

Orfeo: Mankind in the centre of attention in the world

Around 1600 the last chains that hold mankind bound to church and authorities seem to have been broken. Even though each individual remains dependant somehow, the spirit of man starts to ignore stipulated limits and goes beyond them. Orfeo is the symbol of a whole epoch, in which art and science are recognised as those skills of man, which give humankind right to his special position on earth.

Monteverdi's Orfeo, a genius, can use his musical talent to change the cosmos. His trip to the netherworld, on which he tries to bring back his beloved and through a snakes bite lost Eurydice, is not only a heroic deed of love. Since the geographical division of the world in earth, heaven and hell does not function anymore because of scientific progression, this division now takes place in the subconscious of human mind. That is why Orfeo's trip turns out to be an expedition, on which he confronts himself with the limits of his own room for manoeuvre – that is with the question of dependence and power. The journey culminates in the question of trust. As an absolute individual, he puts himself in the centre of attention in the world, but therefore he also loses love and contact to his fellow species.

The fear that comes up in that moment is reduced in Monteverdi's opera through the appearance of God. Seems like time is yet to come, in which mankind will finally be able to face nothingness.

Andreas Bode

The white spots in Monteverdi's music

The playing of musical instruments 400 years ago was filled with conventions that every musician knew. Since these conventions were not written down in the scores they have nowadays become unknown territory for musicians. The early music movement, armed with scientific knowledge about historical performance, went into that territory and claimed a new authenticity for their musical performances.

Of course this movement has led to exciting results in the sound of early music, for example a certain lightness in the interpretation and new instrumental colours. But the claim of authenticity comes up against limiting factors, when one considers seemingly trivial elements like surrounding society – as for example the historical listener.

In the end the search for **the** genuine interpretation of music written before our time is unattainable and it expresses a longing for music, that is independent of time, place and society, in fact for "innocent" music.

Our adaptation is the search for a contemporary authenticity that also considers the present time and includes contemporary facts. In close cooperation with the mise-en-scene components of our reality today were integrated. But of course, the search for Historical truth is also a component of our time. Therefore we have been very careful to maintain the score and to not change a single note of it.

Titus Engel und Tobias Schwencke