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Virus der Erneuerung

10 Jahre Internationale Ensemble Modern Akademie (IEMA)

Preface

Ten years ago, when the Ensemble Modern initiated the International Ensemble Modern Academy (IEMA), its rapid and positive development and the associated experiences were impossible to foresee.

Implementing their own educational ideas, reacting to suggestions and wishes from outside IEMA, fulfilling their own goal of passing on their musical heritage and supporting new approaches to contemporary artistic creativity: those are the goals and yardsticks by which members of the Ensemble Modern measure their activities within IEMA.

After ten years, this book is the opposite of a retrospective. It delivers neither a chronology nor statistics, for example a list of all the 150 artists who have now graduated from the one-year IEMA Fellowship Programme in Frankfurt; all this information can be found in great detail on our website. Instead, we focus on highlights, future plans, analyses and conclusions regarding the training of musicians today and tomorrow.

The texts focus on today's IEMA Master's Degree Course while the images try to convey an impression of all of IEMA's project areas. Using numerous interviews as a basis, the musicologist Dr. Egbert Hiller has delved deep into the heart of the matter, producing seven essays on very different aspects: what exactly is the nature of what the Ensemble Modern conveys in its Academy's programmes? What awaits the students after their year at IEMA? Has it shaped them as artists, broadened their aesthetic horizons, sharpened their professional orientation? Is the Ensemble Modern fostering the competition under its own roof? What is the social relevance of this very specific educational offering?

An interview with Heiner Goebbels (cf. Appendix) illuminates possibilities of future interdisciplinary projects and their various aspects on the Academy level. Tilman Allert, professor of sociology and social psychology at the Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main, analyses this training model, »unique throughout the world«, in terms of educational policy. Michael M. Kasper, cellist of the Ensemble Modern and director of the IEMA Master's Degree Course on behalf of the Ensemble Modern, gives insights into the IEMA »workshop« in his essay ›Do something!«. The enclosed CD of works by Péter Eötvös, Elliott Carter, Fausto Romitelli and Franco Donatoni – live recordings of concerts by various IEMA ensembles throughout the years – provides sound evidence of IEMA's work.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all our project partners and supporters, without whose financial and conceptual help we could simply not develop and produce our activities within IEMA: the Arts Foundation NRW, the Federal Arts Foundation, the Allianz Cultural Foundation, the Kulturfond Frankfurt RheinMain, the Altana Arts Foundation, the Deutsche Bank Foundation, the Foundation Jugend musiziert of Lower Saxony and the Siemens Foundation.

Furthermore, we thank our cooperating partners within the IEMA Master's Degree Course, i.e. the Frankfurt Academy of Music and Performing Arts, the Institute for Music and Acoustics at the ZKM in Karlsruhe, the Institute for Applied Theatre Studies at Gießen University as well as the international partner Academies forming part of the Ulysses Network: the synergies and

highly professional working conditions resulting from these models of cooperation enable us to offer projects at an extraordinarily high level.

We thank the NRW Arts Foundation and the Society of Friends and Patrons of the HfMDK Frankfurt am Main, without whose generous support this book would not exist. We hope you find it a stimulating reading experience!

*Christiane Engelbrecht, Roland Diry, Michael M. Kasper, Johannes Schwarz
Managing Directors and Board of the International Ensemble Modern Academy*

Greeting

At the initiative of the Arts Foundation North Rhine Westphalia, in 2003 the International Ensemble Modern Academy first offered stipends for especially qualified musicians whose artistic and life focus are centered in North Rhine Westphalia. For almost ten years, the Arts Foundation NRW – together with further supporters added since then – has enabled IEMA to offer a conceptually outstanding one-year course, and today IEMA has become the Arts Foundation NRW's most important partner in its efforts to support young artists.

As an aesthetic event, current music, whether composed or improvised, reflects our present times. It opens new soundscapes, sharpens our perception and ideally teaches us to experience reality from a new perspective. If an institution such as IEMA contributes to qualifying young instrumentalists, conductors, sound artists and composers for the music of our present times, then a major goal of the Arts Foundation NRS has been fulfilled in exemplary fashion.

The impulses for the future radiating from this initiative are tangible in diverse ways: numerous former participants have launched notable careers since then. Smaller ensembles have also crystallised within the individual years and have made names for themselves with independent profiles. IEMA's success, however, is also apparent from the fact that significant numbers of institutions are trying to adapt the IEMA »model« for themselves.

The present publication is the impressive document of ten years' work. However, it is not just a retrospective documentary, but also an invitation to secure and extend the project IEMA for the future. The Arts Foundation NRW considers itself a supporting partner in this process.

*Dr. Fritz Behrens
President, Arts Foundation NRW*

The Phenomenon of New Music – and IEMA

The close correlations between music and social, cultural and scientific phenomena observed in cultural history are striking. Mutual dependencies and influences range from imitation and appropriation all the way up to subtle transformations of innovative tendencies and to reflections of approaching social upheaval in sound. At the same time, the new and unknown has always attracted musicians, driving them to journeys of discovery – whether real or virtual – especially once music was released from its narrow role of functional servitude to churches and courts during the second half of the 18th century. After this significant loss of direct non-musical meaning, music's level of abstraction necessarily rose, since meaning now had to be found for each individual piece. Potential meanings can arise within the composer's personal and biographical realm, from spiritual, intellectual or philosophical reflections or from the structure of the music itself.

As early as 1800, a tension arose which has continued to define art music up to the present: greater autonomy and individualisation as well as highly differentiated expressivity increased the gap between heightened levels of artistic reflection and the need of a very large majority of the audience to maintain their familiar listening habits. Even the formal experiments and expressive intensity of Ludwig van Beethoven, Franz Schubert and Robert Schumann irritated their contemporaries. During early »modernism« these reservations turned into massive rejection facing new movements and their protagonists, occasionally discharged in spectacular scandals.

The Eerie Attraction of the Unknown

Only a historical vantage point makes evident the vehemence of the social contradictions lurking behind aesthetic conflicts. Starting with the developments and scientific insights of the 19th century, new technologies, mass media, industrialisation and urbanisation began breaking ground around 1900, and the manifestations of these changes had decisively influenced people's attitude towards life. Conversely, the »old world« and its conventions were still present in people's spiritual perceptions: the fascination exerted by technical achievements was counterbalanced by feelings of menace and loss – the loss of the old world, which retrospective nostalgia was all too quick to stylise as ideal, but which dissolved into fragments in the face of fast-paced change. As early as 1843, Heinrich Heine speculated on the consequences of such changes for the human spirit, reporting on the opening of new railway lines from Paris to Rouen and Orleans: »While the great mass of people stares, perplexed and stunned, at the outward appearance of these great powers of motion, the thinking observer is seized with the sinister dread we always feel when the most terrific, the most unheard-of happens, with incalculable and unpredictable consequences. We only realise that our existence is dragged along, catapulted away, that new circumstances, joys and tribulations await us, and the unknown is eerily attractive, tempting and yet frightening.«

This upheaval is also reflected in music – perhaps not directly, but via circuitous channels. Clinging to tradition suggesting certainty and security was part of the atmosphere, just as much as the intuitive and seismographic perception of new forms of expression. 19th century music reacted with a marked delay to phenomena such as industrialisation and faster modes of transport, or to groundbreaking developments in other art forms – e.g. impressionism in painting, leading to the dissolution of concrete representation. Musical art created a »romantic« counter-world, or at least evoked a longing for a counter-world. And yet the outside world could not be ignored. Even if many composers did not react immediately to its effects, indirectly they expressed them: such phenomena were reflected in the structure (and thus, in the interior) of music. Thus, the changed perception of space and time found its equivalent in a new relationship between the linear-melodic and chord-like spheres. The increasing density of musical relations led to a state in which one single motif could be the germ-cell or basic material for an entire work.

Liberation from Traditional Patterns

This development – which can be observed equally in Franz Liszt's and Johannes Brahms' output – then became the foundation of 20th century music, ultimately leading to serial procedures. Further central aspects of this New Music were the radical increase of expressive intensity, the dissolving of tonality and the liberation of rhythms from the strictures of traditional patterns – manifested paradigmatically in Igor Stravinsky's »Le Sacre du Printemps« (1913).

The extreme differentiation of expressive content also undermined traditional genres and motivated individualised sound constellations, a fact which favoured the founding of specialist

ensembles and flexible constellations of instruments. The ensemble assembled especially for the tour of Arnold Schoenberg's ›Pierrot lunaire‹ (1912) may be considered the grandfather of these formations; in its founding Ensemble Modern, however, also made reference to the chamber music processes of concentration in Schoenberg's Chamber Symphony No. 1 Op. 9. Doing justice to the various tendencies of New Music required the establishment of specialist ensembles, which often realise the composers' concepts and sound visions in close cooperation with the composers themselves – a process in which the complexity of many artistic approaches and their characteristic aesthetic diversity reflects increasing social and cultural pluralisation. The fact that new instrumental and electronic sound sources are discovered, noises and supposedly secondary noises are included, as are computer technology and digitalisation, and that repertoires previously considered remote are assimilated as they become globally available – all this has much to do with perception processes within the context of time, as does the opposite, conscious process of shutting out all the above-mentioned (as practiced by Arvo Pärt, for example).

In this regard, contemporary music does not differ fundamentally from the music of other epochs; and yet its contemporary nature has far-reaching consequences. Not only can current references only be fully understood with some historical distance, but the lack of such distance also has repercussions for the question of a quality filter. Therefore, interpretation is essential for new works, for an established work hardly ever suffers from a failed performance, since other interpretations are available – in the case of new works, however, the first performance often decides their subsequent ›fate«. During the second half of the 20th century, the goal of guaranteeing a high quality of interpretation motivated the formation of those ensembles which have remained trend-setters to this day. A few years after the London Sinfonietta (1970) and the Paris-based Ensemble Intercontemporain (1976), the Ensemble Modern performed its founding concert at the Deutschlandfunk in Cologne in 1980. Since 1985 it has found a home in Frankfurt am Main.

