

Basel, December 2010

PRESS RELEASE

Mauricio Kagel

ZWEI-MANN-ORCHESTER

New version, Basel, 2011

Museum Tinguely, 6 April – 15 March 2011

A co-operation with Paul Sacher Foundation, Hochschule für Musik Basel and Museum Tinguely

Zwei-Mann-Orchester [Two-Man Orchestra] for two one-man orchestras (1971–73), described by its creator Mauricio Kagel (1931–2008) as an 'unautonomous automatophone', is surely one of the strangest yet most original pieces of contemporary music ever composed. When it was premièred at the Donaueschingen Festival in 1973, Kagel and his musicians, Wilhelm Bruck and Theodor Ross, surprised their mystified audience with a gigantic contraption pieced together from more than 200 broken, battered and discarded instruments and dysfunctional sound-generators. They were played with the aid of strings, rods, levers and all manner of other movable elements by the smallest combination of musicians capable of forming an ensemble. The traditional instrumental body of the renowned festival that had commissioned the work – the orchestra – was reflected in a caricature raised to the level of sound-art.

Now a new version of Zwei-Mann-Orchester will be produced in Basel as part of a joint project involving the Paul Sacher Foundation, the Hochschule für Musik Basel and the Museum Tinguely. It will mark the third rendering of this conceptual score following its world première and a second version produced at the Kassel Documenta IX in 1992. Wilhelm Bruck, who performed in both earlier versions and has played Kagel's music since the 1960s, will now face this challenge a third time, building and playing a new orchestral machine together with Matthias Würsch, a professor of percussion at the Basel Academy of Music and a multi-instrumentalist of international stature. There will also be a small documentary exhibition from the holdings of the Sacher Foundations' Mauricio Kagel Collection to shed light on the genesis and surroundings of this unusual piece.

The musical dimensions opened up by Zwei-Mann-Orchester will be magnified by the performance venue – the Museum Tinguely – creating the possibility of glimpses at the visual arts. Kagel's musical apparatus will stand alongside Tinguely's own machines or the currently exhibited accumulations of the nouveau réaliste Arman (February 16 to May 15 , 2011) to unveil their common background in object art.

Audiences will have an opportunity to experience performances of Zwei-Mann-Orchester on dates to be announced. For further details and exact dates, please consult www.zweimannorchester.net and www.tinguely.ch. Tickets will go on sale several weeks in advance both online and at the Tinguely Museum Shop.