

Silence

where a song would ring

setting of / Xam texts

for baritone, violin and percussion

Hans Huyssen

Lynedoch

2000

Instrumentarium - Instruments

Bariton - baritone

Violine - violin

Schlagzeug - percussion:

2 Pauken (G, C) - 2 timpanies (G, C)

großes Becken (umgekehrt auf die Membran der C-Pauke gelegt) - cymbal laid upside down on to the C-timpani 2

Steine (handgroße Flußkiesel) - 2 stones (medium sized pebbles)

‘Stockspiel’ (twig):

(ein dünner Holzstock, bzw. Zweig auf weicher Unterlage, mit zwei etwas kleineren Stöckchen anzuschlagen

- dry twig supported on cushion, ‘played’ with two light sticks

Metallophon (Vibraphon ohne Motor) - vibraphone (without motor)

Zimbel (mit Metallstab angeschlagen) - finger-cymbals

gefüllte Wasserschüssel zum Hineintauchen der Zimbel - bucket of water into which the cymbals are dipped

2 !goin!goin (Schwirrhölzer) - (trad. whirl-wood)

hängendes Becken (harte, weiche Schlägel, Besen) - suspended cymbal (hard and soft mallets, brush)

Holzblocktrommeln (4 Holzblöcke) - log-drum (4 wood blocks)

4 Tom Toms

Röhrenglocken - tubular bells

Sand-, bzw. Regenrohr, aufgehängt - suspended rain-box

Baß-Xylophon (Filz- und (4!) Paukenschlägel) - bass-xylophone (played with 4 soft mallets)

Anlage für Ton-Zuspielungen (von CD) - hi-fi system for play-back

Schlagzeug Besetzung der einzelnen Sätze - instruments in the various movements:

I. The string is broken

großes Becken (weiche Schlägel)

C-Pauke (als Resonanzkörper für Becken)

2 Steine

Stockspiel (Holzschlägel)

Metallophon (mittelweiche Schlägel)

II. What the stars say

Zimbel (Metallstab, Wasserschüssel)

2 !goin!goin (traditionelle Schwirrhölzer)

hängendes Becken, mittelgroß

(harte, weiche Schlägel, Besen)

Holzblocktrommel (4 Blöcke)

4 Tom Toms (harte Schlägel)

G-Pauke (harte Schlägel)

Metallophon (weicher Schlägel)

Intermezzo 1

Metallophon (mittelweiche Schlägel)

III. //Kabbo's song on the loss of his tobacco pouch

2 Steine

Sandrohr (Regenrohr)

Metallophon (harte Schlägel, Stein)

4 Tom Toms (Trommelstöcke, harte Schlägel)

Röhrenglocken (harte Schlägel)

(Aufstellung so, daß Metallophon und Toms, bzw.

Röhrenglocken und Toms gleichzeitig erreicht werden können)

Intermezzo 2

tacet

IV. Jantie Toorn's asking for thread

großes Becken (weicher Schlägel)

C-Pauke (als Resonanzkörper für Becken)

Baß-Xylophon (Filz-, 4 Paukenschlägel)

I. The string is broken

Diakwain, July 1875, in the Katkop dialect
BC 151, A2.1.103, VI-108, (5101-5103), Specimen of Bushman Folklore: p. 236

People were those, who, grasping, broke for me the string.

Therefor the place became like this to me.
because the string was that which broke for me.

Therefor the place feels not to me
as it did use to feel before.

The place feels empty for the string is broken.
and the place does not feel pleasant any more, therefor.

II. What the stars say

Han=kass'o, May 1879,
BC 151, A2.1.64, III-27, (8447-8458), Specimen of Bushman Folklore: p. 80-82

The stars say 'tsau', they say 'tsau, tsau'
therefor we say: "The stars do curse for us the springbok's eyes."

I was the one who listened then,
asking grandfather Tsatsi
what thing it was that called thus.
He said: "The stars are those
that say 'tsau, tsau', the stars say 'tsau'
and summer is the time they sound."
Grandfather called Canopus
as it had newly risen:

"You shall give me your heart with which you sit in plenty
and take my heart with which I'm desparately hungry.
You are not small.

It seems your food is plenty and you are filled.
But I am hungry. Give me your stomach which is full
and you take mine, that you might hunger.

Also give me your arm.
You - take my arm with which I do not kill,
and I take yours,
for mine which is here - I miss my aim with it."