Education on Multiple Levels

However, even if the artistic goals are met in an exemplary fashion, usually the audience remains limited. Only a small part of concertgoers attends New Music events on a larger scale – and this touches upon a fundamental dilemma. Although – or perhaps because – New Music makes direct reference to our own times, it collides with the broader audience's entertainment needs. The often-heard blanket prejudice that it is too ›complex«, difficult to understand or over-intellectualised obstructs any willingness to perceive it as a sensual listening experience. The educational element is all the more important, going beyond accompanying or introductory events. It takes place on multiple levels, addressing not only the audience, but also the musicians involved. The main goal when founding IEMA in 2003, says cellist Michael M. Kasper, ›was to convey the knowledge which Ensemble Modern had amassed, both about New Music and its interpretation, to the next generations. This knowledge is very diverse, and familiarity with certain playing techniques is the lesser part of it. The far greater part consists in our interaction with the composers, with their goals and the historical context which led to new artistic ideas.«

Thus, the one-year fellowship programme for instrumentalists, composers, sound directors and conductors, for which the Arts Foundation NRW was one of the most important initiators, was the point of departure and still forms the heart of IEMA. Since 2003, 150 fellows have completed the programme. Since 2006 the fellowship has been offered as a one-year Master's Degree Programme ›Contemporary Music‹ in cooperation with the Frankfurt am Main Academy of Music and Performing Arts. In close cooperation with Ensemble Modern, a broad range of repertoire from modern ›classics« to world premieres is rehearsed and presented in

over 20 concerts per year in Germany and abroad. Even if not all IEMA graduates (can) remain faithful to New Music, their intensive experiences alone, conveyed directly and indirectly in other musical contexts, make them multipliers, potentiating effects which in turn mean a stronger anchoring of contemporary elements in daily musical life. Today, IEMA's main purpose is collecting diverse Ensemble Modern education projects under one roof, to systemise and develop them further. One example is including local schools in the project ›CultureDayYear‹, as Christiane Engelbrecht, Managing Director of IEMA, explains: »Classic education projects like one-time rehearsal visits are good first steps, but they do not lead to results as we envision them; instead, they cater to a pedagogical interest in singular events. Projects like ›CultureDayYear‹, initiated by the Altana Cultural Foundation, are much more intriguing and sustainable: for an entire year, Ensemble Modern joins partners from other artistic genres, for example the Forsythe Dance Company, visual artists or writers, in visiting school rooms. One day a week is dedicated to culture! Our past experiences have already shown that the lasting effects for the students are enormous.«

Furthermore, the IEMA umbrella covers the International Composition Seminar, the Composers' Studio, international master classes for instrumentalists as part of renowned festivals such as the Klangspuren Schwaz in the Tyrol, the Paxos Spring Festival in Greece, at Tokyo Wonder Site and in Miami, the master classes entitled ›Epoch f‹ for young winners of the Federal Competition ›Jugend musiziert‹, and the project ›Musicians for Children‹ at the pre-school age, initiated in 2012. Thus, IEMA includes the entire educational spectrum: from activities for children, teenagers and students to further education for professional musicians.

Competition under the Same Roof? – Ensemble Modern and IEMA

Who likes having the competition under one's own roof? Well, Ensemble Modern invited it, so to speak, when it founded IEMA. Every year, the fellows of the programme form the IEMA Ensemble, collaborating intensively under the tutelage of Ensemble Modern. It is obvious that this gives rise to groups which continue to exist and try to make a name for themselves in concert life. Thus, the fellows Bettina Berger (flute), Anna D'Errico (piano), Yuko Fukumae (clarinet), Agnieszka Koprowska-Born (percussion), Christophe Mathias (cello) and Maiko Matsuoka (violin), all from the Class of 2009, founded Ensemble Interface. The sextet originated during a working period led by Péter Eötvös which »welded together« the participants, says Bettina Berger. »After that, we followed IEMA's model and rehearsed together intensively for a year, in order to become optimally attuned to each other.« On the contemporary music scene, Interface is no longer an unknown entity and has even started to coach young musicians itself.

The following fellowship year of 2009/10, produced several ensembles: 3° (MAM.manufaktur für aktuelle musik, Trio Catch and the wind section of MAM). MAM includes Boglárka Pecze (clarinet), Shin-Hye Park (violin), Gregor Schulenburg (flute), Paul Hübner (trumpet), Daniel Lorenzo (piano), Sun-Young Nam (piano), Yen-Ting Liu (cello) and the conductor Susanne Blumenthal. Yen-Ting Liu returned to her native Taiwan in February 2013 to take up the position of principal cellist in the Evergreen Symphony Orchestra there on March 1, 2013.

Decoys

As the name of MAM, »manufaktur für aktuelle musik« or »manufactory for current music«, signifies, the ensemble specialises in experiments and crossover projects involving other arts and media. Elements of musical theatre play as important a role as the expansion of instrumental playing techniques – as Daniel Lorenzo describes, during their time at IEMA this was inspired by the study of Mauricio Kagel's ›Exotica‹ for non-European instruments. The

ensemble maintains close working relationships with the composers Georg Nussbaumer, Niklas Seidl, Hannes Seidl and Robin Hoffmann, whose piece ›Locken‹ for a septet of blackcocks marked the initial impulse for the founding of MAM, as Paul Hübner recounts: »The IEMA fellows of this year wanted to contribute to the programming and rehearsed a piece by Robin Hoffmann for birdcall decoys. This led to the founding of MAM. We do not consider ourselves an ensemble in the traditional sense, but more as an umbrella under which various projects from the area of ›current music‹ are realised.«

MAM gave an enthralling concert at the 2013 ›Acht Brücken‹ Festival in Cologne, presenting an unusual programme rich in contrast. The fact that it featured not only a Iannis Xenakis piece and the shrill, performative ›Epicycle‹ by Jani Christou, but also a work by the Chinese composer Ying Wang, a IEMA fellow in 2009/10, speaks for itself.

After completing their IEMA fellowships, Boglárka Pecze, Yen-Ting Liu and Sun-Young Nam also founded Trio Catch, which is not specialised exclusively in New Music. Yen-Ting Liu describes the formation's profile: »Trio Catch – a combination of clarinet, cello and piano – plays both classical and modern works. In order to find an even more concentrated mode of relating to each other as chamber musicians, after IEMA we enrolled in the master's degree course in chamber music at the Hamburg Music Academy, which we completed in February 2013. At the same time, I think we acquired a good reputation, especially in the New Music area, by giving several concerts. I then left the trio, having decided to return to my native country. This had been clear for some time, so we had enough time to find a new cellist.«

Career Advancement

The open position was filled by Eva Boesch, a 2010/11 IEMA fellow. In April 2013 Trio Catch gave a much-acclaimed concert at the Witten Days of New Chamber Music in which she played the cello. The programme featured a world premiere (›Rajzok III‹) by the Hungarian composer Márton Illés, who had been one of the participants of IEMA's first International Composition Seminar in 2004 and has maintained this connection to this day. In 2014, Vito Žuraj will write a piece for Trio Catch. Žuraj was an IEMA fellow in 2009/10, subsequently participating in the International Composition Seminar and winning the renowned Stuttgart Composer's Prize in 2012. Ensemble Modern also performs his works, for example the world premiere of ›Übürall‹ in November 2013 at ›cresc...‹, the Biennial for Modern Music Frankfurt Rhein Main. The cooperation between Ensemble Modern and (former) IEMA fellows is not limited to individual cases, but has characterised the Ensemble's overall recent history. One example is the conductor Clemens Heil, who led the world premiere of Markus Hechtle's chamber opera ›Minotaurus‹ at the 2013 ECLAT Festival in Stuttgart. However, by no means do IEMA graduates move only in Ensemble Modern and IEMA circles. Instead, they continue to meet in other musical contexts as well. Matthias Engler, for example, a 2005/06 fellow, is the percussionist of the German-Icelandic Ensemble Adapter, whose guest conductor is Manuel Nawri – a fellow of the same year. Like many other IEMA graduates, Engler emphasises that during and after his time at IEMA, he developed contacts with festivals, composers and presenters who were previously beyond his reach. Manuel Nawri shares the same experience: his career received an enormous boost through IEMA – using it as a »calling card«, he launched an international career. Today he works regularly with several renowned ensembles, including musik Fabrik and Ensemble Modern itself. Since 2008 Nawri has held a professorship at the Music Academy Hanns Eisler in Berlin, where he founded a New Music ensemble.

Developing Identities

Thus, individual fellows and the ensembles formed under IEMA's auspices profit not only from the abilities and experience of Ensemble Modern itself, but also from its excellent reputation. And yet, the new formations want to and must go their own ways. »Today, over 30 years after the founding of Ensemble Modern,« says Bettina Berger, »the musical, political and social conditions are very different than they were then. Therefore, one cannot do the same thing as Ensemble Modern. It is very important to develop our own identity with Ensemble Interface.«

The fact that IEMA gives birth to ensembles which are able to »compete« is due to the high level of playing technique that is demanded of the fellows. This is the basic prerequisite for being accepted into the programme. These abilities are the foundation for advancement, with members of Ensemble Modern »providing a strong role model by the very fact of their existence and identity. They bring the full weight of their personality to the table, putting their own specific mark on the collaboration«, as Bettina Berger explains. This function of role models goes far beyond aspects of playing technique, referring mostly to the concentration and seriousness required for the interpretation of New Music, says Roland Diry, clarinettist and managing director of Ensemble Modern since 2003. »Another central tenet is to give the fellows the opportunity to participate in Ensemble Modern's working processes with conductors and composers. Its guests include such contrasting artist personalities as George Benjamin, Peter Eötvös, Helmut Lachenmann, Steve Reich and Wolfgang Rihm, who are also engaged to rehearse and discuss with IEMA fellows. These encounters are formative; they sharpen the understanding of New Music and open up other perspectives when studying and rehearsing scores. Ultimately, the goal is to train the IEMA fellows to be contemporary ›artists‹ in the fullest sense.«

Give and Take

Joint Ensemble Modern and IEMA projects, for example at the 2011 and 2013 ›cresc...‹ Festivals or at the 2013 ›Acht Brücken‹ Festival in Cologne (featuring ›Alax‹ by Iannis Xenakis) accompany these processes. The intense working atmosphere notwithstanding, curiosity and openness must be maintained, new challenges must be met and one's own motivation and attitude must be continuously questioned. The high level of responsibility that goes with this approach is based not least on the goal of determining the Ensemble's fate autonomously. This is one of the most striking differences between Ensemble Modern and institutionalised orchestras, as Michael M. Kasper points out, who is familiar with both »worlds«. He joined Ensemble Modern shortly after it was founded, then moved to the Cologne Radio Symphony Orchestra (known as WDR Symphony Orchestra Cologne today) for twelve years before returning to Ensemble Modern in 1997. »Doing one's own thing, pursuing one's own goals within self-governing structures is also a motor for optimal output. Passing on this attitude, creating a consciousness for it, is also one of IEMA's tasks.«

