

What philosopher has not
At one time or another
Cut the queerest figure imaginable,
Between the affirmations of a reasonable
And firmly convinced eye-witness,
And the inner resistance
Of insurmountable doubt?*

In Manhattan, on the Upper East Side, in the city of New York, a Steinway & Sons Model M grand piano sits on the fifth floor of Zahra's apartment. The piano has been completely rebuilt since its 1934 birthday.

The realm of the shadows is the paradise for dreamers.
Here they find a country without limits,
Where they can continue to build as they please.*

I first contacted Zahra when I was in New York living alone, without a keyboard or any type of musical instrument. I wanted to play the piano, but not at the Steinway showroom. She generously opened her home and fallboard. I brought my microphones, but no score. Putting Plato's theory on memory to test in the manner of a utopian-scientific experiment, I simply remembered, from eternal ideas, fugues that are intimate, pretty, and free like birds.

The fugues, for 4 independent monophonic voices realized by an 8-armed pianist, fly around the very definition of a fugue through the baroque concept of pure ornamentation vs. *cantus firmus* (fixed song). Independent from each other, like Leibniz' *monads*, the 4 voices' *tempo* micro-fluctuate around linear time and macro-oscillate stylistically through the centuries around historical time.

To enhance the sound effect for the listener, a matched pair of microphones was set up so that they form a perfect triangle above the strings. I call this *Platonischer Kunstkopf* (Platonic art head) and it is thusly defined: A ORTF configuration developed by the *Office de Radiodiffusion Télévision Française* in which a pair of cardioid microphones are angled apart at 110 degrees with 6.69 inches between the capsules - the average distance between human ears - now altered to the *Blumlein* pair angled at 90 degrees with the distance between capsules altered to the *Rothkamm* distance between the ears.

This release is my first non-electronic, all acoustic work in twenty-five years.

To me, Zahra will always mean "White, Radiant".

Thence originated the present piano music,
Which, we flatter ourselves,
Will fully satisfy the listener;
For the main part he will not understand,
Another part he will not believe,
And the rest he will laugh at.*

* Derived from Immanuel Kant "Dreams of a Spirit-Seer"