank was Roth's old jazz trumpet. Like the *Grosse Tischruine*, the *Relief mit 2 Trompeten* is also a pile of "detritus" from the work and biography of the artist.²³⁵

Roth accepted it when his machines no longer functioned – which is the case with many of his music works today: "Above all, we show here that the machines get old and don't work any more, that you can't get any replacement and that technology changes".²³⁶ They, too, fall silent over time.

Since you've mention the physical-corporeal aspect of his music-making, I would like to mention the physical aspect of his musical works in general. Roth isn't just concerned with listening. Whether it's a matter of our picking up the records, playing them and looking at their covers, or whether it's about taking the innumerable cassettes out of their cases and boxes, looking at the Polaroid photos included with them, or putting the cassettes in the cassette players: the cases and containers always encapsulate the immaterial, ephemeral aspect of the works. The sounding excess of material becomes a component of a single work object. Sometimes, the objects even look like music cabinets [↗ p. 217]. In the *Fernquartett* ("Distance quartet", 1978–1980[®]), the playing of the individual family members only takes place in the box. Whoever plays the stacked-up cassettes simultaneously in the four cassette machines can make a "quartet" from the accumulated material: a simultaneity of the unevenly distant.

Often the containers of Roth's music works have distinctive handles. The *Fernquartett* cupboard is even on wheels. So, just like a piece of luggage or a mobile piece of furniture, these physical works of art can be carried around, moved or transported by the listener/observer/collector – and thus they once again become part of everyday life [↗ pp. 188–189, 303].

M. ROTH This point becomes even clearer if you look at the whole work trilogy. The *Fernquartett*, the *Nahquartett* ("Near quartet", 1980–1982[®]) and the *Simultanquartett* all thematise different degrees of social collaboration and togetherness. In a file appropriately marked "Schall" ("sound"),²³⁷ Roth sketched out detailed plans for the conception of the three works and their respective instrumental, spatial and temporal situation. In

a later publication entitled *Ladenhüter* (“Shelf warmers”), he summed things up as follows: “*FERNKVARTETT 1*,²³⁸ comprising 4 times 12 hours of cassette recordings (on cassettes) of violin (Vera Roth), viola (Karl Roth), cello (Björn Roth) and piano (D. Roth). We made the recordings in different places, each on his or her own. In the course of 2 years, from roughly mid-1978 to mid-1980, everyone first learnt to play the instrument after their own fashion, without any guidance (except for D.R., who had some practice in piano playing). The 4×12 hours of cassettes come in a portable box/suitcase together with four cassette players – such as you use in cars – and four loudspeakers. You can take out the four loudspeakers individually and set them up at some distance from the box, together with the cassette players. But you can also listen to the music on headphones (all four players at once) that you attach to the box (the instruments are the same as the classical piano quartet). The *Nahquartett*²³⁹ comprises 4 times 4 hours of tape recordings – four hours each of violin, viola, cello and piano. The players, as in the *Fernquartett*, are Vera, Björn, Karl and Dieter Roth. But each of the four people here plays an hour on the four different instruments. As in the case of the *F’quartett*, four cassettes can be listened to at the same time (four cassette players) with four loudspeakers that you can set up as you wish. As with the *F’quartett*, the instruments were played separately, but in the same house (Bali, Mosfellssveit) – thus the title ‘*Nahquartett*’ (a *Simultanquartett* is currently in preparation, in which all four players play and record at the same time in the same place)”.²⁴⁰ The speaker system described here [↗Fig. 28] epitomises the ambivalence between nearness and distance: there are four layers that may be sounded either “disunited” from four loudspeakers set up at a distance to each other, or that may be heard united by means of earphones situated right next to the ears. And the different musical characteristics of the four people playing can be clearly discerned in

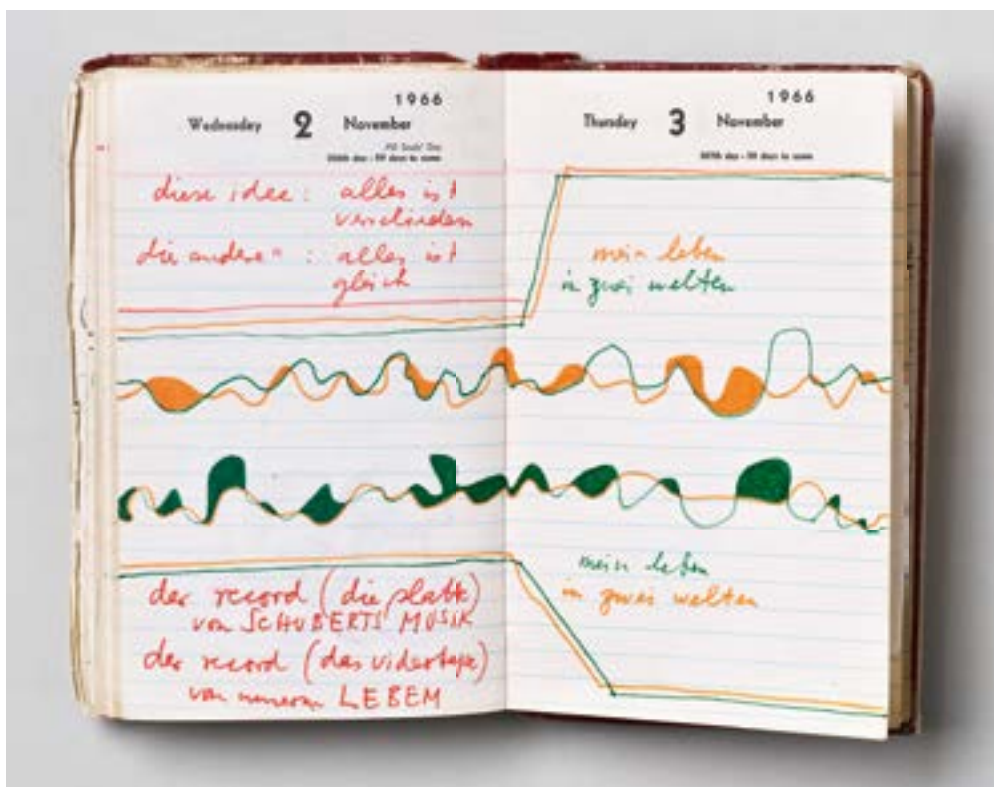


Fig. 28 *Ladenhüter* (aus den Jahren 1965–1983), 28 pages, offset, stapled, ed. Dieter Roth and Galerie Onnasch, Berlin, Rainer Verlag, 1983

their recordings. Their coming together, their counterpoint, is nevertheless formed by technical apparatus – their temporal and spatial interplay remains virtual, without any interpersonal interaction or warmth.²⁴¹ It is notable that the *Simultanquartett* never actually came about.

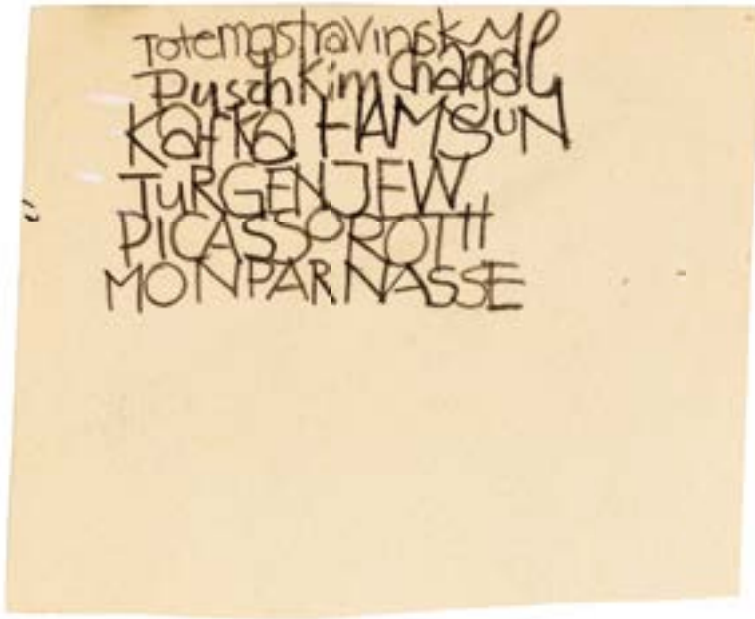
M. HALDEMANN If the work embodies the author's yearning for familial closeness, it also makes evident the painful impossibility of any connection between individuals. In the *Romenthal quartet*, Roth, Brus, Nitsch and Rühm "play asunder in a manner that makes no ensemble possible any more, and nevertheless it's a quartet because there are four of them".²⁴² We know that he knew and loved classical string quartet music from Mozart and Haydn to Schoenberg.²⁴³ You've spoken of Schoenberg's First String Quartet, which is mentioned in *Gebläse*. The "canned music" there is complemented by the botched "blowing" of the Roth family. Roth presumably loved the harmonic-classical aspect of collective music-making precisely because it was an ideal that had become so unattainable.

So this is a physical music to be played, seen and stored – music to be touched and collected. It is a timeless/material art object that by being perceived, used and further processed, is also realised, animated and temporalised. The canned everyday life of the artist and the actual everyday life of the observer/listener/user are interlaced. In the *Olivetti-Yamaha-Grundig Combo*, the *Keller-Duo*, *Gebläse* and *Bar 2*, the observers can play on instruments and combine their own recordings with those of Roth and others. They are interactive, accumulative "collections of sounding trash". In this manner, the long dead "Meister" with the "Scheibenkleister" also "cans" our present for the future. Through this, the *Rarely heard music* offers a continuation for "everyman" beyond the artist's death.²⁴⁴ Only through its dilettantish failure does the near/distant collaboration of artist, work and public come about, without any hierarchy. As a simultaneity of the non-contemporaneous in "real time" and as a dialectic of transient presence and present past. Roth quotes an old German rhyme: "Time consists of time's passing".²⁴⁵



Notebook 1966

18 × 11 × 3.5 cm, Dieter Roth Estate



Untitled ca 1950

Pencil on paper, 8.5 × 10.5 cm, Kunstmuseum Bern,
Toni Gerber Collection – donation 1983



Untitled ca 1950

Black chalk and collage on paper, 23.6 x 17 cm,
Kunstmuseum Bern, Toni Gerber Collection – donation 1983



Sketch for a poster **Krompholz II** 1951

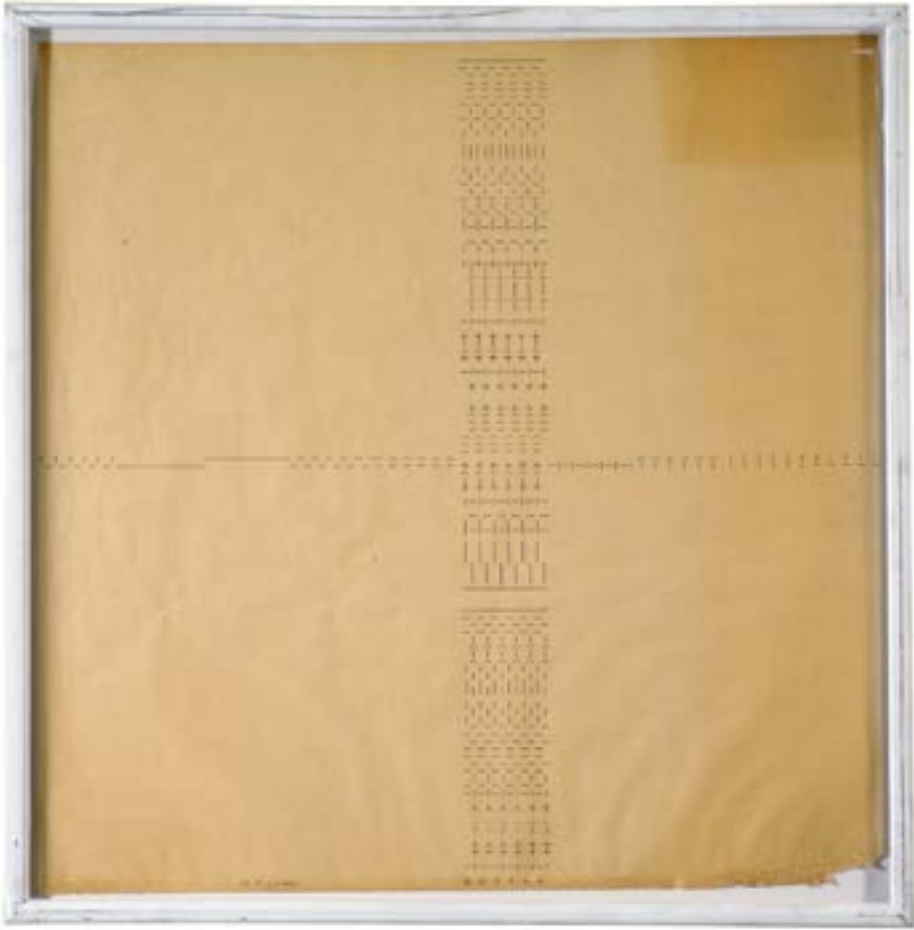
Stencil print on paper, 53.5 × 36 cm on
65 × 47.5 cm, Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg



Sketch for a poster 1950
Stencil print, 59.4 × 42 cm,
Kunstmuseum Bern, Sammlung Toni
Gerber – Schenkung 1983

Dieter Roth plays the trumpet at a jazz
session in the Anliker Keller, Bern, 1953
Photo: W. Gasché, Bern





Zeichnung mit 6er-Rhythmus 1957

Chinese ink with a ruling pen on tracing paper,
69.5 × 69.5 cm, Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg



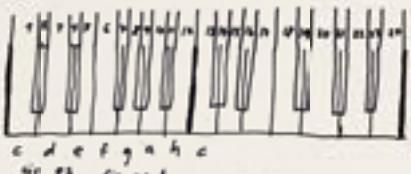
Kugelbild Nr. 2/4 (in Bewegung) 1962–1992

Wooden balls, iron nails, table surface, acrylic glass disc,
100 × 100 × 12 cm, Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg

TONALFABET

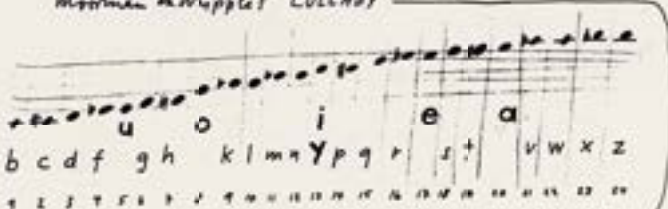
für alle Instrumente
und Stimme

für N.J. Paik



c d e f g a h c
45 42 41 40 39
38 37

bei der Aufführung in Providence spielten Paik und Charlotte
Moorman Whipple's LULLABY



u o i e a
b c d f g h k l m n p q r s t v w x z
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26

LULLABY by Charlotte Whipple

WHEN MIGHTY MOOSE MUST MEET AROUND
TO MAKE MAC MOON MAKE MISERS MOAN
SLIP ME A SLICE OF SLOPPY ~~SWINE~~ SWINE
● PERRY-PICKLED IN PONDEROUS PEE
TO MUFF YOUR MURDEROUSLY MESTY MOUTH
OF GIGGLING GOBBLING GOONY GOOSE
FANTASTICLY FEROCIOUS FARTING FOOL!

206



Flöte 1965

Cardboard, wood, thread, plastic foil, organic material,
210 × 40 × 5 cm, The Living Art Museum, Reykjavík



Dreiklang 1967

Foodstuffs and spices in three wooden boxes in a metal case, 29 × 36 × 3 cm, Collection du Frac Alsace



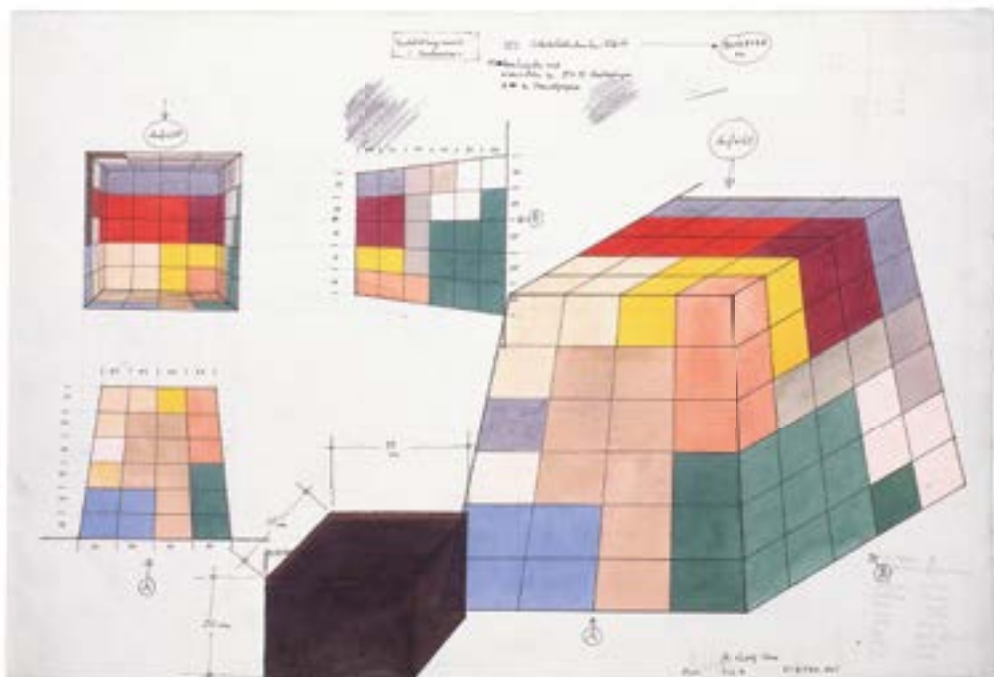
Gitarre 1968

Foodstuffs, wood, glass, metal etc. in a wooden frame,
84 × 51.7 × 5 cm, Museum Weserburg, Bremen,
Gerstner Collection



Unterhaltungsmusik 1968

Watercolour, matches, cardboard on paper,
62 × 50 cm, Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg



Unterhaltungsmusik – Kuchenriese 1970

Watercolour and ink on handmade paper, 53 × 78 cm,
Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg



Franz-Lehár-Sofa 1969

Wooden cupboard with 6 inner surfaces of different sizes, glass panes, portrait busts of Bach, Beethoven, Liszt, Mozart, Wagner and other composers in imitation alabaster, 208 × 34.5 × 22 cm, Ludwig Collection – Ludwig Forum for International Art, Aix-la Chappelle




Untitled (bath tub Ludwig van) 1969

Zinc bathtub, 60 portrait busts of Beethoven made of vitrifiable enamel, brown chocolate coating and hydrogenated fat, 54 × 180 × 65 cm, Museum Ludwig, Cologne



Second loop

MICHEL ROTH “music | , in contrast to painting e. g., | makes what goes before (in | many a sense) part of the compo - | sition , a historical part of the | composition, too ...”²⁴⁶ Thus wrote Dieter Roth in *die blaue flut* (“the blue tide”). In one of his drawn illustrations he depicted the interaction of “pieces of a piece of music” and “memories” with arrows [ Fig. 29].²⁴⁷ Before we embark on a second approach to Roth the dilettante, we should speak of the amateur, the fan, who has such profound thoughts about musical composition; we should identify what “goes before” him. We have already mentioned Roth’s comprehensive record collection. In his little hut in Hellnar at the foot of Snæfellsjökull you find both biographies and demanding musico-theoretical writings by and about Schoenberg.²⁴⁸ Roth shared his deep interest in music with the co-musicians of the *Rarely heard music*, though very different musical characters came together there. If we may be allowed to sum up in a few words, there was: twelve-note music (Gerhard Rühm²⁴⁹), bebop (Oswald Wiener²⁵⁰), Anton Bruckner (Hermann Nitsch²⁵¹), rock ‘n’ roll (Christian Ludwig Attersee²⁵²), traditional Viennese song (Dominik Steiger²⁵³) and Icelandic rock (Björn Roth²⁵⁴). And then there was Günter Brus, a confessed Anton Webern fan²⁵⁵ who delighted in punning across the whole of music history.²⁵⁶ Just Rühm (piano and composition) and in part Wiener (musicology) had enjoyed a

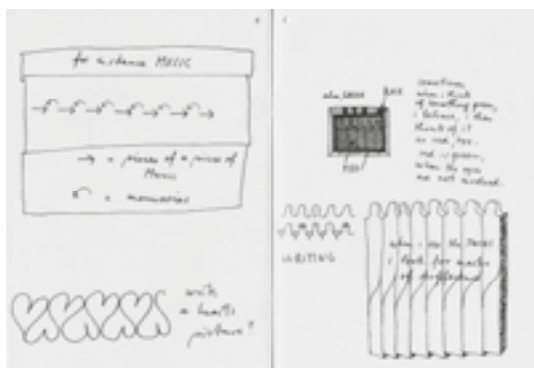


Fig. 29 “For instance MUSIC”, in: *A LOOK into the blue tide*, part 2, offset print, Something Else Press, 1967

wird/kann nicht/wird nicht geliefert werden. Diese Worte werden/ist/wird gewünscht (werden), Weibchen dürfte nur auf Weagen an Land land gezogen werden können, jedoch sei in Spiel/der Wasser/ an Land (gezogen werden können), jedoch kommt nicht in Spiel zu Land oder Wasser zu sein,

5. Bekämpfung/Verbot/Verbot kann/wird/taut nicht geliefert werden, kann aber durch ein von verschiedenen empfangen behender Band erzwungen werden/nicht erzwungen werden, leider/glücklicherweise, wenig unerwünscht kann abgeben/abgegeben werden/nicht zulässig sind gezogen werden,

6. Die/der Umwandlung des eingetragenen/angekommen, nicht eingetragenen/nicht angekommen, entgegengenommen werden/ nicht entgegengenommen werden, ist an gegeben, ist verfügbar (gewesen), verfügbar (gewesen/geworden), ein unwichtiges -unmöglich/ Notwendigkeit. Die Wörter schrieben auf den Boden vor/hinter den Baum, auf der Straße in den Hütern/ Fächer/ Abzweigen -weiterhin hinter/vor/ unter einem Baum, jeden Baum auf/hinter/vor jedem Hügel/Berg/ See/ Bergsee,

7. Konner ist (in voller Höhe) fällig, so gehen/bleiben die ewigen/jewilligen/besetzten/wigen Hüten/Verhalten, so gelten gewaltige/wigen/zeitliche/temporäre/transporter Güter wie z.B.

prestissimo

8. Die Flasche war offen/leer/woll (gelassen), das war nicht so, das war ein/großes/ Fehler/Mistake, die Dichtung (aber) ist von unten/abgelassen/verloren/aufgegeben (in Dreck/Innen/In der Decke/Damp/Verhalten, Verhalten/Wasser/Abfluss/verloren,

9. Bitte *Adagio* in Worten *p. 29/29*
Konner sind/ist fällig i CPU
IM - OB - SCH - UGA - FIK - (ohne Aufträge/Wik) (nicht) strafbar, ohne Fliese - strafbar/nicht/strafbar/nicht/strafbar/kein Strafe,

10. Dichtig Dichtig Dichtig
Als war Zuverlässigkeit: Maßstab/1.8. 1967/1

Fig. 30 Dieter Roth and Arnulf Rainer, *Ratiobrief 3*, small offset print, 29.7 × 21 cm, edition hansjörg mayer, 1976

professional music education. Nevertheless, Attersee had a career as a pop singer, while Nitsch – aside from his “actions” – is also a composer of large-scale symphonies.

Since all the participants work in different media, we can hardly consider their engagement with music in isolation. At the same time, however, making music together was for most of them distant enough from their own core artistic activities that any rivalries tended to be alleviated – as Wiener himself declared to the press on the occasion of the *Munich concert* (1974): “We love each other a lot, but are always hurting each other in conversation. In music we can have different opinions without promptly offending each other”.²⁵⁷ Friendship was thus repeatedly a topic of their team efforts, especially in the *Romenthal quartet* (1975).²⁵⁸

Music was also a common passion of theirs, as a remark by Hermann Nitsch makes evident: “brus and i spoke a lot about music, music connected us. we were very interested in the transition from late-romanticism to the modern”.²⁵⁹ Such conversations about music are documented on the records of the *Rarely heard music*. Thus the *Romenthal quartet* climaxed in the musicians listening together to Franz Schubert’s string quartet variations on *Der Tod und das Mädchen* and discussing them (Brus: “this is the best thing I know, in my brain”).²⁶⁰ On the other hand, there are extensive written documents



Fig. 31 *Diary 1975*, vol. A, with notes, addresses and photos, leather binding, 15.5 × 11 × 2 cm, Dieter Roth Estate

such as a letter by Nitsch in which he writes: “dear dieter roth! i’m sitting here with a good wine and am right now listening to op. 132 by beethoven in order to get the proper impetus to write you this letter as warmly as i would like ...”.²⁶¹ At one time, Rühm sent Roth a list of “meditative piano music” that included composers such as Chopin, Brahms, Satie, Debussy, Hauer, Cage, Berio and even Rühm himself.²⁶² And Roth, too, kept such lists of artists – oddly enough, these were written in the alphabetical address lists of his diaries and agendas.²⁶³ Among the composers listed in 1982 we find those mentioned by Rühm, along with numerous others from all stylistic directions, often including concrete work details [↗ p. 224].

In his *Collected works* vol. 39 (1980), Roth published parts of an article on the composer Dieter Schnebel, originally published by the music scholar Ulrich Dibelius, but with Roth’s own handwritten alterations.²⁶⁴ Yet music also reappears time and again in unexpected contexts as if it were always in his mind, whatever he was doing.²⁶⁵ For example in Steiger’s short-lived journal *Nervenkritik* (“Criticism of the nerves”, 1976), where Attersee, Brus, Nitsch, Rainer, Roth, Steiger and Wiener published texts that strikingly often included references to music. Or in the third *Ratiobrief* (1976, together with Arnulf Rainer), in which music plays a role as a terminological reservoir that prompts them to puns and brings forth jingle-like interjectory fanfares [↗ Fig. 30].

In secret, Roth also made attempts at composition. Friedrich Döhl, at the time the Director of the Basel Music Academy, told of how Roth had sat at his desk in an unguarded moment and had begun to “doodle” on a piece of manuscript paper.²⁶⁶ In the year 1975 he sketched out concrete compositional projects in his diary,²⁶⁷ doing so with both words and rudimentary music notation. However, these remained unrealised [➤ Fig. 31].

So where does Dieter Roth’s love of music come from?

Love of music

MATTHIAS HALDEMANN Dieter Roth loved music already as a child. Björn Roth was told by his uncle that Dieter once went to a classical concert on his own when he was six years old.²⁶⁸ His parents were also interested in classical music. In 1941, his mother told her sons about going a Bach concert.²⁶⁹ And together with his father, Roth listened to Radio Beromünster broadcasts from the Lucerne Festival in 1948, where Wilhelm Furtwängler and others were performing.²⁷⁰ In 1957 he recommended his parents to listen to the *Feuervogel* by Igor Stravinsky, along with piano pieces by Manuel de Falla and compositions by Bartók, Mussorgsky, Hindemith, Debussy, Webern and Sibelius.²⁷¹ His mother wrote to her “interesting son” in 1965 that she had attended an orchestral rehearsal of her youngest son Hartwig and had there enjoyed a good conversation with a music student “about modern ideas”.²⁷² In 1975, Roth told his parents of Schubert’s alcoholism, and that he “was so poor that he had to drink the very cheapest wine in Vienna”, and he also told them of records made by his son Karl. He includes “a pair of pictures from our eight-man concert in a church in Berlin, from 2 years ago. (We made music under the motto: Rarely heard music. Up to now we’ve released nine LPs). In October we have a big concert with a hubbub in Naples”.²⁷³ He gave his father records of Schubert’s complete piano sonatas as a gift,²⁷⁴ and from his parents he received records of Bach, Bach’s sons, Frescobaldi and Handel.²⁷⁵

We have proof that Roth was inspired in his art by his foster parents Betty and Fritz Wyss in their Zurich bed-and-breakfast hostel “Bergheim”. He was able to read books from the small collection owned by one of the others staying in the hostel, and

another guest gave him piano lessons from December 1943 onwards. The young Roth wanted to become a poet or a musician,²⁷⁶ and liked most of all to draw girls and conductors.²⁷⁷ He was often invited to go along to the theatre and classical concerts. He wrote to his parents in 1944 as follows: “That was once again a rare pleasure! A tiny audience in the beautiful small hall [presumably of the Zurich Tonhalle], a grandiose female singer, a fantastic pianist, wonderful songs by Beethoven, Schumann, Mahler, Fauré, lots of flowers – very colourful, great applause and encores! It was a real experience for me”.²⁷⁸ And in a documentary film about the artist, Hilmar Oddsson reads from an early letter that Roth sent from Zurich: “Afterwards they played the fourth symphony by Brahms in such a manner that I can really say I have rarely heard such a beautiful concert”.²⁷⁹

While Roth’s relationship to his parents would remain tainted by their Nazi past, their strictness, their lack of understanding for his art, and especially by his father’s earlier sadistic tendencies towards his family, their common love of classical music obviously offered a means of understanding and emotional contact.²⁸⁰

At Christmas 1941, Roth was given an accordion as a gift by his first foster family.²⁸¹ Later, he would utilise the accordion once more for the *Rarely heard music* and *Harmonica Curse* (1981[®]) [7 p. 222]. He also had a high opinion of the instrument in his role as a publisher of folk music. As mentioned above, he played trumpet in a jazz band after having got to know this type of music in the Pension Bergheim.²⁸² And in the 1960s he also regularly played the piano once again.²⁸³ Pianos both upright and grand plus electronic keyboard instruments were to be found in several of his residences from the 1970s onwards. But just how well could he actually play the piano? Various people have said that he had mastered the piano quite well – better than his recordings would have us believe.²⁸⁴

There are two things we can state here. First, when the music-lover and music *aficionado* Roth performed as a dilettante in the *Rarely heard music*, he was initially playing a role. He might have been self-taught, but he exaggerates and portrays his unprofessional playing as a form of failure. Gerhard Rühm also did this – and he was a trained pianist. Roth speaks of “camouflage” with regard to his art,²⁸⁵ and he was clearly putting on his “magic helmet” when playing music.

M. ROTH “Disguise was something at which he was a master”²⁸⁶ said Attersee about Roth on one occasion.

M. HALDEMANN Behind this “mask”²⁸⁷ of the failed dilettante there was hidden a sensitive, educated, clever, amateur musician, one incidentally who was keen to ensure that his children got a musical education.

Secondly, Roth was interested in Classical and Romantic music up to early Modernism, and also in jazz, folk music and rock – as you have already mentioned. The musical avant-garde from the 1950s onwards was of little interest to him. He did not go as a listener to the Donaueschingen Music Days²⁸⁸ and never went on a pilgrimage to the Darmstadt Holiday Courses. When he sought new territory as a visual artist and as a poet from an early age, when he wanted to trump everyone and radically expand the concept of the “work”, breaking taboos, questioning art and artists and pushing himself to the boundaries everywhere – then as a music amateur he comes across as rather “conservative”. In the *Rarely heard music*, he even mocks new music. Wiener says: “It sounds as if it were by Kagel”. Roth answers: “Like modern music”.²⁸⁹

M. ROTH It makes sense that Wiener tells us that the *Rarely heard music* explicitly refers to existing music, but with a new approach.²⁹⁰ Rühm called it “music about music”.²⁹¹ Roth said in this regard: “I don’t believe that I’m a revolutionary. I’m rather the opposite, namely someone who looks back and takes another look where people formerly saw nothing. And I see it anew”.²⁹²

M. HALDEMANN And yet Roth allowed the epithet “Neutöner” – a “creator of new sounds” to be applied to his literary innovations and even adopted it himself.²⁹³ So the literary/visual “creator of new sounds” contrasts with the musical “creator of old sounds” (“Alttöner”).

This reminds me of his artistic ideal, Paul Klee, who was interested in Mozart but not in the avant-garde of Schoenberg or Webern. In the 9th edition of the journal *Die Schastrommel* (1973) that Günter Brus published about the 1st *Berlin Poets’ Workshop*, we find a drawing that shows a well-rounded figure with a waistcoat at a piano: *EINSAMKEIT MIT KLAVIER* (“LONELINESS WITH PIANO”). It’s unmistakably Roth. This portrait presumably refers to Klee’s similar caricature: *The pianist in need* (1909[®]) [7 p. 193]

M. ROTH We also have to see Roth's score-like geometric drawings from 1957 in connection with Klee and music. They bear titles such as *Zeichnung mit 4er Rhythmus* ("Drawing with rhythm in fours"), *Zeichnung mit 1-4-1 Rhythmus* ("Drawing with a 1-4-1 rhythm") and *Zeichnung mit 6er-Rhythmus* ("Drawing with rhythm in sixes", 1957[Ⓢ]) [↗ p. 70].²⁹⁴ Roth here employs the principle of a "dividual" pulse that is subjected to different metric patterns that are in part linearly progressive and are ultimately reshaped in an "individual" manner,²⁹⁵ just as Klee described in his visual morphology. Incidentally, this was something that had an inspiring impact on Roth's composing contemporaries (such as Pierre Boulez).²⁹⁶

M. HALDEMANN At the beginning of the present "text loop" you mentioned how Roth differentiated between painting and music. In this respect I am reminded of the music-relevant concepts of "history" and "memories". The music of Roth and his Viennese friends awakens reminiscences of classical music. At the beginning of our conversation, we spoke of how the traditional work titles awakened the listener's expectations, as did the use of classical instruments. In literary terms, Roth did not just engage with visual poetry in the footsteps of Mallarmé and Apollinaire, thereby achieving new things;²⁹⁷ he also engaged with the old sonnet form of Petrarch and Shakespeare. In his youth he wanted to be a new Wilhelm Busch²⁹⁸ – and in his stage and film personas he can also be said to have succeeded in this to a certain degree. He read Schiller, Storm and Hölderlin at an early date, and afterwards Rilke, Kraus, Loos, Wittgenstein and Kierkegaard.²⁹⁹ And when at the end he stages his everyday life as an artist in his *Solo Szenen* (1997–1998), then the reading and writing figure resonates with historical pictures of the hermit St Jerome in his study, via the poor poet of Carl Spitzweg to the shorn-headed Buddhist avant-gardists à la Johannes Itten and Max Bill. Roth presents himself unobtrusively as a "pictor doctus".

Given this cultural background, we should take a closer look once more at the topic of his musical "failures". Let's look under his magic, transforming helmet and ask ourselves whether there is something along the lines of a "concept of failure" in his music. What meaning do "history" and "memories" have here?

Dabbling failure

M. ROTH You could see them as a foil against which failure might be measured – similar to the numerous musical genre descriptions in Roth’s titles (such as “Lieder”, “sonata”, “popular music” [↗ pp. 76, 77], “Baroque étude” [↗ Fig. 32]) that awaken specific expectations that are then mostly countered by the work itself. Wiener told us that they were incredibly talented in inventing titles.³⁰⁰

Wiener also explained clearly the balancing act involved in such an art of failure, describing the genesis of the fourth movement of the *November symphony* (1973) to illustrate his point: “The plan was to make ‘Bagatelles’, in other words, sort of short farts. I thought that would be bad enough, but it wasn’t bad at all, it was bad in a different sense from the one I had hoped for: it wasn’t provocative, it was just incredibly dull. Because we couldn’t play the instruments properly and couldn’t produce such wild sounds – or when a wild note did emerge, then it was by chance. And then we stopped on the evening or at night and then we went to the Exil [i.e. to Wiener’s restaurant] and the next evening we carried on, or on the afternoon, and then he [D.R.] said: ‘I’ve got an idea. We’ll make another track, leave it as it is and make a commentary about how shitty it is’. Then we said: ‘that’s it!’”³⁰¹

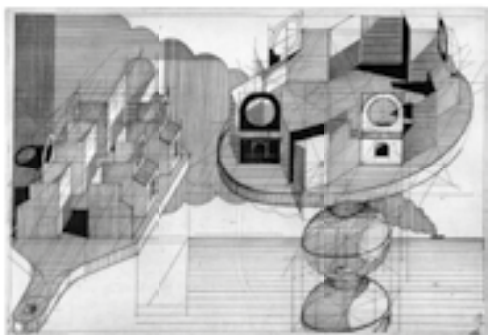


Fig. 32 *Barocketude 1*, etching on handmade paper, photomechanical reproduction of a drawing, 56 × 81 on 78 × 98 cm, 1971, Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg

For his part, Roth explained with reference to his *Scheisse* books that “trying to be bad”³⁰² can bring forth the exact opposite: On the one hand because failure can actually turn out well and thus produce unhopd-for quality; on the other hand because a drastic work title such as “catastrophically ambitious tragedy”³⁰³ scales down the recipients’ expectations to such an extent that “you can put the misconstructured [sic] stuff in there”³⁰⁴ – and, paradoxically, this makes everything once more seem coherent. Subsequently, Roth compared the concept of failure to a parachute that would prove its worth even in his bad piano playing (he’s here speaking in English): “the piano is the worst. But now this is not true any more... [...] there’s, I think it’s

like a parachute... . I've built-in parachutes in all the fields, and whenever I try to really drop now, there's a poof! – it opens – and somebody says 'great!', and this is the signal for the parachute to open, I feel. It sounds rather ridiculous, doesn't it, but it's true, it's my destiny. [Interviewer:] So you have not yet succeeded in failing? [Roth:] I will not".³⁰⁵ So he even fails at failure!

M. HALDEMANN Though I hear a note of irony here.

M. ROTH Absolutely! Nevertheless, Roth also developed a kind of ambition in this, describing his relationship to music as "ambitious"³⁰⁶ and striving for a "downwards élan"³⁰⁷ in his "Selbergernekönnenmögen"³⁰⁸ as he put it ("would-like-to-be-able-to-himself"), as if he were emulating classic models: "Just like those Karnowski brothers or Kantarski or however they're called [he meant the legendary piano duo Alfons and Aloys Kontarsky], we [D.R. and Emmett Williams] wanted to travel around and print a few posters and give piano concerts".³⁰⁹ On the one hand, a great pianist was an "arsehole",³¹⁰ but on the other hand he had "always envied those classical guys who can play piano so well. I also wanted to play the piano well. Didn't succeed. That's why I established non-ability. Now it's non-ability that's sought after. Everyone's copying it".³¹¹

It was logical that Roth had to distance himself from the *Rarely heard music*: "My ideal would be to play really badly. If you've got it all together, then you'll always hatch some kind of warm egg. It'll always be beautiful. Convincing. Really telling"³¹² – because "if 6–10 talented people make a noise, the individual won't be noticed any more (and doesn't need to have any stage nerves)".³¹³ Roth seems to have imagined overcoming the "fear of having to please";³¹⁴ "I'd really like to just do shit, really dumb shit. To do a piano recital and then say, the great virtuoso so-and-so is coming, and then I sit down and there are 1000 people there and expect something – and then they only get stupid stuff. And then they'd have to realise that I just can't do it any better".³¹⁵ People would think: "he can't even get close to Mozart, and not to Schubert either".³¹⁶ This would have a kind of cathartic effect on the audience, because they would be in the same situation as the pianist, i.e. they couldn't play.³¹⁷

M. HALDEMANN As a listener, it was not just the music of Schubert that could move him to tears. That could happen even with

the naïve playing of amateurs and children, whether it was a farmer playing the organ in a small Icelandic church, a Slavic folk music group or a Swiss one, a collector from Basel playing Schumann, a mentally confused piano player or a grandchild playing at a concert in the local music school.³¹⁸

M. ROTH The high degree of sensitivity around this topic is made evident in the following words: “WHEN THE SOUND COMES TO US FROM CHILDREN ... we (who is this?) hear sounds from children from far off. The sound of the child is the speech of the child, the speech of the child is song. Do the sounds of children come to us, the adults?”³¹⁹ To be sure, Roth’s art of intentional inability is by no means the “sound of a child”, because it is an artefact that is the product of a high degree of reflection and presupposes creative acts on the part of both artist and listener – thus also a certain degree of ability or empathy. And yet the outrageous resort to well-tried schemata in itself negates this. According to Wiener, “in a collaboration between trained musicians and amateurs and completely unmusical ‘instrumentalists’ and singers, it is not a rare occurrence for unusual tensions to arise that comprise different levels of assimilation that are played off against each other (such as when someone sings a Schubert song who in terms of the canon is unsuited to the task; the cliché is aimed at inputs that seem no longer possible to assimilate)”.³²⁰ Reception as production – that was something that was of obvious interest to the founding trio of the *Rarely heard music*, in other words Roth, Rühm and Wiener.

On a piece of paper entitled “Musideas”, Roth sketched out how he would like to thematise the listener’s perspective on a piece from the musical repertoire: “Brahms, accompanying the 3rd (with tenor horn) (with several diff. instr.)? | make the listener | (as he – the list. – sometimes takes part | sometimes deviate | sometimes counteract | and transform other recordings?”³²¹

[↗ Fig. 33]

M. HALDEMANN This “inability” is also linked to a childlike joy in discovery and trying out new things, and to an undistorted sensibility. Often, Roth used children’s toys in his works and described his artistic practice altogether as a “game”.³²² And for his role model, Klee, an intensive engagement with the creativity of a child is something characteristic. It is possible that highly talented people like Klee, Picasso and Roth had a particular

yearning for a childlike creativity because they never drew or painted like “children”, but as imitations of adults. “That would be such a super thing, if we could lose all elite techniques. Then we could start all over again, just like a child”.³²³ Furthermore, Roth’s childhood was marked by violence, dictatorship and war, which left a mark on him for his whole life. In artistic terms he first had to discover the “lost” child in him. Later, his relationship with his children and grandchildren is something that inspired him and made him happy.

If, in his visual art – unlike in his music and poetry – Roth initially had no historical “greats” in his sights and only towards the end entered into a visual “dialogue” with Cézanne, nevertheless from 1977 onwards his visual works of art start to “sound” and align themselves structurally to music. This happened at the same time that he stopped with the *Rarely heard music*. So he switched from performative music to an object-related music. In general, his new “accumulations” now carry within them the memory of their creation and are temporal wholes made up of different parts, like works of music: “pieces of a piece of painting”. Even without any explicit historical reference, these works are, materially speaking, historical overlayings (“Geschichte”). While their excess of material makes of them the exact opposite of “sounding forms”, they too tell of becoming and decaying. The hybrid *Splittersonate* (1976–1994[®]) is a collage of notation, image and text, and is an exemplary form of “pieces of a piece of art” [7 pp. 296, 297]. It is connected to the everyday history of its author as a kind of diary, one that has “splintered off into many small ideas and actions”.³²⁴ Roth’s musical experiences have thus made him into a regressive “creator of old sounds” (“Alttöner”) in visual art. He believed that avant-gardists such as John Cage or Marcel Duchamp would have regarded him as a “Bismarckian hack” from the 19th century.³²⁵ He also distanced

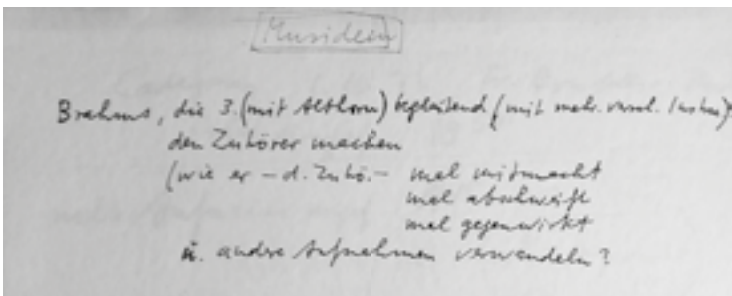


Fig. 33 Handwritten note “Musideen”, undated, Dieter Roth Estate

himself from the established music scene, and from 1982 onwards he supposedly hardly listened to music on the radio or on record any more: “For some years (2?) I can’t listen to the music any more that used to make me weep (sometimes I still can, if I’m drunk). When I listen I imagine the music-making machinery that is full of persistent, healthy but hard, ambitious people who are not well disposed to me; I remember conversations with professional musicians, interviews I have read and heard with those who carry out and hold high what is established and accepted, I remember my fear of them since my youth, compare them with myself, imagine how I would seem to them and feel ashamed. But I can’t console myself with my own efforts in that field, because in moments like that I see them as products of resentment”³²⁶.

M. ROTH That seems to me to be a decisive point: Roth’s public failure has nothing of the martyr about it; the pathos we find in certain of the Actionists is far removed from him. What he does is instead accompanied by a very personal sense of shame.

M. HALDEMANN Though the Actionists in the *Rarely heard music* also act without pathos, or treat it ironically. Besides shame, this public failure is accompanied by an anarchic pleasure, a malicious roguishness and a kind of tragicomedy – though all this decreased in Roth’s case as he got older.

M. ROTH Various contemporary witnesses of the concerts expressed the uniform opinion that Roth was uncomfortable on stage.³²⁷ He himself described “A LITTLE FEAR”³²⁸ as something that was actually inspiring, and even called “FEAR”³²⁹ a word that best described his creative work. And it was not just his fear of concert performances that troubled him. In 1986 he also wrote in his diary of a “fear of not doing the concert”³³⁰ when he refused at short notice to join in the event *Attersee and his friends*,³³¹ giving as his reason “a lack of ability in popular music”.³³²

It was also in the mid-1980s that Roth thematised both his shame and his failure in his *Splittersonate*. It has to be played “at sight”, as he explained in a letter to Attersee – a letter that also become part of the score.³³³ But one can choose the tempi freely and “perhaps play even more than one version?”³³⁴ Failure in this is pre-programmed, given the cryptic form of the musical text – as was indeed the case during a well-meaning attempt at

performance in private by Friedhelm Döhl,³³⁵ and which filled both Roth and Döhl with a subsequent sense of shame.³³⁶

But in this score, Roth also thematised his own suffering under his lack of ability. In the 51st “splinter”, he comments on his own music notation with the words. “That only doesn’t seem stupid because one knows nothing | imagines nothing (not like Moz[art].)”. In the 88th splinter, he makes a report of his failure because the key is too difficult for him. But along with this, Roth also tries to compose on the highest level, experimenting with puzzle canons and note alphabets, parodying the repertoire and even imagining a “Retro-Sonata | (opposite of what each time – measure by measure – | is expected[.])”. Roth wants to “do this with well-known sonatas: | Beethoven – Schubert = Kempff[f] – Brendel and other combinations”.³³⁷

M. HALDEMANN At the same time, he ponders his music library. “Music books put close to the records so I can read them at the same time (began some 8–10 years ago); I noticed that I don’t have the time to practise (in order to be able to read along easily). First: restricted to reading with smaller ensembles (string quartets), then gave it up completely (some 2–3 years ago); giving it up was the easier thing, or the less difficult, according to how little composed music seemed to me to be a means of satisfying ambition (you’ve got to be able to talk with others about the famous ones), and the more comfort I (had to) seek elsewhere. For 2–3 years it hasn’t comforted me in reading the bad life stories and the unhappiness of certain famous people, because it becomes clear: ‘I’m not them’. The tone, the language, the images, the comparisons, the value systems of the writers of music books and biographies are especially repugnant to me. I often ponder setting myself free from this library, but I can’t do it (yet) ...”.³³⁸

But soon he would indeed set himself free from it.³³⁹ When he now worked on his own music works, his memories of the “often heard music” acquired a constitutive function: he played from memory what he no longer heard.

Finally, shortly before his death, he formulated something that is typical of him, albeit in another context. “Something like an echo from earlier. An unclear echo of something that was there at some time”.³⁴⁰ So music-making became an act of remembering, a kind of inner auditory echo, an act of making audible the act of hearing.

M. ROTH Roth perhaps meant his piano playing when he wrote of a “piano of memory and of hope”.³⁴¹ Perhaps this also explains the structure of the *Spittersonate* – a work of restless transitions; many “splinters” don’t just document Roth’s constantly changing places of abode but were also created while travelling, even in an aeroplane.³⁴² It is notable that Roth made a copy of this score that was his personal “travel and working copy”.³⁴³ And within the work itself there is an odyssey that is characterised by forgetting and rediscovering, remembering, restarting, copying, varying, overwriting and collage.

M. HALDEMANN With himself in mind, he described Odysseus as a “garbage man wading through Middle-European garbage”.³⁴⁴ Isn’t his constant travelling between his distant places of residence and of work also a kind of “odyssey”? One that on his eternal search for a home he put into music in his *Lorelei, die Langstreckensonate*, *Harmonica Curse* and the *Spittersonate*?

M. ROTH It seems so to me. It is especially fascinating how this external motion corresponds to an inner one: just as Roth, for example, delights in moving stepwise across the keyboard in his *Lorelei, die Langstreckensonate* (1978[©]), exploring its tonal spaces, letting his musical ideas meander freely, so is the “compositional” principle behind the *Spittersonate* one of free association in the progress of its musical material. That can have an impact on the dramaturgy of an individual “splinter”: in the 88th splinter, for example, the continual consumption of alcohol is composed out using classical motivic development – for every drink there is another variation. In the 70th splinter, the words that are sung extend chromatically over a whole octave (“No one knows when the hour will come when he must die”); they go beyond the octave with a final, decisive step, but now without any sung syllables, for the voice goes silent. The Polaroid fixed underneath shows the same piece of music lying on a table arranged as a still life, but the chair is empty ... shortly before the close of the sonata, a tenor part circles round and sums up the whole ambivalence of an art of failure. Under the title: “the mistake”, he sings: “I was never good never | was I good never was I | good, never”.³⁴⁵

This brings me back to the amateur. Roth once said: “I have always played the piano, but I never dared to play to anyone. That was something quite different. In music I was never one

of the avant-garde. I was always just the ... the ... first of all I was a lover of classical music and then the one who liked to destroy".³⁴⁶ He had always improvised, he said, "I acquired little tricks over the course of the years. Wherever a piano stood, I played on it, you see? When no one was there. That way I got a certain dexterity of the fingers. For my own purposes. ... I would have liked to take part too, I would like to have been a composer, but I couldn't do it, that was all made impossible by the ideas that I had of music. I thought music was something that you can learn, where you apply certain principles and that was that. And I didn't realise that it's also free".³⁴⁷

This is probably why he used music (among other things) to help liberate his students when he was teaching in Providence,³⁴⁸ as Malcolm Grear describes it: "He gave each student fifty cents and told them to go buy a book. [...] He then said: 'Take the book and build a tower'. [...] So they were building their towers and he stopped them. They now had to take words from the pages used on the tower and with these words they had to construct a piece of poetry. Then, they had to turn the poem into a piece of music. Finally, he asked the students to make symbols for the music notes, build a musical instrument, and play a concert. I swear to you that every student thought they were Mozart. It was incredible, they got so into it".³⁴⁹ Roth himself related the following: "Yes, for example in Providence, where I was supposed to teach graphic design, we built music instruments. I found sixty or seventy photographic slides in a drawer ... left by my predecessor ... and on each of them there was an advertisement ... and then I ... gave each of them [the students] one of these pictures on a slide and said, if they wanted, they should build an instrument, one that looked similar to what was on the picture and to how it would sound. Then they did that. After two or three weeks giant pieces of furniture were the result - some of them damn beautiful things. And then for the whole half-year that I had to teach, we only made music and recorded everything".³⁵⁰

M. HALDEMANN This musical method of liberation in his "non-teaching as teaching"³⁵¹ is connected to the idea of failure. Liberation from one thing means failing in the other. If you're in a field of activity that's foreign to you, you'll unavoidably make mistakes. How can you deal with this creatively? I'm reminded of Hermann Nitsch here, who at Roth's invitation gave a music

workshop with art students in Reykjavík.³⁵² The result was *ICELAND: a symphony in 10 movements*, which Roth recorded and released on LP. In *A Diary* (1982) we see how he builds up the record boxes on a table in front of his piano in his apartment,



Fig. 34 Hermann Nitsch, *Triptychon* (detail), oil and acrylic on canvas, 1983, nitsch museum, Mistelbach

all while listening to piano music by Mozart [↗ pp.290–291].³⁵³ Before this, he had made possible a tour of the “Nitsch Orchestra” that began in the Basel Music Academy.³⁵⁴ The material for the record that was arranged by Nitsch and Björn Roth in the Bali recording studio is remarkable. The “lack of ability as collective ability” gives expression to an “amorphous” power and has much to do with the elemental forces of nature and the spatial expanses of Iceland.³⁵⁵ They achieve this precisely because “ina-

bility” can resist the temptation to illustrate a landscape in music (as is attempted by programme music). When Roth refers to landscapes in the context of abstract painting,³⁵⁶ another connection to Nitsch arises. The latter’s amorphous composition *ICELAND: a symphony in 10 movements* becomes an abstract, “informal music” that is close to Nitsch’s performative “Schüttbilder” (“pouring pictures”) [↗ Fig.34]. By making their music abstract, the “failures” of Nitsch and Roth become productive: differences, shifts, imprecision, formlessness all result in something new and uncontrolled.

M. ROTH “Informal music” is a concept that has become rather encumbered thanks to Theodor W. Adorno.³⁵⁷ He was referring to the European reception of the New York School of John Cage, though in fact this also had a parallel impact on Roth. When Roth was in America, he wanted contact with the musical avant-garde over there, and he organised concerts for his students with artists such as Nam June Paik and Charlotte Moorman. He even wrote a piece for them, a *Tonalfabet* (“Note alphabet”) [↗ p.72], which later flowed into the *Splittersonate*, splinters Nos. 17–20.³⁵⁸ Roth is also represented in Cage’s anthology *Notations*³⁵⁹ by a *Symphony (No. 1) From the Old World* (1966)³⁶⁰ and he dedicated to the inventor of the prepared piano a *prepared webster by diter rot for john cage*³⁶¹ [↗ Fig.35]



Fig. 35 prepared webster by diter rot for john cage, in: Collected works, vol. 18, edition hansjörg mayer, 1971

Roth also appears (as a poet) in the *Anthology*³⁶² [↗ Fig. 62] of La Monte Young. He had visited the composer almost every day when he lived in New York. He listened to Young making music and reacted well-nigh “ecstatically, euphorically”,³⁶³ recalling that “The music was magnificent, it was incredibly beautiful ... They started at around 6 or 7 in the afternoon and played until about one in the night. They became ever more excited. Quite crazy”.³⁶⁴ Roth describes the chords they played together for hours, which were only subject to minor changes: “The first impression is one of [contemplation], but when you listen into it, the inner structure is naturally very complicated and crazy and there is so much happening; they work against each other and so on. ... I think he wanted to play for two or three hours every day for a whole year with his quartet ... and the principle was not to play the note that the others had already occupied. There were sometimes such battles – one of them would slip off the note and wanted to return to it and try to see how long the other would hold it until he gave up, the one who was there before him. And the result is an incredible maelstrom when 5 people

do that. ... Yes, and then sometimes they changed things a little, going a little higher or then ... that sometimes lasts a long time, I think, until you notice which note isn't yet occupied. For my part I never noticed, but they were well practised and so they'll have noticed it. That lasts a certain amount of time, and until they're sure that they can go to it because it's free, the other one has perhaps already made up his mind, and then two or three go to the same unoccupied note at the same time because there were always only two or three who were free and 5 or 6 were occupied, you see? So there was this maelstrom; when you listened for a long time, day in and day out, for weeks on end, then as a listener you notice how incredibly lively it is. You think it's monotonous, but when you listen into it, you get utterly excited. Because then you notice how the people there swirl around. ... I sat there full of envy".³⁶⁵

When Goethe defines a "dilettante", as "a lover of the arts who does not wish solely to observe and enjoy but also wishes to participate in their execution",³⁶⁶ we can surmise that Roth's envy was part of his motivation to become active as a musician again when he returned to Europe – albeit in a completely different manner from La Monte Young.³⁶⁷ Soon he would be cooperating with artists who were close to him culturally,³⁶⁸ but with whom his relationship would soon be characterised by other envies and rivalries ...³⁶⁹

M. HALDEMANN It was in Vienna and Berlin that he found congenial partners for his music-making, men who had different experiences, competences and ideas. His children, who grew up with the *Rarely heard music*, were intended "quite naturally" to collaborate musically with their father.

M. ROTH In ovo, Roth's observations on the art of La Monte Young also reveal important characteristics of his own later musical practice: the almost ritualised, daily playing of music over the course of years, the long duration of concerts that last into the night, the "semi-public" character of these concerts, their monotony that with their "crazy inner structure" becomes quite exciting, and then the collective acts where "so much happens" and the artists "work against each other", "battle", "slip off" and yet somehow manage to "swirl around" together.

In the 1970s, Roth's musical activities were characterised by similarly exciting collaborations. In their joint programme book

for the *Berlin concert* (1974) [p. 203], Brus describes their activity as a “basic chord”,³⁷⁰ a “being together of masters trained in delirium”,³⁷¹ “alone, as a duo, a septet, with listeners, without listeners ... Every single one of them reflects a gigantic symphony of selfly corporeal notes. If these concentrated entanglings come up against each other, then what is rarely heard becomes even rarer: it becomes unheard (of)”.³⁷²

M. HALDEMANN “Unheard-of entanglings” – that’s a good one! In our essay on Roth’s dabbling failures we are ourselves in danger of failing. So I suggest that we disentangle our knotted ball a little once again.

We have alluded indirectly to the fact that failure, dilettantism, memory and collaboration are all linked in Roth. Your analysis of the *Splittersonate* has shown that “failure” in fact signifies a complex, “unheard-of bundling” in every individual work. Roth’s failures include the “desire to destroy”, his dilettantism and memory. Furthermore, it also has metaphorical and historic dimensions. Collaboration, however, is also an expanded form of failure, which is why we are still excluding it for the moment.

We have also differentiated between the memory of the author and of the recipient. When he plays, Roth remembers a specific music and reproduces it in a vague form. The listener believes that he can remember something and endeavours to complete it in his thoughts. But already new splinters have been spread out that one has to gather and “glue” together. So we don’t just listen passively, letting a “sounding film” pass before our eyes. Instead, we listen actively to this vague music full of holes and full of information. Wiener is particularly interested in this aspect of perception and meaning in the *Rarely heard music*, and we shall deal with this a little later.

In connection with dilettante “dabbling”, we have employed the concepts of “amateur” and “autodidact” in a somewhat unfocussed manner. Roth and his friends used the concept of “dilettieren”, “dabbling”. A dilettante, however, is not fundamentally different from an amateur.

M. ROTH But the concept of the “dilettante”, the “dabbler”, is clearly pejorative today. Especially in music, the concepts of amateur and dilettante must be clearly differentiated in the external evaluation of their activities – albeit less with an eye

to their actual artistic results. There are innumerable “amateur orchestras” – and as for other self-declared “dilettantes”, I can here only think of artistically gifted men who associate the concept with a specific aesthetic stance: there was the Portsmouth Sinfonia³⁷³ of Gavin Bryars and Brian Eno, or Wolfgang Müller’s “Geniale Dilletanten”³⁷⁴ (“Brilliant dilettantes”, *sic*) – and it is hardly surprising that both of these projects have links to Roth or his co-musicians.

M. HALDEMANN If an autodidact has acquired his abilities on his own, as a layman, then he can undoubtedly be in possession of a proper training, whether or not he is a “dilettante” or an “amateur”. Such dilettantes don’t practice their art as a career, but out of love and for the sheer pleasure of it. From Classical times until 1800, the dilettante belonged primarily to the aristocracy with their humanistic education. Today, however, you’re called a “dilettante” if you’ve failed to master an activity. But this ambivalence of the concept is well suited to the cultured exponents of the *Rarely heard* music, who “muck around” with joy and passion before their paying audience, but with a complete lack of seriousness. When they produce their first notes on their wind instruments – after much difficulty and effort – they stress their beginner-like lack of ability. Nitsch and Steiger play on rattles or little flutes as if they were children, thereby thwarting the expressive “howls of lament” of their colleagues in the *Berlin Concert*. And the childish naïve, occasionally infantile aspect seems to me to be an important topic that is connected to their dilettante dabbling.³⁷⁵ Often, children’s toys and children’s instruments are also employed in Roth’s assemblages and his multiples, such as the children’s electric organs in the *Keller-Duo* (1980–1989[®]) [↗ p. 303]. Rühm, however, is a professional pianist, and despite all his efforts to mask it we can hear it too. Attersee, who is self-taught, developed a very personal “hand-slapping” technique for playing the piano.³⁷⁶ He is a successful popular singer and possesses a distinctive singing voice. Wiener is a similar case, for as a former jazz musician he had mastered the saxophone. And from the 1960s onwards, Roth had acquired various playing tricks on the piano and hid himself under his “magic helmet”. In his piano works he comes across as uncertain as if he were an autodidact, even though he had been given piano lessons and knew his way around music theory and music history.

M. ROTH There is a dialogue between Roth and Wiener in the *November symphony* that seems to deal with this. Wiener says there about Roth: “He wants to undercut it, he wants to undercut everything” and carries on: “Dieter is a rascal!” Roth replies: “I would like to know what’s rascally about me, I’d like to know that”. Wiener: “What’s rascally is that you’re playing as wrongly as all the others, but you’ve found a way of letting this wrongness appear as honesty. When I speak, every idiot notices that it’s wrong ... but with you, they believe it!” Roth: “But that’s just your double falsehood”. Wiener: “Then it’s your triple falsehood!”³⁷⁷

The medium of music is well-nigh predestined for such tension-laden interplays between ability and inability because there is no other branch of the arts where a relatively elite professional group is up against such a huge mass of amateurs who perform in public. And, traditionally, it is not just the case that the amateurs ape the professionals, but also that professional musicians often cultivate the untamed impetus of the amateur. These two tendencies are reflected in Roth’s broad spectrum of musical preferences, and are also determining factors for the records in the series of *Rarely heard music*: the commentaries that can also be heard on the recordings alternate continuously between professional musical jargon and crude punning. In instrumental terms, the inability of those involved brings forth both pallid sounds devoid of any power, and sounds of breathtaking virtuosity.³⁷⁸

In our interview with him, Attersee, the rock ‘n’ roller, stressed the value of his unacademic abilities as follows: “I imagine to myself that I can do everything – just on different levels of quality ...”.³⁷⁹ On the other hand, Rühm told us impressively how their joint work in connection with the *Rarely heard music* had somewhat liberated him from his high consciousness of quality, both aesthetically and in terms of technique.³⁸⁰ Arnulf Rainer spoke of a specific avoidance of “fixed mannerism”.³⁸¹ While essentially applicable to all the arts, it seems me that music is particularly suited to a productive connection between the “raw” and the “cooked” as dichotomies but at the same time as mutually modulatory ideals of recent cultural history.

M. HALDEMANN When Roth co-initiated the *Rarely heard music* and established the idea of artistic failure, he bought a wonderful grand piano, other keyboard instruments and a whole set of classical instruments for his performances with his friends.

But from 1972 to 1974 he also built up a huge record collection. There are whole pages of his diary that list titles of works and names of composers and performers [↗ p. 177, 242].³⁸² And his partner, Dorothy Iannone, also installed a listening station for him in his studio in Düsseldorf, with a record player and loudspeakers. He regularly listened to music on the radio or on records. What I want to say is this: he “prepared” himself thoroughly for his musical failures. As a lover of “all” music, he listened to a comprehensive repertoire, and read music and numerous books by and about composers and performers.

M. ROTH There’s a diary entry that’s of interest in this regard. On 9 August 1972 Roth noted down the following: “Schoenberg, very big surprises while ‘reading’ along with the score”.³⁸³ Two days later, he even mentions “Fantastic mood with Schoenberg”³⁸⁴...

M. HALDEMANN ... and in parallel to this, he also built up a comprehensive collection of literature. He trained himself through self-study and gathered a store of listening experiences in preparation for his own playing. And when he and his friends on stage drink and eat, try things out, discuss, lark around and argue, then it doesn’t just come across as a flippant, public rehearsal. The private character of the event was something they stressed, and it is reminiscent of the traditional domestic music of idling dilettantes. This is especially the case with the “domestic music” of the Roth family.

The “old-fashioned” manner of the musicians in the *Rarely heard music* stands in contrast to the “avant-garde” aspects of their theatrical performances. Unlike Cage, Nam June Paik, La Monte Young and the other Fluxus people, they’re not concerned with an experimental, intermedia search for new things in which the instrumental conditions of established classical music are symbolically destroyed. Incidentally, as early as 1959, taking their cue from the Surrealists, Friedrich Achleitner, Konrad Bayer, Rühm and Wiener destroyed a concert grand piano during an event [↗ p. 260].³⁸⁵

M. ROTH Wiener described to us in detail how this action came about, and how extremely carefully it was staged.³⁸⁶ Incidentally, it’s interesting to observe on the live video recording of the *Ab-schöpf-symphonie* (1979) how Wiener and Rühm doggedly play

on while Roth smashes a violin and a drum: [↗ DVD].³⁸⁷ Roth here had some “catching up”³⁸⁸ to do that was in artistic terms already passé for the other two.

M. HALDEMANN In their failure to reproduce what was known, established, trusted and loved, therein lies what was potentially new and “rarely heard”. Even their destructiveness becomes productive and appears “informally abstract”. As failed “conservative musicians” (“Alttöner”), Roth and his friends become “radical musicians” (“Neutöner”).

M. ROTH Though it is primarily the mechanism of production that is “informally abstract”, not necessarily the resultant work itself. Rainer put it like this: “Furthermore, various things interested us that go against the morals of classical Modernism, such as infidelity to oneself, the non-committal, the variability, the zigzags, the stylistic contrasts etc., thus an expansion of our work on all possible sides without any concept as to its direction. [...] D.R. was by his very nature a fluid aggregate”.³⁸⁹ The “vagueness”³⁹⁰ of music and of “sounds”, which according to Roth possess a “permanence factor of almost zero”,³⁹¹ are the ideal medium for this.

M. HALDEMANN In biographical and aesthetic terms, Roth acts as a disillusioned artist-Odysseus – homeless, nebulous, between worlds, epochs and continents. He fails as an avant-gardist and as a traditionalist, both as a professional visual artist and poet and as a musical amateur – but in his dialectic dissolution of antagonisms, he ultimately triumphs as a radical.

And this failure does not just bring new things to this music in informal terms. It applies to the status of modern art in general. Roth knows of the end of the masterpiece and of the cult of the genius at the outset of the Modern.

M. ROTH Roth found two impressive allegories for this in the context of Mauricio Kagel’s film *Ludwig van* (1969): a bathtub full of disintegrating Beethoven busts made of fat and chocolate [↗ p. 79] and the violent disfigurement of busts by various composers, whose noses Roth knocked off: “then they become flat and become Beethoven”³⁹² (Kagel used the latter idea only in rudimentary fashion). Out of this he later developed his *Beethoven-Schrank*, which was mistakenly renamed the *Mozart-Schrank*,

at which Roth demonstratively declared the work to be the *Franz Léhar Sofa* (1969[®]) [7 p. 78].³⁹³ Roth's contribution to the soundtrack of Kagel's film was similarly "lambasting and distorted":³⁹⁴ [I] said the names of all my friends, but always with a B in front of them, B for Beethoven. So Emmett becomes Bemmett and so on".³⁹⁵ Roth's concluding "Statement on the Beethoven year" regrettably landed on the cutting room floor.

M. HALDEMANN To Roth, truth, morals and ideal beauty are a horror because they are authoritarian and inhuman. One of the things that antagonised him was the "violent" *Gesamtkunstwerk* ("total work of art") of Richard Wagner.³⁹⁶ But he also found the avant-gardists elitist and – in their urge to do new things – destructive too.³⁹⁷

M. ROTH But astonishingly, Roth admired and supported the music of Nitsch,³⁹⁸ and published it on several occasions – even though Nitsch openly flirts with the idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* as few artists have dared since Wagner and Scriabin.³⁹⁹ Roth himself associated the concept with something "horrific and saccharine", "something to make you vomit", something that sounds "like the Great German Reich".⁴⁰⁰ He feared the "ambition", and probably also the totalitarian (German-nationalist) claims to unity that were fatally associated with this concept.⁴⁰¹ Instead of dreaming of an "artistic circumnavigation of the world"⁴⁰² like Wagner and the younger Nietzsche, Roth hesitates – but uses similar metaphors: "I have only done lots of different things, nothing whole. And these different things are not so different. Seen from afar, you can surely no longer tell the individual objects apart from each other".⁴⁰³

M. HALDEMANN In contrast to Scriabin, Schoenberg and Kandinsky, Roth does not believe in an identity for sounds and colours. Nor does classical synaesthesia⁴⁰⁴ play any role at all for him. When his works include shifts in media, such as his *Tonal-fabet* (from 1965 onwards), then they are specified as subjective systemic orderings. Roth is just as interested in what does not fit together as in what unites.

M. ROTH While Friedrich Nietzsche believed that the hitherto hermit-like existence of the arts would die off in the face of a "new art",⁴⁰⁵ Roth's ideal is exactly the opposite, and instead of

any aesthetic manifestos he indulges in clever juggling: “The urge to do something beautiful and then even more beautiful is something that I had to lose. I prefer it when the heterogeneous parts of a picture tussle with each other. For this, I don’t need any plan – or at best a technical programme. But what is interesting is always what diverges from the programme”.⁴⁰⁶ Instead of thinking in concepts,⁴⁰⁷ Roth seems to think in “recipes” (if at all), and he is thus committed to a far more flexible and playful approach than are most of his contemporaries.

M. HALDEMANN I think that we are here on the track of an open work concept that is also the result of reflection; one that is derived from different works and media and even interviews. For this, I prefer Roth’s concept of “method”.⁴⁰⁸ “Recipe” sounds a bit culinary in comparison.

