

Frau Musica (nova)

CD

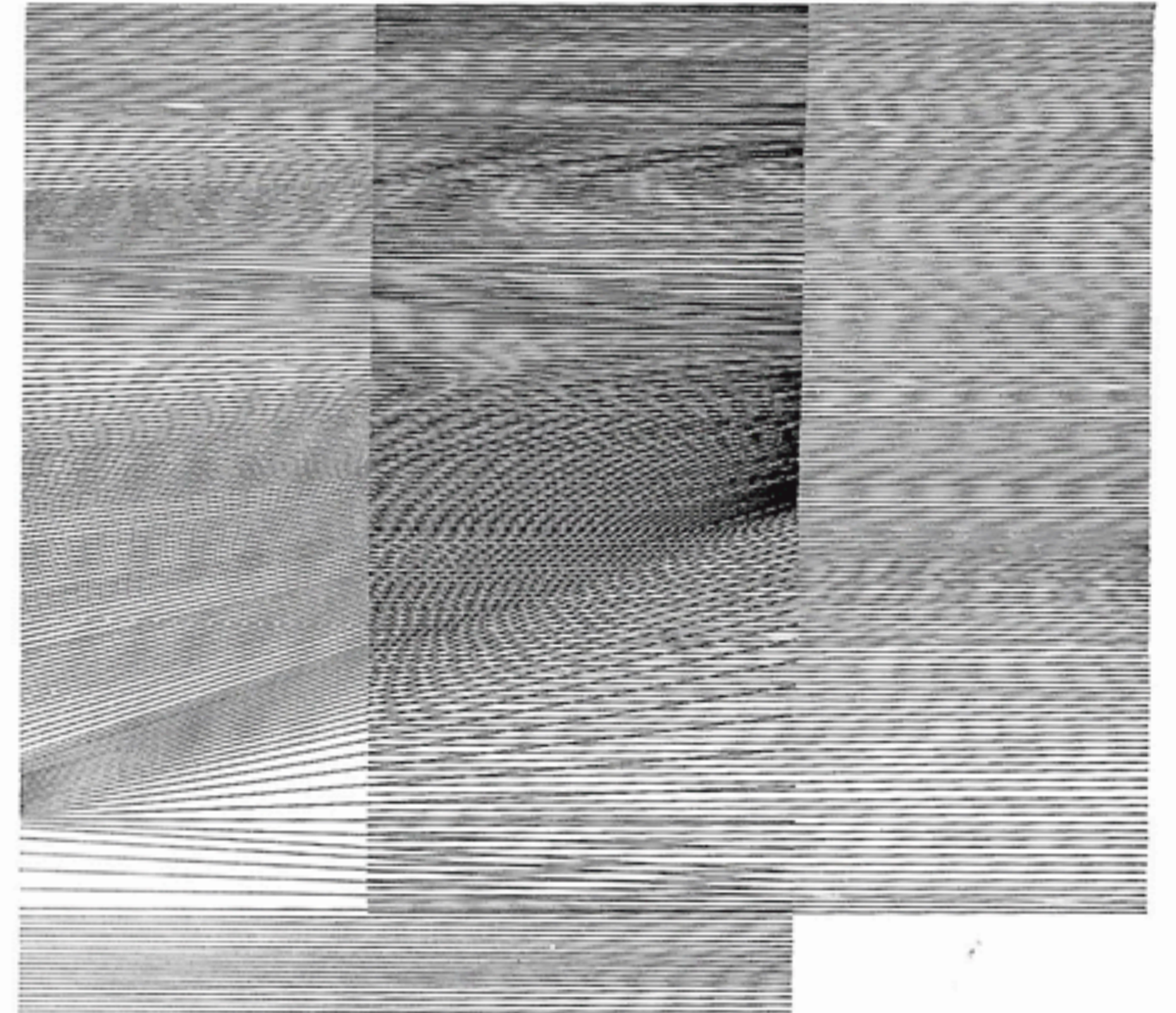
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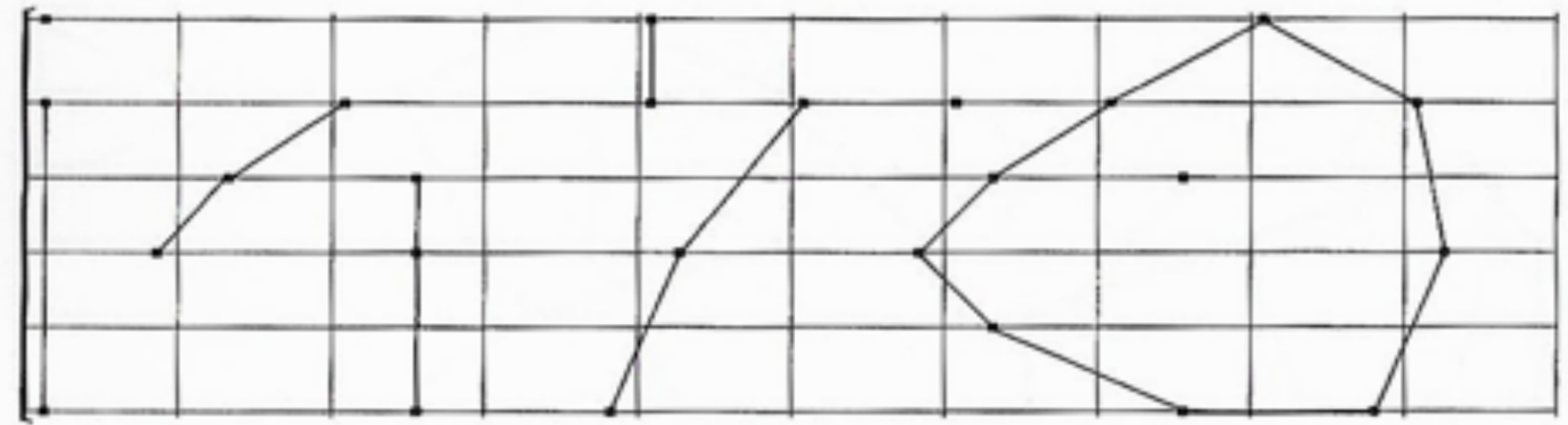
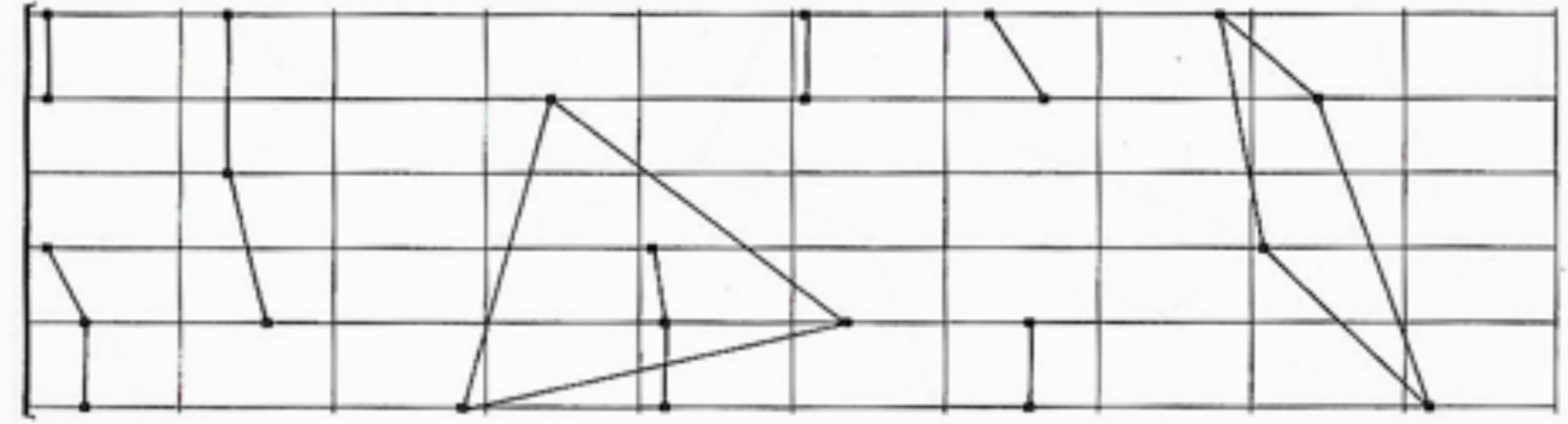
# Gradients of Detail

