

Gunnar

Crisse

The Wannsee Recordings

THE WANNSEE RECORDINGS

1

[01] VII.4 [10100111_A7_*167] electric guitar, brass, percussion, timpani, celesta	01:58	[11] II.3 [100001_21_*33] distorted guitar, non-virtual electric guitar, electronic bass, electronic drums	05:35
[02] V.1 [1011000_58_*88] electronic guitar, distorted guitar	02:11	[12] V.2 [1011111_5F_*95] processed electric guitar	05:54
[03] I.1 [11_3_*3] electric guitar, electronic drums	01:10	[13] I.4 [1111_F_*15] electric guitar, non-virtual electric guitar, prepared acoustic guitar, distorted guitar	03:34
[04] I.2 [1011_B_*11] electric guitar, piano	03:33	[14] VII.9 [10101111_AF_*175] church organ	04:26
[05] III.2 [110011_33_*51] electric guitar, piano	01:08	[15] IV.4 [1010110_56_*86] charango, strings	03:05
[06] V.3 [1100110_66_*102] distorted guitar, choir, orchestra, percussion, timpani, vibraphone, celesta, piano	06:35	[16] VII.1 [10011111_9F_*159] steel string guitar, piano, strings, drum set (brushes), vibraphone, woodwinds	03:30
[07] VI.1-3 [1110001-1110010-1110011_71-72-73_*113-114-115] piano, string ensemble, orchestra	05:13	[17] I.3 [1101_D_*13] electric piano, choir, electronic drums, piano, strings, percussion, celesta	06:31
[08] II.4+V.4 [100100+1100111_24+67_*36+*103] electric guitar, saxophone, drum set, trombone, woodwinds, strings + piano, choir, noises, electric guitar, trombone, drum set, woodwinds	13:33	[18] IV.1 [1001101_4D_*77] processed brass, processed woodwinds, processed vibraphone	01:25
[09] VII.3 [10100101_A5_*165] trombone, electric guitar, noises, choir	02:58		total playing time 76:36
[10] VII.6 [10101011_AB_*171] field recordings, non-virtual electric guitar, processed noises	04:15		

Gunnar Geisse laptop guitar

THE WANNSEE RECORDINGS

2

[01]	II.2 [100000_20_*32] distorted guitar, vibraphone, piano, brass, woodwinds, electronic bass, non-virtual electric guitar, processing, electronic drums	10:27	[10]	VII.7 [10101100_AC_*172] shamisen, steel string guitar, cembalo, ebowed acoustic guitar, glockenspiel	03:26
[02]	VI.5 [1111100_7C_*124] electronic guitar, electric piano, electronic bass, electronic drums, distorted guitar	03:23	[11]	VII.12 [10110011_B3_*179] classical guitar, flute, oboe, clarinet, alto saxophone, woodwinds, vibraphone, strings, double bass	03:48
[03]	II.5 [101011_2B_*43] piano, electronic drums, electric piano	01:18	[12]	II.1 [11010_1A_*26] electric guitar, prepared acoustic guitar, woodwinds, brass, percussion, timpani, celesta, vibraphone, strings, choir, piano	12:44
[04]	VII.8 [10101101_AD_*173] dombra, synthesizer	02:56	[13]	IV.2 [1001111_4F_*79] electric piano, piano, electronic drums	02:01
[05]	VII.2 [10100100_A4_*164] steel string guitar, prepared piano, drum set (brushes), electric piano	02:24	[14]	III.2a [110011_33_*51] electric guitar, piano	00:58
[06]	VII.5 [10101000_A8_*168] cembalo, bowed acoustic guitar, marimba, xylophone, vibraphone, glockenspiel, piano, percussion, orchestra	01:26	[15]	III.1 [101111_2F_*47] woodwinds, vibraphone, drum set, double bass, distorted guitar, saxophone, trombone, electric guitar, piano	07:57
[07]	III.3 [1000101_45_*69] strings, double bass, tabla, piano, vibraphone, woodwinds, brass, percussion, celesta	05:47	[16]	IV.3 [1010101_55_*85] charango, prepared acoustic guitar	01:29
[08]	VI.4 [1111011_7B_*123] drum set, double bass, saxophone, vibraphone	08:56		total playing time	73:09
[09]	VII.10 [10110001_B1_*177] oud, ney, shakuhachi, muted trumpets, mandolin, double bass, electric organ, drum set (brushes)	04:06			

