

## Reconnaissance<sup>1</sup>

Typical for Kupsch's works are the earnest, questioning gestures, and changing situations, ambivalent in character. His works often start out in tense restraint, from which complex developments with sometimes-strong contrasts emerge, usually leading back to restraint once more. An example of this is "Fragiler Diskurs" written for chamber ensemble (1991/92), in which "fragile" lines of sound enter into changing relationships with one another. Syntheses, and approaches between different structures and instruments are sought, it is true, but they are only ever fleetingly found.

Characteristic for Thomas Kupsch's works are a distinctive constructive attitude as well as a tendency to explore nuances in sound colour, which for example play the main role in "Osservazioni" (1994). The composer differentiates the sound of the instruments through glissandi, flageolet, quarter tones, sul ponticello, frullato and tremoli of the wind instruments (etc.); dense harmonious structures become transparent through their placing and instrumentation -whereby it seems Kupsch prefers the wind instruments. In certain works rhythmic formal steps come to the foreground; in the wind quintet "act - change" (1988) Kupsch uses phases of quietness and movement to graphically recreate scenic or optical breaks and processes, such as we know from the theatre or film. Non-musical references have also played a role in the forming of other works. "Triphonie" for flute, harp and percussion (1993) was, for example, inspired by the legends of the guatemalan poet Miguel Angel Asturias. In the "Sinfonia ma non tanto" (1995), "Stabat Mater" (1995) and in "Osservazioni" (1994), a development is implied, which frequently, even if indirectly, links up with traditional tonality, without having to ignore new sound developments. Modal structures can be identified in many pieces, although they appear sometimes as background plains or as inclusions in collages, for example in "...quasi concerto per piano" (1992) (for piano and chamber orchestra). The critical dialogue with passed on musical genres can here lead to surprising results - what might have been deemed typical in a piano concerto is turned almost into its opposite (for example the piano never plays a leading role). Whereas in the foreground there stands, as in most of the composer's work, the shaping of sound, the insertion of sound plains, instrumental lines and gestures.

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<sup>1</sup> Frank Geißler, englische Übersetzung von Christopher Simpson