Chiyoko Szlavnic

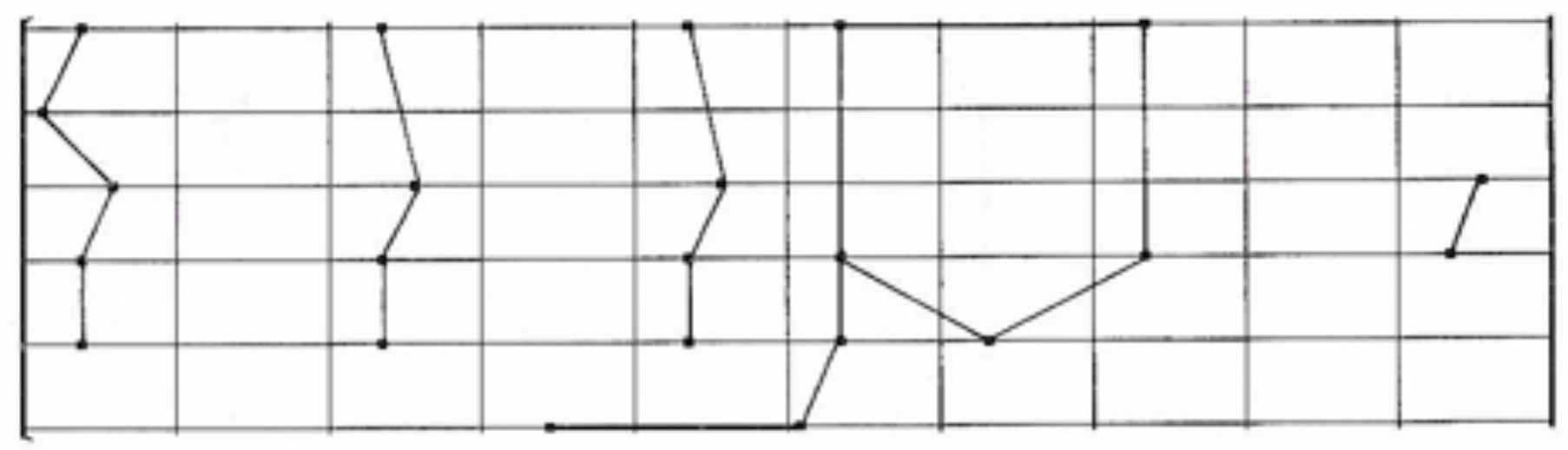
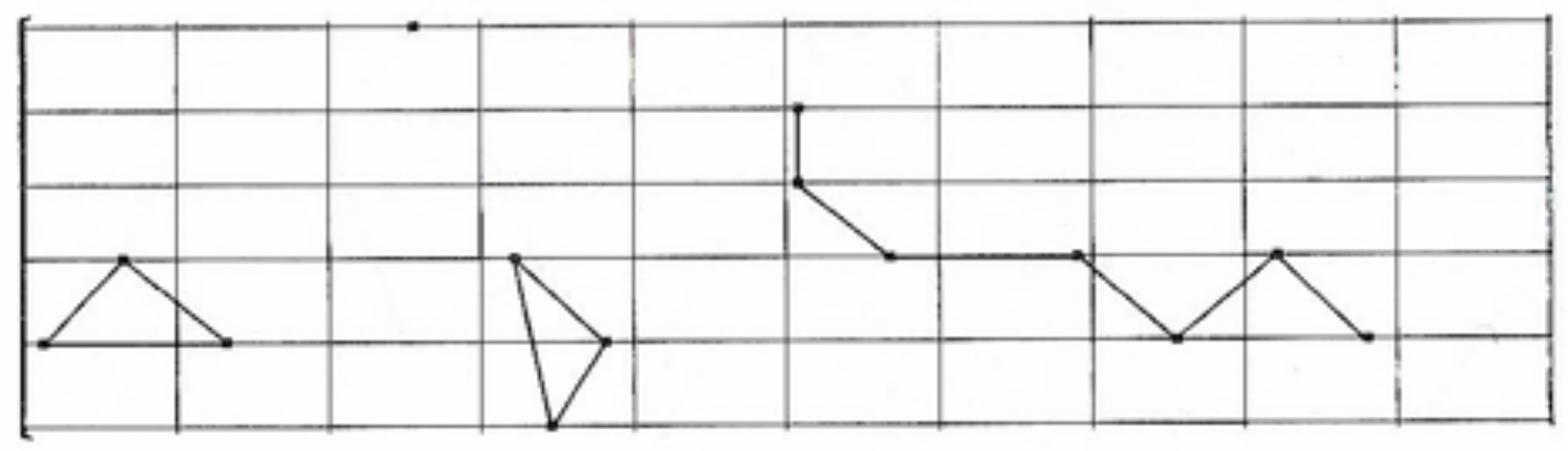
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**CHIYOKO SZLAVNICS  
GRADIENTS OF DETAIL**









