



Contact: A Journal for Contemporary Music (1971-1988)

<http://contactjournal.gold.ac.uk>

### Citation

Fox, Christopher. 1988. 'Loops, Overtones and Erhard Grosskopf'. *Contact*, 33. pp. 6-12.  
ISSN 0308-5066.

**Goldsmiths**  
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

---

## Christopher Fox

# Loops, overtones and Erhard Grosskopf

---

Erhard Grosskopf is in his mid-fifties; he lives in West Berlin, the city of his birth, and his music, like that of all but a handful of continental European composers, is virtually unknown in Britain. What makes Grosskopf interesting, in a way that distinguishes him from many of those other unfamiliar Europeans, is the synthesis in his music of a number of techniques which have conventionally been regarded as being at odds with one another. Few composers, for example, have successfully wedded strongly periodic rhythms to non-repetitive melodic forms within a music whose harmonic organisation is simultaneously mobile and derived from the harmonic series.

Grosskopf is also unusual for the range of his musical allegiances: in the early seventies his name often cropped up in association with 'political' composers like Christian Wolff and Cornelius Cardew; more recently he has fulfilled commissions from rather more mainstream organisations, including major orchestras both in Germany and in Japan; more recently still he has worked in the theatre with Achim Freyer and Lucinda Childs, artists whose reputations are closely linked with that of Philip Glass.<sup>1</sup> Electro-acoustic media (mostly concrete sounds manipulated on tape in the late sixties and seventies, mostly computer generated sounds in the eighties) rub shoulders with acoustic instruments in many of his works; he has also created site-specific installations, most recently *Ent-Art* (1987).<sup>2</sup> But the seeming disparity of these allegiances owes less to compositional schizophrenia on Grosskopf's part than to new music's preference for personalities which are readily strait-jacketed. Indeed, as Grosskopf's career has progressed it has become ever more evident that, although from year to year it may seem a little erratic, there is a recurrent body of ideas about the means and substance of music-making to which Grosskopf has remained consistently faithful.

The interview that follows was recorded in Grosskopf's Berlin apartment in December 1987, a few days after the première of his ballet *LICHTKNALL* (Lightbang), at the Deutsche Oper in Berlin. Rather than breaking up the course of our conversation with annotations, I have chosen to use these opening paragraphs to introduce some of the central preoccupations of Grosskopf's music and of our discussion. *LICHTKNALL* itself was, inevitably, in the

background as we talked: the ballet is a culmination of Grosskopf's recent work and its commissioning and performance as part of Berlin's 750th birthday celebrations was by far the most public manifestation of Grosskopf's work to date. Nor was the ballet's première an unequivocal success: much of the critical reaction was hostile, with Rolf Michaelis' lyrical review in *Die Zeit*<sup>3</sup> one of the few to take time both to describe the work and to reflect on the ideas it provoked.

Grosskopf talks frequently of the use in his work of 'looping technique' and this technique has lain at the heart of his compositional procedures since 1972, although, as he says, the use of a forerunner of looping technique is already evident in pieces from as early as *Nexus* (1968) for flute, percussion and tape. As the name implies, 'looping' was a technique which grew out of the classic analogue tape studio practice of making loops from lengths of magnetic tape; when the loop was played the sounds on the tape could be repeated over and over again. Steve Reich's 'phasing' technique grew out of his fascination with what occurs when two identical loops gradually move out of synchronisation with one another; Grosskopf's 'looping' technique grew out of his interest in overlapping tape loops of different lengths.

In the series of pieces entitled *Looping* from 1973 and 1974, Grosskopf combined instruments and tape (except in *Looping II* and *Looping V* which are for acoustic instruments only) and treats the live players as little more than human tape-loops, giving them short repeating patterns to play. By 1977 the technique had become more sophisticated: the five loops in use at the very start of the fourth movement of *Lied* for bass clarinet and string quartet (1977) each have their own particular durations (of five, seven, four, three and six quavers respectively as one reads down the score) and their own particular pitches and rhythms, but they are passed between the various instruments and are never repeated more than three times by any one instrument. Loops can also be replaced by silences of the same length or by repeated notes. The result is music which has the active, periodic rhythmic surface characteristic of much repetitive music but which, unlike American minimalist music of the same period, does not exploit repetition as an essential prerequisite of a music 'about' gradual processes of change (Example 1).

