

GRUPPEN in Amsterdam 1

(Brief vom 8. August 1993 an Oliver Knussen, der zusammen mit Reinbert de Leeuw und Robert Spano am 3. September 1995 im *Concertgebouw* Amsterdam eine Aufführung von GRUPPEN für 3 Orchester dirigierte; Original in Handschrift.)

[Anmerkungen am Seitenrand:]

Do you have our CD
of GRUPPEN?

Do you have the scores
of INORI? LUZIFERs TANZ?

Yesterday I returned from Sofia where I conducted
the Symphony Orchestra twice with INORI: quite good.

Dear Oliver Knussen,

GRUPPEN rehearsals demand a musician who sits in the centre of the hall, notes all the bars where the balance is not right (where one instrument or group is covered). This person must be able to speak loud enough and short, clear whenever you ask him something.

The 3 conductors cannot know “how it sounds”.

The *tomtoms* are **always** played too loud in proportion to the other instruments; their *f* and *ff* **must** be adjusted to the *f* and *ff* of the other instruments.

All **rests** must be respected by the *tomtom players*. They usually do not stop the drum skins at pauses or at the end of a group, but they must.

The same applies to cow bells, cymbals etc. Cow bells are always placed too low. They should be so high, suspended at stands, that the players can see the conductor just **below** the bells. The reason is that the cow bells should be hit at

the rim and most of the time with the original beaters which were inside the bells. Usually the cow bells sound **terrible** (like tin cans) because of wrong beaters and a wrong playing technique.

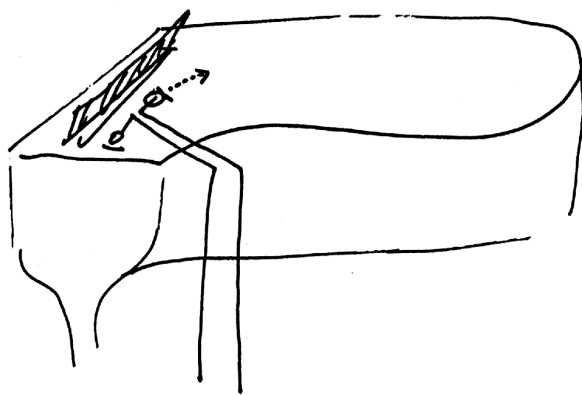


Please check all the pitches of the cow bells: percussionists have no ears for octaves!! The same is true for Bongos, Tomtoms, African log drums.

I send you my **books vol. 5 + 6** and you can find in #6 a very important text with photographs about GRUPPEN-percussion.

The piano **must** be amplified (lid off) with 2 microphones, for the highest $1\frac{1}{2}$ octave and for the lower ranges.

The assistant in the centre of the hall must balance the piano and the electric guitar (both in orchestra II) with 3 potentiometers and project them, perfectly



balanced, stereophonically through 4 speakers (2 x 2 at the right and left of the podium II, about 4–5 meters high on 4 stands:

Please go to the mixing console yourself and check if the balance is right. In particular the guitar is dif-

ficult to integrate. It usually sounds completely alien to the rest (generally too loud, too poppy).

Check by all means the **Kontrabaß-Posaune** in orchestra III: the player very often plays an octave too high. And there is always a wrong **mute**...



Lamps: the lamps as shown in the score are really necessary: *standing lamps* within each orchestra **in addition** to the spot lights from afar. Please ask for them from the start of the rehearsals.

The 5 octave Celesta (Schiedmayr!) is very often a problem. In case of difficulties a good **sampler** (with Celesta sounds) could be the solution. The same applies to the “Klaviatur-Glockenspiel”.

DO NOT PLAY OTHER ORCHESTRA MUSIC IN THE SAME PROGRAM:
GRUPPEN – intermission – PIANO PIECE XI (or excerpts from GRUPPEN with explanation of space music) – GRUPPEN repeated.

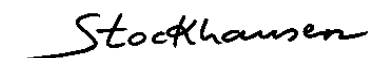
The latest edition of the U.E.-score contains all the corrections. Ask U.E. Vienna! The new edition is **also larger and considerably** better readable.

The main task of GRUPPEN is the dynamic balance of the 3 groups, and of percussion with other instruments within each group: tame the drummers, make the sound of cow bells sound like beautiful bells (careful choice of beaters).

The rehearsal plan of the score is not sufficient: at least one more day of split rehearsals is necessary.

Good luck!

Cordial greetings from

Stockhausen