Gunnar Geisse laptop guitar

The laptop guitar instrument is a unique hardware/software set-up that allows to pursue the analogue playing on a digital level, consisting of an electric guitar, a laptop, a MIDI controller, and software which converts audio signals to MIDI messages in realtime for the purpose of operating and controlling any virtual instrument, and in fact a lot of them at the same time, with a non-virtual electric guitar.

Signal chain:

audio input -> digital conversion -> MIDI processing/virtual instruments -> audio output

Numbering key:

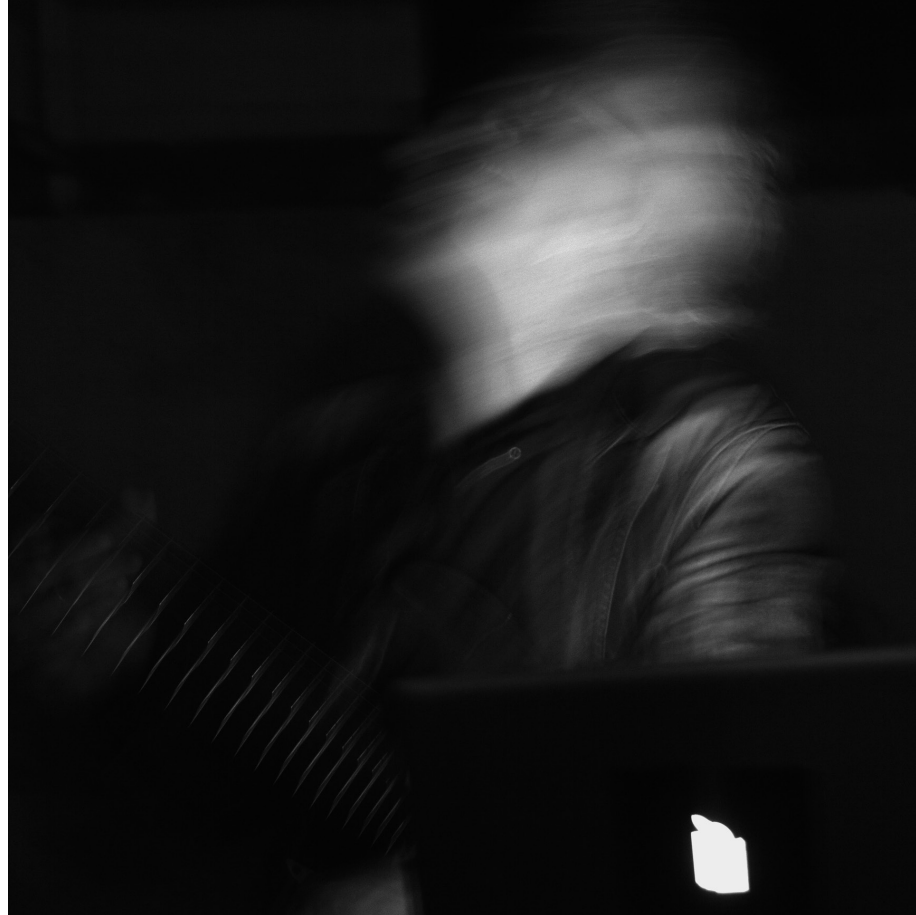
*concert day.track [serial file number] = [binary code_hexadecimal_*decimal]*

THE WANNSEE RECORDINGS solo improvisations recorded live direct to SSD
All instruments performed without overdubbing by Gunnar Geisse on laptop guitar

Initiation, realisation & recording supervision: Jörg Diernberger

Thanks to Jörg Diernberger, Marty Cook, Geoff Goodman, Friedrun Geisse, Christiane, Solly, Dominik Weinmann, Brigitte and Wulf Weinmann

This music is for you.