Example 1 Grosskopf: *Lied*, fourth movement, first 4 bars.

IV  $\frac{4}{4}$  (♩ ca 90)

8. Half kein Salben und Binden

More recently Grosskopf has further developed his use of looping technique so that, instead of a particular duration almost always being identified with a particular phrase, as in the example from *Lied*, durations become units of time which may be filled with various *different* sorts of music (or with silence).<sup>4</sup> What is looped in these works is not melodic patterns, but a series of time-proportions. But, as in the earlier looping pieces, a number of these time loops can be running simultaneously and, as in the earlier pieces, it is the combination of a number of loops of different durations that generates much of the music's fascination. In the works written since 1984, the micro-computer revolution has enabled Grosskopf to introduce yet more refinement: now the computer allows Grosskopf to model the inter-relationship through time of a particular collection of loops and to preview especially interesting (or potentially banal) conjunctions of durations. Thus he is able to decide whether the chosen loops are a suitable basis for the music *before* note-to-note composition has begun in earnest.

Like American (and indeed most European) minimalist music, Grosskopf's work eschews any rhythmic irrational more complex than the triplet. However, as the example from *Lied* demonstrates, Grosskopf does not attach the same structural importance to the bar-line as do most genuinely minimalist composers; for Grosskopf the bar-line is a useful notational convention by which to coordinate a group of musicians playing overlapping rhythmic patterns, rather than a measure of the metric character

of the music. As a result Grosskopf's music is often characterised by a rhythmic fluidity, the rhythms flowing back and forth across the bar-lines, that sets it apart from most of the other sorts of regularly pulsed new music that, at first hearing at least, it might seem to resemble.

The harmonic world of Grosskopf's music is similarly fluid and, again, the fluidity is the result of a sophisticated use of simple means. In his earliest works he made use of atonal and 12-note techniques, but by the time he came to write the *Looping* pieces he had started to experiment with harmonies derived from the harmonic series, discovering that it was possible to move, within a single harmonic series, from the simple consonance of the first few overtones to much denser, dissonant formations amongst the upper overtones. By overlaying the overtone series of a number of different fundamental pitches he discovered that it was also possible to write music in which particular harmonic centres shifted in and out of focus. The opening of *Slow motion* (1980) for koto and orchestra is an instance of music where the overtones of three fundamentals, each a perfect fifth apart, are gradually and slowly unfolded from the lowest fundamental, yielding music of extraordinary repose which nonetheless has no single predominant tonal centre. Elsewhere – in the viola, cello and double-bass trio, *Chaos* (1984), for example – Grosskopf writes music of a peculiarly pungent dissonance by extracting his materials from the upper reaches of different harmonic series (Example 2).

Example 2 Grosskopf: *Chaos*, first movement, beginning of third section.

$1, 3 \ 3/4$

The combination of relatively straightforward rhythms (which, nevertheless, tend to be ametric) with microtonal tunings (which need to be precisely tuned if their harmonic derivation is to be clear to the listener) is, as I suggested above, an unusual one, and Grosskopf's music requires unusually attentive players if it is to succeed. A central problem of this music (and of a number of other musics that do not readily fit either the minimalist or complex pigeon-holes) is that, while players must have a high degree of technical proficiency to meet the demands of the score, the music does not sound especially difficult. These pieces are not glitteringly virtuosic vehicles; in Grosskopf's music it is not so much that the instrument speaks the music, as that the music speaks through the instrument. Despite (or perhaps because of?) this problem this is music that deserves a much wider circulation: it is to be hoped that British musicians<sup>5</sup> take up its challenge soon.

**C.F.** It seems to me that your music requires what somebody once called the 'other virtuosity': on the page it doesn't look very difficult but there are, nevertheless, real performance problems associated with it.

**E.G.** Yes, that's often been a real problem because musicians are educated in a traditional way and when they're presented with music where, for example, the dynamic is the most important parameter they often don't pay enough attention to it. They're used to music where dynamics are an overall design that they can put in at the end of learning the music, more or less how they feel it should be. But if dynamics – *crescendi*, *diminuendi* – are of real formal importance, as they are in my music, then musicians must respond to it like a new discipline. In my music a wrong dynamic is like playing a wrong note!

**C.F.** That's especially true in a piece like *Kalypso*, isn't it, where, certainly in my experience of listening

to Robyn Schulkowsky's performance, there seemed to be many finely graded *crescendi*.