I was the one who listened then,
The stars were those which said 'tsau, tsau'.
We knew they cursed for us the springbok's eyes.
The stars said 'tsau',
and summer was the time that they would sound.

III. //Kabbo's song on the loss of his tobacco pouch

Han=kass'o, January 1878,

BC 151, A2.1.76, V-106, (6138), Specimen of Bushman Folklore: p. 234

I smoked not. I did not smoke.

For a dog has carried off my pouch from me by night, I did not smoke, I didn't.

I rose at night and missed my pouch. I did not smoke.

Famine is here.

Tobacco hunger it is.

Famine is that which is here.

Again I lay down, I did not smoke, I didn't.

And early we rose and sought for the pouch. We did not find it.

Famine it is.

Tobacco hunger is here.

Famine is that which is here.

IV. Jantie Toorn's asking for thread

//Kabbo

BC 151, A2.1.18, V-106, (1171-1172)

My thoughts spoke to me.

My thoughts in this manner spoke to me.

Therefor my mouth speaks to thee.

My mouth thus says to Mylady, that which I should tell her.

Thus I thought at night

while I lay, I - thinking - lay.

I lay upon the bed, thinking what I would say to thee.

I thought that I would say to thee,

that thou shouldst give me thread,

that I should sew

and sewing place the buttons on my baaitjie.

The buttons that you gave to me -

Else they would fall,

be falling to the ground.

But I - and not a little gentle - I think of them

for they are beautiful.

I. The string is broken

Diätkwain, 1875

Hans Huyssen

Senza timpani

$\text{♩} = 138$

$\text{♩} = 69$

Bar

Vn

Schlägel

Becken

Pfe

Becken umgekehrt auf das Pantoffel gelegt
wache Schlägel

Stöcke der Beckenschlägel

Stöcke nehmen

mit Holz i.v.

pp

innere Pedal: poco a poco cresc. mf

Tonhöhe-pedal ad. lib.; ganze Spanne ausnutzen
(ungefähre Tonhöhenänderung)

Time: C:D:1
↓
!ke kein doa...

Band/ Tape

Stochspiel

Steine

Bed.

Pfe

(Strom. mit Holzstäben der umgedrehten Beckenschlägel)

ca. 5"

pp < mp

(nur Pedal)

Text

Vn

Vn

Bed.

Pfe

espr.

mp

(III.)

cresc.

dim

step sempre cresc.

f

i.v.

Vn

Stochspiel

Metallophon

! (Holzschlägel)

dim

mf

cresc.

ste

harte Schlägel

mf

mp

cresc.

poco f

$\text{♩} = \text{♩} = 138$ Akkord

Silence where a song would ring

CD:2

30 Text: ↓
 O! nū:īn a: - - - - - →

Tombard

Vn

Hes.

p leggiero

Band 36

Vn

Hes.

meno f

mp

42

Vn

Hes.

mf

stz p

mf

CP

Band 42

d = 69

Text: ↓
 Ti: kerne lne...

Vn

Stad-
 spiel
 Steine

Bed.
 Pke

p

dim

cres. molto

Band 52

d. < 69 (poco meno)

♩. = 69

Vn

Steine

p espr.

poco

piu

poco

p

Band 60

Vn

Stad-
 spiel
 Steine

meno f

dim.

p

pp

mf

dim

placando

poco rall...

Senza tempo

a tpo. $\text{♩} = 69$

Bar *People were those who, grasping, broke for me the string*

Vn *poco f*

Senza tpo

Bar *Therefor the place became like this to me, because the string ^{was} _{which} broke for me*

Vn $\text{♩} = 69$

Holz-
stude *poco f*

senza tpo

Bar *Therefor the place feels not to me as it used feel be-fore*

Vn

a tpo $\text{♩} = 138$

$\text{♩} = 69$

Vn *(mischerweise Schl.) mp*

Her. *poco f*

Senza tpo

Bar *The place feels empty for the string is broken, and the place does not feel plea - - - sant*

a tpo $\text{♩} = 69$

Bar *a - ny - more, therefor.*

Vn *p dolce* *piu mosso* *rall...*

Vn *p* *poco f* *sfz* *p* *dim.* *ppp*

Bech *weiche Schlägel* *senza pp* *l.v.*

Ple *ped.*

41 *f agitato*

Bar. *ri-sen:* You shall give me your heart — with which you sit in pen = ey

Vn *sfz* *sfz* *f agitato*

!goin. *kleineres Schwirrholtz* *mp* *cresc.* *f*

48 *meno f* *cresc.*

Bar. and take — my heart — with which I'm desperately hungry.