M. ROTH Or at least a bit like a *Literaturwurst* ... I hesitate for my part to use the word “concept”, because it sounds to me like conceptual art or concept music, which – especially when I think of the discourse back then about “the open work”⁴⁰⁹ – comes across as surprisingly harmless and unexciting today when seen alongside Roth’s work.

M. HALDEMANN Though in the visual arts, “concept” is well established in the discourse around the Modern and the contemporary. A concept is based on the autonomy of artistic means, on the experience of the author, and encompasses the sum of his visual imagination. Concept art is thus only one possibility of artistic conception.

M. ROTH Then we’re talking about two different levels. Defined like this, the “recipe” is naturally also one (possible) concept.⁴¹⁰

M. HALDEMANN Exactly.

M. ROTH What I actually want to express here is Roth’s allergy against the “untouchability of assertions”⁴¹¹ and his ambiguous circumvention of normative work concepts and of any prevalent aesthetic.⁴¹² With the concept of “recipe” I was referring to Roth’s *Little tentative recipe* (1969),⁴¹³ which makes clear his “trust in the productivity of the unconscious”,⁴¹⁴ but also of the unhopd-for, the unwanted, the impotent and the unmotivated

(the series could be extended more or less *ad infinitum*) – in other words, his preference is for things that are organised in a processual manner as if in a recipe, instead of filling out a conceptual space. This results in the “automatic aesthetic” that is so noticeable in Roth’s music-making (“let the piano do what you can’t manage”).⁴¹⁵ Wiener sums up this stance with the phrase “the pleasure of letting go”⁴¹⁶ ...

This once more almost sounds like the “Liebestod”, which is why I have to return briefly to Richard Wagner. Roth once actually compared himself to Wagner, though with a telling difference: “I, D.R., who am Hölderlin resurrected as Richard Wagner”.⁴¹⁷ In this “recipe”, which links up with Roth’s poetic engagement with Friedrich Hölderlin during the war years in Zurich,⁴¹⁸ two antagonistic geniuses of the 19th century clash together – but more than this, conflicting traits that are characteristic of Roth’s own oeuvre also rub up against each other: Hölderlin – highly educated and technically adept but a failure in life – comes up against Wagner, the autodidact who knew no bounds and was ultimately triumphant.

“Dilettantism”

M. HALDEMANN Goethe and Schiller were the men who introduced the pejorative notion of the dilettante in the 19th century, establishing him as a counter-pole to the artistic “genius”. Friedrich Nietzsche was the first to try and reunite both poles again, inventing the word “Dilettantisiren” for Richard Wagner (“dilettant-ising”). This describes a new phenomenon that only appears to represent non-artistic dabbling, but in fact means “a dangerous pleasure in intellectual sampling” (Nietzsche). For Nietzsche – and here I refer to the study authored by Rudolf Vaget⁴¹⁹ – it presupposes an extraordinary talent and also the ability to imagine oneself easily into other forms of existence, to allow oneself to be excited by them and to mimic them, but without losing oneself in them.⁴²⁰ Vaget sums up Wagner’s “dilettante” characteristics according to Nietzsche, and does so in a manner that could apply to Roth: a pleasure in trying out role playing, a stupendous versatility, an element of theatricality, a chameleon-like ability to adapt, and the appearance of non-authenticity.

Theodor W. Adorno also saw something of the “dilettante” in Wagner’s relationship to the individual arts, though of course he saw this in a negative light. As with other great artists, said Adorno, the habitus of his work is owed to a “pile of garbage, rubble und rubbish”, and only just manages to escape this. With Roth there is no escape any more, because his work is indeed a pile of garbage, rubble und rubbish.

Like Goethe, Adorno links his negative opinion to the unequal relationship between aesthetic sensibility and productive ability: “Because the dilettante’s career as a self-producer is derived only from the impact of the art works on himself”, writes Goethe, “he mistakes this impact with the objective causes and motives and now believes that he can take the state of mind that he has entered and turn it into something productive and practical, as if one were able to use the scent of a flower to conjure up the flower itself”.

If the dilettante is to Goethe someone who is without ability because he believes he can turn the impact of art into art itself, then to Nietzsche – after the abandonment of a normative aesthetic – that dilettante becomes the “dilettant-ising” artist. When Arnulf Rainer, Roth and their friends zigzag and manoeuvre in order to avoid any kind of commitment, as in the quotation from Rainer you brought before,⁴²¹ then they are essentially positioning themselves against a 19th-century idealism that is insinuated by the Modern. And when the young Roth identifies himself with Picasso in an early text he wrote before he “turned himself” into Hölderlin and Wagner, then he was sampling the “brilliant dilettantism” of the modern master [↗ p. 66].

Cézanne’s failure

M. HALDEMANN In the late 1990s, Roth took up his visual “dialogue” with Paul Cézanne once again in which he had engaged during his youth. Cézanne was for him still “the only one who I can really ... who can make me weep when I see his pictures”.⁴²² “I like Cézanne, he’s a dream. Perpetual summer”.⁴²³ To be sure, he was engaged in a dialogue with an early master of failure. In Emile Zola’s novel *L’oeuvre* (1885), Cézanne was presumably already the unnamed model for his failed artist Claude Lantier. And Zola was following the example of Honoré de Balzac’s tragic

master Frenhofer from the story *Le chef-d'oeuvre inconnu* (1831). Roth also took up his place in the genealogy of master-failures. His time-consuming long-distance art refuses to complete itself in aesthetic terms and remains stuck to its creator. Its formal “deficit” deprives it of elitism, making it touchingly “human” and bringing it onto the level of the average observer – that was at least what Roth hoped for.⁴²⁴ He did not just write “Bastel-Novellen” (“homemade novellas”) with a do-it-yourself approach, but also created “homemade music” and “homemade art”. The amateur can undoubtedly see himself reflected in him.

The late Cézanne of the *Montagne Sainte-Victoire*, with its strokes (“tâches”) of colour, appealed early on to Roth [→ Fig. 36]. For his “ersatz” mountain, the young Roth took the Weissenstein outside Solothurn. Because the failed master of Aix was

not destined to commit what he saw onto canvas in an adequate fashion, he was nevertheless able to realise his colour painting as an optical metaphor of nature in a state of being and becoming. Cézanne’s ideal mountain was brought “down to earth” by Roth: “I’m going to the rubbish dump. You don’t have to climb up the St Victoire”.⁴²⁵ In his “nature morte” made of garbage, he depicts a possible state of becoming. His successful failure answers Cézanne’s failed success like an

echo. In a visual long-distance call across time, Roth ultimately brings the master his clumsy, spotted flower pictures. This reminds me of Maurice Denis’s oil painting *Hommage à Cézanne* (1900) and of Henri Fantin-Latour’s painting *Hommage à Delacroix* (1864) [→ Figs. 37, 38].

For Cézanne and Roth, a successful “completion” can only come at the cost of imperfection. In this sense, ultimately, all modern art must also fail. When measured up against the former, traditional canon, there are really only self-taught diletantes and no masters any more. Given our complex, contradictory reality, anything else would be presumptuous or naïve. So in their search for alternatives, the avant-gardists were interested in folk art, children’s art, tribal art and the work of outsiders



Fig. 36 *In Bellach*, watercolour on paper, 16 × 25 cm, 1948, Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg

and the mentally ill. Because practice no longer makes masters, the academies had to define their teaching anew. One possibility for reform is Roth's "Non-teaching as teaching"⁴²⁶ at Yale University, New Haven, the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence (1964–65), the Watford School of Art in London and the Düsseldorf Art Academy (1968).

Roth and the Nitsch Orchestra even received an invitation to "musical failure" from the Basel Music Academy. But under a different guise, they proved themselves in secret to be "masters" among "failed" academics.

M. ROTH That, of course, was the point of all the efforts made by Friedhelm Döhl. In the evening programme for the *Quadruple concerto* (1977) that caused such controversy, he wrote: "Dieter Roth is a dilettante who can say something to musicians: about the topic of 'music' and non-music, not-yet-music, no-longer-music, about the 'and' between music and non-music, not-yet-music and so forth, from which musicians might perhaps be able to learn to 'speak' musically, to make something out of nothing, to make something different out of something, something personal, in this case something Dieterrothian".⁴²⁷ Hansjörg Mayer called this "a different way of being able to make music"⁴²⁸ – we should note that he does not say "a different kind of music"! In the annual report of the Music Academy, Döhl used conciliatory words to smooth ruffled feathers and called the event "something to spur on the



Fig. 37 Maurice Denis, *Hommage à Cézanne*, oil on canvas, 180 × 240 cm, 1900, Musée d'Orsay, Paris, André Gide Foundation at the Musée du Luxembourg, 1928



Fig. 38 Henri Fantin-Latour, *Hommage à Delacroix*, oil on canvas, 160 × 250 cm, 1864, Musée d'Orsay, Paris, donation by Etienne Moreau-Nélaton, 1906

‘professional’ musician who has ‘learnt’ specific forms and at the same time has in part unlearned that there may also be a musical life outside these forms”.⁴²⁹

This ties in with Björn Roth’s remark that the concert with Nitsch’s 5th Symphony – also at the Basel Music Academy [↗ Fig. 82] – was largely rejected there, but elsewhere (beyond the bounds of institutions of music) it had more success.⁴³⁰ Nitsch’s “failure” – if it is in fact a failure at all, and I would differentiate it from Roth’s “failure” in the *Quadruple concerto* – proves to my mind ultimately to be something conservative again, because it presupposes many (musically institutionalised) value measurements that are at times adopted in a consciously naïve fashion, and whose validity the “conservatories” had perhaps not yet questioned. But that validity had most certainly long been questioned (if not yet wholly overcome) by the musical avant-garde of the 1960s and 1970s.

The aesthetic of the ugly

M. HALDEMANN “To seek naïve, subtle riches and naïve, subtle poverty (in musical terms: both)”, wrote Roth as early as 1967.⁴³¹ In his dilettante failures he practised an aesthetic of the ugly. He summed this up with the concept of “shit” for his word art in 1966. In 1974 he also spoke of a “shit style” in his pictures and later also on one occasion transferred the concept to the *Rarely heard music* when he took the concert title *Concert für Brus – 4 men on 5 grand pianos* and renamed it *Scheisse-Musik (piano)*.⁴³²

Karl Rosencranz was the first to systematise an “aesthetic of the ugly” for the Romantic period.⁴³³ And for the philosopher, music theoretician and composer Adorno, the ugly became a denunciation of the world and thus a task for modern art (as a result of the Second World War and the emergence of the culture industry).⁴³⁴ The ugly could no longer be determined substantially and so it was functionalised. For example, this was done among the Viennese Actionists by using the obscene as an expression of rejection, protest and provocation against the restorative tendencies of the bourgeoisie and the state.⁴³⁵ And Roth uses ugly garbage to formulate a criticism of civilisation and its industrial excrescences that were spreading like a tumour across the world and across nature.⁴³⁶

M. ROTH Nevertheless, I have never come across an artist of the 20th century who so often used the attribute “schön” – “beautiful” – as did Roth.⁴³⁷ Paradoxically, the reception of his self-declared “flip” into working with garbage and mould can be “flipped back”⁴³⁸ in that his unappetising *Inselbilder* are able to depict the Icelandic scenery – determined as it is by the powers of nature – in a manner that is well-nigh “beautiful” in mimetic terms (as you have already pointed out).

Similar things happen in Roth’s music making. In the *Karlsruhe concert* (1975) we suddenly hear him say: “that was a piece by Ravel when he was still young!”⁴³⁹ Naturally, the quartet that was playing had not yet managed a single bar of Ravel, and it was just Roth’s auditory memory that allowed him to detect such associations from out of the free tinkering of his colleagues Brus, Nitsch and Wiener. But in the process he thereby grasped in a wholly comprehensible manner a brief mood that was somehow reminiscent of Ravel.

In this connection, Roth’s judgement of the saxophonist Stan Getz is worthy of mention here: “I think it’s so good because it corresponds to me. You know, to grasp hold of any clichés, really famous clichés, and yet to submit to them and to slump into it all. Perhaps they’re also pretty drunk, those guys. The pianist is particularly naïve. Isn’t that fantastic? There really is beautiful music in the world!”⁴⁴⁰

M. HALDEMANN This lost aesthetic still resounds in the “Garbage music” as an “indistinct echo from before”. He wrote the following in his diary in 1978: “When playing piano myself / I feel how I fearfully seek harmony (in the old sense) and then seek dissolution again / because I want to hide the poverty of my harmonies (I move / at best between G + C, major + minor)]. I always think of the solo piano / recital when I, enduring the deepest anxiety, want to present my dreadful / pianistic efforts (in the old sense) in a sober state and / want them to be ‘the most modern’ or ‘best’. But I know that I don’t yet have the ‘courage’”.⁴⁴¹ For the live radio broadcast of the *Radio Sonata* (1976) he did find the courage, but he never managed a solo piano recital in front of an audience.

Indeed, his visual art in the early 1970s is in stark contrast to the *Rarely heard music*. After the period of the transient and ugly and his “disgusting” materials, he briefly turned to a decidedly aesthetic, even “sweet” style in his painting and

graphic art. The beginning of his musical collaboration promptly brought him back into the sphere of the unfinished and the open. He reacted to his triumphs in visual art with his failures in music, only to assign validity to bad, failed pictures too from 1974 onwards, as his “shit style”.⁴⁴² They are not ugly because of their transient materials, but because of their artistic composition, which is for the first time dominated by glue. Their quality seems to me to lie in their indissoluble tension between “ugly” and “beautiful”.

In his piano music, too, I sense the tension between something initially banal, such as going up and down a scale, which moves into harmonic chordal fragments, occasionally starts to form a melody so that it awakens associations with certain styles or models, but then promptly fizzles out again, falls apart or is swept away. An oscillating between beautiful and ugly, the tangible and the amorphous, the clean and the dirty.

What are your experiences of listening to this music? Do you recognise the naïve, refined search for riches and poverty such as Roth imagined in 1967?

M. ROTH “Beautiful” and “ugly”, like “riches” and “poverty” are uncertain categories to me because they can just as well represent their own opposites depending on how you view them. That might well have made them attractive to Roth, but for me – if I’m trying to give a personal impression of the music – they are too vague. Nevertheless, I also think that the quality of Roth’s art feeds on such unresolvable tensions between antagonistic poles.

We have spoken extensively about Roth’s “playing” with memories when he was at the piano. But this interpretation of his music can also be provided with its counterpole: when listening to his later piano works, such as *Lorelei, die Langstreckensonate*, I am repeatedly reminded of a sentence that Rühm wrote in connection with the theatrical theory of the Vienna Group: “it is always the present”.⁴⁴³ That might at first seem dialectical once again, because except for several concert performances (and, ultimately, even there too), Roth’s music is naturally “canned”, an often muffled echo of a distant event; furthermore, the player often comes across as mentally absent – he feels his way forwards aimlessly and even indulges in the absurd actions of a bored amateur by following a visual/spatial logic, playfully mixing up the black and the white keys.

But on the other hand, this “killing time” at the piano and the nervous, flickering feeling that time is being wasted when you listen to him – these are states of being that belong to the “present” in a very real sense. There is no “promise of form” as one has in classical music; there is no build-up of tension in expectation of resolution in a finale; my broad experiences of music offer me nothing to rely on in any attempt to situate myself stylistically or topologically in this music. It “behaves just as it happens, and it happens here and now, under these or those circumstances (events). form and content, the performer and the performed are identical” (Rühm).⁴⁴⁴ The simple presence of an “I” that is playing – not an interpreter tearing virtuosically through a score, nor an improviser shooting off into unheard-of futuristic realms – this, too, can create an incredible sense of nearness because there is no content in which the player and the listener can develop together. It is music-making without music, it is something that sounds without sound.

In *MUNDUNCULUM* (1967), he writes: “Since these things hang between the dead points of boredom and are thus hung up on these points (so to speak), they are bridges”.⁴⁴⁵ The sound shapes that Roth plays when sitting at the piano are for me truly a kind of bridge: they are of the here and now, but point to murky memories and thereby awaken vague expectations – but they are bridges that are not fixed to any riverbanks, because Roth creates new “things” without ever attaining any firm ground under his feet. “Every feeling for contrasts is often, always, dissolved into the OUT-OF-FOCUS feeling of a quick, uncertain TRAVELLING AROUND and SWIMMING AROUND in life and around things”.⁴⁴⁶ But this too, corresponds to my listening impressions – after all, I have listened to all 38 hours of *Lorelei, die Langstreckensonate* (over several sessions) as a kind of self-experiment. Looking at it point by point, the musical material that Roth uses is very heterogeneous, but these differences recede the longer you listen. On the contrary: when you have the feeling of being in the absolute present, everything comes across as disturbingly unvaried!

M. HALDEMANN It’s as if it annuls itself and becomes “not”. That leads me to the following idea: If a work by Roth collapses under its contingent excess and dissolves away of its own accord, as it were, in the failure of its reception, then at the same time it becomes a “vanitas” picture. What is specific is failed

and purposeless, and topples over into something general and purposeful; the music of the producer becomes an experiential picture for the recipient. In *TOTE RENNEN Lieder* (1977), Roth speaks of the possible meaning of such subjective “pictures” in connection with reality.

M. ROTH Yes, the materialisation of such pictures forms the central discourse between Wiener and Roth, though the two of them remain divided about it.⁴⁴⁷ Their conversation then ends with a thought experiment by Roth that wonderfully expresses my state of mind when listening to *Lorelei, die Langstrecken-sonate*: “I think I’m busy training myself to hear no more differences between individual words – does such a kind of nonsense exist, or something like it? For example, if you only heard words as ... like blablalabla, like that? Not even that any more?” Wiener: “But that’s not any kind of nonsense!” Roth: “It’s a kind of perspicacity! Cognition, a realisation of insight ... Sometimes I imagine words or I feel them, I see them as if they were bullets whistling through the air and every one of them was screeching a little differently, but it’s the same bullet, don’t you think? ...”⁴⁴⁸

M. HALDEMANN Because he cannot achieve anything specific on account of his “clumsy” fingers and only splinters are the result, the Sisyphus-like process of production always continues. The works grow into “table ruin landscapes” but don’t get any better, because new things emerge as ruins. Thus quantity compensates for the “lost” quality. It is a searing metaphor for our industrial society and its cultural industry. When Roth feels an urge for “everything” and the resurrected Wagner belongs to his band of selves, then this urge is at the same time critically reflected as a metaphor of civilisation’s urge to expansion and usurpation. Even when he wears the mask of an artistic monster he embodies Everyman!

The insufficiency of the “informal” individual work leads the listener, the reader and the observer from one thing to the next. We shift from the fragmentary music to the fragmentary visual works, then to his words, we come back to a video, leaf through a drawing book, and read diaries and interviews. Their combination and the processual linkage of what is unfinished and open produces a creative, ironic, labyrinthine game.⁴⁴⁹ Roth also speaks of “oscillating” for this unending loop of work and discourse, author and recipient.⁴⁵⁰

The combination of “bad” things can naturally also result in something “good”, as in the music assemblages that he began to make in 1978. “It’s important to exhibit your mistakes. Man is not perfect, neither are his creations. I’ve given up using sour milk. Instead I use music. I sometimes fasten a tape recorder onto paintings or objects and have the music pour over the spectator / listener. This creates a certain effect: Those who look at the art don’t realize how bad it is when they hear the music. For the music is even worse. Two bad things make one good thing”.⁴⁵¹

Roth meant that “true” mastery is only a cover for bungling: “We only call it mastery. That’s no mastery, it’s just that certain difficulties are being ignored. The ‘master’ is a lazybones, he only does what he can; he’s a coward”.⁴⁵² Conversely, setting up your own rules and concepts can turn an autodidactic artist into a master. Failure, when measured against conventions, stands in a mutual relationship with the successful realisation of your own criteria: “La Monte Young built up his own systems and is a classic of himself, so to speak ... He always possessed mastery, but under the condition that it was his own ... I always respected him highly, he’s wonderful”.⁴⁵³

It wasn’t just his music: Roth didn’t want his pictures to “succeed” any more either. Instead of the ideal mountain of natural beauty that Cézanne sought with his artist’s eye, Roth’s splatter-accumulations are expanded using objects and demonstrate the indifferent refuse of artistic production: brushes, tubes of colour paint, drawing implements, boxes with paper clips, cigarette ends, pieces of string, tubes of glue, tin cans, bottles of turpentine and so on. The secondary aspects of making pictures becomes the primary object of the picture that proves to be a “palette” in the picture’s transparent process of becoming. This self-accumulation turns the picture into a “nature morte” whose ugliness comprises its own, crude reality. The picture gradually sucks up its whole environment – the mats on the tables, the walls, the flooring, the studio, the garden, the apartment, the house, the bar, the exhibition room, the museum and the artist himself. It creates its own reality in reality. Increasingly, Roth and his living environment are taken up into his art. These monstrous constructions of downfall by this dilettante artist-monster gobble up everything and, in contrast to Wagner, prove to be “total works of garbage”. Whoever gets too close to them falls into their trap.

M. ROTH In Roth's poem *Das Leben* ("Life"), he writes, punning on "der Fall", falling, and "die Falle", the trap: "When life gets up again | after falling, | I have already seen the trap | and punch life in the face".⁴⁵⁴ So we have to spot Roth's "trap"⁴⁵⁵ in good time. Failure is calculated into the reception process as much as into the process of production, and it is striking just how intensively Roth has engaged with modalities of perception: "the meaningless phenomenon: eg a single note | a meaningful phenomenon: eg a single note that says idiot | the more complicated (the more composite) a phenomenon is | the more meaning it has",⁴⁵⁶ he writes. "More meaning" here probably means three things: more meaning, possessing a plurality of meaning and more senses that participate in the reception process. Wiener would speak of "experiential complexes"⁴⁵⁷ and in our conversation he described the concerts of the *Rarely heard music* in particular as an art form that was committed to "the principle of indifference, this principle of putting the blame on the listener",⁴⁵⁸ with Roth having exercised a kind of pioneering role within the group.⁴⁵⁹

Reception as production

M. HALDEMANN The failure of production enables the success of reception. This "abstract" music opens up space for memory and imagination. We "complete" what is not fully ripened and what is fragmentary, we seek the aesthetic glue to stick together the ugly splinters so as to make a preliminary "whole". The conservative approach of the *Rarely heard music* creates a common listening horizon for musicians and audience alike. A cultural heritage vaguely rises up from out of the collective memory. An echo of something that used to be there. A lost beauty, a lost mood from past times. Melancholy and a joy in music-making slip one into the other. In the sounding, remembered musical labyrinth, we become seeking co-listeners and co-players.

Music in any case has a fundamental connection to memory. This is because its different sections are not given simultaneously as in a picture, but appear one after another and have to be remembered by the listener as he comprehends the whole piece. But also because we can only recognise again and perceive as form those things that remind us schematically of

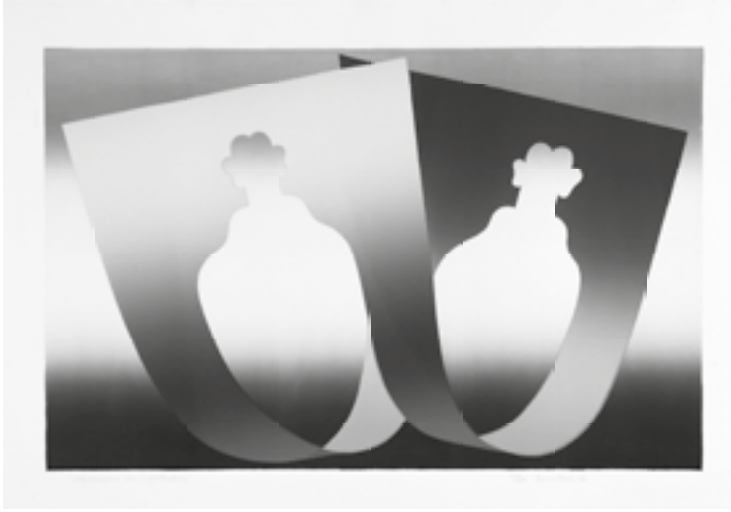


Fig. 39 *Selbstbildnis als Luftbewohner*, hand offset print on white cardboard, 53.5 × 82 cm auf 66 × 93 cm, 1973, Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg

things we already know. This is also true of Cézanne’s paintings that use strokes of colour, which are open and possess many possible meanings, and which thanks to their schematically vague motives can be interpreted as possible landscapes, albeit “unfinished” ones. In actual fact, these canvases comprise only daubs of colour without any descriptive value. Our perception of them is thus not a one-sided reception of external information and data, let alone an act of decoding, but rather an act of active selection and then of linking up and interpreting what was selected in order to produce “reality”.

Some precursors of Roth’s “template”-like music are his stencil-like self-portraits with noticeably large ears (1971–73). Here, the “nebulous” author is present only as an empty form.⁴⁶⁰ Clearly, the observers are intended to “fill out” in their imagination the *Selbstbildnis als Luftbewohner* (“Self-portrait as inhabitant of the air”, 1973)⁴⁶¹ [↗ Fig. 39]. The “non”-Roth⁴⁶² puts the onus on us here.

M. ROTH Especially with regard to “(postulated) reality”,⁴⁶³ the *Rarely heard music* stands very much in the tradition of the Vienna Group. The programme leaflet for the 2nd literary cabaret makes this quite clear. “our cabaret will comprise the whole of the impressions that can be felt by our guest in our place. if we intend to educate our audience, then we do so in order to expand his circle of perception, to integrate his impressions and to master complicated thought connections. our cabaret will be

to every individual exactly what he is able to take home with him in the way of impressions. everything plays along: the floor, his neighbour sitting next to him, the lady in the cloakroom, we shall make sure that essentials are veiled, that circumstances will be stored in the memory of our audience that he [*sic*] otherwise overlooks so easily. our actors will not offer any illusions of other people (such as stanislavski's actors) but nor will they denote other persons (like brecht's actors). they remain themselves, and yet the audience will fall for the illusion of a performance: this is false and intentional. (we shall link up all the stitches to make an overarching meshwork)".⁴⁶⁴

And yet it was a central act of recognition of this experimental art "that it is quite impossible to create something senseless (devoid of context) lasting beyond an initial shock of disorientation".⁴⁶⁵ Rühm justified this as follows: "since our thinking lives from constantly creating connections (understanding means always seeing connections), our system of perception, which is so irritated, regulates itself by ultimately learning to switch from the close connections it knows to the new, more distant connections: from flickers of concepts at the start, images stabilise again whose charm consists of their unusual inventory".⁴⁶⁶ So all that is left is to play with the "false, intentional illusions" of the public. In concrete terms, the *Rarely heard music* leaves open what is depicted by this "self-music", what "remains of itself".

In his programme booklet to the *Berlin Concert*, Brus wrote the following: "The individual masters, schooled in delirium, are like note heads., [*sic*], signs that mean this or that, but never what is final ... many years of asking questions of composers, of musicians, of common musical practice, has found an end. Self-music has appeared on the podium. No one has to conduct, no one has to make music. Music is now only composed".⁴⁶⁷

The last word here seems at first to be incorrect, because "composing" is the last thing I would talk about in connection with the *Rarely heard music* – even though Wiener, with a hint of sarcasm, suggested writing on the poster of the *Berlin Concert* "Dieter Roth, composer".⁴⁶⁸ "Composing" here probably means a specific process of reception. The primary listeners are the co-performers themselves. In the programme booklet for the *Berlin Concert*, Wiener described their complex, interacting roles in their collective "self-music" as "not yet able to delete at every moment *what the other means* from what one perceives of him, but already able to see what one has done oneself in

its multiplicity of interpretational possibilities; and it is able to use the modulation of the few aspects that strike me at all, not in order to manipulate your understanding, but to use them against the narrowness of my own thinking".⁴⁶⁹ In the second instance, and also secondly in its potency, the same compositional task is accorded to the recipient of this music: he has to "compose" his own "self-music" from out of the totality of his impressions, from out of this flickering, unusual inventory – and this ultimately enables him to expand his circle of perception. It was surely this "moving into the audience"⁴⁷⁰ – on the one hand through their blatant provocations, on the other hand through the necessity of active "co-creating" – that prompted individual members of the audience of the *Rarely heard music* not just to offer their own loud commentary on what was happening on the podium, but also to take to the piano keys themselves.⁴⁷¹ Roth allowed this, and in his *Quadruple concerto* he even wanted to provoke it actively. Brus, however, rejected this out of hand and shooed the people away from the podium.⁴⁷²

M. HALDEMANN The people on the podium and those in the audience are thus a reflection of each other. The painter and drawer Roth records what he sees and feels, rather like a naïve artist, but he does so in order to be able to know exactly (as a critic of language and of knowledge) that it is, in the end, all senseless. However clumsily "dilettantish" this painting, drawing and music may be, when seeing and hearing it one becomes aware of how we see and how we hear, and how we seek for meaning in what is devoid of sense and amorphous because we cannot cope without meaning.

M. ROTH That is why, in our conversation, Rühm turned things on their head and said: how much sense a thing has depends on the interpretational capacity of the recipient.⁴⁷³

M. HALDEMANN One example of the double production of meaning by artist and observer is the *1234 weiche Schnellzeichnungen* (in Roth's own English translation: "1234 most speedy drawings", 1987) [↗ Fig. 40]. This sequence of innumerable leaves, bound in a book, reveals itself as an endless flow of the gradual process of finishing the drawings while drawing and observing them. From one page to the next in this labyrinthine, informal jumble of lines, vague visual motives emerge and

recede again. They flit past as possible appearances of a world of visibility that one has both seen and imagined, comprising arabesque lines. As a combination of seeing/remembering/imagining that is at once an echo and yet something new; an open visual score. A kind of “Splittersonate” for self-observing, creative seeing.

Thus the listeners of the *Rarely heard music* are also collaborators in it – in a music that is not just rarely played and rarely performed, but above all is “rarely heard”.

M. ROTH It’s then logical that at the beginning of the *Abschöpf-symphonie*, Wiener wishes the audience “toi toi toi!” (“good luck!”) [▷DVD].⁴⁷⁴

M. HALDEMANN This concept of music thus places the emphasis very much on listening. Perception is a component of the work’s conception.

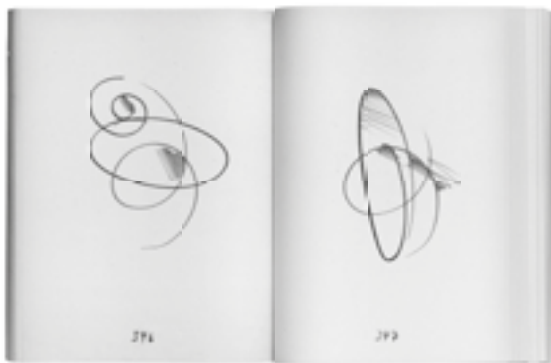


Fig. 40 1234 most speedy drawings by D. Roth, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 37, edition hansjörg mayer, 1987

M. ROTH Or the intentional snubbing of the perceiver. The Vienna Group had already listed whole pages of such strategies in its sketch for a “‘record-functional’ acoustic cabaret”,⁴⁷⁵ but only actually realised many of them in the *Rarely heard music*.⁴⁷⁶

M. HALDEMANN We’ll come back to this later. In the *TOTE RENNEN Lieder*, Roth chats with Wiener about psychological questions of perception and the role of schemata and inner images for our emotional world and our thinking. The perception and participation of the observer had already been important for his early books that comprised loose leaves and holes, as also for his kinetic objects, his turning pictures, his elastic band pictures and his experimental films. He used the work title “Interferenz”⁴⁷⁷ for them. Movement and time play a constituent role in them, and this in general reminds me of music, which is an art of movement.

The lack of information and the excess of it activate both the under-challenged and over-challenged listener of Roth’s

music. One inevitably engages in a process of completion and selection with what is devoid of form and style, one seeks for connections and relationships in what is dynamic but “half-finished”. One becomes the navigator of one’s own perception in the desert or ocean of work fragments without an author: this is the “self-music”.

This is also the case for Roth’s visual art. Unlike comparable object artists such as Jean Tinguely, Arman, Daniel Spoerri or Paik, Roth paints over his fixed objects with bright colours and displays them as part of the painting [↗ Fig. 41]. This all-over texture unites the heterogeneous material to form a carpet of colours. This excess of contrasts binds these innumerable things to the waves of the colour matrix like flotsam. The eye meanders and jumps restlessly around the pulsating object and experiences it as something dynamic, despite its emphasis on being fixed. Thus what is “dead” is animated into something energetic and lively when one sees it. The work appears not just as a product of fixed painting utensils. In the aesthetic observation of it, everything material conversely comes across as a component of the primary object of colour – a picture seemingly generated by the emphatic eye of the beholder without an author: it is a “self-picture”. It is thus logical that – as in his *Family portrait / Mimi Klein 2* (1981), for example, Roth occasionally allowed children or the public to paint along, thereby expanding or dissolving the authorship of the work [↗ Fig. 42].⁴⁷⁸

Roth himself also spoke of “reliefs” with regard to his material pictures and assemblages. And indeed, these three-dimensional objects do rise step-wise out of the flat surface. Visually, they do not seem to be applied to the material base but seem rather to be component parts of a pictorial, image space. This dissolves all boundaries and unfolds a “Baroque” impact [↗ Fig. 43].



Fig. 41 Dieter Roth and Björn Roth, *Keller-Duo* (detail), 1980–1989, Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg



Fig. 42 *Mimi Klein 2*, acrylic, wood, television, tape recorder with headphones, film projector, 192.5 × 230 × 120 cm, 1981, Kunsthaus Zürich, gift by the artist and Mimi Klein, 1982

This also applies to installations such as the *Grosse Tischruine* (1978–1998) [↗ p. 306–307]. Even the portrait pictures of the artist feature in his work as Polaroid photos or film motives [↗ Fig. 44].

He does not feature here as the authorial creator of the work, but as flotsam in the oceanic picture of himself, like all the other material components of the work – as a historical “self-picture echo”.

The work is not fixed to the author alone, who in any case is fictionalised through his artistic self-creations. Just as much (and, indeed, above all), the author is fixed to the work as a “painted conversation with himself”. As early as 1974, Roth gave a text the title: *the original or can the painting be*

*the painter?*⁴⁷⁹ Consequently, his self-referential works are also self-stagings and self-depictions.

In “*Collaborations*” readings (1977), a play by Roth and Hamilton, 25 people embody the painting utensils that were used for their joint works, “*Talens Rembrandt Acryl*”, for example.⁴⁸⁰ Whereas the actors here play a material picture, the material pictures and assemblages are staged as actors, with their author represented photographically and linguistically.

Furthermore, the vortex-like manner of their circular processes is reminiscent of a maelstrom or whirlpool [↗ Fig. 16]. These silent assemblages of downfall come across as noisy and loud. It seems they are trumpeting and crashing as if at the Apocalypse. But essentially, their “noises” exist only in our eyes and in our heads – the pictures themselves are dominated by a deathly silence and nothing moves in their “nature morte”.

These intermediary works activate your senses of hearing and seeing, but you oscillate endlessly between the information provided to the senses and the information provided in words. In the *Chicago wall* (1977–1984) [↗ pp. 300–301], when you stand at a distance so you can see the picture properly, you can only perceive a murmuring; but when you stand close enough to hear properly, you lose the ability to see the whole picture. There is



Fig. 43 Dieter Roth with Björn Roth and Eggert Einarsson, *Grosse Tischruine* (detail), 1978–1998, Dieter Roth Estate

no ideal position to appreciate the work, so you keep moving between seeing and hearing, closeness and distance. In contrast to the romantic notion of the unity and identity of all the senses (as in the *Gesamtkunstwerk* and in synaesthesia), here the difference between them is dominant. Sound, image and words are fundamentally different. There is no deeper meaning hidden behind them or in them. Thus in the brightly textured *Chicago wall* you hear from one of the loudspeakers a description of an empty picture.⁴⁸¹

Media shifts

M. ROTH Or you could say that their playful combinations and mutual acts of translation belong to the sphere of the sense of possibility, because out of this an incredibly creative stimulus results that not least allows us to discover (surreal) creations of meaning once more. In the omnipresent punning and in the senseless-sensual “superficial German”⁴⁸² into which Roth “translated” Richard Hamilton’s essay *Urban image* as “Urbane Matsche”,⁴⁸³ for example (literally “urban mud”), such processes also occur within a single medium.

The leap from one medium to another was literally just one step for Roth to take: numerous photos document how music instruments and permanently installed recording equipment was part of the inventory in his studios [↗ pp. 318–319].⁴⁸⁴ In certain years, his diaries and notebooks are full of fleeting examples of music notation. I’m thinking, for example, of the *Notebook 1981–1984* that he published as his 209th “copy book” [↗ Fig. 45]. Conversely, the score of the *Spaltersonate* is again a diary. At times he wrote down music with meticulous care, but mostly he wrote using clumsy notation, or just inaccurately. As we occasionally learn, he did this



Fig. 44 Dieter Roth and Björn Roth, *Keller-Duo* (detail), 1980–1989, Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg



Fig. 45 Notebook
1981–1984, 220 leaves,
colour copies, glue binding,
Dieter Roth's Verlag,
1994, Dieter Roth Estate

to commit to paper things he had heard by chance⁴⁸⁵ – though he also notated his own inventions,⁴⁸⁶ or endlessly circling melodies⁴⁸⁷ that were in his head.

M. HALDEMANN I remember how Rainer said that Roth was “by nature a fluid aggregate”. Various products can be generated from this aggregate, simultaneously or successively. One example is the parallelism of graphic art and music under the title “Quartet”. This is an analogous, media-specific treatment of overarching design principles. In the *Strichquartett* (1971[®] – “Line quartet”, a play on words of the German for “line”, *Strich*, and “string quartet”, *Streichquartett*), Roth uses the juxtaposition and superimposition of graphic elements that come together and pull apart again on the four quarters of a page [p.183] He listens to classical and modern string quartets and plays in the *Romenthal quartet*. The tension between unity and the contrasts of quadruple diversity are something that he will later try out with the help of recording technology in his *Quadruple concerto* – a kind of “self quartet”. He once actually called a self-portrait (in English) “Quadruple self portrait from behind”

(1972) [↗ Fig. 46]. Even without any shift of media, this “fluid aggregate” thinks and acts at the same time in graphic and musical terms.

M. ROTH In his piece *frauen-fantasien* (“women fantasies”),⁴⁸⁸ Rühm tried out self-collaboration and influenced how his right hand drew when he was playing the piano with his left.

M. HALDEMANN In analogy to this, we can divide up the unity of Roth’s graphic works and his music into smaller, contrasting elements. “When drawing I always listened to music – quartet music. By Mozart and Haydn. And I thought: we always look wrongly at the classical quartet because we think that it’s a matter of chance that we say the first movement is like this, the second movement like this – slower, for example. But basically it’s divided up that way. The quartets by Haydn, for example, the proper quartets, are also structured like this. There’s a theme and a development or a theme and a contrasting theme. There we already have the division into two. And then the theme is also often divided up by being played now loudly, now softly, or it’s played by different instruments. So opposites are always being developed”.⁴⁸⁹

M. ROTH There speaks a classical music lover who’s obviously well read in music! The “elaboration of contrasts” is also what makes the quartet projects so interesting in the *Rarely heard music*, because inner conflicts are often thematised there. When Wiener doesn’t want to play in the *Romenthal quartet*, the others call one piece “Adagio with hell ride (or rage over the lost Wiener)” (referring to Beethoven’s piano piece “Rage over a lost penny”). The fact that they are a “thwarted quintet”⁴⁹⁰ is also referred to in the design of their record cover: there is a gap where Wiener would be on the photo. Another difference of opinion is remarked upon in the title list of the same record: “BRUS NOT IN AGREEMENT”.

But I’d like to take up another thread suggested by your previous quotation. In an annotation to the catalogue for the



Fig. 46 *Vierfaches Selbstporträt von hinten / Quadruple Self Portrait from Behind*, lithograph on handmade paper, 50 × 38 cm on 65 × 50 cm, 1972, Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg

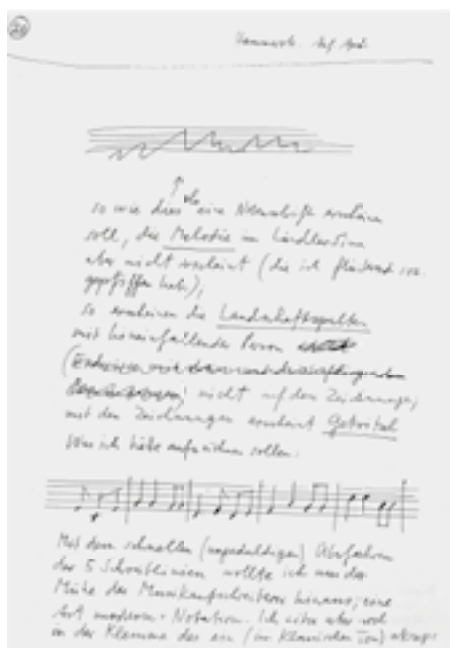


Fig. 47 Catalogue for the exhibition *Dieter Roth & Ingrid Wiener & Björn & Vera Roth, Bilder- & Teppichausstellung*, Holderbank Management & Beratung AG, Holderbank, black and white copies, Dieter Roth's Verlag, 1987

exhibition in Holderbank, Roth wrote about whistling melodies while drawing and described how he wanted to make this parallelism of two media productive in artistic terms: “first show the melody, secondly find the names on what’s drawn, thirdly find and write down formulas regarding the first and second matters”.⁴⁹¹ Interestingly, in these remarks he subsequently scribbles over the music staff [↗ Fig. 47]: “By quickly (impatiently) crossing the 5 lines I wanted to go beyond the labour of writing down music; it’s a kind of modern notation. But I’m still stuck in what (classically speaking) is the acceptable manner of showing something in notation (acceptable somewhere close to me); this should include understanding (in this case, hearing the melody) and if the readers (I almost wrote: ‘the reader’ [in the masculine]) hear it, they should hear how I (nevertheless) have described his little destroyed place (I almost wrote here: ‘wrote down a small destroyed place’) or

two small destroyed places. This captivity in which I believe I am living here is given a cautious indicator (I almost wrote: ‘expression’). I don’t want to do the older, slower, difficult, careful activities any more (because I can’t). But instead of abandoning them, I don’t just allude to them, but practise them fleetingly, occasionally as a pretence (‘practise them’ is probably too much, I could also write: ‘apply them’).⁴⁹² Björn Roth has explained the noticeably different styles in which Roth wrote musical notation – the discrepancy between his academic, calligraphic notation and his clumsily notated passages – as a result of his different degrees of drunkenness.⁴⁹³ But I rather think that these remarks make it clear how deeply Roth thought about the means of committing music to paper and their productive utilisation and revaluation.⁴⁹⁴

M. HALDEMANN This is a concept in an expanded sense. These artistic “translations” and transformations turn out to be a language/music/image game.

M. ROTH This term fits well – after all, as early as 1958 Roth wrote a journal article about “dynamic theatre” in which he breaks down the stage play into its smallest elements of meaning, using many pairs of contrasting concepts to characterise optical and acoustical elements within whose fields of tension a play, as a “hybrid”,⁴⁹⁵ can oscillate freely. It is similar to Kurt Schwitters,⁴⁹⁶ whose collages one can read, in which case one dwells on the semantics of the words one deciphers, while at the same time one can view them as abstract image compositions. In the case of Roth, the boundaries often melt effortlessly between image and music score, signified and signifier.

M. HALDEMANN Roth’s ironic take on his own work and his own act of distancing himself from it is all linked to this shift in media. But it also allows Roth to open up new artistic potential. It is like a game in which he is outfoxing himself. New, surprising things emerge as if of their own accord: “And then I always wanted to do something that’s not by me, where I have the feeling that it’s actually by me, only it’s not ... I don’t see my own weaknesses or my own handwriting, my own hallmark so clearly. And if you could build this computer into it, then using certain instructions that you give it you could experience something that you had never thought of. I assume. Or at least something you hadn’t imagined”. So even before the advent of the computer he had wanted to make a picture “in front of which you stand and say something and then it moves. Then it sets off, it changes”.⁴⁹⁷

M. ROTH One vivid example is the *Tonalfabet* [p. 72]. It’s initially applied from the perspective of his concrete and visual poetry, as a means of translating one system of signs into another and thereby achieves a kind of “sonification” of literature or, conversely, the semantization of series of notes. This was something that did not just occupy those in Roth’s artistic environment (Williams, Rühm⁴⁹⁸ and Thomkins) but also corresponded to issues of cybernetics that were current in the 1960s.⁴⁹⁹ What prompted this work was in fact a commission from a computer company, but since “the matter ... could not be carried through, I fell back on doing it for my own pleasure and for a brief while made music examples. In one of my attempts I ordered the vowels in a C-major chord; I think the leading note (C major) was the e, not the a, wasn’t it? I also thought of assigning phonemes

(letters) to keys according to their frequency; the most frequent letters – e.g. in German – should bring the key or pause it or paraphrase it, whereas the less-used letters would have had to appear between the others, thus disturbing the tonality. Using another language with this system – after the listener had become accustomed to the style of the German language – would have sounded bizarre (?)”⁵⁰⁰

In parallel to this, Roth experimented with objects other than letters and notes – such as different qualities of sounds and different writing systems (including Braille).⁵⁰¹ In pictorial terms, he in part achieved similar results as in *MUNDUNCULUM* by translating series of letters into rondo-like building blocks and thereby transforming words into stacked-up figurines [↗ Fig. 48].⁵⁰²

The idea for the *Tonalfabet* remained linked with a corresponding machine that created notes, and Roth also pondered clever ways of programming a computer in order to avoid an all-too-mechanical repetition of identical series of signs: “For example, when you press ‘A’, some note or other comes out. But when it’s pressed 10 times, another note sounds. Or everything that you play is stored and as soon as the letter ‘X’ comes, 3 seconds of everything that has already sounded is then played”⁵⁰³ “Using the computer, one would have been able to make the tonality, or at least the letter-note-affiliations, fluctuate. Or instead of individual notes – one per letter or sound (!) – one could have brought series of notes (e.g. melodies or speech objects[]): ... certain letters, as soon as they appeared so and so many times, would have prompted the playback of news about traffic, the abattoir, hospitals in war and peace and similar communications (recordings) ... The machine would have ... triggered notes in machines that would have been placed in the forest, at greater or lesser distances from each other ... In the late 70s I spoke several times with a computer guy who wanted to convert a telex machine to make it suitable for my plan. But the swift development of machines of this kind robbed us both of the energy to continue with it (back then I heard for the first time, with envy and displeasure, how a Japanese computing machine was playing Schubert melodies, the ‘Ballet music from Rosamunde’)”⁵⁰⁴

Roth was thoroughly proud of his “invention”, but its technical implementation proved too challenging for him. Later, he created “a primitive=mechanical version of the complicated=electrical dream”,⁵⁰⁵ namely the *Olivetti-Yamaha-Grundig*

Combo (1965–1982[®]) [↗p.298]. It enables one to type in a series of letters on an Olivetti typewriter that are then translated onto a Yamaha keyboard, and the series of notes thereby generated are recorded by a Grundig tape recorder. In the 1980s, Roth liked to experiment with it (as, for example, in the *Splittersonate*) and even sent letters written in this manner (the “Literature organ”).

M. HALDEMANN In *A Diary* (1982), we see him at the piano, playing and singing the *Tonalfabet* [↗p.291].⁵⁰⁶ The words and music are here joined by a film with Roth the actor – the media shift here becomes a “solo scene”.

M. ROTH To return to the topic of reception: on the one hand, this translation process from one medium to another has something enigmatic about it when one word after another is to be decoded. On the other hand, it also opens up space for the imagination. In the deluxe edition of his *Collected works* vol. 18 (1971), Roth printed the *Tonalfabet* and recorded its series of notes at the piano on an endless cassette. Thus, when reading this book, one can listen to this alphabet endlessly and would little by little reach a position in which one might imagine series of notes for “everything written and printed” and thereby “allow incredibly complicated figures to blossom”.⁵⁰⁷

M. HALDEMANN You’ve mentioned the *Alphabet for Emmett Williams* that Roth sketched out in 1967 and reconstructed in 1971.⁵⁰⁸ He has the dark and bright spoken sounds, the soft and the hard sounds, run along a middle line. Two diagrams with dots and discs are intended as a serious and an ironic version [↗Fig.48]. And when he develops stamps analogous to language with which he can make pictures for the book *MUNDUNCULUM*, then creates stupendous visual solutions with them, then this “translation” too becomes as

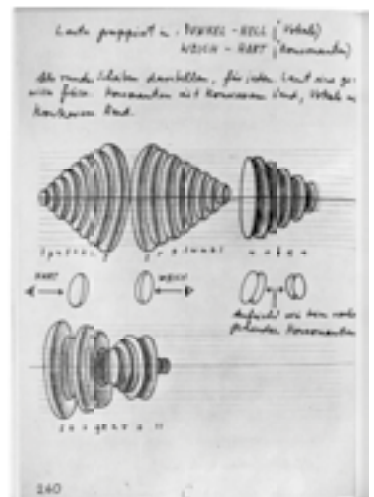
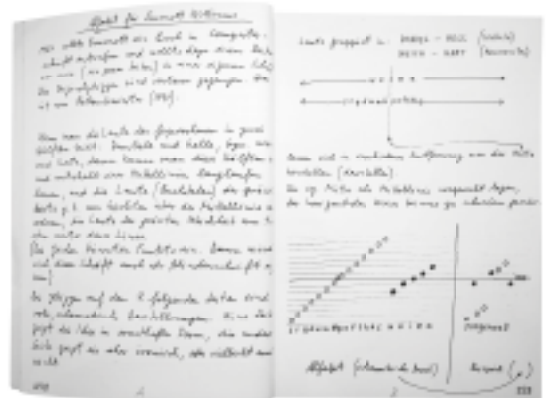


Fig. 48 *Alphabet für Emmett Williams*, in: *Collected works*, vol. 19, edition hansjörg mayer, 1971

creatively meaningful as it is semantically senseless. The media shifts thus signify two things: a playful, creative openness and a melancholy, ironic hermeticism.

M. ROTH Roth several times reflected on music-immanent media shifts – the three-step compositional process from imagining a sound to committing it to paper and realising it in performance. This also becomes evident in an interview in which he declared: “I often have a kind of movement in my throat – language movements – when I do something. Or especially when I’m contemplating something. ... I noticed this for the first time when I was young and was thinking of melodies. I noticed that I was doing things in my throat as if I was singing those melodies. I couldn’t detach my throat from the melody, as it were. Then I imagined – I don’t know if it’s right – a composer in the classical sense, like Mozart, would have to be someone who doesn’t have such a strong link to his throat. That someone like him can think of a melody and write it down without his throat ... The throat always slowed me down ... If I wanted to remember a melody, then I always noticed how my throat started to work. And then I had the feeling that the melody wouldn’t come because it was stuck in my throat and my throat couldn’t bring it. Only later did I notice that it’s also like this when you say: I think that I’m moving my throat and I speak ... I think what we call thinking is simply speaking. Especially because you can’t demonstrate thinking, you can only *talk* about it, tell of it or report it. Like dreaming: you can’t say what you’ve dreamt either, you can’t bring the dream as a dream, but as a *narration* of a dream, as a report of a dream”.⁵⁰⁹ In this sense, Roth’s media shifts also seem to be always a reciprocal “narration” of the other side, one in which something always naturally gets “stuck”, meaning that you ultimately never know any more which is real.

M. HALDEMANN The *Spaltersonate* fits right in here. Unlike the visual notations of avant-garde composers from the 1950s onwards – Cage above all – this is not a recipe for defining music that has been expanded into the visual. In his media shifts, Roth always thinks of new modes of disturbance. The Sonata comprises a series of individual leaves that are numbered and described as “Splitter” – “splinters”. Every “Splitter” is itself “splintered up” into fragments of words, notation, photos, colours and graphemes [7 pp. 296, 297]. They can’t be united into any

kind of homogeneous meaningfulness, let alone be translated into music. But they are nevertheless plausible constellations. Each of the collage-like pictures stands alone and yet still belongs to a larger whole. In our multi-sensory reception of them, we switch between the competing possibilities for reading these “shifting hybrids” (“changierende Zwischendinger”).

M. ROTH Herein lies Roth’s modernity: he carries out media shifts in the knowledge that the one medium cannot represent any other. Thus Roth becomes a “Gesamtkünstler” – an artist of the “total work of art” – beyond the “Gesamtkunstwerk” as we know it.

M. HALDEMANN ... in the knowledge that the “totality” or the “everything” can only be subject to artistic processes at the cost of “nothingness”, and that this requirement is problematical. When *A Diary* shows him in his apartments or in his car listening to Renaissance music on the radio, or listening to Bach, Bartók, the Beatles, Beethoven, Handel, Mahler, Mozart, The Who, Verdi or Schubert, then it is utterly prosaic – he eats at the same time, reads, smokes, gets undressed, draws, speaks, sleeps, writes, drives, wipes the floor and washes up. There is no higher aesthetic or sensorial legitimacy: normal everyday life holds everything together as these tasks are carried out.

In an older graphic work of his, incidentally, a piece of music notation still figures as a component of a homogeneous pictorial composition. Can you say anything more about this?

M. ROTH This work is called *Nah und fern* (“Close and distant”, 1978/1980[®]) [↗ p. 294]. More than in other works by Roth, this does not have as its topic a leap from one thing to another, but a fluid transition that moves “legato”,⁵¹⁰ as it were, from a music score to an image composition. In the middle of the picture there is a piece of music notation for voice and piano that “stylistically” already points towards the later *Splittersonate*, and it is in part underlaid with the words “nah und fern”. Its lines of notation abandon their horizontal alignment at the left and right, becoming sweeping circles that sketch the outlines of two heads: a musical duet becomes a double portrait. Their open mouths – indeed, all their open facial orifices – make it clear that they are making music. But in abstract terms, the whole print can be described once again as an interplay of lines and note-like oval



Fig. 49 *A Diary* (film still), Super 8 Film, 1982, collection [mac] musée d'art contemporain de Marseille



Fig. 50 Caspar David Friedrich, *Window with view onto the park*, sepia ink on a pencil sketch, 39.8 × 30.5 cm, ca 1837, The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

dots, as an image that overall refers back to musical notation. The title is thus highly meaningful: close up, one sees a graphic score not unlike certain leaves of the *Splittersonate*, but from afar it is a picture of a duo making music.

M. HALDEMANN This shift of media can also signify an act of doubling. Thus we repeatedly hear Roth in *A Diary* (but cannot see him) as he plays the piano, ruminating, while the stationary camera shows the view through the closed

window of the apartment, looking onto the neighbouring houses and trees [↗ Fig. 49].⁵¹¹ The image and the music together create a melancholic atmosphere that is reminiscent of the Romantic studio window pictures of Caspar David Friedrich [↗ Fig. 50]

In the *Harmonica Curse*, too [↗ p. 222], there is in both image and sound an expression of the sadness of the lonely artist who plays the accordion for himself and for an anonymous, distant audience. The flow of air in the accordion is reminiscent of the existential wheezing in the *Rarely heard music*. The “accursed accordion playing” has something tragicomical about it. It is a prime example of his embarrassing art of artistic failure, and Roth here comes across as a tragic clown. A kind of “Grock” who plays the accordion, the violin and the piano. His friend Jan Voss described him accordingly: “Impersonating a broken Superman as a clown – no

one has done that before”⁵¹² [↗ Fig. 51]. He acts like a clown in his collaborations with Rainer [↗ Fig. 52], in the *Interfaces* (1977–1979) with Hamilton and in the occasionally forced, inane facial gestures in his Polaroid self-portraits [↗ Fig. 53]. To find anything similar I have to think of the video installation *Clown torture* (1987) by Bruce Nauman [↗ Fig. 54] or of the video performance *Painter* (1995) by Paul McCarthy. Roughly one hundred years earlier,



Fig. 51 Untitled, acrylic, marker pen, ink on b/w photography, 24 × 30 cm, 1979, Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg

however, Nietzsche had already written the following: “At times we have to rest from ourselves by looking down at ourselves and, from an artistic distance, laughing or crying at ourselves: we have to discover the hero and (just as much) the fool who exists in our passion for knowledge”.⁵¹³

With the accordion, Roth also creates a connection to folk music. This hand-pulled instrument, presumably originally from China, was well known in Europe in the 18th century and was patented in its present form in Vienna in 1833. This instrument had an important role in cultural history; it helped to create “amateur” music and has remained well-known for this from the Alpine regions to Latin America.⁵¹⁴ On photos, Roth appears at times as if he were a folk musician. And in the *Harmonica Curse*, the “clown” comes across as a lonely, melancholic boatman with his boatman’s squeeze box in his isolated hut.

Let’s be clear: what links all his media, despite all their differences, is a framing set of rules, the artist-figure as topic and the collaboration of the recipient. When the fluid aggregate that is Roth does different things, then they are also always “the same”, as he says. Because everything overlays and interlocks with everything else, drawing in the recipient at the same time. However different the sense organs of eye and ear may be, both are for him mouths that take in food, solid in the one case (the

eye) and fluid in the other (the ear).⁵¹⁵ This multisensory perception is digested by the body and made into pictures and, we might add, also into music.

In the *Rarely heard music*, the actors react to what the others hear and see: their reactions are a “digestive production”. The continual eating and drinking on the podium are a reference to it. In terms of aesthetic production, this “eat art” is indeed a form of “shit music”.

M. ROTH But it was part and parcel of “passing the buck” to the audience (according to Wiener) with which they wanted to avoid “this constant reacting to things”⁵¹⁶ about which Rühm complained in the *November symphony*,⁵¹⁷ just as they wanted to avoid other standardised forms of interaction while improvising.⁵¹⁸ Roth’s actions are particularly interesting in this regard because they presupposed a collective as a source of friction (which is why in his solo projects *Radio sonata* and the *Quadruple concerto* he included the sound engineer, the event organiser or the audience in his performances), but only in order to deny himself any participation in that same collective. This is especially clear in the *Abschöpfsymphonie* [↗DVD].⁵¹⁹ This in turn creates a new collectivity because it leads the others into a “music of self-assertion” with pointed remarks (Attersee: “Dieter, are you free today?”⁵²⁰) and unusual actions. And yet the expressive driving forces and stress curves are renewed on a new level, a kind of “music of utmost, haywire Romanticism”.⁵²¹ This collective “self-music” achieves a “music despite itself” in a mixture of reflected role-play and spontaneous action.

M. HALDEMANN Of course, refusal to participate is also a form of reaction.

M. ROTH Exactly. A kind of “offer through denial”.⁵²²

M. HALDEMANN This unfinished/failed, “author-less” music is predestined for collectivity. Roth’s interest in uncontrollable processes, which leads him to utilise transient materials and the computer, and to make his observers into users and interpreters of his participatory works, is also linked to the topic of collaboration.

Collaboration

M. HALDEMANN In the 1970s in particular, Roth engaged in a multitude of collaborations in parallel to the *Rarely heard music*. I'm thinking of the joint projects with Hamilton and Rainer, or of the innovative collaboration with the printer Karl Schmutz and with the publisher Hansjörg Mayer, as well as his collaborations with his children. From the very beginning he had sought out all kinds of possibilities of cooperation and wanted to react to ideas and patterns of behaviour on the part of students, printers, artist friends, jewellers and collectors. His personal creativity was bound up with an ability to collaborate with others such as we find in no other visual artist. The only comparable case I can think of is the Factory of Andy Warhol, where collaboration was no longer restricted to the artistic and technical realms but also had a social dimension. With Roth, we see this in his numerous friendships with other artists and in his close collaborations with his children.

M. ROTH This social component becomes evident in the “festive character”⁵²³ of individual collaborations in his contemporary environment. For example, there was the *Berlin concert* where Ingrid Wiener was also involved, making artfully designed menus⁵²⁴ – her husband described this as a “week that was totally absorbed in – or that exploded into – sensuality”,⁵²⁵ where they ate and made music together. The Hamburg Archive of the Dieter Roth Estate holds correspondence about the *Rarely heard music* in which it becomes clear just how thoughtfully certain decisions were made within the group, but also how this sensitive disposition could just as easily serve to escalate things at certain moments. In his essay meaningfully entitled “DUETS, DUELS”,⁵²⁶ Rainer described the psycho-social implications of his collaboration with Roth in impressive terms, and depicted



Fig. 52 Arnulf Rainer and Dieter Roth, Untitled, (7.11.74), mixed media on photo, 47.5 × 59.5 cm, 1974



Fig. 53 Self-portraits from different years, Polaroid photos, mounted, Dieter Roth Estate

precisely these mechanisms as a crucial expressive element in their joint performances.⁵²⁷

I would like to illustrate this here using two hitherto unknown examples: In the correspondence between Wiener and Roth regarding the *Karlsruhe concert*, Wiener reacted negatively when Roth expressed his intention of releasing the recording of the event.⁵²⁸ Roth thereupon asked him explicitly not just to design the record cover for it, but also to write out his “counter arguments” and put them on the cover too.⁵²⁹ In return, he offers a fee in the form of a picture, “colourful and daring”,⁵³⁰ that Wiener could then sell. All the same, the concert was never released on record.

Steiger told us of another example, this time to do with the *Abschöpfsymphonie*: “it often happened to me in life that I’m called to go somewhere, and then I go, and then I simply vanish into thin air; I’m still there, but for everyone else I’m gone, somehow I fall away from everything, out of the whole complex. And so it was in Munich too. Dieter invited me to Munich to take part in the concert in the Lenbachhaus [in the *Abschöpfsymphonie*]. I arrive there, was really looking forward to it, performing in the Lenbachhaus, with a good group of people and so on, and then I see a poster – and my name isn’t on it. I asked: ‘Why aren’t I on the poster?’ And Dieter said: ‘That’s Hansjörg Mayer’s fault again’, but then he said: ‘Don’t make a fuss about it, we’ll write it there somehow, but I’m embarrassed, I’m embarrassed’. But I did want to make a fuss about it and so I just didn’t go. I didn’t go and comforted myself with spirits that night and didn’t go and was stubborn and so on, and Dieter was embarrassed, embarrassed and embarrassed, and he made good his embarrassment by giving me the stamp box as a gift – and I don’t know what else – this giant stuff arrived in several stages until he thought that he’d made it good again”.⁵³¹

M. HALDEMANN In the catalogue for the last large Roth exhibition in Marseille (1997), the photos and names of all the participants are gathered together at the end.⁵³² Not just his son and his artist friends and his helpers, but the whole staff of the museum. A temporary “family in art”.

Music in particular is a collective art and an art of collaboration. We have already spoken of the domestic music-making in the Roth home, also of jazz and folk music. So it should not surprise us that this artist and collaborator also made music with friends. He liked the “intimate”

chamber music groupings of trio, quartet and quintet. Before we deal more closely with the *Rarely heard music*, we should mention that this multimedia, multicultural collaboration in the form of social practice had its origins not just in Roth’s many-sided talents. In biographical terms, I think it also has to do with Roth the lonely child who found a distinctive “replacement family” among the theatre people, the musicians, writers and artists in the pension in Zurich where he lived. These, for example, included the important Austrian and German actors and directors Karl Paryla (1905–1996) and Wolfgang Langhoff (1901–1966), who had come as emigrants from Nazi Germany to work at the Zurich theatre, the Schauspielhaus Zürich.⁵³³

Through autodidactic imitation, Roth collected his “factory” within himself from here on, and also sought an artistic exchange with friends and family members. So from the beginning he was a would-be poet, a would-be musician and a would-be painter. As an artist, he took these aspects of creative work further and expanded them. It seems to me that he even adopted the activities of his father by making himself an archival “book keeper” and “sales rep” of his self-art (in his dealings with gallerists).⁵³⁴ And his mother, who wrote poems, and even his grandfather, who was an inventor,⁵³⁵ appear as “characters” in him, so to speak.



Fig. 54 Bruce Nauman, *Clown Torture*, video still, 1987, video transferred onto DVD, colour, sound, 60 mins (loop), The Art Institute of Chicago, Watson F. Blair Prize Fund; Wilson L. Mead Endowment; Twentieth-Century Purchase Fund; previously donated by Joseph Winterbotham; donation by the Lannan Foundation, 1997

From these multidisciplinary and multiple “self-collaborations” there emerged an intermedia, integrated oeuvre that one might describe – in the sense of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari – as “rhizomatic”.⁵³⁶ It is a “multi-rooted”, interwoven system that does not resolve into dichotomies: “A rhizome can be broken and destroyed at any chosen point, but it will continue to proliferate along its own or other lines”.⁵³⁷ It is a matter of different multiplicities and connections. According to Gabriel Kuhn, diversity in unity is ordered here “not on a level of identity, nor does it dissolve merely into minimalistic opposition ... Instead, unity and diversity are interlinked with each other and neither one exists before or above the other, nor is the one annulled by the other. The one does not exist without the other”.⁵³⁸ The multiple ramifications and processual connections within Roth’s oeuvre and his individual works result in a rhizomatic system without hierarchy or progression. Everything proliferates and grows quantitatively, but not qualitatively.⁵³⁹ Even the *Grosse Tischruine*, the *Gartenskulptur* (1968 ff.), the *Ringgebilde* (1986–1993) [↗ p. 310] and *Bar 1* (1983–1997[®]) [↗ p. 311] were straddled by a long fireman’s ladder for the exhibition in the Vienna Secession (1995), which meant a connected installation structure emerged at the exhibition, a temporarily accessible “super-work”: “a piece of a piece of art” [↗ pp. 312, 313 and figs. 20, 24].

Roth assembled his rhizomatic system as a solo and with friends and family members, in many workplaces in many different locations. The less strength he had as he got older, the larger – paradoxically – his collective works became.

M. ROTH One could also describe the course of the series of *Rarely heard music* as rhizomatic: it was not goal-oriented, but consistent and sequential. Already in the 1st *Berlin poets’ workshop* they made “chamber music”, as you described it before. The results, as we know, were published in the journal *Die Schastrommel* No. 9 (1973). There we find an appendix: a large folded leaf with four different texts, each in a different hand, but linked with each other by lines illustrating the two concepts of “observation” and “theory” that are stated on the page – the result is like a network, or a kind of four-part counterpoint.⁵⁴⁰ Typically, alternative versions of the same leaf were also published – it’s as if we had already reached the editorial practices of the *November symphony*.

This anthology contains the most varied forms of artistic collaboration, such as joint “automatic writing”, in which certain concepts are being for ever developed anew and varied motivically. The collaborators clearly challenged each other, trying out different textual forms and different jargon for an idea, and offering spontaneous commentary. Inevitably, the joint creative activity also tipped over into reciprocal acts thematising the different personalities involved – this is particularly clear in a schematic depiction of the “difference” between Wiener and Roth.⁵⁴¹ The later role-plays in the *Rarely heard music* already flare up here. Of course, they repeatedly drew, and in visual and literary terms this often points towards the topic of music that would soon thereafter move into the centre of their field of activity.⁵⁴² Thus the “attempt at drawing an initial final stroke” with a glued-on picture of a record cover of Beethoven’s 9th symphony is given a “seal of quality”⁵⁴³ [↗ Fig. 55]; in one text they write of a playboy who “always walks in 3/4 time”, which is illustrated with a brief music example as a cylindrical fermata on a 5/4 bar.⁵⁴⁴ Finally, there are even concrete reflections here about the relationship between “note” and “theme”.⁵⁴⁵

The *Glossolal poets’ workshop* that followed already had a (private) performative character, because the participants wanted to converse in extemporised languages. It was recorded, but was not released.⁵⁴⁶

The 3rd *Berlin poets’ workshop* signified their “partial transition into music, where you can’t say any more whether it’s poetry or music,⁵⁴⁷ really it’s got rather more to do with music”.⁵⁴⁸ On the cover, three (beer-drinking) poet friends are posing, but the structure of the recording was unmistakably the real artistic goal of the collaboration, for which Roth had specifically bought a professional Magnetophon.⁵⁴⁹ With the technical possibilities it offered, the vocal and keyboard acrobatics of the participants were overlaid over each other several times and manipulated,



Fig. 55 F. Achleitner, G. Brus, D. Roth, G. Rühm, O. Wiener, *Die Schachtrommel*, No. 9, ed. Günter Brus, edition hansjörg mayer, 1973

the result being the first joint record in the series *Rarely heard music* – it was dedicated to Roth’s children, “for means of instruction”.⁵⁵⁰

M. HALDEMANN The poets’ workshop moves rhizomatically into a drawing workshop into a music workshop into a poets’ workshop. The multi-competent artist friends are master dilettantes of rapid change. There is a series of photos that shows their to-ing and fro-ing between the piano and the table where they draw and write [↗ pp. 190, 191].⁵⁵¹ Their creative “séances” are reminiscent of surrealist methods of drawing and writing, collectively using chance operations that were described by André Breton as “cadavre exquis” (“exquisite corpse”). You have already mentioned

the joint automatic writing of the 1st *Berlin poets’ workshop*. Breton’s definition for that was: “CADAVRE EXQUIS – a game with folded paper where a sentence or a drawing is constructed by several people, without any co-player being able to gain any knowledge of the work of the player preceding him”.⁵⁵² The example that gave the game its name was the first part of a sentence that was created in this manner, namely: “Le cadavre-exquis-boira-le-vin-nouveau” (“The-exquisite-corpse-shall-drink-the-new-wine”).

