

Lisa Bielawa

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Note

Premiere: November 4-10, 2019, Created for the 30th Anniversary Celebrations of the Fall of the Berlin Wall; Commissioned by Kulturprojekte Berlin; Premiered Brandenburg Gate; Alexanderplatz; Marx-Engels

Duration: 16'

Instrumentation: Alto saxophone; horn; trumpet; trombone; unlimited number of singers

American composer Lisa Bielawa and American artist Sheryl Oring created *Mauer Broadcast*, a series of pop-up choral performances for the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, hosted by Kulturprojekte Berlin. The 16-minute musical piece for an unlimited number of voices was performed four times during Berlin Festival Week between 4-10 November, in the open air at Brandenburg Gate (4 November, 14:30 and 5 November, 14:00), Alexanderplatz (10 November, 12:30), and Marx-Engels Forum (10 November, 14:00). The musical work was created specifically for each of these official celebration sites, and listeners were able to walk in between and among the performers. Anyone was able to join the performances – the music is designed to be singable by the public, and involves many “call and response” sections. The work sings out a whole city’s memories of the Wall and its ultimate end, on the sites where its presence was most felt. Over sixteen minutes, the piece evolves through five sections: ‘Erinnerung’ (Memory); ‘Ich denke an...’ (I Think About...); ‘Est ist lange her’ (It was a long time ago); ‘Wieso?’ (How so?); and finally, ‘Herzenswunsch’ (Heart’s Wish).

In addition to participants from the public, each *Mauer Broadcast* also featured the American Church Berlin Gospelchoir, Lisa Bielawa and Ken Norris, sing leaders, and local instrumentalists. The horn played the entire piece from the center of the site, while the other instruments and singers began at opposite peripheries and worked their way towards the center for the celebratory finale, enacting a symbolic “reunification.”

Composer Lisa Bielawa’s work on *Mauer Broadcast* follows her largescale piece, *Airfield Broadcasts*, a massive 60-minute work for hundreds of musicians that premiered on the tarmac of the former Tempelhof Airport in Berlin (*Tempelhof Broadcast*, May 2013) and Crissy Field in San Francisco (*Crissy Broadcast*, October 2013). Bielawa turned these former airfields into vast musical canvases, as professional, amateur, and student musicians executed a spatial symphony.

The texts for *Mauer Broadcast* are selected from Sheryl Oring’s *Maueramt* project from autumn 2014, produced in conjunction with the 25th anniversary celebrations of the fall of the Berlin Wall. At this series of public performances, Oring set up typewriter locations along the former Wall and asked questions such as: “What do you think about when you think about the Berlin Wall,” or “What would you like the world to remember about the Berlin Wall?” Answers were typed on a manual typewriter onto small sheets of paper and collected for an exhibition at the Museum THE KENNEDYS in Berlin.

– Lisa Bielawa

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