

KLAUS OBERMAIER compositions one



## thirty-five, String Quartet No. 2

1986

The harmonic and melodic material of thirty-five is exclusively based on the use of minor and major thirds and perfect fifths; the rhythmic structure is made up of groups of three and of five.

## String Quartet No. 3

1986

Four rhythmic patterns gradually dissolve into improvisatory melodic material. The quasi-entropic process consistently brings an increase in information through the build-up of complexity.

## String Quartet No. 1

1986

The first string quartet reflects Klaus Obermaier's preoccupation with the overlaying of rhythms and his interest in the conjunction of entirely disparate worlds: twelve-tone music, gamelan and minimal music...

A twelve-tone row is played in parallel major chords with its retrograde, inversion and retrograde inversion forms. Through overlaying rhythms, tightly-packed rows generate 'interference melodies'.

### **Première** (all three quartets):

*Arnold Quartet, members of the German Chamber Philharmonics, at the 3rd International St. Gallen Festival in Austria, August 27, 1989.*

*Live recording by the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation (ORF).*

*download: [www.exile.at/compositions](http://www.exile.at/compositions)*

## Tasten keys/touch

for piano solo – 1992

A play on the two central pitches, G and D, with an inverted, deconstructed repeat.

### **Première:**

*Hermann Kretzschmar, member of Ensemble Modern, at 'Ein Ort für Neue Musik', Frankfurt am Main, Germany, May 9, 1997.*

*download: [www.exile.at/compositions](http://www.exile.at/compositions)*

## Diminuendo

for string orchestra and light plot – 1990

Together with subtle lighting direction – at the beginning the whole concert hall is brightly lit; the lights are slowly dimmed, ending with only the faintest light on the musicians – throughout the whole piece a diminuendo creates a powerful undertow towards nothingness. Through the steady fluid change in each voice of five-part chords, despite functional harmony, a continual state of limbo with a gentle rhythmic pulse is created.

## Felder des Wohlbehagens fields of pleasure

for 16 solo strings or string orchestra – 1992, rev. 2005

Fields of Pleasure was inspired by the painting *champ d'aise* by Jean Dubuffet. Sharply distinguished fields of sound and structures (microtonal fluctuations, clouds of pizzicati, layers of glissandi, etc.) strike one another abruptly, negating classical development.

## **Überlagerung und Verschiebung** overlay and shift

for two marimbas – 1991 (version for two guitars – 1985)

The original version was composed in 1985 for two guitars. The only slightly altered version for two marimbas was created in 1991.

The first section (overlay) begins with a rhythmic phrase on the pitch 'A', a new, always more complex, phrase is overlaid, fusing with the previous one, until at the climax of this section all 12 notes of the chromatic scale sound.

The second section (shift) is also based on the number 12: the rhythmic figure is divided across 12 sixteenth notes, and there are 12 rhythmic displacements of this figure across a two-octave range.

This section was inspired by Steve Reich's Clapping Music, which Klaus Obermaier recorded in 1993 for the CD new music for guitar and piano (Extraplatte EX 178 CD).

### **Première** (guitar version):

Guitar Duo Klaus Obermaier and Alois Watzinger  
at Steinbrünniger Woche für Neue Musik, Germany,  
May 5, 1987.

### **Recording of the guitar version:**

Guitar Duo Klaus Obermaier and Alois Watzinger in 1986,  
for the LP 'Werke österreichischer Komponisten des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts'  
(Extraplatte EX 74).  
download: [www.exile.at/compositions](http://www.exile.at/compositions) (guitar version)

## **Butelcute**

for string quartet, playback and optional video projection – 2003

In 2002, Alexander Balanescu and Klaus Obermaier started to collaborate on a project inspired by the life and voice of legendary Romanian folk singer, Maria Tanase.

Born in 1913, Tanase acquired mythical status in Romania, both during her lifetime and after her death in 1963. Obermaier created videos for some of Balanescu's pieces and also composed two pieces for the quartet.

In performance, the live quartet is seamlessly incorporated into the visual experience, at times appearing to join Maria Tanase's own band. Butelcute uses samples of original folk songs, performed by Maria Tanase, which are about drinking, loving, living and dying in Romania.