### Chapter 2: Linear Algebra

(a) Long lines are drawn on the grid (2000-2020).  
 Example:  $\begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 & 3 \\ 4 & 5 & 6 \\ 7 & 8 & 9 \end{pmatrix}$   
 The determinant is  $1(5 \cdot 9 - 6 \cdot 8) - 2(4 \cdot 9 - 6 \cdot 7) + 3(4 \cdot 8 - 7 \cdot 7)$   
 $= 1(45 - 48) - 2(36 - 42) + 3(32 - 49)$   
 $= 1(-3) - 2(-6) + 3(-17)$   
 $= -3 + 12 - 51 = -42$

(b) For each row, write the first two elements of the row.  
 The determinant is  $1(2 \cdot 3 - 3 \cdot 4) - 2(1 \cdot 3 - 3 \cdot 1) + 3(1 \cdot 2 - 2 \cdot 1)$   
 $= 1(6 - 12) - 2(3 - 3) + 3(2 - 2)$   
 $= 1(-6) - 2(0) + 3(0)$   
 $= -6$

## Chiyoko Szlavnic: Gradients Of Detail

1. **(a)long lines: we'll draw our own lines** (2004) 29:35

**Ensemble musikFabrik:**

Elizabeth Hirst, flute

Bruce Collings, trombone

Hannah Weirich, violin

Dirk Wietheger, violoncello

Axel Porath, sinewaves

Carl Rosman, sinewaves

Dirk Rothbrust, percussion

Conducted by Peter Rundel

2. **Her Teeth Were White** (1999) 6:17

Dirk Rothbrust, percussion

3. **Gradients of Detail** (2005-6) 21:22

**Asasello Quartet:**

Rostislav Kozhevnikov, violin

Barbara Kuster, violin

Justina Šliwa, viola

Wolfgang Zamastil, violoncello

total time 57:33

A co-production between Deutschlandfunk, World Edition and Frau Musica (nova).

The music on this CD was presented in concert by Frau Musica (nova), on February 5th, 2012, in the Deutschlandfunk Kammermusiksaal, Cologne, Germany.

Track 1 was recorded on September 25th, 2012.

Tracks 2 & 3 were recorded on February 3rd & 5th, 2012.

Recording & mixing realised with the cooperative efforts of Gidi Boss, Stephan Schmidt, and Eckhard Glauche.