Roth, Rühm, Brus, Wiener, Nitsch, Steiger and Attersee also brought forth not just *Rarely heard music*, but also *Rarely shown art*, as they called their ex-

hibitions with their joint graphic works [↗ pp. 198, 199].⁵⁵³ A lithograph by Roth, Rühm and Wiener (with their individual single colour prints) was intended to be included with the luxury edition of the record of the 3rd *Berlin poets’ workshop* [↗ Fig. 56].⁵⁵⁴ Roth had practised collaboration in drawing for the first time in 1970 together with the architect and artist Stefan Wewerka, and then “perfected” it in his duos with Rainer and Hamilton.⁵⁵⁵ This principle was also continued in various combinations of



Fig. 56 Dieter Roth, Gerhard Rühm and Oswald Wiener, *Lithograph for the luxury edition of the 3. Berliner Dichterworkshop* (not published), 1973, Hansjörg Mayer Collection

partners and duos with Attersee, Brus, Nitsch, Rainer, Rühm, Steiger and Wiener over the ensuing decades, and has in part continued to this day. And the questions it asks are similar to those about making music: “How can I react to the other and supplement, subvert, comment or object to something? How can I break out of what is usual and subconsciously arrive at something new? How can I inspire my creativity and my imagination through this?”

M. ROTH Yes – and joint music-making even has the advantage that everyone can work simultaneously on the same thing, not just after each other. The form of collaboration that they strove for always ran the danger in their drawings that what they each did “would actually stand alongside the work of the others ... that they wouldn’t touch each other properly and enhance each other”.⁵⁵⁶ Music thus served as a model for all the forms of collaboration that they wanted.⁵⁵⁷

M. HALDEMANN And at the same time it fulfilled a convivial, social function for the participants and for the majority of the audience.

It was chaotic, unconscious and yet conceptually conceived – and unexpected things were intended to be the result. *Rarely heard music. The Hamburg concert (= lithograph workshop)* was both a lithograph workshop and a concert, all in one, and for this reason took place in a printing works (1974) [? pp. 196–197]. It was a resumption and an expansion of the multi-disciplinary *Berlin poets’ workshops* (with records and lithographs). Getting the audience involved was also part of it. Isn’t *Rarely heard music*, as a creative/sensual “vanitas party” thus also a “Cadavre exquis”?

M. ROTH In the case of the *Lithograph workshop*, one could even speak of a “Cadavre exquis” in terms of its technique. The event took place on the occasion of the launch of a four-colour offset printing machine, and Roth’s idea⁵⁵⁸ was to thematise the number four in the form of improvised musical quartets (involving Brus, Roth, Rühm and Wiener) but also on the other hand to have the same artists work on printing plates with a lithograph pen, each of them contributing one colour layer to a joint poster.

Such methods were also employed in the *Rarely heard music*, but as audio-technical multi-track procedures. As in a “Cadavre exquis”, each artist only referred vaguely to the previous layer,

at best offering only (disdainful) comments or ironic reassessments. As in the Surrealist tradition, the exciting disconnectedness of it all was foregrounded here. In the movement “without tempo” from the *November symphony*, they initially “looped” an awkward ostinato, for example (to judge from the photos, Roth was maltreating a sofa during this), then this was overlaid with the sound of heavy breathing, and the third layer comprised their improvised, jazzy clichés. Often the result was complex, rhizomatic structures in which object and commentary, early and late merged into each other inseparably and became overlaid on and through each other. The title “without tempo” is thus conceptually meaningful, even if the musical result, by contrast, reveals a kind of suction effect as one experiences time in it. The fourth movement of the same Symphony is also organised on multiple channels. Here, Roth, Rühm and Wiener record two layers of commentary on pre-produced “samples” and thereby get mixed up in a strikingly dense dialogue with themselves.⁵⁵⁹

In the *Quadruple concerto*, Roth initially recorded layer upon layer on tape in a concert setting, until he could make music with himself times four.⁵⁶⁰ The obvious decision would have been to play a different one of the four instruments at his disposal in each of the four layers, but he subverted this intentionally – most provocatively when he sat on the organ keyboard⁵⁶¹ and played the horn to the accompaniment of this “sound monster”. As a result, the live recording of the concert⁵⁶² does not allow one to determine definitively just which sounds belong to which layer. Roth later rearranged this audio material in his recording studio “Bali” in Iceland,⁵⁶³ restricting the chronology of it and interpolating it with “encores” that he had given at the close of the concert – in some cases, wound backwards. The result was a kind of remix that still allows us to perceive the layer principle and the individual material connections that are involved, but at the same time it has all been transformed into a heterotrophic, counter-causal structure.

M. HALDEMANN In his graphic work in particular, Roth was able to realise this layering principle using overlaid printed plates, and he did so in masterly fashion. In the work product, its creation remains visibly present as a memory. Juxtaposition functions as a means of spatialisation and of “historicising” the material (its “Ge-schichte”, a play on “Geschichte”, “history”, and “Schichte”, “layer”). Thus his painting acquires a historical

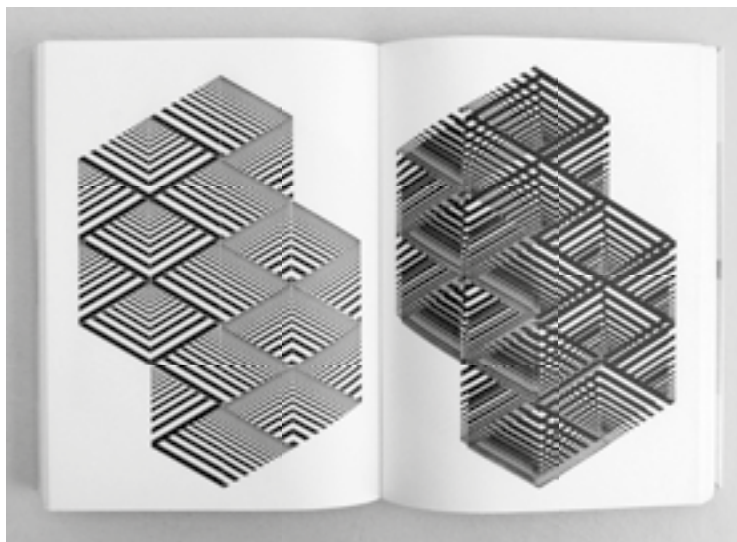


Fig. 57 *Bok 4a*, *Collected works*, vol. 4, edition hansjörg mayer, 1972, original edition: forlag ed, Reykjavík 1961

quality, besides its instantaneity in the present – a historical quality such as he also assigns to music.⁵⁶⁴ It seems to me that in the case of music he utilises this layering principle in an inverse manner, endeavouring to achieve a spatialisation and an imminence that is intended to counter its successive progress in time – something that on the other hand he regarded as characteristic of painting. As if we are able to imagine that we are listening in to a complex simultaneity of space. Echoes of things past emerge on the surface from out of deep layers, and these unite to form a montage-like whole that is indissoluble in linear time. Conversely, the layering in the visual works of art serves to situate the simultaneous presence of the picture in time by allowing us to perceive its process of creation. The temporalising intent of this layering principle becomes evident already in early books such as *Bilderbuch* (“Picture book”, 1956) and in the *Bok* series (1969/61) [↗ Fig. 57]. This layering takes place dynamically, as if in a film, when one leafs through the book. This act of juxtaposition results in a shifting, constellated “picture”. Roth’s “turning” raster pictures, whose moving, layered structure is too taxing to the eye to be “stabilised” by viewing it, are also similar in conception [↗ Fig. 58]. And the *Kugelbild* (“Sphere picture”, 1962; 1991/92), in which the circular picture can be turned and yet visually “stands still”, also makes sounds on account of the little balls that trickle down in it [↗ p. 71].

So this layering principle also provides for a dialectic of the present and history, the now and the past, because this tips the successive nature of music and the books into simultaneity, while also tipping the simultaneity of the visual art into successiveness.

M. ROTH It is actually remarkable that Roth's later visual art is hardly kinetic any more, if we think of the works you describe and of early sounding/moving objects such as the *Windharfe* ("Aeolian harp", 1962),⁵⁶⁵ which was sadly destroyed! If I might take up where you left off, one could say that later, instead of the work, it is its recipient who is set in motion, because he has to play with and on the object – that was already the case with the turning pictures in the early 1960s. And in many later works, visual motion is replaced simply by the experience of time as music, the impression of notes in motion,⁵⁶⁶ or the tape that turns round on its wheel.

M. HALDEMANN With his highly contrasting, gestural colour structure, Roth already sets his objects into motion, optically speaking. I have already spoken of their vortical, swirling impact. The three-dimensional *Ringgebilde* is, as it were, the embodiment of a vortex [7 p. 310]. Roth had already admired the "incredible maelstrom" that he found in La Monte Young's music.⁵⁶⁷

M. ROTH This constructivist kinetics, moreover, is superseded by a conceptual flexibility that also goes beyond the visual. We are able to experience this as something everyday and in great variety in the constant twiddling of the car radio knobs in search of stations by both father and son on the record *Autofahrt No 1* ("Car journey No. 1", 1979) and it's especially impressive on the record *The Kümmerling Trio plays No 1 & 2 (sic, 1979)* with Roth, Emmett Williams and Hansjörg Mayer, where we can hear clearly just how much spontaneous flexibility such collaborations demand on the part of their protagonists, but also how they can profit precisely from the opposing forces of the participants and their surprising twists and turns.⁵⁶⁸ The conceptual "quick plan" that was already formulated on the record cover for this production is explained by Roth to the two other participants at the beginning of the recording, though Emmett Williams – apart from a few pointed comments – refuses almost completely throughout to follow the plan and pursues his own ideas instead. Mayer,

who is palpably loyal to Roth, sticks to the initial concept and even reprimands Roth on one occasion when he begs to be allowed to deviate from the rules of the game. Roth himself starts to dither on account of the situation, but respectfully allows Williams his freedom; and while he won't be outdone in matters of certain puns, for his part he starts to ponder how the record might actually turn out, tries out ideas for its title and occasionally presses the "stop" button of the recording equipment nervously in order to censor what's happening.

In our conversation, Rainer pointed out that one could make "something small" out of everything, as long as a "creative tension [exists] between those present".⁵⁶⁹ Instead of a texture that is stimulating on account of its content or its sensual intent, in *The Kümmerling Trio plays No 1 & 2* we are able to observe an exciting constellation of participants,⁵⁷⁰ including the palpable endangerment of consensual cooperation when the collective threatens to split up.

Such a "splitting up" is something that actually happened in places in the *Romenthal quartet*, with the silent Wiener sulking in the background, and Roth's co-musicians Brus and Rühm seemingly irritated at times. Already in the *Munich concert* certain individuals had left the podium demonstratively because Roth blew his horn in too dominant a manner – which was a snub to Roth.⁵⁷¹ Of course, it is just these "sizzling" moments on the records that belong to the most exciting passages – not least in musical terms. Collaboration in the *Rarely heard music* is not just a means to an end, but the central topic.

M. HALDEMANN It's sheer human nature that there are not just things here that unite, but that also divide. The concert becomes a staged reality of human social behaviour, a "comédie humaine".



Fig. 58 *Dreh-Rasterbild*, wooden disc rings, glass sheet, aluminium adjusting lever, 80 × 80 cm, 1992, Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg

The terminology of the visual and filmic collaboration with Rainer can be transferred to the collaboration practices of the *Rarely heard music*. Thus Rainer/Roth described their collaboration as a “duet and duel”,⁵⁷² their joint drawings as *Misch- und Trennkunst* (literally “mixed and separated art”, but a play on the German words “Mischkost”, a balanced diet, and “Trennkost”, food combining).⁵⁷³ In conversation with us, Rainer also spoke of “Zusammenspiel-Widerspiel” (“interplay-counterplay”),⁵⁷⁴ of “Auseinanderarbeit” (“working asunder”)⁵⁷⁵ and of “geschlossener Disharmonie” (“unanimous disharmony”).⁵⁷⁶

M. ROTH Rainer’s concept of the “embryonic”⁵⁷⁷ is also something I find worthy of mention, as it encloses within it the specific provocation of artistic acts of creation by the other. In our conversation with Rainer I repeatedly had the impression that he played with Roth’s creativity and spontaneity as one would play on a musical instrument.

M. HALDEMANN The same is true of Roth, who joyfully and “destructively” played with Rainer’s submissions by making holes in his pictures, pouring water over them and sitting on them. Such acts of negation are just as relevant for their co-productions as acts of affirmation. The same was practised on stage. When driven to extremes, their actions on stage acquired performative, theatrical qualities [→ Fig. 6]. Then it is no longer quite clear just when playing turned serious and when seriousness became play.

M. ROTH Brus confirmed this in the following words: “To be fair, I would have to say that it wasn’t just about acts of aggression, clashing against each other. There were also places where you pricked up your ears and listened, and then it also became quiet and a unity and a feeling of wellbeing arose, you see? So that I almost ... yes, it gives me the shivers and makes my hair stand on end ... that was a two-edged sword”.⁵⁷⁸ It was Brus in particular who succeeded in keeping this “double-edged” quality held in balance: he plays, almost to the point of losing consciousness (in the *Berlin concert*); he maltreats instruments in the *Romenthal quartet* up to a point where the wood splits and he cries out: “That’s how you have to treat instruments!” – but at the same time he wrote on the cover of the same record: “How I was AFRAID of destroying the instruments. I had a GHASTLY

FEAR". It is no coincidence that this ambiguity reminds us of the Expressionist movement, which was of great significance for all the participants of the *Rarely heard music*,⁵⁷⁹ and it almost seems as if one is reading Georg Trakl when Brus writes the following in the programme book of the *Berlin concert*: "We must draw the MUSIC OF DELERIUUM out of the dark deathly fountains of the soul".⁵⁸⁰

Consonances and dissonances

M. HALDEMANN I have asked myself why Roth's interest in modern music was primarily focussed on Schoenberg – a composer who is often mentioned in his work. This can't just be because of Schoenberg's own interest in the visual arts and because of Schoenberg's own paintings. Or because of the fact that Schoenberg in both music and painting was an autodidact in possession of a higher intellect. Instead I recognise a connection between Roth and the *Rarely heard music* and Schoenberg's principles of harmony. The traditional harmonic system was broken up by Schoenberg in his atonal works and expanded into an expressive, conflictual music of tension featuring divisive and unifying elements – an indissoluble, dialectical "harmony of disharmony" with emancipated dissonances. Wassily Kandinsky admired Schoenberg's music for the way "the independent voices tread along individual fateful paths, each possessing its own life".⁵⁸¹ These voices nevertheless coagulate into an "oeuvre" whose completeness still includes frictions, fissures and distortions, the wild and the raw. An oeuvre that captivates the active listener/observer and at the same time repels him – causing pain and fascination, including him while excluding him. In Roth's *Fernquartett* (1978–1980[®]), after all, the separate recordings of the different family members are also "independent voices with their own fates".

Roth and his friends transferred Schoenberg's principle onto the stage, as it were, not just by bringing forth dilettante atonal works, but by also acting "atonally".⁵⁸² The dissonances of their rivalries and their isolated, autistic separations within the collective also always include the reconciliation of tonality. As with Schoenberg, dissonances and consonances are given an equal weighting.⁵⁸³ The *Rarely heard music* expands the radical,

modern aesthetic into a kind of “principle of life”. In this sense, I find the *Berlin concert* like a musical, linguistic lamentation with independent vocal fates.

The aesthetic, human principle can naturally not be notated or controlled. In the creative process, it comes about in a manner that is unforeseeable to all the participants. Music is better suited to such a challenging collaboration than the calm, slow, visual arts that have neither an audience nor a stage. The joint drawings of the *Rarely shown art* correspondingly seem rather tame. Here, these professional colleagues went rather easy on each other, whereas in the art that was foreign to them they were able to act freer, with fewer inhibitions. The skilful music-making of Rühm and Wiener at times even seems like a foreign body in this cacophonous context – a dissonant disturbance in the consonant noise.

M. ROTH This idea is very interesting! The *Rarely heard music* as a kind of post-Schoenbergian “social sculpture” – or, as Rühm formulated it at the *Berlin concert*, a “homage to the schoenberg of the word”⁵⁸⁴ (he here meant August Stramm): “meta-spectacle!!! nature with brains”. Though this is naturally a rather unconventional form of Schoenberg reception, “looking at the world with Schoenberg, so that everything you look at becomes an exceptional case through the manner in which you look at it” (Döhl).⁵⁸⁵

M. HALDEMANN To be sure, with Rainer, Roth succeeded in achieving extraordinary visual things before the running camera. When, for example, he sat down on Rainer’s wet painting,⁵⁸⁶ the result of such a “painters’ workshop” is surprising. Despite all their tomfoolery, their aesthetic gaze did not just remain alert – it was challenged and spurred on. This collaboration proves to be a matter of give and take, a “working together and asunder”. When the one presents something done with the paintbrush, the other promptly reshapes it. They draw a dividing line, set converse accents, distort it all again, scribble commentaries on it, give the other one instructions, dissolve everything in water, cut it up, punch holes in it, paste over the paper, or continue working on the reverse of it. Taking away and destruction are components of this play of interaction and counteraction. Both artists goad each other on and drag each other down. But whatever happens, from the very start it’s clear that the results will be signed and sold as works of art.⁵⁸⁷

The peculiar method of collaboration between Rainer and Roth also makes us aware of the fact that a creative process in general is not just a matter of building up and adding together. For everything that is added also signifies a reduction and a “taking away” of alternative possibilities. And everything that is crossed out and painted over can also be a creative decision.

The destructive principle

M. ROTH In the *Abschöpfsymphonie*, this happens quite literally: as the live video recording shows, Wiener disrupted a pantomimic episode between Roth and Rainer (who by this time had been brought onto the stage) by successively taking away all their props – though this merely drove the two of them on all the more. Another time, one gets the impression that the other co-musicians are so annoyed at Wiener’s stubborn repetitions of the pop song “Es war nur die Bossa Nova” (“It was just the bossa nova”)⁵⁸⁸ that they play their accompaniment to him ever louder, smothering the sound of him all the more, trying to use acoustic means to silence him.

M. HALDEMANN Attersee has described Roth and his friends in the Vienna Group and among the Vienna Actionists in general as a “generation of destruction”.⁵⁸⁹

The acts of overpainting and covering-over that were characteristic of Rainer’s painting are also found in Roth. For example, when he pours acrylic colours and chocolate over music instruments, or covers a picture with glue [↗ Figs. 23, 74, 75]. Creation is here negation and “destruction”. It is in fact the “boring moralist” Piet Mondrian who provided him with the confirmation he needed for this: “It was in 1942, shortly before his death. He had written [in a letter] that destruction had been allotted too little importance in his work. He had joined in the spatial imitations of the Cubists and destroyed them by painting his blocks. He had destroyed these blocks by drawing lines, and had destroyed the lines by dissolving them into individual points of colour ... This destructive principle was thus confirmed to me even by this man”.⁵⁹⁰

In his own oeuvre, Roth differentiates between two “smearing waves” in 1950 and 1960 and his “shit” poem phase. He was

always concerned with destroying those things that he could not master, he said.⁵⁹¹ And as a music lover, too, he had to be a would-be-destroyer of the old in order to find his way to his own music. In contrast to the avant-garde, however, he and his friends made no *tabula rasa*. They created new things by repeating the old in a failed manner. Even the exemplary Schoenberg had understood his radical harmonies as a continuation and expansion of tradition, not as a break with it, and as a conservative revolutionary he also invoked Johannes Brahms. In reply to Nam June Paik's reference to Schoenberg's opus 4 as "Wagnerian Quatsch" ("Wagnerian rubbish") on his record *NAM JUNE PAIK. MY JUBILEE IST UNVERHEMMET*, Roth made his own record, *DIETER ROTH THY QUATSCH est min Castello* (1979) [p. 214].⁵⁹² In his record "duel" with his "extremist" avant-garde friend Paik, he wanted to rehabilitate tradition: "Schoenberg revenged!"⁵⁹³

M. ROTH Roth is really avenging himself on his own account because of Paik's use of the word "Quatsch", "rubbish", which he would gladly have associated with himself, as he explained (in English): "... I am an extreme Schönberg freak. [...] Why do I feel the combination doing me harm? It is because I am myself a word, namely, a Quatsch. Hell, that hurts! Quatsch means nothing so far. as far as i see – Quatsch, the incomparable".⁵⁹⁴

Incidentally, we find something amusing along these lines in the *November symphony*. Right at the close of the fourth movement, Wiener offers these comments on what he has heard: "Shit! Dog shit!" At which Roth corrects him: "I've patented that!"; Wiener replies: "Pardon ...".⁵⁹⁵

If I may add something to Roth's reception of Schoenberg, I would just like to point out that in what we hear in the *Rarely heard music*, it is above all Schubert who is present. One could describe the reception of the music of this composer as "conservative/revolutionary", which along with his strong connection to language probably made him attractive to Roth and his co-musicians. The Biedermeier period declared Schubert to be the "prince of song" and his music was subsequently popularised to such a broad degree that it even encompassed ultra-conservative perversion (it was not for nothing that in Thomas Mann's *Magic mountain* the hero dies in the tumult of the First World War with a Schubert song on his lips). On the other hand, there is an incomparably more complex reading of him that has come down to us via Schumann, Mahler and even Dieter Schnebel:

Schubert as revolutionary, a “somnambulant genius”.⁵⁹⁶ In the *Romental quartet* we hear Schubert’s string quartet variations *Death and the maiden*, in the *Abschöpfsymphonie* “Gute Nacht”, the opening song of *Die Winterreise*. Both are pieces that can be regarded as either easily consumable kitsch or masterly, ambiguous art, according to how you view them.

M. HALDEMANN Roth’s work process of many decades’ standing was a continuous process of building up and tearing down again, oscillating between saccharine-kitschy entertainment, “swing” and disgust, sugar icing and shit. His first partners in collaboration included bacteria, maggots, flies and mould, whom he invited to be the “co-workers” in his “creations of destruction” (from 1966 onwards):⁵⁹⁷ “I think that this is the real idea of a museum – to observe how something disintegrates and also the war of living things – the sadness that this radiates”.⁵⁹⁸ For Rainer, Roth’s most successful collaboration was his scandalous trampling of Joseph Beuys’s installation *Basisraum nasse Wäsche (Jungfrau)* (“Virgin Basic – Wet Room Laundry”, 1979), which Roth later described as “Bei Beuys in Fettnäpf[ch]en getreten” (for which the closest English expression is “putting his foot in it”, though with a play on “Fett”, “fat”, which was famously one of the materials Beuys often used in his artworks) [↗Fig. 59]. After his failed painting action together with Rainer and an ape in the Secession in Vienna, Roth had gone to Beuys’s neighbouring installation and “dismembered it”, “trampled it”.⁵⁹⁹

In his own works, Roth practised a circumspect, aesthetic art of “destruction”, never in the heat of the moment.⁶⁰⁰ This is also proven by his painting film *Duell im Schloss* (“Duel in the castle”, 1976), where Roth describes himself and Rainer as “destructive smearer” (“zerstörerischer Schmier”).⁶⁰¹



Fig. 59 Dieter Roth tramples the installation *Basisraum Nasse Wäsche (Jungfrau)* by Joseph Beuys at the *International Biennial for Graphic Arts and Visual Arts* at the Vienna Secession, 1979, Dieter Roth Estate

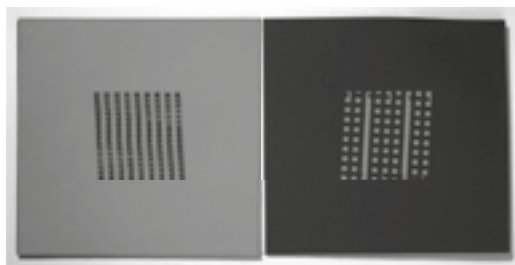


Fig. 60 *Book*, folder with 18–24 loose leaves, cardboard, cut by hand, 1st edition: forlag ed, Reykjavík 1958

how often he expresses his formal thanks. Nevertheless, this refinement was contrary to his uncouth actions, to which it was often linked. And when editing their joint music productions, the collaboration often ceased: Rühm, for example, told us how Roth had far more material pressed on the records of the *Romental quartet* than had been agreed upon⁶⁰⁴ – anyway, Roth at least did release the alternative editing plan drawn up by his

M. ROTH And after carrying out his works of destruction, Roth behaved very politely again!⁶⁰² Paul Renner took part in the *Abschöpfsymphonie*, and told of how Roth reimbursed him financially afterwards for having twisted Renner's trombone into a kind of ear trumpet during the performance.⁶⁰³ And on the records, it's also noticeable how often we hear Roth beg pardon for something, or how often he expresses his formal thanks. Nevertheless, this refinement was contrary to his uncouth actions, to which it was often linked. And when editing their joint music productions, the collaboration often ceased: Rühm, for example, told us how Roth had far more material pressed on the records of the *Romental quartet* than had been agreed upon⁶⁰⁴ – anyway, Roth at least did release the alternative editing plan drawn up by his colleagues in vol. 38 of his *Collected works* ...⁶⁰⁵



Fig. 61 *Bok 3 b*, *Collected works*, vol. 7, ca 350 pp., leaves from comics and children's painting books with holes punched out, glue binding, paperback, edition hansjörg mayer, 1974, original edition: forlag ed, Reykjavík 1961

the square pictures of Josef Albers and Camille Graeser [↗ Fig. 2]. This is a matter of “destruction as reification” of a static/mobile “picture” made only of parts of pictures. The colours that are visible through the openings are interpreted as geometric positive forms. Only in the interaction between the observer and the play of the transparencies – thus, when one physically flicks through the leaves – are the pictures created for the eye.

M. HALDEMANN In the early books such as *Book* (1958–1964) or *2 Books* (1958–1961) Roth used a knife [↗ Fig. 60]. Constructivist perfection was literally cut up. But Roth thereby also opened up the book to make it a transparent object for the participating observer. In *Bilderbuch* (“Picture book”, 1956), which is put together out of colour transparencies with right-angled openings, a moving picture is created when you flick through it, one with “flying” colour squares that is reminiscent of

The book does not bring reproductions of pictures; instead, it's experienced visibly. As a picture book.

M. ROTH As a result of this Rothian act of cutting, the hole becomes important. You've already referred to his self-depiction as a hole – here I'm thinking of the *Collected works* vol. 7 with the comics with holes punched in [↗ Fig. 61] or of Roth's contribution to La Monte Young's *Anthology*, where his template with holes allows one to filter out one's own "poetry" from any chosen text [↗ Fig. 62].

Wiener stressed that Roth wasn't actually "prominent" during their concerts, and he would have preferred him to have taken a more prominent role.⁶⁰⁶ Oddly, Wiener opens the *Ab-schöpfungssymphonie* with the words: "In the name of Dieter Roth's Rarely Heard Music I would like to offer the warmest welcome and hope that you have an evening of pleasant entertainment ..." [↗ DVD].⁶⁰⁷ Roth played almost nothing, though the ensemble of musicians was arranged in a semicircle around him as if he were the soloist. As a result, he must have appeared as just such a "hole" – a roly-poly, musical zero, but one who roams around and brings to the fore what lies beneath, making it knowable: the actions behind the music, the human aspect behind the actions.

M. HALDEMANN – Often the all-too-human!

On the design for the cover of the *November symphony*, we don't just see photos of the protagonists. On the back cover, Roth also shows a self-portrait of himself as a hollow shape [↗ Fig. 63].⁶⁰⁸ Incidentally, he saw himself as the initiator of the concert series: "Giving concerts – with the aforementioned people – was my (DR) idea".⁶⁰⁹



Fig. 62 "DIETER ROTH: POETRY. White pages with holes", in: *An Anthology*, second edition, ed. La Monte Young and Jackson Mac Low, 1963

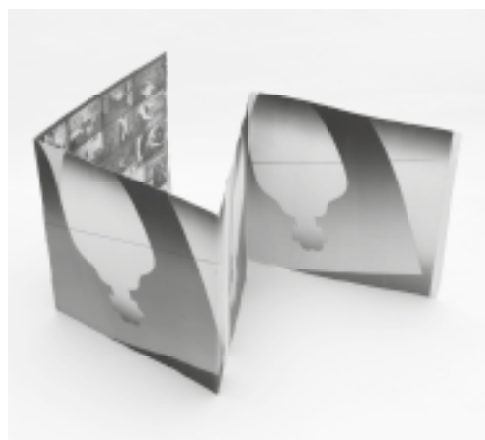


Fig. 63 *Novembersymphonie (Doppelsymphonie)*, original template for the cover of the LP edition, cardboard with 67 original colour photographs, original drawings and typeface designs, 23 × 61 cm, 1973, Daniel Buchholz and Christopher Müller Collection, Cologne

The film documentation of the *Abschöpfsymphonie* shows how he continually interrupted – and disrupted – his colleague’s ensemble playing. He acts about on stage but is the only one who isn’t really playing. He acts out a negative part, “playing asunder”, the “would-be destroyer” of timpani and chairs. But without much aggression – it’s more to entertain the audience, aware of what his destructive “solo scenes” are referring to – from the Surrealists via the Vienna Group and Fluxus to Jimi Hendrix or the notorious Who. It is to Hendrix that his following remark refers: “‘Burning Desire’ – he had a wonderful technique, he climbed on the piano and ran around on it. Yeah!”⁶¹⁰ So there was method behind Roth’s acts of artistic destruction. When asked about his approach to it, he answered succinctly: “The destruction is not destruction”.⁶¹¹



Fig. 64 *Selten gehörte Musik. Abschöpfsymphonie. Die Abschöpfung* (film still), Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich, 1979

M. ROTH Attersee said something apt about this: Yes, they threw chairs into the audience, but never the instruments – after all, they wanted to carry on playing them.⁶¹² Roth commented on this in an interview: “As long as you can blow your instrument and pester

the people with it, you’re happy that you’re enjoying that triumph. And that you’ve played so loudly – once again, thank God”.⁶¹³ Wiener emphasised that Roth wasn’t actually “prominent”.

M. HALDEMANN The poster that Brus designed for the *Munich concert* (1974) shows a dog whose stomach has been pierced by a hybrid thing that’s half knife, half piano keyboard [p. 202]. And the title *Abschöpfsymphonie* – the “skimming off symphony” or “siphoning off symphony” – itself plays on the idea of renunciation as a musical/symphonic creation ...

M. ROTH ... and is naturally also a play on the title of Joseph Haydn’s famous *Abschiedssymphonie* (the “Farewell symphony”, Hob. I: 45), where in the final movement one player after another has to leave the stage! Attersee alluded to their contrary practice in our conversation: they wanted to play until the last member of the audience had left⁶¹⁴ – and at the end of the *Karlsruhe concert*, Nitsch summed this up with the remark: “The unmusical ones have left!”⁶¹⁵

M. HALDEMANN It is also a “siphoning off” of the “highest” creation of all – the Creation of the Book of Genesis. In Haydn’s oratorio *Die Schöpfung – The creation* – it is put into music in a fictive, childlike manner, and perhaps this finds an echo in the mischievous play of Roth and his friends. Such as when Roth at the outset climbs up and down a “ladder of life”, accompanying the playing of the trombone and piano as an “incarnate note”, moving as a “god of siphoning off” between the heavens and the Earth [↗ Fig. 64].

But the participants in these over-long concerts are also always “assassins”, however, who kill off time!⁶¹⁶ And when they edit the recording for the record, they “destroy” the musical piece by cutting it off abruptly or by fading it out.

Despite all their respect for old music that they made audible in “new” ways through their dilettante playing, these “respect-less” assassins demolish the plinth of the masters who have become authoritarian. Roth writes the following: “I think that I have only dissolved forms ironically or aggressively when they were aggressive themselves – the established Classical and Romantic forms. I spat on them and twisted them”. He also expressed himself more precisely: “Classical music, so-called, offers a clear example of established people who are dead but who are built up by third parties (e.g. musicians) as if they were referring to us who are living; it is as if they were addressing us directly. They are harsh persons of respect (often in the form of a club – like that thick stick on which Mr Bach’s portrait serves as a truncheon)”.⁶¹⁷ As early as Kagel’s film *Ludwig van* he had placed Beethoven busts made of fat and chocolate in a bath tub to soak. And he destroyed busts of Mozart, Wagner and Liszt, turning them into “Beethoven busts” by knocking off their noses [↗ p. 79].⁶¹⁸ On the other hand, by damaging these heroes and toppling them from their pedestals, one actually shows one’s “affection” for them by bringing them down to one’s own level of interpersonal reality.



Fig. 65 P.O.T.H.A.A.VFB. (Portrait of the Artist as Vogelfutterbüste), intaglio printing, 31.5 × 22 cm, 1970, Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg

Years later, Roth later mounted his own bust on a broomstick: *P.O.T.H.A.A.VFB* (*Portrait of the Artist as Vogelfutterbüste*) (“Vogelfutterbüste” being a composite word, “birdfeedbust”, 1970) [↗Fig. 65]. It was made of chocolate and birdfeed and was thus intended to feed the birds and avoid intimidating any form of posterity. It was an ecological/artistic act of “self-destruction”.

Dialectic of opposites

M. HALDEMANN But what holds the whole oeuvre of Roth together? How does it come to this tension within what is heterogeneous, to this aesthetic of the ugly, to the attraction of the disgusting, to order within chaos, to the attunement of the untuned? Roth repeatedly speaks of “opposites”. And if there is a constant in his oeuvre, then it is that of dialectics. So monotony belongs to ecstasy, the hangover to the “high”, the banal to the extraordinary, kitsch to the expressive, the pop song to Mozart, commerce to high art, the dilettante to the master, embarrassment to admiration, dissonance to consonance, indifference to variety. The dialectic of extremes is something we find in his individual works just as much as we find it in his whole oeuvre: “I hate it when I notice that I like something, when I have mastered something to a point that I would only need to repeat it for something to become a common trick. Then I stop straightaway ... I prefer it when the heterogeneous parts rub against each other on the picture ... Everything that tears the picture down is allowed because in truth it lifts it up. The failures, the things that slip away – that’s what interests me, how the picture bears it all the same, and in fact it’s what makes the picture strong”.⁶¹⁹ And when the *Rarely heard music* has been enough for him, then he mounts the instruments in his assemblages or pours chocolate over them as in the *Stummes Relief mit Trompete* (“Silent relief with trumpet”, 1984–1988[®]). Instruments turn into silent pictures and objects; pictures and installations, conversely, become playable instruments (*Bar 2*) [↗ pp. 314, 315].

M. ROTH It was mostly Roth’s own personal instruments that were used in the *Rarely heard music*.⁶²⁰ Before the concert, the instruments were placed on the podium “so that the players could walk around there and take up whatever they felt like”.⁶²¹

This alone reminds me of the later installations by Roth that had something of the musical instrument-maker about them – for with them, you are confronted by the same choice and are even encouraged to play several things at once.

M. HALDEMANN There is even a dialectic of opposites in his artistically productive love-hate relationship with Wiener. I think that the opposites of Roth’s “selves”, these bands of people gathered together in him, are what keep his “aggregate” fluid and offer an inner antagonism for his reservoir of tragicomic creativity. Or as Mayer put it: “Dieter didn’t just play on the white notes. He also played on the black ones”.⁶²²

M. ROTH Roth was particularly active on the “black notes”, as it were, when it was a matter of the “fame” of such collaborations. He only described a highly select group of artists as “equal partners”⁶²³ and, incidentally – in contrast to his collaborative works – in his collaborations with editors, printers or bookbinders he tended to appropriate their actual tasks himself.⁶²⁴

This correspondence with Wiener makes it clear that Roth found it very difficult to contemplate expanding their personnel for the *Rarely heard music*, especially before the *Berlin concert*: “I think there’s someone in me (the most powerful of them all in me) who wants the fame that you can get with ‘the people’, when we do the rarely heard music (when we do it as it has to be done so that the aforementioned fame is achieved with the most stringent authorities), doing it by dividing it by not more than 3, and now he can’t divide it up further, certainly not by 8, because this blocks everything that the others in me could bring to the setting, visual or acoustic, of the fame-bringing events; all their vehicles – of every year and every model – are now largely and for ever BLOCKED in my car park”.⁶²⁵

Paradoxically, however, it was later Roth who invited so many friends for the *Abschöpfungsymphonie* (perhaps out of spite) that the critical mass of such a “self music” was noticeably exceeded.⁶²⁶ This didn’t please Rühm and Brus,⁶²⁷ and Björn Roth got the impression that “everybody was in his corner doing different things”.⁶²⁸

One fundamental measuring rod for the social functioning of the group is its dynamic balance. It guarantees not just that the individual will be heard within the collective, but also provides for a whole experience that is “in tune with” itself, a whole

in which the individual can again subsume himself.⁶²⁹ Interestingly, both these aspects were often a topic of discussion in the *Rarely heard music*, and indeed a topic of argument. We have already spoken about Roth's supposedly over-dominant horn playing in the *Munich concert*. The bigger the ensemble, the more precarious its balance became. Roth referred to this in a letter to Wiener: "Think how I was already tempted to play too loudly in Munich (it's quite clear to me that this was only because of the large number of people, and the fact that I wanted to be heard in all that, it wasn't just a matter of wanting to be prominent), and in Munich you came to me and said that; would that have happened with just three of us alone?"⁶³⁰ But according to Wiener, this had in fact already happened in the *November symphony*, thus in a private setting and with only three of them.⁶³¹ Naturally, the *Abschöpfungsymphonie* above all represented an extreme case, but at the same time a borderline case. Its ensemble was too big for the performers to remain in contact with each other acoustically, but at the same time too small and too heterogeneous for them to be able to create mass orchestral effects that would have levelled things out. This is why, during the concert, Wiener put the problem of balance into a broader context: "Do that softer for once. You're too loud! Let's have a bit of democracy, OK?"⁶³²

The *Rarely heard music* functions explicitly as a decentralised system, and a certain "attune-ment" has to emerge in this kind of collective "self music" so that everyone finds their way to an individual voice that is at the same time subsumed into the whole.⁶³³ Attersee has referred to this: "The trick was simply to seek out sounds, and when these sounds had been found, you had to hold onto them".⁶³⁴ The resultant overall effect – more precisely, the sound structure created in concert with each other – thus says a lot about the conditions of its creation. This well-known remark by Helmut Lachenmann⁶³⁵ is realised quite particularly by the *Rarely heard music*.

M. HALDEMANN The conditions under which a product is created are made transparent. We have already discussed this self-reflectivity at some length.

M. ROTH Yes, but in this case these conditions are not just visible at the edges; they're always perceptible in the actual experience of hearing it. This is made particularly clear when you compare the *Berlin concert*,⁶³⁶ which was generally described as

a musical “success”, with the *Abschöpfungsymphonie*. The *Berlin concert* lives from individual voices that are overlaid on each other in a free, circling manner, and which generate an impetus from out of themselves; this impetus in turn prompts the musicians into creating moments of coordination or joint arcs of tension – Rühm has even spoken of its “ecstatic climaxes”.⁶³⁷ The *Abschöpfungsymphonie*, however – despite its larger number of participants – isn’t polyphonic to the same degree.

M. HALDEMANN Instead, all the more is now happening on the podium itself! The moment of “action” becomes important. Clearly, the experience that Roth and Rainer had enjoyed in film had flowed into the event just as much as did Viennese Actionism and the Vienna Group’s experience with cabaret and “actions”.

M. ROTH And what is evident from listening to it is then proven when you watch the video edit of the *Abschöpfungsymphonie*. Events are dominated by Wiener, who also acts as the *conférencier* with the microphone, animating the others to certain actions and for his part tirelessly blaring out the pop song “Es war nur die Bossa Nova ...”. Attersee, too, pushes himself into the foreground with his rock’n’roll interventions. So the two of them certainly experienced their personal “ecstatic climaxes”. Roth is visually at the centre of things, though his actions are almost exclusively scenic, and he can barely be heard on the recording. Incidentally, it is noteworthy that in those few moments when he does indeed resort to an instrument, then he does so only indirectly – such as using objects to play on the piano keyboard. Rühm and Nitsch – the latter in particular – clearly come across as marginalised when compared to this trio of performers, especially compared to their earlier concerts. And you can hear hardly anything of all the others, certainly nothing that could be considered independent, either instrumentally or vocally. It is also unfair that they were put at a disadvantage by the amplifier. Only towards the end, when Wiener stages a duel of the duets, do the outstanding artists among them come more to the fore, such as André Thomkins. But they are also promptly outshone once again by Wiener, who is determined to be the winner.⁶³⁸

Wiener even declared his “strategy” in the programme book for the *Berlin concert*: “i’m not bothered about communicating, but about softening my ideas. ... man has but very few means of making music, of *making* it in any sense, because the differences

are so small and the *criteria* are the real *mistakes*. the *musical structure* does not lie in the music ...".⁶³⁹ The *Rarely heard music* is here a heuristic experiment,⁶⁴⁰ "for me an exercise in loosening up ...", in which Wiener would like "the tension between the (sound) striven for (for example) and the result of that striving to be chalked up as a success".⁶⁴¹

If we imagine this brilliant, dominant, ideological leading figure⁶⁴² alongside the composer, artist and writer Rühm, a man possessed of the precision of a surgeon, and the universal heavy-weight Roth with all his complexity and contradictoriness, then one can get an idea of the tensions that were inherent in this founding trio of the *Rarely heard music* and thus in the project as a whole.

Under these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that Roth once diagnosed himself as having an "Oswald Wiener syndrome (feelings of deep dejection and hopelessness, a feeling in certain secular achievements – e.g. languages – of being under attack and completely bereft, feeling eaten away as if by cannibals from the inside)",⁶⁴³ and Rühm spoke laconically of "Qualverwandtschaften" ("afflictive affinities").⁶⁴⁴ As a result, they had to cultivate a collaborative "playing asunder"⁶⁴⁵ – but in so doing they found a fresh, highly productive factor to provide musical tension.

M. HALDEMANN Like in a rock concert, there was a core group for the *Abschöpfsymphonie* comprising Roth, Wiener, Rühm, Nitsch and Attersee, along with numerous "accompanying musicians" in the background [▷DVD]. Not to mention the women! They stand around, serve the gentlemen and remain anonymous. Anni Brus and Ingrid Wiener pointed out that there was a "macho circle" in the *Rarely heard music* where women weren't needed.⁶⁴⁶ How subtly and "quietly" Roth and Ingrid Wiener collaborated, on the other hand, when it came to their joint work on their carpets!⁶⁴⁷

In the play by Hamilton and Roth, too, there are underemployed characters. "Such an obscene, laughable brief play with an awful lot of characters. Some of them only appear and don't even say anything".⁶⁴⁸ In the *Abschöpfsymphonie*, one can thus assume some artistic intent behind the hierarchy created among the participants.

We have now spoken extensively about Roth's collaborations. But what, to you, are the special features of the *Rarely*

heard music? What links the numerous performances and their recordings? I am reminded here of Rühm’s remark about “hovering music”.⁶⁴⁹ And as for Brus, you’ve spoken about how the music’s twofold nature was kept in balance. That suits the musical aspect of it all, for it was without any proper beginning or end, meandering between ability and inability, old and new, noise and sound, stasis and happening, music and non-music, concert and theatre, music and commentary, concert and reality; then there was the rehearsal situation, the interaction of what’s heard and he who hears it, the tension between cooperation and conflict, of isolation and the collective, tonality and atonality, seriousness and play, destruction and reification, high and low, good moods and nonsense: all these “hybrid” things (“Zwischendinger”). That hovering, which Rühm links to trance experiences when playing, is something that you can’t express verbally. Perhaps as both an “as well as” and an “either/or”, as linking and dividing elements of this “non-music music”.

Do you find that the *Rarely heard music* has a “style”?

“Style”

M. ROTH I see it more as a “stalk” (“Stiel”) than as a “style” – and I’m referring here to our discussion of the rhizome. The many roots of the *Rarely heard music* as it grew out of the Viennese post-War avant-garde (the Vienna Group, Viennese Actionism) and out of Roth’s own musical experiences are things we have already discussed at length. As our conversations with the artists have shown, each of them had his own “music history” (perhaps with the exception of Rainer).⁶⁵⁰ In other words, music played a central role in all their lives and work well before the *Rarely heard music* and also after it, in the most varied forms and ways. Accordingly, the experience of their joint studio productions and their concerts in the 1970s brought forth very individual after-effects.

Earlier, I tried to describe that it was not just their personal backgrounds, preferences, orientations, strategies and motivations that were very different. Their artistic roles were also different, too, and not least their social roles. Nitsch made this clear in his reply to the question as to what he had brought to the *Rarely heard music*. He answered simply “I think I brought ‘me’ to it”.⁶⁵¹

This is again musically significant, because meaningful instrumental choices were made among these different personalities, especially in their concerts (it was less obvious in their studio productions): Wiener was on the saxophone, Roth on the tenor tuba, Brus on the violin, Nitsch on organ-like instruments,⁶⁵² Rühm at the piano and Attersee also at the piano and on the vibraphone. Except for Nitsch, whom we rarely hear say anything, they all also used their voices – especially Wiener, Brus and Attersee. In this instrumental combination, musical roles become evident. Wiener and Roth often act as soloists – though in the case of Roth in particular, this may not be mistaken for any undue dominance or outstanding ability – quite the contrary.⁶⁵³ But Roth often plays on his own, doesn't participate in the “meshwork” of the others and, notably, suffered from stage nerves for days before these performances.⁶⁵⁴ The shy, retiring Dominik Steiger must have felt even more isolated in the *Berlin concert*;⁶⁵⁵ he played a self-made aluminium rattle and occasionally slammed doors (though out of sight of the audience).⁶⁵⁶ Rühm, and Nitsch especially, tended to have an integrative function that created a sense of cohesion, as did Brus and Attersee in part; these two had a fondness for ostinato-like actions that in the case of Brus could be excessively repetitive.

In reference to Brus's collapse during the *Berlin concert*, Wiener told us the following: “That's the bass players, so to speak, who give the whole thing its foundations; without these people to my mind, nothing musical at all can come about ... Basically, he [Brus] sacrificed himself for the others. The others could then dance around on his note, they could twirl their pirouettes and so on”.⁶⁵⁷

Attersee said something quite similar, though he took things somewhat further: “In this fashion, there are no compositional concepts, and that's what is unique about them, these moods that the artists created with each other, even with monotonous music, e.g. when Brus, who couldn't play any instrument, set about the violin and then a sound emerged or we heard a sound that was actually new; he let that sound stay as it was. The trick was just to seek sounds, and when you'd found them, to hold onto them. In these music recordings, you can listen to them, even their gaps and their profundities, and they're quite strong pieces. That's what constitutes this music, because even the audience here is placed in different states. The one can find it boring or just goes out, nothing happens or someone makes paper music or something.

We did everything, and then suddenly someone sits down and plays three humane chords, and that yanks everyone up because it wasn't actually planned in the music, then they're extinguished again straightaway ... there was no agreement on what to do when, somehow you knew: this number's finished now; then it breaks off, and then you start again; there was a lot that happened without anyone saying anything. I can't remember any concepts, at least not any planned concepts for the concerts that I took part in. There must have been concepts for those quartets, they discussed things in advance and also for these workshops, but at the concerts that I took part in, that wasn't really the case".⁶⁵⁸

Attersee sums up two things here: first, there are the unmistakable differences between the studio productions, which had a concept behind them, and the concerts, which were freer.⁶⁵⁹ If you listen carefully, this is sometimes revealed by the discussions that were recorded too; thus in the *Romenthal quartet*, Rühm ends one argument with the words: "Let's continue with our programme, I think that's simpler",⁶⁶⁰ and in the *November symphony* Roth admonishes Wiener: "We can't talk through Gerhard's rests!"⁶⁶¹ Secondly, we have Attersee's dramaturgical characterisation of the proceedings – namely that the above-mentioned allocation of roles was not continuous and that no musical continuity at all could have been created, nor was it even intended to be. However, such "non-significant ruptures"⁶⁶² are again well-nigh symptomatic of rhizomatic circumstances.

Despite everything, after the *Munich concert* the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, one of Bavaria's main daily papers, wrote that "the five are very well attuned to each other, so that their anarchic music-making had several firm, basic elements. Nevertheless, in the midst of their calculated/boisterous maltreatment of their instruments, from their megaphone to the upper voices, a few fascinating sounds emerged in a half-planned, half-improvised manner. There were vocal and instrumental combinations, concentrations of noise, crescendi such as are unknown in today's emaciated modern music nor in the meanwhile ritualised ensemble playing in jazz".⁶⁶³ In our conversations, Wiener accordingly distanced himself from the widespread improvisational practice whereby a stringent "meshwork"⁶⁶⁴ is allowed to emerge in an ensemble by each player reacting to each other. He added that "through this variety, this multiplicity of talents and non-talents, a dynamic always developed of its own accord. There was always someone who answered in a conventional

manner, and there was always someone who tried to disrupt that, and that was how the thing was built up. The typical ‘answerers’ were Günter [Brus] and Gerhard Rühm, they both have a pretty conservative understanding of music”.⁶⁶⁵

I would support this verdict in the case of Rühm, and would add that he was palpably unable, ever, to suppress the conceptually, selectively thinking composer in himself. Nor could he mask the professional piano virtuoso that he was.⁶⁶⁶ In the *Munich concert* and the *Berlin concert* that indeed leads to the one or other “often heard” cascade of clusters or glissandi. But in the *Lithograph workshop* Rühm’s ability also made possible a musical moment of glory in the history of the *Rarely heard music*: for several minutes he preludes through the cheapest clichés of the music repertoire at a breakneck tempo; Brus and Wiener chase him from behind on their lotus flutes and Roth paces about in typical fashion, hammers on the piano and drums, and drones away on the tenor horn.⁶⁶⁷ For the aforementioned technique of the “cadavre exquis”, and for their satirical and ironic commentaries, Rühm’s firm grasp of the repertoire offers an important store of possibilities – one could say, after the manner of Rainer’s art, that he repeatedly provided an “objet trouvé” (mostly fractured by irony) that the others were then able to “paint” over.

M. HALDEMANN That’s an apt comparison.

M. ROTH This observation must naturally be understood as resulting from an overall impression of listening to all the recordings of the *Rarely heard music*. One could focus on others among the musicians and describe further stylistic “influences” on the collective event, such as Wiener’s bebop elements or Nitsch, who with his mighty major chords brought a kind of “banal romantic monumentalism” to it⁶⁶⁸ (Roth). The police whistle that we occasionally hear also belongs to Nitsch, and he commonly uses it to signal entries in his own *Orgies Mysteries Theatre*. In the *Rarely heard music*, on the other hand, no one seems to take too much notice of it.

This brings me to another thought. Rühm told us how his collective writing experiments had shown that just a few words can reveal a personal style – meaning that within the group, it was easy to find out who had written what.⁶⁶⁹ I experienced something very similar when listening to the *Rarely heard music*. With time, you recognise individual patterns of

playing and musical behavioural patterns, even if the person in question isn't playing an instrument that is typical of them, or if they make only a brief intervention. This act of divination comes easiest, of course, in the *TOTE RENNEN Lieder*, where the differences between Wiener and Roth become manifest in the congenial interplay of their different modes of thought, of their modes of speaking and of music-making.⁶⁷⁰ For example, when Roth's nervous five-finger rolling technique from the *Radio Sonata* collides with Wiener's cool, bluesy piano playing. Hansjörg Mayer told us that Roth didn't like Wiener's repeated incorporation of jazz elements;⁶⁷¹ we can see this antipathy clearly on the live video recording of the *Abschöpfungsymphonie*.

So the individual musicians have identifiable stylistic characteristics, though these were not necessarily desirable and, given the oscillating context and presumably for reasons of “group solidarity”,⁶⁷² these individuals become “incapable of applying the canon”.⁶⁷³ As a result, nothing is achieved, either individually or collectively, but instead everything is once more “extinguished”.⁶⁷⁴ In other words, ultimately we are unable to detect the stabilisation of any firm style.⁶⁷⁵ Their form of collaboration resulted in a renunciation of any personal sense of authorship, and Wiener called this “the real liberating aspect”.⁶⁷⁶

This principle contrasts with certain joint works that were made with a small ensemble and that often display a very different quality. I'm thinking in particular of *Klaviertreiben* (“Piano driving” 1980) by Attersee and Rühm,⁶⁷⁷ which comes across as well-nigh “canonical”, even academic – and which is very different from the *Rarely heard music*, despite the participants being in part the same. Such comparisons are awkward because they suppose that the music-making of Roth and his friends is something that we can determine and demarcate precisely, whereas in fact most of the participants emphasised how much every event had its own unique character.⁶⁷⁸

M. HALDEMANN If we understand negation as an organising or structural element (which was already the case in the early *Picture book*), then the concept of style can be defined dialectically on another level, namely as a “style-less style”.

M. ROTH Perhaps that is why Roth expressed his indisputably close relationship to music in the most non-committal linguistic form possible: “IT SOUNDS LIKE IT”.⁶⁷⁹

M. HALDEMANN Something is clear to me in either case: You can clearly recognise this music when you hear it! That also struck me when I listened to the records with Roth's children, whether it's Vera's piano playing or *Freddy and the fighters*. Everywhere you recognise the characteristics of Roth's own music and of the *Rarely heard music* in very different "stylistic" contexts; it's a certain behavioural aspect. When the songs never really quite get going but get stuck, or when things are continuously being interrupted and commented upon, and when they're chatting as if they were at a rehearsal and so on. My question as to a specific "style" is something that Björn Roth confirmed.⁶⁸⁰ One could perhaps rather speak of a "method",⁶⁸¹ of a specific aesthetic manner, of common principles, "recipes", interests and background experiences – but also of rules. A multitude of common aspects has emerged in our conversation.

M. ROTH To Mayer, the records become "ever rounder and almost more melodic"⁶⁸² the more you listen to them. I just think that this connecting aspect can't be found on a stylistic level. A method? – perhaps; or perhaps rather a specific artistic approach or a characteristic mood? In any case, I think it is a significant achievement of the *Rarely heard music* that it cultivated acts of joint music-making beyond the bounds of any stylistic consensus. This is unusual, particularly in improvised music, where the sensitivities are normally pretty considerable and in jazz and rock a common style is the fundamental identifying characteristic.

Nevertheless, all the participants in our conversations were still able to identify with the *Rarely heard music* and its contemporary context. Undoubtedly, for many of them it was a highpoint and a furthestmost boundary in their career as musicians.⁶⁸³ The basis for this was and remains their mutual friendship – it's not a matter of chance that this topic arose throughout our conversations with Roth's co-musicians.

Beyond the bounds of any discussion of style, we could certainly investigate the genre(s) of the *Rarely heard music*, in fact in my opinion it has a certain prototypical character. It is instructive to compare the different quartet ensembles with each other (including the *Romenthal quartet*, the *Karlsruhe concert* and the *Lithograph workshop*) because they occurred in close chronological proximity to each other, but with varying participants. In the *Lithograph workshop* the participants remained the same

but changed instruments several times during their performance, which again created markedly different genre-specific realities: a vocal quartet, a string quartet and a combo represent completely different kinds of musical interaction among four people – and we experience this in a manner all the more undisguised when four musically knowledgeable dilettantes are involved. As a result, Roth experimented repeatedly with quartet constellations, even outside the realms of the existing music projects. Besides works of visual art with corresponding titles (such as the *Strichquartett* and the *Great double quartet*) I’m thinking here in particular of the thoughts and sketches he committed to his diaries⁶⁸⁴ [↗ Fig. 66].

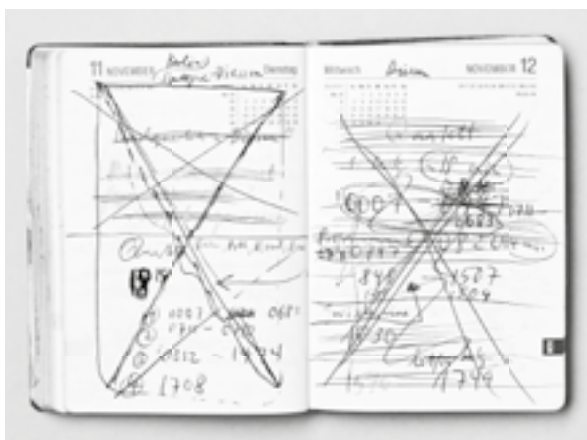


Fig. 66 *Diary 1975*, vol. B, with written notes and music sketches, leather binding, 14 × 11 × 1.5 cm, Dieter Roth Estate

M. HALDEMANN This play with generic identity is also relevant to Roth’s visual art and his book art, where expectations are awoken but are then only partially fulfilled, or not at all, or are expanded and treated ironically. What else might one expect from a “Garden sculpture”?! [↗ p. 312]

If Roth’s art has a concrete stylistic context, then it is that of the Baroque. He himself mentions this several times. Thus there are prints that are given titles such as *Barocketüde* (“Baroque study”, 1971) [↗ Fig. 32] or *Chinesisches Rokkoko Theater-Wolk-enstück* (“Chinese Rococo theatre-cloud-piece”, 1985). I here mean “Baroque” as a style in which it’s a matter of overcoming boundaries, where everything sensual and physical begins to move uninhibitedly, where the abundant, the excessive and the ecstatic predominate, where everything proliferates and grows rampant, where different realities can barely be kept apart, tending to be subsumed in an overpowering, aesthetic overall experience. Where the overlapping genres of theatre, opera and landscaping are favoured. But also where there is an intellectuality at play, when I think of the emblematic concepts of word, sculpture, architecture and image. How is this expressed in music by Roth?

M. ROTH Roth orients himself, in my opinion, not to any clearly identifiable musical style, but rather to a musical practice – domestic music. And this would indeed bring us back to the Baroque. As for your characterisation of his work, I can certainly recognise parallels. The *Rarely heard music* repeatedly plays on the musical rhetoric that stretches back to the early 17th century – in concrete terms it utilises compositional *topoi* that represent specific emotions or “affects”. A perfect example here is the “funeral march”⁶⁸⁵ from the *Romenthal quartet*, where the musicians progress through “Andante, adagio, presto, fortissimo” to “Generalissimo” and ultimately attempt a portrait of Napoleon, with specific musical figures being assigned semantic significance: Roth depicts Napoleon’s hat, Brus the “shadow of the hat”, and the two of them – fired up by Kapellmeister Rühm – work themselves up to a climax at which Brus endeavours to portray in music “the peppermint in the toothpaste”. By the time they mention the “army”, they have assembled a complete “battaglia” – a musical sound-painting of a battle such as was popular in the Baroque.

M. HALDEMANN Incidentally, even today, Rühm plays Baroque keyboard music every day.⁶⁸⁶

M. ROTH As for the intellectualism that you’ve referred to – Roth’s piano playing, especially in the work he did in his last two decades, is characterised by a special form of polyphony in which the left and right hands move surprisingly independently, with a tendency to a melodic bass line. What initially might sound just like aimless tinkling is in fact not the playing of an unmusical amateur but of an artist who is thinking in music in an extremely sensitive, as it were multidimensional manner. This makes the *Splittersonate* so difficult to play, because the two hands often act with little coordination⁶⁸⁷ – or, when they are coordinated, then they stand in a complicated canonic relationship to each other.⁶⁸⁸ The latter again is reminiscent of Baroque models, or (because in Roth’s case it is a kind of puzzle canon) of the domestic compositional use of music as a pastime, as an epigram one might write in a guest book.⁶⁸⁹

This reminds us of a “label” that was widespread in the 18th century: Roth and most of his co-musicians are perhaps dilettante domestic musicians, but they are clearly playing for “Kenner und Liebhaber” – for “connoisseurs and enthusiasts”.⁶⁹⁰

Their music refers in both sound and notation to the most varied forms of music,⁶⁹¹ their discourse indulges in puns with demanding musicological terms that only “a member of the educated classes knows”.⁶⁹² At the same time, their elaborately designed and limited, special editions are aimed at the art lover. Their concerts attracted a circle of initiates⁶⁹³ – and these at least actually held out until the end of their events.

These “fans”⁶⁹⁴ of the *Rarely heard music* will also have noticed that the whole series of it – besides its references to historical models – was characterised by strongly self-referential elements. I’ll offer several examples: Roth’s tenor horn “Attacca” from the *November symphony* is continued in the *Munich concert* that followed on chronologically; and there, as we know, it led to a big altercation with the other players.⁶⁹⁵ The *Berlin concert* also begins with Roth on the tenor horn, just as on the records before it. In the same concert, Brus plays one note repeatedly on a (multi-note) fog horn and towards the end suffers a fainting fit, though this did not stop him from repeating exactly the same note on the same instrument at the beginning of the *Karlsruhe concert*,⁶⁹⁶ nor from exhausting himself again in the process. In the *Romenthal quartet*, Rühm and Roth briefly talk about the *November symphony*, and in *The Kümmerling Trio plays No 1 & 2* Williams mentions the *Rarely heard music*. The highpoint of these references is undoubtedly the *Quadruple concerto*, which was conceived very much in analogous fashion to the *Radio sonata* and also refers to the *Canciones de Cadaqués* and the *Romenthal quartet*; a surviving written note⁶⁹⁷ even mentions the idea of releasing the *Quadruple concerto* along with a commentary such as was done with the fourth movement of the *November symphony*.

Several record covers of the *Rarely heard music* noticeably refer to each other. In the *Munich concert* and the *Romenthal quartet* they even used the same portrait of Rühm (at the accordion) [↗ pp. 186, 202]. Even the aesthetic of the sound-mixing of the records is uniform and is characterised by extreme dynamic compression and a levelling out of the sound colours when compared to the original tapes.⁶⁹⁸ The records did, however, display different editorial approaches to “filling up” the record sides and the ways in which the end of each side was organised (either as a fade-out or a simple cut-off). In the case of the *November symphony*, the *Berlin concert*, the *Romenthal quartet* and the *Abschöpfungsymphonie* there are similarities in the



Fig. 67 Dieter Roth at the “Disklavier” of the collector Franz Wassmer, 1995, photo: Franz Wassmer



Fig. 68 Robert Rauschenberg plays “a duet with Roth” on the Disklavier, in the home of the collector Franz Wassmer, 2000, photo: Franz Wassmer

labelling of the records and in how the different movements were named. They are self-contradictory (clearly unintentionally so with the *Berlin concert*),⁶⁹⁹ so the chronology and the allocation of the movement titles have to be reconstructed by the recipient in a complicated process. From at least the 3rd *Berlin poets’ workshop* onwards this was intentional, for there the pieces are announced by means of a labyrinthine, confusing numbering.

M. HALDEMANN This delight in references to their different works and in reworking their own material is a testament to the processual continuity of the collaboration between these men, but also to their aesthetic/conceptual context. A specific work context is formed so that the “repaintings” in sound don’t just have to refer back to Schubert, as it were, but can revert to their own models. Roth did something similar in his material pictures and assemblages when he integrated Polaroid photos from earlier phases as “doc-

umentary” self-quotations. The individual is not just a component of a disharmonic overall work, for the latter is also part of an overarching creative process that is interlinked with everyday life and serves the work of memory. Everything is done in order to keep the collaboration open, heterogeneous and fluid. It is possible that this was why new partners were accepted into the concerts – to give new impetus, not just so that the ensemble would grow in size. The danger that idioms would stabilise and solidify, becoming a mere “trick” or a “method” was something of which Roth was aware.⁷⁰⁰ He switched from the *Rarely heard music* to collaborations with his children at just the right time. Instead of giving concerts, he wanted to create sounding objects with them. A written note concerning the *Hamburger Tastenkoncert* (“Hamburg key[board] concert”), the last in the series of *Rarely heard music* in which Roth participated, thus bears the distancing title “The echo of the swansong” (“Das Echo vom Abgesang”).⁷⁰¹

One echo is found in the material pictures and assemblages that he began making – though it's not his own works that "echo" here, but rather the early, radical works of Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns, whom Roth had got to know in the USA in the 1960s. These works of Roth also refer back to the *Fallenbilder* by Spoerri, the visual objects with music instruments by Arman and the objects with music apparatus and instruments by Paik and Tinguely. At a late date, Roth also once more linked up with the intermedia tendencies of the international avant-garde of the 1950s and 1960s in order to create something new from it "in secret". This was at a time when most of the above-mentioned artists were already comfortable on the pedestals erected for them.⁷⁰² His approach to these "classics" of the avant-garde was, like his approach to Classical and Romantic music, that of "someone who looks backwards and takes another peek".⁷⁰³ He summed this up in a correspondingly critical manner: "In my eyes, the Americans saw it as something worthy that over here was done precisely *against* what was 'worthy' ... Robert Rauschenberg, like Jasper Johns, was pretty desperate when he began. I saw the American flag in New York when it was new [Jasper Johns: *Flag*, 1954–5]. But all that ended in luxurious gestures that have nothing more to do with reality".⁷⁰⁴ The conspicuous proximity of his new works to the early works of others seems like an "echo of the swansong", like the liquefaction of a solidified, already historicised collective aggregate. A retrospective/innovative art about art in an overarching, historical process.

However, Roth's self-images that are stagings of their material history in fact naturally correspond to Rauschenberg's contemporary approach, for the latter said: "All material has its own history built into it. There's no such thing as 'better' material. It's just as unnatural for people to use oil paint as it is to use anything else. An artist manufactures his material out of his own existence ...".⁷⁰⁵

Roth and Rauschenberg were often guests in the home of the Swiss collector Franz Wassmer, though independently of each other. There they were each able to see works by the other – such as new music objects by Roth and old "combine paintings" by Rauschenberg. Rauschenberg apparently praised the works of his Swiss colleague. On one of his visits, Roth played on the Yamaha "Disklavier" of his host, who recorded it [↗ Fig. 67]. Rauschenberg later played a "duet" with the deceased Roth on the same instrument [↗ Fig. 68]. "It was magical", recalls Wassmer.⁷⁰⁶

Rauschenberg had in earlier times carried out his performative painting with piano music in collaboration with Niki de Saint Phalle, Johns, Tinguely and David Tudor [↗ Fig. 69].⁷⁰⁷ As late as 1989 he could describe “collaboration” as something that Roth would surely have understood and supported: “a prescription or device that keeps one from getting hung up on a strong single intention that blinds. Even two people doing something together is important. With collaboration, as complex as it may be, the directions can change. I suppose there must be a cutoff point, or you get total chaos. It seems that in theater and printmaking, every individual that you add to a project will result in ten times as many new possibilities. A good collaboration produces universal thinking”.⁷⁰⁸



Fig. 69 Robert Rauschenberg, *Variations II, Homage to David Tudor*, performance in the Théâtre de l’Ambassade des États-Unis in Paris, 20 June 1961, photo: Shunk-Kender

M. ROTH In this context, I would like to return once more to the rhizome metaphor: the roots of the *Rarely heard music* lie in a meshwork of collective and at the same time individual experiences that one can really not tease apart – in our series of *Rarely heard conversations* the participants also described it thus; it had a plurality of voices that somehow still belonged together. It would undoubtedly be productive to carry out a well-founded, intertextual

and historical interpretation of the records – as products of collaborative creative processes that were in part also subject to spontaneous everyday reality, they proliferate in very diverse directions; they are able to overcome individual limitations and ideas,⁷⁰⁹ and what they achieve remains in the collective memory and is able to be reactivated individually again in subsequent events, under new conditions. Like Wiener, one could speak of “contiguity” here.⁷¹⁰

In the end, it is not surprising that the *Rarely heard music* continues today, its participants including the Swiss Walter Fähndrich and Rolf Winnewisser, though in parallel it has also brought forth such diverse offshoots as the cabaret evenings of “Attersee and his friends”,⁷¹¹ Steiger’s (failed) “Dieter Roth Commemorative Concert”⁷¹² and Roth’s own late installations – here I’m thinking in particular of the *Keller-Duo* (1980–1989[®]),⁷¹³

which is itself an impressive document of an escalating musical and visual collaboration.⁷¹⁴

M. HALDEMANN And at the same time it is a ruinous proliferation. The *Rarely heard music* has inspired a later generation, beyond its own circle of participants, and has had a historical impact, bringing forth many a side-branch. We have already spoken briefly of the "brilliant dilettantes" ("Geniale Dilettanten", *sic*) in Berlin in the 1980s. We'll come to that again later.

In order to use an image to describe the collaboration of the *Rarely heard music*, I'd like to link two images: "star" and "zigzag". Attersee speaks of collective work as a "combination", like the different "points of a star" pointing inwards.⁷¹⁵ But the image of the star can naturally be interpreted as things coming together or moving apart. You bring something in and get something in return. You meet together in the process of performance, coming from all different directions, and then you move apart again. On the other hand, Rainer speaks of "zigzags" that he and Roth carried out in their collaborations. If there is anything that unites the distinctive personalities of the *Rarely heard music*, then it's their mutability. The fact that they repeatedly redefine themselves over the course of time and even change profession. Wiener isn't just an artist, he's also a mathematician, a computer specialist, a restaurateur and a professor at an academy, he has literary and epistemological inclinations and interests, and his biography is a series of fragments in which he enters and exits the art world; he's "professionally in transit". Brus halted his unsettling actions abruptly in 1970 in order to return to drawing again. This silent, extreme avant-garde performer became an eloquent, conservative picture-poet who once again managed to affront some people. Rühm practises in the most varied artistic fields in parallel – he's a poet and chansonnier, he draws, composes and is the scholarly editor of the collected works of Konrad Bayer. He belongs neither wholly to the art world nor to the music world or to the worlds of literature or theatre. Attersee paints intensively and is out and about as a successful pop singer, a yachter, a restaurant owner and as "the most handsome man in Austria": "I love doing everything".⁷¹⁶ Rainer switches between abstract painting and his humorous/cryptic mimicry and pantomime, while Nitsch remains true to his *Orgies Mysteries Theatre* and quite uninhibitedly performs as an organist at the venerable Bruckner Festivals in Linz. They have all, to the present

day, remained artistic “border crossers”. The possibility is never excluded that they might redefine themselves differently once more in order to free up space for themselves. And in their music collaborations they are not just like the points of a star pointing inwards and outwards, coming closer to each other and then moving away again; they have also at times made unexpected zigzags. As “brilliant dilettantes” they’re capable of everything.