Vn *mf* *sempre* *cresc.* *f*

!goin. *mp* *sempre cresc.* *sfz*

57

Vn *step*

!goin. *dim* *wecheln zum größeren Schwirrholtz*

63 *f*

Bar. You are not small it seems your food is pleny — and you are filled.

Vn *5* *tr.*

!goin. *mp* *cresc.* *sfz*

70 *meno f* *mp* *espr.*

Bar. But I am hungry, hungry. Give — me — your

Vn *dim.* *mp dolce*

!goin. *meno* *dim* *Adia*

79 *cresc.* *meno f*

Bar. stomach which is full and — you take mine — that you might hunger.

Vn *sempre* *cresc.*

!goin. *ppp* (weiche Schlägel) *sempre* *cresc.* *Silence where a song would ring.*

Bed. (hängend, mittelgroß)

87

Vn *f* *ff* *agitato*

Beck *p* *molto cresc.* *sfz* *1.v.* → Holzblocktrommel

93

Bar *f* Also give me your

Vn *ff*

Holzblöcke *harte Schlägel* (Holzblocktrommel mit 4 Blöcken) *f* *more.* *mp*

100

Bar *arm.* You — take my arm wich which I do not kill — and I take your arm

Vn *mf* *dim*

Holzblöcke *f* *sfz* *dim* *p* → Becken

rall — — — *d = 92*

106

Bar for mine which is here I miss my aim wich it.

Vn *mp* *cresc.* *sfz* *f* *more.* *1.v.*

Beck (harte Schlägel) *pp* *cresc.* *sfz* → Tom Tom!

rit *meno* *d = 80*

113

Vn *sfz* *meno f* *sf*

Holzblöcke *f* (harte Schlägel)

Tom-Toms *mf* *p*

118

Vn *p*

Tom-Toms *mf* *dim*

Plec (G) *mp*

124

Vn *dim* *poco f* *p* *cp* 129 *l. = 69* *raissig (ganz andere Welt)*

Bed. *mp* *mie Besen*

Picc (C) *sf* *dim* *p* *cp* *mp* (Tonhöhenpedal)

132

Vn *cp* *poco più mosso (d ca 92)* *p* *v n*

Bed *cp sfp* *p* *(harte Schl.)*

Picc (C) *poco f* *cp* *poco f* *p* *!gain!gain*

139

Bar *mp* *a tempo* *♩ = 80*

Vn *poco* *dec.* *p* *mp* *poco f* *p*

!Goin *p* *f* *mp* *poco f* *p* *!gain!gain* *→ Metallophon*

I — was the one who listened than. The stars were those which

144

Bar *pp*

Vn *pp* *p* *f* *p*

said 'tsan, tsan'. We knew they cursed for us — the springbot's eyes —

148

Bar *espr.*

Vn *dim* *p* *pp* *sf*

The stars said 'tsan' and summer was the time — that

153

Bar *morendo*

Vn *pp* *p* *pp*

Met. Ziml. *Metallophon* *l.v.* *p* *pp* *(Wasserschüssel)*

they would sound

- Silence where a song would ring -

Intermezzo 1

CD: 4

ca 146

Tom band

1 2 3 4 5-17 18 19

ect.

Zuspielung: 19 Takte lang

piu mosso $\text{♩} = 160$

ff

Zuspielung unterbrechen!

Metallophon

mittelschwere Schlägel

CD: 5

Tom band

Metallophon

stz

mf

cresc.

dim

pp

Met.

(wieder unterbrechen)

stz

mf

rall.

acc.

p dolce cresc.

Met.

rall... a + po etwas unregelmäßig, aber fließend (wie auf der Aufnahme)

mp

p

abreßen

III. // Kabbo's song on the loss of his tobacco pouch

/Han-kass'o, 1878

Tp^o I

$\downarrow = 152$

Vn

Steine *mf agitato*

Sandrohr *gegen-einander schlagen*

⊗ oder Regarrohr mit groben Sand gefüllt, möglichst so angehäut, daß es mit einem Saß gelippt werden kann und selbst anstüßt

Tp^o II

$\downarrow = 100$

Bar

Vn

Steine

Sandrohr

Metallophon

Tp^o I

$\downarrow = 152$

Bar

Vn

Steine

Sandrohr

Metallophon

Toms

Tp^o II

$\downarrow = 100$

Bar

Vn

Steine

Toms

19

Bar

Vn

Steine

I missed my punch

agitato

cresc.