Sound Technicians: Ernst Hartmann & Christoph Schumacher

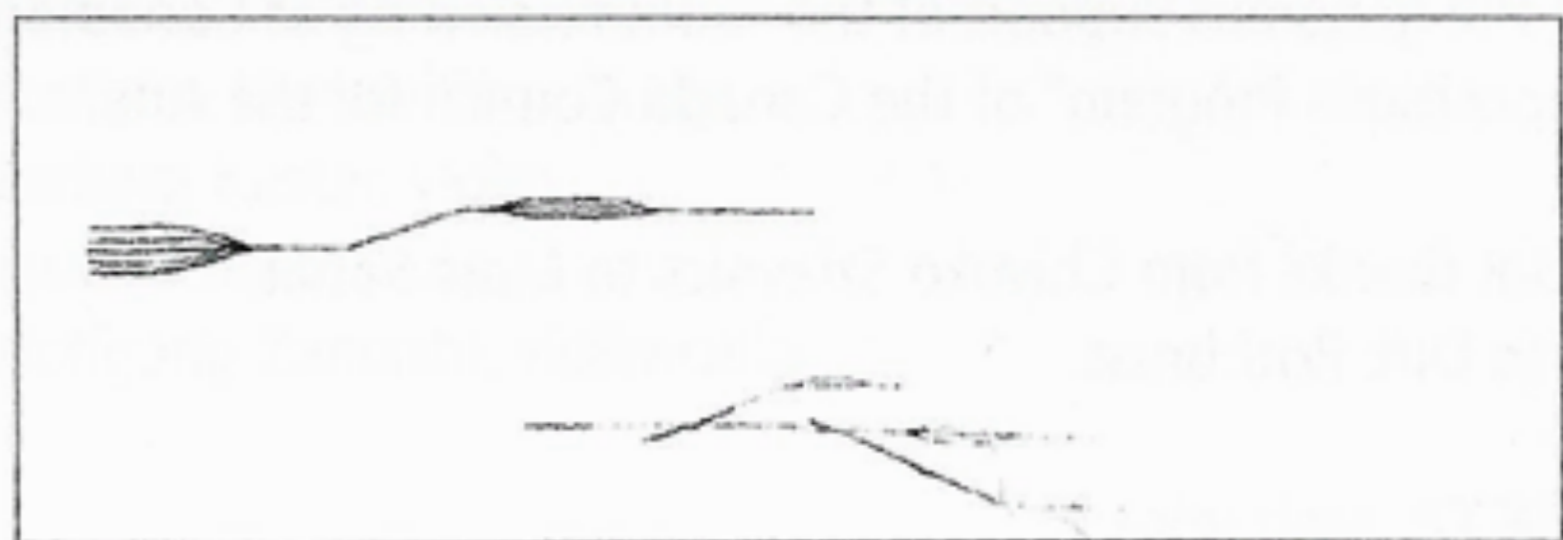
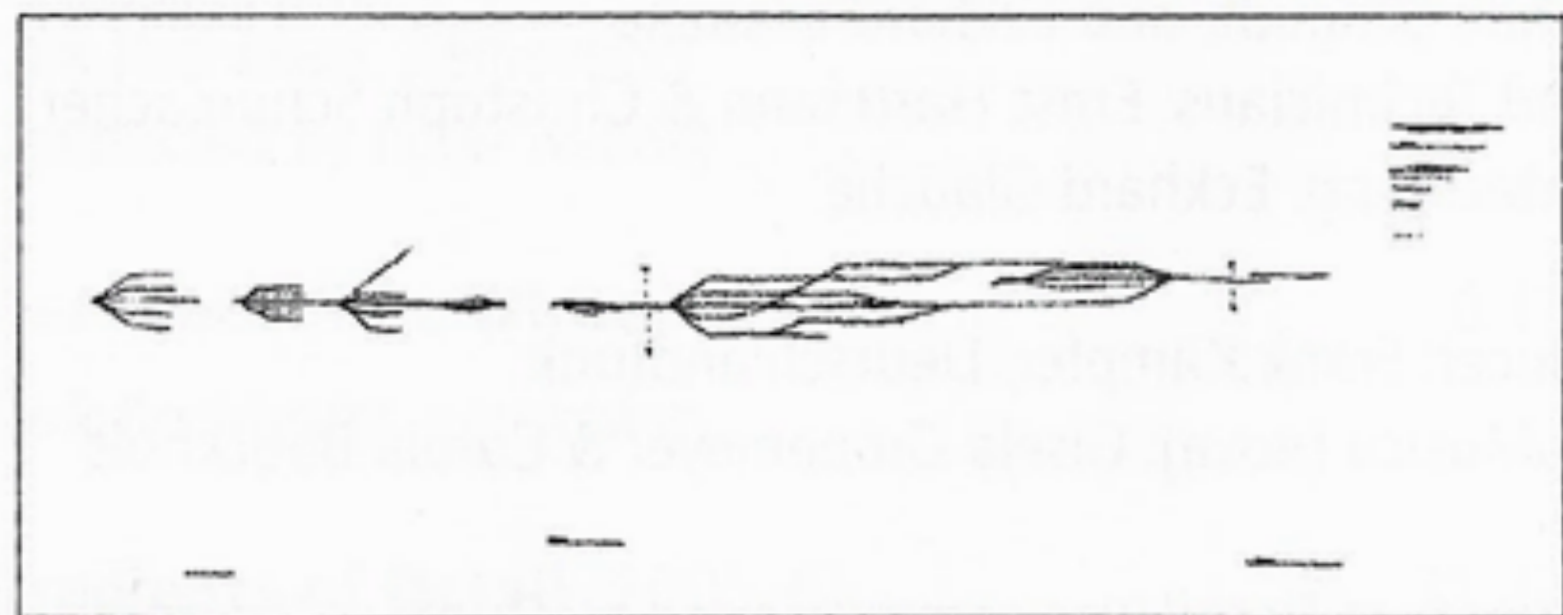
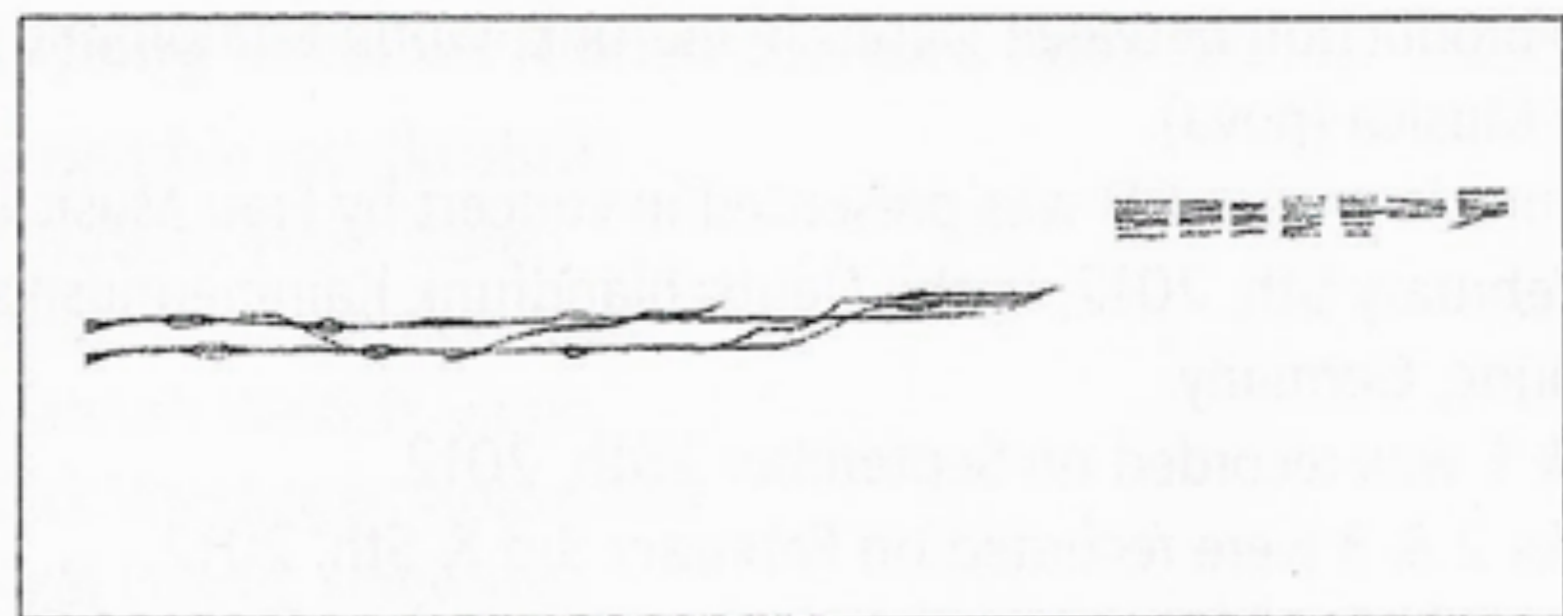
CD-Mastering: Eckhard Glauche