**E.G.** Yes, in many pieces this is important because the loops which I'm using are coming and going and this is often achieved by changes in dynamics. Another thing is that musicians who like to modify dynamics often want to modify the tempo too, to 'dramatise' the music: they want to make their own interpretation before they have really got to grips with the music. My experience is that usually we have to go back to the score several times; the best solution is almost always to do it as it's written in the score! I've experienced this a lot: I've worked with some very interesting musicians and often they will offer suggestions that we try this or that change, and naturally I'm interested in what effect this might have on the music – but usually it doesn't work.

**C.F.** Rhythm and tempo often seem deceptively straightforward in your work. For example, the middle movement of the String Quartet presents each instrument with single notes separated by rests, so each part is individually quite easy to play, but these must all come together in a really tightly coordinated rhythmic structure. That's hard isn't it?

**E.G.** There are other pieces where it's even harder. I had an interesting experience with the Ensemble Modern when they played my *Kammersinfonie*. The last movement is like an abstract dance in which the twelve instruments all combine: every instrument has quite simple sounding things to play (although technically they are hard to do – leaps across very big intervals for horn, for example), but the music seems quite straightforward to each player as he works on it on his own. The Ensemble was in a very bad mood in the rehearsals – it seemed as if they didn't want to do the piece at all – so I asked them to play just what was written and we recorded. When they listened to the playback of the recording they suddenly understood what their role was in the music and from then on it worked much better.

For the Ardittis in the String Quartet there were similar problems, because everyone has to count very hard just to play a few notes. The bad thing is that, because the music is very clear, you can hear when the musicians make mistakes, especially in this movement which is in 19/8 all the way through and you can hear the rhythms which come out of this ensemble work (Example 3).

**C.F. But that's a characteristic of a lot of the pieces isn't it, that your concern is with ensemble-playing and with what musicians can produce together, rather than with using each musician as some sort of individual dramatic protagonist – for you they're there primarily to contribute to some sort of collective enterprise.**

E.G. For me musical structure – and I include in that the structure of the sound itself – is a very complex thing. Often I cannot work with just ordinary instrumentalists: the music needs musicians who, in performance, become part of the whole, really part of the whole, not soloists in the traditional sense, even though they are asked to do very difficult things.

**C.F. Do you think that has anything to do with the fact that you came to music quite late and that also you came to composition as someone who read scores rather than as someone whose primary musical experience was gained through playing an instrument?**

E.G. I don't think so, but I can't prove that it wouldn't have been different if, like most composers, I had been educated as an instrumentalist before beginning to compose. My main interest was composing right from the first moment, reading scores and then composing music: I don't feel that I am a performer, except in a sophisticated way through the medium of the electronic studio or the computer.

**C.F. You studied church music – was that a particular choice that you made?**

E.G. The beginning of my musical adventure had been in church: I heard Bach, and Reger – whose music I

must say made a big impression on me at that time. And I sang in a choir, a very good choir in Hannover, the Bach Choir, so that was my entry into music. Also I think that church music, especially when you are rather late starting your musical education, offers a lot of basic education – all that teaching of counterpoint! **C.F. Was church music something you studied in music college?**

E.G. No. I went to a school for church music, where I also met Ernst Pepping who was later my composition teacher. He was a very good teacher of counterpoint too, so I got a very good fundamental education rather late in my life as a musician! I was already over 20; I'd begun with other studies before, studying medicine and philosophy, although I think that was more to make time to prepare for music school.

**C.F. In the seventies I read your name quite regularly in connection with people like Cornelius Cardew, Christian Wolff and Frederic Rzewski; as a group of composers you were always being cited as being involved in a 'political' music that was left of centre.<sup>6</sup> In retrospect it seems a rather awkward grouping but did it feel like a new direction to you at the time?**

E.G. I feel that I was forced to do something different: it was a time of war, the Vietnam War, and we were part of this war because we were in the West and allies of the USA, so I was forced to do something other than what I would have done if the war had not existed. And like any wartime it wasn't good for everything: I couldn't think of music all the time; I thought a lot about how we could influence events and influence people to end the war and of course this had an influence on the music. The best of it was that I was forced to rethink my situation as an artist and when I came back to pure music I was a little different, and not for the worse!