2 ff

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

24

Bar

Vn

Röhren
glocken

Toms

Steine

I didn't smo - ke. Famine is here - Tobacco hunger it is -

härte Schügel (für Röhrengl. u. Tom-Toms)

Ped. sfz

(schnell reiben)

sfz

ff

Tpo II ♩ = 100 ff

29

Bar

Vn

RG

Toms

Steine

Famine is that which is here

dim

mf

(i.v.)

Ped.

i.v.

(Metaphor ad. lib)

36

Bar

Vn

Steine

gain I lay down

I did not smoke, I didn't.

meno

mp

mf

5

7

40

Bar

Vn

Steine

Met.

And ear-ly we rose - and sought for the punch - We did not find it!

poco acc.

mf

cresc.

p

hären Schügel

(acc. - -)

mf

sfz

Tp II ♩ = 100

45

Bar

Va

Mer

Tom

f

meno f

Famine it is — Tobacco hunger is here. Famine is what

f marc. *sfzp* *f* *sf*

l.v. *l.v.* *mf*

51

Bar

Va

Mer

Tom

dim

which is here

dim *mp* *mp*

57

Va

Mer

Tom

mp *sfp* *mp* *l.v.* *poco f* *p marc.*

63

Va

Mer

Tom

mp *sfp* *mp* *l.v.* *poco f* *p marc.*

69

Tp. I ♩ = 152

Tp. II ♩ = 100

Va

Mer

Steine

Sand-

rohr

p agitato *sfp* *rall.* *poco f* *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp*

Intermezzo 2

$\text{♩} = 69$

Va Solo

mp *cresc.* *poco f* *dim* *f*

a epo *p agitato* *poco f*

$(\text{♩} = 69)$ *mit „groove“*

immer ausdrucksstark spielen, präsent sein; nicht mechanisch, monoton!

(crescibile)

Bar

f espres. *meno f*

Vn

meno f *espr.*

(senza rit!) The string is broken, and the

Bar.

mp *espr.*

place feels amp-ey. The place does not feel plea - - - sant any-more.

Zuspiel-band

Musik vom Band

ICD:6

Band

IV. Jantjie Toorn's asking for thread

//Kabbo

♩ = 60

mp

Bar 1: My thoughts spoke to me. My thoughts in this manner spoke to me. There for my mouth

Bar 1: Musical notation for Bar 1, including vocal line and piano accompaniment.

Vu: *espr.*

Bech: *weite Schlägel*

Pk: *pp*, *p*, *mp*, *pp*

Tonhöhenpedal versetzen

Bar 5: speaks to thee. My mouth thus says to thy lady that what I should tell her

Bar 5: Musical notation for Bar 5, including vocal line and piano accompaniment.

Vu: *cresc.*, *mf*

Bech: *2*, *4*, *4*, *3*

Pk: *pp*, *mf*

Bar 9: Thus I thought at night while I lay. I, thinking,

Bar 9: Musical notation for Bar 9, including vocal line and piano accompaniment.

Vu: *mf*

Bech: *harte Fingerschlägel*

Kyfl: *secco*, *mf*, *f*, *dim*, *p*, *pp*

Bar 13: lay I lay upon the bed, thinking what I would say to thee

Bar 13: Musical notation for Bar 13, including vocal line and piano accompaniment.

Vu: *mp*, *cresc.*, *mf*, *up*, *step*

Bech: *mp*, *step*

poco più mosso

Bar 17

Vn. I thought that I would say to thee that thou shouldst give me thread, that I should sew -

Bsp. 4 Pantenschlägel

Xyl.

mp dolce

Bar 22

Vn. and sewing place the buttons on my boari - tie

Bsp.

Xyl.

Beck.

Flc.

Pantenschlägel

mf

Red.

Bar 28

Vn. The buttons that you

Beck.

Flc.

espr.

poco f dim

verändern ad. lib.

Bar 33

Vn. gave to me. Else they would fall, be

Beck.