### **Première:**

*Balanescu Quartet at the 'artrock' festival in Saint Brieuc, France, June 6, 2003*  
[www.exile.at/tanase](http://www.exile.at/tanase)



## Songs for Bruno Manser

for flute/alto flute, vibraphone/marimba, bassoon/contrabassoon, double bass – 1989

Bruno Manser was an environmental activist. He was well known in Switzerland for his public activism for rainforest preservation and the protection of indigenous peoples. Manser created richly illustrated notebooks during his stay in 1984 to 1990 with the Penan people, in the jungle of the Eastern Malaysian state of Sarawak, on the island of Borneo, near the Indonesian border of Kalimantan. He stayed with the nomadic band of Along Sega, who became the Penan figure-head for their struggle. Manser, however, was declared persona non grata in Malaysia and had to leave the country with a bounty of \$40,000 on his head.

Bruno Manser is missing and presumed dead. Manser was last seen in May 2000 in the isolated village of Bario in the Malaysian state of Sarawak, close to the border with Indonesia. His last known communication is a letter mailed to his girlfriend on May 22, 2000, from the village of Bario, in the Kelabit Highlands, Sarawak, where he had returned to meet the nomadic Penan he lived with for so long.

Manser is still regarded by the Penan as somewhat of an idol, named „Lakei Penan“ (Penan Man). A man that united them and has been accused by the government of arranging numerous blockades of logging roads (although no proof has been given) and having some positive effect by protesting in Tokyo and Europe about the alleged inhumanity of the tropical timber industry. (Source: Wikipedia)

I first heard of Bruno Manser's activities in 1988. When Johannes Prischl asked me to write music for his new ensemble, I composed the songs dedicated to Manser. Just one year later I was shocked by the message of his disappearance.

link: <http://www.bmf.ch/en/>

### **Prèmiere:**

*Ensemble Ohrwurm*

*at 'Alte Schmiede', Vienna, Austria, October 3, 1989*

## Klaus Obermaier

studied classical guitar at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna, and visual art at the University of Art and Industrial Design in Linz.

In 2005 and 2008 he taught as an adjunct professor for composition at the Webster University Vienna.

He composed for the KRONOS QUARTET, the ART ENSEMBLE OF CHICAGO, the GERMAN CHAMBER PHILHARMONICS, the BALANESCU QUARTET, the ALIAGE QUARTET, a. o.

He played and recorded with ENSEMBLE MODERN, Ornette Coleman, John Scofield and Peter Erskine, and crated and directed works with dancers of the NETHERLANDS DANS THEATER, TANZ\*HOTEL, Robert Tannion, Desirée Kongerød and Chris Haring.

His interactive music, dance and theatre performances, as well as his 'immersive environments' installations, are shown at major festivals in all parts of the world.

For further information on Klaus Obermaier's works see: [www.exile.at](http://www.exile.at)

Sheet music can be downloaded at: [www.exile.at/compositions](http://www.exile.at/compositions)

Graphic design and cover photo: **Gabi Hauser**

Booklet cover photo: **Ditia Edalati**

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Orchestral samples included in this recording from the Vienna Symphonic Library.

thirty-five, String Quartet No. 2 (1986)	4:21
String Quartet No. 3 (1986)	4:25
String Quartet No. 1 (1986)	4:16
Tasten – for piano solo (1992)	3:29
Diminuendo – for string orchestra (1990)	6:54
Felder des Wohlbehagens – for 16 solo strings (1992, rev. 2005)	6:55
Ueberlagerung und Verschiebung – for 2 marimbas (1985/1991)	8:15
Butelcute – for string quartet, playback and optional video projection (2003)	5:37
Songs for Bruno Manser (1989)	
I. Lanahé – for alto flute, vibraphone, contrabassoon and double bass	3:12
II. Belok – for flute, marimba, bassoon and double bass	1:07
III. Baang tutung – for flute, vibraphone, contrabassoon and double bass	2:18
IV. Sitan, pessú, ani-assó – for flute, marimba, bassoon and double bass	1:48
	total 52:50

Also available on CD with title "composition 1985 – 2005", but with some different content at:  
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