This concern goes hand in hand with teaching a canon of »New Music«, knowledge of which, according to Hans-Joachim Wagner of the Arts Foundation NRW, is »necessary in order to survive in the contemporary music business. Transferring the profound immersion in the musical arts of the 20th and 21st century from Ensemble Modern to IEMA fellows is a form of intensive education which a music academy alone cannot provide. Beyond mastering one's instrument, which is taken for granted, the goal is to learn how to position oneself within the difficult market for contemporary music and how to network.«

Therefore, Ensemble Modern spares no effort to educate highly qualified future generations of musicians. Whether it will eventually have to fear this kind of »competition« is secondary; after all, the »market« is limited and it remains to be seen whether it will grow during the coming years and decades. However, both sides profit from this give and take, for the fellows

from many countries reflect back upon Ensemble Modern, infecting the Ensemble itself with the »virus of renewal«, since the enriching mutual exchange of musical heritage, cultural backgrounds and attitudes towards life prevents any form of self-satisfaction and »stewing in one's own juices«. Fostering the (future) »competition« under one's own roof is not just a fulfilling task for the Ensemble Modern members, but it also keeps them »young« and awake and allows them to take the pulse of our times as a matter of course.

Changing Times – IEMA at Ten

Measured against cultural history, or Western music history with its roots in antiquity, ten years are a minuscule period of time. And yet, much can »happen« in a decade, much can be »moved«, as demonstrated not only by drastic political and social changes. In general, wheels – both literal and metaphorical ones – have been turning ever-faster since the beginning of »modernism«, and this development has long taken hold of music and culture. Not only do the arts react in content, reflecting these processes, whether consciously or subconsciously; forms of organisation and performance and their representation through media are also undergoing massive change. By no means does this deter creativity. But if the proponents of New Music wish to maintain their position and find interested new audiences, instead of being pushed (even further) to the sidelines, they must emphasise their qualities and unique attributes without avoiding processes of change and innovative technologies.

In view of this background, IEMA occupies an important position – given that the conditions for the creation and dissemination of New Music are in flux and that artistic ideas do not develop in a vacuum, there are multiple consequences for its activities. The question whether now, after only ten years, meaningful conclusions can be drawn, is difficult to answer, since its influence emanates and is potentiated with each new class of graduating fellows, projecting into the immediate and distant future. Only fragments of what may be expected, artistically and in terms of New Music education, especially from the participants in the one-year fellowship programme, are visible from today's vantage point.

Cultural Permeation

At the same time IEMA itself is constantly changing, and one of the central issues in this regard is the number of fellows. The programme's core, the fellowship programme, has been extended significantly over the years. In 2003, when a lengthy preparation phase culminated in the enrolment of the first students, there were six fellows with stipends for half a year, funded by the Arts Foundation NRW: five instrumentalists and one conductor. According to Hans-Joachim Wagner, the fact that the Arts Foundation NRW has remained one of IEMA's main supporters is a consequence »of its bylaws, which stipulate financial support for outstanding young artists. We support fellows from North Rhine Westphalia, providing five to six fellowships for this exemplary form of professionalization for musicians.«

In 2004 the pattern of six fellows for six months was repeated – these included three instrumentalists and one conductor, but also a composer and a sound director. When the Federal Cultural Foundation began supporting the programme, the fellowship was extended to one year, beginning in the 2004/05 season (running from October 2004 to September 2005), and the number of fellows grew to 13, one year later to 15, then 14, 13 and 14 again. When the Kulturfonds Frankfurt RheinMain joined the ranks of the programme's supporters, their numbers grew to 17 in 2010/11, to 18 in 2011/12 and finally to 20 in 2012/13. During that year, support from the Altana Cultural Foundation enabled the programme to extend its profile, as Christiane Engelbrecht explains: »We added a fellowship for music education. This person, who already holds a degree in music education, has the task of accompanying

Ensemble Modern projects in schools, involving their fellow IEMA participants, creating their own education projects and implementing them together with the fellows.«

The increase in fellowship places also reflects the improved sponsorship situation. At the present time, four foundations are on board, and yet there is significant insecurity regarding the programme's finances. Christiane Engelbrecht says: »All projects of the International Ensemble Modern Academy – both the Academy's projects and those within the Master's Degree course – are funded mainly by foundations. This funding is time-limited and must be re-applied for every year. We dare not imagine that the Academy's work might end some day, especially since the Ensemble Modern's networks, which contribute to the Academy, have led to new international cooperation projects during recent years. One outstanding exchange project, for example, took place in the spring of 2012 and was entitled ›Composing in a globalised world‹. This was a cooperation with the Goethe Institute, the Cologne Music Academy and four universities in Hong Kong. The IEMA Ensemble travelled to Hong Kong for a week with its two IEMA composers, two composers from the Cologne Music Academy, docents from Ensemble Modern, the composer Johannes Schöllhorn and Kasper de Roo, an experienced conductor. There they rehearsed new works by four young German and eight young Chinese composers. The results were presented in Hong Kong, Frankfurt and Cologne. It was the first time that all four of Hong Kong's universities worked together. In addition, there are extremely promising cooperation projects, with novel ways of interaction, taking place now within the newly-founded Ulysses Network, which unites fourteen European Academies.«

IEMA's strong international network is reflected not least by the international provenance of its fellows. Taking its cue from Ensemble Modern, roughly half of whose members have an international background, IEMA has challenged itself from the very beginning to attract young musicians from all over the world. Thus, it reacts to changes in the world at large: the phenomenon of increasing globalisation means that geographically and culturally distant countries and regions are now much more closely connected. On the one hand, Europe with its functioning educational structures still represents a centre of gravity for New Music; on the other hand, the times when non-European musicians had a hard time identifying with their roots are past.

Such developments also have consequences for IEMA's work. When the fellows form an ensemble every year, meeting at eye level, individual dispositions and specific cultural influences meet and mesh without sacrificing any of their multiple layers. Thus, these ensembles are also an expression of this change, allowing us to focus on the utopian dimensions of a cultural permeation not dominated by short-term economic interests, imperialistic ambitions or political demarcation impulses. As Karsten Witt (one of the founding members of Ensemble Modern and today director of an artist management company) emphasises, »the fellows from other cultural backgrounds gather their very own experiences at IEMA – and when they return to their countries of origin, they become champions of contemporary music. Already we see examples of this, e.g. in Greece and China.« »In exchange,« Roland Diry adds, »the fellows receive many impulses from the Academy: the democratic collective, goal-oriented, concentrated cooperation, the relationship between conductor, individual musician and ensemble that is brought to eye level: all this they carry back to their native countries, where they build new networks.«

Connecting with the Master's Degree Course

IEMA certainly cannot complain about a lack of resonance. About 140 candidates apply each year, submitting to a selection process with several levels. Initial doubts – about the ability of the »market« to yield enough interested musicians of sufficient quality over the years – have long been banished. On the one hand, this has much to do with Ensemble Modern's excellent reputation throughout the world, and on the other with the outstanding working conditions IEMA offers. Another essential step was the integration of the one-year Master's Degree course ›Contemporary Music‹ into the fellowship programme in 2006. This is directed by Michael M. Kasper in cooperation with the Frankfurt Academy of Music and the Performing Arts. Thomas Rietschel, President of the Music Academy, explains the reasoning behind the installation of the degree course: »Since 2004 the Academy has maintained an Institute for New Music, underscoring our fundamental decision to devote a lot of attention to contemporary elements. Roland Diry and I discussed the idea of linking IEMA with the Music Academy, in order to make IEMA even more attractive and to institutionalise it. For the Music Academy, IEMA is also an ideal enrichment, especially since we have entered into similar cooperation agreements with theatre and dance institutions.«

Professor Gerhard Müller-Hornbach, who directs the Master's Degree course on behalf of the Music Academy, states that »the combination of IEMA and Music Academy represents an exemplary combination of musical practice and research and teaching. This results in a multitude of other interrelated effects. For example, the Music Academy is closely connected with a major education project, the Hessian ›Response‹ Project, which brings contemporary music to schools. Through the fellows' participation, IEMA is now also involved in ›Response‹.« The abovementioned Response Project was initiated in 1988 by Ensemble Modern, after previous experiments with Response Projects in London – at first together with the London Sinfonietta and the British Council in Germany. It was then implemented throughout the 1990s by Ensemble Modern alone at schools in Frankfurt and many other towns in Hesse. Since 2009 the Frankfurt Music Academy has taken on responsibility for the project, cooperating with the Hessian Ministry of Culture. It makes sense to combine the IEMA fellowship programme, a form of elite education, with the education of broader circles of young people, since these forms are complementary and fertilise each other. Support for outstanding talent requires broad basic training, as otherwise no »elites« can emerge, and at the same time the broader education efforts need this »elite« as motivation, providing visions and goals.

However, the Music Academy and IEMA also profit mutually at other levels. Thomas Rietschel points out the high level of the fellows, which reflects back on the Music Academy. The connection with IEMA also encourages networking with other institutions. Thus, there are already cooperation projects pointing beyond education in form of a Master's Degree course, for example the numerous cross-genre projects taking place within the Music Academy, which IEMA is also involved in. »The docents from the Ensemble Modern, who automatically become assistant lecturers,« explains Müller-Hornbach, »have an effect on the Music Academy that goes beyond IEMA. IEMA's composer fellows are invited to the composers' colloquium at the Music Academy and are involved in music and musical theatre projects.« As Thomas Rietschel says, »We will only reap all the fruits of the cooperation between IEMA and the Music Academy in the future.«

The installation of the Master's Degree course ›Contemporary Music‹ has not only changed the character of the IEMA fellowship programme, since every graduate now also receives a valuable degree. This example may also be a sign for further change, since the course has become a model for future-oriented practical education at artistic academies – towards direct

practical relevance during the educational period, towards stronger and more direct involvement of the music academies in musical life at large, and towards the elimination of the »special role« still ascribed to New Music. In addition to all these aspects, this form of networking increases social relevance and legitimacy.