Flc.

mp

poco f

36 (more.) *p dolce*

Bar: fal-ling to the ground. But I — — and

Vn: *etc*

Boß: Filzschlägel

Kyl.: *f marc. poco dim.*

39

Bar: not a little gen-ly — — I think of them for they are —

Vn: *mp dim*

Metallophon: Glockenspietschlägel *pp*

Kyl.: *mf* *p*

41 *dolcissimo!*

Bar: beautiful

Vn: *dim* Eva

Mes.: *dim*

Band: ↓ Music: — — — — — ↓ Text: — — — — —

Ton-band

(Text) — — — — —

(Music) — — — — —

lunga

["Silence..."]

Lynedoch, 2.9.2000

Silence where a song would ring

Setting of translations of /Xam texts

for baritone, violin and percussion

commissioned by the Gasteig Kulturverein, Munich

The archives of the University of Cape Town contain a significant, yet not widely known record of ancient South African culture, the so-called Bleek & Lloyd collection. It comprises accounts of historical /Xam folklore, stories and myths as related by some of the last /Xam people living in the Cape in the 19th century.

The German linguist William Bleek was living in Cape Town in the 1870s, when he learned of a group of imprisoned Khoi people, serving sentences of hard labour (for minor 'crimes', such as stealing sheet) at the breakwaters. Amongst them some were some /Xam. Suspecting that these might be some of the very last representatives of a culture on the verge of extinction, he spontaneously abandoned all other projects and set his mind on 'interviewing' them, documenting as much information as would still be possible. Through an intervention of the then governor of the Cape, Sir Peter Wodehouse, he succeeded to transfer some of the convicts into his own services. For the following five years, until Bleek's premature death in 1875, a number of /Xam informants would be living in huts in his Mowbray garden. During this period Bleek, with the assistance of his sister in law, Lucy Lloyd, phonetically transcribed and then translated into English some 12 000 pages of text. The amazing feat is not only that Bleek apparently learnt the language in a very short span of time, without any other reference than that of the /Xam themselves, who wouldn't exactly be fluent Dutch or English speakers, but also, that this quantitatively substantial bulk of material was related mainly by only three men: //Kabbo, Han=kass'ó and Diä!kwain. They must have been traditional knowledge bearers, informants and storytellers of the first order. What we know of the /Xam traditions, we know through them.

The Khoisan

Only in recent times – by far too late – has the culture of the historic indigenous population, generically called bushmen, or Khoi and San-people, been appreciated to a certain degree. Certain restitutive measures have in the mean time been taken, such as reallocating traditional land to the few remaining descendant communities; reintroducing native mother-tongue tuition in regional schools and radio broadcasts, or integrating traditional tracking and hunting skills into modern conservational institutions and thereby offer employment to indigenous knowledge bearers, etc. However, none of these efforts will even marginally restore or reinstate this prehistorically old culture.

The Khoisan were living as hunter gatherers throughout Southern Africa, from Angola to the Cape. They are especially associated with the more arid regions, where physical survival would be a daunting and ongoing challenge. Yet they not only survived – but established a sustainable livelihood for tens of thousands of years in utmost balance with their environment.

Society would be made up of small clans not outnumbering 25 persons, every single one necessarily being an expert ecologist, specialised on sustainable consumption of scarce the natural resources. There would be no need for any greater social structures, let alone state-like organisations. This un-institutionalised form of living was probably the best adaptation to the harsh environment, yet it also made them utterly vulnerable. There was no way they could resist the influx of European and black farmers into their territory from the 18th century onwards.

Ironically these settlers were under the impression at first, that the country they were ‘discovering’ was uninhabited: the bushmen in their adapted way of living hardly left signs of their presence – unlike the newcomers, who, ignorantly blundering into this ecosystem would inadvertently mar it and sow destruction.

If not direct fights and clashes, then the sudden over-exploitation of the limited resources sealed the fate of the local aborigines. Those that escaped starvation had to adapt to the pressure of the intruding ‘civilisation’, usually by becoming farm labourers. There being neither space nor any appreciation of their way of living, this intricate culture unobtrusively and silently came to an end, with hardly anybody even noticing the tragedy. Today the only remaining traces are those of the incomparably beautiful rock art, well hidden and scattered over vast stretches of landscape, and – in the manner of a strangely mediated archive – the signs of the Bleek-collection, potentially contain samples of the phonetically sounding language and its ‘poetry’.