**C.F. I haven't heard the early music but just looking at the titles there's a very obvious shift from titles like 'sonata' to titles like *Night Tracks* and *Looping*.**

Example 3 Grosskopf String Quartet, second movement (opening)

|| 19  
8 (♩ = 180) Moment, ins Ungewisse geöffnet

The musical score for Example 3, Grosskopf String Quartet, second movement (opening), is presented in four staves. The time signature is 19/8, and the tempo is marked as Moment, ins Ungewisse geöffnet. The score begins at measure 112. The music is characterized by complex rhythmic patterns, including many eighth and sixteenth notes, and a sense of uncertainty. The dynamics are marked with *p* (piano) and *pp* (pianissimo). There are several accents and dynamic markings throughout the score.

\*) Akzente sehr stark und unvermittelt

E.G. I think the change in my music would have happened anyway: it began before my political engagement and then for some years I wrote very little, but when I went back to writing more music a lot had happened.

**C.F. There are some people – the sort of people who decried Nono's politically explicit music, for example – for whom politics and music are anathema, but it seems to me to be important that artists don't shut themselves off, even if the music 'suffers'. Looking round an exhibition like *Berlin, Berlin* it's hard to avoid the conclusion that the most important work is that by people like Grosz who did look long and hard at the society in which they lived. Were your 'Vietnam' pieces an attempt to do the same sort of thing?**

E.G. At that time two influences came together: one was to use speech sounds, the other was the political influence. This started to happen as early as 1969 in a piece like *Dialectics*, which I did for the Osaka Expo, where I used a quasi-sentence from Stokely Carmichael which I developed in a very abstract musical way from white noise at the beginning to the spoken sentence at the end, passing through all the intermediate steps in between in the music.

**C.F. And was it about that time that you started to use the looping technique as well?**

E.G. I didn't really research it when I first used it but it's very clear that I'd started to use it by 1971-2.

**C.F. That sort of clarification of technique, introducing a technique like looping which is quite audible, could also be related to a desire to speak through the music more clearly.**

E.G. But these things were already coming up in the earlier music as well and only when I became aware of it did I develop it as a conscious technique. It wasn't so much that I discovered the technique but rather that it emerged in my music.

**C.F. What were the first things to be looped: pitches or rhythms?**

E.G. Both: in the early electronic pieces I used little phrases of pitches and rhythm and repeated them and then put them together with other loops. There are little things like this in a piece from 1968, *Nexus* for flute, percussion and tape.

**C.F. And that technique's carried on?**

E.G. Yes, it's still there. I'm still working with the technique, although it's changed very much: now I can go down to the most basic loops of the piece. Mostly when you hear the music you can't analyse the loops very easily because they combine to form many layers, but it gives me the feeling that the whole structure is built in a very natural way. It seems to me that this periodic method of using loops is a very natural thing, even when I combine them in a very complex way.

**C.F. In a piece like *Kalypso* does each instrument have its own loop, or how does the technique work? I noticed that there are places where particular instruments predominate; in most people's music that would probably constitute some sort of climax, especially if it's one of the louder instruments that predominates, but in *Kalypso* it feels more as if the flow of events has simply become denser, in the same way that the frequency of a natural phenomenon, like waves reaching a beach, varies.**

E.G. In *Kalypso* I use the different groups of instruments – wood, metal and skins – like three different instruments or like an ensemble of three percussionists or instrumental groups. So the music is put together like an ensemble piece and the groups can

have different dynamics: one group may be *pianissimo* while the other has a *crescendo* to *fortissimo*. That's very hard for one player, of course! And in *Kalypso* these three instrumental groups also represent different layers of the time and sound structure of the piece, so it really is like music in three parts.

**C.F. Do you mean that the groups move at different speeds?**

E.G. Sometimes: every group has its own way of developing rhythm and dynamics, so in an ideal performance they should be played very polyphonically . . . I don't know if that's possible!

**C.F. Did the use of the overtone series as a source of harmonic ideas come later than the use of the looping technique? Does that work in the same way, with interlocking layers of harmonies?**

E.G. It's similar. The harmonic structure is as natural for me as the looping of periodic phrases; when I combine the harmonic spectra of different pitches I can get very complex sounds out of these combinations. I feel that my harmonic thinking changed through this use of different layers of harmonic spectra because now the harmonies appear as the result of a process. I don't think in terms of using this or that chord with this or that sort of dissonance – it's very different. Let's say I have the harmonic spectra of three different pitches: when they are combined give me constellations which make, as a result, the harmony. In this way I can have harmonies which even when they are very simple are part of a very complex construction.

