

Karlheinz Essl

# **Sequitur XII**

for harpsichord and live-electronics

2009

Dedicated to Maja Mijatović

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### **Preparations**

Remove the damper from the jack of the lowest string (1F).

Tie a piece of fishing line (length: approx. 1.5 m / 5 feet) close to the jack of the lowest string. Rub the fishing line well with rosin.

Attach a contact microphone (recommended: *AKG C411*) to the sound board of the harpsichord close to the bridge.

Place a bottleneck (as used by guitar players) close to the harpsichord

**NB:** Tuning 415 Hz (1F = 41 Hz)

### **Comment**

In this composition, the harpsichord is played in a highly unconventional manner. Except for the end of the piece, no keys are touched. Instead, the sound board and the lowest string of the instrument (1F) are excited in different manners. A contact microphone mounted on the sound board acts like an acoustic lense that amplifies sounds that are normally inaudible. The interaction between the harpsichordist and the live-electronics creates a kind of meta-instrument. Its novel sounds and expressions purposely-avoid the typical percussive sound of the harpsichord, which is only heard at the end of the piece as a quotation.

By preparing the instrument with a thin nylon thread, sustained „drone“ sounds can be produced as an antitheses to the needle-sharp and rapidly decaying harpsichord attacks, which György Ligeti tried to overcome in his harpsichord composition *Continuum*.

## Playing Instructions

In this piece, the harpsichord is played in 4 different ways:

- on the **sound board**
- by plucking the lowest **string**
- by playing on the **fishing line** attached to the lowest string
- and finally, by playing the lowest key of the keyboard

### Sound board

- STROKING: slow stroking with the finger tips (FB) or fingernails (FN) from front (jack) to rear (bridge) and vice versa
- SCRUBBING: with finger tips (FK) resp. fingernails (FN), sometimes also as tremolo
- TAPPING: single attacks; sometimes also as tremolo („trill“) with 2 or 3 fingers

### Lowest string

- PIZZICATO: various plucking positions on the open lowest string (1F) between jack and bridge
- PIZZICATO BEHIND THE BRIDGE: bell-like sounds without defined pitch
- FLAGEOLETT-PIZZICATO: VI.–XI. overtones (mark positions on the string with water-proof felt marker)
- PIZZICATO-GLISSANDO: grip lowest string between thumb and index finger and shift position continuously
- BOTTLENECK-GLISSANDO: left hand moves a bottle neck along the lowest string whereas the right hands is plucking

### Fishing line

- „ARCO“: stroke the thread alternatively by left and right hand in order to produce sustained „drones“ or short pulses
- „RATTLING“: grip thread between thumb and middle finger; move slowly with high pressure
- PIZZICATO: various degrees of tension on the fishing line produce different pitches and pitch modulation

### Lowest key

When releasing the key after playing, a separate softer sound is produced by the fall of the jack. To avoid noises when playing the key, the index finger of the left hand should be placed under the key in order to dampen the attack.

## Clefs

R

R clef: play on the **R**esonance/sound board  
note positions on the staff represent positions between the jack and the bridge

S

S clef: play the lowest **S**tring  
note positions on the staff represent positions between the jack and the bridge

F

F clef: play the **F**ishing line attached to the lowest string

♭:

bass clef: play the lowest key

E

E clef: input level of the microphone fed into the live-electronics

C

C clef: output level of the live-electronics

## Methods of exciting the instrument

FK

*finger tip*

FN

*fingernail*

FF

*stroke with flat fingers*

BN

*bottleneck*

Božo Mijatović gewidmet

Sequitur XII  
for cembalo & live-electronics

6. August 2010

Karlheinz Essl (\* 1960)

$\downarrow \sim 60$

$\frac{6}{4}$  mit der r. H. entlang des  $\frac{5}{4}$  Resonanzbodens streichen