“Life is complex, it’s not just black-or-white, it’s colored, beautiful and ugly and everything in between and something beyond. Colors we don’t understand, colors we agree to and colors we deny exist. Because art may reflect and express that complexity of our human existence and condition, art is ambiguous by its nature, as is life.”

(Gunnar Geisse)

Gunnar Geisses Faszination gilt in den vorliegenden Aufnahmen zum einen der Akzeptanz des flüchtigen Ist-Zustandes und seiner sich oftmals widersprechenden musikgestalterischen Anteile sowie der Wahrnehmung seiner Veränderung, die ja untrennbar mit der Zeit verbunden ist, sozusagen *per se* Form bildet, zum anderen aber auch der künstlerischen Möglichkeit, Kondition und Komplexität unserer ambigen menschlichen Existenz auszudrücken und zu reflektieren, hier insbesondere Transformationsprozessen klanglicher, struktureller und formaler Natur, also der Ästhetik zeitbedingter Veränderungen, denen alles Lebendige unterliegt – geradezu die Domäne der Musik.

Geisse entwickelte ein Instrument, das er *laptop guitar* nennt, eine Erweiterung seines ehemaligen Hauptinstruments, der E-Gitarre um den Computer, die es ihm ermöglicht, das analoge Spiel auf digitaler Ebene fortzusetzen. Neben dem »signal processing« nutzt er hier vor allem, basierend auf den spektralen Eigenschaften des Ausgangssignals, die Software gestützte Realtime-Konvertierung von Audio- in MIDI-Daten zur Steuerung von virtuellen Instrumenten und Sampler. Dabei ist es unerheblich, welche Art von Audio-signal als Quelle dient: Das kann die E-Gitarre, kann Sprache, können Geräusche sein, ja selbst Musik in andere Musik zu »übersetzen«, ist auf diese Weise realisierbar.

Nach einer schweren Handverletzung durch einen Kletterunfall Anfang der 1990er-Jahre widmete Geisse sich verstärkt dem Komponieren und wandte sich infolge der Elektronik zu. Es reifte in ihm der Wunsch, den Laptop als Meta-Instrument zu begreifen, mit dem die unterschiedlichsten virtuellen Instrumente gedacht, gebaut und tatsächlich gespielt

werden können. Mit der erneuten Integration der E-Gitarre in dieses Setup schloss sich nun für ihn der Kreis.

Als maßgebliche Einflüsse auf diese langjährige Entwicklung benennt Geisse drei beispielhafte Quellen aus der Kunst: die *Date Paintings* aus der *Today* Serie von On Kawara, die inszenierte Fotografie von Jeff Wall (in Anlehnung nennt Geisse Samples auch gerne »akustische Fotografien«) und die von Robert Rauschenberg oft selbst erzählte hochsymbolische Geschichte der Begegnung mit Willem de Kooning, die zur Entstehung seines Bildes *Erased de Kooning Drawing* führte.

“So I thought the only way to do it is like with an erasure. When I just erased my own drawings, it wasn’t art yet. And so I thought ‘Aha, it has to be art’. And Bill de Kooning was the best known acceptable American artist that could be indisputably considered art ... And so, I bought a bottle of Jack Daniels, and hoped that he wouldn’t be home when I knocked on his door. And he was home. And we sat down with the Jack Daniels, and I told him what my project was; he understood it. And he said, ‘OK. I don’t like it, but I’m going to go along with it because I understand the idea.’ He went through one portfolio, and he said, ‘No. It’ll have to be something that I’ll miss.’ ... And then he went through a second portfolio ... and then he said, ‘I’m gonna make it so hard for you to erase this.’ And he had a third portfolio that had crayon, pencil, charcoal and – and it took me about a month, and I don’t know how many erasers to do it ... It’s not a negation, it’s a celebration. It’s just the idea!” / “Vandalism is the other alternative” / “And for you?” / “It’s poetry.”
(Robert Rauschenberg)

