

Description of the work submitted

Tina Kozin, Saška Rakef and Bojana Šaljić

Podešva: IDEN

Electroacoustic Radio Opera



Foto: Tina Kozin

»What lies behind human endeavours to preserve biotic diversity, habitats, endangered species? Do they originate in care towards nature or rather care for oneself? Or perhaps, more than care, one's fear – of transience, of change, fear of death?«

The electroacoustic radio opera Iden conveys a story of the Curonian Spit sand dune in Lithuania, a temporary geographical phenomenon under the protection of Unesco as world cultural and natural heritage. It is a story of a conflict of interests inscribed in the management of national parks, as well as a story of prehistorical struggle of man with inevitable change, passing, transience.

»How to establish contact with nature, and why? Is it even possible, are we able to get close to a plant in its temporality, can our comprehension of planthood be in any way different than anthropocentric?«

The musical material of the opera as a whole is mostly weaved from human voice. It comprises documentary statements (diverse views, from the management of the national park and city municipality to biologists, lumberjacks, tourist workers and the dune inhabitants, poetic writing and musical material reinterpreting the field recordings from the dune. These layers, knitted into a polyphone whole and expressed entirely through human voice, convey a question on whether humans, in their struggles to preserve the dune, are able to actually ‘hear’ all that. The dune was preserved due to constant human endeavours to stop erosion, according to the Unesco document. Do human beings simply struggle or do they actually wage a war on nature?¹ To what extent do we realise that the relationship goes both ways – not only does man manage plants, but plants themselves manage us.

»So, where do plant biopower and plant biopolitics enact themselves? How to perceive them? How to convey them? For even though it seems at first that plants, in relation to man, are always subordinate, it is precisely the examples such as the Curonian Spit that show how necessary it is to collaborate with them. If the Unesco acts refer to the preservation of the dune as to “technology” (thus equating the use of these organisms with the use of non-living machines), how would the narrative be told from the viewpoint of plants? How to submerge into the plant perception field, where the molecules speak, where time is accelerated and slowed down at the same time, where centuries of cultures flow in days of underground contacts?«

Špela Petrič, PhD

The electroacoustic radio opera *I den* originates prominently in the deconstruction of human language, which is caused by the opera as a dramaturgic whole passing into the destruction of logos, of the intelligible, towards the sensory address of its listeners. It is founded on sound specialties of individual languages included (e.g. Lithuanian as a language is exceptionally musical in nature); also in the sense that the sheer syllables or sibilants or vocals inside the

¹ Translator's note: Word play, in which the word *prizadevati* is used as a reflexive verb (meaning: to struggle, strive) and also as a transitive verb (to cause harm, to hurt).

individual words of applied languages have become bearers of meaning and symbolic value. Due to the aforementioned dimensions of the work, along with its poetic dimensions (word play, multiple meanings of language ingredients), this/the work is to a significant extent untranslatable.

In the last part of the IDEN section, human principle is replaced by planthood through field recordings, captured on locations on the Curonian Spit dune. The composition opens up to another organisation of time, demanding a different manner of presence, mindfulness, listening.

Thus, the electroacoustic radio opera Iden is above all questing – and looking for answers, but not in the classic sense, instead, answers in the speech beyond the intelligible, in the speech of sound and thus the body. Namely, it draws further away from the word, from logos, only to gravitate towards the abstractly musical conveying of content, the direct bodily experience. It is a work anchored in sound in order to justify the meaning of sound. To make us sensitive to sound, to promote different ways of listening. It was premiered on 2 July at the time of the nautical sunrise (4:36 AM) as a sound performance with four live vocalists and an 8-channel soundtrack in the physical, site-specific venue of the Tivoli greenhouse, and as a radio play on the 3rd programme of the Slovenian national radio – Radio ARS.

Colophone:

Script: **Tina Kozin, Saška Rakef**

Music: **Bojana Šaljić Podešva**

Direction: **Saška Rakef**

Musical dramaturgy: **Saška Rakef, Bojana Šaljić Podešva**

Expert advisor: **Špela Petrič**

Dramaturgic consultation: **Pia Brezavšek**

Sound technicians: **Matjaž Miklič, Urban Gruden**

Video broadcasting: **Anže Ančimer**

Video documentation: **Igor Velše**

Lighting design: **naravni pojav**

Acting and musical interpretation: **Katja Konvalinka, Barbara Krajnc Avdić, Nika Rozman, Nataša Živković.**

Narrators: **Lucija Grm, Matej Rus, Bernard Stramič.**

Chorus: **Tesa Drev, Tadeja Krečič, Andrej Rot, Ana Johana Scholten, Maja Žvokelj.**

Co-production: **3. program Radia Slovenija – program Ars, društvo Celinka, ŠKUC gledališče.**

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