

Moving Tongues: Playing Space

solo performance featuring
voice, strophonion with four loudspeakers, and video

Alex Nowitz



by Oscar Loeser

Photo

Where: **Reaktorhallen Stockholm**

Drottning Kristinas väg 51 (on KTH campus), 114 28 Stockholm, Sweden

When: **13 December 2018, 17:30 - 20:00**

Arrival time is 17.30. (Access to Reaktorhallen requires this deadline.)

Performance starts at 18:00. The performance lasts ca. 1 hour 40 minutes incl. short intermission.

Alex Nowitz's solo performance features voice, strophonion with four loudspeakers, and video. The live performance forms part of the artistic research project *Monsters I Love: On Multivocal Arts*. These are part of Alex Nowitz's PhD examination on 27 February 2019. The performance is also part of the 50th anniversary celebration of University College of Opera, which hosts Alex Nowitz as a doctoral candidate in the field of opera at the Stockholm University of Arts.

Technical Assistance: **Jimmy Svensson**: sound and light, **Sabine Vogel**: video and slide presentation, **Sukandar Kartadinata**: software and hardware monitoring.

Free entrance!



On Moving Tongues: Playing Space

When vocal and bodily practices meet technological practices by using custom and gesturecontrolled live electronics and live sampling techniques, a performance aesthetics of the *in-between* and *uncertainty* emerges, forcing the performer to consistently act upon the question how to handle cross-disciplinary challenges. Due to the complexity and multitude of variables coming together from the different disciplines, these can neither be planned nor predicted, but they are certain to arise.

Accompanied by video works, the presentation of a set of vocal performances, with and without live electronics, is specifically designed for the extraordinary space of Reaktorhallen with its uneasy, church-like acoustics. Thirty meters under the KTH campus, Reaktorhallen used to be home to a nuclear reactor.

Disseminated through a quadrophonic loudspeaker set-up, the approach to extend the voice by applying a live electronic instrument will be explored via the *strophonion*, formerly built at the studio for electro-instrumental music, Steim, in Amsterdam and, during the course of the PhD, further developed by Berlin-based software programmer Sukandar Kartadinata who created an intricate configuration on the basis of the audio application Max 7. The performance represents the first public appearance in Sweden of this new software environment.

Apart from the use of sensor and computer-based live technology, the solo performance showcases also different works for the singing, speaking and whistling voice including a variety of extended vocal techniques, all of which shall demonstrate the inclusive concept of a multivocal practice and to reveal the potential of one vocal apparatus (in German: *Stimmapparat*).

Moving Tongues: Playing Space comprises also a distilled version of the *Manifesto for the Multivocal Voice* which depicts a ‘discursive solo performance act’ to provide insights into developing the principles, premises, politics and discourse of the contemporary performance voice.

Ultimately, the performance reaches out for an expanded and electrified space of vocal expression and a heightened perception mode. Controlled by bodily movements via wireless sensor technology, the boundary between the human live voice and its aural copy, the acousmatic voice, becomes blurred. It’s exactly this kind of encounter with the unfamiliar that makes us become alert and attuned to vocal soundscapes that are unusual, but nevertheless increase our awareness of perception. The audience is invited to hear and listen, see and watch, and by doing so to tune in (*einstimmen*) to one vocal apparatus resonating in a peculiar space to experience, with a deepened attentiveness and expansive quality, the sound of the voice.

The performance is supported by KTH represented by Leif Handberg and by the University College of Opera represented by Anna Lindal.

About doctoral research project *Monsters I Love: On Multivocal Arts*

Proposing a ‘multivocal practice’ (German: *Praxis der Vielstimmigkeit*) in the vocal arts, the doctoral research project embodies an inclusive approach to the four core categories of the contemporary vocal art performance: the singing, speaking, extended and disembodied voice. Multivocality addresses various modes of virtuosity, all of which are informed by a multi-faceted artistic knowledge, whether experimental or experiential, technical or technological, improvisational or compositional. The project is driven by the investigation of the voice’s boundaries within the field of vocal performance art as of today. On the basis of the highly subjective approach to the vocal arts through the researcher’s own voice, the posed question is what the performance voice could be and sound like rather than just asking what it is or represents. Either by extending the potential ranges of the multi-register voice or by examining the *in-between* and the *unknown* of an interdisciplinary and interdependent approach to oral, vocal, bodily and technology-related practices, the performance not only uncovers that these idiosyncratic practices are informed by additional questions pertaining to technical issues to bridge the vocal terrains, but also unfolds what is conceived as a bountiful *vocal imaginary*.

As forming part of the defence of the doctoral candidate’s dissertation *Monsters I Love: On Multivocal Arts*, the performance *Moving Tongues: Playing Space* documented by Dan Lageryd will be published in the form of an exposition on the Research Catalogue on following webpage:

<http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:uniarts:diva-427>

Supervisors: **Rolf Hughes:** PhD (Director of Artistic Research, Experimental Architecture Group, Newcastle University); **Sten Sandell:** PhD (composer, musician, vocal performer, Stockholm).

Disputation Participants:

Chair: **Wilhelm Carlsson**, Professor of Musical drama at Stockholm University of the Arts and University College of Opera.

Opponent: **Tone Åse**, Associate Professor at the Department of Music, NTNU, Trondheim.

Examination committee: **Henrik Frisk**, lecturer at KMH Stockholm and Lund University; **Franziska Baumann**, lecturer at the Berne University of Music, Professor for voice training and contemporary vocal music at the Théâtre Musical departement; **Morten Qvenild**, Associate professor at the Norwegian Academy of Music in the department of Jazz, Improvised Music and Traditional Nordic Folk Music Department, Oslo.