Heute nutzt Gunnar Geisse den Rechner sowohl als Improvisations-Instrument als auch als Produktionswerkzeug in mittlerweile weit über 20 Hörspielen für den BR, WDR, SWR, NDR, ORF und für DLR Kultur, in Auftragswerken für die *musica viva*, die Münchner Opernfestspiele, die Münchener Biennale und die Donaueschinger Musiktage, bei der er die Realtime-Übersetzungen von Sprache in Musik für das Stück *Hotel zur Ewigen Lampe* von Michael Lentz entwickelte und komponierte. Eine Echtzeit-Manipulation des Klangs von Chor und Orchester (Württembergischer Kammerchor und

Philharmonie) verwendete Geisse bei Gregor Hübners *De profundis*, einem Auftragswerk der Internationalen Bachakademie Stuttgart, angelehnt an die *Missa sacra* von Robert Schumann. Als Interpretations-Instrument setzte er den Rechner zuletzt am Theater in Erfurt in elektronischen Versionen von Auszügen aus der *h-Moll Messe* und der *Johannespassion* von Bach ein. Aktuell arbeitet er an einer elektronischen Transformation des Streichquartetts von Debussy mit Musikern der Münchner Philharmoniker.

Neben seiner Tätigkeit als E-Gitarrist im Sinfonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, im Radio-Sinfonieorchester des SWR, im Orchester der Bayerischen Staatsoper, im Staatsorchester Stuttgart, im Orchester des Staatstheaters am Gärtnerplatz sowie bei der *Broadway Musical Company New York*, in denen er – neben Opern, Operetten und Musicals – Werke der Neuen Musik, von Helmut Lachenmann und Hans Werner Henze über Dieter Schnebel und Friedrich Cerha bis Gérard Grisey und James Tenney spielte, brachte ihn seine Liebe zur improvisierten und experimentellen Musik zu Kooperationen mit Eivind Aarset, Richard Barrett, Jaap Blonk, Peter Brötzmann, Marc Ducret, eRikm, Vinko Globokar, Barry Guy, Joëlle Léandre, George Lewis, Phil Minton, David Moss, Olga Neuwirth, Lauren Newton, Phill Niblock, Evan Parker, William Parker, John Russell, Giancarlo Schiaffini, Elliott Sharp, Mike Svoboda, Gary Thomas und Michael Wertmüller.



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(Gunnar Geisse)

In the present recordings, firstly, Gunnar Geisse’s fascination is aimed at the acceptance of the fleeting present state and its frequently contradictory musical-formative components, as well as the perception of its alteration which is, after all, inseparable from time and gives shape to form *per se*. Secondly, he is fascinated by the artistic possibility of expressing and reflecting the condition and complexity of our ambiguous human existence – here, in particular, transformation processes of a sonic, structural and formal nature, or the aesthetics of time-related alterations to which all living things are subjected – especially the domain of music.

Geisse developed an instrument that he calls a *laptop guitar*, an extension of his former principal instrument, the electric guitar with the computer. This enables him to continue analogue playing on the digital level. Alongside “signal processing” he especially uses – based on the spectral characteristics of the original signal – the software-supported real-time conversion of audio into MIDI data in order to control virtual instruments and samplers. It is irrelevant which type of audio signal serves as a source: it can be the electric guitar, or speech or noise; it is even feasible to “translate” music into other music in this manner.

Following a serious hand injury from a mountain-climbing accident in the early 1990s, Geisse increasingly dedicated himself to composing and, as a result of that, electronics. The desire grew in him to understand the laptop as a meta-instrument with which the most widely varied virtual instruments could be conceived, constructed and actually played. The new integration of the electric guitar into this setup brought these ideas full circle.

