

Interview conducted by Michal Rataj in relation to the piece Prague – imaginary fragments, commissioned by Radioatelier - Czech National Radio.

Michal Rataj: I am trying to decode your way of handling meaning and sound. Sometimes I feel you use a familiar and recognizable sound to produce sort of abstract interpolation, stylized articulation. How did you deal with meaning and sound articulations while composing this piece?

Mario Verandi: my way of dealing with recorded sounds starts with listening many times to the materials I am working with. After this listening process I start to find timbres, rhythms and textures which I consider interesting and have a potential musical use. Finally I make a selection of the sounds I will use in my composition. Obviously, the original sounds have in themselves a particular meaning but after being recorded and edited on the computer I start to listen to them as musical material as well. So, from this point on, these sounds can be mixed and structured and can create parallel meanings as well as metaphors. Basically, what I mean is that I have the possibility of composing fictions or meta-realities out of real sounds.

MR: You come from Argentina, lived in Barcelona and London and now you are living in Berlin. Concerning the characteristic sound images you experienced in these cities: can you find something special in the sound images of Prague in comparison to the other cities?

MV: when you are in a new city what comes first to your ears as a completely new sound is language. Then you start to find other particular sounds and soundscapes. From my short experience in Prague, the sounds of the singing fountain which is located in the east part of the Royal Gardens have a distinct character and were new to my ears. I also found the singing of some birds that were in the royal garden quite unusual. Another special sound was the laughing sound produced by the toy witches that are sold in the Havelske street market ... I never heard this sound before. Nowadays capital cities do have a lot of sounds in common ... but it is still possible to find few sounds that in a way represent or are characteristics of a city.

MR: The title of your piece refers to "fragments", but I cannot avoid the feeling of a very homogenic piece with a form that seems to tell a story, almost an acoustic fairytale I would say, somehow hidden and mysterious ...So my question is: why fragments, what is "fragmented" in your piece?

MV: ok, the word fragment and the word fragmented may have different meanings. When I use the word fragments in the title of my piece I refer to "a small part of something, not complete in itself", this actually is a definition taken from a dictionary. This means that I worked with some sounds found in Prague and not with the whole Prague soundscape ... the sounds I used are part of Prague but just a small part of it not the whole thing. It is like having pictures taken in some parts of a city but not the complete picture of the city.

The word fragmentary or fragmented means: "composed of small parts that are not connected to each other", this is again a definition found in a dictionary and this is certainly not the case of my piece, because in my piece there is a clear connection between the sounds ... they all belong to the same city. The fragments of my piece work like short sections which do have a strong connection between each other and are rhythmically articulated by the use of short and long silences.