What Rainer says of Roth and himself also applies to their colleagues. They violated the confessional, lifelong style and morals of the Modern, and did so by “infidelity to oneself, through non-commitment, mutability, zigzags, stylistic contrasts etc., in other words the expansion of our work on all possible sides without any concept of our direction”.⁷⁷

This is also true of Roth’s work, first and foremost of the *Spaltersonate*. The horizontal succession of the music notation is broken up in the vertical by the collage structure of the different leaves, which puts its heterogeneous parts in a situation in which they are in cooperation and in conflict at the same time [↗ pp. 296, 297]. The “Sonata” is an art of “mixture and separation”, a “duet and a duel” of shifting systems. Every leaf of this “long-distance sonata” represents an “interplay/counterplay”-variant of the centripetal/centrifugal disharmony. Roth zigzags from one splintered splinter to another and creates a continuity devoid of style. In this “hybrid thing” (“Zwischending”), individuality possesses negative contours, rather as in his previous self-images as empty holes [↗ Figs. 4, 39].

And if we investigate the intellectual, historical roots of this oppositional/dialectical concept of art with its conjunction of contrary styles, of high and low, serious and comical, the ideal and the satirical, of various interpretations of reality and of its invigoration of the observer’s imagination, then – according to Werner Hofmann – it leads us all the way back to Shakespeare, who assumes prime historical importance as a precursor of “fractured modernity”.⁷⁸ For Roth, Shakespeare’s sonnets were exemplary.

Totem

M. ROTH Rühm gave us “several hints” about their collaborative works of visual art, one of which sums up nicely this matter

of “working together/asunder”: “rhyme attersee with brus, brus with nitsch, nitsch with roth, roth with rühm, rühm with steiger and steiger with wiener, then you’ve reached the common denominator that we neither intended nor excluded”.⁷¹⁹

M. HALDEMANN Roth brought himself to a “common denominator” with other names already in an early work from around 1950. He linked his own names with those of Stravinsky, Pushkin, Chagall, Kafka, Hamsun, Turgenev and Picasso to create a single image [▷ p. 66].⁷²⁰ There are no gaps between the words, the spelling is falsified, the size of the letters and the handwriting vary. As in visual poetry, various possible meanings emerge. On the second-last line, Roth unites his name with that of Picasso: “PICASSOROTH”. But he does not just set himself on the same level as the most famous living artist of the time. In contrast to his other role models, Cézanne and Klee, Picasso is also the epitome of the creative, transforming artist “without a style”. One who zigzags like no other “dilettant-ising” artist.

At the end of the text stands the word “MONPARNASSE”. He means the district in Paris that in the early 20th century was where modern artists, poets and musicians were gathered, including Chagall and Picasso who are both mentioned in the text. But because the letter “T” is missing, the group of names becomes Roth’s “mon parnasse” with his personal “muses” and “goddesses” of the arts. Furthermore, “MONPARNASSE”, as the last word, refers back to the first of the text: “TOTEM”. The latter is derived from the southern Canadian Algonquin language and means “relationship” or “family symbol”, “personal guardian spirit”. In indigenous cultures, it signifies an animal or a plant, more rarely a natural phenomenon, to which a human being or a group of people feels a special relationship. Mostly these are a kind of inherited, remote ancestor and guardian spirit. Among the North American Indians there also emerged an individual totemism. There, an adolescent can adopt a non-inherited totem. In this sense, Roth’s artistic “gods” are elective affinities, namely his personal “individual totems”. It also makes me think of his artistic “ersatz” family that was of such defining importance to him in the Zurich guest house where he lived.

This word-piece proves that right at the very beginning of his artistic activity he regarded himself as a collective member of “all” the arts, which also supports my notion of the rhizome. His early self-depiction as part of an interdisciplinary artistic

collective furthermore points forward to his close relationship with his collaborator-friends of the *Rarely heard music* (whose names Rühm “rhymes” together). And together with his children, Roth was ultimately able to build up a real, artistic family. The work he put into the “Family publishing house”, the fact that he published a poetry book by his mother and records by his children, along with his close collaboration with his son Björn and his Icelandic friends – all this appears in a new light when one takes this background into consideration. In the meantime, the family collective has been extended into the third generation, as was shown by the Milan exhibition *Dieter Roth/Björn Roth – Islands* in 2013/14, in which Oddur Roth and Einar Roth participated.⁷²¹ In this collaboration, music actually played a central role [↗ Fig. 70].

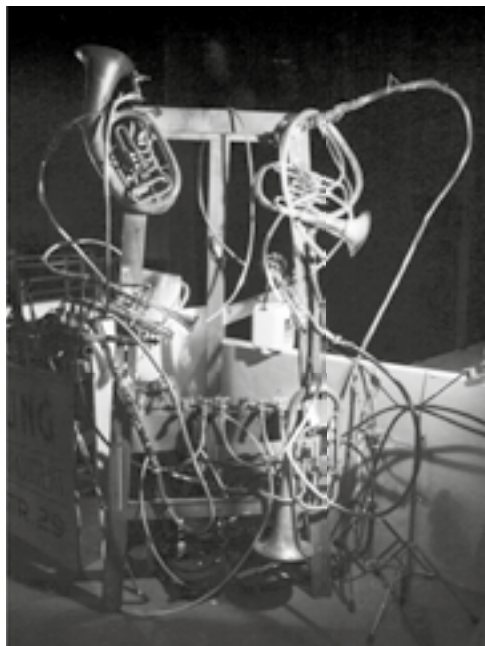
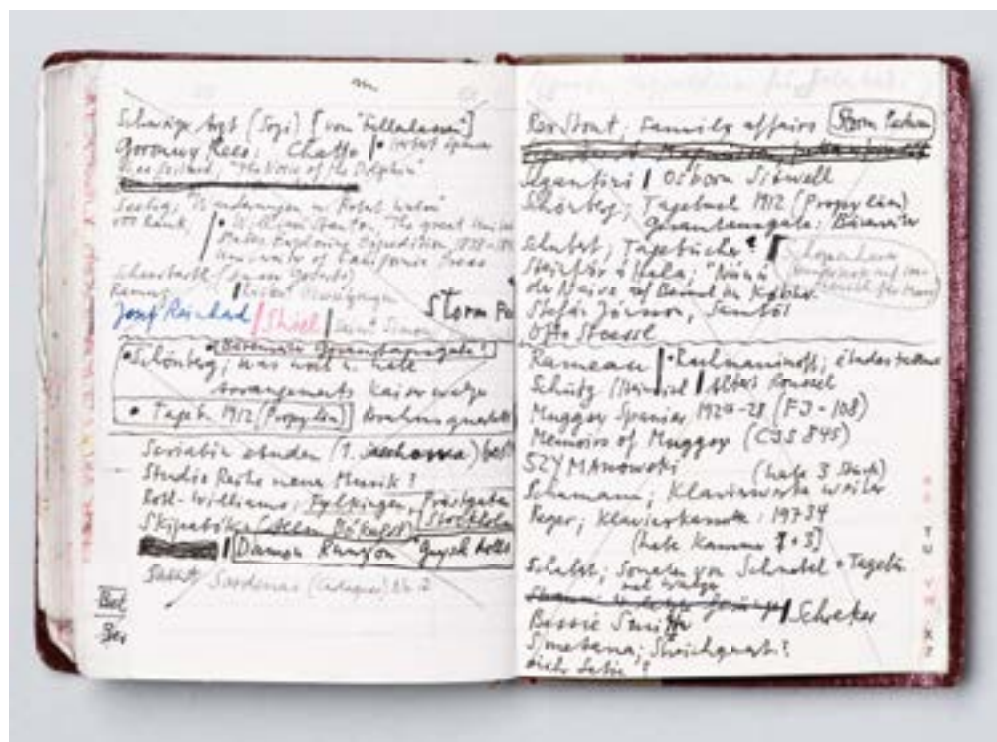


Fig. 70 Björn Roth, Oddur Roth with Davið Þór Jónsson, *The Relatively New Sculpture*, 2013 (detail), installation view of *Dieter Roth/Björn Roth – Islands*, Hangar Bicocca, Milan, 2013/2014

Roth also prompts his audience to play with and against him. Thus the readers of his *Bastel-Novelle* are subjected by him to ironic advertising for the varied products of his publishing house, so that “they don’t listen to this blowing with trembling and apprehension,

and indeed by force. Instead, making an effort might let the bluster of the trumpets of the so-called last days seem utterly banal nonsense – or even an amusement?! Who can know unless he’s tried it?” To those who have “inner, thus also outer difficulties of all kinds”, he recommends enrolling in the “course to enable one to recognise a weariness of life as pop music”.⁷²²

So why not also reach for the violin or for the piano keys in the ruinous, eschatological *Keller-Duo*? In order to amuse himself through playing, as Dieter and Björn Roth also did originally with their spontaneous duo music in the cellar of the Kunstmuseum Luzern. Over the years, first an object and then a two-part “duo installation” would grow out of this, with large and small instruments for the “whole family”. As a product of artistic, collaborationist amusement in a battle against the weariness of life. As a pastime. And as an invitation to us to try it too.



Notebook and diary 1976
 14.5×10.5×2 cm, Dieter Roth Estate



Grosses Theater 1971

Dry-point etching on handmade paper, in part a photomechanical reproduction of a drawing, 59 x 78 on 78 x 95 cm, Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg

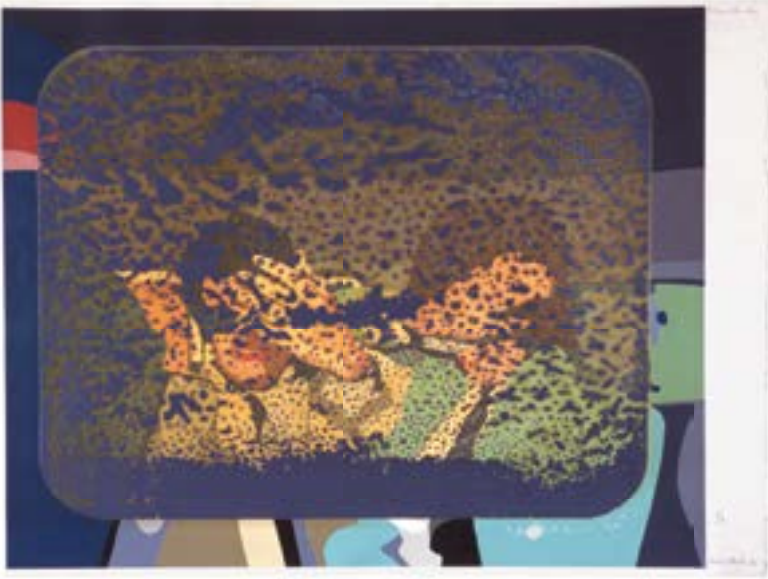
Grosses Theater, in colour 1971–1979

Dry-point etching, colour overpainting and collage, 60 x 78 on 78 x 95 cm, Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg



Poster for the world première of Mauricio Kagel's
Die Erschöpfung der Welt, Württemberg State Theatre,
Stuttgart, 9 February 1980

Offset print on paper, 63 × 88 cm



Richard Hamilton and Dieter Roth
A strong sweet smell of incense (a) and (b) 1972

Silkscreen print and collage on handmade paper, 67 × 92
 on 84 × 108 cm, Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg



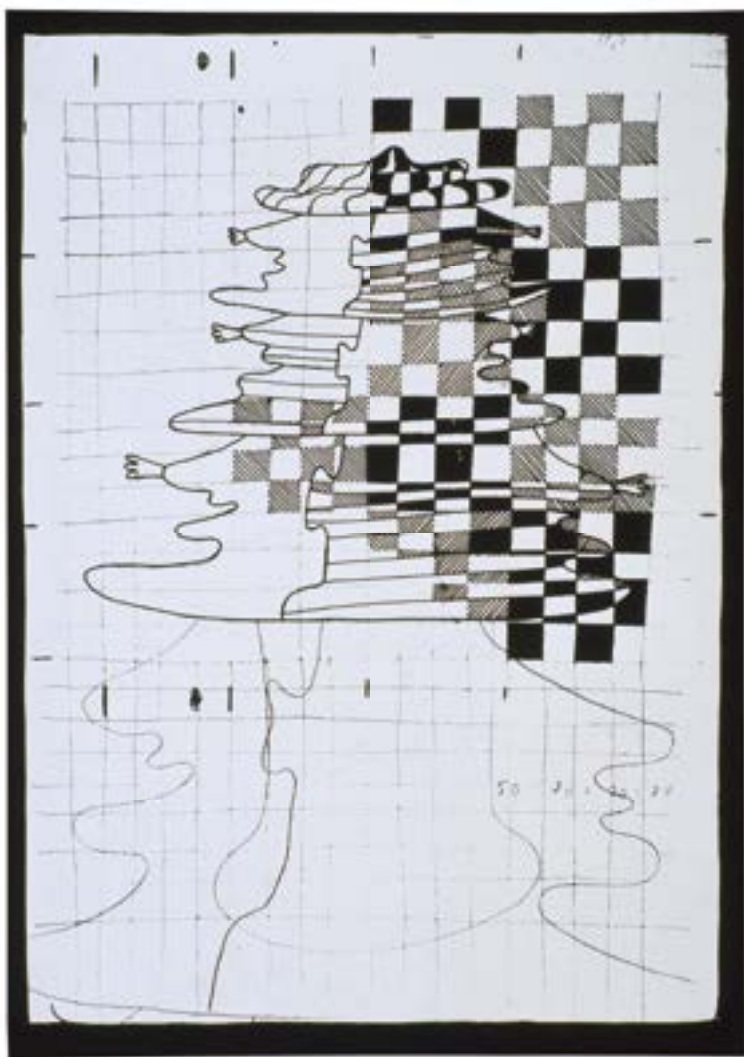
Zuhören 1972

Stencil print/screen on cardboard, 75 × 54 cm on
86 × 65 cm, Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg



Doppelquartett 1971

Flatbed print (stone and zinc) on handmade paper,
63 × 85 on 78 × 94 cm, Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg



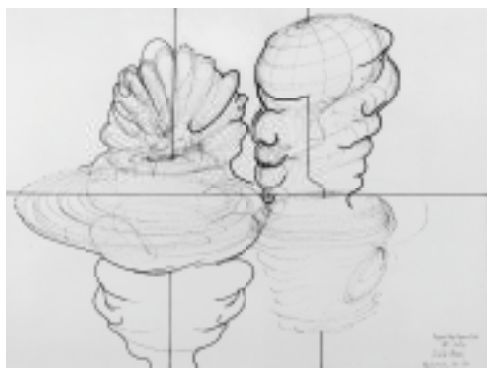
Strichquartett 1971

Silkscreen print on cardboard, photomechanical reproduction of a drawing, 70 × 50 cm, Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg



Doppelkopfquartett I-V 1974

Pen and/or pencil on vellum paper, 30 × 40 cm,
Sprengel Museum, Hanover, State of Lower Saxony





Cover of the record **Selten gehörte Musik**.
Streichquartett 558171 (Romenthalquartett) 1976

(above: front cover; next page, top: back cover;
 next page, bottom: inside cover); offset print on
 cardboard, 31.5 × 31.5 cm, edition hansjörg mayer,
 Stuttgart / London / Reykjavík





Documentation of the Fernquartett
in the catalogue for the exhibition *Dieter Roth
& Björn Roth, Stretch & Squeeze*, collection
[mac] musée d'art contemporain de Marseille,
1997, Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg



Dieter Roth with Björn Roth, Karl Roth and Vera Roth
Fernquartett 1978–1980

48 audio cassettes, 4 car cassette players, 4 loud-
speakers, wood and acrylic housing with a metal handle,
120 × 30 × 15 cm, collection [mac] musée d'art
contemporain de Marseille



Dieter Roth with Björn Roth, Karl Roth and Vera Roth
Fernquartett 1978–1980

48 audio cassettes, 4 car cassette players, 4 loud-
 speakers, wood and acrylic housing with a metal handle,
 120 × 30 × 15 cm, Dieter Roth Estate



F. Achleitner, G. Brus, D. Roth, G. Rühm and O. Wiener, *Erster Berliner Dichterworkshop*, 30 October – 7 November 1972, in the public room of Oswald Wiener's Restaurant "Exil" and in Gerhard Rühm's studio in Berlin

Photos: Karin Mack





Dieter Roth at the *Erster Berliner Dichterworkshop*,
30 October – 7 November 1972

Photo: Karin Mack



Einsamkeit mit Klavier 1973

Drawing in: *Schastrommel* No. 9, ed. Günter Brus



Paul Klee

d. Pianist in Not 1909

Pen and watercolour on paper on cardboard, 16.5 × 18 cm, private collection, Switzerland, on loan to the Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern



Nasenbohren am Klavier 1974

Handmade offset print on handmade paper,
45 × 60 cm, Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg



Advertisement for the record of **Die Radio Sonate** 1978

Offset print on cardboard, 44.5 × 64 cm



Dieter Roth's piano from his studio in
Stuttgart, 1970s to early 1980s

J. A. Pfeiffer & Co., Stuttgart, mixed media,
128 × 155 × 65 cm, ahlers collection



Günter Brus, Dieter Roth, Gerhard Rühm, Oswald Wiener
Vierfarben-Schnellpresse-Konzertgrafik 1974

Offset print on paper, 62 × 88 cm, private collection





C. L. Attersee, G. Brus, H. Nitsch, D. Roth,
G. Rühm, D. Steiger and O. Wiener
Untitled 1970s

Felt-tip pen and oil crayon on paper,
20.9 × 29.5 cm, private collection



C. L. Attersee, G. Brus, H. Nitsch, D. Roth,
G. Rühm, D. Steiger and O. Wiener
Windbeutel, meine Herren! 1975

Coloured crayons on paper, 20.5×29.5 cm,
Klewan Collection, Munich

3.1.1974, hier

lieber Karl Dietrich -
dies, um in Derschätzung die Ankommerlei deines Briefes in Rück-
meldung zu stellen.

Vorwärtsfütterung:

a)

was Englischsprachrechtsbesitz der Lachterhandhabe betreffend
in Vorgang zu bringen wäre, tritt das Erscheinunghaben deiner
Rechtsauffassungsweise mirorts ins beschwerdelos Istreffende. Was
in Jedochheit angesichts des Fragenschatzes der in Forderung zu
stellenden Gross-Summenbeträge in Anlangung gehalten wird, stößt
auf Nichtvorhandenschafft von Vorstellungshaftigkeiten verkonkre-
sierter Natur. Dies sei in jedweder Jedenfallschaft Vollmachtereil,
den meinseitigen Part - so fern in Erwünschtheit für die amerikani-
schen Kaufenhaber - in Betrefferei meines Betragssummeninteresses
bitte gütigst und recht angenehm für mich in Mitvertretung zu
Überstellen.

Gebe jedoch in
Anheimkeit, dass
meinestails
größte Lusthaf-
tigkeit zur Ent-
stehung bewogen
ist, s e l b e r

wo schon nicht
allein in eng-
lischsprachige
Übertragerlei, so doch sogar schon n e u e allerprime feinstgute
Gedankmachereien in der Vereinfachung gleich in englischer Sprech-
haftigkeit neukonzeptioniert aufs Papier zu stempeln - da eine
Mancherleischafft von Neuideenmässigkeiten dasig in Ansturm gestellt
in der Entsprechung zur Gemässheit sich befinden.

b)

Hansjürgs wchles Verständnis hat auch mich begelestert gestellt.
ein VIVARI der Bravmässigkeit desselben.

c)

Bin bereits zustands hoher Bereitheit, Hoffnung auf Arbeitsankeiten
auf Snaefellnes in mir hochkomms förder zu legen. Sollte es Dirseits
in Gefallerei kommen, in Vorherigkeit irgendwannmässig nochens in
Berlin Aufenthaltereien in ~~W~~planung zu bringen, so muss ich ~~de~~
Versicherei ganz bedeutender Einwilligungsmässigkeiten meinests
nicht erst im Schriftstell zur Ausdrücklichkeit in Verhelfung
legen. Zudem ~~existieret~~ existieret eine Leckerei durch Streichquartetttäg-
schafften in völligen Unverhältnismässigkeiten.

d)

Ingrid geriet in volle Suchung nach Sobelinhandbuchtextereien und
in die Nähe eines Tatsachenwerdens der diesbezüglichen Abschickerei.

e)

In allachafftlicher Vorlufigtümelei ist mirs eine Abreiseditiert-
heit am 28.1. in Verplanung eingestuft. Hohe Wertestgüte würde das
in solcher Beschaffenheit befindliche Datumwesen durch Vorauszeich-
nung hervordentlichen, solltest Duseher in etwaiger Dannigkeit
gleichfalls von Berlin aus in Zurückkehrerei in das Islandhaben
eintreten wollen.

Größte Grüsse von Deinen Oswald auf bald!



Letter from Oswald and Ingrid Wiener
to Dieter Roth, Vienna, 3 January 1974

Dieter Roth Estate



Selten gehörte Musik. Münchner Konzert, Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich, 28 May 1974

Photos: Karin Mack



Günter Brus
 Concert advertisement for the
Selten gehörte Musik. Münchner Konzert 1974

Offset print, 81.5×59.5 cm



Cover for the record of the
Selten gehörte Musik. Münchner Konzert 1975

Offset print on cardboard, 31.5×31.5 cm



Christian Ludwig Attersee
Cover drawing for the programme of the
Selten gehörte Musik. Das Berliner Konzert 1974





C. L. Attersee, G. Brus, H. Nitsch, A. Rainer,
 D. Roth, G. Rühm, D. Steiger and O. Wiener
 Front and back of the original cover design for the record
Selten gehörte Musik. Das Berliner Konzert ca 1977
 Collage of Polaroid photos on paper, pencil, oil pastels,
 gouache, 31.5 × 31.5 cm, Dieter Roth Estate

Advertisement for the record
Selten gehörte Musik. Das Berliner Konzert 1977
 Offset print on paper, 100 × 70 cm



Arnulf Rainer
 Untitled (Arnulf Rainer and Oswald Wiener) 1974

Overpainted photograph, 24 × 18 cm,
 Klewan Collection, Munich

Arnulf Rainer
Schlussapotheose für ein schönes Österreich
 (Steiger / Brus / Rühm / Rainer / Wiener) 1974

Overpainted photograph, 61.3 × 48.3 cm,
 Klewan Collection, Munich



Reykjavik, 20.7.74

Hi, Ossi, heute kommt Deine Karte mit Kirche und Anklebsel, ich möchte aber auf keinen Flaketen sein (was uns alten Gehörte betrifft), an denen ich nicht mitgemacht habe oder gefragt worden bin, auch Briefpapier nicht. Ich fühle mich überfahren, schmeisst da der alte Ossi wieder mit seinen Gewichten ? Hoffentlich nicht und nie mehr, sonst lauf ich wieder.
Dein Dieter

Letter from Dieter Roth to Oswald Wiener,
Reykjavik, 20 July 1974

Dieter Roth Estate

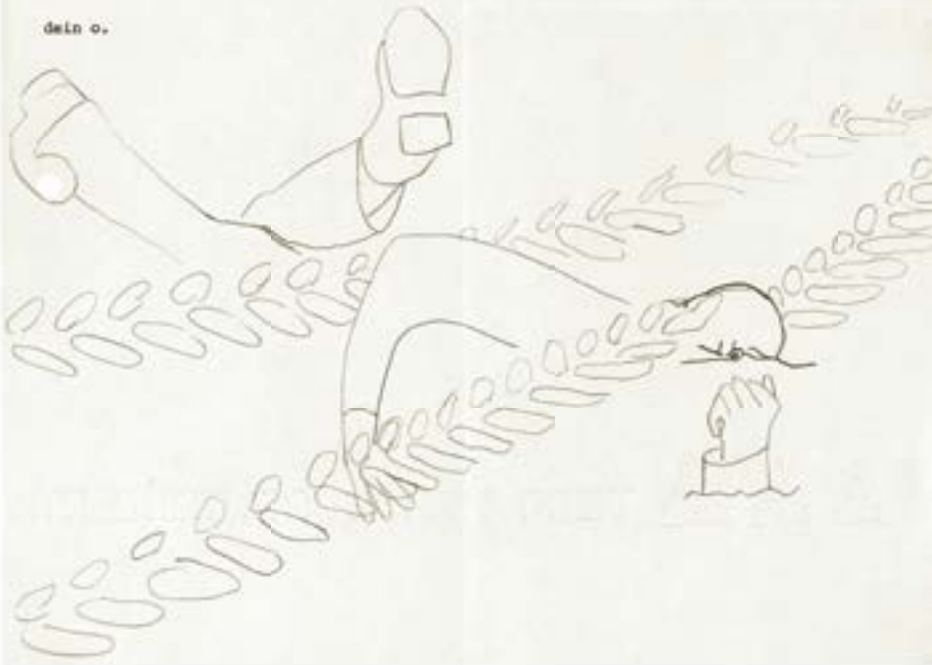
wiener berlin 27.7.

lieber dieter ich hab schon ein talent dir auf die flüsse zu treten was?
das briefpapier sollte bloss so schnell wie möglich fertig sein. ich dachte an die beiliegen-
de vignette (etwas kleiner noch) auf briefumschlägen und ev. auf papier in schwarz mit text:
selten gehörte musik
DAS BERLINER KONZERT
27. september 1974

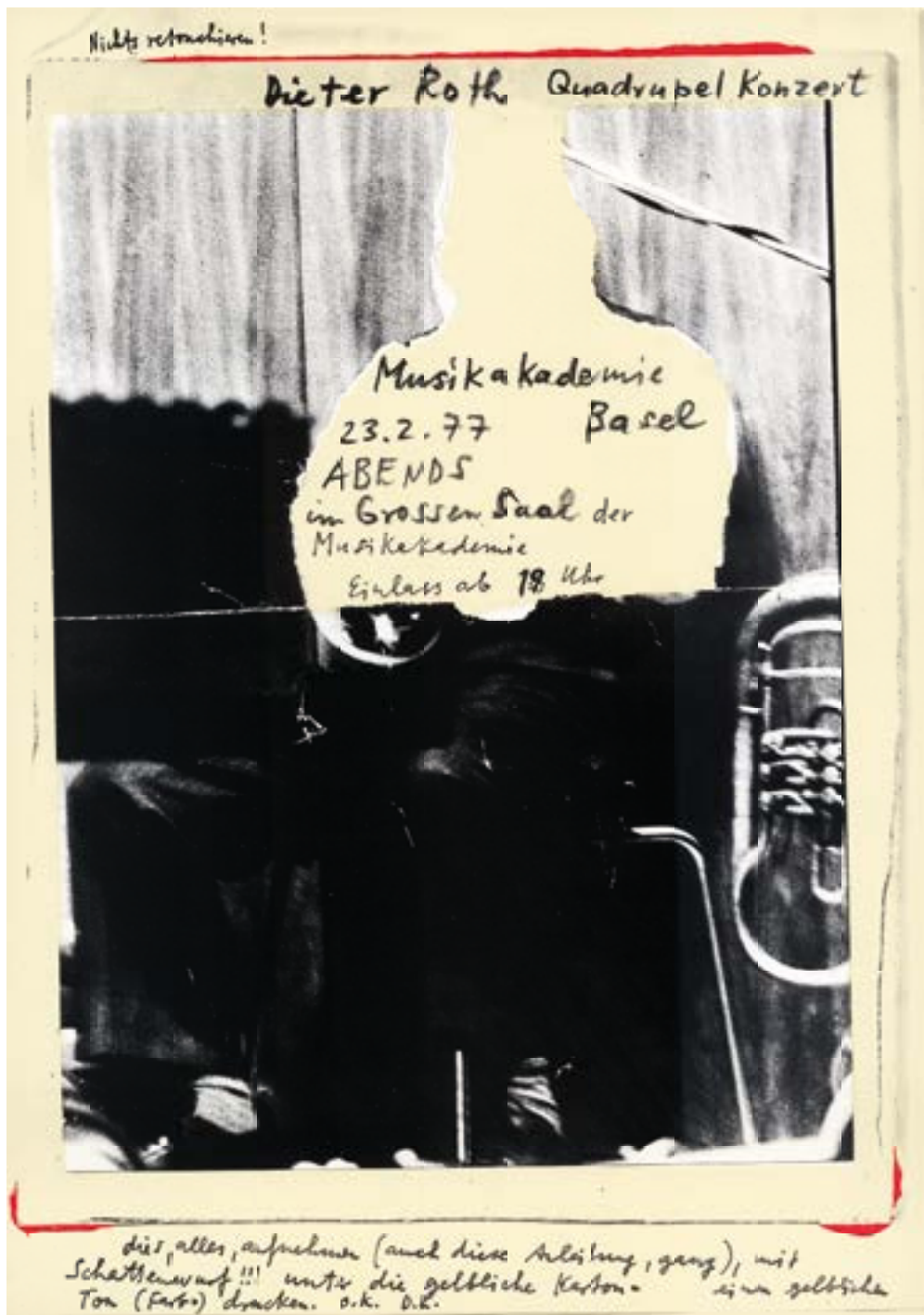
oder ähnlich (in handschrift, ziemlich gross). nun mach doch bitte was dazu oder was ganz
neues oder gib zustimmung zum druck so bald als möglich (schön wäre schon eine briefmarke
zum mitaufkleben?) (oder ein stempel statt briefmarken, wie manche firmen und ämter haben).
was das oder die plakate betrifft, so ist ein alleingang nicht meine absicht gewesen, ganz
im gegenteil wäre es ja verrückt, solche plakatspotenzen wie die meisten der mitwirkenden
nicht heranzuziehen. ich wollte mir nur einen allerersten überblick verschaffen.
in deinem ärgen hast du vergessen mir zu sagen, ob dir der termin passt (den ändern passt).
es wäre auch schön, zu wissen, welches instrumentarium ich ausser dem vorhandenen anstreben
"lite, und was alle an weiteren möglichkeiten (elektronik? aufnahmetechnik?) wünschen oder
erwarten.
ich möchte doch gerne, dass die sache ein grosser erfolg wird; und da wir, um die kirche zu
füllen, 500 bis 1000 menschen (falls wir ausser den 'parterre'-sitzen auch die vorhandenen
galerien nützen wollen) mobilisieren müssen, sollten wir mit der werbung so bald wie möglich
anfangen.

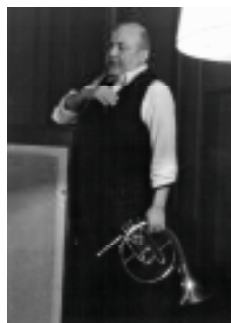
bist du in der zweiten augusthälfte in berlin? es wäre schön wenn es zu der bereits ange-
deuteten filmkooperation kommen würde (jedenfalls du und gerhard - güster?)

dein o.



Letter from Oswald Wiener to Dieter Roth,
Berlin, 27 July 1974





Concert announcement for the *Quadrupelkonzert*, large hall of the Music Academy, Basel, 1977

Offset print, 100 × 70 cm

Dieter Roth at the *Quadrupelkonzert*, 23 February 1977, Music Academy, Basel

Photos: Hannes-Dirk Flury, archive of the Music Academy, Basel

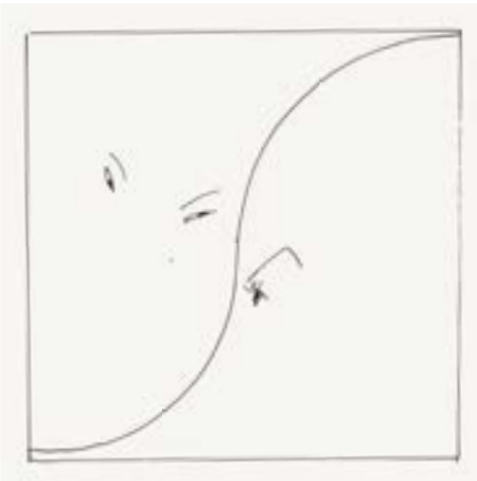


Dieter Roth with Björn Roth, Karl Roth and Vera Roth
Tibidabo-Hundezwinger 24 Stunden Gebell 1977–1978

ca 1600 drawings, ca 1000 photos (all bound in books),
contact prints on 16 wooden slats, amplifier, loudspeaker,
ca 300 × 300 × 75 cm, Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg



Details from **Tibidabo-Hundezwinger 24 Stunden Gebell**
(b/w photographs and drawings)



top: Nam June Paik
My Jubilee ist Unverhemmet 1977

12" vinyl LP, offset print on cardboard, 31.5 × 31.5 cm,
 Edition Lebeer-Hossmann, Brussels

below: Dieter Roth
THY QUATSCH est min Castello 1979

One sided 7" vinyl single, offset print on cardboard,
 17.8 × 17.8 cm, Dieter Roth's Verlag, Stuttgart



Schallplattenturm 1979

Vinyl, glue, 35.5×17.5 cm, private collection



Musiktruhe 1979

Jukebox, 59 records, exhibition poster,
85.5 × 107 × 55.5 cm, private collection



Dieter Roth with Björn Roth
Triptychon 1979–1981

Assemblage with radio cassette machine, 12 original cassettes with piano and violin music, toy guitar, xylophone, everyday objects, acrylic, oil, glue, wood, metal and other materials, 69 × 107 × 69 cm, private collection, Switzerland



*Keller-Duo (early state) in the exhibition *Ladenhüter aus d. Jahren 1965–1983* (“Shelf warmers from the years 1965–1983”), Galerie Onnasch, Berlin, 18 February 1983*



Records from Dieter Roth’s Verlag and *Nahquartett*, exhibited in the Galerie Jes Petersen, Berlin, March 1985



Dieter Roth with Björn Roth and Vera Roth
Lorelei, die Langstreckensonate 1978

37 audio cassettes, radio cassette recorder in a wooden box painted by Dieter Roth, 12 × 61 × 28 cm, Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg



Video stills of the recording of the performance of the *Selten gehörte Musik. Abschöpfersymphonie. Die Abschöpfung* in the Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich, 3 February 1979





Various Polaroid photos from
Harmonica Curse 1981

8.9×10.8cm, Dieter Roth Estate

**Greetings** 1978

Pencil and coloured pencils on lined, perforated paper,
31.5×20 cm, Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg

Third loop

MATTHIAS HALDEMANN Now that we have busied ourselves extensively with music-related works and projects by Dieter Roth, we should expand our perspective somewhat and look at the broader contexts.

Sven Beckstette, you're preparing an exhibition about Dieter Roth and language for the Kunstmuseum Stuttgart. How did you come to Roth? What interests you about the way he deals with language? You're an art historian, aren't you?

SVEN BECKSTETTE Yes, I studied art history in Münster and Berlin, with German language and literature among my minor subjects. I came to Dieter Roth in a roundabout way. In the past I've occupied myself with artists such as Öyvind Fahlström,⁷²³ Ferdinand Kriwet⁷²⁴ and Timm Ulrichs. It turned out that all three of them had their roots in concrete poetry, even though their beginnings were different.

Concrete poetry

SVEN BECKSTETTE Fahlström developed his concept of concrete poetry on his own, in Sweden in the early 1950s, and its origins lay in Pierre Schaeffer's *musique concrète*. Kriwet and Ulrichs, on the other hand, were influenced by Eugen Gomringer, whose concrete poetry was founded on Max Bill's concrete art. When I did further research into this, it struck me that a whole series of artists in Europe and the USA were similarly influenced by concrete poetry. For example, Bruce Nauman, Carl Andre, Peter Roehr and Marcel Broodthaers all wrote concrete poetry when they were younger. And Daniel Spoerri too, of course. It then wasn't far from here to Roth. He and Spoerri were friends for many years. And Roth also worked with Gomringer himself – the founding father of the movement – at the journal *spirale* in Bern.

Another thing these artists have in common is that they moved into new forms of expression in the 1960s when they turned to performance, video and installation art. This process of removing boundaries from their art was once described by Laszlo Glozer as an “exit from the picture”. But given the fact that these artists had no training in the visual arts but instead came from concrete poetry, it would be more accurate to talk of an “exit from the book”.⁷²⁵ In this context, Roth is a central figure. He made concrete poems (and also concrete artworks), but soon distanced himself from the movement. Nevertheless, the approach of concrete poetry, namely to reduce language to its own means, was fundamental to his whole oeuvre – from the artist's books via the “literature sausages” and material pictures of the 1970s to the late installation works. Because Roth's starting point is really always language as the sole yet insufficient access point from which we experience reality and, above all, identity. So his work is also a critique of language, formulated with its own means. Even if he leads language back to itself, as in concrete poetry, his approach naturally has nothing to do with Gomringer's theory, for whom concrete poetry was a reflection with and on language but was also in reaction to a process of increasing mechanisation of communication. The Kunstmuseum Stuttgart owns a comprehensive collection of works by Roth that will form the core of our exhibition.

M. HALDEMANN Though spoken language ultimately was merely a “sound” for him, thus something acoustic. That is also true of the interviews: “I’m talking rubbish, aren’t I? I don’t think what I say is systematic, at best it’s a kind of note that I always have, that’s the system, and I shoot off around me, starting with that note ...”.⁷²⁶

Roth’s interest in concrete or visual poetry links him with the representatives of the Vienna Group, such as with Gerhard Rühm, whom he got to know at an early date through *spirale* in Bern, and who was originally a musician. Roth appreciated the language critique of the Viennese poets of his generation and their predecessors. But from the very start he did not just write poetry, he also listened to music and played the piano. How would you differentiate between his particular approach to language at the time of his concrete or visual poetry, and that of Eugen Gomringer?

SVEN BECKSTETTE Gomringer saw his concept of a concrete poetry in the context of the societal change of the post-War years. In his theoretical text “vom vers zur konstellation” (“from verse to the constellation”, 1954)⁷²⁷ he quite forcefully points out the changes in our forms of communication that have come about because of the telephone and the radio, which brought with them a simplified language. Furthermore, he was concerned with socio-political aspects. To him, poetry that is contemporary may not be individualistic, i.e. it may not be characterised by a personal, emotional language of metaphor, because this private, inward literature is not of “use” (Gomringer) to society. He contrasts this with a new poetry that is based on concentration, economy and silence in that it restricts itself to just individual words in its texts.

It was not just Gomringer’s political approach that was utterly alien to Roth. More than that, the words “concentration, economy, silence” meant absolutely nothing to him. On the contrary: Roth’s oeuvre is characterised by “expansion, profligacy and babbling away”.

M. HALDEMANN And yet in his excessive abundance a “nothing” is concealed: “I’m not an either/or, I’m simply *not*”⁷²⁸ [↗ Fig. 4]. Roth the chatterbox is a “nought-sayer”. When he commits his endless talking to his diary, the result is a kind of inner monologue of silence.

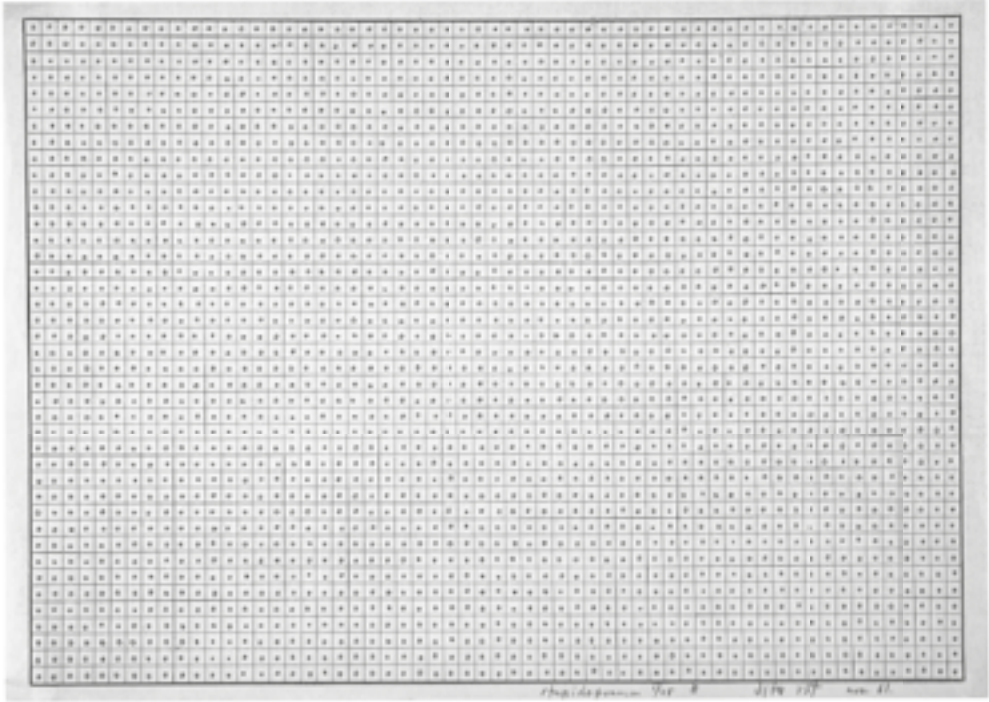


Fig. 71 *Stupidogramm*, red crayon on graph paper, 21 × 29.5 cm, 1961, Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg

SVEN BECKSTETTE And there's one more thing: Roth's starting point is really always his own person. In principle, his artistic oeuvre is deeply individualistic, though naturally not in any escapist sense such as resonates in Gomringer's reproach, but quite existentially: Roth asks the whole time who he is, and how he can know anything for certain about himself and his environment.

This unfinished, processual aspect that is characteristic of his oeuvre and that also differentiates him from Gomringer can be found already in his early concrete texts. For Gomringer always kept to whole words and, above all, to their content. Roth, on the other hand, begins to dissolve concepts into individual letters, thereby negating their semantic content and expanding the possible readings of his poems: does he here mean "tu", "tut" or "ut"? And what way round should I hold the page when Roth also plays with the ambiguity of the letters b and d? In this sense, he is right when he claims that his approach was even more concrete and thus more radical than that of Gomringer.⁷²⁹

M. ROTH Eugen Gomringer played an important role, especially at the beginning of Dieter Roth's career, though Roth's later friendships with Emmett Williams and Gerhard Rühm seem to me to have had a more lasting impact. Then, of course, there were Roth's many years of collaboration with the publisher Hansjörg Mayer, the former student of Max Bense. In 1967, Williams brought together all the above-mentioned men in his *Anthology of concrete poetry*.⁷³⁰ Language pieces by Roth, Rühm and Williams also appear in John Cage's book *Notations*.⁷³¹

Rühm's work in particular is paradigmatic in how it works with the duality of language in a way that transcends its actual medium. On the one hand it is a script, and thus related to drawing or graphic art and also to musical notation; but on the other hand it is a performance and thus subject to musical parameters such as prosody, rhythm and tone colour.⁷³² Rühm himself refers in this regard to precursors such as August Stramm. Incidentally, Williams, Mayer and Roth discuss just this on their joint record *The Kümmerling Trio plays No 1 & 2* (1979)!⁷³³

Above and beyond this, Rühm has also referred us to parallels between him, Roth and Kurt Schwitters,⁷³⁴ whose *Sonate in Urlauten* ("Sonata in primitive sounds") was a kind of Big Bang for literature that aspires to the status of a musical score. The affinity to music felt by individual exponents of concrete poetry later becomes evident in events such as Ernst Jandl's performance with the NDR Big Band or his translation of Cage's verbal score *Silence*, though Jandl did not belong to the circle of figures around Rühm and Roth.⁷³⁵

Björn Roth once said the following about his father (in English): "But I think it is also related to music, that he asked people very often to read for him".⁷³⁶ For me, the question therefore arises: To what extent was Roth's poetry also beholden to musical parameters, and to what extent does it have the character of a musical score or is it intended for performance?

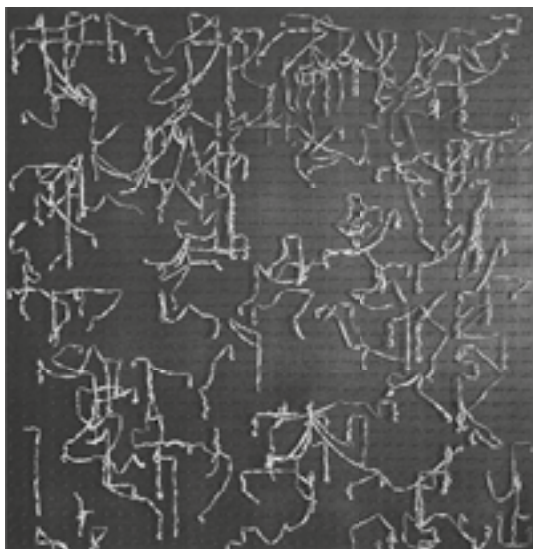


Fig. 72 *Gummibandbild Nr. 6*, iron nails and rubber bands on plywood board, 100 × 100 cm, 1962/1992, Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg

SVEN BECKSTETTE I think that for this phase of his career, Roth's gallerist Arthur Køpcke in Copenhagen was important. Roth exhibited his artist's books with him in 1960 and then, more importantly, the *Stupidogramms* (1961–66), which point the way forward via the *Gummibandbilder* ("Rubber band pictures", 1960–1992) [[↗] Figs. 71, 72]. Køpcke was close to the Fluxus movement, and in his own art works he displayed a real interest in language and in involving the observer in the work.

But to get back to your question: I do think that Roth already intended his early works to be performed. His work *zum laut lesen* ("to be read aloud") of 1963 is paradigmatic in this regard: these are text collages in which Roth has taken personal pronouns and inflected words and typed three-word sentences with them on a typewriter; he then glued them onto six pieces of cardboard [[↗] Fig. 73]. Even if the grammatical structure is correct, these sentences – which were intended to be read out aloud – are devoid of any content that makes sense.

However, I believe that Roth did not so much take musical, compositional principles as his starting point (though in this I'm hardly an expert), but onomatopoeia.

Large-scale theatre

SVEN BECKSTETTE And there's one more point that seems fundamental to me. In our exhibition we're investigating Roth's relationship to theatre for the very first time, beyond *Murmel*. If you look very closely, you see that he did indeed engage with the problems of performance and of the stage situation. You have already mentioned his text on "dynamic theatre" and *Die grosse Bockwurst* ("The big sausage", 1976/77). The question as to what is "play-acted" and what is real is one that can be traced like a leitmotif through his oeuvre, as we can see, for example, in *Ein Lebenslauf von 50 Jahren* ("A curriculum vitae from 50 years", 1980) and in the *Solo Szenen* (1997–1998) [[↗] pp. 316, 317]. But of course, Roth is no dramatist and above all he is no observer of interpersonal conflicts, except for emotions that affect him personally such as feelings of triumph and jealousy, envy, fear and shame.

In literary terms, what is striking is that he wrote poems first and foremost. The only narrative piece is really the

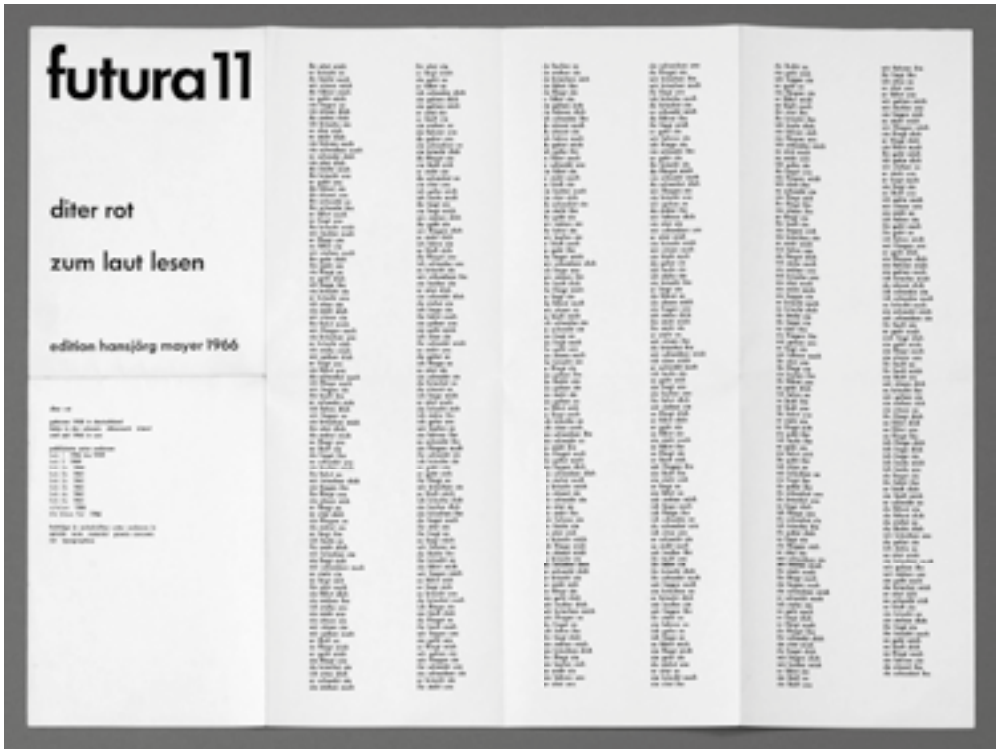


Fig. 73 *futura 11. zum laut lesen*, offset print, 48 × 64 cm, edition hansjörg mayer, Stuttgart, 1966

Bastel-Novelle (“Tinkering novella”, 1974), which meanders around the fact that, strictly speaking, nothing can be described exactly. Perhaps his preference for poetry was because he was very interested in formal and compositional principles – such as symmetry in the visual arts. In his poems he engaged with the form of the sonnet, which has a very rigid structure; and as you have already discussed, his musical borrowings in the form of sonata, quartet and symphony are notable too. Perhaps this is a fundamental issue with Roth: “In what form does art manifest itself?” “Doesn’t art mean giving form to material (linguistic, musical, visual material or even one’s own life in diaries etc.)?” The fact that these questions are posed by an artist who busied himself with the destruction of forms makes them all the more urgent in my opinion.

M. ROTH Or one might say that with Roth, this act of giving form is a process that is both never-ending and always

beginning anew. In other words, nothing is ever able to coalesce into form but is promptly subjected to a transformation or a reshaping. It is precisely this that becomes the hallmark of Roth's art, by means of which he brings something exciting to the contemporary discourse around the "open work": Besides the polymorphism of a work, its "multi-work" aspect also becomes significant. I'm thinking here of the work cycles *Scheisse*, *Wolken/Clouds* or *Das Tränenmeer* ("Shit", "Clouds", "The sea of tears", all ca 1966–1975). Roth once offered a nice description of this processual tendency: "You see a picture and find a word for it, let's say: a name. The pictures that you imagine, however, are constantly changing, fluid things. It's similar with words. If you've found a word for the picture, then you promptly feel a need to change it, to put another in its place, in order to make clear what you mean. This similar name, or another name, then calls forth a different picture. Picture and name, both are in flux".⁷³⁷

M. HALDEMANN Though that fluidity bears a tipping point within it, as it were, switching to and fro between picture and word.

M. ROTH We must come back to this "flowing" in the context of the Fluxus movement. In Roth's work with language, it prompts a continuous variation in how he verbalises things, something that (certainly not by chance) is linked to the musical art of variation on the records of the *Rarely heard music*. At the close of the 3rd *Berlin poets' workshop* (1973), Roth, Rühm and Wiener engage in variations (both in declamation and in song) on Joseph von Eichendorff's verse "Es war, als hätt' der Himmel die Erde still geküsst ..." ("It was as if the heavens had quietly kissed the earth"),⁷³⁸ and in the *Romenthal quartet* (1975) Roth offers punning variations on the lines "Lass Euch nicht verblüffen, Meister, es ist sowieso alles Scheibenkleister" just before they together listen to Schubert's Variations on *Death and the maiden* ("Don't be astonished, my masters, it's all [shit] anyway", "Scheibenkleister" being a German euphemism for "Scheisse", "shit", but also, literally, the "disc glue" discussed earlier).⁷³⁹ Finally, in the *Splittersonate* (1976–1994), everything is linked together: it is edited as a copy book (in different variants!) and in formal terms comprises material procured through manipulating copying processes; musically it often works with repeated

but altered melody fragments, and is characterised by variative continuations in the notation and in the genesis of the (vocal) texts [⁷ pp. 296, 297].

Already in his early poems we find striking references to music, such as in *Some variations on 44* (1957) or *A piece for voice and silence* (1957)⁷⁴⁰ – the latter title in particular is highly reminiscent of Cage. And the word “piece” (in English), which Roth often used for his poems, seems noteworthy to me here – and he goes one step further when he writes in Williams’s anthology (also in English): “I like your selection, but I thought we should add some of the pieces which are concerned with a relation of more than just one page”.⁷⁴¹ In concrete poetry, in the tradition of the “vision simultanée de la page”⁷⁴² that links up with Mallarmé, this is rather unconventional; but by leafing through the pages another level of time is introduced that almost implies a “musical” interplay of reminiscence and expectation such as we have already seen in *MUNDUNCULUM* (1967) [⁷ Fig. 21]. In this sense, it seems to me that most literary texts and books by Roth are also “pieces” in that they incorporate the design of a moment in time as one “leafs through” them, or in the form of a variative technique of continuation.

SVEN BECKSTETTE This fluid process of form-giving and continuous re-forming that you describe is really the same to which I referred as the “destruction” of form. But you’re right: “destruction” is perhaps the wrong word in this context and it ought rather be called “the expansion or warping of form”. It’s not just a matter of simple variations, because Roth also tests how far he can expand a form up to the point of its complete dissolution. On a semantic, linguistic level this continuous process of variation corresponds to Roth’s refusal to give definitive statements or assertions because he finds it fundamentally presumptuous. That is why we see these endless games with formal and substantive criteria for concepts and their referential universe. Nothing is definitive – and if it is, then it is only a temporary state. This is also why transient materials interested him. His works made of chocolate show this best of all, because they are literally poured into a mould and subsequently allowed to decay.

This activation of the observer or reader of which you speak is also something that Kriwet does in his first work, *Rotor* (1961). And Spoerri, too, wrote in the first edition of the journal



Fig. 74 *Motorradrennen III*, toy motorcycles and riders, painting and cooking utensils in chocolate on wood, 33 × 46 × 18 cm, 1994, Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg

material that the contributions to the journal were arranged so that the activity of the reader was the guiding principle.⁷⁴³ So it is not so incongruous to link this participatory element with concrete poetry, not least because this is how Gomringer too understands the act of reading and for this reason said that new types of book have to be found for it (in this regard, see his text *vom gedicht zum gedichtbuch* – “from the poem to the book of poems” – from the year 1966).⁷⁴⁴

But let’s get back to Roth and to your ideas: I do think that Roth took this temporal aspect into consideration in his poems, or even took it as his starting point. What “piece” means in this context is something we would have to examine more closely. It can mean either “piece” in the straightforward sense, or “contribution” or, more generally, “work”. I assume that you understand it in the stricter sense, i.e. “Stück” in German, in order to stress its temporal dimension. But I’m not sure whether I would want to link temporality in general with a musical way of thinking, because the acts of narrating and play-acting also take place in time. (In your discussion of theatre, you’ve both already spoken about Roth’s notion of “Stücke”, “pieces”, as “hybrid things”).

But as I've said: of course, the temporal moment is fundamental to Roth's oeuvre, also for his books and texts.

M. HALDEMANN Here I'd like to remind you both of Roth's act of eliminating time: "And away with the minutes". His acts of stealing time, cutting it away, affixing endless music on a record, the "Meister mit dem Scheibenkleister", the "master with the disc glue" who wants to cement together everything that has been splintered, who wants to fix in place everything that is ephemeral and transient, and who collects, archives and makes inventories. Who makes a real "piece" out of hardened chocolate. His motorcycle rider is stuck in it, and his garden gnome is sunk in it up to his cap [*Fig.* 74, 75]. Nothing can move any more. Sven has spoken of the expansion and warping of form; I'd like to add the concepts of contusion and fixation.

And of course one can say that all this is "theatre" and thus part of a potentially temporal scenario. With regard to music and theatre I'd like to mention the poster that Roth made for a performance of Mauricio Kagel's music theatre piece *Die Erschöpfung der Welt* ("The exhaustion of the world", 1980[®]; a play on the German word "Schöpfung" = "creation") [*p.* 179]. This is a reworking of an older piece of graphic art with the title "Grosses Theater" ("Large-scale theatre") [*p.* 178]. The title of the poster is reminiscent of the *Abschöpfungssymphonie* (1979). Besides its aspect of "siphoning off" or "skimming off" ("abschöpfen") what is extant, isn't Roth's art also an "art of exhaustion" and "great theatre"? After visual poetry, didn't it soon become an "old" art? Not just a transient art, but a past art, a ruinous art, a dead art? An art of "filth", "shit" and "garbage"?

The precocious, well-read Roth was a lonely, exiled child of war who developed an enthusiasm for poetry and music against a background of difficult life experiences and sentimental yearnings, and not just because of their formal aspect. When he tips his failed poetry into the river Aare, but later – after a long writer's block – begins anew with his "shit" poetry, this is not just a result of his engagement with the radical avant-garde of the early 1960s. It also has to do with personal crises; it's "born out of distress".

SVEN BECKSTETTE I find your observations very apt, Matthias. Roth's methods of accumulation and fixation are naturally a striking aspect of his oeuvre. Behind them there also lurks

the question: “What happens if I keep everything, if I order everything and bring it into a form, or transform it into art and reveal everything?” – because the dividing line between artwork, artist and context is something that from a certain point onwards can no longer be discerned in Roth. Nevertheless, it seems to me that, despite all his joy in documentation – or, rather, his obsession with documentation – something lies intentionally obscured behind these mountains of books, films, installations, records and pictures by the artist. Benjamin Meyer-Krahmer remarked on this in his book. When he asked Richard Hamilton whether he saw an influence of Duchamp on Roth, the artist was surprised and denied having recognised any link at all between the two of them.⁷⁴⁵ It was similar with the French philosopher and writer Georges Bataille, though here too the connections are obvious. The fundamental question seems to me to be existential, namely “What remains?”, or rather “What do I want to remain?”.

M. HALDEMANN Nor is Kurt Schwitters hardly mentioned either. What is the connection to Bataille?

SVEN BECKSTETTE Roth knew Bataille’s work, we know that. The Staatsgalerie Stuttgart possesses two letters by the artist to the collector Hanns Sohm from 1964 and 1965 in which Roth asks him to send books by Bataille to him in Iceland. Bataille’s understanding of art and his ideas on wastage were fundamental to Roth.⁷⁴⁶ Nevertheless, the artist does not refer directly to him, which is unusual because Roth otherwise records so much in his notebooks and diaries.

As regards its reception – or its survival – I find one of the most interesting of Roth’s projects the *Zeitschrift für Alles* (“Review for Everything”), especially in its later years. Initially, Roth asked friends and acquaintances to send in five-page contributions for the journal that were then printed unaltered. Later he put advertisements in all manner of newspapers and periodicals (hobby magazines, school newspapers, etc.) because he wanted everyone to feel included and wanted to offer a publication platform to everyone (though in fact, only people from the cultural scene actually submitted manuscripts). Over time, the issues got bigger and bigger. This made production more complicated, increased costs and began to put more and more of a strain on Roth. Today, in the era of blogs, the idea behind the project – of

democratising opportunities to express oneself and storing the results – has taken on a quite different aspect. This is why, from our perspective, the endeavour to do all that back then seems quite touching. The relationship between the efforts invested in it and the results it generated are oddly disproportionate.

Incidentally, Roth would have had a suitable means of stemming the flood of information from the Internet. Barbara Wien recalls that in the final stages of preparing issue nine of the *Review for Everything* Roth was writing the trilingual foreword, cooking and building furniture all at the same time. His editor asked how he managed to do all these things at once. His answer was: “Just don’t concentrate so much”.⁷⁴⁷ One might sum up Roth’s credo as: “the momentary for eternity”.

M. HALDEMANN That’s a good phrase! Roth’s art wends its way onwards in ever-contrary directions, in word, image and sound – and yet, essentially, it remains static. It flows with and against the current, and yet remains stationary in its own stream. One could also talk of a circling motion. He often depicted himself in circles [↗ pp. 183, 184–185]. And he often used tape loops for music works such as *Harmonica Curse* (1981[®]) and the *Langstreckensonate* No. 1 (1993–1997[®], on which brief recordings are repeated “endlessly”). When he breaks rhymes, divides up sentences into words and those in turn into meaningless letters, then these stick to the image, isolated, as if they were concrete signs. A multitude of reading possibilities and viewing angles allows these components in Roth’s sign collages and linguistic material pictures to be subjected to dynamic, even rhythmic interconnections – and yet they remain static and silent. The one-word play *Murmel* (“Mumble”) goes right to the heart of this [↗ Fig. 76]. This word is literally “all alone”.⁷⁴⁸ It is a speaking silence, an



Fig. 75 *Grosser Gartenzweig mit Laterne*, plastic garden gnome with lamp and casting utensils in chocolate, height: 73 cm, 1992, Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg

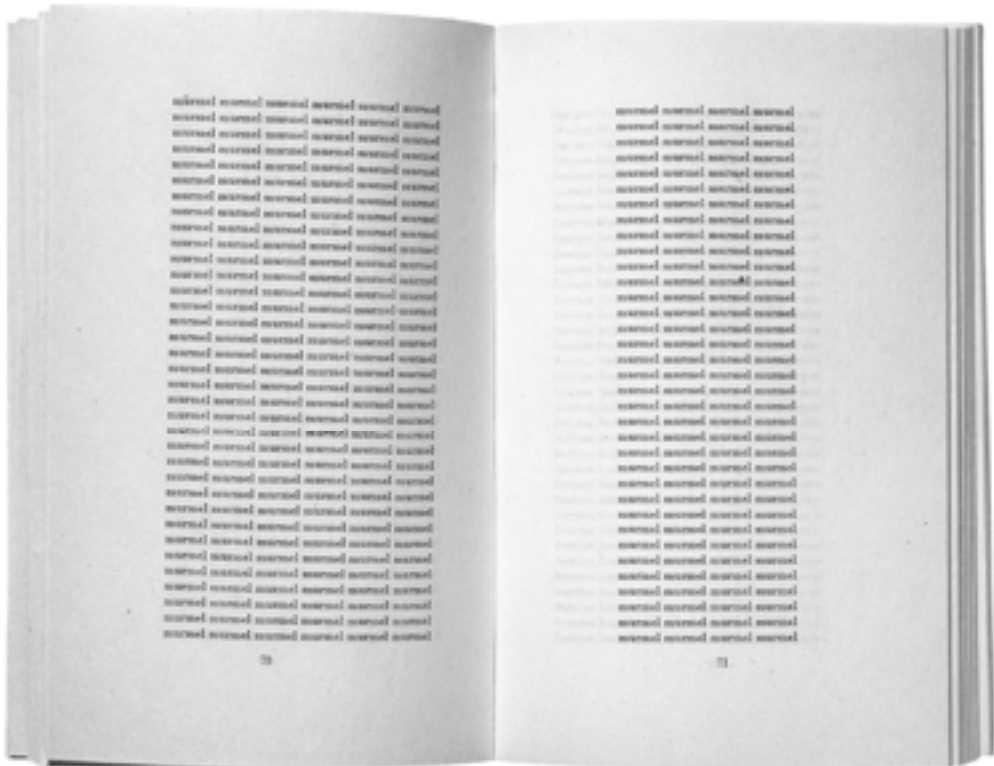


Fig. 76 *Murmel*, play, 176 pages, letterpress printing, thread stitching, paper-bound, 1974

incomprehensible-sounding inner monologue, a sound of endless variants devoid of significance and without any development, an entertaining “autism”, a theatrical performance and – music? Isn’t *Murmel* a piece of music, a play and visual book-art all in one? It reminds me of the music piece *eintonstück* (“onepitchpiece”) by Rühm (1952).

M. ROTH Rühm himself created a similar connection when he compared the *eintonstück* with his *einworttafeln* (“onewordboards”).⁷⁴⁹ At the same time as Rühm, and independently of him, the composers Giacinto Scelsi and György Ligeti were experimenting with one-note music. What they all have in common is an element of system critique – albeit with different targets in their sights – and they achieve this through a radical simplification of their artistic means. And all three of them discovered a richness in this asceticism that allowed them to

acquire new means and made them able to achieve expressiveness again. Roth's piece *Murmel* is over 20 years younger and seems initially to be an expression of the inexpressive. A theatrical "onepitchmusic" such as this consciously accepts its monotony, but – wholly in the sense of something "hybrid" – this is not all. The word "Murmel" was cleverly chosen, because it both thematises the act of speaking incomprehensibly – "to mumble", but can be understood in very different ways, both semantically and onomatopoeically. For example, *Murmel* was "mumbled" as a Dadaistic performance in 2013 (by Martin Engler and Davíð Þór Jónsson on the occasion of the Roth exhibition in the Bicocca hangar in Milan), but has also been staged opulently at the Volksbühne in Berlin (directed by Herbert Fritsch in 2013).

It is in precisely this that Dieter Schwarz sees the difference between Roth's literary oeuvre and that of Rühm, and he refers here to Mikhail Bakhtin's "types of prose discourse".⁷⁵⁰ In contrast to Rühm's formative stylisation, which subjects the word "passive" to his own ends, Roth works with the "active", "polyphonic" word as part of a "hidden polemics".⁷⁵¹ With Roth, the word exerts an impact back on the author himself. It is not dissected masterfully as a simplification, but instead unfolds a multi-layered explosive power in the inherent interplay of meaningless linguistic garbage and the potentially boundless creation of meaning.

A comparable musical alternative to Rühm's *eintonstück* was provided by Günter Brus in the *Berlin concert*.⁷⁵² According to Wiener, Günter Brus "sacrificed" himself for the ensemble towards the end of the concert and with his action offered a firm foundation for the stone-drunk music-making of the others.⁷⁵³ Brus actually does something here that "cums eesy"⁷⁵⁴ in a Rothian sense, simply blowing the same note again and again on a kind of foghorn. This is no longer any aestheticised playing, but a semantic supercharging to a point of an existential distress signal, and ultimately rebounds on Brus as an act of distress itself – he hyperventilates and collapses. "impvlse velche diese ainfachen dinge ershainen machen | komen avs der elementar-en mekanik des altags | zb desen der si sezt" (roughly: "impvlsis wot mayk these simpul tings appeer | cum owt ov thee aelimentary mekanix ov thee evrydae | eg hee hoo mayks thvm").⁷⁵⁵

The stasis of the musical material "gets meaning"⁷⁵⁶ through its radical implementation and is cancelled out by it. This is why, for as long as anyone can remember, the temporal art of music

has made use (occasionally excessively) of the repetition of small motives and of whole formal sections. This is also strikingly characteristic of Roth's poetry. In many of his poems one has the feeling that they have been based on folksongs or rhythmicised counting rhymes, and their content also often refers to music. Björn Roth has remarked of this (in English): "Somehow, I see that his relation with music was in the same station in his head, so to say, as his relation with poetry. It is very much linked".⁷⁵⁷ This is probably why in his *Scheissegedichtlesung* Roth treats the repetitive moments of his texts as if they were music. In the rhythmical singsong of his stoically performed repetitions and declensions, what is meaningless becomes sense and possessed of deeper meaning.

Shit poetry reading

M. HALDEMANN The *Scheissegedichtlesung* (1975) has indeed been linked to the concept of "inner music" that the English poet Ted Hughes used for the genre of the reading.⁷⁵⁸ His concept describes the interplay of man and word, author and text, body and sound that is experienced by the spectator. It is a matter of the speed of speech, the stresses and intonations but also the gestures, facial expressions and commentary of the reader. For several years now, scholarly investigations have been undertaken of such criteria for performative literature readings.

In the context of the *Rarely heard music* and his duo collaborations with Rainer, Roth initially wanted to edit and release on record one of his "shit poetry" readings, and then decided to release a film of a reading (1975). In the transitional phase between his shit poetry and his monological diary literature, he subjected his shit texts to a self-interpretative reading. He thus treats the performativity that is an integral aspect of the texts in a logically performative manner. For example, in the *Letzte Lesung* (1996) he reads the same text twice in such a contrary manner that we hardly recognise that they are one and the same. In one poem, however, he is so "overcome" while reading its many repetitions that he breaks off reading it. So whereas he remains in command of the first poem, he is overwhelmed by the second. And when he is interested in the text and the tone of the language, he is transformed from being a writer

into a musicking “speaker”. He forgoes the role of the auctorial artist who presents a supposedly “authentic” mode of reading, and also forgoes the principle of authenticity of an “author’s reading” (as was the fashion in 1970s Germany). At an author’s reading, the custom was to read badly in order for the author to distance himself both from the cult of the genius and from the commercialisation of such events. But Roth’s reading is not “shit” because he reads badly – he reads brilliantly in fact – but because his performance respects no conventions of the genre. He questions the reading event as such, just as much as he questions the supposedly authentic self-reader. He indulges in role-playing with the audience. He is alternately a “person”, an author, an actor, a listener and a reader. This game is intended to heighten the *Letzte Lesung* of the old artist-author to a point of tragicomedy.