Geisse names three exemplary sources from art as definitive influences on his long-term development: the *Date Paintings* from the *Today* series by On Kawara, the staged photography by Jeff Wall (analogously, Geisse also likes to call samples “acoustic photographs”) and the highly symbolic encounter of Robert Rauschenberg with Willem de Kooning, a story often told by the former, which led to the creation of his picture *Erased de Kooning Drawing*.

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(Robert Rauschenberg)

Today Gunnar Geisse uses the calculator both as an improvisatory instrument and as a production tool in over twenty *Hörspiele* (radio plays) for the BR, WDR, SWR, NDR, ORF and DLR Kultur, in commissioned works for *musica viva*, the Munich Opera Festival, the Munich Biennial and the Donaueschingen Music Days, at which he developed and composed the real-time translations of language into music for the piece *Hotel zur Ewigen Lampe* (Eternal Lamp Hotel) by Michael Lentz. A real-time manipulation of the sound by choir and orchestra (Württemberg Chamber Choir and Philharmonic) was used by Geisse in Gregor Hübner’s *De profundis*, commissioned by the Stuttgart International Bach Academy, based on the *Missa sacra* of Robert Schumann. He most

recently applied the calculator as an interpretative instrument at the Erfurt Theatre in electronic versions of excerpts from the *B minor Mass* and the *St. John Passion* of Bach. He is currently working on an electronic transformation of the Debussy String Quartet with musicians of the Munich Philharmonic.

Alongside his activities as electric guitarist in the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, the SWR Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Orchestra of the Bavarian State Opera, the Stuttgart State Orchestra, in the Orchestra of the State Theatre on Gärtnerplatz and with the *Broadway Musical Company New York* in which he played – alongside operas, operettas and musicals – works of New Music, ranging from Helmut Lachenmann, Hans Werner Henze, Dieter Schnebel and Friedrich Cerha to Gérard Grisey and James Tenney, his love of improvised and experimental music led him to collaborations with Eivind Aarset, Richard Barrett, Jaap Blonk, Peter Brötzmann, Marc Ducret, eRikm, Vinko Globokar, Barry Guy, Joëlle Léandre, George Lewis, Phil Minton, David Moss, Olga Neuwirth, Lauren Newton, Phill Niblock, Evan Parker, William Parker, John Russell, Giancarlo Schiaffini, Elliott Sharp, Mike Svoboda, Gary Thomas and Michael Wertmüller.



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Ce qui fascine Gunnar Geisse dans le présent enregistrement, c’est d’une part la disposition à accepter la fugacité de l’état présent et de ses composantes musicales souvent contradictoires ainsi que la perception de ses changements, qui est bien sûr indissociable du temps et pour ainsi dire en soi constitutive de la forme ; mais d’autre part aussi la possibilité artistique d’exprimer et de réfléchir la condition et la complexité de notre existence humaine ambiguë, ici en particulier les processus de transformation de nature sonore, structurelle et formelle, donc l’esthétique des transformations liées au temps, auquel est soumis tout ce qui est vivant – le domaine par excellence de la musique.

Geisse a développé un instrument qu’il appelle *laptop guitar*, un élargissement par un ordinateur de son ancien instrument principal, la guitare électrique, qui lui permet de prolonger le jeu analogique au niveau numérique. Outre le « signal processing », il utilise ici surtout un logiciel de conversion en temps réel de données audio en MIDI pour commander instruments virtuels et échantillonneurs. Pour ce faire, la nature des signaux audio sources est indifférente : il peut s’agir de la guitare électrique, de la parole, de bruits, et il est même possible de « traduire » de cette manière une musique en une autre musique.

Après une grave blessure à la main provoquée par un accident d’escalade au début des années 1990, Geisse s’est consacré plus intensément à la composition et s’est alors tourné vers l’électronique. Ainsi a muri le désir de considérer l’ordinateur portable comme un méta-instrument avec lequel on puisse penser, construire et jouer réellement les instru-

ments virtuels les plus variés. La réintégration de la guitare électrique à cette configuration lui a permis de fermer la boucle.