Producer: Frank Kämpfer, Deutschlandfunk

Frau Musica (nova): Gisela Gronemeyer & Carola Bauckholt

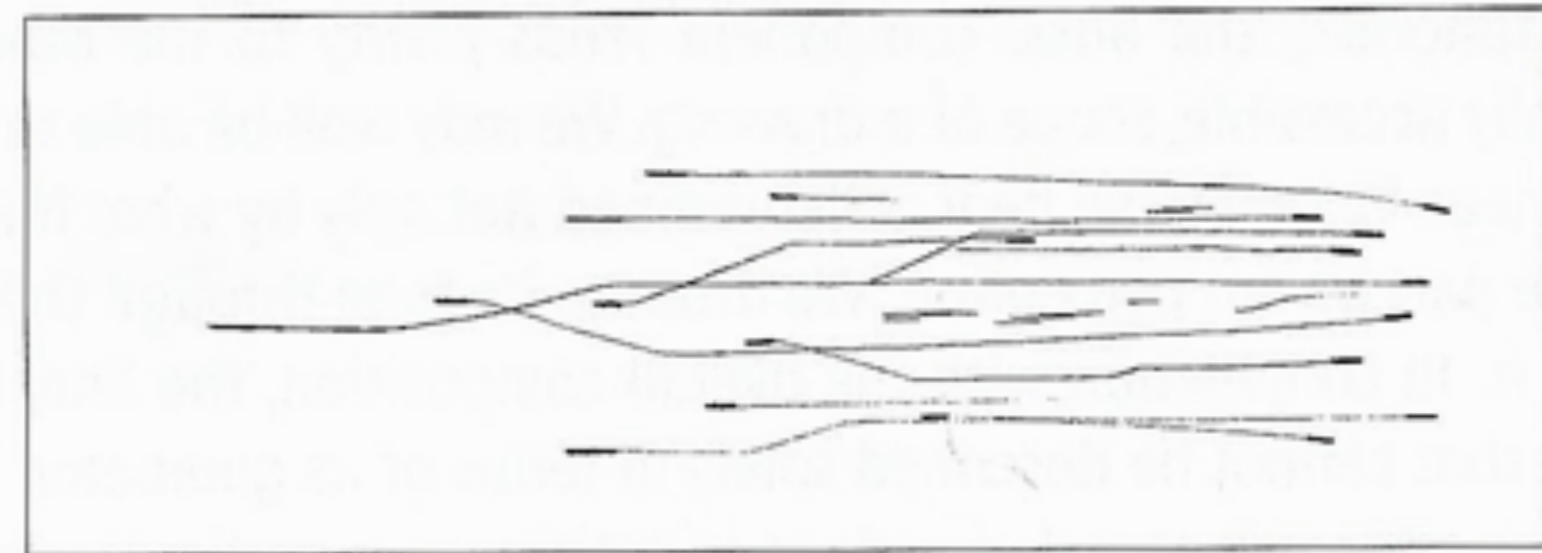
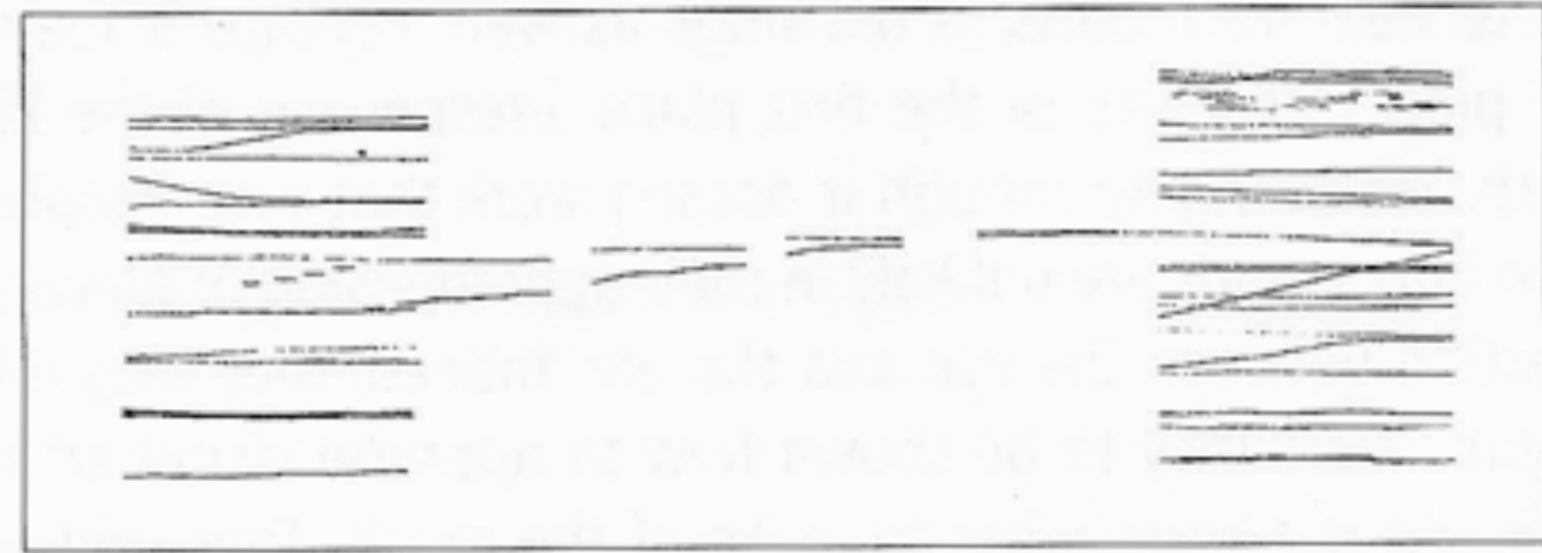
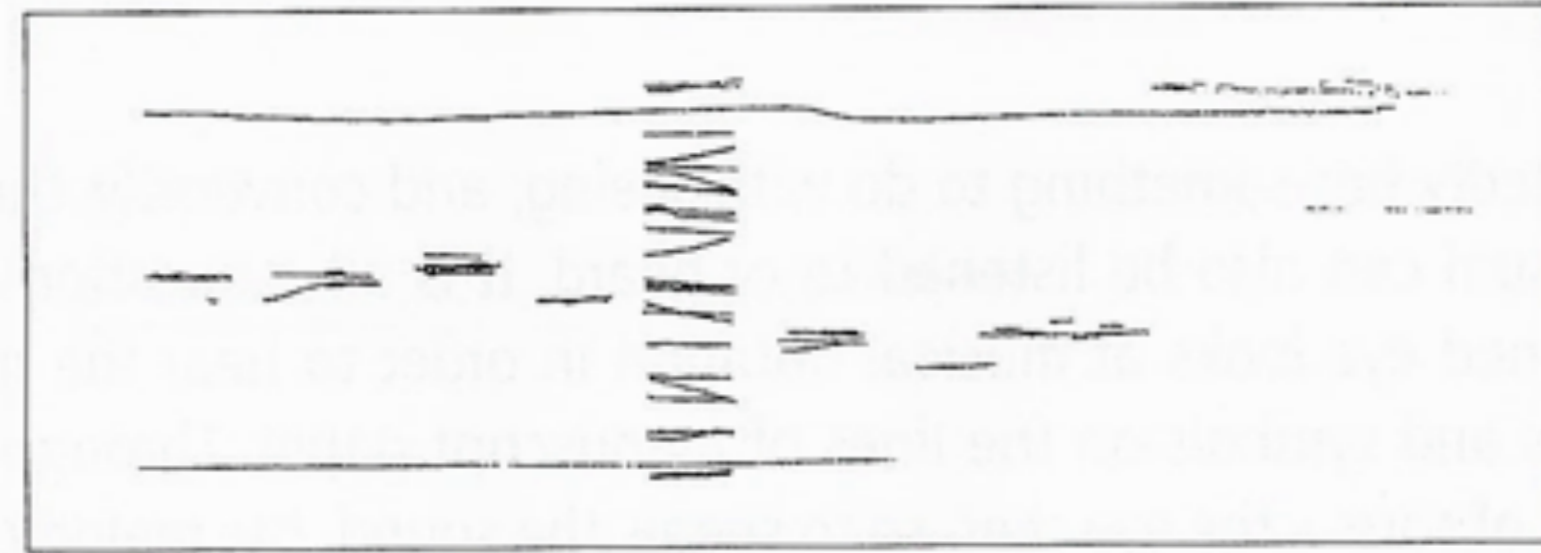
*Gradients of Detail* was commissioned by Quatuor Bozzini in 2005 with the generous support of the "Commissioning of Canadian Compositions Program" of the Canada Council for the Arts.