**C.F. In the middle movement of *LICHTKNALL* does the music descend through a single harmony or is it made up from a series of harmonic layers?**

E.G. It's both. The main structure is a single harmonic spectrum, based on B, and the music begins on the 32nd harmonic and moves around this, going up to the 40th partial before it starts to gradually come down to the fundamental at the end. In the instrumental group there are other harmonic spectra, but the structure on B dominates the piece and its entire time structure; when other sounds appear it's only within this time structure, so that ensures that the music is very focussed.

**C.F. In a piece like *Quintett über den Herbstanfang* you seem to be able to move from very dense harmonies to very simple harmonies. Is that progression composed into the process of the whole piece?**

E.G. For me it's much more interesting to compose like this, it's much more of an adventure to see how the piece develops through its entire duration. On the other hand it can present problems, particularly in the piece you mentioned. *Quintett* is composed in five layers: five layers of harmonies of time structure and of rhythm, and it's only at the very end that you can understand the whole piece.

**C.F. And the same is true, I think, of the last part of *LICHTKNALL* – that too has to be heard right the way through. You mentioned that in *Quintett* there was a layer of time structure and a layer of rhythms . . .**

E.G. No, they're the same: in one layer there's the time structure and out of this the rhythms are developed but, on the other hand, that layer is different from the other layers. Each of the five layers has the same material, but because each layer develops differently with different meeting-points the harmonic and rhythmic constellations that result are different. When I started composing I just followed my intuition as to when to put in a new rhythm or another sound, but with the looping technique it's much clearer because

the meeting-points of the different loops give me an excuse to change things.

**C.F. Presumably, as the layers move across one another they produce all sorts of unexpected co-incidences.**

E.G. I can never predict all the things that may occur; it's an adventure every time. But I do a lot of research – that's one reason why I began using the computer some years ago, so that I could research my structures and select sections which would produce more or less the results I want.

**C.F. So you program the computer to produce the structure?**

E.G. When I first start to think about a piece I find the proportions I want to use and then I research how these proportions will work. Sometimes the particular combinations of proportions involved in a piece could go on for years – in the *Konzert für orchester in zehn Gruppen* I used a time structure which would need millions of years to return to its starting point. But it's the same with shorter time structures – the combined proportions may produce a section with many meeting points or a 'quiet' section with very few meeting points and then I choose which part I want to use. It's like a path through time: with the computer I can go along it very quickly – like going from the past to the future – and select the part I want to use for the composition. If it doesn't work I can even input other proportions as I'm composing, although usually the proportions of a piece are completely developed beforehand.

In the *Quintett über den Herbsanfang* I had this tape of things happening on the street, fights between squatters and the police, and there was a particularly dramatic moment on the tape when a big construction lorry was turned over and it was out of this sound that I developed all the time proportions for this piece.

**C.F. I see. I've used a similar sort of system but with the proviso that if a process begins at the beginning of a piece then its end will also be the end of the piece. But you're making pieces that may use just part of a huge time structure.**

E.G. It's like painting on a tiny part of some great natural form!

**C.F. How are the interruptions in LICHTKNALL, both the audible ones (the very loud synthesizer interjections) and also the danced interruptions, accommodated within the overall structure?**

E.G. They were already there in the structure. They are places where meeting-points follow one another very quickly, so I introduced these sections as interruptions, bringing in very much louder sounds and introducing different rhythms into the music. The idea of having interludes in the dance was also developed out of these points – Lucinda Childs introduced interludes in the dance at the points where these interruptions occur, but she extended this idea in the dance and her interludes are longer. My interruptions are only between five and sixteen seconds long whereas in the dance the interludes are sometimes as long as five minutes.

**C.F. I'm interested in your sense of structure in pieces with a number of movements. In LICHTKNALL the focus of the whole work seems to be the ten minute section just before the interval; the third part of the work, although it's as long as the rest of the work, is a memory of what's gone before, drawing things together and 'explaining' connections between earlier ideas in the work. But for many people in the audience this seemed quite difficult to take, perhaps because the conventional expectation in the theatre is**

**that everything is finally resolved at the very end of a piece, not in the middle.**

E.G. It's hard for people who go to the theatre and expect drama rather than meditation or incident rather than spirituality, but I believe theatre should include all these things. It should be possible to have long periods of meditation through stage action, dance, music, whatever.