Geisse cite trois sources issues du domaine de l’art pour leur influence décisive sur ce développement étalé sur de longues années : les *Date Paintings* de la série *Today* de On Kawara, la photographie mise en scène de Jeff Wall (par analogie, Geisse aime bien appeler les échantillons « photographies acoustiques »), et l’histoire hautement symbolique souvent racontée par Robert Rauschenberg lui-même de sa rencontre avec Willem de Kooning qui conduisit à la création de son tableau *Erased de Kooning Drawing*.

“So I thought the only way to do it is like with an erasure. When I just erased my own drawings, it wasn’t art yet. And so I thought ‘Aha, it has to be art’. And Bill de Kooning was the best known acceptable American artist that could be indisputably considered art ... And so, I bought a bottle of Jack Daniels, and hoped that he wouldn’t be home when I knocked on his door. And he was home. And we sat down with the Jack Daniels, and I told him what my project was; he understood it. And he said, ‘OK. I don’t like it, but I’m going to go along with it because I understand the idea.’ He went through one portfolio, and he said, ‘No. It’ll have to be something that I’ll miss.’ ... And then he went through a second portfolio ... and then he said, ‘I’m gonna make it so hard for you to erase this.’ And he had a third portfolio that had crayon, pencil, charcoal and – and it took me about a month, and I don’t know how many erasers to do it ... It’s not a negation, it’s a celebration. It’s just the idea!” / “Vandalism is the other alternative” / “And for you?” / “It’s poetry.”
(Robert Rauschenberg)

Aujourd’hui Gunnar Geisse utilise l’ordinateur à la fois comme instrument d’improvisation et comme outil de production dans – entre-temps – plus de 20 jeux radiophoniques pour les stations de radio BR, WDR, SWR, NDR, ORF et DLR Kultur, dans des œuvres commandées par *musica viva*, les Münchner Opernfestspiele, la Biennale de Munich et le Festival de Donaueschingen, pour lequel il a développé la traduction en temps réel de la parole en musique qui entre dans la composition de la pièce *Hotel zur Ewigen Lampe* de Michael Lentz. Geisse a utilisé une manipulation en temps réel des sons du chœur et

de l'orchestre (Württembergischer Kammerchor und Philharmonie) pour le *De profundis* de Gregor Hübner, une commande de l'Académie internationale Bach de Stuttgart, qui s'appuie sur la *Missa sacra* de Robert Schumann. Sa dernière utilisation récente de l'ordinateur en tant qu'instrument d'interprétation a eu lieu au Théâtre d'Erfurt dans la version électronique d'extraits de la *Messe en si* et de la *Passion selon Saint-Jean* de Bach. Il travaille actuellement à une transformation électronique du Quatuor à cordes de Debussy avec des musiciens des Münchner Philharmoniker.

Outre son activité de e-guitariste à l'Orchestre Symphonique de la Radio Bavaroise, au Radio-Sinfonieorchester du SWR, à l'Orchestre de l'Opéra national de Bavière, à l'Orchestre National de Stuttgart, à l'Orchestre du Staatstheaters am Gärtnerplatz ainsi qu'auprès de la *Broadway Musical Company New York* où il a joué – à côté d'opéras, opérettes et musicals – des œuvres de musique contemporaines, de Helmut Lachenmann et Hans Werner Henze, en passant par Dieter Schnebel et Friedrich Cerha, jusqu'à Gérard Grisey et James Tenney, sa prédilection pour la musique improvisée et expérimentale l'a amené à coopérer avec Eivind Aarset, Richard Barrett, Jaap Blonk, Peter Brötzmann, Marc Ducret, eRikm, Vinko Globokar, Barry Guy, Joëlle Léandre, George Lewis, Phil Minton, David Moss, Olga Neuwirth, Lauren Newton, Phill Niblock, Evan Parker, William Parker, John Russell, Giancarlo Schiaffini, Elliott Sharp, Mike Svoboda, Gary Thomas et Michael Wertmüller.

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