This event, despite all its vacillations, its multiplicity of voices, its contrarinesses and its contradictorinesses, and despite its deliberate confusion, is distinguished for me by its special tension. This tension is kept up for over sixty minutes without one being properly aware of what it is that one is observing. The author’s reading becomes a kind of inner music, a performance and an act of theatre. A “shifting hybrid” (“changierendes Zwischending”).

So, conversely, should we perhaps not speak of Roth’s music as “inner poetry”?

Inner poetry

SVEN BECKSTETTE That’s an interesting question. Perhaps we can find an answer if we approach it from the formal or design aspect, in other words approaching “inner poetry” as “inner design” or “inner form-giving”. Ultimately, Roth was concerned about how something indeterminate in his imagination – or whatever we want to call it – became outwardly manifest. This applied to pictures and texts but also, I think, to his musical works. He once explained this creative process in an interview, saying he tried to switch off inner discussions with himself (which presumably didn’t always succeed, even if he trained himself to do it): “You have to give a distinct form to something indistinct; you have to become profane, you have to work, and

this is work I shun. It's an awareness of linguistic expression, or whatever you want to call it. For me, language isn't expression, it's only an act of forming, of shaping, something that emerges out of you and that simply gives trouble. And that brings misery with it".⁷⁵⁹ In this sense, behind the arduous process of giving form there lay an endeavour to grasp hold of something nebulous and cloudlike, ephemeral, which naturally isn't possible, or only insufficiently so. That is why the metaphor of the "cloud" is so apt for Roth. Seen from far off, clouds possess a distinct form, but you can't determine their actual outlines.

M. ROTH Though your definition of a cloud would also be an exciting definition of music too! In Roth's collection *301 little clouds in memoriam big J and big G*, we read the following: "Once, when I sang, I painted the world between my ears, I heard the w. as it was a picture, and I saw the w. sounding, and the w. said: see how I sing and listen whether you can see me, Diter!"⁷⁶⁰ I think that Roth was particularly drawn to the fleeting, time-dependent, invisible and immaterial aspect of music. In fact, perhaps it freed him for once from the process of giving form to something – a process that he knew all too well as a graphic artist, as a visual artist and as a writer, and he could surrender himself to letting things happen in "real time", something to which he aspired all his life. In the *November symphony* Wiener summed this up with the words: "what comes will come".⁷⁶¹ Music would then not be "inner poetry" in the sense of giving form to something, but in contrast would be an inner "emptying" such as Roth also describes in the *301 little clouds*: "Mozart had the music of the others always in his EARS | that's clear, – although he had his own in his HEAD, but me, yes, me, I don't have the other people's stuff in my head any more and not in my ears and NOTHING et cetera that's something isn't it!"⁷⁶² Whereas with Roth it was normal that everything "immediately fired up his imagination".⁷⁶³ Björn Roth has described impressively how this was only different when Roth listened to music: "And that may be the reason also why he did give all these records to me because it was too much, [...] he reached the point that he could not do anything else when listening to music than listen to music, he could not work anymore".⁷⁶⁴

Despite this great degree of significance that he assigned to music, and despite Roth's broad listening experience and his knowledge of music theory: the musical terms that he used in

his work titles, his texts and commentaries were mostly well-nigh devoid of content. When Roth described his oeuvre as “a mixture of melancholy and irony”,⁷⁶⁵ this is particularly appropriate for his music works. He loves Schubert, but when his colleagues listen together to a Schubert record during the *Romenthal quartet*, he interrupts the rapt mood to suggest they go to the pub;⁷⁶⁶ he organises concerts but demonstratively refuses to play along on stage; he produces his own records, but finds them “like eating something canned a second time round”;⁷⁶⁷ his oeuvre encompasses a *Splittersonate* (1976–1994) and various “Long-distance sonatas”, though these are in no way beholden to the genre of the sonata as we know it; over several decades he constantly sketches out music, though in many cases these jottings have no musical sense – or at least, no notational sense. In short: Roth’s attitude to music (as he himself remarked) was always at one and the same time that of a “music lover” and a “would-be destroyer”.⁷⁶⁸ Strictly speaking, he creates no things as an artist; in musical terms he is no composer but an interpreter – and at the same time he is his own instrument: “like the shit sinks through me, so | the blue flood of reminiscence sinks through me and is gilded in me”.⁷⁶⁹

Speech as music

M. HALDEMANN An interpreter without music before him, to be sure, who interprets wholly from memory and wakens associations in the listener.

But my question was intended to take us in another direction: don’t he and his friends speak while making music, even when they actually need no words? Is there a “music-playing speech/poetising”? It seems to me as if we were listening to them think. You can hear them seeking and rejecting means of articulating themselves, a gradual manufacturing of musical/emotional thoughts during their music-making. An attempt at communication as non-verbal statements and counterstatements, as a hodgepodge of speech, a “musicking mumbling”.

The Vienna Group had already conducted speech experiments along these lines. To this day, Rühm works with the onomatopoeia of written speech, everyday speech and dialects. Though he seems to be less interested in musical abstraction

that in the level of non-verbal-associative communicability (after filtering out lexical meanings). We have language in our ears, as Roth says, and remember it. And if language can be musicalised in this manner, could music also be turned into language in an analogue fashion? Perhaps it speaks less than it stammers, cries out, laughs, sighs and mumbles? Music as a pseudo-language and existential expression?

M. ROTH The similarity to language of the *Rarely heard music* and of Roth's "speechlike" playing on the tenor horn have already been mentioned here. One could also suggest that the deficient recourse to familiar schematas, hinting at clichés and making fun of them, is also a means of (polemically) semantising music. Though the critical approach to language, media and communication on the part of the artists in this group normally means that such "explicable"⁷⁷⁰ moments prove futile.

And yet I regard it as just as much an achievement that the *Rarely heard music* leaves the usual musical means of communication behind it. In their concerts, the musicians mostly act in a doubly hermetic fashion in that on the one hand each plays for himself, and on the other hand, none of them plays for an audience. This is also evident in the rejection of certain collective improvisational techniques⁷⁷¹ by Wiener⁷⁷² and Rühm.⁷⁷³ Instead, Christian Ludwig Attersee,⁷⁷⁴ Anni Brus⁷⁷⁵ and Björn Roth⁷⁷⁶ stressed that it was this new form of polyphony, in which there was a great degree of independence of the individual "self-music", that made the *Rarely heard music* so unique. In our conversations, Wiener tended to relativise Roth's musical contributions, but in this matter he even acknowledged that he had a pioneering role.⁷⁷⁷

So I regard the *Fernquartett* (1978–1980[®]) [[↗] pp. 188, 189] as paradoxical chamber music – or at least as a corny twist on the idea of it: each member of the Roth family filled cassette tapes for hours on end, playing on their own in their own rooms. Ultimately, one could interpret this as an extreme form of absolute music, a "self-music" beyond the act of listening (and for some, beyond what one can endure when listening) ...

M. HALDEMANN ... or an autistic monologue.

M. ROTH After the *Munich concert* (1974), the local newspaper the *Münchener Abendzeitung* already wrote as follows: "Five

wayward individualists ... invented a musical language for themselves”⁷⁷⁸ – and one could even take this one step further and add: each on his own! It’s striking how the protagonists take a highly “essayistic” approach. In the live video recording of the *Abschöpfungsymphonie*, we can clearly see how the individual players wander aimlessly across the stage, how they let themselves go as they meander from one idea to the next, how they initiate musical or actionist initiatives, or seek social contact or a communicative exchange (both mostly in vain). The “duel of the duets” staged by Wiener towards the end of the concert comes across as well-nigh forced because it endeavours to overcome their preceding hours of incapacity of expression and communication, and does so by means of the genres “operatic love duet” (Wiener and Hermann Nitsch, who then kiss after their performance) and “folksy chanson” (Roth and Attersee).

In this type of essayism, a concurrently productive yet critical strategy for creating language, music and art, there is a basic tendency in Roth’s oeuvre to cross the boundaries of different media. This is why he cautiously added Robert Musil to his own oblique genealogy that he traced back to Friedrich Hölderlin and Richard Wagner (see above): “if i now, on 22 april 1967, don’t directly kick the bucket, die, then i will write a little more yet (with musil’s paternal help): i, richard wagner resurrected with hölderlin’s help as robert, known as karl”.⁷⁷⁹

SVEN BECKSTETTE You’ve naturally been more intensively engaged with Roth’s musical practices than I have. But I would still agree with you, Matthias. In my opinion, the concerts of the *Rarely heard music* are certainly more of a linguistic dialogue of the participants using notes, than improvisations in the sense of jazz or other types of music founded on spontaneity.⁷⁸⁰ The musical voice of the instrument could thereby be understood as a speaking voice of its player (though the metaphor of music as language must naturally be seen as a general topos).⁷⁸¹ As we know, Roth experimented much with musical alphabets or with the translation of language into notes and sounds, such as in the *Olivetti-Yamaha-Grundig Combo* (1965–1982[®]) [p. 298], and his performances transferred this principle, so to speak, to several different protagonists in a concert situation. And isn’t speaking ultimately nothing more than a constant process of improvisation or of reacting to each other (as is also the case with the present text)?

M. HALDEMANN In his conversation with us, Rühm said that if you get to the bottom of something, then this is the bottom of several things and everything starts to branch out. Spoken text leads to music because it has musical parameters – volume, pitch, intonation, tempo.⁷⁸²

For me, the *Rarely heard music* as a whole is an autistic-collective “lament”, a “suffering sonnet” of “independent voices with their own fates”.⁷⁸³

But let’s move on to another topic now. In the first two “loops” of our conversation we discussed the connection between Roth’s music and the American avant-garde, and the Vienna Group and Viennese Actionism. It struck us just how interconnected Roth was. He moved between continents and between the different key places on the international art scene, participating in different artistic circles and gaining important stimuli from them. In New York, Stuttgart, Düsseldorf and Vienna. He remarked to me in 1990 that he was always drawn to places where something interesting was happening.⁷⁸⁴

There were important links to Fluxus exponents – I’m thinking of his friendship and collaborations with Robert Filliou, Nam June Paik and Emmett Williams, of his esteem for George Brecht, whom they invited to take part in the *Berlin concert*, and of his aversion to George Maciunas. We’ve already spoken of La Monte Young.

Often, researchers have one-sidedly lumped the *Rarely heard music* together with Fluxus or Viennese Actionism (and thereby also situated it in national terms). In fact, the artists themselves said we should rather focus on the *Rarely heard music*’s different connections.⁷⁸⁵ According to Rühm, they were able to do concrete poetry and Fluxus at the same time, which is why these things can’t be kept “neatly” apart.⁷⁸⁶ Both Björn Roth and Hansjörg Mayer stressed that the importance of Roth’s Viennese friends on his artistic development has been underestimated.⁷⁸⁷ Music was a more important determinant in this regard than language, they said. Roth himself remarked on this, looking back: “It’s the best city I’ve known, Vienna”.⁷⁸⁸

The international approach to things that came about after the end of the War was also part and parcel of their joint intermediary, transboundary stance. Thus Roth collaborated with representatives of quite different groupings from all over the world. Visual poetry and an interest in music are two examples of common interests. Indeed, the introduction of music into the

experimental visual works of art by the avant-garde from the 1950s onwards played a big role. Roth was thus acting within a broad, open field.

Now we should go about investigating possible specific aspects of the *Rarely heard music* and of Roth's own music works in comparison with Fluxus and the Vienna Group.

Fluxus and the Vienna Group

M. HALDEMANN Gabriele Knapstein, you're an art historian and a Fluxus specialist – how did you come to Roth and music?

GABRIELE KNAPSTEIN These questions about links between Dieter Roth and Fluxus were something I first encountered in connection with the touring exhibition *Eine lange Geschichte mit vielen Knoten. Fluxus in Deutschland 1962–1994* (“A long tale with many knots. Fluxus in Germany 1962–1994”), which René Block and I prepared in 1994/1995 for the Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations in Stuttgart. We wanted to show that Fluxus can be described as a network of artists that was international by nature and in its actions, but that was also interconnected with specific local art scenes. Roth did not take part in the numerous Fluxus festivals in Europe or the USA, and he rejected the political rhetoric of the Fluxus “impresario” George Maciunas. But from 1960 onwards he was close friends with many of the Fluxus protagonists. Thus it was that he got to know Arthur K pcke, Emmett Williams and Robert Filliou, and during his stay in the USA in 1964 he also came together with Dick Higgins, Alison Knowles, Philip Corner and George Brecht. That same year, he invited Nam June Paik, Charlotte Moorman and La Monte Young to concerts in the Philadelphia Museum College of Art, where he also taught for a brief while. He also made smaller contributions to several early Fluxus publications. For this reason, and because he felt close to the intermedia working procedures of the artists of the Fluxus circle, we included him in the exhibition back then. He undoubtedly belongs to the network that formed around Fluxus in Germany and in Europe as a whole. Gerhard R hm and Tomas Schmitt also belonged to that network of artists, as did Daniel Spoerri – and Roth was associated with all three of them over many years.

M. HALDEMANN Roth had got to know Rühm and Friedrich Achleitner already before the Fluxus period, in the 1950s, when these two men visited the editors of the journal *spirale* in Bern regarding a number that was planned about the Vienna Group.⁷⁸⁹

G. KNAPSTEIN As part of my work at the Nationalgalerie im Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin, various museum presentations since 2003 have brought me into contact with the Dieter Roth holdings in the Friedrich Christian Flick Collection. I have been able to present major works by Roth in different contexts, such as the *Gartenskulptur* (1968 ff.), the *Solo Szenen* and *Flacher Abfall* (1976/1983/1992) [*Fig. 10 and 24 and p. 312*]. I'm generally interested in intermedia work and especially in the field of relations between visual art and music, and I've been following this since 1999, for instance in the event and exhibition series "Works of music by visual artists" produced in collaboration with the "Berlin Friends of good music". So in my dealings with Roth's oeuvre I've naturally been struck by the special role that music played for him. And in the conversations that I have enjoyed with Björn Roth while setting up various installations in the museum, I repeatedly came back to the significance of music in his father's work and wanted to know more about it.

M. HALDEMANN How do you view the Fluxus references in Roth's music projects and the *Rarely heard music*? What role did music play in Fluxus? And what about the concept of the "happening"?

G. KNAPSTEIN First of all: the intermedia approach of Fluxus, the way it linked action, language, music and visual art, is very closely related to Roth's music projects and the *Rarely heard music*. I like to quote Higgins's description of Fluxus because to my mind it offers us a very good starting point: "Basically, we can describe such works as Fluxus whose nature is inter-medial: visual poetry and poetic pictures, action music and musical actions and also happenings and events inasmuch as they are conceptually committed to music, literature and the visual arts."⁷⁹⁰ This approach was surely an inspiration to Roth when he met the Fluxus artists in the 1960s and worked with them. The clear orientation to music in the Fluxus movement must have been fascinating to him – even if he himself put less

emphasis on the musical avant-garde of John Cage, Karlheinz Stockhausen and the circle from the Darmstadt Holiday Courses for New Music that had been a decisive starting point for early Fluxus ...

M. ROTH ... and where, for example, Roth's early companion Nam June Paik also connected with the European musical avant-garde. Despite their belonging to different scenes, certain similarities and parallels in their works are unmistakable. I'm thinking here of Paik's *Etude for pianoforte* (1960) or his participation (together with Beuys) in Henning Christiansen's *Abschiedssymphonie* ("Farewell symphony", 1985).⁷⁹¹ But Paik saw Roth more as a music lover than a "musician": "He likes music and I like music. But when I was playing he was just looking".⁷⁹²

G. KNAPSTEIN You just have to look at the programme flyer for the first Fluxus festival in September 1962 in Wiesbaden with its announcement of 14 "concerts", to understand how important music was to Fluxus [⁷Fig. 77]. In her contribution to the catalogue that René Block and I brought out in 1995, Ina Conzen offers an apt description of the connections between the Fluxus movement and the avant-garde music scene in Germany.⁷⁹³ In this article, she also mentions the connections between Fluxus and the German-speaking scene for concrete or visual poetry – which was a very important environment for Roth, one that you discussed in your conversation with Sven Beckstette.

The differences between the Fluxus events and the happenings can't be summed up in a few sentences, not least because the origins of both lie in an engagement with the experimental music of Cage and the action painting of a Jackson Pollock. The protagonists of Fluxus were also closely associated with artists such as Allan Kaprow, Al Hansen and Wolf Vostell. But the Fluxus pieces are generally focussed, monostructural actions that are performed by one or a few performers. By contrast, the happenings were more complex in their organisation and were more closely bound to the specific protagonists; they determined the course of the happening and then carried it out with other participating artists or actors. This was different from the Fluxus pieces that, essentially, could be performed by any interested party. In this sense, the concerts of the *Rarely heard music* were clearly more closely related to the happenings.

M. ROTH Nevertheless, Wiener⁷⁹⁴ and Brus have clearly distanced themselves from happenings. The latter said to us: “There I have to protest. Music was in the foreground, not the performance, otherwise there would be far more obvious documents of it, photos to record it all. I could have painted myself white; then it would have been a happening. Or I could have appeared naked. But we were dressed, quite normally ... it was more about music. And anyway, we never did happenings. Happenings were a trend in themselves in America that were realised parallel to our actions, and also parallel to the Vienna Group, the poets’ group, that from the start had a quite different character. They were more expressive, more meaningful, whereas happenings were indifferent – rolling a car tyre through a gallery, nothing more. It was American, you see”.⁷⁹⁵

M. HALDEMANN Compared to the rolling car tyre, their attempt at chamber music seems almost traditional. Though the *Ab-schöpfungssymphonie* does remind me of a happening because it wasn’t the music but what happened that was foregrounded, with Roth as the main protagonist. Günter Brus didn’t take part in it.

G. KNAPSTEIN In any case, we can be sure that the emphasis was on the musical action at the *Rarely heard music* and that it wasn’t about getting the listeners or the observers to participate, such as was intended in many of the happenings by Kaprow or Vostell. So there is indeed a clear relationship between the *Rarely heard music* and the early Fluxus concerts in which the pieces were also performed by actors in front of an audience. Even a work such as Roth’s *Fernquartett*, for example, stands in close proximity to the ideas of Fluxus, because both here and there the formats and conventions of the music business – or of bourgeois domestic music – are taken up, deconstructed and brought to life in a new form.

M. HALDEMANN How would you sum up the Fluxus concept of music? Can one sum it up in general terms at all?

G. KNAPSTEIN If you think that the inner core of the Fluxus network in the 1960s comprised more than 30 artists with different backgrounds, different educations and different temperaments, from Europe, the USA and Japan and who all had an intermedia approach to their work, then it quickly becomes clear that we

FLUXUS*FESTSPIELE INTERNATIONALE NEUESTER MUSIK

IM HÖRSAAL DES STÄDTISCHEN MUSEUMS, WIESBADEN

SAMSTAG 1. SEPT. 1962 14-30 UHR	KONZERT NR.1, KLAVIER KOMPOSITIONEN - U.S.A., K.E.WELIN UND F.RZEWOSKI - PIANISTEN. JOHN CAGE: 33'57,9064"/PHILIP CORNER: KLAVIER TATIKETTEN (FÜR EIN KLAVIER UND VIELE SPIELER) & P.OX & FORM NR. 7 & 14 / TERRY RILEY: KONZERT FÜR 2 PIANISTEN UND TOMBAND / T.JENNINGS: KLAVIER STÜCKE / JED CURTIS: KLAVIER STÜCK / GRIFITH ROSE: 2. ENNEAD / DICK HIGGINS: CONSTELLATION NR.1 (FÜR 2 KLAVIERE UND 3 RADIOS) / LA MONTE YOUNG: "564" FÜR HENRY FLYNT & KLAVIER STÜCKE FÜR DAVID TUDOR NR.2 / GEORGE BRECHT: FÜNF KLAVIER STÜCKE 1961 UND DREI KLAVIER STÜCKE 1962		
SAMSTAG 1. SEPT. 20-00 UHR	KONZERT NR.2 KLAVIER KOMPOSITIONEN - JAPAN, K.E.WELIN - PIANIST. TOSHI ICHIHANAGI: MUSIK FÜR KLAVIER NR.1 BIS NR.7 / YORIAKI MATSUOAIIRA: INSTRUKTIONEN FÜR KLAVIER / SHINICHI MATSUSHITA: MOSAIKEN / YOKO ONO: EIN STÜCK UM DEN HIMMEL ZU SEHEN / KEIURU SATO: CALIGRAPHY / YUSU TAKAHASHI: EKSTASIS / TORU TAKEMITSU: KLAVIER ENTFERNUNG 14-30 UHR UND ÜBERGANG / YASUNAO TONE: KLAVIER TON MIT TOMBAND / GEORGE YNASE: PROJECTION ESEMPLASTIC I, II UND III		
SONNTAG 2. SEPT. 14-30 UHR	KONZERT NR.3, KLAVIER KOMPOSITIONEN - EUROPA, K.E.WELIN - PIANIST, K.H.STOCKHAUSEN: KLAVIERSTÜCK IV / G.LIGETI: TROIS BAGATELLES / G.M.KOENIG: 2 KLAVIER STÜCKE / KONRAD BOCHMER: KLANGSTÜCK & POTENTIAL / JAN MORTHENSON: COURANTE / LARS J.WERLE: GRILLER FÜR PIANIST / MICHAEL VON BIEL: EIN BUCH FÜR DREI / DIETER SCHNEBEL: REACTIONS 14-30 UHR (KONZERT FÜR EINEN INSTRUMENTALISTEN & PUBLIKUM) & VISIBLE MUSIK FÜR 1 DIRIGENTEN UND 1 INSTRUMENTALISTEN		
SONNTAG 2. SEPT. 20-00 UHR	KONZERT NR.4, KLAVIER KOMPOSITIONEN - EUROPA, F.RZEWOSKI - PIANIST. JACQUES CALONNE: QUADRANGLES SUTVS DE FENETRES ET BOUCLES / PAOLO EMILIO CARAPEZZA: 9% CIELO / GIUSEPPE CHIARI: GESTI SUL PIANO / SYLVANO BUSSOTTI: POUR CLAVIER, 5 KLAVIER STÜCKE FÜR DAVID TUDOR & PER TRE (FÜR EIN KLAVIER UND 3 PIANISTEN) / FREDERIC RZEWOSKI: STUDIEN & TRÄUME / LUCIERI: ACTION MUSIC FOR PIANO BOOK I / MACROBI: TITONE / MARCHETTI: MUSIK		
SAMSTAG 8. SEPT. 20-00 UHR	KONZERT NR.5, KOMPOSITIONEN FÜR ANDERE INSTRUMENTE UND STIMMEN - U.S.A., GEORGE BRECHT: KARTENSTÜCK FÜR STIMMEN / JOHN CAGE: SOLO FÜR STIMME (2) 1960 / PHILIP CORNER: PASSIONATE EXPANSE OF THE LAW / DICK HIGGINS: CONSTELLATION NR.4 & NR.7 / TERRY JENNINGS: STREICHQUARTETT / PHILIP KRÜMM: MUSTER (FÜR STREICHQUARTETT) / JACKSON MAC LOW: BUCHSTABEN FÜR IRIS NUMMERN FÜR DIE STILLE UND DANKE - EINE ZUSAMMENARBEIT FÜR LEUTE / TERRY RILEY: UMSCHLAG 1960 (FÜR STREICHQUARTETT) / EMMETT WILLIAMS: EIN ZWEIFELHAFTES LIED IN VIER RICHTUNGEN FÜR 5 STIMMEN / GEORGE BRECHT: STREICHQUARTETT / LA MONTE YOUNG: KOMPOSITION 1960 NR.7 (FÜR STREICHQUARTETT)		
SONNTAG 9. SEPT. 14-30 UHR	KONZERT NR.6, KOMPOSITIONEN FÜR ANDERE INSTRUMENTE UND STIMMEN - JAPAN, TOSHI ICHIHANAGI: STANZEN & PILE / KENJIRO IZAKI: BEWEGLICHE PULSE & DISCRETION / YORITSUNE MATSUOAIIRA: EIN STÜCK FÜR SOLO FLÖTE / YASUNAO TONE: ANAGRAMM FÜR STREICHE / YOKO ONO: DER PULS /		
SONNTAG 9. SEPT. 20-00 UHR	KONZERT NR.7, KOMPOSITIONEN FÜR ANDERE INSTRUMENTE UND STIMMEN - EUROPA, MICHAEL VON BIEL: STREICH MUSIK / GEORGE MACIUNAS: SOLO FÜR STIMME UND MIKROPHON / GRIFITH ROSE: STREICHQUARTETT / FREDERIC RZEWOSKI: SOLILOQUY (FÜR VIOLINE) UND THREE RHAPSODIES FOR SLIDE WHISTLES / BENJAMIN PATTERSON: VARIATIONEN FÜR KONTRABASS /		
FREITAG 14. SEPT. 20-00 UHR	KONZERT NR.8, KONKRETE MUSIK & HAPPENINGS - U.S.A., JOSEPH BYRD: [WEI] STÜCKE FÜR RICHARD MAXFIELD, 1960 / JOHN CAGE: VARIATIONS / GEORGE BRECHT: KARTENSTÜCK FÜR OBJEKTE, TRÖPFELNDE MUSIK, KERZEN STÜCK FÜR RADIOS & SOLO FÜR EINEN BLASER / JED CURTIS: GAVOTTE, ALLEMAND, UND GIGUE / DICK HIGGINS: GEFÄHRLICHE MUSIK NR. 2 / ANDRÉ GRAPHS 82 / JACKSON MAC LOW: EIN STÜCK FÜR SARI DIENES / TERRY RILEY: OHR STÜCK (FÜR PUBLIKUM) /		
SAMSTAG 15. SEPT. 20-00 UHR	KONZERT NR.9, KONKRETE MUSIK & HAPPENINGS - JAPAN, TOSHI ICHIHANAGI: MUSIK FÜR ELEKTRISCHE METRONOM & IBM MUSIK / K. AKIYAMA: EINE GEHEIM METHODE / TAKENHISA KOSUGI: MICRO I & MANOHARMA I / YOKO ONO: ZWEI STÜCKE / YASUNAO TONE: TAGE, NUMMER & UNTERREDUNG / GEORGE YNASE: MUSIQUE CONCRETE UND AINOUE /		
SONNTAG 16. SEPT. 20-00 UHR	KONZERT NR.10, KONKRETE MUSIK & HAPPENINGS - INTERNATIONAL, NAM JUNE PAIK: SIMPLE / PIERRE MERCURE: STRUCTURES METALLIQUES NR.3 / NAM JUNE PAIK: HOMMAGE À JOHN CAGE / ETUDE FÜR PIANOFORTE UND SONATA QUATZ UNA FANTASIA / DIETER SCHNEBEL: SICHTBARE MUSIK FÜR EINEN DIRIGENTEN / MACIUNAS: IN MEMORIAM FÜR ADRIANO OLIVETTI / BENJAMIN PATTERSON: SEPTET AUS "LEMONS" UND OVERTURE (2. DARSTELLUNG) / GEORGE BRECHT: WORD EVENT		
22. SEPT. 14.30 UHR	KONZERT NR.11, TOMBAND MUSIK UND FILME - U.S.A., JOHN CAGE: FONTANA MIX, MUSIC FOR THE MARRYING MAIDEN / LA MONTE YOUNG: ZWEI TÖNE / STAN VANDERBEEK: FILMEN / DICK HIGGINS: REQUIEM FÜR WAGNER THE CRIMINAL MAYOR		
22. SEPT. 20-00 UHR	KONZERT NR.12, TOMBAND MUSIK - U.S.A., RICHARD MAXFIELD: HUFTER MUSIK / RADIO MUSIK / DAMPF / PASTORAL SYMPHONY / PERSPECTIVES / NACHT MUSIK		
SONNTAG 23. SEPT. 14-30 UHR	KONZERT NR.13, TOMBAND MUSIK UND FILME - JAPAN, KANADA, TOSHI ICHIHANAGI: KAIKI / NOSHUTAKA MIZUNO: TOMBAND STÜCK / TORU TAKEMITSU: VOCALISM A-B & WASSER MUSIK / YASUNAO TONE: GOSTUME UND WARANO / GEORGE YNASE, ADO-NO-DE YTESHICAHARA: FILM / YOSU KIRI: HUMAN ZOO / OSHIMA: FILM / RANI: FILM / ISTVAN ANHALT: COMPOSITION NR. 4 / CIONI CARPI & L. PORTUGAIS: POINT ET CONTREPOINT (FILM) / MAURICE BLACKBURN: JE (FILM) /		
SONNTAG 23. SEPT. 20-00 UHR	KONZERT NR.14, TOMBAND MUSIK - FRANKREICH, "LES PREMIERES DECOUVERTES" / P.SCHAEFFER: ETUDE AUX CASSEROLS P. HENRY / MUSIQUE SANS TITRE / P. ARTHUSY: NATURE MORTE À LA GUSTARE / A. HODER: JAZZ ET JAZZ / "RECHERCHES RECENTES" / L.FERRARI: ETUDE AUX ACCIDENTS & TÊTE ET QUEUE DU DRAGON / F.B. MACHE: PRÉLUDE / E. CANTON: ETUDE / J. HEDALGO: ETUDE / B. PARMIGIANI: ETUDE / F. BAYLE: TREMPLEINS & LIGNES ET POINTS / M. PHILIPPOT: AMBIANCE II / P. CARSON: ETUDE / P. SCHAEFFER: SIMULTANÉ CAMEROUNAIS /		
EINTRITTS- KARTEN	FÜR JEDES KONZERT FÜR EIN ABONNEMENT (14 KONZERTE) FÜR STUDENTEN	DM 3 DM 20 DM 1,50	EINTRITTSKARTEN SIND AM EINGANG ZU ERHALTEN ODER DURCH: VORVERKAUF AM HAUPTBAHNHOF, WIESBADEN

Fig. 77 George Maciunas, *Fluxus Internationale Festspiele Neuester Musik* ("Fluxus international festival of the newest music"), original programme, 59.2 × 42 cm, 1962

simply can't talk about an unequivocally clear understanding of music. While there were trained musicians and composers among the Fluxus protagonists, such as La Monte Young, Benjamin Patterson, Nam June Paik, Philip Corner, Takehisa Kosugi, Mieko Shiomi and Henning Christiansen, there were also artists among them who in 1958 and 1959 attended John Cage's course in "experimental composition" at the new School for Social Research in New York without having ever studied music before – such as Dick Higgins, Jackson Mac Low, Allan Kaprow and George Brecht. And autodidactic artists were also involved, such as Robert Filliou, Arthur K pcke, Emmett Williams and Tomas Schmit, who were initially united by their interest in poetry and in writing in general. So it's difficult to pin down any common concept of music among them, or a unified approach to musical form. At best, perhaps, according to Filliou, the uniting characteristic of the Fluxus activities could be described as "the understanding that all of life can be regarded as music. As a musical process in which the acoustic and the visual part are held in balance. A butterfly in flight is just as much a musical event as the dripping of a tap".⁷⁹⁶ Here it is implied that in Fluxus compositions it is often inconspicuous, everyday events whose sound or process attracts interest and that allows them to become musical events beyond the usual norms. Or, to quote Brecht – one of the few Fluxus protagonists of whom Roth spoke positively in retrospect in his interviews: "Music is what you are listening to at this moment".⁷⁹⁷ As for Cage, who had a decisive impact on the creation of Fluxus, music is here understood as an art of listening in which all sounds and noises are potential music for one to experience; it is an art whose starting point is that sounds always exist – you just have to turn your attention to them, or make them audible.⁷⁹⁸

M. ROTH It's interesting how in the most recent parts of our conversation the frequency of the term "sound" has increased dramatically! When we were just talking about Roth and the *Rarely heard music*, the concept barely played any role at all. It's hardly surprising, because Roth's music-making lacks the contemplative aspect that is necessary to evoke "sound experiences". It's bound radically to the material itself, it struggles with it. Thus after the *Munich concert*, a review wrote that "Roth's placid, heavyweight body dreams fuzzy pathos at the organ; the wafer-thin Brus tinkles delicately on xylophone, triangle and flute;

Wiener quite obviously has had serious training on the piano, Hermann Nitsch fantasises on the violin like an angel of the trumpet and indulges himself aggressively and theatrically on the cymbals; Rühm seems to be held together only by his tight trouser braces because he needs so much breath for his clarinet".⁷⁹⁹ In the arts section of the *Münchener Abendzeitung*, Brus notably let himself be quoted as follows: "For me, everything that lies in the box is a violin".⁸⁰⁰ You can't separate this music from its corporeal aspect; the instrument is no medium of transcendence but a thing, at best a tool. In the *Romenthal quartet* (1975), Roth on one occasion asks while playing the violin: "How do you use this?" Accordingly, you don't really reach a state of "listening" here; the sounds remain "in the box" ...

M. HALDEMANN ... or they remain trapped in the head of the listener.

M. ROTH Gabriele, I suspect that Fluxus had a different approach to listening?

G. KNAPSTEIN Fluxus music can on the one hand be described as a "school of attentiveness" towards everyday sounds and noises; thus Brecht describes the virtuosic listener as someone who "(can hear music at any moment)".⁸⁰¹ But on the other hand, Brecht also expedited the process of blurring the boundaries of the musical, beyond its relationship to sound – which was wholly in the spirit of Fluxus – and in his music research he investigated the following question: "Imagine that music isn't just sound. What could it then be? ... I think we still don't know today whether music has to have sounds – whether music necessarily embraces sound or not. And if not, then one possible direction of research would be to see what it could be. What we have here is music research that has been transformed into object research".⁸⁰² Ultimately, music becomes an acoustic or a visual event – an experience that we can perceive through our senses in some way or other – or even a conceptual event.

M. HALDEMANN Then the question arises: what *wouldn't* be music? Music is here intentionally dependent on the listener. He or she imputes musical conditions to reality, so to speak, and recognises/understands everyday sounds as musical ready-mades, as "rarely heard music".



Fig. 78 *Selten gehörte Musik. Abschöpfersymphonie. Die Abschöpfung* (film still), Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich, 1979

But in the *Rarely heard music*, as a rule we don't hear any sounds or noises "in and of themselves", but a vain endeavour to offer other, primarily "classical" music or folk music. Through their failings and mistakes, novel sounds arise indirectly. Are there Fluxus music works that refer to classical music, and if so, how?

G. KNAPSTEIN Fluxus pieces generally don't draw on classical music in the sense of referring to specific compositions, taking them up and reworking them (I'm not including the exceptions that we find in works by Paik or La Monte Young). Numerous pieces do refer to classical formats in their titles, such as "symphony" (George Brecht), "Opera Instruction" (Eric Andersen), "String Quartet" (George Brecht), "Piano Piece" (Tomas Schmit) or "Variations for Double-Bass" (Benjamin Patterson), though the verbal instructions found there are far removed from any conventional understanding of these genres. They are

scrutinised and completely re-interpreted in the spirit of action music, and the conventional performance practice of music shifts to the centre of activity when, for example, Brecht's String Quartet comprises the performers going onto the podium with their instruments and taking their places, only to shake hands and then leave the podium again. Actions that would not belong to the piece in a chamber music concert or an orchestral performance – such as the musicians shaking hands after a successful performance – here become the actual event.

M. ROTH In the video of the *Abschöpfungssymphonie* we can see how Wiener and Rainer take their bows in the middle of the concert [[^]Fig. 78].

G. KNAPSTEIN Douglas Kahn describes this aspect of Fluxus music as follows: “Fluxus in essence asked why, given the array of factors that comprise music, should sound be given the decisive role in determining what is and what is not music, or what may or may not direct its development? Fluxus artists systematically isolated various extra-aural aspects of music as moments that could themselves undergo artistic transformation just as easily as any sonic material. [...] Fluxus turned inward upon Western art music practice in order to recuperate the seemingly extramusical elements and activities already existing within the belly of conventional musical practice”.⁸⁰³ In pieces that involve playing records, as in Køpcke's *Music While You Work* or Milan Knizak's *Broken Music*, however, the most varied types of music can sound, depending on which records the artist or the performers choose. In both these cases, however, the music is continually being interrupted, disturbed or fragmented.

M. ROTH We should also mention Cage's *Mozart Mix* (1991) in this context. It's an edition comprising a box with 5 cassette players and 25 cassettes. Basically, it's similar to the *Fernquartett* in that you can compress “canned Mozart” into a quintet: pieces that would normally be heard one after another are here played synchronously and at the same time made into a sound installation that involves the whole space.

G. KNAPSTEIN And in Knowles' *Piece for any number of vocalists* of 1962, which has the instruction “Each thinks beforehand of a song, and, on a signal from the conductor, sings it through”,

either classical art songs, folk songs or pop songs can be sung. But here, too, it is less the performance or the sounding of a well-known melody that is foregrounded, and more the action itself, the decisions to be made by the performers, the record as object, or the chance constellation of different songs sung simultaneously.


In the end, it's characteristic of Fluxus music that its pieces are to be performed in a simple, concentrated way. There's no virtuosity or theatricality involved. According to Brecht, it's about "Doing things as simply and as well as possible and without any excessive control – but also without any unnecessary carelessness".⁸⁰⁴ This sense of composure in performance practice was obviously something that impressed Roth, who expressed his admiration for Brecht and his "liberation from stage fright": "I've observed him when he performed his pieces, he always performed so drily and so economically that he conveyed absolutely no excitement at all. On the contrary, he extracted the passion from pieces that were more or less impassioned, or at least a little passionate. I found that was such a thing ... you could read it like a recipe: how can I free myself of stage fright, or something like that. He was always quite prosaic when he arrived on the podium, there was almost nothing there. I thought that was really good".⁸⁰⁵

M. HALDEMANN If there was hardly anything fixed in advance for the concerts of the *Rarely heard music*, how was it with the Fluxus concerts?

G. KNAPSTEIN For one thing, I have to mention that Maciunas – as the self-appointed Fluxus impresario – designed the programmes for the Fluxus concerts and festivals in advance and also announced them to the public with flyers or programme announcements that he also often designed himself. Furthermore, he made long lists with the order of the pieces, which as a rule were based on verbal scores or graphic notation, and of the people who were intended to perform them.⁸⁰⁶ The order of pieces that he gave on these flyers or announcements was not generally adhered to – or at least not all the pieces that were announced were actually performed.⁸⁰⁷ And over the course of the years, a repertoire of "classical" Fluxus pieces emerged, as did a style of performance that in Williams' words was "non-professional, free of form, simple and pure".⁸⁰⁸

M. ROTH These four attributes allow us to make revealing comparisons with the *Rarely heard music*. “Non-professional” seems at first to fit in with Roth’s “dilettantism” – but hardly to the “drop height” of the failure he actively sought after. The *Rarely heard music* here noticeably operates on a dialectical level of tension that also makes the description “simple” inappropriate. On the contrary, Wiener pointed out the fact that they demanded far more from art than they were able to give.⁸⁰⁹ “Free of form” might be appropriate from the perspective of the listener, but all the records document a need to give form to the ephemeral, even if this naturally happens in a highly ironic, “fractured” manner – the records have numbered announcements of titles (the 3rd *Berlin poets’ workshop*), elaborate movement titles (the *Romenthal quartet*), aesthetic discussions (the *November symphony*) or staged final cadences (*The Kümmerling Trio plays No 1 & 2*). “He always needed a product”,⁸¹⁰ Björn Roth explained with regard to this peculiarity of his father. This is never “pure”, but laden with all the debris of creation, full of contradictions and fissures.

How did the people in the Fluxus movement deal with their self-created “repertoire”?

G. KNAPSTEIN Well, the expression “pure” is perhaps misleading with regard to the performance practice of the Fluxus protagonists. It’s more a matter of something concrete, or what Schmitt called “the plain language aesthetic” of Fluxus: “a new type of realism. George Brecht’s ‘solo for violin: • polishing’ (1962): sit on the stage and polish a violin [ Fig. 79]. Just how – no, precisely *not* how – one would clean one’s violin at home; at home, you’d do it in a more relaxed manner, or more thoroughly, or more ‘incidentally’. But not how an actor would treat a violin, trying to be just as relaxed with it etc. as would a violinist at home. Instead he does it just as one would when sitting on a stage, polishing a violin. – and emmett williams’s ‘counting song’: he counts the audience. until he knows how many people are sitting in it. basta”.⁸¹¹ Otherwise, in the course of a Fluxus concert a pretty chaotic situation developed on stage because the different instruments, utensils and materials that were necessary for the individual pieces weren’t always tidied away neatly after each piece. The pieces left their mark behind them – especially so when Patterson’s *Paper piece* was given at the close, because the whole event descended into a happy

shambles, with the performers and the audience joining in tearing up strips of paper.

All the same, the sequence of the pieces to be performed was subject to a certain degree of prior ordering. As I said, these pieces were based on scores, and Maciunas also saw it as his responsibility to print these scores in Fluxus publications and thereby make them accessible to everyone. But the scores themselves allow for fundamentally different realisations. They follow the principles of indeterminacy and chance, and are oriented on an understanding of experimental music such as Cage had formulated succinctly in 1955: “an act the outcome of which is unknown”.⁸¹² In that sense, the pieces themselves were not determined in advance, or at least they were not organised with a view to a single possible realisation.

M. ROTH But they’re still “pieces”! They can be performed more than once, and (with certain exceptions) are not bound to specific people or a specific time or place. The *Rarely heard music*, however, cannot be repeated. The *Abschöpfsymphonie* was “siphoned off” for ever on that 3 February 1979 and, soon after, the collective activities of this circle of artists ceased too. All that remains are “canned” music, photos and memories. Actually, this fits in perfectly with Roth’s “art of decay”: whereas works of music can potentially exist for ever by being “updated” through ever new interpretations – which in the case of “open works” could in a distant future be even easier to realise than with traditional pieces – Roth’s musical oeuvre is subject to the ravages of time. As Roth himself once put it:

The leg e.g. is off
 e.g. the leg is off
 german language dead
 you soon dead as much as
 now already now dead
 you dead
 play records
 legs are off
 tapes on
 the leg off
 the arse off
 arse off⁸¹³

Already today, hardly anyone knows these music works any more or has ever heard them – they are collecting dust in glass cases and in archives. What makes things even more difficult is the fact that these tapes and records were published within the framework of a highly artistic editorial practice and thus cannot be converted to suit our digital age without being subject to loss.⁸¹⁴ This is why our series of publications consciously forgoes any compilation on CD or mp3.

M. HALDEMANN These works are truly “rarely heard”! Roth didn’t even want to hear the recordings any more, because he found them as unenjoyable as “canned pickles”. What remains is the record as an object with its appealing cover: a visual work of art. This “object music” is collected by art enthusiasts, but presumably only rarely heard. Conversely, it has remained almost unknown in the music world, and thus belongs rather in a museum.

Your descriptions of Fluxus, Gabriele, make it clear to me how similar were the events organised by the Vienna Group in the late 1950s. They too decided on their programmes of individual pieces in advance, and these were performed either alone or jointly and were in principle repeatable. In contrast to Fluxus, handed-down genres played an important role there – even if these were mocked or distorted into something grotesque: cabaret, theatre, the chanson, the lecture, the exhibition. Irony was important – humour in general – though there were also shock elements, such as the destruction of a grand piano [↗ Fig. 80]. But as with Fluxus, critical reflection on their media was also significant in the Vienna Group. Not just with regard to language – which was variously disassembled into speech, philosophising, information, words, sounds, dialect sounds, matter-of-fact speech, informal speech etc. The podium is thematised, as are the audience and the record. But it’s always got a corporeal, physical aspect – just think of the later Actionism. And it’s not just about farts and shit. In around 1958, Rühm and Wiener formulated the idea for a piece



Fig. 79 George Brecht, *Solo for violin • polishing*, performance at the Flux Fest in the “Flux Hall”, 25 April 1964, New York City, photo: George Maciunas

in which the actors should revert to nakedness: “The piece ends, so to speak, directly before the sex act”.⁸¹⁵ They also formulated radical “exhibition ideas”: a “one-note concert”; a “milking course with a subsequent lecture about it”; presenting objects that are far too big or far too small; a “tape performance of ‘reality recordings’ (appropriate to the objects exhibited)” or an “evening of ‘interpretations’”.⁸¹⁶ Ultimately, a “realistic-acoustical event” would happen on the stage. They intended to join together with the like-minded and with “people who have historical merit with regard to our goals”. Surrealists and Dadaists and Vladimir Tatlin, El Lissitzky, Otto Nebel, Josef Albers and Max Bill are counted among these, along with philosophers, composers, conductors and physicists such as Max Bense, Karlheinz Stockhausen, John Cage, Luigi Nono, Pierre Boulez, Olivier Messiaen, Hermann Scherchen and Werner Heisenberg!



Fig. 80 Vienna Group, *2 worlds* (2nd literary cabaret), performance in the Porrhhaus, Vienna, 15 April 1959, photo: Franz J. Hubmann, museum moderner kunst stiftung ludwig wien

M. ROTH Though almost all of those “like-minded” people you mention will hardly have been interested in the Vienna Group or the *Rarely heard music*.⁸¹⁷ Daniel Spoerri, for example, recalled the following about John Cage: “Even the precious LPs of Dieter Roth’s *Rarely heard music* were ostentatiously ignored by him ...”.⁸¹⁸

M. HALDEMANN The concept text from 1959 entitled *suggestions for a ‘record-functional’ acoustic cabaret* by Konrad Bayer, Rühm and Wiener reads like a pool of ideas for the *Rarely heard music*. Here’s a few examples from it: “interview as ready-made cabaret number”; “different volumes that compel the listener to adjust the volume constantly”; “vulgar noises; scurrilous sound colours of voices”; “typical conversations in the corridor as ready-made, brief scenes”; “the whole of music history reduced to roughly one minute”; “different degrees of speed”; “laughing – crying”; “sounds of pain”; “Schubert: ‘ich hört ein bächlein rauschen’ moves imperceptibly into the sounds of a real babbling brook”; “announce a ‘hodgepodge’ as an improvisation”;

“addressing the listener by his first name”; “rhythmic pulsation at different volumes”; “what all the listeners have in common. (ears?)”; “wearing out a groove makes something else suddenly appear”; “record also runs from the inside to the outside”; “mistakes pressed along with the record”; “pieces not just juxtaposed, but often also simultaneous”; “the listener is challenged to imagine specific music”; “increase in self-confidence of the listener (magically); “feedback”; “difficult philosophical text, read by a child’s voice”; “very sweet notes”; “syllables of embarrassment”, and so on.⁸¹⁹

Media realities and everyday matters are reflected upon to the same degree, and treated with the same delight in irony. This is neither “pure” nor “dry”, wouldn’t you say?

G. KNAPSTEIN Maciunas drew up numerous so-called “charts” describing developmental lines in art history going back to Classical times in which he endeavoured to situate Fluxus and other contemporary trends, and he described a number of supposed precursors to Fluxus as follows: “We have the idea of indeterminacy and simultaneity and concretism and noise coming from Futurism, theater, like Futurist music of Russolo. Then we have the idea of the Ready-made and concept art coming from Marcel Duchamp. Okay, we have the idea of collage and concretism coming from Dadaists. Now, you see, they’re all shown on the chart: how they all end up with John Cage with his prepared piano, which is really a collage of sound”.⁸²⁰ In one of his manifestos in which he pilloried the professional, parasitic, elitist status of the artist in society, he also defined Fluxus as “art-amusement”, referencing popular genres such as vaudeville and the bandleader Spike Jones who was famous for his music revues in the 1940s and ’50s, and he situated these (quite contradictorily) alongside the avant-garde tradition: “Fluxus art-amusement is the rear-guard without any pretension or urge to participate in the competition of ‘one-upmanship’ with the avant-garde. It strives for the monostructural and non-theatrical qualities of [a] simple natural event, a game or a gag. It is the fusion of Spike Jones, Vaudeville, gag, children’s games and Duchamp”.⁸²¹ However, many protagonists were only conditionally in agreement with this definition of Fluxus, and when he returned to the USA from Germany in the autumn of 1963, Maciunas had ever-decreasing success in keeping the Fluxus circle together, and in getting its artists to commit to a single, joint approach.

M. ROTH But back to Fluxus music: Can you say something more about the further development of the principles “indeterminacy” and “chance”, which go back to Cage?

G. KNAPSTEIN If we look at the pieces by Brecht from the years 1959 to 1963, for example, we can see that he quite deliberately aimed to strengthen these principles of “indeterminacy” and “chance”. We can clearly trace a development in his work from what were initially quite complex pieces, with relatively comprehensive performance instructions, to increasingly succinct and thereby increasingly open performance guidelines.⁸²² Because he noted down and reflected upon the individual steps in this development in his notebooks, we have clear proof of the influence that John Cage had on him. His notebooks have many quotations from Cage or conclusions drawn from his lessons, and Brecht’s starting point is the understanding of “experimental composition” that he gained from him. Thus, for example, in November 1958 he writes. “The growth of the work as an ‘unfolding situation’: a) composition with chance (Cage) b) interaction between performers (Wolff) c) ambience as part of the work”.⁸²³

As “open” art works, his scores – which ultimately comprise only a few words – allow a correspondingly greater multitude of possible realisations. They can be realised as actions, as objects or merely in thoughts. Brecht said the following in this regard: “I don’t demand anything. I’d leave the maximum freedom to everybody. Certain proposals I have realised myself, others no: if the spectator prefers the object to the idea he’ll make a choice. He can realize it by himself. It’s all open”.⁸²⁴

M. ROTH Such pieces are mostly committed to paper as word scores. We know how carefully Cage worked out the performance instructions for his scores (both in terms of their language and their design). To what extent is this also true of Fluxus? Is language for them a mere vehicle, or also a topic in itself, as with the *Rarely heard music*?

G. KNAPSTEIN It’s characteristic of Fluxus’s intermedia approach that many of the “word scores” that comprise words on a card, a page of a book or a page of a newspaper – some with more words, some with less – can be read either as an instruction for action, as a conceptual work or as visual poetry. It’s the recipient who decides where to place the emphasis. You could

perhaps say that the word scores of La Monte Young, Brecht, Mac Low, Williams, Filliou, Schmit or Køpcke in fact represent an investigation into this polyvalence of language. Their concern is with a reflection on the visual, phonetic and semantic qualities of language, spoken in a playful manner that is no less serious for all its playfulness.⁸²⁵ Filliou, Schmit, Køpcke and Brecht repeatedly raise epistemological questions; as an example I shall here mention the score *Two exercises* (1961) by Brecht, which runs as follows. “Consider an object. Call what is not the object ‘other’. EXERCISE: Add to the object, from the ‘other’, another object, to form a new object and a new ‘other’. Repeat until there is no more ‘other’. EXERCISE: Take a part from the object and add it to the ‘other’, to form a new object and a new ‘other’. Repeat until there is no more object”.

M. HALDEMANN On the topic of “chance” I’d like to mention the early use of record players and radios by Cage. For example his *Imaginary Landscape No. 4* (1951) for 24 performers at twelve radios. Roth repeatedly integrated prepared radios in his works in order for their users to be able to listen to the radio live at the same time as hearing the music cassettes [↗ pp. 217, 219]. This “canned” music is linked with “real time” in a chance constellation. The concept of “constellation” itself seems to me relevant to his open, variable music and art, as opposed to the concepts of “composition” and “notation”. Everything is only provisional, everything could also be different and remains in flux.

The radio links art and its observer/listener with the outside, everyday world. In *A Diary* (1982) [↗ pp. 290, 291], Roth shows himself ostentatiously as an everyman listening to the radio every day. He criticised Fluxus’s lack of connection to the everyday: “For example, it was always unpleasant to me, first with the Dadaists and then with the Fluxus people, you could almost say they created difficult moral behaviour patterns for themselves, behaviour patterns that came easy to them – such as asceticism or a certain mockery or irony – and that they then insulted the other people if they didn’t find it pleasant and beautiful. Above all I found the happenings to be actions that degraded the audience”.⁸²⁶ Certain “recipes” seemed to him like mandatory, “stupid rituals” that the audience could also perform. He didn’t want to describe himself as an artist, so to him, the Fluxus people were like “traders in indulgences”, or “fabricators of indulgences”.⁸²⁷

Gabriele, can you recognise any “indulgence music” in Fluxus? For Roth, incidentally, chance wasn’t something artistic to strive for, but instead possessed an inescapable “power”: “You get old and kaput, and chance knocks you back into shape”.⁸²⁸

G. KNAPSTEIN What Roth describes as a “trade in indulgences” – promising people entry into heaven “when they buy pictures, when they buy works of art or support artists”⁸²⁹ wasn’t something propagated by the Fluxus artists. Roth’s criticism of their “moral behaviour patterns” might well have been an apt description of a certain anti-academic rage in the Fluxus circle and might have been aimed at the endeavours to achieve ideological constriction in Fluxus (driven above all by Maciunas). But to go by my experience, I would actually stress the Fluxus artists’ openness to encounter any and every audience, and their playful approach that encouraged their opposite number to engage in actions and thoughts of his or her own. You also have to remember that in the 1960s and 1970s the audience for art hardly had any real interest in Fluxus. Only in retrospect, since the 1990s, has Fluxus been assigned such a big significance within the artistic development of the post-War years. Schmit aptly summed up the situation of the Fluxus protagonists in the 1960s and 1970s: “there was no money to be made, there was no fame to be harvested, the rest of the art scene ignored us (with a few notable exceptions such as wilhelm jährling), the press at best brought an occasional spot of malice on the ‘odds and ends’ pages, in between reports of a calf with five legs and the wedding of a prince ...”.⁸³⁰ No money could be made from the early Fluxus activities, and the Fluxus multiples were intentionally offered at prices of just a few dollars in order to make this art accessible to everyone and to anchor it in everyday life. Quite apart from the broad lack of success of the Fluxus mail-order trade, it was in itself a two-edged sword. Because after annulling the boundary between art and life, the main aims of Fluxus were rather complicated. Here I’d like to quote Schmit again, who describes the problem in a wonderfully vivid manner: “it’s perhaps not yet quite clear – nor to me – what I mean by plain language aesthetic: art stands on legs of which some – especially when art is so rotten and corpse-like – are like perfect crutches – as if there were a pedestal, an aura, an ideology and so on. – now it might entice you to try to produce art that survives without any such support – an undertaking that’s jittery

because it's impossible. – 'I'm just going here around three street corners': as soon as I announce this as an artistic event, it's on a pedestal. If I don't announce it, but only do it, but do it differently from how I would every day to go and fetch fresh bread rolls or to go to the pub, then it's also on a pedestal, a sort of inner pedestal. and fetching bread rolls and going to the pub are things I don't want to declare as art to myself; fetching things should remain fetching things, schnapps should stay schnapps".⁸³¹

The question as to the boundary between art and life is one that Roth also raises when he makes his own life and work into the material of his art. But here we clearly see the differences between Fluxus and Roth's universe. Especially in the case of those artists strongly influenced by Zen Buddhism such as Mac Low, Brecht or Filliou, it would never have occurred to them to place their own self at the centre of their art as Roth did. And the existential dimension of Roth's thought – the dimension that was centred on transience and decay, life and death – was foreign to their very nature.

M. HALDEMANN On the other hand, Roth was described by Rainer as a "fluid aggregate", as a kind of embodiment of "fluxus". Despite all their differences, they still have a common approach, don't they?

G. KNAPSTEIN Yes, I see that too, and the connections and friendships that were kept over the years between Roth and artists such as Spoerri, Williams or Schmit also testify to a fundamentally similar stance. Roth and the Fluxus artists were all concerned with dissolving the fixed boundaries between genres and with questioning rigid conventions and norms – or with simply attacking them head-on. They were concerned with keeping meanings open and fluid, with processes of thought, action and materials that were directed against all things that were absolutely solid and rigid. In cultural philosophy there is a concept of a movement that cannot be precisely determined, situated between what is "fluid" and what is "fixed", which can be said to be "the threshold of that field of tension in which culture is fundamentally constituted, and in which cultural life has always moved".⁸³² Roth and the Fluxus artists are clearly situated on the "fluidifying" side of this field of tension.

M. HALDEMANN For me, however, Roth's fluid work process represents exactly this cultural field of tension between "fluid" and "fixed".

G. KNAPSTEIN In this connection I'm reminded of something said in a conversation I had about Fluxus with the former director of the museum in Mönchengladbach, Johannes Cladders, back in 1994. Cladders had already exhibited Fluxus artists in the 1960s, along with Joseph Beuys, and he recalled a speech given by Otto Mauer, the preacher of St Stephen's in Vienna, at the opening of an exhibition of Joseph Beuys in 1967 (Mauer was very close to contemporary trends in art, not least to the Viennese Actionists). Cladders quoted him thus: "A seventh thing occurred to me in the face of these matters: Beuys makes happenings, or actions, fluxus: they are events, incidents ... But it is something fluctuating, it's the flow of our life that climaxes in death. Everything that exists moves towards death; death is the goal; all thought is a science of death, and there is a deathly seriousness in these things. An alliteration might be humorous, perhaps this lightning bolt, whose point is blunted by felt – perhaps. But perhaps that is just a sign of transience, and this deathly seriousness is present, this flow of things, this *panta rhei*, though not in the sense of old Heraclitus, but in the sense of actually moving towards the end, the goal; in any case, it's our individual life ... this fluctuation prevents anything from being turned into a cult and from being made absolute; it prevents triumphalism, and that is incredibly important. Because these are the greatest lies in life and the greatest lies in politics. They would create a new Hitler and a new Stalin, a new, absolute state, and the next world war; but the fluctuating, the fractured, the futile, the contingent, and that which is afflicted by death: all this is what prevents false absolutes".⁸³³ The existential dimension that he here attests to the fluid is perhaps less appropriate to the spirit of Fluxus, but it was undoubtedly decisive for Beuys and for Roth, whose oeuvres were very much shaped by the shock of the Second World War.

M. HALDEMANN Michel has already brought a quotation from Roth in which he links the state of being existentially trapped with the notation and reception of music. He differentiates between two types of notation. First there is the act of drawing a vague, visual outline of one's own whistling on a musical staff:

“by quickly (impatiently) crossing the 5 lines I wanted to go beyond the labour of writing down music; it’s a kind of modern notation” [→ Fig. 47].⁸³⁴ Then there is the classical notation of the melody just whistled. For which should he decide? “I am still stuck in a tight corner, wanting to show an acceptable (in the classical sense) script (acceptable somewhere close to me); this should incorporate the act of understanding (in this case hearing the melody), and if the readers (I almost wrote: the reader) hear it, they should hear how I (still) have described a small, destroyed place (I almost wrote: wrote down a small destroyed place) or two small destroyed places.

“The captivity in which I believe I live is here given a cautious pointer (I almost wrote: expression)”.⁸³⁵

As a listener of his music, one can still experience this “captivity” as an oscillating between experiences that one recognises again and those that have been destroyed. As an inextricable tension between the “as well as” and the “neither nor”, the “not”.

This “captivity” is connected to the failure that was important to the Vienna Group and to Roth, even before it acquired its thematic link with the “dilettantism” of the *Rarely heard music*. Wiener even speaks of a “philosophy of failure”.⁸³⁶ Is this perhaps a relevant difference from Fluxus?

Failure

G. KNAPSTEIN It seems to me that success and failure are not categories that are of importance to Fluxus music, for it is instead concerned with questioning normative stipulations. For example, Cage’s definition of experimental music runs as follows: “Where [...] attention moves towards the observation and audition of many things at once, including those that are environmental – becomes, that is, inclusive rather than exclusive – no question of making, in the sense of forming understandable structures, can arise (one is a tourist), and here the word ‘experimental’ is apt, providing it is understood not as descriptive of an act to be later judged in terms of success and failure, but simply as of an act the outcome of which is unknown”.⁸³⁷ The “principle of equivalence” that Filliou developed in connection with his idea of “permanent creation” also expressly denies a hierarchy of “well done”, “badly done” and

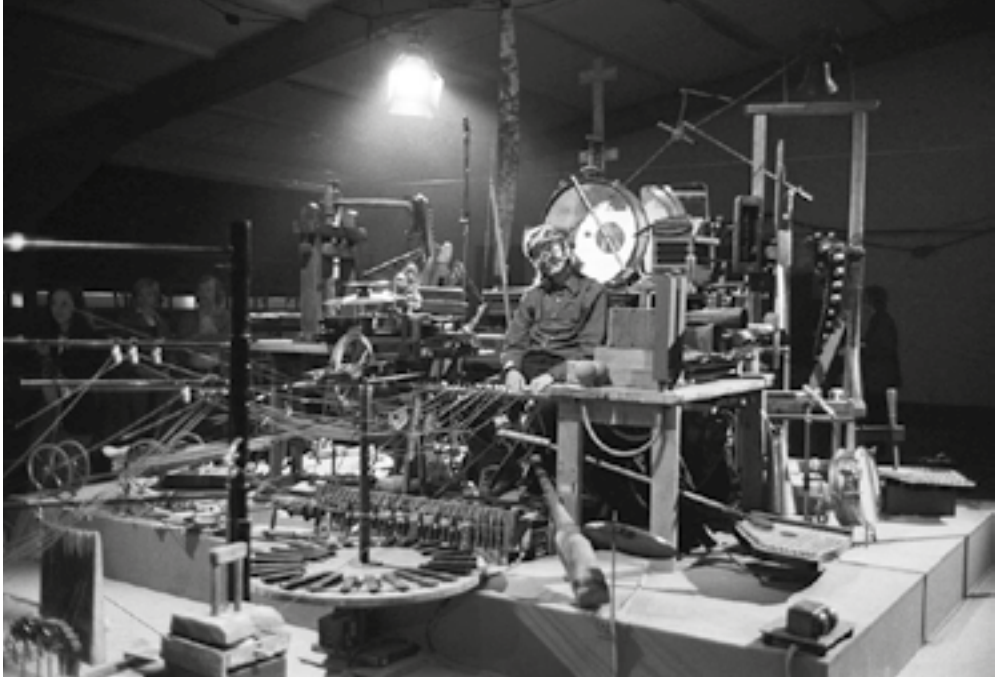


Fig. 81 Mauricio Kagel, *Zwei-Mann-Orchester*, world première at the Donaueschingen Music Days, October 1973, commissioned by South-West German Radio, performer: Theodor Ross, photo: Zoltán Nagy

“not done” and instead asserts their equivalence in a permanent process of creation.⁸³⁸

M. HALDEMANN Roth admired La Monte Young for his new musical criteria, though his mastery of those criteria again made him into a “classic” in terms of his own music.⁸³⁹ Roth himself tried to avoid this through failure.

M. ROTH In contrast to this, the European musical avant-garde discovered artistic failure as a new expressive quality. I’m thinking here of works such as *Res / As / Ex / Ins-pirer* (1973) by Vinko Globokar or Heinz Holliger’s piece *Cardiophonie* (1971) – both, incidentally, performer-composers – which stage a kind of game of life and death. This is reminiscent of Fluxus compositions such as *Danger music* by Dick Higgins. Globokar was especially interested in the unforeseen lapses and mistakes that occur when the physical demands of a piece become excessive.⁸⁴⁰ In Holliger’s composition *Kreis* (“Circle”, 1971/72) he provokes something similar in that the performers have to

perform in turn on instruments that they haven't actually learnt to play.⁸⁴¹ Nevertheless, the performers naturally master these situations in a musically professional manner, and even pieces such as this are subject to a normal process of practising and rehearsal. In the preface to his only music score, the *Spittersonate*, however, Roth expressly writes: "the *Spittersonate* should never be practised/never needs to be practised (it would be good for it to be played and sung at sight at its first concert performance) and it is dedicated to the first pianist who plays and sings it thus".⁸⁴²

M. HALDEMANN In dialectic terms, a successful interpretation would be a necessary failure to perform the unplayable score.

Your oblique glance at the European musical avant-garde shows just how closely interwoven and how fluid were artistic practices back then, beyond the boundaries of individual disciplines (incidentally, Holliger and Roth do have literary points of convergence in Friedrich Hölderlin and Robert Walser).

The theatrical aspect of Holliger is also found in Roth, with his open demonstration of failure, and is something different from Fluxus. Music as theatre was also decisive for Kagel, with whom Roth collaborated on his Beethoven film *Ludwig van* (1969). Kagel was inspired by Jean Tinguely, and with him the transitions are fluid between music theatre and concert and the environment of music instruments and music apparatus [↗ Fig. 81]. But this does not lead to any naïve art of liberation or of removing boundaries, being instead subjected to critical questioning: "Do you want total theatre?"⁸⁴³ Roth is even more radical in extending this question to include himself as author and as an everyday person. It is not just art: his whole life is an inescapable, large, total theatre. For Roth, the supposed openness of art becomes a trap for "captured" reality, whereas Kagel refers back to Joseph Goebbels: "Do you want total war?"⁸⁴⁴ and at the same time to Wagner's "total" work of art. For Roth, a self-appointed successor to Wagner who was traumatised by war, the removal of boundaries leads one into the captivity of art and life: "Freedom also has to be one's own lack of it".⁸⁴⁵ Not just on account of societal constraints, but on existential grounds. His philosophical art of failure thus acquires a surprising proximity to a philosophical stance that he actually could not bear – just as he generally couldn't bear philosophy. I'm thinking of Martin Heidegger's famous phrase "being toward death" from

his *Sein und Zeit* ("Being and time", 1927). Heidegger sets up the concept of "Dasein" ("existence") against that of the "subject", which comprehends itself through its finiteness as "self". The experience of the temporal "being toward death" makes one aware of one's own nullity. It means isolation. In a "reversion", the heteronomous self experiences its freedom as unfree "thrownness" into historical fate. Thus isolation becomes the supposed security of our inherited environment of homeland and our national community".⁸⁴⁶ This aroused the anger of Roth the sceptic: "That's stupidity, it's utterly stupid. 'The question of domestic being is the question of one's homeland'. Oh, really ... good night!".⁸⁴⁷

Taking his own life and his circle as his starting point, Roth creates a historical-musical dialectic of memory and destruction of his unfree/free "self-playing unto death". What once was, remains distant as a comforting echo within Roth the deracinated listener/reader/observer. Thus his self-image, already quoted, becomes a "reincarnation" within his own reception history: "if i now, on 22 april 1967, don't directly kick the bucket, die, then i will write a little more yet (with musil's paternal help): i, richard wagner resurrected with hölderlin's help as robert, known as karl".⁸⁴⁸ Musicians, poets and artists from different times act within Roth himself as a fateful, elective community and his "totem".⁸⁴⁹

Reception history

M. HALDEMANN If the history of his impact was so important to Roth, he also prompted it himself. Gabriele, at our Roth exhibition in Berlin you're adding examples of a contemporary artistic approach to music. Naturally there are lots of artists who also make music – you just have to think of Laurie Anderson, Markus Lüpertz, Martin Kippenberger, Albert and Markus Oehlen, Raymond Pettibon, Hans Weigand, Carsten Nicolai, Gelatin or Les Reines Prochaines (with Pipilotti Rist). The post-punk movement in Berlin in the 1980s saw the two fields come together. Do you think Roth's music works and the *Rarely heard music* are topical today? I'm also thinking here of the Icelandic scene.

G. KNAPSTEIN Yes, the exhibition in Zug that concentrates on music in Roth's oeuvre will be expanded to include younger works when it's shown in Berlin. We intend to use specific examples to show that there were artists or groups of artists for whom Roth's intermedia works formed a point of reference – such as for the artist and musician Wolfgang Müller, who together with Nikolaus Utermöhlen founded the post-punk band “Die tödliche Doris” (“Deadly Doris”) in Berlin in 1980. They were joined in 1982 by Käthe Kruse. Müller's little book *Geniale Dilletanten [sic]*, published by Merve Verlag, summed up a whole movement.⁸⁵⁰ In his introductory text, Müller writes: “Dilletantism in music (though also in all other possible fields) has nothing to do with stasis through non-professionalism. Quite on the contrary, development can find universal expression, drawing in all possible and supposedly impossible fields – an expression to which the professionals are helplessly inferior. [...] Serious musicians – dogged, stubborn and involuntarily funny – cannot create funny noises because in order to find the unknown you have to enjoy playing; it has to be playing you relish, though a form of playing that can certainly be paired with severe pains. Whoever has properly understood the idea of dilletantism can never be a serious musician; that would be death itself”.⁸⁵¹ The emphasis on the non-professional and the principle of artistic collaboration is reminiscent of Roth and the *Rarely heard music*. It's not for nothing that in his recently published book *Subkultur Westberlin 1979–1989*, Müller repeatedly mentions the presence in Berlin of Oswald and Ingrid Wiener, Rühm, Brus and Roth and their activities in the 1970s.⁸⁵²

M. HALDEMANN What does he say?

G. KNAPSTEIN He describes the significance of the Restaurant Exil in Kreuzberg as a meeting place for the artistic community – it was run by Ingrid and Oswald Wiener together with Michel Würthle. He also mentions the role that Roth, Brus and Hamilton had in the interior design of the restaurant, where they spent many evenings and nights too.⁸⁵³ He doesn't expressly mention the concerts of the *Rarely heard music* in Berlin, because he didn't actually experience them himself.