**C.F. I found that when I saw the work a second time I enjoyed the last part much more. There is this fantastic event, the movement 'Lichtknall' itself, which leaves the audience wondering what on earth can possibly come next and, in a sense the last part flouts those expectations by doing something quite different. When you're writing a piece do you take people's possible preconceptions into consideration or do you hope that people will wipe themselves clean of expectations?**

E.G. Mostly I write for myself: I do what interests me and then I hope that there are some people with the same interests!

**C.F. You've just worked on two collaborative pieces, Ent-Art with Ulrich Baehr and LICHTKNALL with Achim Freyer and Lucinda Childs. Do you find collaboration a fruitful way of working?**

E.G. I met Achim Freyer in 1974-5 and he asked me to do the music for a theatre piece; I made a tape piece and that was my first experience of working together in the theatre. I could never imagine being involved in such a collaboration unless the music was just as I wanted it to be. I have to be convinced that things will be just so, otherwise I can't do it. Achim Freyer was one person with whom I could work in this way. I also did some music for films and there too at the first meeting with the director I explained how I work and that if he couldn't accept this then I wouldn't do the film.

**C.F. But do you find that when you're working with someone else, even though you're working on your terms, that things change in a way that they wouldn't if you were working on your own? In LICHTKNALL, for example, did things come into the piece that wouldn't have been there if you hadn't been working with Lucinda Childs and Achim Freyer?**

E.G. I don't think so. In LICHTKNALL the music was done first so it gave the time-structure of each of the movements and of the work as a whole. Of course the visual element of the piece affects the reception of the piece: it's quite different from just hearing the music to also see the stage picture, the dancers, the lighting and so on.

**C.F. In LICHTKNALL, when you conceived the piece, did you conceive it as a piece with dancers and, if so, was that conception anything like the final result?**

E.G. No, but then when I write a purely instrumental piece I don't think of the players; I think of the instruments and their sounds but not about personalities. In LICHTKNALL I thought of the possibility of having dance with my music and of the stage and lights but that didn't affect the music.

**C.F. So could LICHTKNALL survive as concert music?**

E.G. Oh yes. I think so. But I don't know what will happen – it's a long piece, especially the last movement!<sup>8</sup>

**C.F. I'm interested in the way you think about the reception of your music. Are you interested in taking it beyond the concert hall? Trio In Spirato, which needs a long reverberation time around the instruments, seems to be such a piece.**

E.G. That was influenced by the acoustic in Speyer cathedral – it's a musical idea that's created the piece. I thought about other places to perform music in the seventies, when I rethought my attitude to the place of music in society, and at that time I also did concerts in places like cinemas and rock music venues. But I found that the music which I write, which is based on the spirit of chamber music, needs a good acoustic, so I've come to prefer rooms with good chamber music acoustics.

**C.F. So your primary concern is with the room, not with society's ideas about what that room represents?**

E.G. Yes, it's the music that changes the room, makes it another place. Every good performance is a ritual enabling you to really listen to the music which is performed and the acoustic can intensify this ritual. With electronics – live electronics or tape – it's possible to take music into many more types of room, even into the street, because you can influence the acoustic of the place in which you are performing. So this may also change the sorts of places where music may be performed.

**C.F. In the seventies you rethought your ideas about what you were doing as a musician. I wondered what conclusions you came to then and whether they're still things in which you believe.**

E.G. There's no conclusion, in that sense. I was forced to do something else and I was also influenced in a very positive way, so that at the end of this period my music had changed and not in a bad way. I don't have a conclusion!

