

Alex Nowitz



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Alex Nowitz

Born in 1968, lives in Potsdam. Composer of vocal music, chamber music, electronic music as well as music for dance, theatre and opera. Tenor, countertenor, voice artist, whistler, performer.

Alex Nowitz studied music in Munich, Berlin, Potsdam (USA) and Potsdam (Germany): composition with Gerhard Rosenfeld (GER) and David Heinick, electronic composition with Paul Steinberg (both USA) and classical singing with Floyd Callahan (USA), Michael Büttner and Gerold Herrmann (both GER). In 2000 he graduated with first class honours as Diplommusikpädagoge (major subject: voice) at the Institute for Music and Music Education at the University of Potsdam (GER). He was artist in residence at Schloss Wiepersdorf (2002/2006), at Künstlerhaus Lukas in Ahrenshoop, at Leighton Studios Banff Center for the Arts (Canada, 2005/2007) and at STEIM (Amsterdam, 2007/2008). He got several grants by Stiftung Kulturfonds Berlin/Brandenburg, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Berlin and by the Ministry for Science, Research and Culture of Land Brandenburg (MWFK).

He obtained commissions from several ensembles and institutions including the 'Kammerakademie Potsdam' and the 'Staatsoper unter den Linden Berlin'. In spring 2006 his first opera of an entire evening's length, for vocal ensemble, choir, orchestra, piano, harmonium, toy-piano and theremin, was premiered at the Theater Osnabrueck: 'Die Bestmannoper' (The Best Man Opera) which is about Nazi criminal and mass murderer Alois Brunner and Nazi hunter Serge Klarsfeld.

Furthermore he is a voice artist, whistling and singing virtuoso who is performing in collaboration with musicians from various stylistic areas as well as interpreting composed new music. He is a beautifully trained tenor and countertenor who presents a big variety of diverse extended techniques, which are beyond the scope of purely classical singing. He has performed as soloist and in various groupings and projects in Europe, Russia and the US.

The 'Vancouver Sun' writes about the dance show 'Screaming Popes' by choreographer Marie-Josée Chartier (Toronto) touring through Canada in spring 2007: „German composer Alex Nowitz performs the live and recorded score, a brilliant aural architecture that gives the piece its unhurried but sure pace. The surround-sound comes at you from all directions: piano (strings as well as keys), whistling, a haunting vocal falsetto, gongs, the scabbling of rats.“ And the 'Sun Media Winnipeg' remarks: "German virtuoso Alex Nowitz - call him The Man of 1,000 Noises - provides a live soundtrack that fuses opera, whistling, scatting, beat-boxing, piano and pre-recorded sounds to parallel each complex emotional display. But, surprisingly enough, there's not a scream to be heard.“



Babylon Mitte | Rosa-Luxemburg-Str. 30 | 10178 Berlin
Veranstalter: Helma Schleif | TMP Productions | A division of FMP FREE MUSIC PRODUCTION Distribution & Communication
Markgraf-Albrecht-Str. 14 | 10711 Berlin
T - +49 30 323 75 26 | F - +49 30 324 94 31 | tmp-schleif@gmx.de | tmp-ermer@gmx.de | www.free-music-production.de

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Currently he is performing as musician, actor, voice artist and countertenor with extended voice techniques at the renowned Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz, Berlin, in 'A Summer Night's Dream', an adaptation from Shakespeare directed by Thomas Ostermeier and Constanza Macras. Further performances at Schaubühne take place in June 2009. Next and last performances take place in July 10 through 12, 2009.

In 2007/08 he was invited by STEIM in Amsterdam (STudio for Electro-Instrumental Music) to develop a set-up for live electronics as an extension for his vocal performances. He uses two gestural controllers (Wii-Remote controllers), a computer (MacBookPro) and STEIM-software (LiSa, junXion). Alex Nowitz wrote an article about his approach to develop and play the electronic instrument: "Voice and Live Electronics using Remotes as Gestural Controllers", which was published in eContact! by the CEC (Communauté électroacoustique canadienne/Montréal) on October 4th, 2008 (http://cec.concordia.ca/econtact/10_4/nowitz_voicelive.html)

For further activities of Alex Nowitz at STEIM check out a solo concert at STEIM (<http://steim.org/jamboree08/?p=663>) and/or read the article 'Alex Nowitz – STEIM projects 2007/2008' (<http://steim.org.projectblog/?p=338>).

In February 2008 he realized the conceptual idea of presenting his chamber music in a spatially open positioning of performers and audience which in a sense is comparable to an installation or art exhibition. Other art forms such as dance, video and light have been integrated into the presentation as well: 'Wolfsgeheul', for four musicians, two dancers, multichannel tape, interactive video and visuals. Co-production of 'intersonanzen 2008' and Fabrik Potsdam.

On 21 March 2008 'City' by Martin Crimp and 'Cut' by Mark Ravenhill were premiered at the Schaubühne Berlin directed by Thomas Ostermeier. Alex Nowitz composed the music for the whole evening including the music for both plays, a sound installation called 'Music for Four Stereophonic Sound Showers' and the performance piece 'Music for a Singer/Performer with Gestural Controllers, Live Electronics and Playback for ten Loudspeakers', which he realized himself.

Prizes / Grants / Awards (Selection):

- 2009 Participant of the interdisciplinary workshop of the Contemporary Opera, Berlin ('operare09')
- 2007/8 Artist-in-residence at STEIM (STudio for Electro-Instrumental Music), Amsterdam
- 2007 Artist-in-residence at Banff Centre in Alberta/Canada
- 2006 Artist-in-residence at Künstlerhaus Schloss Wiepersdorf
- 2005 Artist-in-residence at Banff Centre in Alberta/Canada
Scholarship (Ministry of Science, research and Culture, Brandenburg)
- 2004/5 Scholarship (Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation)
- 2004 Scholarship (Stiftung KulturFonds Berlin/Brandenburg)
- 2003 Artist-in-residence at Künstlerhaus Lukas Ahrenshoop
- 2002 Participation in the 'Rheinsberger Opernwerkstatt' for composers, headed by Siegfried Matthus.
Artist-in-residence at Künstlerhaus Schloss Wiepersdorf

<http://www.nowitz.de>
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