M. HALDEMANN Ingrid Wiener has mentioned the Club SO36 in Kreuzberg with regard to their music activities. It was run by

Fig. 82 Hermann Nitsch, world première of the 5th Symphony with students from the art academies of Reykjavík and Frankfurt, in the great hall of the Basel Music Academy, 1980, photo: Kurt Wyss



the painter Kippenberger in 1978/79. Kippenberger wanted to bring together punk, new wave and art, so the performers at the club included artists who made music. And in his conversation with us, Oswald Wiener implied that the *Rarely heard music* (and the Vienna Group) might well have had a pioneering role for artists' music in general.⁸⁵⁴

G. KNAPSTEIN Furthermore, in Müller's book there's a brief passage on Roth's *Review for everything* that was edited by Barbara Wien in Berlin in the mid-1980s, and which Roth abandoned with issue No. 10 in 1987, admitting that he had been compelled "once more to throw in the towel".⁸⁵⁵

M. ROTH In his anthology *Geniale Dilletanten*, Müller also offers a felicitous description of the relationship of the dilettante to his instrument – a statement that I would largely apply to Roth, his co-musicians and their "self music": "Brilliant dilettantes don't want and don't need any power over their instrument or to have command over it. What they intend is merely to get to know it in hopes that at some point it will speak of its own accord, intensely and concentratedly, showing the player who he is. They themselves are media in the service of their instrument, intense and concentrated".⁸⁵⁶

M. HALDEMANN Though Roth and his co-musicians also became "abusive media" of their instruments. They really scuffled

with them. I recall the *Letzte Lesung*, where Roth “masters” one text and is “overpowered” by another. And then there is his “destructive principle” in general.

G. KNAPSTEIN Wolfgang Müller also had a decisive part in the radio homage to Roth broadcast by the Bavarian radio and released in 2006 by intermedium records. Müller brought the most varied musicians together in the production *Das Dieter Roth Orchester spielt kleine wolken, typische scheisse und nie gehörte musik* (“The Dieter Roth Orchestra plays little clouds, typical shit and never-heard music”).

M. HALDEMANN Though this again sounds pretty conventional because it conforms to existing genres. What I miss here is what’s rarely heard!

It’s an irony of history that an ancestor of the “brilliant dilettantes” who rebelled against the established music business and the rigidity of music in Berlin was in fact Wagner, the “dilettant-ising” opera composer (thus Nietzsche).⁸⁵⁷

G. KNAPSTEIN It’s also interesting to see what traces Roth left on the Icelandic art and music scene. In early 1978 he “taught” at the Icelandic College of Arts & Crafts – that is, he drank to excess with his students and in his studio Bali made the album *Summer music* that was released in 1979 in an edition of 300. Shortly afterwards, the students also took part in realising Hermann Nitsch’s *ICELAND: a symphony in 10 movements*, which Roth also released on record. Later, he initiated and financed Nitsch’s tour with the Icelandic students and students of the Art Academy in Frankfurt [↗ Fig. 82]. The students included Gudmundur Oddur Magnusson, who today is Professor for Visual Communication at the Iceland Academy of the Arts, and the cameraman Ari Kristinnsson, who, together with Fridrik Thor, in 1981/1982 made the legendary film *Rokk í Reykjavík* about the young post-punk and new-wave scene in Reykjavík. The band Bruni BB is featured in the film, along with the musician and artist Omar Stefansson who was also one of the students involved with Roth. The band also included Björn Roth and Eggert Einarsson; Einarsson later also helped with setting up various exhibitions by Dieter and Björn Roth.⁸⁵⁸

And in the contemporary art of Iceland, we also find a form of performance situated between visual art, theatre and



Fig. 83 Ragnar Kjartansson, *The Visitors*, nine-channel HD video, colour, sound, loop: 00:64 mins, 2012, photo: Elísabet Davídsdóttir

music – though without there being any direct connection here to Roth; I’m thinking of Egill Sæbjörnsson and Ragnar Kjartansson. This type of performance rejects precepts of virtuosity and perfectionism and instead has as its aim the collaboration of artists from different fields and the act of setting processes in motion.

M. HALDEMANN In Ragnar Kjartansson’s video installation *The Visitors* (2012), simultaneous projections mean you see and hear different musicians recording a song [↗ Fig. 83]. Each musician is in a different room of an old, abandoned villa, separated from the others, and they all repeat the same melody on their own. This melancholy “Fernoktett”, a “distant octet”, reminds me of Roth’s *Fernquartett*.

G. KNAPSTEIN Yes, it made me think of that too, though the musicians in Kjartansson’s piece are synchronised via headphones. In Berlin we’ll also be showing several works that can be related to Roth’s music projects on account of their specific issues and approaches. However, it’s not just about pointing out connections, but also differences. Here I’m thinking of *School of velocity* (1993) by the Canadian conceptual artist Rodney Graham, which is in the collection of the Nationalgalerie [↗ Fig. 84]. In this work, Graham engages with a score by Carl Czerny, inserting ever-longer rests into it by means of a specific principle. A score that aims to increase the manual dexterity and rapidity of the pianist thus becomes an exercise in deceleration. In the



Fig. 84 Rodney Graham, *School of Velocity*, 1993, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Nationalgalerie, donation by the Friedrich Christian Flick Collection 2008

exhibition hall, the total of 1443 leaves of music of Graham's score can be seen on the wall, while a Disklavier plays the piece itself, which lasts 24 hours. I would also like to show *Strings* (2010) by Annika Kahrs [Fig. 85], which can be presented not just as a video installation but also as a live performance: the artist brings a string quartet by Beethoven out of step by having the musicians swap instruments after every movement. Through this intervention – in itself minimal – the whole structure goes out of joint, and with it the rules of classical music. It's highly irritating to hear and see this process. These examples will have to suffice here to demonstrate the topicality of Roth's engagement with musical traditions and common performance practice.

New Rarely heard music

M. HALDEMANN Now let's turn to the musician and sound artist Walter Fähndrich, who prepared the new concerts of the *Rarely heard music* along with Christian Ludwig Attersee, Hermann Nitsch, Gerhard Rühm and Oswald Wiener that will take place on 5 and 6 November 2014 in Zug and Basel.

Walter, did you ever meet Roth himself? How do you experience your encounters with his art?

WALTER FÄHNDRICH I never met Dieter Roth personally, but I followed attentively much of what he did while he was still alive.

My first encounters with the works and actions of Roth occurred at a time when I was still very young and hadn't settled down in artistic terms, or in terms of my perception of art. Above all I was still finding my way, so these encounters were initially pretty unsettling and confusing. I learnt only bit by bit and began to sense – and later (presumably) to learn – the kind of engagement and approach that might lie at the bottom of these works, and what their message might be. It took somewhat longer until I was ready and able to engage seriously with Roth's kind of music-making and to understand and accept the stance that is made manifest in his musical actions.

My engagement with Roth's works helped me to free myself and to find out where I actually belonged.



Fig. 85 Annika Kahrs, *Strings* (film still), 2010, HDV film, colour, sound, 8.20 mins

M. ROTH What you relate also corresponds to Rühm’s descriptions. He was a professional musician and called his participation in the *Rarely heard music* “jumping in at the deep end”⁸⁵⁹ – though I suspect that Rühm is here talking primarily about the concerts. But at the same time, he says, his own creative work experienced an “act of liberation”⁸⁶⁰ that inspired him to “allow and accept more things” than he had in the 1950s. But to come back to Dieter Roth and music: based on your experiences of listening to the records, how would you describe this kind of music-making? What strikes you in particular?

W. FÄHNDRICH What’s immediately obvious is that the instruments being played aren’t being used professionally. Also absent, it seems, are the goal-oriented handling of material and the structural understanding to which we are accustomed in conventional music.

Nevertheless, when you listen to it for a longer period, this music exerts a strange fascination. The music is and remains exciting and has a high density of information; it’s intense and concentrated and conveys an impression of organic, natural musicality. In a certain way, it’s also often even beautiful.

Roth’s music is often akin to what you’d hear in the background of a radio play (“Hörspiel”), and despite the fact that for

long stretches it's fundamentally unpredictable, and despite its "unprofessional" approach, it doesn't come across as arbitrary. Roth the man possessed a striking charisma, and he seems to be able to transform this aura into every medium that he utilises. The result is a sense of great commitment and great suggestive power.

M. ROTH I've also been struck by its similarity to music you'd expect in a radio play, and it's particularly the case, I think, with the 3rd *Berlin poets' workshop*, the *TOTE RENNEN Lieder* (1976) and the *Radio Sonata* (1976). The last of these indeed came about as a radio production, and the dramaturgy that Roth acts out here is almost classical – it's a Sisyphus allegory as if in an existentialist drama. When I think of the *Autofahrt* record with Björn Roth or the *Autonom-Dialogische Thematik* with Arnulf Rainer, these are also similar to radio features in that they document the "original soundtrack" of actual life and artistic actions, while at the same time they've been "pressed" into audiophile ready-mades.⁸⁶¹ And indeed, Bill Furlong of Audio Arts was Roth's production partner for several works (including the *Harmonica Curse*). This idiosyncratic mixture of work and documentation is typical of Roth, and it is naturally reminiscent of artistic works such as the *Box with the Sound of Its Own Making* (1961) by Robert Morris [[↗] Fig. 86].

M. HALDEMANN I like the concept of "Hörspiel", also in its literal sense, as a play or game ("Spiel") with/of hearing and listening ("Hören").

M. ROTH Besides their unmistakably dilettante aspects, most of the records are also notable for their idea of collaboration. Artistic greats such as Rühm, Wiener, Brus and Nitsch worked alongside Roth, leaving their imprint on the course of the music and on its impact in a quite fundamental fashion, albeit in very different, individual ways. Walter, you have worked as a teacher for many years and have much experience with free improvisation in groups. As a pedagogue you always used to play together with your students, which means, looking back, that you've had a considerable number of temporary collaborative partners. And – what's especially valuable to us – you have also performed together with Wiener and Rühm, in Roth's place as it were, and you've thereby become part of the *Rarely heard music* yourself.



Fig. 86 Robert Morris, *Box with the Sound of Its Own Making*, 1961, Seattle Art Museum

Can you try to describe, from the inside out, as it were, what creative mechanisms were at work in this group that resulted in their fascinating intensity?

W. FÄHNDRICH Incidentally, with regard to playing together with students: during the last ten to twelve years of teaching, I've not played with them any more. This is because I became increasingly aware that by participating as their teacher I was making it more difficult for my students to formulate, assert and express their own musical ideas.

And as for that intensity: with this kind of concert and with these participants it comes on the one hand from their great personal presence, thus also from their great stage presence. On the other hand, the unpredictability of what happens – also for the performers themselves – serves to supply a lot of energy. The tension increases when you don't know what's still going to happen. That's true both for the people on the podium and for those in the audience. To be the direct witness of a process of musical creation demands an increased degree of sympathy and attentiveness from the audience too. This is amplified all the more by the kind of processes that occur – processes that are not primarily oriented along the usual lines of musical logic, even though their result is in fact music. The goal of these actions is not to produce self-contained music works that last a whole evening; instead it's about offering hearing or listening experiences that as a rule are devoid of any specific dramaturgy,

that are full of surprises for all the participants, and that offer the listener a space in which he or she can move around pretty freely ...

M. HALDEMANN ... “Hörspiele”, “listening games”, as you said.

W. FÄHNDRICH As for the musical operations that occur during a concert, I can only give more precise information about my own role. At the concerts in Zurich (with the trio: Fährndrich, Rühm, Wiener) and in Gmunden in Austria (with the quartet Fährndrich, Schmidt, Wiener, Winnewisser), which we rigorously kept to a single hour in duration, I planned precisely in advance, to the exact second, when I would play what material, and when I would make rests, and how long they would be. I kept to this plan consistently, regardless of what happened on the outside (i.e. what my co-performers did). I naturally told the others nothing of my plan. Nor did it interest me whether the others had any plans, and if so, what they might have been.

At the concert in the Millowitsch Theatre in Cologne there were thirteen people on stage (besides Oswald Wiener and his wife Ingrid, these included their son Adam, Valie Export, Friedrich Heubach and other musicians and non-musicians, along with Wolfgang Müller). It was moderated by Alfred Biolek. There, I did free improvisation and didn't plan anything. Oswald did the same; with others I had the feeling that they'd prepared themselves, such as Ingrid and Valie, for example, who recited poems together. The “venerable” theatre auditorium was full to burst with people in the audience, and the whole thing seemed incredibly grotesque. Willy Millowitsch's son Peter is responsible for the theatre today, and he almost collapsed in horror at it all – he felt that we had dreadfully dishonoured his father's legacy.

M. HALDEMANN Did those concerts you've mentioned run under the title of *Rarely heard music*? If yes, why?

W. FÄHNDRICH Those concerts did indeed run under that title, because we saw them as belonging to that same tradition.

M. ROTH Let's talk now about the reception of the *Rarely heard music*. On the recordings of the *Munich, Berlin and Karlsruhe concerts* (1975) you can now and then hear insults from

the audience in reaction to what was happening. But in the last of the concerts, those reactions were actually prompted by Wiener's intentionally provocative announcements. Otherwise, these concerts prompted neither scandal nor disturbances, which is surprising when you consider the era when they took place. This was presumably because they were given before an audience that mostly already knew what to expect.⁸⁶² The *Quadruple concerto* (1977) at the Basel Music Academy brought its director Friedhelm Döhl briefly under pressure to justify his having allowed it, and the well-meaning review in the *Basler Zeitung* led to a forceful, negative letter from a reader. Otherwise, the musical élite of the city simply took note of Roth the "clown"⁸⁶³ with a similar degree of disdain to that shown by the broader public somewhat later, when Roth appeared as an "Adipositas victim" on the TV show *Zischtigsclub*. Instead, it was above all the "art freaks"⁸⁶⁴ who bought his records – and presumably hardly ever actually listened to them. What would interest me is this: did these concerts and records nevertheless have any specific reception history on the improvisation scene, or even beyond it? Or, in your opinion, have there been any other, similar approaches or concepts?

W. FÄHNDRICH I've no knowledge of Roth's musical activities having had any direct impact on "normal" music life or "normal" musical activities. Nor has the improvisation scene taken much conscious notice of him, as far as I know. One reason for this is perhaps because – seen from the outside – his musical excursions largely seemed to take place in the context of the visual arts. In that field, of course, a varied performance scene has developed since the 1960s that has encompassed all possible forms of visual actions and movement as well as musical actions and experiments. That music scene has not been accepted as anything "professional", and "classical" musicians have had something of a defensive attitude towards it. Those forms of musical activity were regarded – to use a phrase from Carl Dahlhaus – as self-sufficient acts. However, in several places (Darmstadt, Vienna, Berlin, Amsterdam, London and New York etc.) there have been people who were interested in what was happening on that scene, and who had a good idea of what was happening – or who even saw it very clearly – and saw the potential in these musical actions that were taking place outside established music life. Inasmuch as we can say that Dieter

Roth's musical activities belong to that movement, he presumably also contributed to a broadening of perspectives and to relativising opinions.

As for your last question: in a certain sense, there have been and there are things happening on the free improvisation scene that are comparable to Roth's approach to music. In my opinion, we can divide up the improvisation scene into two broad categories: there is a professional scene in which the musicians primarily aim to create a logical, compositionally convincing music – with musical results that have a claim to remaining interesting even when heard several times, and that unfold a strong suggestive power. Then there is a scene that has meanwhile grown very considerably in which the participants are mostly not professional and for whom their own pleasure is the primary purpose, and in which all their intentions are fulfilled in the moment of performance. From a musical, technical point of view, Roth belongs to the second group. But his great personal magnetism and his critical consciousness – based on immense knowledge and paired with a strong intuition – means that his musical works also become art.

M. ROTH Wiener mentioned two projects that to his mind are related, namely the Portsmouth Sinfonia and the Nihilist Spasm Band. Both stood for dilettante performance with musical schemata, which is what also particularly interested Wiener about the *Rarely heard music*. Apart from that, however, I see few similarities. In fact, the concept and the stylistic orientation of those two ensembles makes them easy to classify, whereas I keep recalling Björn Roth's remark that you can hardly explain the *Rarely heard music* without having actually experienced how it sounds.⁸⁶⁵

In our interview with him, Dominik Steiger mentioned Brion Gysin and Jean Dubuffet. The latter in particular had a fundamentally similar starting point to Roth, because he consciously made creative use of his non-mastery of instruments, and his music recordings aim to record a form of collaboration with his painter friend Asger Jorn [↗ Fig. 87]. But when you listen to them, it's striking how conventional they are in attempting to achieve a unity in their treatment of musical material, and just how much they understand music as an embodiment of processes of continuous motion and continuation, whereas for Roth, discontinuity and the ephemeral are crucial factors. In



Fig. 87 Jean Dubuffet and Asger Jorn at a recording of *Musique Phénoménale*, 1960/1961

this sense, the *Rarely heard music* is also different from the “instant composing” of certain improvisation ensembles such as the New Music Ensemble in the USA, the British group AMM or the Gruppo di Improvvisazione Nuova Consonanza, founded by Franco Evangelisti, which all oriented themselves on new music (or are in well-informed opposition to it) and who organised themselves by means of “cybernetic processes”⁸⁶⁶ that involved actions and reactions, and interactions that depended on listening and reacting to each other. To a certain degree, Roth seems to me to be closer to Luc Ferrari’s “anecdotal art”, especially to his exuberant acoustic documentation and his extremely media-sensitive manipulations of the seemingly everyday, often linked with an inherent self-commentary.⁸⁶⁷

In a lecture on the *Rarely heard music* (Cologne, 1998), Wiener mentioned Thomas Brinkmann’s techno record with the title *Totes Rennen*,⁸⁶⁸ which was presumably meant as a homage. We’ve already spoken of the Roth reception by the post-punk band Die tödliche Doris and the “brilliant dilettantes” of Wolfgang Müller. Mayer told us that the records of the *Rarely heard music* are currently in demand among DJs on the London club scene.⁸⁶⁹

How would you sum up now the artistic topicality of the *Rarely heard music*, and what in your opinion is the current significance of their musical practice?

W. FÄHNDRICH Since I'm not properly informed about today's perception of the historical *Rarely heard music* – at least not outside the circle of the steadfast few who are still involved with it – I can't say anything about its topicality today. Whether or not it will have a lasting place in the history of music and art is something I can't judge either, because we're still too close to it in historical terms.

But what I can say as someone who participates in it now and again, is that this type of music-making offers the participants a wonderful forum for musical journeys of exploration and discovery of the most varied kinds. For example, it compels professionally trained musicians (assuming that they want to do more than “just” amuse themselves) to question their own mechanisms (i.e. clichés) of playing and perception, to take a corresponding stance and draw the consequences. Whether or not the results are interesting for a critical audience depends very much on the circumstances: as with many music practices (or rather: music-making practices), the quality of what's offered depends solely on the people that are involved. What their musical and artistic abilities are, whether they have something to say that hasn't been said in that way before, whether the manner in which they act is original, fresh and surprising – all this is decisive for the relevance and quality of their actions and for their results.

So basically, I'd like to say: just as monodic music-making is still up-to-date (or can be) one thousand years after monody was replaced by polyphony, the same is true of the practices of the *Rarely heard music*.

M. ROTH That ties in with Döhl's judgement on the *Quadruple concerto* in the annual report of the Basel Music Academy: “D. Roth, known as a painter and writer, is still unselfconscious enough to make ‘his’ own music ... Music in the process of emergence out of nothing, as it were, from the unlearned, from someone learning by playing. Something to spur on the ‘professional’ musician who has ‘learned’ specific forms and at the same time has in part unlearned that there may also be a musical life outside these forms. Part of the essence of this experiment was also that success is not automatically programmed. Nevertheless, the Music Academy had to dare to carry out this experiment if it is to do justice to its duties and its responsibilities in the city”.⁸⁷⁰

The sentence that really interests me is “[Roth] is still unselfconscious enough to make ‘his’ own music”: does our music training perhaps prevent young people from unselfconsciously making “their” own music? To be sure, in many music genres today we barely notice any personal need to communicate on the part of the musicians. Why then shouldn’t we sometimes play “according to the mood of the day, according to the state of the individual artists, whether drunk or sober, hidden away, tender or aggressive” (Attersee)⁸⁷¹ instead of delivering highly polished interpretations such as are always rattled off on CDs? This yearning for something personal, however, is satisfied by offering sex appeal and “artist talks” – which are in the end mere self-stagings instead of “self-music” (Brus)! In *DIE VERBESSERUNG VON MITTELEUROPA* (“The improvement of Central Europe”), Wiener writes that “always when they play Mozart I yearn for Little Richard, for a cutlet, for Helga, for something or other; oh, Mozart, Mozart is a paragon”.⁸⁷²

Just like Döhl, I can sense a “musical life outside these forms” – one that is astonishingly varied and innovative. In the last five years, when I’ve discovered truly surprising, fascinating ideas it’s hardly been thanks to my visiting festivals or sitting on juries; it’s been thanks to YouTube. Roth and the *Rarely heard music* have much of this kind of creative playing – sometimes dilettante, and sometimes in collaboration with others. Of course you can’t learn the “Dieter style”⁸⁷³ at a conservatory, and I’m also curious and sceptical as to how the Icelandic musician Davíð Þór Jónsson intends to realise the *Radio Sonata* as a piano performance⁸⁷⁴ – that could quickly end up as just more posturing. But engaging with this music ...

M. HALDEMANN ... and with art and literature and film and theatre ...

M. ROTH ... encourages one to a productive confrontation with one’s own non-abilities, to accept the possibility, courageously, of one’s own personal failure, to play creatively with “melancholy and irony”⁸⁷⁵ (Roth) and, ultimately, to adopt an experimental, reflective and critical approach to one’s own profession. The *Rarely heard music*, and Roth in particular, play critically with disturbed, fractured modi of expression and thereby find their way to an art that is astonishingly communicative.

M. HALDEMANN This productive engagement has meant our e-mail conversation has turned out far longer than I expected, five months ago.

And with regard to my own field, the visual arts, I can only agree with you. Already in the way they link visual and auditory elements in a work, Roth and his co-musicians help us to overcome the boundaries of our own field. And to open up our ears and eyes. Furthermore, this openness to the unusual that they bring about is a good training against slipping into a routine, both for producers and recipients. In general it's a sign of the musical and artistic development of nascent modernism. What I mean is: "unlearning" things as a creative principle. The process of unlearning, as something aberrant, presupposes an object of reference. But it's not just things learnt that can be unlearned. Things unlearned are soon relearned again, and then have to be re-unlearned. If there is no tradition there can be no avant-garde ("Neutöner"), and every avant-gardist soon becomes a traditionalist (an "Alttöner"). This is a dialectical process that is a different kind of creative act of handing-down. In this sense, music history and art history are individual/collective games of listening and seeing. Quite independently of whether they are old or new: "living" music and art are in their present ultimately always rarely heard and rarely seen.

This is not just a matter of the creativity of the author, but also has to do with reception. Because several people can never hear the same thing and because no one hears the same thing twice. Because the rarely heard – according to Wiener – is dependent on the person who "understands" it⁸⁷⁶ and on his listening perspective. Also because that "same thing", according to Rühm, is heard differently, depending on the context and the "interpretational capacity" of the listener.⁸⁷⁷ For Björn Roth, the concept of "rarely heard music" also sounds somewhat "arrogant", because it implies an exclusive listening ability.⁸⁷⁸

M. ROTH For Wiener, however, it's also "elementary music tuition",⁸⁷⁹ as he says in the *Munich concert*, and when someone in the audience gets annoyed, he answers succinctly: "Bildende Künstler reden nicht ..." ("Visual artists don't talk"). Roth promptly puns on this: "Redende Künstler bilden nicht" (literally, "speaking artists don't educate"). And he says to the protester: "I'd like to ask you to hold your tongue!".⁸⁸⁰

Alfred Zimmerlin, who is Walter Fähndrich's successor as the lecturer for improvisation at the Basel School of Music, is currently dealing intensively with our topic in his classes, and he recently wrote the following to me: "Dieter Roth and his comrades-in-arms of the *Rarely heard music* created extreme situations in which they were surprised by unexpected, new qualities. The situations themselves had a lot to do with waiting, with an act of letting time go by. This waiting had a quality of non-expectation, from out of which suddenly the unexpected could emerge".⁸⁸¹

We can hardly wait for the two concerts of *Rarely heard music* to be performed in November 2014, where you, Walter, will play together with Rühm, Wiener, Nitsch and Attersee in Zug and at the Basel Music Academy.

W. FÄHNDRICH I naturally don't know what we'll do at these concerts. What we can predict is that no musical work in the usual sense will emerge, because presumably every one of us will follow his own ideas, reactions or plans that have not been discussed or rehearsed with the others. So I'm assuming that the result will be something along the lines of a radical polyphony; in other words a meshwork of the most varied sounds, materials, densities, structures, forms, arcs, aesthetics, and so on.

As I've said, this meshwork will be – not a work, but more of a range of listening experiences, in a certain sense also a multidimensional "musical range of spaces" in which the listeners may move and in which they can – and must – construct interesting musical connections and processes for themselves. "Must", because what we will offer (I hope) will follow no familiar, musically "meaningful" intentions and so both on an individual level and as a whole will be unpredictable. This kind of music means that as a listener and (of course) as a performer you find yourself repeatedly in unforeseen situations and are also repeatedly cast out of these too. Every individual listener is continually challenged to engage with his own mechanisms of perception and with his clichéd expectations – and every one of us has these. They are in part acquired, but to a large degree archetypal. I hope that our intentions of producing "rarely heard" music will succeed inasmuch as whoever among the listeners is open to something unusual will gain pleasure from it.



A Diary (film stills) 1982

Super 8 film recordings, sound,
collection [mac] musée d'art contemporain de Marseille



These film stills show: the record collection of the artist in his Stuttgart studio; Dieter Roth packing Hermann Nitsch's 6-part LP *ISLAND: eine sinfonie in 10 sätzen*; Dieter Roth at the piano, playing the Tonalphabet



*Selten gehörte Musik. Das Karlsruher Konzert,
Akademie der bildenden Künste, Karlsruhe,
29 October 1975, Dieter Roth Estate*



Relief mit 2 Trompeten 1962–1992

Acrylic, oil, glue, paint tubes, 2 trumpets, cans, foghorns, chocolate busts etc. on wood and cardboard, zinc tub, upper part: 150 × 115 × 60 cm, lower part: 132 × 130 × 42 cm, Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg



Nah und fern 1978/1980

Offset print, reworked, on cardboard, 46 × 64 cm,
Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg



The artist's work table with materials for the collage of the *Spaltersonate*

Dieter Roth Estate, photo: Dieter Roth



Splittersonate (splinters Nos. 64 and 86) 1976–1994
115 leaves, collage, Dieter Roth Estate

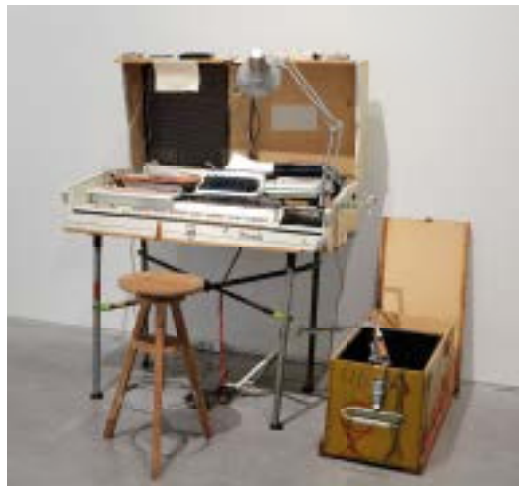


Splittersonate (splinters Nos. 98A and 99) 1976–1994

115 leaves, collage, Dieter Roth Estate



Exhibition: *tableau, objets musicaux* in the Galerie Bama, Paris 1982; besides the *Olivetti-Yamaha-Grundig Combo*, we can here see *Bar 3* and *Triptychon*



Olivetti-Yamaha-Grundig Combo 1965–1982

Typewriter, organ, cassette recorder, Polaroid camera, office materials, 200 × 170 × 120 cm, private collection



Dieter Roth and visitors at the *Olivetti-Yamaha-Grundig Combo* during the exhibition *Ladenhüter aus d. Jahren 1965-1983*, Galerie Onnasch, Berlin, 18 February 1983

Photo: Juergen Junker-Roesch



Dieter Roth with Björn Roth

Chicago Wandbild / Chicago Wall. Hommage to Ira and Glorje Wool 1977–1984

32 cassette recorders, tapes (master KMB), loudspeakers, 7 parts on canvas and 5 parts on cardboard, loudspeakers, electrical installations and 2 ring binders, 230 × 598 × 18 cm, property of the Kunstmuseum Bern and the Swiss Federation / Federal Office of Culture, Bern





Tonbild 1975–1998

Tools, painting, printing and drawing utensils, glue, acrylic, oil, watercolour, pastry, Polaroid photos, lamp, cassette recorder, loudspeaker, everyday objects and much more, on wood, partly under acrylic glass, 120 × 105 × 20 cm, Collection Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, I. B. Walker Acquisition Fund, 1995



Dieter Roth with Björn Roth
Keller-Duo 1980–1989

Box with hinged lids, drinking utensils, audio cassettes, radios, recording equipment, loudspeakers, oil, acrylic, marker pen, electric pianos, violin, cables and much more, 200 × 240 × 60 cm, Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg



Stummes Relief / Silent Relief 1984–1988

Smashed violin, glue, acrylic colours, marker pen, painting utensils, plywood, drawing utensils, rubbish, in a violin case in plexiglass case, 54 × 61 × 14 cm, Aldo Frei Collection



Stummes Relief 1986–1988

Accordions, painting utensils, tools, lemons, Polaroid photos, glass, acrylic dispersion, varnish, adhesives and much more on a plywood board, 118.5 × 121 × 28 cm, Kunstmuseum Stuttgart



Dieter Roth with Björn Roth and Eggert Einarsson
Grosse Tischruine 1978–1998

Installation with everyday objects and furnishings, painting utensils, instruments, audio recording and playing equipment and much more, installation view from the exhibition *Dieter Roth, Martin Kippenberger*, Hauser & Wirth Coppermill, London, England (2006), Dieter Roth Estate





Bild mit Geländer 1989–1992

Mixed media, 218 × 150 × 50 cm,
Anliker Collection, Emmenbrücke



Dieter Roth with Björn Roth and Karl Roth

Gebläse 1987–1993

Cassettes, radio/cassette machine, loudspeakers, wind instruments, photos, toys, everyday objects, Polaroid camera and painting utensils, 220 × 272 cm, Anliker Collection, Emmenbrücke



Dieter Roth with Björn Roth
Ringgebilde 1986–1993

Cassette recorder, video players, monitors, music instruments, household equipment, foodstuffs, paints, painting utensils, in steel rings, 330 × 330 cm, Schaulager, Münchenstein, Emanuel Hoffmann-Stiftung

Bar 1 (lautloses Bild mit Bar) 1983–1997

Audio cassettes, radio/cassette machines, loudspeakers, video cameras, wind instruments, everyday objects, painting utensils, glasses, bottles and much more, oil and acrylic on wood and canvas, 325 × 335 × 120 cm, Maria És Walter Schnepel Kulturális Alapítvány, Budapest / Weserburg – Museum für moderne Kunst, Bremen







Exhibition *Dieter Roth & Björn Roth, Bilder, Apparate, Bücher, Schallplatten, Filme*, Vienna Secession, 1995, (to the left: a section of *Gartenskulptur*)

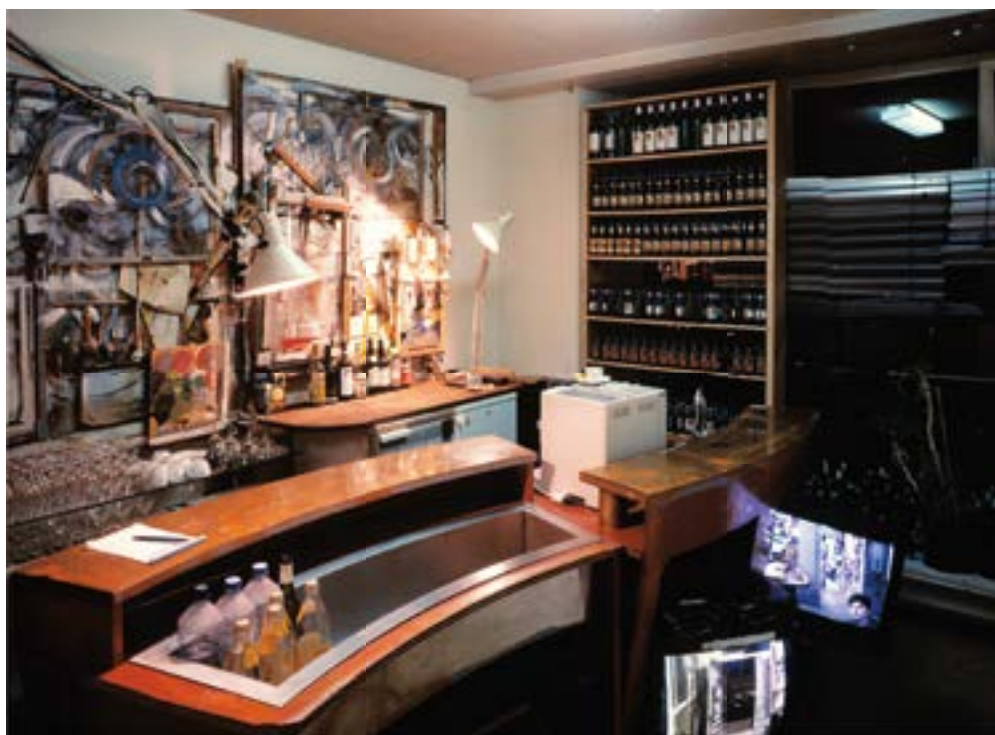
Photos: Margherita Spiluttini



Dieter Roth with Björn Roth

Bar 2 1983–1997

Installation with wind instruments, keyboard, everyday objects, loudspeakers, radio, PC, bar table, painting utensils, glasses, bottles and radio, audio cassettes, cassette machines, video monitors and much more, variable dimensions, ca 300 × 600 × 200 cm, private collection





Solo Szenen (film stills) 1997–1998

Video, sound



Next double page:
Dieter Roth's studio Bali in Mosfellsveit, Iceland







Notebook and diary 1986
20 × 11 × 3 cm, Dieter Roth Estate

Notes

Abbreviations:

CI = Dieter Roth. Collected interviews, ed. Barbara Wien, London 2002.

CW = Collected works.

RHC = Rarely heard conversations (*Selten gehörte Gespräche*). Video interviews with Christian Ludwig Attersee, Günter Brus, Hansjörg Mayer, Hermann Nitsch, Arnulf Rainer, Björn Roth, Gerhard Rühm, Dominik Steiger and Oswald Wiener, with time codes (see www.dieterrothmusic.ch).

First loop

- 1 Gerhard Rühm, “von der ‘wiener gruppe’ zum berliner kreis. texte, aktionen, grenzüberschreitungen”, in: *Miteinander Zueinander Gegeneinander. Gemeinschaftsarbeiten österreichischer Künstler und ihrer Freunde nach 1950 bis in die achtziger Jahre*, ed. Otto Breicha and Hubert Klocker, Klagenfurt 1992, pp. 13–48; Gerhard Rühm, “Einige Daten zu ‘Selten gehörte Musik’”, in: *Dieter Roth. Bücher + Editionen*, catalogue Raisonée, ed. Dieter Roth Foundation and Dirk Dobke, with texts by D. Dobke, F. Döhl, E. Jud, T. Kellein, T. Maka, S. Ripplinger, G. Rühm and B. Walter, with a CD with music examples by Dieter Roth (German/English version), London 2004, pp. 83–85; Friedhelm Döhl, “Dieter Roth und die Musik”, in: *ibid.*, pp. 79–82; Florian Neuner, *Selten gehörte Musik – Dilettantismus als Provokation: Dieter Roth*, programme on Deutschlandradio Kultur, broadcast 11.12.2007.
- 2 Björn Roth, who worked closely with his father from the late 1970s onwards and realised many works with him as co-creator, was not able to take part in this work (Björn Roth in conversation with the present writer on 3.12.2013 in Basel).
- 3 The live recordings from both Karlsruhe and Hamburg are held by the Hamburg archive, Dieter Roth Estate.
- 4 A live concert recording was found in the Hamburg archive, Dieter Roth Estate, and a remix of the same material is in the possession of Björn Roth in Álafoss (Iceland) (also Dieter Roth Estate).
- 5 CI 1976/79: “Dieter Roth INTERVIEW von Irmelin Lebeer-Hossmann”, in: *Gesammelte Interviews* (“Collected interviews”, hereinafter CI), ed. Barbara Wien, London 2002, p. 115.
- 6 David E. Wellbery, “Stimmung”, in: *Ästhetische Grundbegriffe. Historisches Wörterbuch in sieben Bänden*, ed. Karlheinz Barck *et al.*, vol. 5, Stuttgart/Weimar 2003, p. 705.
- 7 See Oswald Wiener: “Wozu überhaupt Kunst?“, in Wiener: *Literarische Aufsätze*, Vienna 1998. On p. 37 Wiener defines “Stimmung” as superior to “Begriff” (“concept”).
- 8 *TOTE RENNEN Lieder*, record side 2, beginning.
- 9 Rühm 2004 (as endnote 1), p. 83. The sound recordings from the 3rd Berlin poets’ workshop (Dieter Roth, Gerhard Rühm and Oswald Wiener) were published as LPs by edition hansjörg mayer; see also *Selten gehörte Gespräche* (“Rarely heard conversations”, hereinafter RHC), video interviews with Christian Ludwig Attersee, Vienna, 27.9.2012, Günter Brus, Graz, 1.10.2012, Hansjörg Mayer, London, 18.1.2012, Hermann Nitsch, Mistelbach near Vienna, 20.2.2013, Arnulf Rainer, Vienna, 28.9.2012, Björn Roth, Mosfellsbær (Iceland), 26. 6. 2013, Gerhard Rühm, Cologne, 11.9.2013, Dominik Steiger, Vienna, 27.9.2012, Oswald and Ingrid Wiener, Vienna, 26.9.2012, ed. Kunsthaus Zug, Edizioni Periferia, Hochschule für Musik Basel/FHNW; the interviews were carried out by: M. Haldemann, F. and G. Paravicini and M. Roth, assisted by J. Bruggmann; camera: A. Aufdermauer and K. Wegmüller; production: videocompany.ch, 2014. The interviews can be downloaded at www.dieterrothmusic.ch; here: RHC, Attersee, 00:28:30.
- 10 E.g. *Romentalquartett, R adio Sonate, Abschöpfsymphonie*; see also Wolfgang Müller (ed.), *Geniale Dilletanten*, Berlin 1982, pp. 45–49.

- 11 CI 1989: Hans-Joachim Müller, "Die Wolke innen, die Wolke außen. Ein Gespräch mit Dieter Roth", in: Vienna 2002, p. 420.
- 12 Oswald Wiener in: *Dieter Roth. Frühe Schriften und typische Scheisse. Ausgewählt und mit einem Haufen Teilverdantes von O. Wiener, Darmstadt/Neuwied 1973, 1975 vorm einstampfen bewahrt und in zusatzumschlag*, ed. edition hansjörg mayer, Stuttgart etc. 1975, no page numbers, ca p. 5.
- 13 See RHC, Mayer, 01:58:50.
- 14 Dirk Dobke, *Dieter Roth – frühe Objekte und Mater ialbilder: 1960–1975*, expanded and commented on by Dieter Roth, vol. 1: *Melancholischer Nippes*, Cologne 2002, p. 8.
- 15 Andreas Brenner, Matthias Halde-mann, Michel Roth, "Ut pictura musica. Ein interdisziplinäres Gespräch", in: *Harmonie und Dissonanz. Gerstl, Schön-berg, Kandinsky. Malerei und Musik im Aufbruch*, ed. Matthias Haldemann, in collaboration with the Musikhochschule Luzern, Kunsthaus Zug, Ostfildern 2006, pp. 22–295.
- 16 CI 1988: "'Der da in mir drinnen'. Ein Hörbild zur Person des Malers, Zeichners, Schriftstellers und Kunstmaschinisten Dieter Roth", Dieter Roth in interviews with Hannes Doblhofer, in: Vienna 2002, pp. 402, 404; CI 1995a: "'Ich zeige einfach, dass ich will und nicht kann!' Peter Nesweda sprach mit Dieter Roth anlässlich seiner gemeinsam mit seinem Sohn Björn konzipierten Ausstellung in der Wiener Secession (10.2.–19.3.1995)", in: Vienna 2002, p. 460; CI 1998c: "Gespräch Patrick Frey – Dieter Roth. Teil 1–9, 18./19.5., 25. und 28.5.1998, Restaurant Limmathof/Restaurant Mühlethal, Zürich", in: Vienna 2002, p. 545 f.
- 17 CI 1981a: "Dieter Roth. Antworten [sic] auf Fragen von Kees Broos", in: Vienna 2002, p. 247.
- 18 CI 1985a: "Ein langes Interview mit Dieter Roth. Mit und von Dieter Schwarz (1., 2. und 3. Teil) und die Fortsetzung in Basel on 20.5.1985", in: Vienna 2002, p. 337.
- 19 CI 1981b: "Dieter Roth/Peter Killer. Klagedieder über nichterhörte Klagedieder", in: Vienna 2002, p. 254.
- 20 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 131. See also: RHC, Björn Roth, 00:17:30.
- 21 See RHC, Attersee, 00:24:40.
- 22 RHC, Wiener, 03:03:00.
- 23 Dieter Schwarz, *Auf der Bogen Bahn. Studien zum literarischen Werk von Dieter Roth*, Zurich 1981, p. 139 and fig. 24.
- 24 *Ibid.*, p. 138 f.
- 25 See the page by Rainer and Roth with the words "Hier Distans mit Abstand auf beiden Seiten", printed in: Robert Fleck, *Rainer Roth Hier Distans. Arnulf Rainer, Dieter Roth & die Wiener Künstlerbohème der Siebziger*, Hamburg 2008, p. 25.
- 26 On clumsiness see RHC, Rainer, 00:36:40.
- 27 Gerhard Rühm, quoted as in Peter Weibel (ed.), *die wiener gruppe. the vienna group. a moment of modernity 1954–1960. friedrich achleitner, h. c. artmann, konrad bayer, gerhard rühm, oswald wiener*, Vienna/New York 1997, p. 635. Rühm's statement referred to the Vienna Group, not to Roth.
- 28 *Ibid.*
- 29 Quoted as in Dieter Roth, *Gesammelte Werke* ("Collected works", hereinafter CW), vol. 12 (Copley book): *erweiterte version des bei der copley foundation chicago 1965 erschienenen buches*, Stuttgart/London/Reykjavik 1974, no page numbers.
- 30 Reprinted in: Dieter Roth, CW, vol. 1: *2 Bilderbücher, versionen der im forlag ed reykjavik 1957 erschienenen bucher*, Stuttgart etc. 1976.
- 31 Reconstructed in two versions and published in: Dieter Roth, CW, vol. 8: *2 books. Rekonstruktion zweier varianten (A und B) des mappenwerkes von 1958–1961*, Stuttgart etc. 1976.
- 32 Also published as CW, vol. 12 (as endnote 29).
- 33 Published in an expanded version as CW, vol. 16: *MUNDUNCULUM, leicht korrigierte und erweiterte version des bei dumont schauberg köln 1967 erschienenen buches*, Stuttgart etc. 1975.

- 34 See Dieter Roth Foundation/Dirk Dobke (eds.), *Dieter Roth, Bücher + Editionen*, catalogue raisonné, with texts by D. Dobke, F. Döhl, E. Jud, T. Kellein, T. Maka, S. Ripplinger, G. Rühm and B. Walter, with a CD with music examples by Dieter Roth (German/English version), London 2004, p.185.
- 35 See Dobke 2002 (as endnote 14), p.112 ff.
- 36 This is why Roth's books are highly reminiscent of Stéphane Mallarmé's concept of "LE LIVRE, INSTRUMENT SPIRITUEL", in: Mallarmé, *QUANT AU LIVRE*, Bordeaux 2010, pp.16–20.
- 37 Original in English. Related by Ira G. Wool, quoted as in Dirk Dobke (ed.), *Dieter Roth in America*, London 2004, p.130. A variation on this anecdote is found in the same volume on p.81, told there by Dadi Wirz.
- 38 Especially in the *Novembersymphonie*, the *Romenthalquartett* and *The Kümmerling Trio plays No 1 & 2*.
- 39 See RHC, Mayer, 01:53:30.
- 40 *The Kümmerling Trio plays No 1 & 2*, first record side.
- 41 See the corresponding concepts of the Belgian artist Francis Alÿs.
- 42 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p.116.
- 43 See RHC, Wiener, 00:40:50.
- 44 Oswald Wiener in: Roth 1975 ('1973) (as endnote 12), no page numbers.
- 45 Letter from Karl-Ulrich and Vera Roth to Dieter Roth of 21.8.1975, Hamburg archive, Dieter Roth Estate.
- 46 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p.131.
- 47 CI 1982: "Ursula Perucchi-Petri, Zu der Druckgraphik von Dieter Roth. Ein Interview mit dem Künstler", in: Vienna 2002, p.259.
- 48 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p.96.
- 49 Quoted from Daniel Spoerri in: *Dieter Roth Puzzle*, directed by Hilmar Oddsson, Iceland 2008, 00:29:45.
- 50 Barbara Wien, "Biografie Dieter Roth", in: *Dieter Roth. Die Bibliothek*, ed. Johannes Gachnang in collaboration with Peter Erismann and Janine Perret Sgualdo, Centre Dürrenmatt, Neuchâtel/Bern 2003, p.139. CI 1981a (as endnote 17), p.248.
- 51 "Plakate zur Wanderausstellung Dieter Roth, Grafik und Bücher, Stuttgart 1972", in: Dieter Roth Foundation/Dirk Dobke (eds.) 2004 (as endnote 34), p.56 f.
- 52 He had earlier performed a brief scene in a Fluxus evening in ca 1963 in New York in which he drew on stage and then spoke with Daniel Spoerri about it. CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p.94.
- 53 CI 1986a: "Das Grosse Interview. Herr Roth, was sehen Sie, wenn Sie in den Spiegel schauen? Robert Naef sprach mit dem Mann, der im 'Ziischtigclub' die Schweizer Fernsehzuschauer so schockierte", in: Vienna 2002, p.386.
- 54 See the two assemblages *Gebläse* (1987–1993) and *Keller-Duo* (1980–1989).
- 55 CI 1998b: "Dieter Roth in conversation mit Felicitas Thun, Basle February 1998", in: Vienna 2002, p.470.
- 56 Dieter Roth plays piano (film 10:00:09:12–00:12:14; film 29:00:32:00–00:34:22; film 32:00:12:40–00:13:23 and 00:14:44–00:15:46). He sorts the records of Hermann Nitsch – *Island : eine sinfonie in 10 sätzen* (film 12:00:12:10–00:15:11). Several films show Roth whistling or listening to music.
- 57 CI 1987a: "Dieter Roth/Kees Broos. A talk with Dieter Roth in Basel", in: Vienna 2002, p.399.
- 58 See RHC, Mayer, 02:46:20.
- 59 CI 1981b (as endnote 19), p.254.
- 60 Arnulf Rainer and Dieter Roth, *Attrappentappen*, performance in the Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich, 2.2.1979, 180 minutes, colour, ed. Karlheinz and Renate Hein/P.A.P. Kunstagentur, Munich 1979.
- 61 See RHC, Mayer, 00:58:35.
- 62 In his library in his house in Hellnar (Iceland) there are several books about this comic.
- 63 See CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p.115; also RHC, Rühm, 01:15:40 and RHC, Brus, 00:18:20.
- 64 See Wiener 1998 (as endnote 7), pp.113–138.
- 65 *Ibid.*, p.135 f.
- 66 See *Romenthalquartett*, record side 5.
- 67 RHC, Björn Roth, 00:43:00; Edith Jud, *Filme und Videos*, in: Dieter Roth Foundation/Dirk Dobke (eds.) 2004 (as endnote 34), p.125.

- 68 Dirk Dobke recalls that, while recording a joint conversation in the Hamburg studio, Roth commented that it was about *Solo scenes* and pushed a cardboard box in front of him to hide him (in conversation with the present writer on 5.11.2013 at the exhibition *Dieter Roth/Björn Roth – Islands* in the Hangar Bicocca, Milan).
- 69 Dobke 2002 (as endnote 14).
- 70 The video recordings of the studio in St. Johann Vorstadt in Basel of 15.12.1997, No. 1; 31.12.1997, No. 1; 2./3.1.1998. Dirk Dobke saw his thesis in the recordings. (In conversation with the present writer on 5.11.2013 at the exhibition *Dieter Roth/Björn Roth – Islands* in the Hangar Bicocca, Milan).
- 71 Oswald Wiener in: Roth 1975 ('1973) (as endnote 12), no page numbers. The lack of capitalisation throughout is original.
- 72 RHC, Wiener, 02:26:10. In this regard see also: RHC, Björn Roth, 02:06:10.
- 73 Ina Conzen, *Dieter Roth: Die Haut der Welt*, Sohm Dossier 2, Cologne 2000, p.171.
- 74 See RHC, Mayer, 01:24:30; see also: CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p.100 and CI 1981c: "Mechthild Rausch/Dieter Roth. Interview (1981)", in: Vienna 2002, p.266. Also: Theodora Vischer und Bernadette Walter (eds.), *Roth Zeit. Eine Dieter Roth Retrospektive*, Baden 2003, p.134 f.
- 75 See CI 1981c (as endnote 74), pp.266–283.
- 76 Gerald Hartung, "Die Sprache", in: *Die Gesellschaft. Neue Folge*, vol. 7: Fritz Mauthner, Gerald Hartung, *Die Sprache*, ed. Martin Buber, Hans Diefenbacher, Marburg 2012, pp.141 ff., 161. The quotation refers to Fritz Mauthner's linguistic criticism.
- 77 *Ibid.*, p.184.
- 78 Oswald Wiener in: Roth 1975 ('1973) (as endnote 12), no page numbers.
- 79 Schwarz 1981 (as endnote 23), p.23.
- 80 The first layer of commentary can be heard in the *Symphonie 1*, the second layer in the *Symphonie 1A*.
- 81 *Novembersymphonie, Symphonie 1A*, fourth movement, record side 2.
- 82 Said on 26.9.2012 as part of the RHC, not documented on video.
- 83 Oswald Wiener in: Roth 1975 ('1973) (as endnote 12), no page numbers.
- 84 Quoted as in Schwarz 1981 (as endnote 23), p.140.
- 85 See Benjamin Meyer-Krahmer, *Aporien des Selbst. Selbstbeobachtung als künstlerischer Schaffensprozess bei Dieter Roth, ausgehend von Mundunculum*, doctoral thesis, Free University Berlin 2006, p.146 ff.
- 86 Andy Warhol, *Thirty Are Better Than One*, 1963, private collection.
- 87 Attersee describes Roth as a "great admirer of the Austrian language artists" in: RHC, Attersee, 12:55.
- 88 In a conversation between Dominik Steiger and the present writer in Vienna on 29.11.2011. See Fritz Mauthner, *Beiträge zu einer Kritik der Sprache*, 3 vols., 1901–1902 (new edition Frankfurt am Main etc. 1982); Mauthner, *Wörterbuch der Philosophie – Neue Beiträge zu einer Kritik der Sprache*, 2 vols., Munich etc. 1910–11 (reprint Vienna etc. 1997).
- 89 See Oswald Wiener, *DIE VERBESERUNG VON MITTELEUROPA, ROMAN*, Reinbek bei Hamburg 1969, p. CXXXVIII, and the "zwei studien über das sitzen"; *ibid.*, p. CXV–CXXXIII.
- 90 See Weibel (ed.) 1997 (as endnote 27), p.779.
- 91 Oswald Wiener in: Roth 1975 ('1973) (as endnote 12), no page numbers.
- 92 *Ibid.*
- 93 Quoted as in Arnulf Rainer, "DUETTE, DUELLE USW", reprinted in: Breicha/Klocker (eds.) 1992 (as endnote 1), pp.81–84, here p.81. Originally printed in: Roth & Rainer. *Misch- und Trennkunst*, exhibition catalogue, Kulturhaus der Stadt Graz, Graz 1976.
- 94 Gerhard Rühm, "vortrag/Symposium 'zweifel an der sprache'", published in: Gerhard Rühm, *Aspekte einer erweiterten Poetik. Vorlesungen und Aufsätze*, Berlin 2008, p.76. Rühm does not refer directly to Roth here. The lack of capitalisation is original.
- 95 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p.113. It should be mentioned here that this also plays a central role in Roth's oeuvre, e.g. in *Das Leben Chopins* (1981–1982).
- 96 CI 1998c: "Gespräch mit Dieter Roth on 15.5.1998. Das Gespräch führten Peter P. Schneider und Simon Maurer", in: Vienna 2002, p.482.

- 97 See Barbara Bichler, *SCH/Dichtung oder Protokollierung des Entstehungsprozesses. Dieter Roths Scheisse-Bücher 1966–1975*, Würzburg 2012, p. 23.
- 98 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 18.
- 99 *Ibid.*, p. 18 f.; CI 1985b: “Fortsetzung-sinterview mit Dieter Roth von Dieter Schwarz. II Teile”, in: Vienna 2002, p. 321 and CI 1985a (as endnote 18), p. 328.
- 100 CI 1985a (as endnote 18), p. 330; CI 1983: “Interview mit Dieter Roth am 25.9.83 von Dieter Schwarz”, in: Vienna 2002, p. 296; CI 1998a (as endnote 16), p. 559.
- 101 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 19.
- 102 *Ibid.*, p. 21.
- 103 *Ibid.*, p. 138.
- 104 CI 1985a (as endnote 18), p. 346.
- 105 *Ibid.*
- 106 Dieter Roth alias Fax Hundetraum, *Bastel-Novelle, Nr. 2. Das ORIGINAL (2. Teil) von Fax Hundetraum*, Stuttgart etc. 1975, p. 22.
- 107 In the *Remix* after ca 24 minutes.
- 108 “Eber-mässige Kraft”, a play on the words “Eber”, a boar, and “übermässig”, “excessive”. See RHC, Wiener, 01:56:10.
- 109 Dieter Roth, *Tagebuch 1975_1*, entry of 27.1.[19]73 [sic], Dieter Roth Estate.
- 110 The translation here endeavours to correlate with the syntax and grammar of the German original. Afterword to *ideogramme*, quoted roughly as in the manuscript, printed in: Vischer/Walter (eds.) 2003 (as endnote 74), p. 43. An impressive concrete example of a work’s genesis in collaboration is described by Dieter Schwarz in Schwarz 1981 (as endnote 23), p. 26 f. In this regard see also the monograph by Nils Röller, *Roth der Große*, Vienna 2013.
- 111 See CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 94 f.
- 112 *Dieter Roth: Die Radio Sonate/The Radio Sonata, Radiohaus-Klage-Musik, Heidelberg/Amsterdam/Mosfellsbær/Basel 2006* (1st edition of the record: Stuttgart/London 1978, 2nd edition as CD: Basel 1995).
- 113 See Roth in a letter to Mayer of 9.8.1978, Dieter Roth Estate, Hamburg; see also: Conzen 2000 (as endnote 73), p. 174.
- 114 See Dieter Roth, *Ein Lebenslauf von 5C Jahren*, ed. Dieter Roth and Kunstmuseum Luzern, accompanying book to the exhibition “Dieter Roth, Graphik, Bücher u.a.m. 1971–79”, Lucerne 1980, p. 2. And the statement (in English): “I’m like a champion 100 meters runner. He runs again and again, just to get more trophies for his living room”, in: CI 1978/82: “‘I only extract the square root’ Dieter Roth speaks. An Interview with Ingólfur Margeirsson”, in: Vienna 2002, p. 233.
- 115 Roth 1980 (as endnote 114), p. 17.
- 116 *Dieter Roth & Dorothy Iannone*, exhibition catalogue Sprengel Museum Hannover, ed. Sprengel Museum Hannover and Ahlers Pro Arte Foundation, with texts by D. Elger, O. Koerner von Gustorf, B. Walter and D. Iannone in interview with D. Dobke, Hanover/Berlin 2005.
- 117 CI 1981c (as endnote 74), p. 276. In *Dieter Roth’s Last Reading. Die letzte Lesung*, he recites his own texts and a poem by Heinrich Heine. See *Dieter Roth’s The Last Reading. Die letzte Lesung*, Heidelberg, 6.12.1996, ed. Boekie Woekie Books by Artists, with a foreword and notes by Malcolm Green, Heidelberg/Amsterdam 2008 (2003), DVD with booklet, p. 42.
- 118 *Radio Sonate*, after ca 40 mins. (as endnote 112).
- 119 See CI 1981b (as endnote 19), p. 254: “[Duchamp] felt above everything. With me, on the other hand, it’s a compulsion. I’m continually at it. Like a businessman. Under stress. I’m at its mercy. That’s the biggest difference from Dadaism”.
- 120 Note in the score of Erik Satie’s *Vexations*, Paris 1969.
- 121 See RHC, Mayer, 02:03:50.
- 122 See Schwarz 1981 (as endnote 23), p. 101 ff.
- 123 *Ibid.*, p. 86
- 124 Letter of 28.10.1974, Hamburg archive, Dieter Roth Estate.
- 125 CI 1981c (as endnote 74), p. 282.
- 126 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 138.
- 127 *Ibid.*, p. 101
- 128 *Ibid.*, p. 20; CI 1981c (as endnote 74), p. 276; CI 1986a (as endnote 53), p. 386. Rühm too speaks of “ecstasy” and “absence” when playing; see RHC, Rühm, 01:48:00.
- 129 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 114.

- 130 *Radio Sonate* (as endnote 112).
- 131 See CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p.100 and CI 1981b (as endnote 19), pp. 253–262.
- 132 RHC, Wiener, 01:06:10.
- 133 *Ibid.*
- 134 Dieter Roth's *The Last Reading. Die letzte Lesung*, 2008 ('2003) (as endnote 117).
- 135 *Ibid.*, p. 14 f.
- 136 Dieter Roth and Arnulf Rainer, *Duell im Schloss II*, Vornbach (Austria) 1976, 01:21:56. Stuttgart etc. 1976.
- 137 CI 1977: "Nigel Finch/Richard Hamilton/Dieter Roth", in: Vienna 2002, p.204 f.
- 138 Richard Hamilton, *In a Deserted Landscape*; Dieter Roth, *A Little Hotel by the Sea*; Richard Hamilton/Dieter Roth, "In a Little Hotel by the Deserted Sea – a Landscape", in: Richard Hamilton and/or Dieter Roth, *Collaborations of Ch. Rotham*, Stuttgart 1977, pp. 89–104.
- 139 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p.100.
- 140 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p.100.
- 141 CI 1982 (as endnote 47), p. 262.
- 142 See *Dieter Roth – Selbste*, exhibition catalogue for the Aargauer Kunsthaus, Aarau/Museum der Moderne, Salzburg, ed. Dirk Dobke and Stephan Kunz, with contributions by D. Dobke, B. Dogramaci, F. Kaltenbeck, S. Kunz, S. Neuburger and S. Ripplinger, Cologne 2011.
- 143 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 20.
- 144 CI 1995a (as endnote 16), p. 460.
- 145 RHC, Nitsch, 00:25:20.
- 146 See RHC, Mayer, 00:25:30 and 03:23:40.
- 147 See RHC, Wiener, 00:40:44.
- 148 CI 1989 (as endnote 11), p. 415.
- 149 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 114. See also RHC, Wiener 00:43:40.
- 150 CI 1983 (as endnote 100), p. 290.
- 151 CI 1994: "Interview mit Dieter Roth (Otmar Rychlik), Wien 21. Dezember 1994", in: Vienna 2002, p. 440. See RHC, Björn Roth, 03:49:25.
- 152 See Roth in a letter to Nitsch of early March 1981, quoted as in Dieter Roth, *Da drinnen vor dem Auge. Lyrik und Prosa*, ed. Jan Voss, Beat Keusch, Johannes Ullmaier and Björn Roth, Frankfurt on Main 2005, p. 275.
- 153 CI 1985a (as endnote 18), p. 346; CI 1994 (as endnote 151), pp. 440, 442; CI 1998a (as endnote 16), pp. 561, 563.
- 154 E.g. RHC, Nitsch, 00:15:20.
- 155 See RHC, Björn Roth, 03:51:00.
- 156 See *ibid.*, 03:48:40; also RHC, Mayer, 00:31:40.
- 157 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 100.
- 158 RHC, Brus, 00:39:50.
- 159 *Ibid.*, 00:41:20.
- 160 CI 1998c (as endnote 96), p. 477.
- 161 See Dobke 2002 (as endnote 14), p. 116.
- 162 See RHC, Wiener, 02:11:30.
- 163 See also: Hubert Klocker, "Zu den interdisziplinären Gemeinschaftsarbeiten zweier österreichischer Avantgarden", in: Breicha/Klocker (eds.) 1992 (as endnote 1), p. 164 f.
- 164 CI 1998c (as endnote 96), p. 485.
- 165 CI 1978a: "From an essay on Dieter Roth by Ari Kristinsson and Eggert Einarsson in 1978", in: Vienna 2002 (as endnote 5), p. 236.
- 166 See in this regard also Wiener's depiction of an unrealised idea of the Vienna Group and the audience reaction that they wanted to provoke with it: RHC, Wiener, 02:47:30.
- 167 CI 1978a (as endnote 165) p. 236. Original quotation in English.
- 168 *Ibid.*
- 169 Series *Literaturwurst* (1961–1970); CI 1998c (as endnote 96), p. 486.
- 170 CI 1970: "Dieter Roth im Gespräch mit Robert Filliou", in: Vienna 2002 (as endnote 5), p. 180.
- 171 RHC, Björn Roth, 03:50:45.
- 172 *Dieter Roth (1930) nato a Hannover lebt in (vive a) Mosfellsveit (Islandia) & on Walensee, Biennale Venezia 1982*, exhibition catalogue for the Venice Biennale, ed. Dieter Roth, n.p., No. 151, 31.3.1982, no page numbers.
- 173 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 137.
- 174 Venice 1982 (as endnote 172).
- 175 Conzen 2000 (as endnote 73), p. 43.
- 176 CI 1998c (as endnote 96), p. 476; CI 1998a (as endnote 16), p. 595.
- 177 *Berliner Konzert*, record side 4.
- 178 RHC, Wiener, 02:54:20.
- 179 *Ibid.*
- 180 RHC, Wiener, 02:47:30.
- 181 Anne Zauner and Erwin Köstler (eds.), *Die andere Seite. Bild, Klang, Text. Grenzgänge in der österreichischen Kunst des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Innsbruck 1996, p. 248.

- 182 Guido Bachmann in the *Basler Zeitung* of 25.2.1977.
- 183 See Sebastian Claren, *NEITHER. Die Musik Morton Feldmans*, Hofheim/Ts. 2000, p.168 ff.
- 184 See John Cage, *Silence*, from the American by Ernst Jandl, Frankfurt am Main 1995, p. 63 ff.
- 185 Quoted as in Jochen Golz, “‘Dilettantismus’ bei Goethe. Anmerkungen zur Geschichte des Begriffs”, in: *Dilettantismus um 1800*, ed. Stefan Blechschmidt, Andrea Heinz, Heidelberg 2007, p. 36.
- 186 Besides the layering there is also the principle of an episodic, unlimited sequence in that Roth gives any number of encores in the second half of the concert.
- 187 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Werke*, Hamburg edition in 14 vols., ed. Erich Trunz, vol. 12: *Schriften zur Kunst. Schriften zur Literatur. Maximen und Reflexionen*, Munich 1998, p. 481.
- 188 See RHC, Brus, 00:18:00.
- 189 For example in the first movement “Attacca” of the *Novembersymphonie*, where Roth frantically practices on his tenor horn. See also RHC, Mayer, 00:15:40.
- 190 *Die Radio-Sonate* (as endnote 112), Beginning of record side 2.
- 191 CI 1983 (as endnote 100), p. 295.
- 192 Quoted as in Schwarz 1981 (as endnote 23), p. 130. The orthography is original.
- 193 Quoted as in Benjamin Meyer-Krahmer 2006 (as endnote 85), p. 138.
- 194 See RHC, Björn Roth, 02:17:50; also RHC, Björn Roth, 03:00:10, where he describes the concrete creation of large quantities using another example.
- 195 *Romentalquartett*, record side 6.
- 196 See Dieter Roth, CW, vol. 38: *Kleinere Werke (3. Teil), Veröffentlichtes und bisher Unveröffentlichtes aus den Jahren 1972 bis 1980*, Stuttgart etc. 1980, p. 30.
- 197 *The Kümmerling Trio plays No 1 & 2*, record side 1.
- 198 Quoted as in Dobke (ed.) 2004 (as endnote 37), p. 90. Original in English.
- 199 These are numbered boxes with ten recorded endless tapes each, published by Hauser & Wirth, Zurich. Other materials that presumably belong are stored in Björn Roth’s studio in Álafoss (Iceland).
- 200 Tape A 27.7. is particularly remarkable with respect to “timelessness”.
- 201 CI 1998a (as endnote 16), p. 595.
- 202 Björn Roth in conversation with the present writer on 3.12.2013 in Basel.
- 203 Video recordings of 12./13.2.1998, 9.3.1998, 11.3.1998.
- 204 See RHC, Björn Roth, 03:26:50. Original in English.
- 205 The exhibition *Dieter Roth/Björn Roth – Islands* in the Hangar Bicocca in Milan (2013/14) demonstrated this in an exemplary manner.
- 206 See Martina Haidvogel, “*The music should be heard!*” *Konservierung und Strategien zur Erhaltung der interaktiven Wandinstallation Keller-Duo von Dieter und Björn Roth (1980–1989)*, thesis for the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, unpublished, 2010.
- 207 Up to the point of legal proceedings; see Dobke 2002 (as endnote 14), p. 48.
- 208 See *ibid.*, p. 136.
- 209 See Andreas Blättler, *Risse im Zeitgefüge. Intermediale Inszenierungen in den Installationen von Dieter Roth, Jeff Wall und Heath Bunting*, doctoral thesis at the University of Basel, Basel 2013, p. 51.
- 210 See Vischer/Walter (eds.) 2003 (as endnote 74), p. 206 ff. We should mention here that there were many exhibitions during Roth’s lifetime that were documented photographically and that made obvious the importance of actually using his objects. See also: RHC, Björn Roth, 02:55:20. The exhibition *Dieter Roth/Björn Roth – Islands* (2013/14) with *The Relatively New Sculpture* (2013) by Björn, Oddur and Einar Roth and Davíð Þór Jónsson opened up a further perspective: showing that a sculpture can function not just as a musical instrument, but at the same time as a concert stage.
- 211 Blättler 2013 (as endnote 209), p. 77 f.
- 212 CW, vol. 16 (as endnote 33), p. 24.
- 213 *Ibid.*, p. 51.
- 214 *Ibid.*, p. 29.
- 215 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 115.

- 216 The story of this work's conception was described vividly by Roth himself. See Dieter Roth, *Ladenhüter (aus den Jahren 1965–1983)*, Berlin 1983, pp. 13–15 (this was published in connection with the exhibition *Ladenhüter* in the Reinhard Onnasch Gallery, Berlin, 16.1.–12.3.1983).
- 217 CI 1994 (as endnote 151), p. 434.
- 218 Björn Roth in conversation with the present writer on 20.3.2013 in Zurich.
- 219 CI 1998c (as endnote 96), pp. 478, 480.
- 220 CI 1995a (as endnote 16), pp. 449, 452.
- 221 CI 1994 (as endnote 151), p. 435.
- 222 In the Dieter Roth Foundation in Hamburg, the works *Tibidabo-Hundezwinger 24 Stunden Gebell* and *Keller-Duo* can be heard in digitised form.
- 223 See RHC, Björn Roth, 02:59:30.
- 224 CI 1998b (as endnote 55), p. 468.
- 225 *Bilder- und Teppichausstellung. Dieter Roth, Ingrid Wiener, mit Björn und Vera Roth*, exhibition catalogue Holderbank 1987, ed. Holderbank Management und Beratung AG and Dieter Roth's Verlag, Basel 1987, p. 21.
- 226 CI 1985a (as endnote 18), p. 326.
- 227 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 115.
- 228 CI 1988 (as endnote 16), p. 406.
- 229 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 113.
- 230 CI 1986b: "Dieter Roth. Ein bißchen Müll schieben. Ein Gespräch mit Barbara Wien, 1986", in: Vienna 2002, p. 370.
- 231 CI 1998c (as endnote 96), p. 482.
- 232 According to Björn Roth in conversation with the present writer on 3.12.2013 in Basel.
- 233 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 113.
- 234 *Ibid.*
- 235 CI 1994 (as endnote 151), p. 434.
- 236 CI 1998c (as endnote 96), p. 480.
- 237 In the Hamburg archives of the Dieter Roth estate there are two files marked "Schall"; both include material for these quartets. One file, however, also contains further plans for music works.
- 238 Instead of "Quartett", Roth occasionally uses the Nordic spelling "Kvartett".
- 239 A version of the *Nahquartett* still remains in Roth's studio in Basel. According to Björn Roth, this has indeed become a "shelf-warmer" – people apparently only want to have the *Fernquartett* (Björn Roth in conversation with the present writer, 03.12.2013),
- 240 Roth 1983 (as endnote 216), p. 12 f.
- 241 See RHC, Björn Roth, 01:12:20.
- 242 CI 1982 (as endnote 47), p. 260.
- 243 *Ibid.*
- 244 CI 1989 (as endnote 11), p. 415.
- 245 CI 1978b: "Ira Wool/Dieter Roth, Video-interview, Chicago 1978", in: Vienna 2002, p. 227.

