

Cornucopia was founded in the year 2000, with the purpose of developing a dialogue and exchange over the boundaries of accepted categories - a dialogue between new and traditional elements of musical style, between composer and performing musician, between notated and improvised musical forms, word and music, and concert and theatre.

The Berlin projects have taken place since 2000 and have been funded partly from the Berlin Senate, the Berlin Decentralized District Culture Fund, and Kulturland Brandenburg. In 2002 and 2005 **Cornucopia** was a guest of the Ethno-Jazz Festival of Thessaloniki, Greece.

Selected Performances 2000 - 2010

- b-flat (prominent jazz club in central Berlin)
- Virchow-Hörsaal-Ruine, Charité Hospital (the war ruins of the old pathology lecture auditorium)
- Rathaus Schöneberg
- Ethno Jazz Festival Thessaloniki
- Kirchentag Berlin 2003
- Lange Nacht der Museen (Berlin's traditional "Long Night of Museums")
- Ballhaus Naunynstrasse
- Ballhaus Rixdorf
- Ponderosa Dance Festival
- Künstlerhaus Schloss Wiepersdorf (Artists' House Chateau Wiepersdorf, Brandenburg)
- T-Werk (Theatre) Potsdam
- Babylon Special Exhibition of the Pergamon Museum
- Ensemble in Residence of the Festival *marenostrum*, Italy

The Musicians

- **Taner Akyol** - Baglama, Composition, Vocals www.tanerakyol.com
- **Antonis Anissegos** - Piano, Composition www.enstase.com
- **Johanne Braun** - Oboe, Cor Anglais, Vocals
- **Gaby Bultmann** - Recorders (all sizes) Vocals www.gaby-bultmann.de
- **Mike Flemming** - Viola
- **Tim Florence** - Composition, Piano, E-Organ, Violin
- **Simeon Ioannidis** - Conducting, Composition, Piano
- **Juliane Opitz** - Violoncello www.julianeopitz.de
- **Paul Mertens-Pawlosky** - Composition, Piano
- **Petra Priess** - violin, medieval fiddle
- **Bettina Semrau** - clarinet
- **Juliane Maria Sprengel** - vocals
- **Georgios Sfyridis** - Composition, Conducting
- **Wu Wei** - Sheng, Erhu, Zheng, Gongs www.wuweimusic.com

Cornucopia was founded as a composer-performer ensemble with the purpose of giving composers and improvisers the possibility of exploring and bringing to performance an individual intercultural sound language.

Cornucopia plays music of our time from various countries and compositional cultures. Turkish art songs can be found side by side with minimal music, sonic experimentalism stands together with European medieval music (or music influenced by it), conducted improvisations based on Chinese sound culture with modern orchestra-like compositions.

Cornucopia's concert projects are often realized in a visual or choreographed context.

The members of **Cornucopia** view "new" or "contemporary" as basically all music that has its home in the diversity of musical languages that characterize the present. No one particular style is presented to listeners as definitively "contemporary". Instead **Cornucopia** favours plurality of style and the possibility of shaping an interdisciplinary music culture which goes beyond the simple fencing-off of established categories.

An important starting point for every new project is the array of prospective connections and confrontations between the heterogeneous musical elements at hand. "Classically" composed pieces of music (often with their own internal dialogue or dialectic between traditional and newer aspects), improvisations and "music of traditional cultures" form in solo or chamber music-like offerings, as well as large ensemble pieces, the structural framework of each program.

According to the existing possibilities for each new project, extra-musical and musical elements are integrated according to a dramatic or theatrical plan. A listener is then not only able to experience a lively diversity of musical styles and idioms, but also aesthetic dimensions of space, optics and spoken language as forms of expression naturally related to music. In this regard collaboration with artists from the areas of film, visual art, lighting and theatre is often sought.

All musicians from **Cornucopia** have studied composition, instrumental or/and vocal performance at reputed conservatories, particularly in Germany, but, or perhaps because of that, have been able to nurture their own very personal sound-language, beyond categories such as "academic", "new" "traditional" or "western European". In this spirit each **Cornucopia** member is simultaneously a performer - instrumentalist, singer or speaker, and an improviser and/or composer, and presents - in a spectrum somewhere between

new/
traditional/
"ethnic"/
jazz/
classical/
notated or improvised/
to remembering and inventing

his or her own musical roots and most deeply personal form of expression, drawing on the rich fund of collective musical memory.

Taner Akyol

learned to play the baglama in his homeland Turkey. He is regarded as one of the best baglama soloists and singers of the younger generation and attained the Solo Prize of the Music-Vitale-Competition Berlin in 1998. He is an interpreter of traditional Turkish songs as well as his own art songs. In addition he studied classical Western composition at Berlin's Hanns Eisler Conservatory and was awarded the Hanns Eisler Composition Prize there. He then undertook and completed post-graduate studies with Walter Zimmermann at the *Universität der Künste* in Berlin. He has completed diverse compositional commissions, amongst others for the festivals *Istanbul in Berlin* and the *Klangwerkstatt Berlin*. In 2002 the CD "peri-Thoriou" appeared with songs of his own and Georgios Sfyridis. "Birds of Passage" (enja records), with orchestrated songs, came out in 2008. In 2010 his most important CD to date was released, on which his songs are performed by the famous Theodorakis interpreter Maria Farantouri. Away from his busy concert schedule he is a sought after teacher of his instrument and has helped to establish baglama playing in Berlin, in competitions and in the district music schools.

