

Karlheinz Essl

www.essl.at

Born 1960 in Vienna. Austrian composer, performer, improviser, media artist and composition teacher. Karlheinz Essl attended the Vienna Musikhochschule (1979–87), where he studied composition with Friedrich Cerha and electro-acoustic music with Dieter Kaufmann. He also studied musicology and art history at the University of Vienna (doctorate 1989 with his thesis *Das Synthese-Denken bei Anton Webern*). Active as a double bassist until 1984, he played in chamber and experimental jazz ensembles. As a composer he has contributed to the Projekt 3 composition programming environment of Gottfried Michael Koenig at Utrecht and Arnhem (1988–89), which later transformed into his own *Real Time Composition Library* (RTC-lib) for Max/MSP/Jitter.

Essl also served as composer-in-residence at the Darmstadt summer courses (1990–94) and completed a commission for IRCAM (Paris) in 1993. Between 1995–2006 he taught Algorithmic Composition at the Studio for Advanced Music & Media Technology at the Bruckner University, Linz. Since 2007, he is professor of composition for electro-acoustic and experimental music at the Vienna University of Music and Performing Arts.

His work with computers (with emphasis on Algorithmic Composition and generative art) and a prolonged occupation with the poetics of serial music have been a formative influence on his compositional thinking. He has frequently sought to combine music with other genres and has collaborated with the graffiti artist Harald Naegeli (*Partikel-Bewegungen*, 1991), the writer Andreas Okopenko (*Lexikon-Sonate*, 1992–8), the architect Carmen Wiederin (*Klanglabyrinth*, 1992–95), the video artist Vibeke Sorensen (*MindShipMind*, 1996, a multimedia installation for the Internet) and the artist Jonathan Meese (generative video and sound environment *Fräulein Atlantis*, 2007).

During the 1990s he carried out many additional projects for the Internet and became increasingly involved with improvisation. In 1997, Karlheinz Essl was featured at the Salzburg Festival with portrait concerts and sound installations.

Besides writing instrumental music, Karlheinz Essl also works in the field of electronic music, interactive realtime compositions and sound installations. He develops software environments for algorithmic composition and acts as a performer and improviser, utilizing his own computer-based real time composition environment m@ze² and also instruments like electric guitar, toy piano and music box.