Second loop

- 246 Dieter Roth, "der blauen flut zweiter teil : | die BLAU ROT GRUEN SCHWARZ GRAU GELB BRAUNE FLUT | oder | das BRAUNE GESCHMIERE", in: Dieter Roth, CW, vol. 14: *die blaue flut*, Stuttgart etc. 1973, here p. 120.
- 247 Dieter Roth, *A look into the blue tide, part 2*, New York 1967, quoted as in Dobke (ed.) 2004 (as endnote 37), p. 42; CW, vol. 14 (as endnote 246), no page numbers.
- 248 Including: Arnold Schoenberg, *Stil und Gedanke. Aufsätze zur Musik, Gesammelte Schriften 1*, ed. Ivan Vojtěch, Frankfurt am Main 1976; Ernst Hilmar (ed.), *Arnold Schönberg. Gedenkausstellung 1974*, Vienna 1974; Erwin Stein (ed.), *Arnold Schoenberg. Briefe*, Mainz 1958; Arnold Schoenberg, *Style and Idea*, New York 1950 (with the mark of ownership "WIENER"); Jelena Hahl-Koch (ed.), *Arnold Schönberg, Wassily Kandinsky. Briefe, Bilder und Dokumente einer außergewöhnlichen Begegnung*, Salzburg/Vienna 1980; Merle Armitage (ed.), *Schoenberg*, Westport Conn. 1977. Regarding Roth's interest in Schoenberg, see also Roth's record text to *THY QUATSCH est min Castello* and RHC, Björn Roth, 01:03:00.
- 249 See RHC, Rühm, 00:22:00 and 02:33:30.
- 250 See RHC, Wiener, 02:16:10.
- 251 See RHC, Nitsch, 00:34:40.
- 252 See RHC, Attersee, 00:03:30.
- 253 Steiger described himself in the RHC as "Zupfgeigenhansl's great nephew" (referring to a famous collection of German folksongs by that name); see RHC, Steiger, 00:09:20.

- 254 See RHC, Björn Roth, 02:15:30.
- 255 See RHC, Brus, 00:07:30 and 00:11:20.
- 256 For assorted examples, see Günter Brus: *Nach uns die Mafflut! Theoretische Poesien*. Klagenfurt/Vienna 2003, p. 169 ff.
- 257 *Münchner Abendzeitung*, 30.5.1974. See also RHC, Attersee, 00:22:20.
- 258 For example, the inside cover of the record of the *Romenthalquartett* includes a text written by Brus entitled “MEINE ANSICHT ÜBER FREUNDSCHAFT”; in this regard see also RHC, Wiener, 00:08:40.
- 259 Quoted after Nitsch in: *Zusammenwerken – Zusammenwirken. Gemeinschaftsarbeiten von Günter Brus mit Künstlerfreunden seit 1970*, exhibition catalogue BRUSEUM/Neue Galerie Graz am Universalmuseum Joanneum, Graz 2012, p. 19. As is usual with Nitsch’s remarks quoted here, the original is written without capital letters throughout.
- 260 *Romenthalquartett*, record side 6.
- 261 Letter of 13.3.1974, Hamburg archive, Dieter Roth Estate. See also RHC, Nitsch, 01:06:00.
- 262 This list is held in the Hamburg archive, Dieter Roth Estate; correspondence with Gerhard Rühm.
- 263 For example the diaries 1972_2, 1973_2, 1976_1, 1982.
- 264 Dieter Roth, CW, vol. 39: *Kleinere Werke ([4.] Teil) Veröffentlichtes und bisher Unveröffentlichtes aus den Jahren 1980–81*, Stuttgart 1985, ca p. 65 ff. [contradictory page numbers].
- 265 See in this regard: RHC, Björn Roth, 00:56:20.
- 266 Friedhelm Döhl in conversation with the present writer, 27.9.2013.
- 267 See Dieter Roth, *Tagebuch 1975_1*, Dieter Roth Estate, pp. 224–229.
- 268 See RHC, Björn Roth, 00:08:10.
- 269 Letter from Vera Roth to Dieter and Wolfgang Roth of 20.7.1941, Hamburg archive, Dieter Roth Estate.
- 270 Letter from Vera Roth to Emma Jacobi of 29.8.1948, Hamburg archive, Dieter Roth Estate.
- 271 Undated letter (1957) to his parents. Quoted as in Vischer/Walter (eds.) 2003 (as endnote 74), p. 206, note 1. The letter is no longer extant.
- 272 Letter from Vera Roth to Dieter Roth of 27.2.1965, Hamburg archive, Dieter Roth Estate.
- 273 Letter from Dieter Roth to his parents of 26.7.1975, Hamburg archive, Dieter Roth Estate.
- 274 Letter from Karl-Ulrich Roth to Dieter Roth of 18.7.1971, Hamburg archive, Dieter Roth Estate.
- 275 Letter from Karl-Ulrich and Vera Roth to Dieter Roth of 29.12.1976, Hamburg archive, Dieter Roth Estate.
- 276 See Vischer/Walter (eds.) 2003 (as endnote 74), p. 19; CI 1981a (as endnote 17), p. 248; CI 1981c (as endnote 75), p. 266; CI 1995 (as endnote 16), p. 458; CI 1998a (as endnote 16), p. 544.
- 277 CI 1978b (as endnote 245), p. 216.
- 278 Letter to his parents, Zurich, 30.9.1944. Quoted as in Vischer/Walter (eds.) 2003 (as endnote 74), p. 19, note 2 (top). The letter is no longer extant.
- 279 Quoted after Hilmar Oddsson in: *Dieter Roth Puzzle*, directed by Hilmar Oddsson, Iceland 2008, 00:25:33–00:25:47. The letter is no longer extant.
- 280 CI 1998a (as endnote 16), pp. 570–574.
- 281 Letter from Greti Guyer to Dieter Roth of 2.1.1942, Hamburg archive, Dieter Roth Estate.
- 282 CI 1981a (as endnote 17), p. 248.
- 283 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 95.
- 284 See RHC, Björn Roth, 00:17:30; 00:45:10; see RHC, Attersee, 00:25:00.
- 285 CI 1985a (as endnote 18), p. 330.
- 286 RHC, Attersee, 00:53:50.
- 287 CI 1985a (as endnote 18), p. 335; CI 1994 (as endnote 151), p. 428.
- 288 Nevertheless, he designed the poster for the Donaueschingen Music Days 1976 together with Rainer.
- 289 *Novembersymphonie (Doppelsymphonie)*, record side D: 00:02:00–00:02:14.
- 290 See RHC, Wiener, 02:01:00.
- 291 RHC, Rühm, 01:47:00.
- 292 Quoted as in Bichler 2012 (as endnote 97), p. 104.
- 293 CI 1981c (as endnote 75), p. 274.

- 294 See Dieter Roth Foundation/Dirk Dobke (eds.), *Dieter Roth Originale*, collection catalogue of the Dieter Roth Foundation, ed. D. Dobke, with texts by L. Glozer and D. Dobke. With a virtual tour of the “Schimmelmuseum” on CD-ROM (German/English version), London 2002, pp. 44 and 220 f.
- 295 See Paul Klee, *Beiträge zur bildnerischen Formenlehre*, facsimile edition of the original manuscript of Paul Klee’s first cycle of lectures at the state Bauhaus in Weimar 1921/22, ed. Jürgen Glaesemer, Basel 1999, pp. 42–68.
- 296 See Zentrum Paul Klee (ed.), *Paul Klee. Melodie und Rhythmus*, Ostfildern 2006, pp. 157–222.
- 297 CI 1981c (as endnote 75), p. 268.
- 298 *Ibid.*, p. 266.
- 299 *Ibid.*; CI 1985c: “Dieter Roth /Barbara Wien: ‘Der Mensch kauft Ablass und macht’s an die Wand’”, in: Vienna 2002, p. 364; CI 1988 (as endnote 16), p. 402; CI 1994 (as endnote 151), p. 438.
- 300 See RHC, Wiener, 00:52:10; see also RHC, Rainer, 00:25:20.
- 301 RHC, Wiener, 00:54:20.
- 302 CI 1978b (as endnote 245), p. 218. Original in English.
- 303 Roth in a letter to Friedhelm Döhl of 12.09.1985; in this regard see also RHC, Rühm, 00:32:30.
- 304 CI 1978b (as endnote 245), p. 219. Rühm points this out, see RHC, Rühm, 00:32:30. Original in English.
- 305 CI 1978b (as endnote 245), p. 226.
- 306 CI 1981a (as endnote 17), p. 249.
- 307 Quoted as in Hans-Joachim Müller, “Ich binde das Bild an den Strichen fest. Knoten und Verknüpfungen im Werk von Dieter Roth”, in: *Über Dieter Roth. Beiträge des Symposiums vom 4. und 5. Juli 2003 zur Ausstellung “Roth-Zeit. Eine Dieter Roth Retrospektive”*, ed. Beate Söntgen and Theodora Vischer, Schaulager Basel, Basel 2004, p. 103.
- 308 *Radio Sonate*, back cover.
- 309 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 95. Roth and Williams even used a paper keyboard as “practising equipment” when travelling. See CW, vol. 39 (as endnote 264), ca p. 265 ff. [contradictory page numbers].
- 310 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 114.
- 311 CI 1981b (as endnote 19), p. 254
- 312 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 114.
- 313 Dobke 2002 (as endnote 14), p. 145 f.
- 314 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 114.
- 315 *Ibid.*
- 316 *Ibid.*
- 317 See *ibid.*
- 318 See *Dieter Roth*, directed by Edith Jud, Switzerland 2003, DVD, 00:58:30–00:59:37; see also RHC, Björn Roth, 00:30:30, 00:30:45, 00:49:00.
- 319 CW, vol. 16 (as endnote 33), p. 103.
- 320 See Oswald Wiener, “‘Klischee’ als Bedingung intellektueller und ästhetischer Kreativität”, in: Wiener, 1998 (as endnote 7), p. 136.
- 321 Hamburg archive, Dieter Roth Estate, “Schall” file.
- 322 CI 1994 (as endnote 151), p. 433.
- 323 CI 1985c (as endnote 299), p. 363.
- 324 Venice 1982 (as endnote 174), Nos. 126, 127, 20.3.82; No. 151, 31.3.82, no page numbers.
- 325 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 108.
- 326 Dieter Roth, *Ein Tagebuch (aus dem Jahre 1982)/A Diary (from the year 1982)*, Basel 1984, No. 181, no page numbers.
- 327 Thomas Kessler, Thüning Bräm and Felix Lindenmaier as contemporary witnesses of the *Quadrupelkonzert* in conversation with the present writer; see also RHC, Rühm, 00:27:20 and 02:12:10.
- 328 *Freunde – Friends – d’Fründe: Karl Gerstner, Diter Rot, Daniel Spoerri, André Thomkins und ihre Freunde und Freundesfreunde*. Publication on the occasion of the exhibition in the Kunsthalle Bern, 1969 and in the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf in 1969, Stuttgart 1969, section “Dieter Roth”, p. 7.
- 329 *Ibid.*
- 330 Dieter Roth, *Tagebuch 1986*, entry of 22.06.1986, Dieter Roth Estate.
- 331 See RHC, Attersee, 00:59:50.
- 332 Dieter Roth, diary 1986, entry of 15.06.1986.
- 333 See Dieter Roth, *Die Splittersonate*, splinter No. 26A (letter to Attersee, dated 20.11.83).
- 334 *Ibid.*
- 335 Friedhelm Döhl in conversation with the present writer, 27.9.2013; see also: Dieter Roth, *Tagebuch 1985_1*, 28.8.1985, Dieter Roth Estate.

- 336 See Döhl 2004 (as endnote 1), p. 80; see also: Dieter Roth, *Tagebuch 1985_1*, 10.9.1985, Dieter Roth Estate.
- 337 See *Die Splittersonate*, splinter No. 54.
- 338 Roth 1984 (as endnote 326), no page numbers.
- 339 Björn Roth in conversation with the present writer on 20.3.2013 in Zurich.
- 340 CI 1998a (as endnote 16), p. 563.
- 341 Dieter Roth, CW, vol. 18: *kleinere werke (1. Teil) veröffentlichtes und bisher unveröffentlichtes aus den Jahren 1953 bis 1966*, Hellnar etc. 1971, p. 37.
- 342 See z. B. *Splittersonate*, splinter No. 42.
- 343 Hamburg archive, Dieter Roth Estate.
- 344 *Grosser Teppich. Sammlung flachen Materials (z. T. Abfall)*, exhibition catalogue for the Galerie Marlene Frei, Zurich 1986, no page numbers. See Vischer/Walter (eds.) 2003 (as endnote 74), p. 234.
- 345 *Splittersonate*, splinter No. 101.
- 346 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 95.
- 347 *Ibid.*
- 348 Roth spoke about his teaching in: Robert Filliou: *Lehren und Lernen als Aufführungskünste*, Cologne 1970, p. 146.
- 349 Quoted as in Dobke (ed.) 2004 (as endnote 37), p. 69. Original in English.
- 350 CI 1983 (as endnote 100), p. 288. Further research into these recordings has remained regrettably without success to the present day.
- 351 Dieter Roth, CW, vol. 40: *Bücher und Grafik (1. Teil). Aus den Jahren 1947 bis 1971*, Stuttgart etc. 1972, no page numbers.
- 352 See RHC, Nitsch, 00:06:35.
- 353 Film 12, 00:12:10–00:15:11.
- 354 1980, concerts in Basel, Vienna, Innsbruck and Munich; RHC, Nitsch 00:09:00–00:09:13.
- 355 Nitsch sees the similarities between his music and that of Roth in what is “amorphous”. See RHC, Nitsch, 00:14:40.
- 356 CI 1986/1994: “Aðalsteinn Ingólfsson: Transcripts of interviews with Dieter Roth 1986”, in: Vienna 2002, p. 393.
- 357 See Theodor W. Adorno, “Vers une musique informelle”, in: Adorno, *Kranichsteiner Vorlesungen*, ed. Klaus Reichert and Michael Schwarz, Section IV, *Nachgelassene Schriften*, vol. 17, Frankfurt am Main 2014, pp. 381–446.
- And: Gianmario Borio, *Musikalische Avantgarde um 1960. Entwurf einer Theorie der informellen Musik*, Laaber 1993.
- 358 See also CW, vol. 18 (as endnote 341), p. 206.
- 359 John Cage, *Notations*, New York 1969, no page numbers.
- 360 See CW, vol. 18 (as endnote 341), p. 252 and CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 118.
- 361 See CW, vol. 18 (as endnote 341), pp. 202–205.
- 362 La Monte Young (ed.), *An Anthology of Chance Operations*, with contributions by Georges Brecht, George Maciunas etc., New York 1963, no page numbers.
- 363 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 94.
- 364 *Ibid.*
- 365 *Ibid.*, p. 94 f. The shifts in tense are original.
- 366 Quoted as in Golz 2007 (as endnote 185), p. 35.
- 367 In an interview, Roth made a differentiation here, seeing a connection between his time in America and the *Rarely heard music*; see CI 1983 (as endnote 100), p. 289.
- 368 See RHC, Björn Roth, 02:33:00.
- 369 See Dieter Roth’s (diary) entry in: *SELTEN GEZEIGTE KUNST. Gruppenarbeiten aus Berlin 1975 von Attersee, Günter Brus, Hermann Nitsch, Dieter Roth, Gerhard Rühm, Dominik Steiger, Oswald Wiener*, exhibition catalogue for the Galerie Klewan, Munich 1979, no page numbers. See also: RHC, Björn Roth, 01:38:20.
- 370 See Brus in the programme book for: *Selten gehörte Musik. Das Berliner Konzert, 27.9.1974*, Berlin 1974, no page numbers.
- 371 *Ibid.*
- 372 *Ibid.*
- 373 See RHC, Wiener, 01:52:20.
- 374 See Müller (ed.) 1982 (as endnote 10).
- 375 See RHC, Rainer, 00:53:20.
- 376 RHC, Attersee, 00:32:40.
- 377 *Novembersymphonie (Doppelsymphonie)*, “Symphonie 1A”, 4th movement: Subito (72 bagatelles).
- 378 See RHC, Attersee, 00:33:00.
- 379 RHC, Attersee, 00:09:20.
- 380 See RHC, Rühm, 01:11:10.
- 381 RHC, Rainer, 00:21:00.
- 382 For example the diaries 1972_2, 1973_2, 1976_1, 1982.

- 383 Dieter Roth, *Tagebuch 1972_2*, entry of 9.8.1972, Dieter Roth Estate.
- 384 *Ibid.*, entry of 11.8.1972.
- 385 2. *literarisches cabaret*, 15.4.1959 in the Porrhaus, Vienna.
- 386 See RHC, Wiener, 03:03:00.
- 387 In this regard see also: RHC, Björn Roth, 01:57:20.
- 388 See RHC, Mayer, 00:58:40.
- 389 Quoted after Arnulf Rainer, "DUETTE, DUELLE USW.," reprinted in: Fleck 2008 (as endnote 25), pp. 233–236, here p. 234.
- 390 See Dieter Roth, *Tagebuch 1975_1*, entry of 5.2.[1975(?); possibly already 1973], Dieter Roth Estate.
- 391 Quoted from Roth in: Voss etc. 2005 (as endnote 152), p. 117.
- 392 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 38.
- 393 See *ibid.*, p. 129 f.
- 394 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 37.
- 395 *Ibid.* See also Dieter Roth, CW, vol. 19: *kleinere werke (2. teil) veröffentlichtes und bisher unveröffentlichtes aus den jahren 1967 bis 1971*, Hellnar etc. 1971, pp. 490–494. Roth published the script in: CW, vol. 39 (as endnote 264), pp. 275–277.
- 396 CI 1994 (as endnote 151), p. 428.
- 397 CI 1985a (as endnote 18), p. 338 f.
- 398 See RHC, Nitsch, 00:48:50 and Mayer, 03:19:30.
- 399 See Hermann Nitsch, *Zur Theorie des Orgien Mysterien Theaters: Zweiter Versuch*, Salzburg/Vienna 1995; also Harald Szeemann, *Der Hang zum Gesamtkunstwerk. Europäische Utopien seit 1800*, Aarau 1983.
- 400 See CI 1994 (as endnote 151), p. 428; see also RHC, Mayer, 02:00:40.
- 401 See RHC, Björn Roth, 01:03:00.
- 402 See Richard Wagner, *Oper und Drama*, ed. and with commentary by Klaus Kropffinger, Stuttgart 1984, p. 305 ff.; Friedrich Nietzsche, "Richard Wagner in Bayreuth (Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen, Viertes Stück)", in: Nietzsche, *Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli etc., section 4, vol. 1, Berlin 1967, p. 5.
- 403 CI 1994 (as endnote 151), p. 428.
- 404 See RHC, Nitsch, 01:22:10.
- 405 Nietzsche 1967 (as endnote 402), p. 5.
- 406 Quoted as in Dobke 2002 (as endnote 14), p. 91.
- 407 See RHC, Mayer, 02:39:10.
- 408 CI 1982 (as endnote 47), p. 261. (The interview was conducted in 1981.)
- 409 See Umberto Eco, *Das offene Kunstwerk*, Frankfurt am Main 1977.
- 410 See Schwarz 1981 (as endnote 23), p. 8; see also: RHC, Mayer, 00:56:50.
- 411 RHC, Attersee, 01:22:50.
- 412 See Rainer in: Breicha/Klocker (eds.) 1992 (as endnote 93), p. 84.
- 413 See also: CW, vol. 19 (as endnote 395), p. 289.
- 414 Oswald Wiener in: Roth 1975 (1973) (as endnote 12), no page numbers.
- 415 *Ibid.*
- 416 *Ibid.*
- 417 Quoted after Roth in: Voss etc. 2005 (as endnote 152), p. 137.
- 418 See CI 1981c (as endnote 75), p. 266.
- 419 Hans Rudolf Vaget, "Dilettantismus als Politikum: Wagner, Hitler, Thomas Mann", in: Blechschmidt/Heinz (eds.) 2007 (as endnote 185), pp. 369–385. All other quotations: *ibid.* Also: Alexander Rosenbaum, *Der Amateur als Künstler. Studien zu Geschichte und Funktion des Dilettantismus im 18. Jahrhundert*, Berlin 2010.
- 420 Vaget 2007 (as endnote 419), p. 375. Nietzsche too was described as a "Dilettante of philosophy". See "Friedrich Nietzsche", in: *Philosophisches Lesebuch*, vol. 3, ed. Hans-Georg Gadamer, Frankfurt on Main 1990 [initially 1965], p. 198.
- 421 Rainer in: Fleck 2008 (as endnote 25), p. 234.
- 422 CI 1995b: "Dieter Roth/Hannes Doblhofer. Gespräch in Vienna 1995", in: Vienna 2002, p. 455; CI 1995a (as endnote 16), pp. 458, 460; CI 1998a (as endnote 16), pp. 560, 569.
- 423 CI 1989 (as endnote 11), p. 420.
- 424 CI 1988 (as endnote 16), p. 406.
- 425 CI 1998a (as endnote 16), p. 561.
- 426 CW, vol. 40 (as endnote 351), no page numbers.
- 427 Friedhelm Döhl in the evening programme for the *Quadrupelkonzert*, dated 22.02.1977. Archive of the Basel Music Academy.
- 428 RHC, Mayer, 01:20:40.
- 429 See Friedhelm Döhl in: *Jahresbericht der Musik-Akademie der Stadt Basel 1976/1977*, Basel 1976/1977, p. 21 f.
- 430 See RHC, Björn Roth, 01:18:40.

- 431 *POETRIE // 2 // 301 kleine wolken in memoriam big J und big G/ein fingierter Bericht aus der inneren Fremde/von D. R. dem Schweizer im inneren Ausland/48 tiefliegende Wolken für Rudolf Rieser*, Stuttgart 1967, no page numbers, No. 267.
- 432 Dieter Roth, “2 Kommentare zur Misch- und Trennkunsausstellung in der Galerie Grünangergasse 12: Übertragung einer Tonbandaufzeichnung für das Fernsehen”, in: *Misch- und Trennkunst. Roth & Rainer*. Publication on the occasion of the exhibition in the Galerie Klewan, Munich 1979, publication by Dieter Roth and Arnulf Rainer, ed. Galerie Klewan, Munich 1979, no page numbers.
- 433 Karl Rosenkranz, *Ästhetik des Hässlichen*, Königsberg 1853, reprint ed. Dieter Kliche, Stuttgart 2007.
- 434 Theodor W. Adorno, *Ästhetische Theorie, Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 7, Frankfurt am Main 2003 (1970), pp. 74–85.
- 435 Peter Gorsen, *Das Prinzip Obszön. Kunst, Pornographie und Gesellschaft*, Reinbek bei Hamburg 1969.
- 436 Roth 1980 (as endnote 114).
- 437 See Döhl 2004 (as endnote 1), p. 82.
- 438 See CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 103. See also: Blättler 2013 (as endnote 209), p. 49 f.
- 439 *Karlsruher Konzert*, tape reel “Karlsruhe, vol. 2”, Hamburg archive, Dieter Roth Estate.
- 440 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 101.
- 441 Dieter Roth, *Tagebuch 1976_2*, entry of 3.2.1978, p. 341.
- 442 Roth 1979 (as endnote 432), no page numbers.
- 443 Quoted as in Weibel (ed.) 1997 (as endnote 27), p. 625.
- 444 *Ibid.*
- 445 CW, vol. 16 (as endnote 33), p. 32.
- 446 *Ibid.*, p. 34.
- 447 *TOTE RENNEN Lieder*, record side 1, end.
- 448 *TOTE RENNEN Lieder*, record side 2, end.
- 449 See Dobke 2002 (as endnote 14), p. 8.
- 450 File with correspondence H. Nitsch – A. Rainer, Hamburg archive, Dieter Roth Estate. (3 pages of typescript, manuscript note: this is 1 arrangement of the “Selbstbevorwortung”, i.e. “self-prefacing”, a pun on “Selbstbevorwortung”, namely “self-endorsement”).
- 451 CI 1978/1982 (as endnote 114), p. 233. Original in English.
- 452 CI 1985a (as endnote 18), p. 330 f.
- 453 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 95.
- 454 Quoted after Roth in: Voss etc. 2005 (as endnote 152), p. 45.
- 455 See in this regard also: RHC, Mayer, 01:58:30.
- 456 Oswald Wiener in: Roth 1975 (1973) (as endnote 12), no page numbers.
- 457 Wiener 1998 (as endnote 7), p. 30.
- 458 RHC, Wiener, 00:59:00.
- 459 *Ibid.*
- 460 CI 1989 (as endnote 11), p. 416.
- 461 This is the same title as a series of graphic works from 1973.
- 462 CI 1985a (as endnote 18), p. 332.
- 463 Rühm, quoted as in Weibel (ed.) 1997 (as endnote 27), p. 625.
- 464 *Ibid.*, p. 357
- 465 *Ibid.*, p. 761
- 466 *Ibid.*
- 467 Brus in the programme for: *Selten gehörte Musik. Das Berliner Konzert*, 27.9.1974, Berlin 1974, no page numbers.
- 468 Postcard from Wiener to Roth, 13.7. [74], Hamburg archive, Dieter Roth Estate.
- 469 Wiener in the programme for: *Selten gehörte Musik. Das Berliner Konzert*, 27.9.1974, Berlin 1974, no page numbers.
- 470 RHC, Attersee, 00:23:10.
- 471 Especially in the *Hamburger Lithographieworkshop* 1974.
- 472 See RHC, Brus, 00:50:50.
- 473 See RHC, Rühm, 01:41:10 and RHC, Wiener, 00:38:30.
- 474 *Abschöpfungssymphonie*, record 1, B side.
- 475 See Weibel (ed.) 1997 (as endnote 27), pp. 427–431.
- 476 See RHC, Rühm, 00:46:50.
- 477 See *Zeichnung mit Interferenz*, 1957 in: Dieter Roth Foundation/Dirk Dobke (ed.) 2002 (as endnote 294), p. 221.
- 478 CI 1987a (as endnote 57), p. 398. There are two of these works that are held today by the Kunsthaus Zürich under the title *Mimi Klein 1 und Mimi Klein 2*.
- 479 *Dieter Roth. Originale 1946–74*, exhibition catalogue for Kunstverein Hamburg, Hamburg 1974, pp. 20–24.

- 480 Hamilton/Roth 1977 (as endnote 138), p.105 ff.; CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 133.
- 481 See CW, vol. 40 (as endnote 351), no page numbers.
- 482 RHC, Wiener, 00:31:30.
- 483 Dieter Roth, "Urbane Matsche", in: CW, vol. 19 (as endnote 395), pp. 420–425.
- 484 See RHC, Björn Roth, 00:43:00.
- 485 E.g. Dieter Roth: *Die Splittersonate*, splinter No. 13.
- 486 E.g. *ibid.*, splinter No. 37.
- 487 E.g. *ibid.*, splinter No. 36.
- 488 See Zauner/Köstler (eds.) 1996 (as endnote 181), p. 242.
- 489 CI 1982 (as endnote 47), p. 260.
- 490 See RHC, Brus, 00:34:40.
- 491 Holderbank 1987 (as endnote 225), p.18 ff.
- 492 *Ibid.*
- 493 See RHC, Björn Roth, 01:00:40.
- 494 See also RHC, Rühm, 01:32:30 and also: Döhl 2004 (as endnote 1), p. 80.
- 495 See Dieter Roth, *stüke sind zwischendinger*, in: CW, vol. 18 (as endnote 341), p. 2 f.
- 496 See RHC, Rühm, 02:14:00.
- 497 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 113 f.
- 498 See RHC, Rühm, 01:32:30.
- 499 In this regard see also the publications illustrated by Dieter Roth: C. E. Shannon and J. McCarthy (eds.), *Studien zur Theorie der Automaten (Automata Studies)*, expanded edition and translation by Franz Kaltenbeck and Peter Weibel, with drawings by Dieter Roth, Munich 1974.
- 500 Roth 1983 (as endnote 216), p. 2 f.
- 501 See also a variant with the number alphabet in: CW, vol. 14 (as endnote 246), p. 99.
- 502 Dieter Roth, *Alfabet für Emmett Williams*, in: CW, vol. 19 (as endnote 395), pp. 258–260.
- 503 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 113.
- 504 Roth 1983 (as endnote 216), pp. 3–5.
- 505 *Ibid.*, p. 6.
- 506 Film 32, timecode: 00:12:40–00:13:23.
- 507 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 113.
- 508 CW, vol. 19 (as endnote 395), pp. 258–260.
- 509 CI 1985a (as endnote 18), p. 330.
- 510 See Dieter Roth, *Tagebuch 1978_2*, entry of 28.10.1978, Dieter Roth Estate.
- 511 Film 13, timecode: 00:10:30–00:12:45; Film 29: 00:32:00–00:34:22.
- 512 Dieter Roth, directed by Edith Jud, CH 2003, DVD: 00:35:00–00:35:26. See Björn Roth: "Dieter was always clowning, but with this serious undertone always", RHC, 02:40:00.
- 513 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke in drei Bänden*, ed. Karl Schlechta, vol. 2, Munich 1955, p. 113. Quoted as in Friedrich Nietzsche, *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, in: Werner Hofmann, "Nietzsches Doppelblicke und Gegenwahrnehmungen", in: Hofmann, *Die gesplattene Moderne. Aufsätze zur Kunst*, Munich 2004, p. 62.
- 514 Thomas Eickhoff, *Kultur-Geschichte der Harmonika*, Kamen 1991; Christoph Wagner, *Das Akkordeon oder die Erfindung der populären Musik. Eine Kulturgeschichte*, Mainz etc. 2001.
- 515 Dieter Roth, "Mein Auge ist ein Mund", in: Scheisse. *Neue Gedichte von Dieter Roth*, Providence 1966, No. 16; CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 100.
- 516 Gerhard Rühm, *Novembersymphonie*, "Symphonie 1 A", 4th movement.
- 517 But elsewhere, Rühm finds this exciting. See Zauner/Köstler (ed.) 1996 (as endnote 181), p. 244 ff.
- 518 See RHC, Wiener, 00:59:00 and 02:44:30; also RHC, Rühm, 00:20:40.
- 519 Regarding Roth's attitude to music-making, see: RHC, Wiener, 00:52:10.
- 520 *Abschöpfungssymphonie*, record 3, B side.
- 521 Günter Brus on an unpublished sketch for the cover to the *Berliner Konzert*, Hamburg archive, Dieter Roth Estate.
- 522 See Rainer Nonnenmann, *Angebot durch Verweigerung. Die Ästhetik instrumentalkonkreten Klangkomponierens in Helmut Lachenmanns Orchesterwerken*, Mainz etc. 2000, especially pp. 149–162.
- 523 Quoted after Rühm in: Breicha/Klocker (eds.) 1992 (as endnote 1), p. 39. See RHC, Wiener, 01:02:00.
- 524 See RHC, Wiener, 00:00:50 and 01:01:10.
- 525 RHC, Wiener, 01:02:00.
- 526 Rainer in: Breicha/Klocker (eds.) 1992 (as endnote 93), pp. 81–84.
- 527 See RHC, Rainer, 00:46:10.

- 528 Letter from Wiener to Roth of 10.2. [1976], Hamburg archive, Dieter Roth Estate.
- 529 Letter from Roth to Wiener of 25.2.1976, Hamburg archive, Dieter Roth Estate.
- 530 *Ibid.*
- 531 RHC, Steiger, 03:39:00.
- 532 *Dieter & Björn Roth*, exhibition catalogue for MAC, Marseille, ed. Dieter Roth and MAC, Marseille, Basel/Marseille 1997.
- 533 CI 1998a (as endnote 16), p. 544.
- 534 His father worked as an accountant with the company von Roll in Bellach near Solothurn. See Vischer/Walter (eds.) 2003 (as endnote 74), p. 21.
- 535 See RHC, Mayer, 01:51:00.
- 536 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Rhizom*, Berlin 1977. Roth describes himself also as a “businessman” “under stress” in: CI 1981a (as endnote 17), p. 254.
- 537 Deleuze/Guattari 1977 (as endnote 536), p. 16.
- 538 Gabriel Kuhn, *Tier-Werden, Schwarz-Werden, Frau-Werden. Eine Einführung in die politische Philosophie des Post-strukturalismus*, Münster 2005, p. 63.
- 539 CI 1985c (as endnote 299), p. 363.
- 540 Günter Brus (ed.), *Die Schastrommel*, No. 9, Results of the 1st Berlin poets’ workshop (30.10.–7.11.1972), Participants: C. L. Attersee, G. Brus, D. Roth, G. Rühm, O. Wiener, Stuttgart etc. 1973, appendix.
- 541 *Ibid.*, p. 18. See also: CW, vol. 14 (as endnote 246), p. 114.
- 542 See in this regard: RHC, Rühm, 00:26:50.
- 543 Brus 1973 (as endnote 540), p. 62.
- 544 *Ibid.*, p. 40
- 545 *Ibid.*, p. 198.
- 546 See Rühm in: Breicha/Klocker (eds.) 1992 (as endnote 1), p. 39 ff. See also RHC, Rühm, 01:04:40.
- 547 Regarding the transition from the poets’ workshop to the music workshop, see also: RHC, Mayer, 03:25:00.
- 548 RHC, Rühm, 00:26:50.
- 549 See RHC, Rühm, 00:24:40.
- 550 *Dritter Berliner Dichterworkshop*, record cover, B side.
- 551 See Karin Mack, *Kunstwege ’70*, Vienna 2007, no page number.
- 552 André Breton and Paul Éluard, *Dictionnaire abrégé du surréalisme*, Paris 1938, p. 6.
- 553 *Selten gezeigte Kunst. Gruppenarbeiten aus Berlin 1975*, exhibition catalogue for Galerie Heike Curtze, Vienna, with Attersee, Brus, Rühm, Wiener, Steiger, Nitsch and Roth; and in Munich, Galerie Klewan, Munich 1979.
- 554 See RHC, Mayer, 03:34:30.
- 555 CI 1981a (as endnote 17), p. 243.
- 556 RHC, Rainer, 00:34:00.
- 557 See RHC, Nitsch, 01:25:00; regarding the concept of the model, see also RHC, Rühm, 01:13:10.
- 558 The fact that Roth was the driving force behind this performance becomes clear on this live recording, as also in the reports in the press.
- 559 In concrete terms: *Novembersymphonie (Doppelsymphonie)*, “Symphonie 1A”, 4th movement: Subito (72 bagatelles).
- 560 Döhl 2004 (as endnote 1), p. 82.
- 561 See the review of the concert by Guido Bachmann, *BaZ*, 25.02.1977.
- 562 Hamburg archive, Dieter Roth Estate.
- 563 Studio of Björn Roth, Álafoss/Iceland, Dieter Roth Estate.
- 564 See CW, vol. 14 (as endnote 246).
- 565 See Dirk Dobke, *Dieter Roth 1960–1975*, vol. 2: *Werkverzeichnis der frühen Objekte & Materialbilder 1960–75*, expanded and with commentary by Dieter Roth, Cologne 2002, p. 3 f.
- 566 See Ernst Kurth, *Grundlagen des linearen Kontrapunkts*, Bern 1948, p. 2 f.
- 567 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 94 f.
- 568 See RHC, Mayer, 00:36:00; see also (with regard to Hamilton): RHC, Mayer, 02:26:40.
- 569 See RHC, Rainer, 01:01:20.
- 570 See Rainer in: Breicha/Klocker (eds.) 1992 (as endnote 93), p. 81.
- 571 See CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 115.
- 572 See Rainer in: Breicha/Klocker (eds.) 1992 (as endnote 93), p. 81–84.
- 573 See *ibid.*, p. 83.
- 574 RHC, Rainer, 00:51:00.
- 575 RHC, Rainer, 00:37:40.
- 576 RHC, Rainer, 00:32:20.
- 577 RHC, Rainer, 00:19:30.
- 578 RHC, Brus, 00:51:50.
- 579 See RHC, Rühm, 00:06:00 and 02:20:10.

- 580 Günter Brus in the programme for the *Berliner Konzert*, 1974, no page numbers.
- 581 Letter from Kandinsky to Schoenberg of 18.1.1911, in: Hahl-Koch 1980 (as endnote 248), p.19. This book, in its first edition of 1980, is to be found in Roth's library in Hellnar along with other Schoenberg writings. Two concerts of the *Rarely heard music* took place in the Lenbachhaus in Munich, which holds the biggest collection of Kandinsky and the members of the *Blauer Reiter*. Kandinsky also figures in the first edition of the journal *spirale*. *Internationale Zeitschrift für junge Kunst*, 1, ed. by M. Wyss, D. Roth, E. Gomringer, Bern 1953, no page numbers.
- 582 Early on during his musical training, Rühm developed an intense interest in Schoenberg and later engaged with his methods in his own work. See RHC, Rühm, 0:22:00 and 02:33:30.
- 583 See Schoenberg 1976 (as endnote 248), p.407.
- 584 Gerhard Rühm in the programme for the *Berliner Konzert*, 1974, no page numbers.
- 585 Döhl 2004 (as endnote 1), p.79.
- 586 Arnulf Rainer and Dieter Roth, *Duell im Schloss* (with Arnulf Rainer), IV parts, Vornbach, April 1976, R: A. Rainer/D. Roth, VHS, Munich etc. Edith Jud, *Filme und Videos*, in: Dieter Roth Foundation/Dirk Dobke (eds.) 2004 (as endnote 34), p.107–111, here part III, p.111.
- 587 See RHC, Rainer, 00:16:40–00:19:00 and 00:37:40–00:39:16.
- 588 Actual title: "Schuld war nur der Bossa Nova" (1963) by the pop singer Manuela.
- 589 RHC, Attersee, 00:59:20
- 590 CI 1998b (as endnote 55), p.469.
- 591 *Ibid.*; CI 1982 (as endnote 47), p.261.
- 592 Record cover text.
- 593 Record cover text.
- 594 Dieter Roth: *THY QUATSCH est min Castello*, Record cover, B side, Stuttgart 1979. The erratic language and punctuation is original.
- 595 *Novembersymphonie (Doppelsymphonie)*, "Symphonie 1A", 4th movement: Subito (72 bagattes), record side B.
- 596 See Walther Dürr and Andreas Krause (eds.), *Schubert-Handbuch*, Kassel etc. 1997, p.114 ff.
- 597 See Dobke 2002 (as endnote 14), p.46. See Vischer/Walter (eds.) 2003 (as endnote 74), p.95.
- 598 CI 1981a (as endnote 17), p.248.
- 599 During the setting up of the Internationale Biennale für Graphik und Visuelle Kunst 79. Expansion, Secession, Vienna, 23.6.1979–22.7.1979. CI 1983 (as endnote 100), p.291; CI 1998a (as endnote 16), p.605; RHC, Rainer, 01:26:50.
- 600 See RHC, Björn Roth, 00:47:20.
- 601 Rainer/Roth, *Duell im Schloss III* (as endnote 586), 00:15:56.
- 602 See RHC, Mayer, 01:52:20; see also: RHC, Björn Roth, 02:00:20.
- 603 See Neues Museum Weserburg Bremen (ed.), "oh cet écho!" *Fluxus und Freunde*, Maria and Walter Schnepel Collection, Bremen 2002, p.117.
- 604 See RHC, Rühm, 00:36:40 and RHC, Brus, 00:54:50 and 00:58:50.
- 605 CW, vol. 38 (as endnote 196), p.28; see Rühm 1992 (as endnote 1), p.47 and RHC, Rühm, 02:10:20.
- 606 See RHC, Wiener, 00:52:10.
- 607 *Abschöpfsymphonie*, 1st record, B side.
- 608 Dieter Roth, *Tagebuch 1972_73*, p.455, Dieter Roth Estate.
- 609 Commentary on Dobke 2002 (as endnote 14), p.145 bis. See also RHC, Mayer, 06:20:00. The title "Selten gehörte Musik" ("Rarely heard music") was actually formulated by Oswald Wiener, as he explained on the occasion of his lecture at the Basel Music Academy on 6 November 2014.
- 610 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p.101.
- 611 CI 1981a (as endnote 17), p.250.
- 612 See RHC, Attersee, 00:24:10.
- 613 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p.115.
- 614 See RHC, Attersee, 00:20:10.
- 615 *Karlsruher Konzert*, unpublished, Dieter Roth Estate, Hamburg.
- 616 CI 1983 (as endnote 100), p.295.
- 617 CI 1989 (as endnote 11), p.415.
- 618 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p.129 f.
- 619 CI 1989 (as endnote 11), p.418 f.
- 620 See the letter from Roth to Wiener of 3.8.1974, Hamburg archive, Dieter Roth Estate; also RHC, Mayer, 01:52:20.

- 621 *Holderbank*, exhibition catalogue for the education centre of the HMB (2nd edition of the exhibition catalogue of 1983, published as a copy book), ed. Dieter Roth and Holderbank Management AG, Basel 1984, no page numbers. No. 10; see also RHC, Mayer, 01:52:20.
- 622 RHC, Mayer, 01:54:45.
- 623 Dobke 2002 (as endnote 14), p. 76 bis.
- 624 Quoted freely after Bichler 2012 (as endnote 97), p. 15 ff.
- 625 Letter from Roth to Wiener of 3.8.1974, Hamburg archive, Dieter Roth Estate. This letter exists in different sketches and variants. The erratic prose is here as faithful as possible to the German original.
- 626 See RHC, Björn Roth, 01:57:20.
- 627 See RHC, Rühm, 01:23:50 and RHC, Brus, 00:58:20; Brus gave this as a reason for his no longer playing in the *Abschöpfsymphonie*.
- 628 RHC, Björn Roth, 01:57:20.
- 629 See RHC, Rühm, 01:25:00; also RHC, Mayer, 00:16:50.
- 630 Letter from Roth to Wiener of 3.8.1974, Hamburg archive, Dieter Roth Estate.
- 631 See RHC, Wiener, 00:52:10.
- 632 *Abschöpfsymphonie*, record 3, B side.
- 633 See RHC, Rühm, 01:24:50.
- 634 RHC, Attersee, 00:28:30.
- 635 See Helmut Lachenmann, *Musik als existentielle Erfahrung. Schriften 1966–1995*, ed. Josef Häusler, Wiesbaden 1996, p. 381.
- 636 See RHC, Wiener, 01:01:20.
- 637 Rühm in: Breicha/Klocker (eds.) 1992 (as endnote 1), p. 47.
- 638 *Abschöpfsymphonie*, record 4, B side.
- 639 Oswald Wiener in the programme of the *Berliner Konzert*, 1974, no page numbers.
- 640 See RHC, Wiener, 02:01:00.
- 641 Oswald Wiener in the programme of the *Berliner Konzert*, 1974, no page numbers.
- 642 See letter from Roth to Wiener of 20.7.1974, Hamburg archive, Dieter Roth Estate.
- 643 Roth in a letter to Wiener of 30.3.1974, Hamburg archive, Dieter Roth Estate.
- 644 Gerhard Rühm: “einige hinweise”, in: *SELTEN GEZEIGTE KUNST 1979* (as endnote 369), no page numbers. A play on “Wahlverwandtschaften”, “elective affinities”.
- 645 See CI 1982 (as endnote 47), p. 260.
- 646 See RHC, Brus, 00:36:40; RHC, Wiener, 01:49:20
- 647 “*Man darf auch weben was man nicht sieht. Die Teppiche von Dieter Roth und Ingrid Wiener*”, exhibition catalogue for Kirchner Museum, Davos; see RHC, Wiener, 01:40:55.
- 648 Hamilton/Roth 1977 (as endnote 138), pp. 105–107. CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 133.
- 649 RHC, Rühm, 02:33:30.
- 650 See RHC, Rainer, 00:06:10.
- 651 RHC, Nitsch, 00:27:50.
- 652 Actually: organ, harmonium or electronic organ (Farfisa VIP 370).
- 653 See however RHC, Mayer, 03:18:50.
- 654 See Dieter Roth, *Tagebuch 1979_1*, entries of 15.–27.1.1979, Dieter Roth Estate.
- 655 See RHC, Mayer, 00:04:30.
- 656 See RHC, Steiger, 01:52:30.
- 657 RHC, Wiener, 01:03:40.
- 658 RHC, Attersee, 00:28:30. The erratic nature of the prose and the mixing of tenses are original.
- 659 See also RHC, Wiener, 02:43:00.
- 660 *Romentalquartett*, record side 3.
- 661 *Novembersymphonie (Doppelsymphonie)*, “Symphonie 1A”, 4th movement: Subito (72 bagatelles).
- 662 See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Tausend Plateaus*, Berlin 1992, p. 19.
- 663 *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, No. 125, 1974, p. 36, quoted as in Graz 2012 (as endnote 259), p. 134.
- 664 See RHC, Wiener, 02:44:30.
- 665 RHC, Wiener, 02:43:00.
- 666 See RHC, Rühm, 01:03:40.
- 667 *Lithografie-Workshop*, tape reel “Hamburg Konzert, Band 5”, 7:20–23:00, Hamburg archive, Dieter Roth Estate.
- 668 Dieter Roth (on a creative phase of his own), quoted as in Vischer/Walter (eds.) 2003 (as endnote 74), p. 128.
- 669 See RHC, Rühm, 01:28:30.
- 670 See in this regard the documents on its genesis published by Roth: CW, vol. 38 (as endnote 196), pp. 31–34.

- 671 See RHC, Mayer, 00:50:10.
- 672 RHC, Rainer, 00:07:40.
- 673 Oswald Wiener in the programme of the *Berliner Konzert*, 1974, no page numbers.
- 674 RHC, Attersee, 00:28:30.
- 675 See in this regard RHC, Rühm, 00:36:40.
- 676 RHC, Wiener, 00:57:30 and 03:03:00.
- 677 See RHC, Rühm, 00:57:50.
- 678 See RHC, Wiener, 01:52:20; Attersee, 00:21:40; Björn Roth, 01:36:10 and 02:09:40.
- 679 Bern/Düsseldorf 1969 (as endnote 328), section “Dieter Roth”, p. 2.
- 680 See RHC, Björn Roth, 02:14:00.
- 681 CI 1982 (as endnote 47), p. 261.
- 682 RHC, Mayer, 00:47:30.
- 683 See in this regard a remark by Arnulf Rainer on its reception, in: RHC, Rainer, 00:18:50.
- 684 E.g. directly before the *Romenthalquartett*; see Dieter Roth, *Tagebuch 1975_2*, 10.11.–16.11.1975 or *Tagebuch 1972_73*, p. 414 f., Dieter Roth Estate.
- 685 *Romenthalquartett*, record side 3.
- 686 RHC, Rühm, 01:03:40.
- 687 See in this regard the performance indication in splinter No. 52.
- 688 E.g. splinters Nos. 26, 32, 50.
- 689 See splinters Nos. 14–19.
- 690 Regarding the phrase “für Kenner und Liebhaber” see Peter Schleuning, *Der Bürger erhebt sich. Geschichte der deutschen Musik im 18. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart etc. 2000, pp. 77–255.
- 691 Besides Roth’s *Splittersonate*, we are thinking here above all of the scores by Gerhard Rühm and Hermann Nitsch.
- 692 See RHC, Wiener, 01:13:10.
- 693 See *ibid.*, 02:56:20.
- 694 RHC, Attersee, 00:20:10.
- 695 *Münchner Konzert*, record sides 2 and 3.
- 696 *Karlsruher Konzert*, tape reel “Karlsruhe, Band 1”, Hamburg archive, Dieter Roth Estate.
- 697 Sheet inserted in the tape reel “Basel, Band 1”, Hamburg archive, Dieter Roth Estate.
- 698 To investigate this, one might compare the following original tapes with the records: 3. *Berliner Dichterworkshop*, *Münchner Konzert*, *Berliner Konzert*, *TOTE RENNEN Lieder* (all in the Hamburg archive, Dieter Roth Estate).
- 699 See the letter from Roth to Mayer of 5.5.1978, Hamburg archive, Dieter Roth Estate.
- 700 CI 1989 (as endnote 11), p. 418 f.; CI 1982 (as endnote 47), p. 261.
- 701 The “Schall” file, Hamburg archive, Dieter Roth Estate.
- 702 CI 1981a (as endnote 17), p. 246.
- 703 Quoted as in Bichler 2012 (as endnote 97), p. 104.
- 704 CI 1998b (as endnote 55), p. 468.
- 705 Barbara Rose, *Rauschenberg. An Interview with Robert Rauschenberg*, New York, 1987, p. 58.
- 706 According to a remark made by Franz Wassmer to Matthias Haldemann during a phone conversation in April 2014.
- 707 *Homage to David Tudor*, 20.6.1961, Théâtre de l’Ambassade des États-Unis, Paris.
- 708 Barbara Rose, *Rauschenberg* (as endnote 705), p. 85.
- 709 See RHC, Rainer, 00:35:20.
- 710 See Wiener 1998 (as endnote 320), p. 122.
- 711 See RHC, Attersee, 00:59:50.
- 712 See RHC, Steiger, 01:28:10.
- 713 See RHC, Björn Roth, 02:50:50.
- 714 See Holderbank 1984 (as endnote 621), no page numbers, No. 56.
- 715 RHC, Attersee, 01:17:18.
- 716 RHC, Attersee, 01:09:16.
- 717 Quoted as in Arnulf Rainer in: Breicha/Klocker (eds.) 1992 (as endnote 93), p. 81.
- 718 Werner Hofmann, “‘Glühend Eis’ und ‘schwarzer Schnee’. Anmerkungen zur ‘gesetzlosen Willkür des jetzigen Zeitalters’ (Jean Paul)”, in: Hofmann, *Die gespaltene Moderne. Aufsätze zur Kunst*, Munich 2004, pp. 120–123.
- 719 Quoted as in Gerhard Rühm: “einige hinweise”, in: Munich 1979 (as endnote 644), no page numbers.
- 720 For this I am grateful to Sven Beckstette, Kunstmuseum Stuttgart.
- 721 *Dieter Roth/Björn Roth – Islands*, exhibition catalogue for the Hangar Bicocca, Milan, with texts by E. Jud, G. Knapstein, H. Mayer, F. Meade, B. Roth and S. Suzuki, Milan 2013.
- 722 Dieter Roth 1975 (as endnote 106), no page numbers.

Third loop

- 723 Sven Beckstette, “Sprache als Material”, in: Jörn Schaffaff, Nina Schallenberg and Tobias Vogt (eds.), *Kunst ↔ Begriffe der Gegenwart. Von Allegorie bis Zip*, Cologne 2013, pp. 273–277.
- 724 Sven Beckstette, “Vom Wortbild zum Bildwort – und darüber hinaus, Ferdinand Kriwets Ausstieg aus dem Buch”, in: *KRIWET – Yester ‘n’ Today*, ed. Gregor Jansen, exhibition catalogue for the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf etc. 2011, pp. 46–48.
- 725 Sven Beckstette, “Ausstieg aus dem Buch. Über den Einfluss der Konkreten Poesie auf die Kunst der 1960er Jahre”, in: *Texte zur Kunst*, No. 85, March 2012, pp. 122–139.
- 726 CI 1985b (as endnote 99), p. 315.
- 727 See Eugen Gomringer, “vom vers zur konstellation, zweck und form einer neuen dichtung”, in: Gomringer (ed.), *konkrete poesie, deutschsprachige autoren*, Stuttgart 2009 (1972), pp. 155–160.
- 728 CI 1985a (as endnote 18), p. 332.
- 729 CI 1981c (as endnote 75), p. 268.
- 730 Emmett Williams (ed.), *An Anthology of Concrete Poetry*, New York etc. 1967.
- 731 John Cage, *Notations*, New York etc. 1969, no page numbers.
- 732 See RHC, Rühm, 01:32:30.
- 733 *The Kümmerling Trio plays No 1 & 2*, record side 2.
- 734 See RHC, Rühm, 02:14:00.
- 735 See RHC, Wiener, 00:26:20.
- 736 RHC, Björn Roth, 00:38:40.
- 737 Quoted as in Meyer-Krahmer 2006 (as endnote 85), p. 190.
- 738 3. *Berliner Dichterworkshop*, 2nd side.
- 739 *Romenthalquartett*, record side F.
- 740 Both are printed in: Williams (ed.) 1967 (as endnote 730), no page numbers.
- 741 *Ibid.*
- 742 Quoted as in Stéphane Mallarmé, *Sämtliche Dichtungen*, bilingual edition, Munich etc. 1992, p. 222.
- 743 See in this regard: Heidi E. Vio-land-Hobi, *Daniel Spoerri. Biografie und Werk*, Munich etc. 1998, p. 17.
- 744 Eugen Gomringer, “vom gedicht zum gedichtbuch”, in: Gomringer 2009 (as endnote 727), p. 163 f.
- 745 Meyer-Krahmer 2006 (as endnote 85), p. 107 f.
- 746 *Ibid.*, pp. 70–81.
- 747 See Barbara Wien: “Das ist die Urwurst”, in: Johannes Gachnang etc. (ed.), *Dieter Roth, Die Bibliothek*, exhibition catalogue for Centre Dürrenmatt, Neuchâtel 2003, p. 77 f.
- 748 Roth speaks of “Alleinsamkeit”, in: CI 1998c (as endnote 96), p. 484.
- 749 See Weibel (ed.) 1997 (as endnote 27), p. 615.
- 750 See Schwarz 1981 (as endnote 23), pp. 103–105.
- 751 *Ibid.*, p. 104 f.
- 752 See RHC, Attersee, 00:28:30.
- 753 See RHC, Wiener, 01:03:40.
- 754 Afterword to *ideogramme*, quoted as in Vischer/Walter (eds.) 2003 (as endnote 74), p. 43.
- 755 *Ibid.*
- 756 *Ibid.*
- 757 RHC, Björn Roth, 00:38:40.
- 758 See Thomas Böhm, “Warum Dieter Roth seine Gedichte schreibe las ... und wie Schriftsteller sonst vorlesen”, in: *Artic. Texte aus der fröhlichen Wissenschaft*, No. 10/04: *Stimme*, Bonn 2004. Ted Hughes, *Wie Dichtung entsteht*, Frankfurt am Main and Leipzig 2001.
- 759 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 99 f.
- 760 Quoted as in Dieter Roth, in: Voss etc. (ed.) 2005 (as endnote 152), p. 134.
- 761 See *Novembersymphonie*, 4th movement.
- 762 Quoted as in Dieter Roth, in: Voss etc. (ed.) 2005 (as endnote 152), p. 134.
- 763 RHC, Rainer, 00:14:20.
- 764 RHC, Björn Roth, 00:30:40. Original in English.
- 765 CI 1995a (as endnote 16), p. 460.
- 766 *Romenthalquartett*, record side F.
- 767 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 115.
- 768 See *ibid.*, p. 95.
- 769 Quoted as in diter rot: “32 tieferliegende wolken für hansjörg mayer”, in: rot, *80 wolken, 1965 bis 1967*, ed. Max Bense and Elisabeth Walther, Stuttgart etc. 1967, no page numbers (No. 28).
- 770 RHC, Wiener, 00:12:10.
- 771 See also Hermann Nitsch’s stance on this in: Zauner/Köstler (eds.) 1996 (as endnote 181), p. 228f.
- 772 See RHC, Wiener, 00:59:00 and 02:44:30.
- 773 See RHC, Rühm, 00:20:40

- 774 See RHC, Attersee, 00:28:30.
- 775 See RHC, Brus, 00:18:20 and 01:04:30.
- 776 See RHC, Björn Roth, 01:57:20.
- 777 See RHC, Wiener, 00:59:00.
- 778 AZ, "Feuilleton", 30.5.1974, p. 10.
- 779 Quoted as in Dieter Roth 1967 (as endnote 769), no page numbers (No. 8). "Karl" presumably refers to the name he was baptised by, namely "Karl-Dietrich"; for information on Roth's naming practices, see: Dirk Dobke, "Wie Karl-Dietrich Roth erst zu Dieter Roth, dann zu Heinrich C. Schwarz und schließlich zu Dieter Roth wurde", in: *Verzeichnis der Editionen 1976–2000*, vol. II: 1988–2000, ed. Griffelkunst-Vereinigung, Hamburg 2003, pp. 14–16.
- 780 On improvisation in jazz, see Daniel Martin Feige, *Philosophie des Jazz*, Berlin 2014, pp. 33–55.
- 781 See Diedrich Diederichsen, *Über Pop-Musik*, Cologne 2014, pp. 91–96.
- 782 See RHC, Rühm, 01:32:00.
- 783 See CI 1978b (as endnote 245), p. 229; see CI 1982 (as endnote 47), p. 262; see endnote 581.
- 784 See also RHC, Mayer, 02:54:00.
- 785 See RHC, Björn Roth, 01:49:10.
- 786 RHC, Rühm, 00:52:10.
- 787 RHC, Björn Roth, 01:41:15 and 02:33:00; RHC, Mayer, 02:50:50.
- 788 CI 1994 (as endnote 151), p. 436.
- 789 Gerhard Rühm in conversation with the present writer on 11.9.2013 in Cologne. Eugen Gomringer brought together a "Small anthology of concrete poetry" for the 8th issue of *spirale*. Besides Achleitner and Rühm, Wiener and others also represented the German-speaking regions with a contribution. See Annemarie Bucher (ed.), *spirale. Eine Künstlerzeitschrift 1953–1964*, Baden 1990, p. 114.
- 790 Quoted as in René Block, "Von einem, der auszog das Fluxus zu lernen", in: *1962 Wiesbaden FLUXUS 1982: eine kleine Geschichte von Fluxus in drei Teilen*, ed. René Block, Berlin 1983, pp. 326–371, here p. 351.
- 791 See in this regard Jürgen Geisenberger, *Joseph Beuys und die Musik*, Marburg 1999, p. 137 f.
- 792 Dirk Dobke, *Dieter Roth in America*, London 2004, p. 41.
- 793 See Ina Conzen: "Vom Manager der Avantgarde zum Fluxusdirigenten. George Maciunas in Deutschland", in: *Eine lange Geschichte mit vielen Knoten. Fluxus in Deutschland 1962–1994*, ed. René Block and Gabriele Knapstein, Stuttgart 1995, pp. 18–31.
- 794 See Wiener, in: Weibel (ed.) 1997 (as endnote 27), p. 321.
- 795 RHC, Brus, 00:48:40.
- 796 Quoted as in René Block, "Fluxus Musik: das alltägliche Ereignis", in: Block/Knapstein (eds.) 1995 (as endnote 793), pp. 50–61, here p. 58.
- 797 Quoted after an undated event card by George Brecht, held in Gabriele Knapstein's archives.
- 798 See in this regard Douglas Kahn, *Noise Water Meat. A History of Sound in the Arts*, Cambridge, Mass. 1999, especially the chapter "The Impossible Inaudible", p. 158 ff.
- 799 Quoted as Roman Grabner, "Selten gehörte Musik", in: BRUSEUM/Neue Galerie on Universalmuseum Joanneum (ed.) 2012 (as endnote 259), p. 134. The reviewer presumably mixed up Oswald Wiener and Gerhard Rühm.
- 800 AZ, Feuilleton, 30.05.1974, p. 10.
- 801 Quoted after an undated event card by George Brecht in the archives of Gabriele Knapstein.
- 802 Brecht, quoted as in Henry Martin, "Interview mit George Brecht (1967)", in: *Jenseits von Ereignissen. Texte zu einer Heterospektive von George Brecht*, exhibition catalogue, Kunsthalle Bern, Bern 1978, pp. 131–147, here p. 144 f.
- 803 Douglas Kahn, "The Latest: Fluxus and Music", in: *In the Spirit of Fluxus*, ed. Janet Jenkins, Minneapolis 1993, pp. 100–121, here p. 108.
- 804 Brecht, quoted as in Michael Nyman, "Interview mit George Brecht (1967)", in: Bern 1978 (as endnote 802), pp. 35–83, here p. 74.
- 805 CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 96.
- 806 For example, a whole series of these documents was printed in *Happening & Fluxus*, published by the Fluxus collector Hanns Sohm and Harald Szeemann in 1970 on the occasion of the exhibition of the same name in the Kunstverein in Cologne.

- 807 See the extensive description of the different European Fluxus festivals in: *The lunatics are on the loose European Fluxus Festivals 1962–1977*, ed. Petra Stegmann, Potsdam 2012.
- 808 Emmett Williams, “Allen einen herzlichen Glückwunsch zum Geburtstag!”, in: Block (ed.) 1983 (as endnote 790), pp. 83–88, here p. 85.
- 809 See RHC, Wiener, 00:26:20.
- 810 RHC, Björn Roth, 02:09:40.
- 811 Tomas Schmit, “über f.”, in: Block (ed.) 1983 (as endnote 790), pp. 96–100, here pp. 96. The erratic capitalisation here follows the original German.
- 812 John Cage, “Experimental Music: Doctrine (1955)”, in: Cage, *Silence*, Middletown, Conn. 1986 (1961), pp. 13–17, here p. 13.
- 813 Dieter Roth, “301 kleine wolken in memoriam big J und big G”, quoted as in Voss etc. (ed.) 2005 (as endnote 152), p. 137.
- 814 See RHC, Björn Roth, 02:08:40.
- 815 Gerhard Rühm and Oswald Wiener, “vorschläge zu unserem stück (da-jetzt)”, in: *Die Wiener Gruppe*, exhibition catalogue for Kunsthalle Wien, ed. Kunsthalle Vienna etc., Vienna 1998, p. 88 f.
- 816 Gerhard Rühm and Oswald Wiener, “ausstellung mit Ossi dinge und zeichen”, in: *Kunsthalle Vienna 1998* (as endnote 815), p. 87.
- 817 See Wiener, in: Weibel (ed.) 1997 (as endnote 27), p. 321
- 818 Daniel Spoerri quoted as in “*John Cage und bildender Künstler – Einflüsse, Anregungen*”, exhibition catalogue for Akademie der Künste, Berlin, ed. Wulf Herzogenrath etc., Cologne 2012, p. 27.
- 819 Konrad Bayer, Gerhard Rühm, Oswald Wiener, “anregungen für ein ‘schallplatten-funktionelles’ akustisches cabaret”, in: *Kunsthalle Vienna 1998* (as endnote 815), p. 93 f.
- 820 George Maciunas, quoted as in Larry Miller, “Interview with George Maciunas (1978)”, in: *Ubi Fluxus ibi motus 1990–1962*, ed. Achille Bonito Oliva, Milan 1990, pp. 226–233, here p. 227.
- 821 George Maciunas, “Manifesto, 1965”, printed in: Bonito Oliva (ed.) 1990 (as endnote 820), p. 219 (here erroneously dated 1963).
- 822 See Gabriele Knapstein, *George Brecht: Events. Über die Event-Partituren von George Brecht aus den Jahren 1959–1963*, Berlin 1999.
- 823 George Brecht quoted as in *ibid.*, p. 128. “Wolff” means Christian Wolff, whose pieces were discussed in Cage’s class.
- 824 George Brecht (1986), quoted in *ibid.*, p. 45.
- 825 See Ina Conzen-Meairs: “Das Gedicht verläßt die Seite – Fluxus und die Poesie”, in: *Fluxus Virus 1962–1992*, ed. Galerie Schüppenhauer etc., Cologne 1992, pp. 32–38; Liz Kotz, *Words to Be Looked At: Language in 1960s Art*, Cambridge, Mass. 2007.
- 826 CI 1985c (as endnote 299), p. 363.
- 827 *Ibid.*
- 828 CI 1998c (as endnote 96), p. 481.
- 829 CI 1985c (as endnote 299), p. 363.
- 830 Schmit 1983 (as endnote 811), pp. 96–100, here p. 97. The text refers to the gallerists Jean-Pierre Wilhelm and Rolf Jährling.
- 831 *Ibid.*, p. 99.
- 832 Aleida Assmann, “Fest und Flüssig: Anmerkungen zu einer Denkfigur”, in: *Kultur als Lebenswelt und Monument*, ed. Aleida Assmann and Dietrich Harth, Frankfurt on Main 1991, pp. 181–199, here p. 182.
- 833 Johannes Cladders and Gabriele Knapstein, “jede kommunikation ist eine collage”, in: Block/Knapstein (eds.) 1995 (as endnote 793), pp. 4–17, here p. 17.
- 834 See Holderbank 1987 (as endnote 225), p. 20.
- 835 *Ibid.*, p. 20 f.
- 836 RHC, Wiener, 00:43:40; also 00:38:30 and 00:40:50.
- 837 Cage 1986 (1961) (as endnote 812), pp. 13–17, here p. 13.
- 838 *Robert Filliou. Genie ohne Talent*, exhibition catalogue for Museum Kunst-Palast, Düsseldorf etc., ed. Sylvie Jouval and Heike van den Valentyn, Ostfildern-Ruit 2003.
- 839 See CI 1976/79 (as endnote 5), p. 95.
- 840 Vinko Globokar in conversation with the present writer on 4.6.2014. Globokar thinks he met Roth personally – probably in connection with Kagel’s *Ludwig van* – but cannot remember the precise details any more.

- 841 See Kristina Ericson, *Heinz Holliger. Spurensuche eines Grenzgängers*, Bern etc. 2004, p.292 f.
- 842 Dieter Roth, *Die Splittersonate*, manuscript, Hamburg archive, Dieter Roth Estate.
- 843 Mauricio Kagel, "Neuer Raum – Neue Musik. Gedanken zum Instrumentalen Theater [1966]", in: *Im Zenit der Moderne. Die Internationalen Ferienkurse für Neue Musik Darmstadt 1946–1966. Geschichte und Dokumentation in vier Bänden*, ed. Gianmario Borio and Hermann Danuser, vol. 3, Freiburg im Breisgau 1997, p.245.
- 844 "Wollt ihr den totalen Krieg?" – speech by Goebbels in the Sportpalast in Berlin on 18.2.1943.
- 845 CI 1981a (as endnote 17), p.247. Auch CI 1983 (as endnote 100), p.288.
- 846 See Sidonie Kellerer, *Zerrissene Moderne. Descartes bei den Neukantianern, Husserl und Heidegger*, Constance 2013, pp.186–194.
- 847 CI 1984: "Fortsetzungsinterview mit Dieter Roth von Dieter Schwarz, II Teile", in: Vienna 2002, p.320.
- 848 See endnote 779.
- 849 For Heidegger, the connection of the self with tradition was connected via thought to language, principally poetic language after the example of Hölderlin: "Such thinking placed us in a dialogue with the thinking of the poet, whose speech, like no other, seeks its echo in thinking". In: Martin Heidegger, *Was heißt Denken?* (1952), in: *Philosophisches Lesebuch*, vol. 3, ed. Hans-Georg Gadamer, Frankfurt on Main 1990 (first edition 1965), p.344.
- 850 This anthology was preceded in 1981 by a festival in the Tempodrom in Berlin entitled: "Große Untergangs-Show: Festival Genialer Dilletanten", while in his text "Die wahren Dilletanten" ("The true dilletantes"), Wolfgang Müller endorsed "squandering [Ver-spielen], un-writing [Ver-schreiben] as a positive value, as an opportunity to achieve new, as yet unknown forms of expression: this should be demonstrated on as big a scale as possible". In: Müller (ed.) 1982 (as endnote 10), pp.9–14, here p.10. The spelling of "Dilletante" is original and is retained in English here.
- 851 *Ibid.*, p.11 ff.
- 852 Wolfgang Müller, *Subkultur Westberlin 1979–1989. Freizeit*, Hamburg 2013, p.62 ff.
- 853 *Ibid.*, p.69.
- 854 See RHC, Ingrid and Oswald Wiener, 01:50:30.
- 855 See Müller (as endnote 852), p.456 f.
- 856 Wolfgang Müller, "Die Instrumente stimmen", in: Müller (ed.) 1982 (as endnote 10), p.49.
- 857 See Vaget 2007 (as endnote 419), pp.369–385.
- 858 E-mail from Gudmundur Oddur Magnusson to Gabriele Knapstein of 20.5.2014.
- 859 RHC, Rühm, 00:05:30.
- 860 RHC, Rühm, 01:11:10.
- 861 See RHC, Rainer, 00:54:30 and 01:01:20.
- 862 See RHC, Wiener, 02:56:20.
- 863 See RHC, Björn Roth, 02:40:00.
- 864 RHC, Mayer, 01:24:20.
- 865 See RHC, Björn Roth, 02:09:40.
- 866 See Roland Kayn, "kybernetische prozesse in instrumentaler und elektronischer music", in: *Collage 9*, Palermo 1971, pp.90–93.
- 867 See Germán Toro Pérez, "Luc Ferrari revisited. Versuch einer Neueinschätzung von Luc Ferraris anekdotischer Kunst", in: *Dissonance*, No. 125, March 2014, pp.16–20.
- 868 Published in 1998 under the pseudonym Ester Brinkmann.
- 869 See RHC, Mayer, 00:13:30.
- 870 Döhl 1976/1977 (as endnote 429), p.21 f.
- 871 RHC, Attersee, 00:23:10.
- 872 Wiener 1969 (as endnote 89), p.LXXX-VIII.
- 873 RHC, Björn Roth, 04:18:10.
- 874 Björn Roth in conversation with the present writer, 3.12.2013.
- 875 CI 1995 (as endnote 99), p.460.
- 876 RHC, Wiener, 00:39:10.
- 877 RHC, Rühm, 01:41:25.
- 878 RHC, Björn Roth, 01:40:40.
- 879 *Münchner Konzert*, record side F.
- 880 *Ibid.*
- 881 Alfred Zimmerlin in an E-mail of 17.6.2014 to the present writer.

