

**Liebes-Lied/Love Song (2005)**  
for Cello and 2-Channel Audio

By Hildegard Westerkamp  
in collaboration with Anne Bourne

Poetry by Rainer Maria Rilke  
English Translation by Norbert Ruebsaat

*Liebes-Lied/Love Song* is based on the poem *Liebes-Lied* by Rainer Maria Rilke and its newest translation into English, *Love Song*, by Canadian poet and writer Norbert Ruebsaat.

*Liebes-Lied/Love Song* is a collaboration between Hildegard who recorded the sound materials and composed the sound track, and Anne who created all cello sounds for the electroacoustic portion and completed the piece with her live cello improvisation for its premiere at the 2005 Open Ears Festival in Kitchener, Ontario. Since then other cellists have transformed the piece again and again with their unique live improvisations.

*Liebes-Lied/Love Song* is a meditation on Love, and takes the Rilke poem and its English translation as its starting point. Readings of the text combine with recordings of environmental sounds and Anne's improvised explorations on the cello to create the soundscape of the piece. Over this composed soundtrack the solo cellist performs free improvisations, that is, the live performer is given no score nor any instructions and thus has the freedom to complete the composition in his or her very own way. The resulting dialogue between the recorded/live and composed/improvised aspects of the piece creates an entirely unique piece with every performance and is an opportunity for performer and audience alike to explore the meanings of the poem in all its depth.

The original German poem is spoken by Hildegard Westerkamp, the English translation by Anne Bourne. In addition small excerpts of the poem are spoken by Wendelin Bartley, Susan Benson, Louie Ettling, Peter Grant, Andra McCartney, and R. Murray Schafer. *Liebes-Lied/Love Song* was commissioned by the Open Ears Festival with the financial assistance of the Canada Council. The soundtrack portion of the composition was completed in Westerkamp's own studio in Vancouver.

Length: 22:24

## **LIEBES-LIED\***

Rainer Maria Rilke

Wie soll ich meine Seele halten, daß  
sie nicht an deine rührt? Wie soll ich sie  
hinheben über dich zu andern Dingen?  
Ach gerne möcht ich sie bei irgendwas  
Verlorenem im Dunkel unterbringen  
an einer fremden stillen Stelle, die  
nicht weiterschwingt, wenn deine Tiefen schwingen.  
Doch alles, was uns anrührt, dich und mich,  
nimmt uns zusammen wie ein Bogenstrich,  
der aus zwei Saiten eine Stimme zieht.  
Auf welches Instrument sind wir gespannt?  
Und welcher Geiger hat uns in der Hand?  
O süßes Lied.

## **LOVE SONG\*\***

Rainer Maria Rilke

Translated by Norbert Ruebsaat

How shall I hold my soul so that it  
does not touch yours? How shall I lift it  
up over you so it reaches other things?  
Oh, how I long to store my soul  
with something dark and lost  
in a foreign becalmed place that does not  
vibrate when your depths vibrate.  
But all that touches you and touches me  
contracts us like a bow  
that from two strings draws forth a single voice.  
Upon which instrument are we two strung?  
And who, pray, is the fiddler who holds us in his hand?  
Oh sweetful song.

\*Source:

Rainer Maria Rilke

Der ausgewählten Gedichte erster Teil

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