Special thanks from Chiyoko Szlavnic to Marc Sabat, and to Dirk Rothbrust.



## Chiyoko Szlavnic: Drawing Music

Sound undoubtedly has something to do with seeing, and conversely, things that seem to be purely visual can also be listened to or heard. It is all a question of attitude. Of course, the trained eye looks at musical notation in order to hear the music inscribed in specific signs and symbols on the lines of manuscript paper. Through the score – in itself a drawing of sorts – the eye sees, so to speak, the sound, the melody, the individual parts written for different instruments. For all intents and purposes, the eye thus trained should be able to hear such parts in drawings as well. Perhaps it may even consider drawings to be pieces of music in the first place, irrespective of the kinds of sounds might bring forth. Yet strangely enough it doesn't work that way. People who translate musical notation into sounds are unlikely in their apprehension of drawings to establish a similar connection between the eye and the ear. Indeed, they may even find such a connection absurd. Were they to be shown how to appraise visual art in this manner, they probably would not know what to make of the result. That said, in any drawing of merit the aural is an indispensable component of comprehension. While in a way remaining metaphorical, the aural component lends clarity to the otherwise elusive, and less rationally accessible, scope of a drawing. We may well be able to put a name to the sounds we hear. Yet what we hear is determined not only by what has been named, but for the large part by our perception. We listen to its form through the word that has been found for it. In conjunction with the overall composition, the line, for example, is part of a sound that cannot be described solely in terms of its geometry. The aural does not presuppose a concrete sound, nor does it anticipate a particular sound. Rather it hears the unexpected. This outlook on the unexpected, given by the aural, is one of the special features of Chiyoko Szlavnic's drawings.

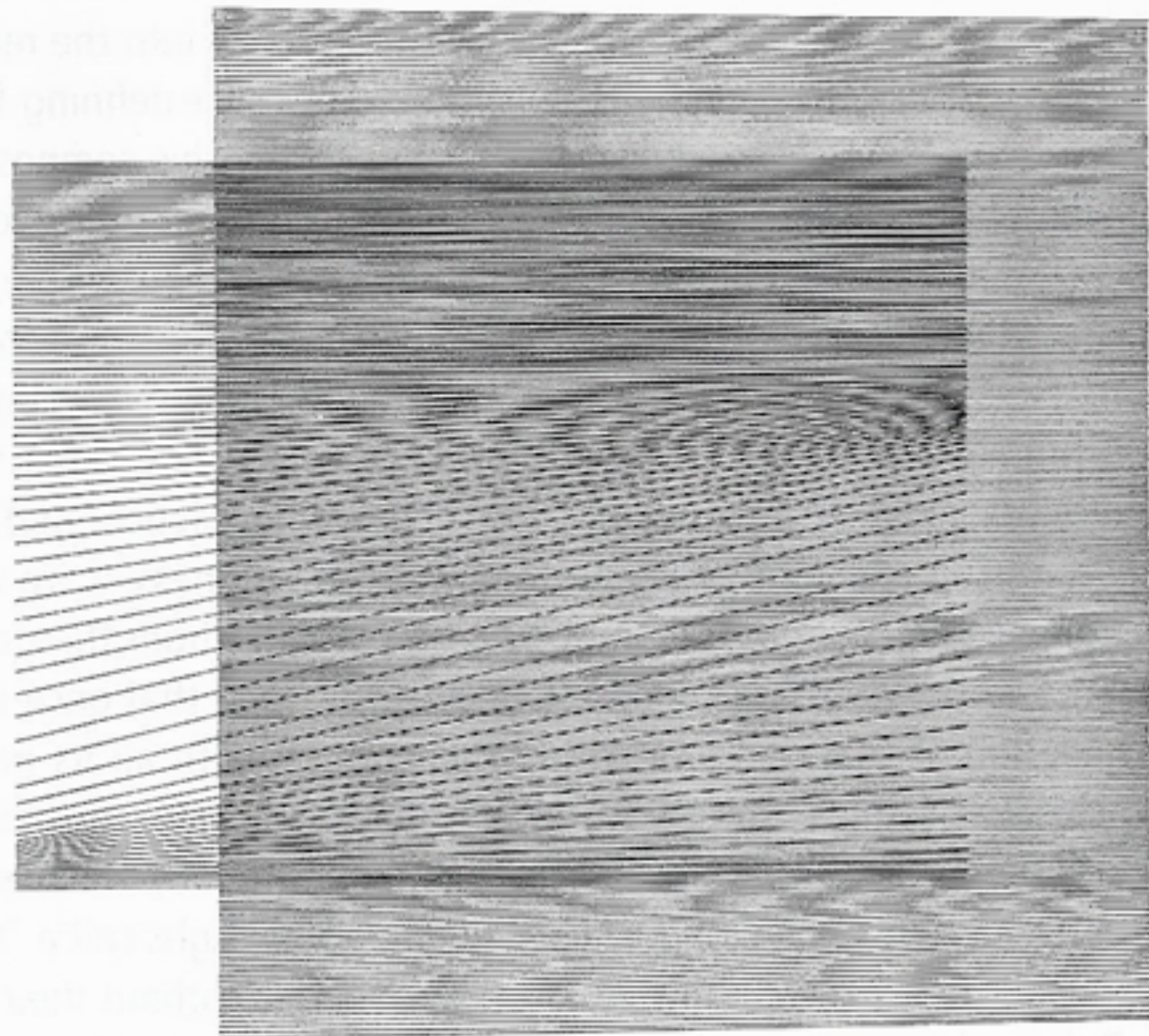


Early scores from the eleventh century have symbols to indicate certain highs and lows, for the most part sung. Viewed from today's perspective, these seem to be related to the scores one is likely to come across in contemporary music. In the work of John Cage, for example, one finds scores of this kind, such as the star charts used in his composition *Atlas Eclipticalis*.