Initial Impulses

Not only IEMA, however, has changed significantly over the ten years of its existence – most importantly, the fellows themselves undergo personal and musical transformations during their period of attendance. This begins with the seminal decision to apply, the reasons for which can differ greatly. Even if it is »only« a year, the graduates agree that their (professional) situation, including their integration into the contemporary music scene, is completely different than it was before.

Trumpeter Paul Hübner heard about IEMA while studying in Mainz, and attended the summer course at the Klangspuren Festival in Schwaz. »Since I had already specialised in contemporary music, it was logical to expand this specialisation by attending the Master's Degree course in Frankfurt, where I started after graduating from Mainz in 2009. Meeting the other musicians there was very important; I continue to work with them in chamber-music projects and especially within the Ensemble MAM. Without IEMA, MAM would never have been founded.«

The cellist (and composer) Wolfgang Zamastil, currently a member of the Asasello Quartet, admits that before his fellowship (2005/06) he had very little knowledge of New Music. At IEMA, he says, he learned not only playing technique, but also a lot about human qualities, namely »modesty, which arises naturally« and the insight that »if you are serious about New Music, then life arranges itself around the music, and not the other way around.«

Matthias Engler had heard about the »Academy« from fellow students, and emphasises that at IEMA he gained a real insight into the reality of the New Music market, especially because of the close relationship with Ensemble Modern: »Artistically and idealistically, this ›experience‹ was an important step in my development towards being a freelance musician.«

Trombonist Florian Juncker (2004/05) came to IEMA due to personal contact with the Ensemble Modern member Uwe Dierksen: »I met Uwe in 1999 at a summer course for New Music in Graz. His technical and musical approach, this completely new way – for me – of treating the trombone, really hit me. While I had been interested in New Music previously, I lacked the right surroundings and a mentor. At that time, I could only dream about an institution like IEMA. When Ensemble Modern founded IEMA towards the end of my studies, I applied immediately.« Subsequently Juncker has played in numerous New Music and jazz projects and initiated his own ensembles, for example the Duo Rayon (trombone and piano).

Another fellow with a mentor was cellist Yen-Ting Liu, whom the composer Mathias Spahlinger encouraged to participate in the IEMA auditions. Liu had heard of IEMA at the Freiburg Music Academy. While she had played contemporary works during her studies, New Music was »more of a side line – as a string player, I have enough ›classical‹ repertoire to keep me busy my entire lifetime. At IEMA, however, I noticed how much earnestness and concentration, but also how much wit and elegance lies in the work of the Ensemble Modern musicians. I found that really inspiring, and I had some incredibly valuable practical experiences. To me, the door to New Music opened, and somewhat later I noticed that my attitude towards music in general and towards life had changed fundamentally due to IEMA. Now I do everything with complete passion, and I stand by that.«

Sound director Christoph Seibert noticed the advertisements for IEMA by coincidence: »I have an acquaintance who had applied as a pianist, and I helped him put together his application. That made me realise that I could join as a sound director as well. I had been searching for a while for opportunities to learn from experienced sound directors, so this was a happy

coincidence for me. Working with Norbert Ommer and the Ensemble Modern musicians, the exchanges with other fellows, attending rehearsals and concerts and observing the preparations and post-concert work of the stage managers – all this gave me the impression that this is all about music, but that music is not ›holy‹ either. Painstaking study of the score and other sources, passionate discussions, precise technical planning and extensive fussing over a percussion setup until it's perfect – these are simply part of our tools of the trade. There may be people who still claim that contemporary music occupies an ivory tower – in Frankfurt, at the Ensemble Modern, you won't find such a tower.«

Impressive Performance

Indeed, it is not only the IEMA fellows who are subject to the »changing times«, but also the works they rehearse and perform with the support of the Ensemble Modern coaches. As a temporal art – unfolding within time, but also subject to time-dependent processes of perception – music is subject to constant change. This is true for its general reception and history of reception, but also for the changes concerning a piece of music in the course of its profound and intensive study. One striking example is Mauricio Kagel's ›Exotica‹, where both factors come together. No less than three classes of fellows have studied ›Exotica‹, most recently the IEMA Ensemble of 2012/13. Thus, ›Exotica‹ was a logical choice for the programme of IEMA's ten-year anniversary concert at the Deutschlandfunk's Chamber Music Hall on April 20, 2013, part of the New Music Forum, the 14th edition of which had the motto »News from the Colonies«. Featuring seven concerts and accompanying events, this Deutschlandfunk festival went in search of traces of colonialism and post-colonialism in contemporary music. Kagel's ›Exotica‹ corresponds closely with this thematic focus, since even its title evokes reflections on »exoticism«, Euro-centrism and globalisation.

The work is conceived for non-European sound-sources, several of which are assigned to each of the six performers, for example Bali gongs, bullroarers, shepherd's horns, horseshoe bells, slit drums, bamboo flutes, etc. The expansion of the instrument range has been elevated to an aesthetic principle, but the instruments are separated from their original, cultic function. The performers are faced with very special challenges, including the use of their own voice. They only have a limited level of expertise in the playing of non-European instruments, and they delve into foreign sound-worlds associated with foreign cultures. The exploration of the foreign and unknown, however, is by no means unusual in New Music, as Michael M. Kasper explains: »As an interpreter of new music, I am constantly confronted with the unknown. Every composer basically has a foreign language which I must study. In principle, whether I am imitating exotic sounds in Kagel or playing a notated piece which I am still in the dark about is the same to me.«

In the context of globalisation and changing cultural and economic hierarchies, the questions facing Kagel's ›Exotica‹ are different than they used to be – and this makes it clear that the piece itself is already historical. At the time of its writing, in 1971/72, given the background of the political and social changes wrought by the generation of 1968 and the experiences of happenings and Fluxus, ›Exotica‹ could be interpreted as humorous activism and an ironic expression of the striving for cultural emancipation. Today, the young musicians from many different countries making up the IEMA Ensemble present their current view of ›Exotica‹. Given the changes happening around the world, they have the chance to transform their relaxed attitude towards the »exotic« and the inherent levels of reflection into sound.

Michael M. Kasper emphasises the pedagogical reasons for including ›Exotica‹ within the IEMA Ensemble's repertoire: »In this piece, the fellows have to distance themselves considerably from their own instrument and from the manner in which they usually present themselves. Not everyone finds this easy, and therefore it is a good challenge. It is fascinating to see that

the interpretations the three different ensembles delivered were very different, although the same docent, Rainer Römer, coached all three on the piece. The first interpretation was more focused on the satirical-comical aspect, the second was extremely oppressive, and the third, the latest one, found the exact middle course between those two extremes.«

The audience was deeply impressed with the intensity and concentration, paired with brilliance in dealing with the »strange« sources of sound, with which the 2012/13 IEMA Ensemble rendered Mauricio Kagel's ›Exotica‹ at Deutschlandfunk's 2013 New Music Forum. The individual parts of the composition intensified into a fascinating river of sound – all the way to the eruptive outburst of the Afro-American conductor (and IEMA fellow) Vimbayi Kaziboni, whose final solo ambiguously reminded the audience of the condescending perspective of colonial power structures and the massive anger they left in their wake.

This impressive performance by the Ensemble was flanked by mature interpretations of further works: ›Fantaisie mécanique‹ by Unsuk Chin, ›Chansons madécasses‹ by Maurice Ravel and ›Colonies‹ by Steingrimur Rohloff, an IEMA fellow in 2004/05. Thus, the concert, recorded by Deutschlandfunk and broadcast on May 12, 2013, emphasised the Academy's format and also pointed indirectly to the »interim conclusions« to be drawn after a decade of IEMA's existence. It is obvious even now that IEMA is training a generation of artists and proponents of contemporary music who are not only of extraordinary technical ability, but have also recognised the signs of the times regarding processes of change in the social relevance of New Music, responsibility towards a broader repertoire and networking within the scene and with other arts and cultural spheres.

Body and Spirit – Playing Technique and Playing Ethos

The fellows agree that IEMA has changed their relationship with (New) Music on many levels. Apart from the spirit and intensity of the collaboration, they describe personal experiences in approaching their own instrument, their own profession, which go far beyond mere issues of playing technique. This, however, does not mean that playing technique is neglected, on the contrary. It often takes centre-stage, a prerequisite for getting to the core of the music and achieving exemplary interpretations. As Michael M. Kasper explains, this demands significant effort from the fellows: »A lot of work is done during this year of study. New Music is best learned by constant playing, through a haptic experience. So much has happened during the century of New Music, and IEMA strives to replicate this century for every class of fellows – to show what comes from where and leads to which result, how works follow each other: this conveys an understanding of the context and sharpens the perception for what is currently happening. The incredible individualization of music is an equivalent of the social context: like the arts, social coexistence has developed towards increasing complexity. In order to understand that, to experience it intellectually and sensually, we have to attain comprehensive knowledge of the repertoire, of aesthetics and of technique. In addition, we want the students to experience the working methods of Ensemble Modern; they are expected to autonomously suggest projects of their own and see how these can be realised.«

Easy and Effective

The willingness to do so is a prerequisite, but it is also important to learn how to effectively marshal the considerable work and time effort required. The conductor Manuel Nawri says that after his IEMA fellowship he needed much less time to learn new pieces. »In 2002 I was one of the co-founders of the Ensemble Chronophonie. There we studied works very slowly, and this was a good foundation to become faster later. This started during my time at IEMA, where the work mode is professional. Apart from conducting, it was important for me to

observe Ensemble Modern's rehearsals. This gave me knowledge of the repertoire, and I learned to grasp a score quickly. Reality in New Music is harsh, everything goes incredibly quickly, one of the reasons being that New Music programmes rarely repeat themselves – and that is something I understood at IEMA.«

In order to do justice to the works in question – which is, after all, extremely important for new pieces – professionalization is a key element. Paul Hübner's perspective was influenced significantly by the intensive collaboration practiced at IEMA. Even if his workload as a trumpeter was less extreme than a string player's, for example, the level of stress was high, since he was still studying with Mike Svoboda in Basel at the same time. »Because of IEMA and inspired by the Ensemble Modern musicians, I learned to study works more easily and effectively.«

