

Encounters with Phill Niblock

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Phill Niblock, the great American filmmaker and composer, is no longer with us. That is a great loss. We can no longer invite him to a festival.

We, SKOP, presented Phill Niblock for the first time in 1996, on June 17. It was an evening with Asmus Tietchens and Rainer Riehn, who unfortunately has also passed away. On this memorable evening, around 350-400 people showed up. Memorable because so many came and memorable because these three exceptional artists presented a program together during the three-day festival. "film and music", as it was repeatedly titled, was offered in ever-new combinations of films and music. That evening, Dietmar Wiesner and I played live with flutes to the composition that had been created in the studio, a composition with very close tones and in a fffff, a massive cloud of sound in which individual overtones repeatedly stood out. To make sure the audience could hear us, we played directly at their ears, about 5 cm away. We went from person to person, playing our tones for individual people. It was a moving experience for me. To see the force of the tones and then the everyday work of people on the screen. The filmmaker as a silent observer of the scene, who had focused his interest only on the activities of the people.

In 1996, I also performed at "Experimental Intermedia" in New York, playing with the steel flutes. The atmosphere there is unforgettable for me.

In 1999, we invited Phill back for the "Revisions of Modernity" event. The title of his performance was also "film and music". Once again, I played into the massive frequency bands along with Phill's music. There were only a few people in the audience that evening, maybe five.

In 2003, for our 10th anniversary, Phill was there - "film and music" was the title and again new films and new music, but in the usual way: Massive Frequenzbänder in fffff. Here I played again in the prepared composition. If I remember correctly, with the transverse flutes made of steel. Martin Lejeune was also there, playing guitar with Ebow.

In 2016, I was back in New York and played an audio-visual composition there in which I controlled the playing of a bass flute via MAX/MSP/JITTER programming in PROCESSING. The color form elements changed with the flute tones.

In 2017, we presented Phill for the last time in a special event: 5 hours of "film and music". I had been planning this event for a long time and we were pleased that we were able to realize it. That evening, Martin Lejeune (guitar), Ebow and I played to Phill's new films and new music pieces with a newly constructed flute. A widescreen projection in an 8:3 ratio in a movie theater showed the films. You could see working people from China, Japan, Brazil, Hungary, Lesotho and Peru-Mexico. The evening began at 8 pm and ended at 1 am at night.

In 2027, we met again in Austria, at the Klangfest Untergreith. There I played again to “film and music” by Phill.

Then, on June 9, 2020, „I had a version of ”

The electronic string instrument I developed, SPO 1.0, played the individual voices and about 27 voices were then combined into a 2-track mix. I wrote the program for this composition by Phill especially for this composition. As part of a 6-hour concert in New York, at Roulette, the realization with the SPO premiered within a further 13 realizations of this composition.

The CD of my realization is on its way. Our last communication concerned questions about the photos of my string instrument. I will miss the encounters with Phill, that's sad.

“Looking for Daniel” realized with the SPO.”