- 1 Lucinda Childs danced in and choreographed the first performances of Glass's *Einstein on the Beach*; Freyer directed the German première of *Satyagraha* for the Stuttgart Opera and has gone on to direct all three of Glass's 'portrait' operas in Stuttgart.
- 2 The title *Ent-Art* is a corruption of 'entartete' (degenerate), an adjective made notorious when Goebbels labelled an exhibition of modernist art, chosen by the Nazis specifically to illustrate the evils of such work, as 'Entartete Kunst'. *Ent-Art* was a bunker – designed by Ulrich Baehr, with tapes made by Grosskopf – in the midst of the exhibition 'Mythos Berlin', which during the summer of 1987 took over the derelict site once occupied by the Anhalter Bahnhof.
- 3 Rolf Michaelis, 'Ein Glanz, ein Flug, ein Feuer', *Die Zeit* (20 November 1987), p. 67.
- 4 In *Ent-Art* looping technique was used to determine the collaging of recordings of a number of Grosskopf's pieces on the tapes heard in the installation.
- 5 Honourable exceptions to this stricture are Richard Bernas – who has conducted a number of Grosskopf works (most recently the *Kammersinfonie* (1982) with Music Projects/London) and was, as a member of the long-departed Gentle Fire, a dedicatee of *Looping III* – Roger Heaton and, inevitably, the Arditti Quartet.
- 6 See, for example, Christian Wolff's sleeve-notes for Ursula Oppens' record of Frederic Rzewski's *The People United Will Never Be Defeated* (Vanguard, VSD 71248, 1978) where Grosskopf is linked with Garrett List and Cardew as 'writing music with political subjects'.
- 7 The exhibition *Berlin, Berlin* was mounted in the Martin Gropius Bau, Berlin in 1987 and attempted an historical profile of the city through the visual arts. Especially impressive, to these eyes anyway, were a series of rooms filled with the work of Otto Dix, George Grosz and Christian Schad, images clinically documenting the infirmities of post-1918 German society.
- 8 Despite Grosskopf's initial misgivings, he has decided to present the 45 minute-long last movement of *LICHTKNALL*, 'Erinnerungen', as a concert work. The première was in the 1988 Insel Musik series in Berlin.

## Selected works

\* Indicates works published by Bote & Bock (Berlin/Wiesbaden).

\*\* Indicates works published by Moeck Verlag (Celle).

All other works are published by the composer (Zietenstrasse 28, D-1000 Berlin 30).

- 1965 Sonate 1, piano trio\*  
Sonate 2, violin solo\*
- 1966 Fantasie 2, soprano, flute and cello (to a text from Paul Celan)\*  
Sonata concertante 1, flute, violin, piano and chamber orchestra\*
- 1967 Sonate 3, flute and string trio\*  
Sonata concertante 2, violin and chamber orchestra\*
- 1968 Nexus, flute, percussion and tape (with an optical installation by B. Damke, ad lib.)\*  
Prozess de Veränderung, 4- or 2-channel tape\*\*
- 1969 Dialectics, 3 instruments and tape\*\*
- 1972 Sun, 3 instrumental groups\*\*  
Night Tracks, 4- or 2-channel tape\*\*
- 1973 Looping I, 5 players and tape  
Looping III, 5-7 instruments and tape
- 1974 Looping II, 8-9 instruments  
Looping IV, rock group and tape  
Looping V (für Wen?), 8 instruments
- 1977 Lieder, voice and guitar  
Lied für Bassklarinette und Streichquartett
- 1978 Schattensprung (musikalisch-lyrisches Environment), soprano and small ensemble  
Drei Stücke für Klavier (quasi una sonata), piano solo
- 1979 Drei Blätter (Luft-Wasser-Erde), flute and tape
- 1980 Konzert für orchester in zehn gruppen, large orchestra  
Violinstück mit Obertönen, violin and tape  
Slow Motion, koto and orchestra
- 1981 Zwischen Himmel und Erde, trombone and tape  
Triodie (Solo-Quintett-Duo), piano and cello, bass clarinet, cello and percussion  
Harmonien, two pianos [see also Lichtknall]
- 1982 Quintett über den Herbstanfang, orchestra  
Kammersinfonie, wind trio, piano quartet and wind quintet
- 1983 Streichquartett 1  
Ich saz uf eime Steine ('Katastrophen herz'), clarinet, string quintet, piano and percussion
- 1984 Chaos, viola, cello and double-bass
- 1985 Erebos, viola, cello, double-bass and orchestra  
Oktett, clarinet, horn, bassoon and string quartet
- 1986 Trio InSpirato, 3 violins  
Kalypso (coupe/transformation), percussionist and tape
- 1987 LICHTKNALL (eine apokalyptische Odysee) (Harmonien-Lichtknall-Erinnerungen), instruments and electronics  
Ent-Art, electronic environment

## Discography

*Quintett über den Herbstanfang*, Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Jacques Mercier, 'Zeitgenössische Musik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland', vol. 9 (1970-80), Harmonia Mundi/EMI, DMR 1025-27.