Wolfgang Zamastil emphasizes that one plays better when one plays together with very good musicians. »Ensemble Modern implies a very specific, very constructive playing ethos and a spirit which is not verbalised, but transmitted by example. And yet we had a lot of fun, which is not a contradiction; and there was much laughter, for example when we rehearsed a piece by Mark Andre with the pianist Ueli Wiget. »Impossible« is simply not part of their vocabulary: that is Ensemble Modern's attitude. Their work goes far beyond traditional playing technique and conventional thought patterns, and thus it is radically different from the traditional education dispensed by music academies. The Ensemble Modern musicians are characters, every single one of them, and it is almost surprising that they have managed to play together for such a long time. The great thing was that I felt that the IEMA Ensemble was like a second Ensemble Modern.«

Knowledge and Intuition

Their long experience with a mixture of knowledge and intuition makes it much easier for the Ensemble Modern members to discover musical qualities. One thing that IEMA automatically trains in its fellows is an ability to recognise and hear what is substantial, special or groundbreaking. Sound director Felix Dreher also considers the combination of technical aspects, like the precise rendition of the score, with a freedom of thought that enables people to »look beyond their own noses«, one of the decisive aspects of IEMA. »This also includes staying power and an openness for ideas and projects that don't seem possible at first.«

Florian Juncker says the Academy gave him the possibility to »try out many, and also difficult, pieces in concert«, something which is often hard for a trombone player. »Shortly before a concert, I would often think, I can't do that, and then it always turned out much better than I thought. That encouraged me to take risks, and this is an experience you can only have in practice, by playing. Working with Uwe Dierksen in particular was an eye-opener for me. If you study Luciano Berio's »Sequenza V« as a »beginner«, you only see lines and dots, and that's also what it sounds like at first. In the beginning we did a lot of puzzling things out, and today I am able to grasp New Music more organically and holistically.«

Playing technique and playing ethos – the intellectual attitude behind one's performance – go hand in hand at IEMA. If some fellows emphasise how different this makes IEMA from traditional music academy training, this points once again to the integrated Master's Degree course, designed to rectify this very disparity.

... Here and Now ...

Flutist Daniel Agi was an IEMA fellow in 2006/07, and thus one of the first to profit from the inclusion of the fellowship programme in the Master's Degree course at the Frankfurt Academy of Music and Performing Arts. Previously, he was a member of the Ensemble Chronophonie – one of its founding members, in fact, alongside Manuel Nawri – and played at

the Deutsche Oper am Rhein. »I always found New Music intriguing,« says Agi, »but I only began to notice it much more through IEMA. I was particularly fascinated by Michael M. Kasper's approach of interpreting New Music not cerebrally, but with as much emotional input as ›romantic‹ music. IEMA inspired me to spend a lot of time exploring my own instrument again. Ensemble Modern has specialists for each and every thing: I worked on Stockhausen's ›Solo‹ with Dietmar Wiesner; the percussionist Rumi Ogawa helped me to deal with very complex rhythms; and Michael M. Kasper introduced me to the fascinating music of Kaija Saariaho. However, I do not play only New Music. My profession is playing the flute, and I enjoy that job most when I can play as much different music as possible – from Mozart's ›Haffner Symphony‹ to world premieres. However, New Music and its stylistic plurality give me the feeling that they truly have something to say about my life here and now. In 2011 I was a co-founder of the ensemble hand werk. It may not be a direct product of IEMA, but I brought the IEMA spirit to it – not only the insight that it's possible to build something, if one has the will and, of course, the high technical and idealistic requirements; but also a sense for the essential element of a piece of music, enabling you to get the most out of limited rehearsal time.«

Usually, the exploration and rehearsal of New Music is more elaborate than in the case of older pieces. The fact that this high input often meets with less resonance from the audience may discourage many musicians from contemporary music. As an institution, IEMA has a particular obligation to change this: by professionalizing education, synchronising playing technique and playing ethos, and thereby supporting the dissemination of New Music among artists and audience members alike. Flutist Bettina Berger considers »intensity« to be the watchword in this context: »Intensity is the key to successful interpretation and conveying of New Music – by emphasising the importance of each moment of sound.«

Inside and Outside – The Individual and the Ensemble

An ensemble is a cosmos unto itself, yet not isolated from the outside world. The experiences and background of each and every member are added into the process, cross-pollinating, even potentiating each other, resulting in a productive »ensemble spirit« and giving wing to the (re-)creative process. Granted, the founding and formation of ensembles are usually based on certain musical preferences corresponding with personal acquaintance. At IEMA, however, an ensemble is assembled for a year without the members previously knowing each other.

»When you think about it, we do something incredible at our auditions,« says Managing Director Christiane Engelbrecht, »we select an ensemble out of which four string players or five winds have to form such sensitive structures as a string quartet or a wind quintet during the course of the year. The young musicians come from different countries and have grown up in different cultures and education systems; in addition, their level of previous knowledge of the contemporary repertoire certainly differs. And yet, this process in which these characters find each other, mixing and coming to grips with each other, and through which a class character emerges, is something very special: another positive aspect.«

Since the IEMA fellows rightfully view the Academy as a great opportunity to take a decisive step in their own musical development, they are willing to contribute their personality and musicianship, and to take on responsibility. Especially because the fellows are a »motley crew«, the tension between individual development and merging into a common »ensemble spirit« holds a special attraction. Even if IEMA is a »safe haven« thanks to the financial security of the stipend and the cooperation within a circle of equals, beyond musical education, it also offers intensive preparation for the reality of musical life, by emphasising the ability to cooperate

and members' social competencies, – all the more since the fellows are already highly qualified musicians with a great breadth of experience.

The Strength and Power of Music

Before his IEMA fellowship, Daniel Lorenzo was mainly a répétiteur and vocal accompanist, but he had already worked in the field of contemporary art song in the class of pianist Axel Bauni at Berlin's University of the Arts. Even if his tasks within the IEMA Ensemble were very different, he sensed that the specific intensity of the song repertoire found a particular expression in his ensemble playing. Today, Lorenzo performs both as a soloist and with ensembles, and – not least, thanks to IEMA – he is able to make a living as a pianist.

Bettina Berger also brought her very own set of experiences when starting her fellowship. A native of Switzerland, she had originally planned to become an ethnologist and directed a choir in Tanzania. »There I recognised the strength and power of music, and I wanted to intensify this as a musician. To me there is no difference between contemporary and ›old‹ music: music is a language, and thus it serves to communicate. There is a difference, however, in the responsibility of the performers, which is particularly large in the case of contemporary pieces, since there is no performance practice for new works and we are operating at the tip of the iceberg. Because the IEMA Ensemble is international, my ethnological interests suddenly again played a large role. In general, many aspects are involved in music-making: they might be philosophical, spiritual, communicative or cultural, and exchange beyond cultural boundaries is certainly one of those aspects.«

Occasionally, a crisis situation can lead to new motivation, as the example of Manuel Nawri shows. Before his IEMA fellowship, he admits that he was »at a very low point. I was composing a bit and involved in various projects, but I felt that I was a round peg in the square hole of the music business. At IEMA, I regained my courage. What was particularly pleasant was that my special position as conductor make my relations with the other fellows unproblematic.«

An Association of Individuals

In general, the relationship between the conductor as an individual and the ensemble as a collective is different in New Music than in the traditional concert business. This is not only true for IEMA, but also for Ensemble Modern itself. The reasons are a different concept of the collective, in which the conductor is more a part of the whole, on the one hand, and the fact that the individual musicians consider themselves »soloists« on the other, although they also see themselves as serving the ensemble and the interpretational task at hand. This principle also applies to the members of the IEMA Ensembles, as trumpeter Paul Hübner emphasises: »I think the greatest change for me was brought about by the concentrated opportunity to play music regularly with like-minded colleagues. Thus, the status as ›lone warrior‹ so familiar from the music academy was replaced by having a place in a community – and yet that community is made up of individuals and individualists.«

Image and Tone – Composers and Performers

Composers write scores which performers decode and transform into sound – this idea remains valid, even if mutual influence should not be underestimated, especially when composers cooperate with experienced ensembles. Composers are not only inspired by performers (or even commissioned to write works for them), but there is also constant exchange about the production of sound and technical aspects of playing. Within IEMA, this exchange is given the highest priority – after all, the fellows have joined IEMA in order to be

integrated into these very working processes and draw insights from them, both as part of IEMA Ensemble and with Ensemble Modern. Thus, within the complex structure of IEMA, composers play a major role, although the goal is not to teach them a particular aesthetic outlook.

Birke Bertelsmeier was a fellow in 2011/12; she had previously studied piano performance in Cologne and composition with Wolfgang Rihm in Karlsruhe. She already was present on the music scene, and yet IEMA was an important experience for her: »The nice thing about the International Ensemble Modern Academy is working together with the same musicians for a year. I could walk into a rehearsal at any time and ask someone, ›Can you play this? Is that impossible to play?‹ and of course, I saw people's strengths, and could adapt to them. During my IEMA year I wrote two pieces: the first one is entitled ›folklich‹ and had its world premiere in Hong Kong, and the second one, ›Nichtsdestotrotz‹, in Royaumont.«

The IEMA Ensemble also performed ›Nichtsdestotrotz‹ at the final concert of the 2011/12 class of fellows on October 2, 2012 in Berlin; Robin Ken Bös was the sound director, Pablo Rus Broseta conducted – both of them fellows as well, of course. The programme of this final concert demonstrated both the stylistic breadth and the various combinations of instruments which the fellows have to cope with. Bertelsmeier's ›Nichtsdestotrotz‹ was flanked by György Ligeti's Chamber Concerto, which also required the full ensemble, Helmut Lachenmann's highly concentrated ›Trio fluido‹ for clarinet, viola and percussion as well as George Crumb's expressive ›Black Angels – Thirteen images from the dark land‹ for amplified string quartet.

Integrated Heterogeneity

The second composer of the 2011/12 class of fellows was Martin Grütter, who emphasises the relationship with Ensemble Modern forged during this time: »I got to know the Ensemble as an inspired and inspiring ›hive‹ of individualists; they are all very different, with very different musical interests and temperaments, yet without exception they are musician personalities, and each of them is crazy in his or her own way. Perhaps ›integrated heterogeneity‹ is a good phrase to describe Ensemble Modern – and my music as well. In order to transform the tension inherent in such a synthesis of contradictions into music, the encounter between individual artists with conflicting aesthetics is essential. IEMA gave me this opportunity«.