Cembalo

Input level

Electronics

Output level

trem: ∅  $\rightarrow \frac{1}{2}$

trem:  $\frac{1}{2} \rightarrow \emptyset$

transp: ∅  $\rightarrow \frac{1}{4}$

Klopfen auf den Resonanzboden

transp:  $\frac{1}{4} \rightarrow \emptyset$

transp: ∅  $\rightarrow \frac{1}{4}$

13  $\downarrow = 30$  acc. -----  $\downarrow = 120$  10  $\downarrow = 60$

FK

*p sempre*

3  $\downarrow$  4 *p33. (hinter dem Steg)*

*p* *mp* *mf* *f* *ff*

transp:  $\frac{1}{4} \rightarrow \emptyset$

8  $\downarrow$  *p33 (tiefe Seite)*

5  $\downarrow$  4 (unterschiedl. Anzupf 3-Positionen)  $\frac{2}{4}$

13  $\downarrow$  4 *FF*  $\frac{23}{23}$  (Wechsel Schlag mit flachen Fingern auf der Seite)  $\frac{4}{4}$

*f* *f* *mf* *mp* *p* *mf* *p*

flange:  $\emptyset \rightarrow \frac{1}{2} \rightarrow \emptyset$

*p33. (hinter dem Steg)*

$\frac{2}{4}$   $\frac{5}{4}$   $\frac{3+2+3}{8}$   $\frac{2+3+3}{8}$   $\frac{3+3+2}{8}$  rit.  $\frac{6}{8}$   $\frac{5}{8}$   $\frac{4}{8}$   $\frac{3}{8}$

*f* *p* *f* *(f)*

$\frac{2}{8}$   $\frac{4}{4} = 60$   
*pizz.* (laere Saite)  
*arco*  
*p* *f* *p* *mf*  
*tramp:*  $\emptyset \rightarrow 1 \rightarrow \emptyset$  *flange:*  $\emptyset \rightarrow 1$

$\frac{5}{4}$   $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{8}{4}$   $\frac{5}{4}$  *pizz.*  $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{2}{4}$   $\frac{8}{4}$   
*f* *p* *mp* *mf* *f*  
*Fladenspannung*  
*flange:*  $1 \rightarrow \emptyset$  *detune:*  $\emptyset \rightarrow 1 \rightarrow \emptyset$

$\downarrow = 45$  acc.  $\downarrow = 90$   $\downarrow = 60$   
 $\frac{6}{8}$   $\frac{5}{8}$   $\frac{6}{8}$   $\frac{5}{8}$   $\frac{4}{8}$   $\frac{5}{8}$   $\frac{4}{8}$   $\frac{8}{4}$   
*arco* *p* *ff* *rit. molto* *à tempo*  
 $\frac{5}{4}$  *pizz.* *vi.* (Blaseolet)  
*f*



(♩=60)

10/4 p<sup>izz.</sup> (leere Saite)

6/4 "Rakern"

5/4

8/4

transp: 1/2 → ∅

lange: ∅ → 1/2

rmod: ∅ → 1/2

new: ∅ → 1/2

12/4 arco (sem.)

8/4

5/4 p<sup>izz.</sup> (leere Saite)

3/4

2/4

3/4

rmod: 1/2 → ∅

lange: 1/2 → ∅

new: 1/2 → ∅

p<sup>izz.</sup> (hinten dem Steg)

5/4

8/4

13/4 r.H. 3 ~ p<sup>izz.</sup>

L.H. = Glissando  
(Saite zwischen Daumen und Zeigefinger anheben)

p sempre

transp: ∅ → 1/2

transp: 1/2 → ∅

♩ = 90  
BN

4/4 <sup>pizz</sup> r.H.

5 4 5 4 7 5 4

l.H. = Glas.  
p (Bolleneck) f

3/4 <sup>pizz</sup> r.H.

l.H. = Glas.  
sfz (Bolleneck) sfz sfz sfz

rit. -----

transp. ∅

♩ = 30    ♩ = 60

auf den Tasten

8/4    5/8    2/4    6/8    4/4

sfz    sfz    sfz

1/4 → 1/2 → ∅

FREEZE

rmod: ∅ → 1

senza tempo

flange: ∅ → 1 trem: ∅ → 1 shift: ∅ → 1 res: ∅ → 1 detune: ∅ → 1

shift: 1 → ∅ (short!)

Moskauer  
7. September 2009  
SDG