



ALEPH GITARRENQUARTETT

Martin Smólka | „Bashō“ (for guitar quartet and soprano)
dedicated to ALEPH Gitarrenquartett
(World premiere 2016, Steirischer Herbst Graz with Daisy Press, Soprano)

english

My sketches are usually overloaded by slow, silent, fragile sounds. Hardly audible and eye-closing. This comes to extreme when I keep guitar in hands. The space of harmonics, muted sounds and tender nuances is endless and narcotic, especially when having my right ear almost glued to strings.

Demanding part of my composing activity then is searching for balance to that “water-scater” space, and trying to find something less direct than just turn to rush and speed. In “Basho” for guitar quartet I developed antinomic playing techniques: muted fortissimo, dark harmonics, long resonance caused by chopped attack, protracted haste.

The guitar quartet is treated as one instrument – for longer time hocketing, then playing in unison (while producing permanent long decay to impress like an aura), and later bringing a stretto-canon which could sound like one instrument with electric delay.

The G string of each guitar is retuned 31 cents lower to enable the opalesque harmony of 6th to 9th harmonic (of fundamental A) played by natural flageolets; as well as to open other microinterval possibilities.

The title and mood of the piece (pure, simple, fragile, dreamy, positive) are related to the classical 17th century Japanese haikai by Mutsuo Bashō. Five of them are to be sung in English by soprano singer in form of three simple songs, almost unaccompanied. The short songs are framing two spread movements of guitar music.