Seldom has anyone with a background in music ventured so far into the realm of drawing that, broadly speaking, they have come to conceive of space-defining lines as temporal sound lines. Even John Cage, while clearly incorporating his compositional technique in his drawings - in the famous *Ryoanji* series, for example - ultimately produced images, hence visual art. These images were not supposed, nor even able, to create a sound for any kind of instrument that would extend beyond or remain concealed within them. (His *Ryoanji* compositions were produced independently of the eponymous drawings.) Cage was primarily interested in the sight and not, strangely enough, the sound of lines. Yet perhaps it was also about hearing and seeing silence, and thus about using both senses to come to terms with nothingness or emptiness. If we want to find our way back from the void, we may well need a line leading from the unfathomable depths out into the world that is right before our eyes - a world that once again proves to be an accumulation of sounds. From within this cosmos, with all its infinite forms, Chiyoko Szlavnic draws sounds into the world. Her drawings are neither graphic works conceived as psychomotoric translations of sensations, nor are they lineatures intended to produce sound. First and foremost, they exist in what one might call a "third" sense. They are - or their author is - aware of their musical qualities without their ever having been realised. Rather, the results are left to the hearing eye in a double sense.

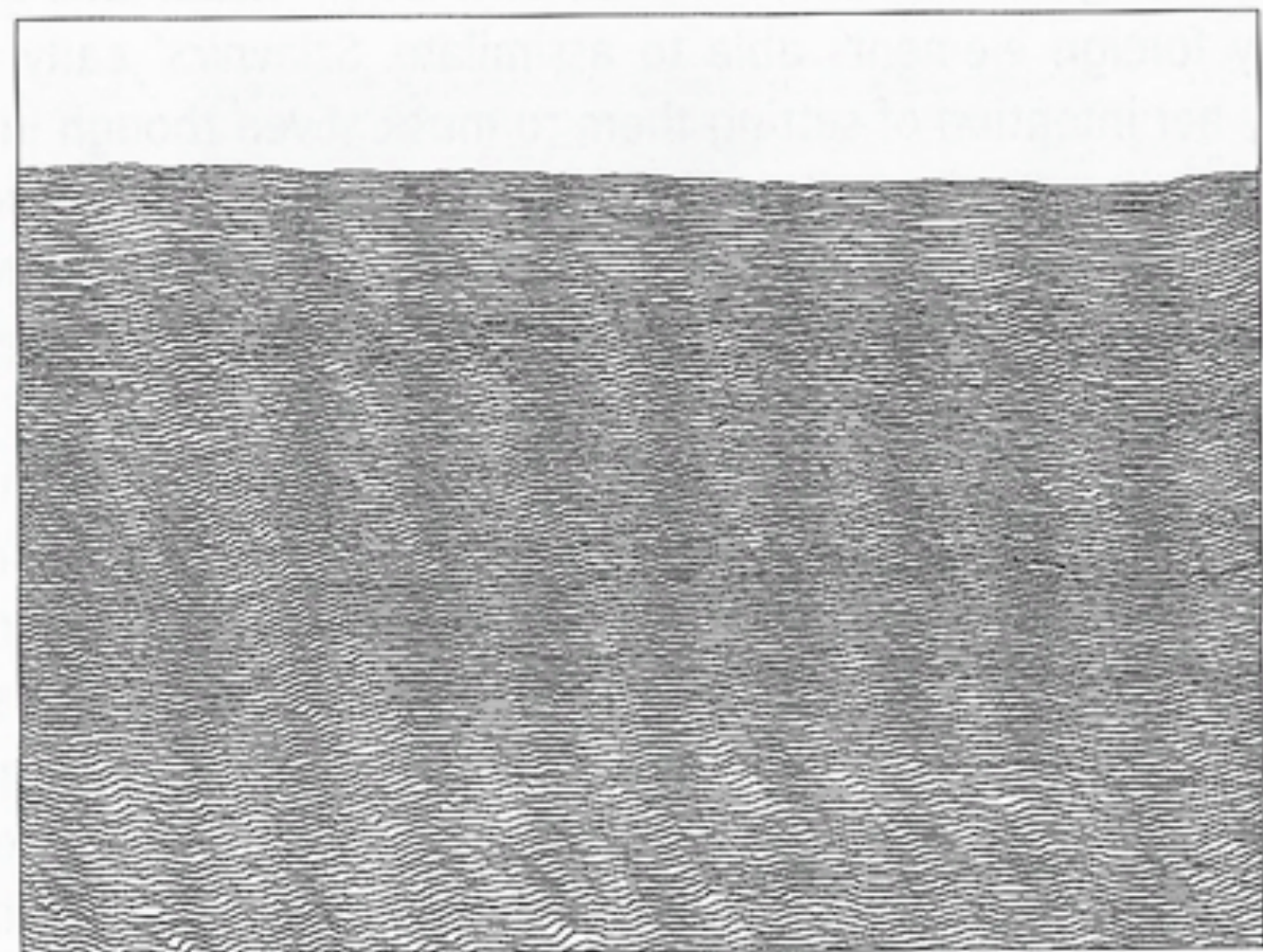
Chiyoko Szlavnic's independent drawings contain no directions that would influence the way we look at them. Seeing is always a silent performance primarily based on sensations. Even so, listening to Szlavnic's music feels like listening to the sounds of the lines in her drawings. The artist does not necessarily intend these drawings to be