The composer Steingrímur Rohloff looks back on an even longer association with Ensemble Modern, having been an IEMA fellow in 2004/05. Before that, he studied with Krzysztof Meyer at the Cologne Academy of Music and Dance and at the Conservatoire national supérieur in Paris from 1998 onwards, where he was a student of Gérard Grisey for a short while (Grisey died in 1998). In 2011 Rohloff participated in the International Composition Seminar, during which the Ensemble Modern gave the world premiere of his ensemble piece ›Der erste Mensch‹. For IEMA's ten-year anniversary concert on April 20, 2013 at the Deutschlandfunk, he was commissioned to compose ›Colonies‹, inspired by the motto of the Deutschlandfunk's festival New Music Forum, »News from the colonies«. He points out that within the class of fellows, the composers occupy a special role, since they learn mainly by observation: »The important part is being there and experiencing the work first-hand, oriented as it is towards musical practice, in order to use this as a creative resource. Thereby, music, one's own music becomes a sensual and sociable event. The fellows embody a modern type of musician, and the ›IEMA milieu‹ offers a chance to get a foothold in the New Music scene, also in terms of ideas and mentality.«

... Something Truly Special

The Slovenian Vito Žuraj sees his IEMA year (2009/10) as »the most important event in my musical life so far. After moving to Frankfurt, I was in the midst of the action; I have never

composed as much as during this period. I developed an algorithmic composition method as my personal musical idiom, approaching the limits of playability and experimenting with specific sound qualities. Of course, I do not ignore my experience of earlier years completely in my new works, but IEMA motivated me to consequently pursue this algorithmic method. Furthermore, there were all the suggestions from musicians of Ensemble Modern and the other fellows. I was able to draw on their specific capabilities and take up their impulses, which are often more liberal than those from composition teachers, who remain stuck to their own aesthetics. What is wonderful is that the contact with Ensemble Modern and IEMA has been maintained«.

This is another part of the IEMA fellowship programme, whose main characteristic, says Roland Diry, is »intense cooperation between different groups: instrumentalists, composers, conductors and sound directors. Here, the programme differs significantly from music education in general, where these areas are usually separate. IEMA is a living example of collaboration in very close proximity, and this pollinates experience and behaviour – not only, but also musical experience and behaviour. One essential prerequisite for this is the uniformly high level of proficiency among the fellows – this enables fruitful collaboration and optimal interpretations«.

This »high level of proficiency« is also a prerequisite for the IEMA composers, and it runs like a leitmotif through the years. In 2012/13, Brigitta Muntendorf and Dariusz Przybylski are two composing artists who already have a significant profile, but of whom much is yet to be expected – not least because of their IEMA fellowships.

Past, Present, Future – IEMA and the Consequences

»The present of past things is memory, the present of present things is perception, and the present of future things is expectation,« the early Christian church father Augustine wrote in his ›Confessiones‹, thereby postulating the simultaneity of the three time-modes. This inspired the composer Bernd Alois Zimmermann to conceive his philosophical idea of a »spherical shape of time«, pointing to the existential problem of the dimensions of time in music. However, even beyond resounding works of art, the »spherical shape of time« is an obvious model which may sharpen our perception of how things develop, where their roots lie, how future perspectives derive from past and present, and which consequences are to be drawn from certain experiences. When, for example, Michael M. Kasper became nostalgic at IEMA's ten-year anniversary ceremony, this touched not only upon his memories of the birth of Ensemble Modern in 1980, but also upon the gratification he felt about the current status quo and visions for the future: »For me personally, this anniversary event is a very special one, since I was present when Deutschlandfunk helped ›baptise‹ Ensemble Modern. Celebrating the Academy in the same location means we have come full circle. I really have the feeling that we are passing something on, that something is being continued.«

... Passing on the Memory ...

Roland Diry recalls early impulses for the founding of IEMA, for example an Ensemble Modern tour of South America with Helmut Lachenmann in 1984: »We gave courses at several conservatories in Latin American capitals, realising how great the difference in New Music education is and what a head start we have. This sparked the wish to pass on our state of education. Over the years, this had been a recurring topic for us, and in the 1990s this wish intensified. One of our main goals for IEMA was to pass on the ›memory‹ of Ensemble Modern, while repeatedly asking the question of what else New Music might enable. We have kindergarten projects which are currently very small. We have school projects and apart from

the regular ›Response‹ projects at schools in Frankfurt, we have a special project covering the entire academic year, in which schools have solidarised in order to free up one school day a week and devote it to art: to music, dance, literature and the visual arts. Furthermore, we cooperate with ›Jugend musiziert‹. It would be my dream to expand the cooperation we already have with the Frankfurt Music Academy in the Master's Degree course ›Contemporary Music‹, offering interested young musicians courses with special conditions throughout Germany and internationally, and thereby lifting the education of musicians to a totally different level.«

Even if this goal still sounds like a far-off possibility, the »virus of renewal« is already active, especially due to the successful integration of IEMA and Frankfurt's Academy of Music and Performing Arts. Karsten Witt also remembers the beginnings of Ensemble Modern, drawing conclusions for IEMA's present and future: »Even before IEMA, there were education programmes like ›Response‹. Starting in 1988 we went into schools with composers and musicians, following the example of the London Sinfonietta. And the young composers' forum, which later developed into the International Composition Seminar, started already in 1996. The novel aspect of IEMA is the systematic combination of the many activities which already existed, and of course the installation of the central fellowship programme. I left the Ensemble in 1991; with my outsider's perspective today, I see that the dynamic force which Ensemble Modern still exudes is stoked and kept alive by IEMA – and that is something we must maintain, expand and develop further in the future.«

Transforming Visions into Reality

The makers of the first education programmes could hardly have imagined that today almost every ensemble, almost every concert and opera house would offer music education projects – and this concerns by no means only New Music. What began as a vision has become reality and the norm throughout the business – even if individual measures may be questionable in terms of usefulness and design. The work IEMA has been doing for ten years has already found imitators and may turn out to be seminal for the future of contemporary musical life. IEMA pursues the goal of professional and practically oriented education for young musicians in the field of contemporary music with the same zeal with which Ensemble Modern champions New Music.

The changing of the guard inevitable at Ensemble Modern during the coming years and decades may also be fuelled to a great extent by IEMA – after all, the close connections between Ensemble Modern and IEMA go far beyond pedagogical aspects, and most of the fellows continue to identify with Ensemble Modern after their time at IEMA. All this, however, does not provide guarantees for the future. It is more important than ever to return insistently to social discourse, to intervene, to consider and discuss social and cultural issues and questions of cultural policy that go beyond music. This begins with the elimination of prejudice facing New Music, for example its supposed difficulty and incomprehensibility, and continues with the emphasis on the sensual and musical experience and insights it offers – all the way to a plea for a form of expression which reflects and transforms phenomena of our times from the higher vantage point of artistic abstraction. Indeed, this approach implies an active participation in social change – which is permanent, and accelerating, due to the omnipresence of media and digitalisation.

»Artistically,« says composer Steingrímur Rohloff, »this should result in allowing even more experimentation within IEMA, contributing to the networking between the arts, the exploration of the ›spaces between‹ the art forms, and giving young musicians the chance to realise such visions.«

The trumpeter Paul Hübner suspects that especially with regard to globalisation, digitalisation

and »work modes and financial support, in one hundred years our present time will come to be seen as a crucial time of upheaval.»

Leaving Distinctive Marks

Ultimately, this also touches upon the question how the world and human coexistence will work in the future. Whatever perspective one assumes for one's answer – whether a political-economic or a religious-philosophical one – a world no longer stimulated and reflected by the arts can only be poorer than the current one. Contemporary music certainly has great opportunities in the future, since its potential will be able to be used more intensively – perhaps its dazzling breadth of colours and forms will simply expand the emotional and spiritual horizon of experience; perhaps a «playful» exploration of complex notations and technical procedures will result in insights that can be transferred to other areas of an increasingly complex world; perhaps creative work – especially in school projects and with young people in general – can counteract the limitation and levelling of thought which goes hand in hand with inflationary media consumption; perhaps IEMA provides a model for the utopia of cultural interpermeation at eye level.

IEMA covers a broad spectrum, and even if its fellows, some of which have already left distinctive marks on the New Music scene, receive a very specialised and highly qualified education, they will still be present as multipliers at other musical levels of education and dissemination.

Despite the ten years in which much has been achieved, there are huge tasks ahead of IEMA, and in order to fulfil them adequately, not only social acceptance, but also the corresponding financial support is necessary.

With its model, unique throughout the world, IEMA not only satisfies a request made of Ensemble Modern musicians from the outside, to be allowed to learn as »master students« from the experiences of the Ensemble Modern instrumentalists and its guests – at the same time, it fulfils a self-posed challenge and »educational task«: to maintain and develop the musical heritage of our times, and to support a living tradition of contemporary artistic output.

Windows on the Landscape beyond Music

A Conversation with Heiner Goebbels on the Future of the IEMA Course of Study

IEMA: The title of the book is »Virus of Renewal«...

Heiner Goebbels: At IEMA, the fellows are »infected« in a positive sense – IEMA constantly confronts them with challenges their former educational life at the academies has hardly offered. This includes not only the study of contemporary music, but of course also thinking about rehearsal and performance conditions, i.e. concert life, how to deal with each other, the visual aspects of a concert, links with other art forms, with performances, with theatre, with staged concerts. Most of the time, the academies separate these areas very clearly into categories. There are a few connections between the different disciplines, although the academy could actually be the place where young instrumentalists can encounter dancers, actors, composers, concepts of stage direction or the visual arts, in an open and uncomplicated manner. De facto, however, this does not take place; and you have created an inspiring form for such encounters.

How did the cooperation between IEMA and the students at the Institute for Applied Theatre Sciences seem to you?

To me, the creativity of collision works in two ways. On the one hand, the IEMA students are not yet prepared to suddenly question their role as musicians in such staged projects: to think about their bodies, about space and lighting. On the other hand, my students of applied theatre sciences in Gießen are unprepared for the fact how much hard work it can be to spend quality time with a solo clarinet piece by Pierre Boulez. However, this is an intensive and fruitful process for both sides.

How could they be more prepared for this, or better prepared?

