

Hände: Das Leben und die Liebe eines Zärtlichen Geschlechts for piano and film

Hände: Das Leben und die Liebe eines Zärtlichen Geschlechts is a visually arresting and surreal masterpiece by Stella F. Simon and Miklos Blandy and reflects my interest in the bizarre and eerie on celluloid. It was written specifically for the pianist Clare Hammond.

The film's plot uses humans' hands as "characters in a dance-inspired narrative exploring female experience and representation" (Jennifer Wild). Hands are used to communicate meaning and context, their shapes, groupings and physicality informed the musical score and role of the pianist in this work. The performer not only has to negotiate the piano as a traditional instrument but also has to be adroit at preparing the piano during the performance (and un-preparing it as well) alongside playing a set of 6 desk bells and using knitting needles inside the piano.

In approaching the film as a 'found object', I freely altered the film in various ways including recutting, recolouring and frieze-framing of images to amplify certain moments of tension and dramatic meaning. The music evolved alongside the development of my altered film narrative as did the prepared and none-piano sounds of the score.

The New York Times said of the film in 1929:

"[This] ballet of hands is devoted to a strange cause. It seeks to employ hands as graceful and plastic units in some sort of cosmic drama that may mean everything or nothing".

The viewer is forced to find their own interpretation and meaning; the ambiguity of film and music interaction is intended to heighten the darker potentiality of the film.