compositions or notations that can be translated into sound. Yet as much as she considers her works on paper to be drawings in their own right, they are musical all the same. Conceptual artist Hanne Darboven, having found in her manifold notations a way of expressing the being in time, began to set to music her vast tableaux of characters and symbols. In this regard there appears to be a certain affinity between the two artists. The basic elements of drawing consist of lines, dots and the connections between them; on the blank page these adhere to their own laws – visual laws beholden to the eye without any foreign elements able to assimilate. Szlavnic's early drawings were characterised by her intention of setting them to music. Even though in some of these drawings she had begun to dispense with manuscript paper, this was nevertheless her purpose. By contrast, the artist's later works on paper distanced themselves further and further from this significant proximity to music. The more decidedly they refer to their own space, without denying their (musical) origins, the more surprising are the effects of their scoring as performed by the eye upon viewing. Here, the term "(musical) origins" pertains to the particular form of the drawings, which has developed from within the compositional context of music. And this is where her drawings break new ground. In the end, even the artist herself must be surprised by the nature of the sound material latent within her drawings. The less the drawing "knows" about it, the more convincing this latent music might be. Of course, only the artist – who is also a composer – may arrange this hidden sound. She incorporates in her drawings her musical perceptions of natural and artificial movements in space, of light and wind, of plants and animals, machines and architecture. The drawings translate these permanently expanding forms into linear arrangements of signs which, in turn, dissolve within the flow of sounds. This interplay overcomes any form of naturalism without becoming abstract. As with aleatoric compositional techniques, the drawings are, on account of their direct linking of the senses, more closely related to nature than if they were to merely capture the visible exterior of a figure while ignoring its music.

*Eugen Blume (tr. Catherine Nichols)*



### **Chiyoko Szlavnic**

Chiyoko Szlavnic was born and raised in Toronto, Canada, and has lived in Berlin, Germany, since 1998.

She studied music at the University of Toronto, and privately with the composer James Tenney. Chiyoko Szlavnic has composed more than thirty works for a wide variety of instruments and ensembles, and has created several sinewave installations for resonant spaces. A central aspect of her work is the audible phenomenon called "beating", which is highlighted through her particular use of extended sustains, glissandi, tuning systems, and her way of combining acoustic instruments with electronics.

Drawings became the starting point for her compositional process around the year 2003. But in 2009 and 2010, several drawings series emerged, which distinctly belonged to the field of visual art. Szlavnic now practices in both disciplines, and not only are her drawings heard in concert, but her music is sometimes also seen in exhibitions in Europe and North America.

### **Ensemble musikFabrik**

Ever since its formation Ensemble musikFabrik has had the reputation of being one of the leading ensembles for contemporary music. Following the literal meaning of its name, Ensemble musikFabrik is particularly dedicated to artistic innovation. New, unknown, and often personally commissioned works using unusual forms of media are typical of their productions. The Cologne-based international soloist ensemble presents the results of its extensive work, that usually takes place in close collaboration with the composers, at over 100 concerts each year, both Germany and abroad, at festivals, in their own radio series *musikFabrik im WDR* as well as regular radio recordings and CD productions.

The ensemble's list of guests is as prominent as it is long, spanning composers such as Mark Andre, Heiner Goebbels and Mauricio Kagel, as much as performance groups like La Fura dels Baus or choreographers like Sasha Waltz.

### **Dirk Rothbrust**

His parents fancied that he would play the accordion, but their son had other ideas. Born in 1968 in Illingen, Germany, Rothbrust found that percussion was his true love during a carnival celebration in his home town and immediately made it the fulcrum of his future life. With all his other activities seemingly receding into insignificance, there really was no other option but to make this obsession a profession. Consequently, from 1986 to 1994, Rothbrust studied with Franz Lang and Isao Nakamura at the Musikhochschule in Saarbrücken and Karlsruhe. There, classical literature awaited students, soon to be followed by studies in contemporary music. No more drumming away in rock bands or stints with the *Illingen Woodwind Orchestra*.

His scope of musical interests, however, has remained as wide as ever. Jazz, improvisation and all sorts of other musical permutations still manage to quicken his heart, along with a desire to cross musical boundaries. As member of the *Schlagquartett Köln* (Cologne Percussion Quartet) since 1995, and also in his continued work with various other ensembles, he has found fertile grounds for his exploration of contemporary music, harnessing his curiosity and broad range of interests. Dirk Rothbrust has been a member of *Ensemble musikFabrik* since 2006.

### **Asasello Quartet**

Founded in the year 2000 in Basel, but domiciled since 2005 in Cologne, the Asasello Quartet has focused from the very start an intense and uncompromising engagement both with the traditional and the contemporary. Aspects of this engagement include commissioned works of contemporary music, innovative concepts as well as new forms of concert presentation and staging, and new types of music production: for example, the intense and highly personal engagement with the music of the respective home countries of the four quartet members or the concert series which has now been running successfully for five years, *1:1 - Schon gehört?*

Another central concern is to combine in an innovative way the classical string quartet form with other expressions of art, such as dance or the graphic and plastic arts. Exciting results have emerged and continue to emerge from different co-productions with renowned choreographers, such as John Neumeier, Bill T. Jones, Stephanie Thiersch or Richard Siegal. On the *Paysages* project, and currently on the production *Echtzeit (GENUIN)* the quartet has been able to achieve a successful and fruitful collaboration with the Cologne artists Michael Growe and Wolfgang Burat, and also with the graphic designers Kuehle and Mozer.

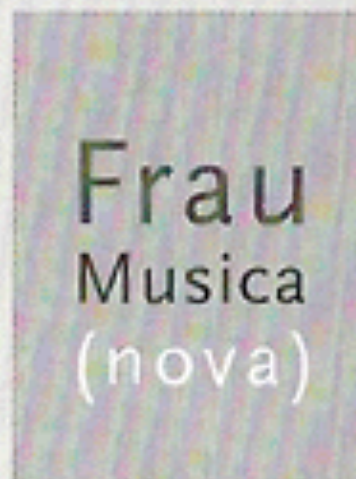
# CHIYOKO SZLAVNICS GRADIENTS OF DETAIL



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1. **(a)long lines: we'll draw our own lines** (2004) 29:35  
Ensemble musikFabrik, conducted by Peter Rundel
2. **Her Teeth Were White** (1999) 6:17  
Dirk Rothbrust, solo percussion
3. **Gradients of Detail** (2005–6) 21:22  
Asasello Quartet

## Deutschlandfunk



A Deutschlandradio recording.

All drawings © Chiyoko Szlavnic, 2005–2013

*Drawing Music* © Eugen Blume, 2013

Layout: faberludens

[www.chiyokoszlavnic.org](http://www.chiyokoszlavnic.org)

[www.musikfabrik.eu](http://www.musikfabrik.eu)

[www.listentopaysages.com](http://www.listentopaysages.com)



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