

# Whispering walls 2006 Brandenburg an der Havel

**An audio-visual sound installation in the shower, therapeutic and spring baths at the Stadtbad Brandenburg & live performance in the swimming pool, light projection Andy Guhl**

“The Swiss musician and performance artist lets the walls whisper in the shower baths. Voices from Brandenburgers, the “water friends”, the pool attendant and numerous swimmers dive into and submerge themselves once again in under-water sounds. A sound cosmos of voices in the pool is evoked by memories and new associations.

## **Live audio-visual performance in the indoor swimming pool**

Charlotte Hug draws with her voice and her viola, creating light-drawings on the ceiling, the walls and on the water of the council baths. These are cooked up some more and worked on by Andy Guhl in his technological witch’s cauldron until they are let loose in the space and again become the stimulus for further music. In the evening the swimming baths are revived once again and become a sensual bath for eyes and ears as they swim in sounds and light-drawings.” *Henk Teufer*



## **1. Histories and proportions**

Since 1929, generations have learned to swim in the Stadtbad Brandenburg. I discussed memories of their first swimming lesson in the Stadtbad with the bathers, I heard stories of the war and the GDR period or of secret love at the pool side... Personal stories immersed in history and these all formed the basis of the vocal composition.

I have broken these voice recordings down into separate fragments and put them back together in a new way to make different combinations. The secret of the composition lies in an

ostensible jumble of voices, through which the stories are no longer burdened to such a large degree by their historical ramifications. Hidden rhythms, tension-curves and speech melodies are distilled and, in a delicate balance between compression and relief, they are composed in sound zones in order that the new sound spaces can be open to new, **energetic sound material from the present.**



Viola sounds encompassing a tonal richness on the **scale of the Bauhaus architecture** of the Stadtbad pour out through the shower baths flooded with light as a counterpoint.

## 2. Bath cells become emotional spaces

With creative electronic media I can easily change the original material and put it back into the space as something new. In this way I create in the cells of the shower baths, amongst many other things, a movable space, a jolting electrified space, a circular spiral space, a space that has been worked into a particular shape– emotional spaces in short. The recipient is to a certain degree himself the creator of his own musical activity, in which he changes his speed accordingly or lingers for longer in certain spaces. For focussed listening he can close the doors of the bath cells or open them and so apply himself to the nuances of the different distances and the full range and diversity of the complete sound. He creates his own sound space, but he will definitely be surprised over and over again as this installation constantly generates new combinations of sounds and to a large removes our control over it.



## 3. Light, air & sun

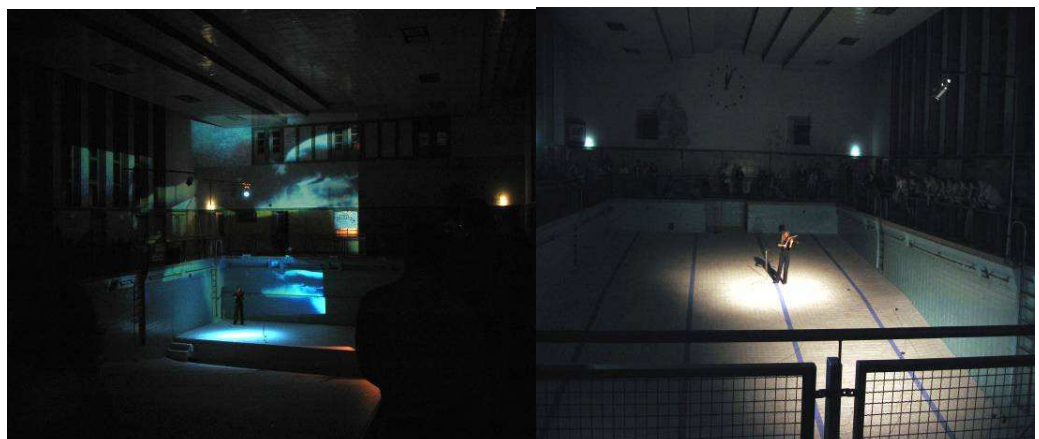
The acoustic sensivity is heightened by stepping out of a lighter space and into a darker space. Through the tonal spaces in the outside area or, as in the Stadtbad, through the absence of the **strong influence of daylight**; the weather and daylight come to play their own part in the composition. The projection of sounds itself changes, psycho-acoustically, in its perception but also physically through the altered qualities of the air.

I have incorporated this **different perception of sound due to warmth, temperature fluctuations and humidity** as a creative element through the artistic reactivation of the greatest range of temperatures and climatic conditions in the shower, steam and bathing pools as well as the sauna in the Stadtbad.

## 4. Architecture and music

The impression of the entirety of a musical or architectural entity originates only in retrospect, after the event, as a result of the memory of all of the sounds that were heard. The experience of the music is a transitory one, as is that of the architecture. Owing to these parallels on the level of reception, music is very closely connected to the architecture. It follows that whoever listens back to the sounds of this installation has his own personal composition. He moves through wet cells, goes downstairs into the cellar space, strolls in the wide, light-filled spaces of the Stadtbad Brandenburg. Through the music, he gains a new, sensuous relationship to the architecture and, in exactly the same way, goes back into the music.

*Composition  
commission from  
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*Brandenburg Premiere Stadtbad Brandenburg 2006*