

Thoughts on *Remember!*

For SATB and String Orchestra ad libitum (approx. 4:30 minutes)

Remember! The global community has agreed that "the increase in global average temperature [should be held] well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels!" This is stated in black and white in the Paris Agreement of the World Climate Conference on December 12, 2015.

This composition aims to keep the memory of that commitment alive and sets to music the entire second article, which defines the goals of the agreement. It is a commitment that must be remembered again and again if we are to prevent a massive deterioration of global living conditions.

The piece was created after an extensive exploration of the fascinating and diverse compositional techniques of Arvo Pärt. His music is characterized by clear structures and forms that reflect his early serialist phase, yet it radiates a profound simplicity that is paradoxically difficult to achieve. I sought to understand the fascination that Pärt's music holds for me and for so many who listen to it by delving into his compositional thinking. Often, his music reveals an algorithm, like a small compositional recipe, that seems to generate music almost automatically. When combined with text, this music is usually not directly linked to the words, but rather allows the text to stand on its own, without being depicted literally in the music.

This was also my intention for the text of this piece, as it represents a powerful statement by 195 nations to curb climate change and make the global economy more climate-friendly. In my view, it does not call for direct musical illustration. The text should stand on its own, without the music depicting it visually. I developed my own small compositional recipe to follow this approach as much as I could and wanted to. The resulting piece was originally conceived as an a cappella version and relies on strict homophony, giving the text a prominent position. Generous pauses between phrases provide space for the listener to reflect on the ideas that have just been heard.

The version with string orchestra was created for a concert in which *Remember!* was performed alongside Pärt's *Berliner Messe* with the same instrumentation, allowing *Remember!* to stand as a companion piece.

Yannick Wittmann, 26.10.2023

Paris Agreement 2015, Article 2

1. This Agreement, [...] aims to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change, in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty, including by:

(a) Holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to one point five degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change;

(b) Increasing the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development, in a manner that does not threaten food production

and (c) Making finance flows consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development.

2. This Agreement will be implemented to reflect equity and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances.

Übereinkommen von Paris 2015, Artikel 2

1. Dieses Übereinkommen zielt darauf ab, [...] die weltweite Reaktion auf die Bedrohung durch Klimaänderungen im Zusammenhang mit nachhaltiger Entwicklung und den Bemühungen zur Beseitigung der Armut zu verstärken, indem unter anderem

(a) der Anstieg der durchschnittlichen Erdtemperatur deutlich unter 2 °C über dem vorindustriellen Niveau gehalten wird und Anstrengungen unternommen werden, um den Temperaturanstieg auf 1,5 °C über dem vorindustriellen Niveau zu begrenzen, da erkannt wurde, dass dies die Risiken und Auswirkungen der Klimaänderungen erheblich verringern würde;

(b) die Fähigkeit zur Anpassung an die nachteiligen Auswirkungen der Klimaänderungen erhöht und die Widerstandsfähigkeit gegenüber Klimaänderungen sowie eine hinsichtlich der Treibhausgase emissionsarme Entwicklung so gefördert wird, dass die Nahrungsmittelerzeugung nicht bedroht wird;

(c) die Finanzmittelflüsse in Einklang gebracht werden mit einem Weg hin zu einer hinsichtlich der Treibhausgase emissionsarmen und gegenüber Klimaänderungen widerstandsfähigen Entwicklung.

2. Dieses Übereinkommen wird als Ausdruck der Gerechtigkeit und des Grundsatzes der gemeinsamen, aber unterschiedlichen Verantwortlichkeiten und jeweiligen Fähigkeiten angesichts der unterschiedlichen nationalen Gegebenheiten durchgeführt.