The main problem between instrumentalists and those who work scenically is that instrumentalists have a different expectation of time. They are always incredibly impatient – or, if they are not challenged musically, quickly bored. Musicians always want to do something, and when they have nothing to do for once, they think it's a waste of time. This means that the basic exercise is: how can we develop mutual patience with the working rules and rhythms of the other art forms? How can we work out a scenic concept, with all the time that this takes, but also abandon it again?

If a musician wants to participate productively in a staged production, he must have patience for the complex paths of artistic creation, plastered with mistakes as they are. One must acknowledge the other art forms and the challenges of space, lighting, scenic production, perhaps video and dance etc – they have to be observed at eye level, and even a virtuoso instrumentalist or composer cannot simply assume that musical aspects take priority in principle. It is important, for instance, to respect any kind of technology. This has not even got around to the very best orchestras: that an ill-prepared sound engineer, or amplification without a careful sound-check, can ruin a concert more quickly than a conductor...

Inventing something you haven't seen before requires a climate in which something can grow which you have not thought out yet completely as a concept, and that corresponds to your own scientific interest. Thought and experimentation must have their place. To me, that seems to be the greatest threshold in the attempt to bring instrumentalists and artists specialised in scenic work together. Ideally, considerations of lighting, space, scenery, and the scenic action must be taken just as seriously as the music. Conversely, it is interesting that musicians can bring their own rules to scenic work and are not just chess pieces moved around on stage. In order for this to happen, they must not only articulate their concerns, but also respect the time frame necessary for a director, or a team of directors, to implement ideas.

How could this become more systematic and a more established part of the course?

In general, I think a year is too short, but I suppose this cannot be changed. Therefore, the question is rather whether it is possible to institute a meeting before the actual course begins, in order to discuss the direction for the year.

And during the course year?

It is the luxury of time which must be built into the curriculum – and which, incidentally, is lacking in all the other courses of study at the academies (the dancers, the actors). Time to make mistakes, to take first steps – possibly in the wrong direction – and to gather experience in other art forms; that is almost the most important thing of all.

Perhaps one should open the »windows« on non-musical approaches (whether this might be a sound installation or music that is conceived architecturally) from the very beginning. That means including an element labelled »non-musical experiences and performance formats« on the same level as ensemble playing, new playing techniques, repertoire knowledge – and this should continue throughout the entire year. Days of »non-musical encounters« must be scheduled differently than musical rehearsal days. It is possible to plan every single second of a rehearsal if one knows exactly what one wants to achieve with a score; however, working together on a scenic concept requires an entire day – or an entire weekend.

One might contextualise this by studying literature, the visual arts or other staged formats. One could develop seminar blocks institutionalising discourse and reflection on what we are doing. Other musical education institutions lack a built-in »window of time« for verbalising and reflecting what one is working on. This would be a marked difference from many other programmes of study. For example, it could be a weekly forum to discuss a contemporary concept of art in theory and in one's own practice. »Did we like the concert? Was it well lit? Did the programme make sense?« The verbalising of artistic experiences and performance formats is something a young musician must learn and be able to do. Such educational formats are at least as important as the other parameters, especially in the contemporary music field. I would develop these theoretical impulses not in the form of lectures, but as seminars.

The course is conceived for sound directors, composers, conductors and instrumentalists alike. What is your take on this?

The fact that we have a place here for sound directors is a wonderful advantage. To my knowledge, EM is the only exceptional ensemble in the world where a sound director has a place at eye level with the instrumentalists. It is of imperative importance that a young musician notices at IEMA that there is a sound director sitting next to him with an equal voice. If, furthermore, this non-hierarchical equality of disciplines is expanded, for example during staged projects, where they might be dealing with a leading team of directors, then this truly becomes a laboratory for a contemporary approach to staged concerts.

We try to cover as many aspects as possible during the course. How do you evaluate our course's offerings?

Of course, my interest parallels your interest in a competent approach to contemporary music, but it goes further. My wish is that young musicians completing this course of study find doors opening for them in very different directions. Apart from the imparting of purely musical competencies, I think this is this course's greatest advantage: it is the gift of one additional year of »time out« for their biographies. We can assume that most of the instrumentalists who have reached such high proficiency that they are accepted at IEMA have done very little but practice their instrument since their earliest childhood. Suddenly, they realise what else is out there. I would accentuate this experience during the course. This includes not only contemporary music, but also the experience of art and the assessment of what contemporary music can achieve, what it cannot achieve, how it segregates itself and where it rejoins society and its contemporaries. All these experiences are part of it.

We now have many students from abroad, so educational backgrounds now differ greatly between the fellows. How can these different cultural backgrounds be turned into opportunities and advantages; how can this diversity be consolidated?

Perhaps this diversity can be reflected in a different compositional practice. If, among the fellows, a clientele of instrumentalists develops who are able and willing to actively work together with composers, their different cultural biographies can be a great asset for the composers – if they, in turn, are open to this process. An exchange of views with a Korean violinist, an Indian flutist or an American horn player can be incredibly eye-opening for a young composer. The resulting misunderstandings and language difficulties – including musical and cultural ones – are nothing but enriching. I would emphasise this element even more, and develop it into polyphony...

On the Institutional Form of Aesthetic Avant-Gardism – An Attempt to Classify the IEMA Master's Degree Course in Terms of Cultural Policy

By Tilman Allert

Any aesthetic creativity, including that of music, has always unfolded in the tension-filled polarity between upholding the canon and breaking with it. This polarity is the foundation for the development of music, opening up new soundscapes for exploration – both for their creators and for recipients on the sensual level, adding previously unrecognised expressive forms of arriving at insight. In their endless quest for musical truth, the innovative disposition of those questioning the canon outright or wishing to experiment with the familiar leads to a zone of risky social nonconformity, a form of vulnerability. Although aesthetically desirable, it requires its own pedagogical arrangements when it comes to training younger generations. Even though, from a historical point of view, »contemporary music«, avant-garde music-making, has always been marginalised and had to be inventive – consider, for example, Schoenberg's Association for Private Performances of Music. However, in institutional and professional artistic training, this leads to a series of curricular problems. On the one hand, music academies aiming to develop artistic competency must keep an eye on current tendencies of aesthetic development and do justice to these systematically in their curriculum; on the other hand, as organisations, they are predominantly oriented towards the canon and thus structurally conservative. The notoriously marginal position of modern music may serve as sufficient indication of this, legendary as it is.

Only given this background – which cannot, of course, be ascribed to individual persons or local circumstances, and which ultimately even secures the function of music academies as places where cultural heritage is maintained – can the institutional avant-gardism of the IEMA Master's Degree course »Contemporary Music« be evaluated appropriately. Continuous integration of public concerts into the curriculum – in general, more than 20 concerts per year are scheduled – as well as a working structure between students and teachers going beyond the usual master-student relationship, lie at the centre of a pedagogical impulse for innovation born of an undeviating search for aesthetic novelty – unique within the German and the international music academy landscape. Within the goal of productively overcoming the element of coincidence governing artistry in general, and especially the performance of new music, Frankfurt's »Master of Music« certainly has model character. Contemporary music implies breaking aesthetic genre boundaries, a willingness to execute sophisticated instrumentations, to synthesise dance, music and spoken theatre in challenging combinations – this daring form of refined interdisciplinarity particularly has led to the curricular specifics of the Master's Degree course. Its most important elements may be summarized briefly as follows:

- a) The students have already earned a professional degree, and thus are well-acquainted with the fundamental elements of an artistic habitus: the triad of technical perfection in dealing with their instrument, a cognitive understanding of musical tradition as well as the practical ability to perform a work of art authentically and with a sensitive interpretation – this triad is taken for granted in Master's Degree course participants, and is confirmed during the selection process and auditions before a jury of members of Ensemble Modern and other teachers.
- b) One of the structural principles of the course is the close integration of Ensemble Modern members with the Academy curriculum, guaranteed by their position Academy docents.
- c) The special importance ascribed to the principle of interdisciplinarity in this Master's Degree course is expressed not only in the concert performances, the students' main goal during their fellowship. It is even more obvious in the structure of their individual classes, one of the pillars of classical music academy training, in which teachers and instrumentalists from Ensemble Modern rotate in order to break up the classical teaching mode, oriented as it is towards purely instrument-specific issues, and focusing instead on aesthetic and interpretational issues. This training for artistic perfection is also dominated by group work – ensemble work with a challenging concert programme becomes the core of this socialisation process.
- d) The course of study, with its expressly avant-garde musical orientation and its major emphasis on performance, makes great demands on the students' self-definition. Within the institutional structure of the one-year IEMA fellowship, the juxtaposition of quite different backgrounds and horizons results in a heterogeneous community of like-minded musicians inclined towards innovation. Their social self-government as an ensemble is tempered by the tutors' involvement. Coming from different countries, the students are supported in organising their lives at their place of study.

Considering the four main educational elements – instrumental performance, composition, conducting, and sound direction – it is immediately obvious that a heightened form of cooperation is required, intensifying the social problem of yielding competencies and revealing the limits of one's own capabilities. Great self-confidence is required from anyone applying for a one-year programme that is densely filled with performances, the acquisition of technical skill and cognitive development. Anyone joining interdisciplinary projects expects productive experiences of dissonance or consonance, added technical knowledge, surprising readings of one's own musical and dramatic concepts promised by the new »neighbours next door«. So much for theory. When searching for students' typical motivation, one encounters young people willing to forsake their pride. Interdisciplinarity combines different »claims for dominance«, and thus is subject to disagreement, but thanks to the tutor system, moderators and mediators are available. Self-generated arguments and reconciliation underlie communication, leading those involved into the adventure of surrendering their sovereign rights to a composition or performance in this particular situation. The pedagogical secret of the course is the complementary structure of individual lessons and group work – ultimately derived from the democratic idea of solidarity to which Ensemble Modern, well-known for foregoing an artistic director and/or conductor, has subscribed since its founding. The result, justifying the mutual effort, is a specific culture of socialisation unique among music academies: assimilation and productive conflictivity, an argument successfully sublimated

through aesthetics, initiating an expansion of perception – which has allowed new and innovative developments in the arts, the artistic professions and in the audience's habits of reception. Anyone exploring the horizon of his own discipline's controlled abilities through his neighbours, whether new or long familiar, should be able to paraphrase. Paraphrasing one's own actions from the perspective of others, translating technical knowledge, aesthetic traditions and preferences of neighbours into the habits of one's own discipline – these are the prerequisites of successful interdisciplinarity. Thus, the challenges facing teachers and students in a demanding master's degree course form an aesthetically sublimated conflict of translation. Given the specific subcultural marginality that is part of contemporary music's structure, enrolling in this course requires courage and personal self-confidence comparable to the psychological disposition of those in former centuries embarking upon the adventure of expeditions to unknown lands.

