

editorial

The development of new musical languages between cultures—this is the artistic vision from which the transonic concert series emerged in its present form. It not only intends to question anew concepts such as tradition and modernity, or categories such as contemporary and ritual, folklore and avant-garde, but also to provide a space in which techniques and modes of working can be examined and transformed. At the House of World Cultures, a production and research centre has been created where such debate and activities can take place. A kind of musical workshop has been established which, in the years to come, will increasingly open its doors to universities and all those promoting and staging events Berlin and elsewhere.

It is not only the festival which is in its infancy. It is exemplary of a dialogue that is evolving gradually but with growing intensity between musicians and composers from the musical cultures of India, China, the Arab world, Africa and Southeast Asia, Central and South America. Europe and the Western music traditions constitute only one partner among many. The hierarchy between western modernities and the music of “foreign cultures” has been replaced by mutual curiosity. Emancipation from the cultural patterns of modernity, which are characterised by the universalistic claims of western modernities, has created a new polycentrism with extraordinary and varied artistic potential.

In the first year, we and our artistic director Gene Colman decided to concentrate on Southeast Asia. This year, however, we would like to capture fragments of the broad spectrum of developments taking place around the globe. The artists and projects invited stand for local innovation, no matter whether they are in Buenos Aires, Beirut or Bandung (Indonesia). Soloists from Japan and Korea will encounter artists from the USA, Berlin and Vienna. Improvisation will be contrasted with composition, and solo work with group productions. At the introductory workshop, some of the artists invited will meet up with intellectuals and musicologists in an experimental field. The debate has started: accompanied by an Internet Forum.

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