~ 13° Hege

ab
"es ist ja mit mehr wert, da
kann man ruhig viel dafür
zahlen"
Fortf. S. 22. Nov.
-03 95

Sonntag
Totensonntag
25

November

DEZEMBER	
Mo	3 10 17 24 31
Di	4 11 18 25
Mi	5 12 19 26
Do	6 13 20 27
Fr	7 14 21 28
Sa	8 15 22 29
Su	9 16 23 30

so war es immer (epochalt (?) alljährig (aber) erzeugt (nicht
normales Handeln), Jännerdog (vor sechs Stunden Personen), Maid
gewisse Personen, unter dem du mich kennen, Hass einreinet
mit Nachbarn) ich bin aus der Furcht vor Personen nie zu
Haus gekommen (Tauschmanöver (?) = Versuch (?) / ich bin
offen im Haus / halte mich, jedoch, angestrich, begenue trage immer
halt die Moral gebietet? / kann mich nicht (mit gegen-Stri-
mungen) wehren? / zu viel Angst? / immer Angst = Krankheit / in den
Loh immer öfter (damals heute) empfindet, immer Bewegung
arme Klossartiger Feigling, göttliche Torte der Tagesleben
im Bett / lesen (Tunke Trost) statt agieren, immer weniger Ein-
passen in Handeln, also Trainingsmangel / das vegetative
Bildproduktions system (wora besteht das?) zeigt Selbsttraume,
wenn nicht wackelt, wenn wackelt, 2 wohnen sagen & schreiben
erkennen (um mich herum) nicht
Kennen
Körper mehr (physische Reise
fast isoliert / Geschlechtsverkehr ist
~ 10 Jahre?) / fürchte (sollen fast
Gewissheit), es würde nur rüber, in mir (ich unbeweglich, ist
Liegend, Nachts, langes träumend, schlend (Körperlichkeit?)

sehe: die freizigen Krankheits symptome wandern (im
Körper / viele verschiedene Gruppen) im nur Länge dauern
nach alkoholische Fällen: Monate (2-3?) / keine
Widerstands = trainings (in allerlei ...?) = Gelegenheiten
wie die Läufer (die sensiblen Körperlos (nur mit dem Erinnern
rangsellenen Vorbildungsbest d. Körper) erlebt (erleben will)
so die Künste (will d. sensiblen Körperlos erleben), der Körper
(mit d. Körper aber auch ...?) geht ihm vor

• Zwei Lektionen (privat) • Formelleiten •

Abhängigkeit (?), 1990 auf der Kindererschulung



August 1997 Bordély -

Week 32

1 Monday

New Holiday Scotland & R. of Ireland

Blumenbilder

Wandtitel

• ~~Alfild (wied - P - d)~~ Preislisten

• Egged, Platten Nibel

F Geld Bis

• Correspondence

F Highlights

• Telefontext

11

12

1

2

3

4

Klebepapier

rote Pinsels

Tipper in Farbe

Wasser Lecker in feinstm

Mappa A³ & A⁴

↑
(Querformat?)

Plasthülle

Eurochecks inlösen

5

6

7

8

9

Times Presence 3

(2 Arnold)

Arnold ← Schwarz

Schwarz

Plakat



→ ?

yes



→ 0

AGENT

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Appendix

previous page: Notebook and diary 1990

20 × 11 × 3 cm, Dieter Roth Estate

left page: Notebook and diary 1997

19 × 13 × 3.5 cm, Dieter Roth Estate

Chronological overview: Dieter Roth and Music

*Compiled by Jana Bruggmann,
Matthias Haldemann and Isabelle Zürcher*

- 1930** Dieter Roth is born in Hanover on 21 April.
- 1941** The brothers Dieter and Wolfgang Roth make use of the support offered by Pro Juventute to children in need living abroad with Swiss parents, and spend the summer holidays with Greti Guyer in Arosa. She gives Dieter Roth an accordion for Christmas.
- 1943–1945** Again organised by pro Juventute, Roth stays from 15 July 1943 to 15 July 1946 at the Pension Bergheim in Zurich, run by the married couple Betty and Fritz Wyss. The Pension is also home to many emigrants, some of whom are active in the theatre while others are musicians or artists. Inspired by his contact with them, Roth reads literature, writes poetry, draws and takes piano lessons. He attends concerts of classical music and gets to know jazz. In his correspondence with his parents, they exchange tales of musical events. He decides he wants to become a poet or a musician.
- 1947** He attends high school in St. Gallen and Bern.
He leaves high school, then begins an apprenticeship with Friedrich Wüthrich in Bern as a commercial graphic artist.
- 1950** A collage and a stencil print depict musical instruments.
- 1951** Two poster designs (stencil prints) for the music shop Krompholz in Bern: "*Krompholz – Das gute Musikinstrument*".
- 1953** W. Gasché photographs Roth with a trumpet at a jazz session in the Anliker Cellar in Bern.
- 1956** Gets to know Friedrich Achleitner and Gerhard Rühm in Bern.
- 1957** Makes pictures with rhythmical structures, e.g. *Zeichnung mit 4er Rhythmus* and *Zeichnung mit 1-4-1 Rhythmus*.

-
- 1959** Richard Hamilton gets to know Roth's works through the exhibition *Texts read simultaneously from a mobile axis* at the Institute of Contemporary Art, London. They begin to correspond, which leads to their collaboration.
- 1960** Meets Jean Tinguely and Emmett Williams in Basel.
Meets Robert Filliou at the "festival d'art d'avantgarde" in Paris.
- 1962** Realises the installation *Windharfe*, since destroyed.
Begins work on the *Relief mit 2 Trompeten* (1962–1992), one of his first assemblages with musical instruments.
Kinetic objects (turning pictures and musical pictures), e.g. *Kugelbild Nr. 2/4*.
- 1963** First contact with Hansjörg Mayer, who visits Roth in Iceland.
Roth often plays the piano in private, but is shy of playing in front of an audience.
- 1964** Gets to know George Brecht, Al Hansen, Dick Higgins, Joe Jones, Alison Knowles, Charlotte Moorman, Nam June Paik, Bob Watts and La Monte Young in New York.
- 1965** Teaches the graphic design class at the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence. Together with his students he builds musical instruments based on advertising designs and has them play on them.
Begins work on the idea of a *Tonalfabet* that would enable him to play texts. Nam June Paik and Charlotte Moorman take Roth's *Tonalfabet* with them on a tour of Europe.
Meets André Thomkins in Providence.
- 1965–1970** Objects with music-relevant titles, e.g. *Flöte* (1965), *Dreiklang* (1967), *Gitarre* (1968), *Gewürzobjekt / Geruchsortgel* (1970).
- 1966** First visit to Vienna. Via Walter Pichler, Roth meets Christian Ludwig Attersee, Günter Brus, Arnulf Rainer, Dominik Steiger and Oswald Wiener.
Roth is represented in John Cage's anthology *Notations with a Symphonie (No. 1) From the Old World* and dedicates to Cage, whom he knows but fleetingly, a prepared webster by diter rot for john cage.
In his diaries and books, music from now on is a topic that surfaces in the form of musical notation, poems, aphorisms, drawings, reflections and diagrams. Ideas for music works remain unrealised, e.g. a *Musik-skulpturbild* and a sonata for piano and violin.
- 1967** In April: first encounter with Hermann Nitsch, chez Hanns Sohm in Markgröningen.
Alfabet for Emmett Williams.

- 1968 Roth translates Robert Filliou's *14 chansons* for his book *14 chansons et 1 charade, 14 songs and 1 riddle, 14 chansons und 1 Rätsel*, published by edition hansjörg mayer.
- During the directorship of Werner Düggelin at the Basel Theatre (1968–1975), Roth gives piano performances at opening-night parties.
- 1969 *Badewanne* (“Bath tub”) as a prop for Mauricio Kagel's film *Ludwig van*. The *Franz-Lehár-Sofa* (originally the “Beethoven cupboard”, mistakenly called the “Mozart cupboard”) is not used in the film, however. Roth's contribution to the soundtrack is only used in part.
- 1971–1976 Numerous graphic works with music-related titles, e.g. *Doppelquartett* (1971), *Zuhören* (1972), *Frau Muse am Klavier* (1974), *Kammerquartett* (1974), *Flötenspruch* (1975), *Musikalisches Blättlein* (1976).
- 1971 Graphic print *Grosses Theater* (1971). He uses its colour reworking (1971/79) as a model for his poster for Kagel's music theatre work *Die Erschöpfung der Welt* (1980).
- The two essays *Wer war Mozart?* and *Wer ist der der nicht weiss wer Mozart war?* are published by Verlag Reykjavík.
- 1972 Roth acquires string instruments in Stuttgart and London and makes “domestic music” together with Kurt Kalb and friends in Vienna. It is presumably there that he acquires his Bösendorfer grand piano, made in 1906.
- He starts writing more musical notation in his diaries.
- 30 October–7 November: *Erster Berliner Dichterworkshop* in the Restaurant Exil, Berlin, together with Friedrich Achleitner, Günter Brus, Dieter Roth, Gerhard Rühm and Oswald Wiener. They draw, write and play the piano. The results are published in February 1973 in the journal *Die Schastrommel* No. 9, which Brus edits. A more comprehensive variant is published by Hansjörg Mayer.
- Roth builds up a large collection of records (classical music, jazz, folk music, rock). He regularly listens to music on the radio. His partner Dorothy Iannone has a listening station installed in his Düsseldorf studio, with a record player and loudspeakers. While listening to music, he sometimes reads along in the score. His diaries list pages of names of composers and performers and titles of works.
- Roth's idea remains unrealised of incorporating his *Tonalfabet* in Tinguely's sculpture *Le Monstre de Milly*, which would translate letters sent by him into music.
- 1973–1978 Official Swiss address is Weidstrasse 19 in Zug. From 1977–1978 he also rents a room at Dorfstrasse 13 in Zug.
- 1973 12–13 July: *Selten gehörte Musik. 3. Berliner Dichterworkshop*, held at Meineckestr. 6 in Berlin in the apartment of Rudolf Prinz zur Lippe. With Dieter Roth, Gerhard Rühm, Oswald Wiener. The LP is released that same year by edition hansjörg mayer. The title of the concert series, “Rarely heard music”, is coined by Oswald Wiener.

5–26 November: *Selten gehörte Musik. Novembersymphonie (Doppelsymphonie)*. 2. *Berliner Musikworkshop* in Gerhard Rühm's studio in Berlin. With Dieter Roth, Gerhard Rühm, Oswald Wiener. The two corresponding LPs are released that same year by edition hansjörg mayer.

Scheisse von D. Roth, record cover for sound recordings planned (but not realised) of three readings in Providence in 1966, in Markgröningen in 1967 and in Stuttgart in 1973.

1974

28 May: *Selten gehörte Musik. Münchner Konzert*. Performance in the Lenbachhaus, Munich. With Günter Brus, Hermann Nitsch, Dieter Roth, Gerhard Rühm, Oswald Wiener. The three corresponding LPs are released in 1975 by edition hansjörg mayer.

2 June: *Selten gehörte Musik. Das Prinzendorfer Konzert*. Piano recital for Günter Brus as part of the Whitsun Festival at Schloss Prinzendorf. With Hermann Nitsch, Dieter Roth, Gerhard Rühm, Oswald Wiener. Unpublished.

Murmel. Play in one word.

27 September: *Selten gehörte Musik. Das Berliner Konzert*. Performance in the Kirche zum Heiligen Kreuz, Berlin-Kreuzberg. With Christian Ludwig Attersee, Günter Brus, Hermann Nitsch, Arnulf Rainer, Dieter Roth, Gerhard Rühm, Dominik Steiger, Oswald Wiener. The LP is released in 1977 by edition hansjörg mayer.

26 November: *Selten gehörte Musik. Hamburger Konzert (= Lithographieworkshop)* in the Korb printing works, Hamburg. With Günter Brus, Gerhard Rühm, Dieter Roth, Oswald Wiener. Unpublished.

Roth releases records of family members and friends with his own publishing company ("Dieter Roth's Familienverlag", also known as "Dieter Roth's Verlag"), based in Zug until 1978.

From 1974 onwards diverse assemblages with audio cassettes, cassette recorders and other audio equipment, e.g. *Etwas mit dem goldenen Ei* (1974–1988). In the 1980s, Roth will expand part of the works using video equipment.

From 1974/75 the Bösendorfer grand piano is in his studio Bali on Iceland. Microphones and recording equipment are permanently installed on it. Numerous piano works will be created there until the death of the artist. He also has other keyboard instruments in his other studios (in Stuttgart, Vienna etc.).

1975

29 October: *Selten gehörte Musik. Das Karlsruher Konzert*. Concert at the Akademie der bildenden Künste Karlsruhe. With Günter Brus, Hermann Nitsch, Dieter Roth, Oswald Wiener. Unpublished.

11 and 12 November: *Selten gehörte Musik. Streichquartett 558171 (Romenthalquartett)* chez Hermann Nitsch at Ammersee in the Villa Romenthal. With Günter Brus, Hermann Nitsch, Dieter Roth and Gerhard Rühm. The 3 LPs are released in 1976 by edition hansjörg mayer.

Between 1975 and 1979, Roth and Arnulf Rainer record several joint performances on film, in collaboration with Peter Weibel.

- 1976 28–30 May: *Selten gehörte Musik. TOTE RENNEN Lieder* chez Dieter Roth in Mosfellssveit, Iceland. With Dieter Roth and Oswald Wiener. The LP is released in 1977 by edition hansjörg mayer.
- In parallel to the exhibition *Collaborations of Ch. Rotham* in the Galeria Cadaqués, Gerona, Spain, Roth and Richard Hamilton record the LP *Canciones de Cadaqués* in Hamilton's house, together with Chispas Luis the dog.
- Roth begins work on his only music score, the *Splittersonate* (1976–1994). It comprises 115 leaves, some of them collages.
- 13 September 1976: Recording of the *Radio Sonate – Radiohaus-Klage-Musik* (42 Min. Klavier und Stimme in steigender Betrunkenheit), at Süddeutscher Rundfunk, Stuttgart. The Radio Sonate is released as an LP in 1978 by Lebeer-Hossmann and edition hansjörg mayer. The second edition will be released on CD in 1995 by Dieter Roth's Verlag, Basel.
- 1977 23 February: *Quadrupelkonzert* at the Basel Music Academy. It is Roth's only-ever solo concert. He plays various instruments such as the horn, the grand piano and the organ, and loops the recordings in layers over each other.
- Roth begins recording *Lorelei, die Langstreckensonate* together with Vera and Björn Roth. Together they record 40 hours of piano music, which will be released in 1978 on 37 cassettes in a hand-painted wooden box by Audio Arts and edition hansjörg mayer. This piano music can be played in a manipulated cassette recorder together with whatever radio programme happens to be airing.
- Tibidabo-Hundezwinger 24 Stunden Gebell*. Dieter Roth with Björn Roth and contributions by Karl and Vera Roth. Sound recordings of 24 hours of dog barks in an edition published together with the gallerist Franco Bombelli (Galeria Cadaqués), in a slipcase bearing a “most speedy drawing” by Roth. Photocopies of the 150-part drawing series “Selbst als Hund” are published in a file as an artist's book. A further 1600 drawings that were made in this context are bound into books as part of the installation *Tibidabo-Hundezwinger 24 Stunden Gebell*.
- As a continuation of the 24 recorded hours of dogs barking on Mount Tibidabo, Roth records the dog barks and the sounds of gallery visitors together at the Tibidabo exhibitions in Madrid.
- Begins work on his *Chicago wall* (1977–1984) in the apartment of Ira G. Wool in Chicago.
- 1978 Continues work on *Chicago wall*, together with Björn Roth. Continues working on it until 1984 whenever visiting the USA. They incorporate 32 tape machines and loudspeakers. On the endless cassettes that Roth sends intermittently by post to Wool, we hear Roth's children singing and playing music (piano, violin and toy instruments).
- Begins recordings for the *Fernquartett* (1978–1980). Dieter, Björn, Karl and Vera Roth record 4 × 12 hours of string and piano music. The cassettes are published by Dieter Roth's Verlag, Lucerne, together with cassette machines, loudspeakers, earphones and an amplifier in a hand-painted wooden box.

Lorelei (Kassettenbild) is created. Assemblage with 37 music cassette cases, radio, painting utensils and papers on wood and hardboard, plus a box with 37 music cassettes containing *Lorelei, the long-distance sonata*.

Continues the gallery-noise-dog-barking recordings in the Galerie Felix Handschin in Basel.

The record *Autonom-Dialogische Thematik* with Arnulf Reiner is released by Edition Lebeer-Hossmann. Roth plays accordion for long stretches on it, including well-known folk songs.

Lorelei, die Langstreckensonate is released by Audio Arts and edition hansjörg mayer.

Begins work on the *Grosse Tischruine* (1978–1998) with Björn Roth and Eggart Einarsson. Installation with everyday objects and fixtures, painting utensils, instruments and audio recording and playback equipment.

Bar O (1978–1998), installation with everyday objects, garbage, painting utensils, files, video recorder, audio recorder, monitor.

1979

Ballett, Super 8 film by Peter Schönherr. Roth dances and drinks to music by Beatrice Cordua.

2 February: the performance *Attrappentappen* with Arnulf Rainer at the Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich. Roth occasionally plays the piano during the performance.

3 February: *Selten gehörte Musik. Abschöpfsymphonie*. Lenbachhaus in Munich. With Christian L. Attersee, Hanns Cibulka, Herbert Hossmann, Hansjörg Mayer, Hermann Nitsch, Paul Renner, Björn Roth, Dieter Roth, Gerhard Rühm, Dieter Schwarz, André Thomkins, Oswald Wiener.

Spontaneous performance by Arnulf Rainer, who is seated in the audience. The four corresponding LPs are released in May 1979 by edition hansjörg mayer and Edition Lebeer-Hossmann.

17 April: Recordings for the record *Autofahrt No 1* with Dieter and Björn Roth. This LP is released that same year by Dieter Roth's Verlag, Stuttgart and by edition hansjörg mayer.

1 May: *Rarely heard music. Das Hamburger Tastenkoncert*. With Christian L. Attersee, Richard Hamilton, Hermann Nitsch, Dieter Roth, Gerhard Rühm, André Thomkins, Oswald Wiener. Unpublished. This is the last time that Roth participates in a concert of the *Rarely heard music*. The series is continued sporadically with varied personnel, the last time being on 5 November 2014 at the Theater Casino in Zug and on 6 November 2014 at the Basel Music Academy, with Christian Ludwig Attersee, Walter Fähndrich, Hermann Nitsch, Gerhard Rühm and Oswald Wiener.

29. May: *The Kümmerling Trio plays No 1 & 2*. With Hansjörg Mayer, Dieter Roth, Emmett Williams. The LP is released by edition hansjörg mayer.

Roth releases the LP *THY QUATSCH est min Castello* in Dieter Roth's Verlag, Stuttgart. It is a parody of *My Jubilee ist Unverhemmet* by Nam June Paik, released in 1977 by Edition Lebeer-Hossmann.

Remaining stock of the numbered records of *THY QUATSCH est min Castello* is glued together spontaneously by Roth to form *Schallplatten-turm*.

In order to entertain the audience at the opening of the exhibition *Dieter Roth – Graphik, Bücher u. a. m.* at the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Roth buys a jukebox from the Lauser company that he fills with popular records by Heino, Supertramp, Blondie and Frankie Miller as well as with his own LPs, e.g. *THY QUATSCH est min Castello*.

Bar 3 with cassette players and radios.

3 November: *Autobiographie*. Recording of brief autobiographical statements by Roth and dialogues with Björn Roth, which are looped over each other in layers. Recorded by Björn Roth in the studio on the Danneckerstrasse in Hamburg. Unpublished.

1980 June: Performance of the ballet *Tagebuch 8. Neue Welt* for four female dancers and four male dancers in the main theatre of the Hamburg State Opera. Choreographed by Beatrice Cordua to a music performance by Dieter Roth.

Roth initiates and finances Hermann Nitsch's tour with the Symphony Orchestra from the New Art Department of the Icelandic School of Arts and Crafts and students of the Kunstakademie Frankfurt. World première of Nitsch's 5th Symphony on 23 October at the Basel Music Academy. Other stops on the tour are on 30 October in the Museum des 20. Jahrhunderts in Vienna and on 5 November in the main hall of the Innsbruck Conservatory, where the *Allerheiligensinfonie* is given its world première and a repeat performance. A performance in the Max Emanuel brewery in Munich is not documented, though Nitsch remembers it having taken place.

The continuation of the idea of a "music machine" results in the *Olivetti-Yamaha-Grundig Combo* (1965–1982 with Björn Roth). Roth uses it to turn several letters and poems into music.

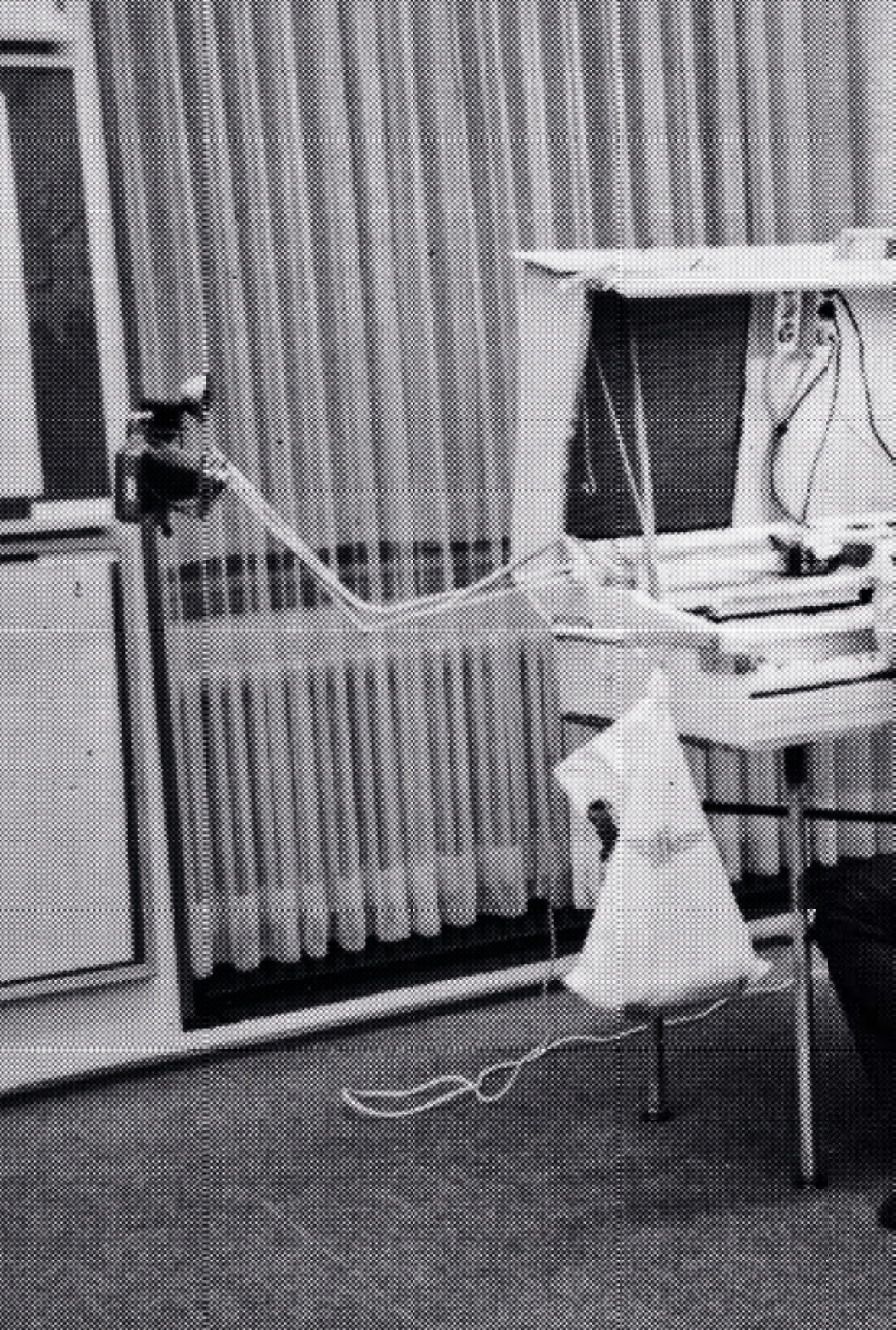
Nahquartett (1980–1982) with Björn, Karl and Vera Roth.

Keller-Duo (1980–1989) with Björn Roth. This work is created in several phases. In the end, visitors can play on electronic organs and record themselves in parallel to music already recorded by Dieter and Björn Roth.

1981 *Harmonica Curse*. Recordings of Roth's accordion playing take place between 14 February and 7 August each day, for an hour at a time. Every cassette is assigned a different Polaroid photo by Dieter Roth. The edition is published by Audio Arts.

1982 *A Diary*. Exhibition in the Swiss Pavilion at the Venice Biennale. The main part of the presentation is a film work that shows Roth's preparations for his contribution to the Biennale, from the invitation in January to the opening in June. In some scenes he plays the piano, including the *Tonalfabet*, he listens to classical music on the radio and whistles.

-
- 1983** At the exhibition *Ladenhüter* in the Galerie Onnasch in Berlin, Roth presents works including the *Fernquartett*, *Nahquartett*, *Grosse Tischruine*, *Tibidabo-Hundezwinger 24 Stunden Gebell*, *Olivetti-Yamaha-Grundig Combo* and *A Diary*.
- He begins work on *Bar 1 (stummes Bild mit Bar)*. Installation with everyday objects, glasses, bottles and radio, audio cassettes, cassette machines, loudspeakers, wind instruments etc.
- At the same time (1983–1997) *Bar 2* is created, an installation with a bar, painting utensils, furniture, bottles, glasses, keyboard, records, various audio equipment, monitors and much more.
- 1984** Begins work on the work group *Stummes Relief*. Music instruments are integrated in assemblages or they have chocolate or glue and/or paint poured over them in their cases and are combined with other garbage materials. They originate in part from the concerts of the *Selten gehörte Musik*.
- 1985** The *Chicago wall* is installed in the Kunstmuseum Bern.
- 1986** *Stummes Relief* (1986–1988). Comprehensive assemblage with two accordions.
- Ringgebilde* (1986–1993) with Björn Roth. Music instruments and cassette recorders along with painting utensils, everyday objects and much more, in steel rings.
- 1987** Begins work on the assemblage *Gebläse* (1987–1993) with Björn and Karl Roth. Assemblage with wind instruments, amplifier, radios, audio cassettes, painting utensils, lamps, wood, acrylics, ring binder and much more.
- 1991–1997** Various long-term piano works, recorded on several endless cassettes: *Accu Sonate*, *Piano Course 2*, *Langstreckensonate* No. 1. Further multi-part sound works on audio cassettes: *6 Einzelstücke*, *Microf. Proben*.
- 1994** The *Splittersonate* is published as the 300th copy book in Dieter Roth's Verlag, Basel and Amsterdam.
- 1995** For the exhibition *Dieter Roth & Björn Roth, Bilder, Apparate, Bücher, Schallplatten, Filme* in the Vienna Secession, he works on *Bar 2* (with Björn Roth). He uses furniture from the Café Alt Wien of Evelyn Oswald and Kurt Kalb that had been liquidated this same year.
- 1997** Roth films himself in everyday domestic activities, for the video work *Solo Szenen*. Four scenes show him playing the piano.
- 1998** *Bar 2*, acquired by the Galerie Hauser & Wirth, is installed in Zurich and used as a public bar until the year 2000.
- He continues work on the idea of the *Tonalfabet* for Daniel Spoerri's artist park *Il Giardino di Daniel Spoerri*, Monte Amiata, Toscana. A new feature is that texts are to be sent by fax and transformed into music. Karl Roth takes on the task of realising this after the death of his father.
- Dieter Roth dies on 5 June in his studio on the Hegenheimerstrasse in Basel.





List of works exhibited

The works marked ° are not part of the exhibition in the Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart – Berlin

Works on paper

Dieter Roth
 Untitled 1945
 Pencil on paper, dated and signed, 29.7 × 21 cm
 Aldo Frei Collection
 [↗ p. 6]

Dieter Roth
 Untitled ca 1950
 Pencil on paper, 8.5 × 10.5 cm
 Kunstmuseum Bern, Toni Gerber Collection, Bern – donation 1983
 [↗ p. 66]

Dieter Roth
 Untitled 1950
 Black chalk and collage on paper, 23.6 × 17 cm
 Kunstmuseum Bern, Toni Gerber Collection, Bern – donation 1983
 [↗ p. 67]

Dieter Roth
 Sketch for a poster 1950
 Stencil print, 59.4 × 42 cm
 Kunstmuseum Bern, Toni Gerber Collection, Bern – donation 1983
 [↗ p. 69]

Dieter Roth
Zeichnung mit 1-4-1 Rhythmus 1957
 Chinese ink with drawing pen on tracing paper, 68 × 69 cm
 Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg

Dieter Roth
Zeichnung mit 6er-Rhythmus 1957
 Chinese ink with drawing pen on tracing paper, 69.5 × 69.5 cm
 Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg
 [↗ p. 70]

Dieter Roth
Unterhaltungsmusik 1968
 Watercolour, matches on paper on cardboard, 62 × 50 cm
 Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg
 [↗ p. 76]

Dieter Roth
Unterhaltungsmusik – Kuchenriese 1970
 Watercolour and ink on handmade paper, 53 × 78 cm
 Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg
 [↗ p. 77]

Dieter Roth
Doppelquartett 1971
 Planographic print (stone and zinc) on handmade paper, 63 × 85 auf 78 × 94 cm.
 Print run: 50, numbered and signed, 10 a. p.
 Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg
 [↗ p. 182]

Dieter Roth
Skizze für ein Quartett 1971
 Pencil, ink on paper, 57 × 73 cm
 Dorle Strobel

Dieter Roth

Strichquartett 1971

Screen print on cardboard, photomechanical reproduction of a drawing, 70 × 50 cm. Print run: 100, numbered and signed, 10 a. p.

Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg

[↗ p. 183]

Dieter Roth

Listening / Rotes Blut 1972

Oil, ink on photography, on wood, under painted glass. Template for the screen print "Zuhören", 72 × 100 cm

Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg

Dieter Roth

Ars Alpina 1972

Lithograph, 60 × 79 cm on 63.5 × 90 cm. Print run: 50, numbered and signed, ca 5 a. p.

Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg

Dieter Roth (with Hugo Welti)

Quadrupelportrait 1972

Lithograph on handmade paper, 63 × 45 cm on 76 × 56 cm. Print run: 50, numbered and signed, 5 a. p.

Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg

Dieter Roth

5 postcards to Dorothy Iannone 1972

From the bundle: 66 postcards from Dieter Roth to Dorothy Iannone, 1967–1978. Polaroid photos, partly overpainted and made into a collage, ca 10.5 × 14.7 cm

ahlers collection

[↗ p. 12/13]

Dieter Roth

Original cover design for the record

Selten gehörte Musik.

3. Berliner Dichterworkshop 1973

Felt-tip pen, Polaroid photos, collage on paper, ca 31.5 × 31.5 cm

Hansjörg Mayer Collection, London

Dieter Roth

Scheisse von D. Roth 1973

Design for a record cover (the record was not realised). Lithograph, 43.5 × 78.5 cm.

Print run: 100

Hansjörg Mayer Collection, London

Dieter Roth

Doppelkopfquartett I-V 1974

Pen and/or pencil on vellum paper, 30 × 40 cm

Sprengel Museum Hannover, State of Niedersachsen

[↗ p. 184, 185]

Dieter Roth

Record announcement for the

Selten gehörte Musik.

3. Berliner Dichterworkshop

und Novembersymphonie ca 1975

Offset print, 89 × 50 cm
edition hansjörg mayer, Stuttgart,

London, Reykjavík

Collection Edizioni Periferia

Dieter Roth

Original cover design for the record

Canciones de Cadaqués ° 1976

Pencil and acrylic dispersion on cardboard, 18.6 × 18.4 cm

MACBA Collection. MACBA Foundation.

On permanent loan from the Bombelli family

Dieter Roth

Untitled^o 1977

4 Original poster designs for the exhibition *Tibidabo. Dieter Roth's dogs live in Galeria Cadaqués*. Watercolour, pencil, felt-tip pen, collage with photos on paper, 74 × 55,6 cm
MACBA Collection. MACBA Foundation.
On permanent loan from the Bombelli family

Dieter Roth

Record announcement for the

Selten gehörte Musik.

Das Berliner Konzert 1977

Offset print on paper, 100 × 70 cm
Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg
[↗ p. 205]

Dieter Roth

Original cover design for the

record **Quadrupelkonzert**

(not realised) ca 1977

Felt-tip pen on cardboard, 31.5 × 31.5 cm
Dieter Roth Estate,
courtesy Hauser & Wirth

Dieter Roth

Concert announcement

Quadrupelkonzert 1977

Offset print, 100 × 70 cm
Archive of the Basel Music Academy
[↗ p. 210]

Dieter Roth

Record announcement for the

Selten gehörte Musik.

TOTE RENNEN Lieder 1977

Offset print on paper, 50 × 71 cm
edition hansjörg mayer, Stuttgart,
London, Reykjavík
Hansjörg Mayer Collection, London

Dieter Roth

Record announcement for

Die Radio Sonate 1978

Offset print on cardboard, 44,5 × 64 cm
Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg
[↗ p. 194]

Dieter Roth

Greetings 1978

Pencil and coloured crayons on lined paper with perforation at the top, 31,5 × 20 cm
Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg
[↗ p. 223]

Dieter Roth

Nah und fern 1978/1980

Offset print, reworked, on cardboard, 46 × 64 cm
Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg
[↗ p. 294]

Dieter Roth

Nah und fern 1978–1980

Offset print, reworked, with glued watercolour saucers, on cardboard, 46 × 64 cm
Collection Anliker, Emmenbrücke

Dieter Roth

Nah und fern 1978/1980

Offset print, reworked, on paper, 46 × 64 cm
Collection Anliker, Emmenbrücke

Dieter Roth

Original cover design for the

record **“60. Aktion” by Hermann**

Nitsch 1979

Ballpoint pen, rollerball pen on paper, 29,7 × 21 cm
Dieter Roth Estate,
courtesy Hauser & Wirth

Dieter Roth

Die Erschöpfung der Welt 1980

Concert announcement for the world première of Mauricio Kagel's concert in the Württemberg State Theatre
Offset print on paper, 63 × 88 cm
Kunsthhaus Zug

[↗ p. 179]

Dieter Roth

Splittersonate 1976–1994

115 leaves, collage
Dieter Roth Estate,
courtesy of Hauser & Wirth

[↗ p. 296, 297]

Dieter Roth

Waldhörner I 1987/1988

Coloured chalks, pencil, watercolour and acrylic on handmade paper behind glass painted with acrylics, 60 × 81 cm
Private collection, Switzerland

Dieter Roth

Waldhörner II 1987/1988

Ink, acrylic, watercolour, coloured chalks on paper, collage, behind glass (cracked and glued)
Private collection, Switzerland

Objects, material pictures, assemblages, installations

Dieter Roth

Flöte (later expanded into

Gebrauchsortel) 1965

Card, wood, string, plastic foil, organic material. With a travelling box by Björn Roth (1985), 210 × 40 × 5 cm
Collection of the Living Art Museum, Reykjavík

[↗ p. 73]

Dieter Roth

Concert for FLY solo and FLY orchestra 1966

Two glue spots on cardboard, flies, 13.5 × 38 cm
Collection Rita Donagh, Northend

Dieter Roth

Dreiklang° 1967

Foodstuffs and spices in three wooden boxes in a metal case, 29 × 36 × 3 cm
Courtesy of Collection du Frac Alsace

[↗ p. 74]

Dieter Roth

Franz-Lehár-Sofa (Mozart-Schrank)

1969

Wooden cupboard with 6 inner spaces of different sizes, glass plates, portrait busts of Bach, Beethoven, Liszt, Mozart, Wagner and other composers, made of imitation alabaster, 208 × 34.5 × 22 cm
Collection Ludwig – Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst, Aachen

[↗ p. 78]

Dieter Roth

Quintett 1971

Oil on wood, 72 × 32.5 × 6.5 cm
Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Stuttgart

Dieter Roth

Kammerquartett II 1974

Set square, ruler, box of coloured crayons with paintbrush, paper, glue, Novopan on chipboard, 69.5 × 63 cm
Dorle Strobel

Dieter Roth

Symmetrisch angehauchtes Bild

1976–1977

Toy guitar, painting utensils, paint tubes, picture frame, cup, matches, textiles, glue, acrylic and much more on cardboard on hardboard, 76 × 105 cm
Collection Anliker, Emmenbrücke

Dieter Roth

Schallplattenturm 1979

Vinyl, glue, 35.5 × 17.5 cm
Private collection

[↗ p. 215]

Dieter Roth

Musikruhe 1979

Jukebox, 59 records, glued exhibition poster, 85.5 × 107 × 55.5 cm
Private collection

[↗ p. 216]

Dieter Roth

Harmonica Curse 1981

74 audio cassettes with Polaroid photos in a case, 25 × 70 × 40 cm
Edition 3/5, Audio Arts, London
Dieter Roth Estate,
courtesy of Hauser & Wirth

[↗ p. 222]

Dieter Roth

Harmonica Curse 1981

50 audio cassettes with Polaroid photos from different editions
Collection Edizioni Periferia

Dieter Roth

Harmonica Curse (B short version)

1976–1981

8 audio cassettes, radio cassette player, in a case of wood and plexiglass, 30 × 50 × 7 cm
Dieter Roth Estate,
courtesy of Hauser & Wirth

Dieter Roth

Literatur Orgel 1981

Endless cassette EC12 TDK, 12', letter of 29 June 1981, 2 Polaroid photos
Private collection, Zurich

Dieter Roth

Olivetti-Yamaha-Grundig Combo

1965–1982

Typewriter, organ, cassette recorder, Polaroid camera, office material, 200 × 170 × 120 cm
Private collection,
courtesy of Hauser & Wirth

[↗ p. 298]

Dieter Roth

Stummes Relief / Silent Relief

1984–1988

Broken violin, glue, acrylic, marker pen, painting utensils, plywood, garbage, in a violin case in a plexiglass box, 54 × 61 × 14 cm
Aldo Frei Collection

[↗ p. 304]

Dieter Roth

Stummes Relief mit Trompete

1984–1988

Trumpet, chocolate, in a trumpet case, 54 × 50 cm
Private collection

Dieter Roth

Stummes Relief (Erste kubistische Geige)° 1984–1988

Acrylic and spray paint on a violin, violin case and violin bag, 80 × 54 × 12 cm
Sprengel Museum Hannover, on loan
Kunststiftung Bernhard Sprengel u. Fr.

Dieter Roth

Hesturinn, riddari og myllur (Der Hengst, ein Ritter und Mühlen)

1986–1989

Oil, acrylics, spray paint, textiles, tools, painting utensils etc. on canvas, 169 × 145 cm
Kunsthaus Zug

[↗ p. 45, Fig. 16]

Dieter Roth

Accu Sonate 1992

10 audio cassettes, Polaroid photos, in a cardboard box, 7.4 × 18 × 12 cm
Dieter Roth Estate,
courtesy of Hauser & Wirth

[↗ p. 50, Fig. 19]

Dieter Roth

6 Einzelstücke 1992

10 audio cassettes, Polaroid photos, in a cardboard box, 7.4 × 18 × 12 cm
Dieter Roth Estate,
courtesy of Hauser & Wirth

Dieter Roth

Microf. Proben 1992

20 audio cassettes, Polaroid photos, in two cardboard boxes, signed, 7.4 × 18 × 12 cm
Dieter Roth Estate,
courtesy of Hauser & Wirth

Dieter Roth

Piano Course 2 1992

7 audio cassettes in a cardboard box, Polaroid photos glued on the inside lid, 7.4 × 18 × 12 cm
Dieter Roth Estate,
courtesy of Hauser & Wirth

Dieter Roth

Relief mit 2 Trompeten

1962–1992

Acrylics, oil, glue, paint tubes, 2 trumpets, painting utensils, cans, foghorns, chocolate busts etc. on wood and cardboard, zinc tub
Upper part: 150 × 115 × 60 cm
Lower part: 132 × 130 × 42 cm
Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg

[↗ p. 293]

Dieter Roth

Gepäck (Stummes Relief / Silent Relief) 1984–1994

Garbage, glue, oil, acrylics, wood, plastic, metal in a cornet case, 44 × 50 × 17.5 cm
Dieter Roth Estate,
courtesy of Hauser & Wirth

Dieter Roth

Improvisation on a Yamaha-Disklavier

1995

Electromechanical recording
Duration: 26' 35"
Private collection, Switzerland

Dieter Roth

Langstreckensonate Nr. 1

1993–1995/1997

264 audio cassettes in filing case, 75 × 106 × 12 cm. Unique specimen
Private collection, Switzerland

Dieter Roth

Bar 1 (lautloses Bild mit Bar)

1983–1997

Audio cassettes, radio and cassette machines, loudspeakers, video camera, wind instruments, photos, toys, everyday objects, painting utensils, glasses and bottles and much more, oil and acrylic on wood and canvas, on wheels, 325 × 335 × 120 cm

Maria És Walter Schnepel Kulturális Alapítvány, Budapest / Weserburg – Museum für moderne Kunst, Bremen

[↗ p. 311]

Dieter Roth

Bösendorfer grand piano 1906

Grand piano, pasted with Polaroid photos, glue, acrylic etc., ca 170 × 150 × 120 cm
Dieter Roth Estate,
courtesy of Hauser & Wirth

**Collaborative works /
Rarely heard music**

Dieter Roth with Richard Hamilton

Swingeing London 1972

Screen print using a photographic and 17 hand-cut templates with a collage by Hamilton and an open template, printed several times by Roth, 68 × 68 cm on 70 × 95 cm
Dieter Roth Estate,
courtesy of Hauser & Wirth

Christian Ludwig Attersee, Günter Brus, Hermann Nitsch, Arnulf Rainer, Dieter Roth, Gerhard Rühm, Dominik Steiger, Oswald Wiener

Untitled 1973

Pencil and oil chalk on paper,
29.8 × 20.8 cm
Private collection

Dieter Roth, Gerhard Rühm, Oswald Wiener

4 lithographs as a complimentary extra with the luxury edition of the record for the **3. Berliner Dichterworkshop** (not realised) 1973

31.5 × 31.5 cm
Hansjörg Mayer Collection, London

Günter Brus, Dieter Roth, Gerhard Rühm, Oswald Wiener

**Vierfarben-Schnellpresse Konzert-
grafik** 1974

Made during the concert *Rarely heard music. The Hamburg lithograph workshop*, offset print on paper, 62 × 88 cm
Private collection

[↗ p. 196/197]

Dieter Roth with Günter Brus, Gerhard Rühm, Oswald Wiener

**Vierfarben-Schnellpresse-Konzert-
grafik** 1974

Made during the concert *Rarely heard music. The Hamburg lithograph workshop*, offset print on paper, 62 × 88 cm.
Print run: 1 000
Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg

Günter Brus, Dieter Roth

Concert announcement for the

Selten gehörte Musik.

Das Prinzenorfer Konzert 1974

Offset print, 84 × 59 cm
Collection Edizioni Periferia

Christian Ludwig Attersee, Günter Brus,
Hermann Nitsch, Arnulf Rainer, Dieter
Roth, Gerhard Rühm, Dominik Steiger,
Oswald Wiener

Concert announcement for the

Selten gehörte Musik.

Das Berliner Konzert 1974

Offset print on paper, 57 × 50 cm
BRUSEUM / Neue Galerie Graz am
Universalmuseum Joanneum

Christian Ludwig Attersee, Günter Brus,
Hermann Nitsch, Arnulf Rainer, Dieter
Roth, Gerhard Rühm, Dominik Steiger,
Oswald Wiener

Programme for the

Selten gehörte Musik.

Das Berliner Konzert 1974

Cover drawing by C. L. Attersee, 8 leaves,
30 × 21.3 cm
BRUSEUM / Neue Galerie Graz am
Universalmuseum Joanneum

[↗ p. 203]

Christian Ludwig Attersee, Günter Brus,
Dieter Roth, Gerhard Rühm, Hermann
Nitsch, Dominik Steiger, Oswald Wiener

Untitled 1970s

Felt-tip pen, pencil and oil chalk on
paper, 20.9 × 29.5 cm
Private collection

[↗ p. 198]

Christian Ludwig Attersee, Günter Brus,
Dieter Roth, Gerhard Rühm, Hermann
Nitsch, Dominik Steiger, Oswald Wiener

Untitled 1970s

Felt-tip pen, pencil and oil chalk on
paper, 20.9 × 29.5 cm
Private collection

[↗ p. 198]

Christian Ludwig Attersee, Günter Brus,
Dieter Roth, Gerhard Rühm, Dominik
Steiger, Oswald Wiener

Untitled 1970s

Mixed media on paper, 23.9 × 33.8 cm
Private collection

Christian Ludwig Attersee, Günter Brus,
Dieter Roth, Gerhard Rühm, Dominik
Steiger, Oswald Wiener

Untitled 1975

Pencil and oil chalk on paper,
29.8 × 20.8 cm
Private collection

Christian Ludwig Attersee, Günter Brus,
Hermann Nitsch, Dieter Roth, Gerhard
Rühm, Dominik Steiger, Oswald Wiener

Windbeutel, meine Herren! 1975

Coloured crayons on paper, 20.5 × 29.5 cm
Collection Klewan, Munich

[↗ p. 199]

Christian Ludwig Attersee, Günter Brus,
Hermann Nitsch, Dieter Roth, Gerhard
Rühm, Dominik Steiger, Oswald Wiener

**Die Christianisierung des
Gerhard Rühm** 1975

Coloured crayons on paper, 20.5 × 29.5 cm
Collection Klewan, Munich

Dieter Roth and Arnulf Rainer

Klavier (Piano oder Flügel) 1975

Pencil and oil chalk on b/w photo,
mounted, 18 × 23.7 cm
Dieter Roth Estate,
courtesy of Hauser & Wirth

Dieter Roth and Arnulf Rainer

Untitled (**Einstimmung**) No date

Overpainted photo, 17.5 × 23.5 cm
Collection Klewan, Munich

Dieter Roth and Arnulf Rainer
Untitled No date

Overpainted photo, 17.5 × 23.5 cm
Collection Klewan, Munich

Dieter Roth and Arnulf Rainer
Poster for the **Donauschinger
Musiktage** 1976

Offset print on paper, 75.5 × 59.5 cm
Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg

Christian Ludwig Attersee, Günter Brus,
Hermann Nitsch, Arnulf Rainer, Dieter
Roth, Gerhard Rühm, Dominik Steiger,
Oswald Wiener

Original cover design for the record
Selten gehörte Musik.

Das Berliner Konzert ca 1977

Polaroid photo collage on paper, pencil,
oil chalk, gouache, 35 × 35 cm
Dieter Roth Estate,
courtesy of Hauser & Wirth
[↗ p. 204]

Christian Ludwig Attersee, Günter Brus,
Hermann Nitsch, Arnulf Rainer, Dieter
Roth, Gerhard Rühm, Dominik Steiger,
Oswald Wiener

Advertisement for the record
Selten gehörte Musik.

Das Berliner Konzert 1977

Offsetdruck auf Papier, 100 × 70 cm
Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg
[↗ p. 205]

Dieter Roth with Björn Roth, Karl Roth
and Vera Roth

Fernquartett (Kurzversion)

1970 – ca 1980

8 audio cassettes, 4 car cassette players,
4 loudspeakers, case of wood and acrylic
glass with metal handle, 120 × 30 × 15 cm
Dieter Roth Estate,
courtesy of Hauser & Wirth

Dieter Roth with Björn Roth

**Tibidabo 24 Stunden Hundegebell
vom Mt. Tibidabo, Barcelona**

1977–1978

24 audio cassettes, numbered and signed,
in a double box, 12 × 46 × 9 cm. With an
original drawing. Dieter Roth's Verlag
with Galeria Cadaqués. Print run: 19
Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg

Dieter Roth with Björn Roth, Karl Roth
and Vera Roth

Tibidabo-Hundezwinger

24 Stunden Gebell 1977–1978

ca 1 600 drawings, ca 1 000 photos (all
bound in books), contact copies on 16
wooden slats, amplifier, loudspeakers, ca
300 × 300 × 75 cm
Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg
[↗ p. 212]

Dieter Roth with Björn Roth and
Vera Roth

Lorelei, die Langstreckensonate

1978

37 audio cassettes, radio-cassette
recorder in a wooden box painted by
Dieter Roth, 12 × 61 × 28 cm
Audio Arts, London and edition hansjörg
mayer, Stuttgart, London
No. 17 of 20 unique specimens
Dieter Roth Estate,
courtesy of Hauser & Wirth

Dieter Roth mit Björn Roth und
Vera Roth

Lorelei, die Langstreckensonate

1978

37 audio cassettes, radio-cassette
recorder in a wooden box painted by
Dieter Roth, 12 × 61 × 28 cm
Audio Arts, London and edition hansjörg
mayer, Stuttgart, London
No. 2 of 20 unique specimens
Private collection, Switzerland

Dieter Roth with Björn Roth and Vera Roth

Lorelei, die Langstreckensonate

1978

37 audio cassettes, radio-cassette recorder in a wooden box painted by Dieter Roth, 12 × 61 × 28 cm
Audio Arts, London and edition hansjörg mayer, Stuttgart, London

No. 11 of 20 unique specimens
Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg

[↗ p. 219]

Dieter Roth with Björn Roth, Karl Roth and Vera Roth

Fernquartett 1978–1980

48 audio cassettes, 4 cassette players, 4 loudspeakers and 1 amplifier in a painted wooden cupboard on rollers with metal handles, 50 × 21.5 × 76.5 cm

Print run: 20 unique specimens

Dieter Roth Estate,
courtesy of Hauser & Wirth

[↗ p. 189]

Dieter Roth mit Björn Roth, Karl Roth und Vera Roth

Fernquartett 1978–1980

48 audio cassettes, 4 cassette players, 4 loudspeakers and 1 amplifier in a painted wooden cupboard on rollers with metal handles, 50 × 21.5 × 76.5 cm

No. 3 of 20 unique specimens

Private collection, Switzerland

Dieter Roth und Björn Roth

Original cover design for the

record **Autofahrt No. 1** 1979

Polaroid photos on paper

Dieter Roth Estate,
courtesy of Hauser & Wirth

Dieter Roth and Arnulf Rainer

Original cover design for the record

Ratio – Konditio. Hart ins Gericht –

Zart ins Gesicht 1979

Collage, pencil, oil chalk on paper,
21 × 29.7 cm

Dieter Roth Estate,
courtesy of Hauser & Wirth

Dieter Roth with Björn Roth

Triptychon 1979–1981

Assemblage with radio-cassette machine, 12 original cassettes with piano and violin music, toy guitar, xylophone, earthenware jug, table lamp, electric cable, drawings, Polaroid photos, bottles, spray paint cans, acrylic and oil paints, glue and small wooden boards in a wooden display case (back panel) and plexiglass (front, base and sides) with a metal handle and metal hinges, 69 × 107 × 69 cm
Private collection, Switzerland

[↗ p. 217]

Dieter Roth and Vera Roth

Am Piano 1980

Pencil, felt-tip pen, ink, acrylic dispersion, fluorescent paint on hardboard,
70 × 85.5 cm on white wooden board,
105.8 × 91 cm

Private collection

Dieter Roth with Björn Roth, Karl Roth and Vera Roth

Nahquartett 1980–1982

16 audio cassettes, 4 car cassette players, 4 loudspeakers, in a painted wooden box with metal handles, 53 × 60 × 30 cm

Dieter Roth Estate,
courtesy of Hauser & Wirth

Dieter Roth and Björn Roth

Keller-Duo 1980–1989

Box with hinged lids, drinking utensils, audio cassettes, radios, recording equipment, loudspeakers, oil, acrylic, marker pen, electric pianos, violins, cables and much more., 200 × 240 × 60 cm
Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg

[↗ p. 303]

Dieter Roth with Björn Roth

Bar 2 1983–1997

Installation with wind instruments, keyboard, everyday objects, loudspeakers, radio, PC, bar, painting utensils, glasses, bottles, radio, audio cassettes, cassette machines, video monitors and much more, variable dimensions, ca 300 × 600 × 200 cm

Private collection,
courtesy of Hauser & Wirth

[↗ p. 314/315]

Works by other artists

Paul Klee

d. Pianist in Not ° 1909

Pen and watercolour on paper on cardboard, 16.5 × 18 cm
Private collection, Switzerland; on loan in the Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern

[↗ p. 193]

Dorothy Iannone

At Home 1969

Screen print on paper, 72.5 × 87 cm
Print run: 100
Courtesy of the artist and
Air de Paris, Paris

Dorothy Iannone

Lions For Dieter Rot The Present

Lion Master 1971

Etching on paper, 77 × 86 cm
Print run: 30
Courtesy of the artist and
Air de Paris, Paris

Dorothy Iannone

The Lorelei 1971/2010

Etching, blue ink on paper, picture:
15 × 18.2 cm

Print run: 5
Courtesy of the artist and
Air de Paris, Paris

[↗ p. 43]

Günter Brus

Concert announcement for the

Selten gehörte Musik.

Münchner Konzert 1974

Offset print, 84 × 60 cm
Collection Edizioni Periferia

Günter Brus

Concert announcement for the

Selten gehörte Musik.

Münchner Konzert 1974

Offset print, 81.5 × 59.5 cm
Collection Edizioni Periferia

[↗ p. 202]

Markus Lüpertz

Concert announcement for the

Selten gehörte Musik.

Das Karlsruher Konzert 1974

Offset print, 86 × 61 cm
Private collection

Arnulf Rainer

Untitled 1974

10 photos, overpainted, 24 × 18 cm

Collection Klewan, Munich

[↗ p. 206]

Arnulf Rainer

Schlussapothese für ein schönes Österreich. Steiger/Brus/Rühm/Rainer/Wiener 1974

Overpainted photo, 61.3 × 48.3 cm

Collection Klewan, Munich

[↗ p. 207]

Friedhelm Döhl

Original cover design for the record

Odradek/Black & White cm 1976

Watercolour, collage, felt-tip pen, pencil

on paper, 31.5 × 31.5 cm

Dieter Roth Estate,

courtesy of Hauser & Wirth

Günter Brus, Gerhard Rühm,
Oswald Wiener

Schmale Renaissance 18 – Die sensible Phase 1974–1979

Book bound in leather, mixed

media on paper, 46 × 32 × 5 cm

Private collection

Video and sound

Dieter Roth

Autobiografie 1979

Tape and digital copy

Duration: 53' 47"

Dieter Roth Estate,

courtesy of Hauser & Wirth

Christian L. Attersee, Heinz Cibulka,
Herbert Hossmann, Hansjörg Mayer,
Hermann Nitsch, Paul Renner, Björn
Roth, Dieter Roth, Gerhard Rühm, Dieter
Schwarz, André Thomkins, Oswald
Wiener

Selten gehörte Musik. Abschöpfsymphonie. Die Abschöpfung 1979

Recording of the concert of 3 February

1979 in the Städtische Galerie im
Lenbachhaus, Munich, video, sound,

Duration: ca 3 h 32'

© 1979 Karlheinz Hein / P.A.P. Kunst-
agentur and artists

Günter Brus, Dieter Roth, Gerhard Rühm,
Oswald Wiener

Selten gehörte Musik.

Lithografie-Workshop 1974

Digital copy

Duration: ca 7 h 30'

Dieter Roth Estate,

courtesy of Hauser & Wirth

Dieter Roth

Quadrupelkonzert "Remix"

no date

Tape and digital copy

Duration: 1 h 56'

Dieter Roth Estate,

courtesy of Hauser & Wirth

This exhibition book includes a live recording from the *Abschöpfungsymphonie*.
Die Abschöpfung., namely an excerpt (00.05.00–00.22.50) from a recording of the concert given on 3 February 1979 in the Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus in Munich (total length: 03:32:30).

Participants: Christian Ludwig Attersee, Heinz Cibulka, Herbert Hossmann, Hansjörg Mayer, Hermann Nitsch, Paul Renner, Björn Roth, Dieter Roth, Gerhard Rühm, Dieter Schwarz, André Thomkins, Oswald Wiener
Camera: Ulli Bauereis and Ulrich Fischer
Sound: Clemens Deisch, Gottfried Düren and Karlheinz Hein
Sound engineer: Karlheinz Hein
Production: Helmut Friedel (Lenbachhaus) and P.A.P. Kunstagentur, Karlheinz and Renate Hein
Post-production: videocompany.ch
Copyright 1979 P.A.P. Kunstagentur and Dieter Roth Estate

Picture credits and copyrights

Picture credits

© Nationalgalerie im Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, SMB, Schenkung der Friedrich Christian Flick Collection / Roman März (275) · Courtesy Collezione Luigi Bonotto (231) · Elísabet Davídsdóttir, Reykjavík, (274) · Joachim Fiegner, Bremen (75) · Roland Fischer (front cover, 2, 30) · Hannes-Dirk Flury (39, 211) · W. Gasché, Bern (69) · Anne Gold, Aachen (78, 79 bottom) · © The Artist and Produzentengalerie Hamburg (277) · © Karlheinz Hein / P.A.P. Kunstagentur und Künstler (31, 154, 220/221, 254) · Franz J. Hubmann (260) · Juergen Junker-Roesch, Berlin (218 top, 299) · Ólafur Lárusson, Reykjavík (73) · Karin Mack, Wien (190–192, 201) · © Estate of George Maciunas (259) · © Photography Archives of the MNCARS (Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia), Madrid (294) · © Ceter, Ville de Marseille (188) · Zoltán Nagy (268) · Courtesy Nitsch Foundation (96) · Alois Ottiger (82 bottom, 82 top, 83, 97, 120, 124, 126, 129, 139, 153 top) · © 1982, Galerie Bama, Paris (298 top) · © RMN-Grand Palais (musée d'Orsay, Paris) / Adrien Didierjean (109 top) · © RMN-Grand Palais (musée d'Orsay, Paris) / Hervé Lewandowski (109 bottom) · Gianni Paravicini, Luzern (308, 309) · Frank Pickhardt, Berlin (218 bottom) · © 1982, Karin Pott (back flap, 354/355) · Studio Arnulf Rainer (135) · © Dieter Roth Estate, Courtesy Hauser & Wirth (Back Cover, 49, 50, 91, 132, 136, 151, 176, 189, 200, 204, 208, 209, 222, 290–292, 295–298, 306, 307, 314–319) · © Dieter Roth Estate, Courtesy Hauser & Wirth / Foto: Mike Bruce, London (306/307) · © Dieter Roth Estate, Courtesy Hauser & Wirth / Foto: Michael Pfisterer, Hamburg (65, 80, 83, 167, 177, 224, 289, 320, 343, 344) · © Dieter Roth Estate, Courtesy Hauser & Wirth / Foto: Agostino Osio, Courtesy Fondazione Hangar Biccoca, Milano (176) · Peter Schönherr (133) · Shunk-Kender (172) · Jürgen Spiler (25, 58) · Margherita Spiluttini, Wien (55, 60, 312/313) · Photograph © The State Hermitage Museum / photo by Vladimir Terebenin (132 bottom) · Niklaus Stauss, Zürich (36) · Kunstmuseum Stuttgart (301) · Kurt Wyss (272) · Jens Ziehe, Berlin (153 bottom)

Copyrights

For works by Dieter Roth, if not otherwise stated: © 2014, Dieter Roth Estate, Courtesy Hauser & Wirth · For works by George Brecht: © George Brecht Estate · For works by Richard Hamilton: © R. Hamilton. All Rights Reserved / 2014, ProLitteris, Zurich · For works by Dorothy Iannone: © The Artist and Air de Paris, Paris · For works by Asger Jorn: © Donation Jorn, Silkeborg / 2014, ProLitteris, Zurich · For works by Annika Kahrs: © The Artist and Produzentengalerie Hamburg, Hamburg · For works by Ragnar Kjartansson: © The artist, Lühring Augustine, New York and i8 Gallery Reykjavik · For works by Bruce Nauman: © Bruce Nauman / 2014, ProLitteris, Zurich · For photographs by Franz J. Hubmann: © IMAGNO / Franz Hubmann · For works by Nam June Paik: © Nam June Paik Estate · For photographs by Shunk-Kender: © Roy Lichtenstein Foundation · For works by Andy Warhol: © The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York · For works by Christian Ludwig Attersee, Jean Dubuffet, Roland Fischer, Karin Mack, Robert Morris, Hermann Nitsch, Jean Tinguely: © 2014, ProLitteris, Zurich · For works by Robert Rauschenberg: © Robert Rauschenberg / 2014 ProLitteris, Zurich · Video and film stills (except 41, 137, 277): © 2014, by videocompany.ch

Despite intensive research we have regrettably not been able to identify the rights holders for all the images reproduced here. Any valid claims will naturally be compensated within the scope of the usual agreements. Any rights holders not listed here should please write to info@kunsthauzug.ch.

This book is being published on the occasion of the exhibition *Und weg mit den Minuten. Dieter Roth und die Musik* held at the Kunsthaus Zug from 6 September 2014 to 11 January 2015 and at the Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart – Berlin, from 13 March to 16 August 2015.

Published by
Edizioni Periferia
Kunsthaus Zug
Hochschule für Musik / Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz,
Musik-Akademie Basel

Concept
Matthias Haldemann

E-mail conversation
Matthias Haldemann and Michel Roth
with
Sven Beckstette
Walter Fähndrich
Gabriele Knapstein
Isabelle Zürcher

Chronological overview
Jana Bruggmann
Matthias Haldemann
Isabelle Zürcher

English translation
Chris Walton

Design
Camillo Paravicini
Stephan Fiedler

Editors
Flurina Paravicini
Isabelle Zürcher

Picture editing
Brigitte Hürzeler

Printed by
Offsetdruckerei K. Gramlich, Pliezhausen



Hochschule für Musik / Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz
Hochschule für Musik



Musik Akademie Basel

This series of publications and the exhibitions have been generously supported by

Anliker-Stiftung für Kunst und Kultur, Emmenbrücke
Artephila Stiftung
Dieter Roth Estate / Hauser & Wirth
Dieter Roth Foundation, Hamburg
Erna und Curt Burgauer Stiftung, Zürich
Ernst Göhner Stiftung
Ernst und Olga Gubler-Hablützel Stiftung
FUKA-Fonds, Stadt Luzern
Hauser & Wirth
Glencore International AG, Baar
Kanton Luzern
Kanton Zug
Landis & Gyr Stiftung / Siemens Building Technologies
Pro Helvetia, Schweizer Kulturstiftung
Schweizer Mobiliar Genossenschaft
Stadt Zug
Stanley Thomas Johnson Stiftung
Starr International Foundation, Zug
Stiftung Sammlung Kamm
UBS AG, Zug
videocompany.ch
Wasserwerke Zug AG

© 2015 Edizioni Periferia; Kunsthaus Zug; Hochschule für Musik /
Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz, Musik-Akademie Basel

ISBN 978-3-906016-36-8

Published by Edizioni Periferia, Luzern / Poschiavo
www.periferia.ch

The exhibition "And away with the minutes. Dieter Roth and Music" was realised by the Kunsthau Zug in collaboration with the School of Music / University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland FHNW, Musik-Akademie Basel, Edizioni Periferia, Lucerne and the Nationalgalerie – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

Exhibition at the Kunsthau Zug

6 September 2014 – 11 January 2015

Director and curator

Matthias Haldemann

Research interns

Jana Bruggmann

Isabelle Zürcher

Administration, communication, sponsoring

Renate Arpagaus

Doris Gysi

Conservation

Manuel Hebeisen

Art education

Sandra Winiger

Friederike Balke

Museum technology

Pascal Bracher

Jonas Burkhalter

Florian Gasser

Maude Léonard-Contant

Thomas Ruch

Audio, video

videocompany, Zofingen

**Exhibition at the Hamburger Bahnhof –
Museum für Gegenwart – Berlin**

14 March – 16 August 2015

Director

Udo Kittelmann

Curator

Gabriele Knapstein

Research assistant

Nadine Söll

Coordination

Ingrid Buschmann

Ulrike Gast

Communication

Mechthild Kronenberg

Anneliese Schäfer-Junker

Art education

Daniela Bystron

Secretariat

Katherine Israel-Koedel

Janet Röder

Conservation

Carolin Bohlmann

Registrar

Johanna Lemke

Custodians

Martin Baal

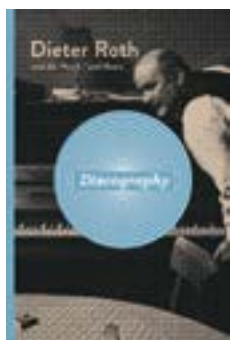
Thomas Seewald



Nationalgalerie
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

Dieter Roth

und die Musik / and Music



Discography

Catalogue raisonné von Dieter Roths Werk als Musiker und Musikverleger. | Catalogue raisonné of Dieter Roth's work as musician and music publisher.

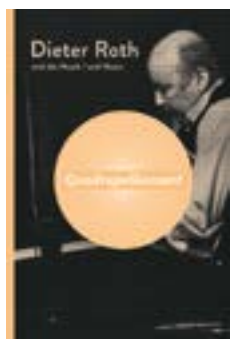
Hrsg. von | Edited by Edizioni Periferia; Kunsthaus Zug; Hochschule für Musik / Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz, Musik-Akademie Basel · Texte von | Essays by Flurina Paravicini, Klaus Renner, Björn Roth, Michel Roth, Guy Schraenen · deutsch | English, Klappenbroschur | paperback, 224 Seiten | pages, 155 × 230 mm · ISBN: 978-3-906016-34-4



Harmonica Curse

Ein klingendes Diary über 74 Tage, dokumentiert mit Polaroidaufnahmen und Dieter Roths korrespondierenden Tagebuchnotizen. | A diary in sound of 74 days, documented by Polaroid photos and Dieter Roth's corresponding diary entries.

Hrsg. von | Edited by Edizioni Periferia; Kunsthaus Zug; Hochschule für Musik / Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz, Musik-Akademie Basel · Texte von | Essays by Peter Kraut, William Furlong, Gianni Paravicini · deutsch | English, doppelte Klappenbroschur zum parallelen Lesen | double paperback for parallel reading, 312 Seiten | pages, 155 × 230 mm · ISBN: 978-3-906016-33-7



Quadrupelkonzert*

Erstveröffentlichung der Mitschnitte von Dieter Roths legendärem *Quadrupelkonzert* 1977 an der Musik-Akademie Basel (3er-LP), mit einem originalgetreuen Konzertplakat und einem illustrierten wissenschaftlichen Kommentar | First publication of the live recording of Dieter Roth's legendary *Quadruple Concerto* in 1977 at the Basel Music Academy (3-LP set), with a facsimile of the concert poster and an illustrated scholarly commentary

Hrsg. von | Edited by Edizioni Periferia; Kunsthaus Zug; Hochschule für Musik / Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz, Musik-Akademie Basel · Text von | Essay by Michael Kunkel · deutsch | English, Klappenbroschur | paperback 160 Seiten | pages, 155 × 230 mm



Selten gehörte Gespräche *

Dokumentation und Verschlagwortung mit Timecode-Angaben zu den rund 25-stündigen Gesprächsaufzeichnungen mit den Mitmusikern von Dieter Roth: | Documentation and keyword tagging with timecode references for the ca 25 hours of recorded conversations with Dieter Roth's co-musicians:

Christian L. Attersee, Günter Brus, Hansjörg Mayer, Hermann Nitsch, Arnulf Rainer, Björn Roth, Gerhard Rühm, Dominik Steiger, Oswald Wiener

Hrsg. von | Edited by Edizioni Periferia; Kunsthaus Zug; Hochschule für Musik / Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz, Musik-Akademie Basel · Texte von | Essays by Flurina Paravicini, Michel Roth · deutsch | English, Klappenbroschur | paperback, 152 Seiten | pages, 155 × 230 mm



Disklavier *

Disklavier-Wiedergabe einer Improvisation von Dieter Roth aus dem Jahre 1992 | Disklavier reproduction of an improvisation by Dieter Roth in 1992

Hrsg. von | Edited by Edizioni Periferia; Kunsthaus Zug; Hochschule für Musik / Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz, Musik-Akademie Basel · Text von | Essay by Franz Wassmer · deutsch | English, DVD in Kartonhülle | DVD in cardboard sleeve, 155 × 230 mm

Splittersonate *



Kommentierte Neu-Edition der 126-seitigen Musikpartitur *Splittersonate für Klavier (und Stimme)* von Dieter Roth | Commentated new edition of the 126-page music score of the *Splittersonate für Klavier (und Stimme)* by Dieter Roth

Hrsg. von | Edited by Edizioni Periferia; Kunsthaus Zug; Hochschule für Musik / Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz, Musik-Akademie Basel · Text von | Essay by Michael Kunkel & Michel Roth · deutsch | English, Broschur mit Blockleimung | paperback with notepad binding, 132 Seiten | pages, 310 × 230 mm

Mit * markierte Medien sind nur in der limitierten Box-Edition *Dieter Roth und die Musik* enthalten und ausschliesslich beim Verlag bestellbar. | The media marked * are available only in the limited box edition *Dieter Roth and Music* and exclusively available at the publishing house.