Without assuming that its fellows will specialise permanently in contemporary music, IEMA's educational concept, which can now look back on ten years of successful work, follows a programme of reflected acquisition. This programme has been formulated repeatedly by precursors of musical avant-gardism like Hans Zender, who described in an interview the extent to which the knowledgeable handling of contemporary music can be considered a prerequisite for understanding musical tradition: »All European centuries must be able to arise before the ear and inner eye of today's listener: the daring and ascetic middle ages, the new sensuality of the renaissance, the complexity of the baroque era, the revolutionary individualism of classical bourgeois culture, the imaginary world of romanticism. At the centre of these creative efforts, however, stands the trendsetting music of our times; it is the true reference point for any interpretation, since it is the living present.«

What is the institutional gain of the Master's degree course, and its importance for higher academic policy? The future of artistic education consists not in additional new areas of competency, professional fields or similar issues, but in reverting to those competencies that have always constituted ideal forms of music-making: reflective acquisition of insight made concrete by sensual perception, and thereby opening new sound-spaces, giving a previously unheard shape to the diversity of human experience. This form of education and transmission, possibly making the magic of art understandable, yet not abandoning the constituting elements of culture, has been given an admirably adventurous expression in the institutional education format of the International Ensemble Modern Academy. From the perspective of cultural history, those engaging in this adventure as teachers and students, with a high level of concentration and professionalism that is honed daily, reproduce an old pattern within avant-garde novelty. The relationship of the International Ensemble Modern Academy and the Music Academy is marked by the contrast of two versions of values, juxtaposed in a dynamic conflict of mutual reference: one side represents the demand for authentic articulation, while the other side ensures tradition and integration of music into daily life. Aesthetic non-conformism, as expressed by contemporary music, does not simply follow an independent development of music-making; rather, it always implies a corresponding innovative social arrangement, ensuring that those taking the risk of innovation find a minimal form of community, a kind of guild-like self-organisation. As one of the outstanding, cross-genre specialist ensembles, Ensemble Modern rises to the challenge of socially organising the self-propagation of aesthetic avant-gardism in an impressively professional manner. It is a highly ensemble-oriented curricular concept, stimulating professional self-reflection by teachers within the Music Academy. Thereby they contribute to the reproduction of the canon, as well as to breaking with the canon. It is no coincidence that the graduates' career profiles reflect attempts to subject themselves to comparable risks elsewhere, by forming new ensembles. We look

forward to diverse forms of music-making indebted to aesthetic novelty, owing their existence to a unique pedagogical constellation.

Do Something!

A Report from the Workshop

By Michael M. Kasper

Who, how, what?

Ten years ago, right after the first press conference announcing the founding of IEMA and presenting the first fellows (who were not yet part of a Master's degree course), we received an agitated phone call from a composer: »What you are doing there has long been done at our music academy.« What a misunderstanding, on several levels at once!

What we were presenting was not a product under the Ensemble Modern (EM) brand competing with the New Music departments of the music academies – instead, the members of Ensemble Modern were merely announcing that they were going to pass on »the collected experience of almost 25 years of living with New Music« to the next generation, in their own way. Given the inner structure of EM, it was to be expected that this would take a shape different from other academic education programmes.

After all, the participants are carefully selected from scores of applicants, and those in the course dedicate a year exclusively to the interpretation of New Music. Since the practical part of this training takes place almost entirely under Ensemble Modern's roof, they enjoy a close connection with the life and work of EM and its members. About 15 very intense 12-day rehearsal periods per year permit a continuous working process without endangering the musical networks the participants have developed at home over the years.

Practice, practice, practice! From the beginning of every new year of study, the instrumentalists, conductors and sound directors focus on one thing only: continuous reading, playing and familiarisation with new literature. Recognising and categorising aesthetic foundations in existing material and applying the necessary playing techniques, often new and unusual, are processes underway while getting to know the 120-plus works which every class of fellows performs.

The student learns that composer S. says about the interpretation of her work: »... make it your own piece ...«; the composer F. – feared for the unprecedented rhythmical complexity of his works – finds a mere mezzoforte too loud; after a wonderful interpretation of his string quartet, the composer R. praises the good selection of microphones more than the musicians, who are bathed in sweat; S. forbids a concert performance of his work after listening to the dress rehearsal, being very dissatisfied and scaring the young performers – the latter is an anecdote that has not been repeated in all of IEMA's ten years of existence. Finally, an EM musician offers the following answer to the question how a cryptic, unplayable passage is to be realised: »Do something!« The main characteristic of the IEMA course is life with the compositions, in close proximity to living composers: a life with unexpected questions and unexpected answers. More than 20 concerts in Germany and abroad, occasionally at festivals together with Ensemble Modern, opera productions and audio plays demonstrate the high standard of this unique course of study. For the two composers who are accepted, the opportunities are attractive and comprehensive: at any time, they have the opportunity to

discuss different playing techniques, manners of notation and aesthetic principles with members of EM. They have several tryout rehearsals for each of the two new works they write during their fellowship, in order to learn an adequate form of communication before final rehearsals, in constant exchange with their »playing« colleagues and the docents. These are elements that a New Music Studio at a music academy cannot and does not have to provide.

Why and wherefore?

In content, the course offers various paths and working forms. Of course, the benchmarks of 20th century music are taught. Nobody can bypass – to mention a non-binding selection with all due caution – Adams, Benjamin, Boulez, Cage, N.A. Huber, Nono, Reich, Rihm, Schoenberg, Stockhausen or Webern.

That, however, is already where the dilemma starts, and thus a first important task: it is all too easy to get into arguments about benchmarks in New Music. »Why this composer, of all composers, and not another?« »More Bartók, Hindemith, Messiaen, Satie, Stravinsky and Pärt, please, but less serial music and a lot less minimal music!« The fact that this is not just an academic discussion is demonstrated by the students' reaction to many a work they find on the repertoire plan: »Why do we have to play this work by X?« »The work by composer Y is no good (for some reason or another); we don't want to play it!« The discourse arising at and developing from this point is among the most valuable elements of the course: not only do »importance« and »value« have to be questioned and justified again and again, but the question of the »aging of New Music« arises anew with each generation of performers and recipients. Doesn't the question of benchmarks, the »true, beautiful and good«, lead straight to programming hell? The fellowship course does not want to and will not give an answer – despite establishing a canon of works.

Of course, not only recognised or supposed 20th century greats are studied. The Master's degree curriculum also includes at least ten world premieres of works by young composers in an international context. The decoding of unknown idioms, which may still be unfinished in many details but often show remarkable potential, is among the most difficult challenges facing young performers. In a similar situation to the IEMA composition fellows, here learning musicians encounter searching composers. Because of the presence of the Ensemble Modern musicians, of invited guest conductors and docents, the course guarantees that what was considered »unplayable« turns out to be doable after all, or what was unfortunately notated can be written more clearly.

Beyond knowledge of the repertoire and the acquisition of numerous playing techniques, the young artists are confronted with the basic democratic structure of EM. However, art and its interpretation have very little to do with democracy, and the course directors will not be moved by a majority's demand to drop work X by composer Y and actually drop it. And yet, the final concerts feature a programme selected and performed exclusively by the fellows. Their task is to demonstrate a convincing programmatic concept in this concert.

The difficulties of this process of searching and finding, different aesthetic ideas, individual preferences and human characteristics of the individual members reflect Ensemble Modern's lifelong challenge, leading – per aspera ad astra – to astonishing insights and results.

And here, again, as when assessing the canon, questioning from the outside must be allowed: how do you feel about democracy? Where is it an indispensable part of the artistic way of life, where is it essential, where is it superfluous, unnecessary, bothersome? Is it a dream of the post-1968 generation, perhaps paraphrasing a Frank Zappa quote: »... is not dead, it just smells funny«.

Questioning makes you smart

»The Ensemble Modern is an ensemble with a democratic structure dedicated to the interpretation of contemporary music.« These or similar words are printed in its programmes, and these or similar ideas are the ones EM wants to pass on to the next generation. Creative processes that are constantly changing and the aesthetic conflicts of the 20th and 21st century make high demands on the performers. The fact that the absence of norms does not lead to randomness, that the »process of re-creation« when realising a printed score can only be adequately performed by strong musical personalities: this is what Ensemble Modern stands for in this course of study, after more than 30 years of experience in studying music of the past century and current music and dealing with the young generation of performers and composers – a generation that asks different questions and seeks different answers too.

In this process, teaching how to ask questions is rather more important than providing brilliant answers – given how rapidly values change, such answers »... just smell funny«.

- Are we less political today than 30 years ago? And: do we even have to be political?
- As members of a free collective of musicians, do the closing or reduction of music academies (»there are too many«), the liquidation of an internationally respected radio symphony orchestra (»there are too many anyway«) or other orchestras (»there are really far too many«) concern us?
- Is the study of contemporary music (something radio stations like to broadcast after 11 pm) necessary, or are social or ecological projects more relevant to society?
- As a 25-year-old musician, shouldn't I be taking care of my career instead? Aesthetic relevance is decided anyway by journalists at the radio stations and the print media (those that haven't been dissolved yet).
- Should the course therefore pay more attention to the most direct concerns of the musicians, to technique, fingerings, etc – or should it observe the social milieu of future performers from a critical perspective?

If an answer to one of the questions above, or a question not asked yet, should fail to appear, perhaps the following quote may help: in Heiner Goebbels' ›Eislermaterial‹ - a work which Ensemble Modern has performed over 70 times – the protagonist is heard to say the following about the composition process: »[...] das muss halt so gemacht werden [silence]...sonst ist es nicht gut!« (»... it just has to be done this way [silence]... otherwise, it's no good!«)

In every performance, this guarantees a round of laughter, perhaps because of the helplessness of the reason, perhaps because the voice of Mr. E., usually so military and edgy, suddenly sounds soft, even fragile. And yet, this »inability to justify« is probably the most profound driving force: there is an absolute necessity to »just do it this way«. You just don't know.

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