

»Allende, 11. September 1973«

For a speaking pianist, clarinet, and violoncello

»Historically articulating something past does not mean recognizing it 's it really was'. It means taking possession of a memory when it flashes up in a moment of danger.« (Walter Benjamin)

September 11, 2001 has changed everything, it is said. We need to rethink. No limitations may be set to the effective combating of terrorism. A paradigm shift has taken place that justifies preventive war as a political instrument. In this composition, the image of September 11, 2001 as a "zero hour" is countered by a leap in history.

Augusto Pinochet's military coup against the democratically elected government of Salvador Allende also fell on a September 11 and a Tuesday, almost at the same time of day.

But the historical comparison does not aim to suggest any deeper numerological order or promote any sensation-craving conspiracy theories. Rather, the coincidental relationship should provide a glimpse of a dialectical understanding of history to which Benjamin alludes in the above quotation: history as a construction by the present. And its consequence is that only the writer of history has the ability to fan the spark of hope suffused in the past: »even the dead will not be safe from the enemy, if he is victorious. And this enemy's victories have not ceased.«

The text used in the piece is based on the publicly accessible recordings of the various speeches Allende made to the Chilean nation on Chilean radio in the course of the morning of September 11. Despite all the pathos of the words, the musicalization seeks to reproduce something of the calmness and equanimity with which Allende spoke on the radio, in the face

of extreme violence and knowing that he would not leave the Presidential Palace alive. The musical gestures developed on especially evocative passages of the text are in part illustrative of and in part in contrast to it, thus creating an emotional environment that reflects the contradictions of the situation.

The piece, written during a stay at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, was commissioned by the Heidelberger Frühling (Heidelberg Spring), where it had its world premiere in April 2004 with Jörg Widmann, clarinet, Alban Gerhart, violoncello, and me, speaker/piano. It is dedicated to my friends Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin and Ronit Chacham, because it would never have been written without them and because they taught me that hope consists only in resistance.

Stefan Litwin