

# HOW TO ELABORATE AN INTERPRETATION OF STOCKHAUSEN'S MIKROPHONIE I

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## Background

Since 1998, I have participated in performances of Stockhausen's live-electronic piece *Mikrophonie I* (1965). Since the goal was not to simply reproduce the moments-arrangement according to Stockhausen's version, we had to come to a profound understanding of the formal strategies implied in this open-form-composition.

## Aim

Since the indications in Stockhausen's score are both verbal and graphic, but not based on a common sign code, it was necessary – through an analysis of Stockhausen's own realisation – to come to an understanding of the rules, which are at the basis of *Mikrophonie I* as work of art. Thus analysis helped by the interpretation of one specific, preexisting reading of the rules – Stockhausen's version – to reconstruct/construct the significance of the rules in their most abstract form, which were to become the foundations of a new version.

## Method

The theoretical background concerning the "Momentform"-concept was explored to analyse *Mikrophonie I*. During the preparation of the performance, the point consisted in producing the verbally determined sounds according to a precise rhythmic notation, to combine them polyphonically in the tutti-sections, and in choosing a specific moments-connections to realise a form-process which would respect the overall plan given by the composer (of which his own version is only one possible realisation).

## Results

Different decisions taken during the working-process led to a version of *Mikrophonie I* first performed in Brussels on April 2nd 1998 in a coproduction of the ensemble *Hermes* (Antwerp) and the Centre de Recherches et de Formation musicales de Wallonie (Liège) that was clearly different from what listeners were used to hearing as *Mikrophonie I*, but which nevertheless had these typical Stockhausen-features concerning timbre-preoccupation, time-articulation and formal gesture.