from 1975–76. Played dazzlingly by pianist Joseph Havlat in front of a horseshoe of nine strings and two alto flutes, the piece is a wild flurry of activity, full of jagged spikes and dense clouds of interlocking notes. Hardly 'static' by any standard metric, yet nor are we really going anywhere. It fidgets and rumbles and dances on the spot, but it pointedly remains where it is, even gesturing wildly at the extremities of its own confinement. If Newland gave us a man waiting patiently for a bus, Finnissy's protagonist might be pacing in an anteroom, anxiously anticipating the results of a test. But he's still waiting. In his programme notes, Finnissy wrote that at the time of composition, his attention was focused on 'the various possibilities (and stereotypes) of "concerto"', its tripartite structure, conventions of leading and following, working 'concertedly' or apart. Like Leung's *Concert Pieces*, it's a question of filling out a standardised form, of worrying at its limits and gesturing beyond them, marking out a territory and making time audible.

In the mid-1980s, Gilles Deleuze published his second book on film, *Cinema 2: The Time Image*. He identified a new kind of cinema emerging outside Hollywood in the post-war period, particularly in the films of Yasujiro Ozu and directors associated with Italian neo-realism. Such films sought to capture a direct image of time. The camera lingers over a scene, as if slowly taking it all in. Characters stare out beyond the frame, apparently lost in thought, watching time pass. Music, like cinema, is often described as an 'art of time'. The phrase is familiar enough to pass as cliché. Works have stretched out time and compressed it, nullified it or exploded it. But in works like those on tonight's elegantly curated programme, time is not pushed or pulled, distorted or distended, made to do little tricks or jump through hoops. Rather, time is simply attended to, made present, sounded. We hear time passing and spend time in the company of sounds.

Robert Barry
doi:10.1017/S0040298218000451

Mark Andre, *Wunderzaichen*.
Oper Stuttgart

On the 13 May 2018, under the beautiful, celestial, fresco ceiling of the city's opera house, the highly acclaimed Oper Stuttgart produced a captivating revival of composer Mark Andre's *Wunderzaichen* (2008–2014; *Wunder*, 'miracle', and *Zaichen*, old German for 'sign'). The protagonist, 'Johannes', is a 'speech role', and André Jung met the challenge with a modest, yet rigorous, intellect. Julia Bauer, as 'Maria', displayed a sensitive and virtuosic vocal ability. The orchestra, under the baton of Sylvain Cambreling, mastered the majestically complex signatures of Andre's soundworld with commendable accuracy and a fluid simplicity.

Interestingly, Andre's concern with both time and space was already evident upon entry into the hall. The stage depicted a waiting area and passport control in Ben Gurion airport, Tel Aviv, with a backdrop consisting of a rich blue sky with moving clouds on the left, contrasting sharply with a solid grey marbled wall on the right. Johannes, sitting in the waiting area, kept looking at his watch, slowly moving from his own seat to the one opposite; during all this, the audience was similarly settling, then resettling, waiting for the performance to begin. A sense of arrival and departure was established, as was a strong, yet unassuming, hall-filling, interstitial space.

The structure of *Wunderzaichen* is outlined by four separate 'situations', the first of which is *Passkontrolle* (Passport Control). In this 'situation', Johannes, a heart transplant recipient, struggles with defining his 'true' identity due to the 'Eindringling' (Intruder) in his chest: when asked his name at passport control, Johannes searchingly responds: 'Ich, wer, ich? Er? Wer? Ich? Ich?' (I, who, I? Is? Who? I? I?). Johannes is subsequently led away to the airport's police station for further questioning. In accompaniment, the music unravelled a poignant, eerie and increasingly agitated 'knocking', like a stethoscope being pressed against Johannes's own disturbed heartbeat. The onstage choir, portraying the queue for passport control, magnified Johannes' status as 'other' by drifting, in unison, away and toward him, like a swarm of whispering, shadowy, grim reapers, using bass bows to bow their bodies and point to the sky. The 'situation' overall was a gripping introduction, convincingly hinting at an existential interruption.

The second situation, *Polizeirevier* (Police Station), conveyed numerous inverted states, including the stage itself, which rose to reveal the police station underneath passport control, leaving both stages simultaneously visible. In passport control, a janitor pensively cleans the floor, and a man, in a reversal of the Greek mythological figure Atlas, arrives with a world around his neck. In parallel, in the police station, Johannes meets Maria, an eccentric lady with bright orange hair. Maria, too, seems not to

'belong': the composer often refers to the philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy's interpretation of Mary Magdalene, in his *Noli me tangere*, as 'abandoned because she is far from God'. The vocal weaving in this 'situation' was particularly impressive, seeming slowly to melt away any sense of chronology. The vocal contrast between Jung (speech role) and Bauer (sustained, stratospheric) conveyed a suitably distanced, yet strongly communicative, relation.

Initially, in the third 'situation', *Fast-Food-Restaurant*, Johannes and Maria (now both conversing in speech) grow close while eating until, suddenly, Johannes dies from a heart attack. Surreally, the staging alludes not only to a fast food restaurant, but also, simultaneously, to passport-control, a chapel and a medical room in which a child in a white cloak wheels a food/surgical trolley past Johannes' body. In unity, beginning with an extensive 'breathing', all musical components seemed to eventually arrive at a tranquil, yet hollow, place of rest. Stunningly, the police sing 'Ewig, ewig . . .' (forever, forever) and Maria, 'Ziellos, Endlos, Hilflos' (aimless, endless, helpless), while a muted trumpet player, also situated on stage, performs a quiet fluttering, just like an inverted military bugle call. A select palette of lulling, ethereal, resonating impulses were emitted gently from the orchestral pit, contributing delicately to blanketing the audience in an expansive, yet intimate, atmospheric haze.

The final 'situation', *Warteraum* (Waiting Room), captures John 20:17, in which Jesus says 'Noli me tangere' (Do not touch me) to Mary Magdalene. As stated by Nancy, '[t]wo bodies, the one of glory and the other of flesh, are distinguished in this departure and in it they belong, partially but mutually, to each other'. Boldly, Jung depicted Johannes as being separate from his body, while Bauer illustrated a lonely Maria, distant and vulnerable, seated on the stage edge. Both Jung and Bauer seemed to intuitively maintain a poignant underlying connection. All in all, an elegantly unified soundworld was fluidly produced, one that, perhaps unsurprisingly, gradually unfolded to be extremely fragile and exhausted: the archangel signalled the 'end' by rotating a sound hose around his head. Yet, as the libretto implied, this is ultimately a work 'ohne Ende' (without end). The 'end', on this evening, was met, deservingly, by a thoughtful and highly appreciative applause from an audience of about 400.

Stephanie Jones
doi:10.1017/S0040298218000463