Antonis Anissegos

studied piano in his hometown Thessaloniki and in Budapest under A. Laszlo, as well as jazz piano with John Taylor. In addition he studied composition in Budapest (with G. Orbaa), in Vienna (with K. Schwertzig), in Cologne (with K. Meyer) and finally in Berlin with Walter Zimmermann. He has been awarded numerous composition scholarships and prizes, among others the 1st Prize of the Composition Competition 2000 of the Neuköllner Oper Berlin, and the Composition Prize 2002 of the Berlin Senator for Culture, as well as commissions from Germany, Korea and Greece (including for the cultural programme of the Athens Olympics in 2004.) Most recently he has been occupied with performances of electronic music. He has lived in Berlin since 1997, and is active there and throughout Europe, and is very often in Japan. He is involved with many ensembles and projects of his own as well as being a guest pianist for numerous bands in the areas of jazz, free jazz, traditional music and improvisation. To date he has appeared on 29 CDs.

Tim Florence

was born in Australia and studied composition (with Carl Vine) and piano in Brisbane. He later undertook composition studies with Walter Zimmermann in Berlin. He has lived for many years now as a composer, pianist and pedagogue in Berlin. As a pianist he is a sought after improviser. His works have been performed in Germany, Australia and Greece, and have appeared numerous times on Australia's national radio broadcaster. With *Georgios Sfyridis* and several others he co-founded the ensemble **Cornucopia** in 1999.

Paul Mertens-Pawlowsky

studied piano in Aachen and then composition with Jürg Baur in Cologne. His works are performed throughout Germany. Highlights have included the Rhine Music Festival as well as recordings for the WDR involving the conception and realization of a "talking book" series on major issues of human rights and peace; to date episodes about Albert Schweitzer and the so-called baptists have appeared. In 1998 his CD "Wach auf mein Herz" came out.

Georgios Sfyridis

studied piano, music theory and classical philology in his hometown Thessaloniki, after which he came to Germany and took up conducting and composition studies with Matthias Spahlinger and Walter Zimmermann. He continued his studies with Walter Zimmermann in Berlin when the latter took up a UdK professorship there. Georgios Sfyridis founded the ensemble for new music *Ensemble Mosaic*, but eventually turned away from academic forms of new music towards the emergent minimal music styles

combined with his own personal approach to Greek art song style. Many musicians from *Cornucopia* are to be found on his first art song CD "Perithorion" from 2002, which was a great success in Greece. He has very recently brought to completion a second CD containing songs with string quartet accompaniment. In Berlin he is active as a conductor, arranger and composer.

Wu Wei

was born in the southeast Chinese province of Jiangsu. He studied from 1989 to 1993 at the Shanghai Conservatory, graduating with a Master's degree in the *sheng* mouth organ. In 1995 Wu Wei came to the Hanns-Eisler Conservatory in Berlin, where he expanded his musical horizons through the study of the western jazz tradition and by collaborating with musicians from the most varied backgrounds. Since 1993, as a *sheng* soloist, either alone or as member of ensembles of the most varied make-up, he has appeared on countless stages and at many great festivals, both inside Germany, including numerous appearances as a soloist with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, and abroad. In addition he has undertaken many projects with contemporary and improvised music, including his own compositions. He has developed a new sound language for traditional Chinese instruments and opened up new dimensions for new music in doing so. In this respect he has played a central role in the world premieres of over 30 contemporary compositions.

Johanne Braun

studied singing and oboe at the *Hochschule* (now *Universität*) *der Künste* in Berlin and works as a freelance musician and music teacher. She is oboist in chamber orchestras, and her work up to date has included engagements as a singer with the chorus of the Berlin *Rundfunk*, as well as at the *Deutsches Theater* in Berlin and the chorus of the State Opera. As a musician she likes to combine music with movement or language and composition with improvisation and performance art. She has produced 3 CDs of her own.

Gaby Bultmann

studied recorder, medieval instruments and singing in Berlin, Amsterdam and Milan. She founded eight ensembles ranging from medieval to contemporary. In addition she is involved in experimental projects with visual artists, dancers and actors. With her concert and teaching activities she is underway throughout Europe. To date she has produced 5 CDs of her own and participated in numerous others.

Mike Flemming

lectures at the Hanns Eisler Conservatory in Berlin, at which he previously studied viola, as well as music theory and composition. Apart from his compositional and arranging activities, since 1995 he has also been active as artistic director and conductor of the Schmöckwitz Chamber Orchestra.

Petra Prieß

studied violin at the Hanns Eisler Conservatory in Berlin. Since then she has been preoccupied with historical string instruments. With the ensemble for medieval and early Renaissance music "Alta Musica" she has appeared in theatre productions at the *Deutsche Oper Berlin*, *Radialsystem V* (Berlin) and *T-Werk Potsdam*. Her busy schedule involves CD recordings, tours throughout Europe and pedagogical work.

Bettina Semrau

studied clarinet in Detmold, Maastricht and Dortmund. Amongst other orchestras and ensembles she has played with the Norddeutschen Sinfonieorchester Hannover and the Norddeutschen Philharmonie. But the focus of her activities has been with chamber music (z.B. with the Frensel - Wegener-Sextett). In addition she is teaching at several music schools and at the University Potsdam.

Juliane Maria Sprengel

studied singing with Renate Leißner (Halle) and Christine Wolff (Potsdam). Her concert performances are overwhelmingly in the areas of early music and church music. She appears inside Germany as well as abroad (amongst other countries Poland, Italy, Lithuania and England). She has participated in opera productions of the *Deutsche Oper Berlin* and the *Hans Otto Theatre* and is a member of the ensembles *Alta Musica* Berlin und the *Orlando Ensemble*. She has worked together with *T-Werk* (Theatre) Potsdam since 2001.