

Thoughts on *Trieste - A Journey Underwater*

For SATB, whale songs and two Bluetooth speakers
ca. 6:30min

Inspiration

On January 23, 1960, a research submarine set out for the first time on a journey to the deepest point on earth, the Mariana Trench in the Pacific Ocean. The Swiss Jacques Piccard and the US-American Don Walsh travelled with their boat "Trieste" to a depth of 10,916m and thus were the first people to reach this hostile place.

Inspired by this event, the composition *Trieste - A Journey Underwater* deals with a fictional submarine journey. It is divided into four parts. In the first part, the submarine initially lies on the surface of the water and is tossed back and forth by the waves. In the second part, the boat sinks and faces increasing pressure and darker and colder environments. In the third part, the boat has finally reached its destination and is fully exposed to the hostile depths. There is little movement and, apart from the real recorded whale songs, sounds of the submarine groaning under the load can be heard. In the fourth part, the vehicle begins to ascend again. Equally, the music also moves more and more and increases noticeably in pitch, dynamics and intensity until the boat reaches the surface of the water again.

In order to match the character of this journey and to emphasize the missing humanity of space and depth, the composition completely gets by without words and only makes use of various individual vowels, consonants and sounds.



About the technics

The composition requires two Bluetooth speakers to complement the choir. These are used to play whale songs that repeatedly appear and disappear. The positioning of the speakers is deliberately calculated to make use of their mobility and the resulting effects. At the beginning of the composition, for example, the speakers are located invisibly for the audience at the two outer rear sides of the choir in the tenors and basses and move to the middle of the choir during the piece. There, they are passed to the front row, making them clearly visible for the first time, only to disappear again towards the outsides. The Bluetooth speakers thus acoustically symbolise two whales that the submarine encounters on its journey. The movement of the speakers, when requested, begins directly with the start of the respective recording and proceeds evenly.

The composition assumes that the choir is positioned in a formation having the tenors and basses behind the sopranos and altos. For other choir set-ups the route of the speakers should be maintained

and transferred to the respective set-up. Regardless of the four voices' specific spatial arrangement, the entire choir should be spread out on stage as far as possible to express the effect of the migrating whales audible to the audience.

The individual tracks should always start at the beginning of the bar. For the practical implementation, in addition to the two Bluetooth speakers, two technical devices are needed that connect to the speakers and which can play the whale songs.

To receive the individual tracks to be played in the composition (free of charge), please send me an email to: ya.wittmann@gmail.com.

The whale songs used in this composition are taken from the websites <https://quicksounds.com> and <https://www.videvo.net> and are free to use.

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