Even though we have some access to the perceptions and beliefs of the /Xam through the texts collected here, their spiritual world nevertheless remains highly enigmatic and secret. Perhaps it is precisely this quality, which has recently inspired a number of linguists, archaeologists, poets and even one other composer of which I know, to engage with these texts. Or rather with there assumed English translations, as nobody is left, to understand, let alone speak the original language. However, to me the existence of the phonetic transcription – which may be seen as a very early form of an actual sound-recording – is really the most fascinating aspect of the collection, remnant of the factual aural tradition, key to the ‘genuine’ material itself, which would correspond with the quality of the rock paintings, undisguised by subjective attempts at translations or interpretations. Considering composition an audible art, working with the originally sounding language, seemed thus the obvious thing to do.

I pursued the idea of a reconstruction, re-sounding of the spoken language from the very moment I had learned of the existence of the phonetic script. Yet this principle motivation eventually nearly toppled the project, as endless complications ensued.

Initially numerous hints and proposals were offered to find someone with a some inherited knowledge of Khoisan-related linguistics, who would be able to make sense of Bleek’s partly self devised phonetic script. But even following all the provided links to universities, museums, various institutions and organisations concerned with rehabilitation of Khoi and San descendants, sooner or later failed me. It turned out, that those capable to decipher the phonetics, were at a loss with the voice inflections, the intonation, accentuation if not the pronunciation and the shaping of the five different ‘clicks’ to be found in /Xam. And those, who might still have some knowledge of a related tongue would be illiterate, too old or live in remote outposts, unreachable in the available time. As all leads came to an end I was confronted with the realization of what ‘extinction’ (of a language) really means...

As there was a deadline for the commission and the date of the first performance, I had to start putting something on paper. Very reluctantly I thus turned to the English translation as well. It felt wrong, since setting the English language seemed not to resonate at all with the realms I had wished to describe or even capture. The least I could do was to stick to Bleek’s original version, which in spite of its occasional crudeness (due to its attempts at literal translations) rings more true than aesthetically edited and altered readings. If at all, any characteristic qualities would be best preserved in the greatest proximity to the original.

But then a little miracle happened: during a conference on the revival of Nama (related to Khoisan languages and still fairly widely spoken in Namibia), I met Pedro Dâusab. A schoolteacher and native Nama speaker, he was interested in the project, but sceptical, whether he could make anything of the texts. It took quite a bit of persuasion before he would be willing to give it a try. But then he began to discover some similarities in sound, remembered some of the sayings of the old people, even recognised certain words and got quite involved in extracting as much sense as he could, from the cryptic notes.

Though there is of course no way in which his renditions of the passages we recorded can be verified, I trust that as a surmised attempt, it will be as close to the historically sounding language as any informed guess could be today. Since there is nobody to understand the language anymore, no recipient for the meaning once carried in its sounds, it cannot be anything else but an artificial construction, even if its pronunciation were scientifically or linguistically 'correct'. (Incidentally this situation closely resembles the performance of early music of which there are also no witnesses left to tell us how it was really supposed to sound. Even after consulting all historical evidence the only remaining option is to ultimately dare an interpretation along ones own lines.) Yet even so the sounds *do* still speak strongly and hauntingly – if only communicating by their bewildering and elementary harshness just how utterly remote the world of the /Xam is apart from ours.

The song cycle thus consists of settings of four English 'poems' (as it were), interspersed by instrumental movements. The recorded passages of the 'original' language are to be played-back at certain moments, as are extracts of recent field recordings of music of the Kalahari bushmen. (My thanks to John Brearly for the kind permission to use his material!) Some of this musical material has also flown into the instrumental parts, and the percussionist at times plays a *!goin!goin* (a traditional instrument apparently used by the Khoi to lure bees from their hives granting the musician access to its sweet content...), reconstructed according to a museum specimen.

Through the juxtaposition of contemporary forms of musical expression with ancient 'original' material the piece wishes to evoke a taste of the poetic quality, with which the /Xam chose to interpret their austere circumstances. In the same vein it hopes to create a deliberate artistic relationship with a very specific local history and landscape. The method followed here to achieve this, is to contextualize new ad old musical material in each other's proximity, to juxtapose, mirror and reflect what is at hand and thereby create subtle associations. The topic seemed to demand a fully opposite trajectory than the generically propagated avant-garde notions of intentionally breaking with any tangible historical relations and traditions. The kind of novelty of musical expression achieved by this approach would seem to be rather spurious and thinly artificial – especially so in the face of the fact and fate of a complete and irrevocable cultural and human extinction. The quest is to find music to respond to the devastating silence left by this void.

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