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**Verena Mayer / Roland Koberg**  
**Elfriede Jelinek. A Portrait**

**Translated by Philip Schmitz**

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<sup>1</sup> "The Black Messenger Woman," a radical feminist periodical. *TRANS*.

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• preface

We met Elfriede Jelinek at her house in Vienna and were ushered into the reception area, a bright room with a parquet floor and a grand piano. It is the kind of ambiance that automatically makes you sit on the edge of the chair and straighten your back to mount some kind of response to the elegance of the hostess. She devotes herself to visitors with the attention that is typical of a Viennese lady. Even after hours Elfriede Jelinek would not dream of glancing at

her watch or indicating through any other gesture that she still had other plans. She expects her interlocutors to notice of their own accord.

A modern sculpture stands in the corner. On a shelf in the bookcase, surrounded by tchotchkes and pairs of stuffed animals, lies a selection of books, among them works by Sigmund Freud and the autobiography of Oliver Kahn. The topics we discuss span a similarly wide range. One doesn't "talk to" Elfriede Jelinek, one "converses with" her. In her soft, melodious Viennese she touches on the things she has read or heard about, subjects that excite and interest her. That can be the latest stage production by Christoph Schlingensiefel or, just as easily, the non-fiction book of the month, the cannibal of Rotenburg or the Comme des Garçons fashion label.

The object is to spin a conversational thread from this material in a way that it neither breaks nor grows too thick. For Elfriede Jelinek, conversation, whether conducted verbally or in writing, means testing ideas and toying with opinions about herself and others. It is not a far cry from Viennese "Schmäh."<sup>2</sup> Eyeing the mixed double that asked her in the summer of 2004 whether they might come by in person because they didn't want to present the matter via E-mail, Elfriede Jelinek remarks, "When the reasons can't be divulged by E-mail, it's always about a pregnancy."

It turned into a portrait. Until now there have been none in book form, an enormous amount of secondary literature on Elfriede Jelinek notwithstanding. She is not an author who sensitively renders her own experiences as literature or creates autobiographically tinged figures – with the notable exception of her novel *The Piano Teacher*. Although she enjoys reading biographies herself and incorporates them in her texts, she doubted whether it is possible to summarize a

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<sup>2</sup> A typically Viennese style of wit and humor. *TRANS*.

life biographically. This apparently led to a certain shyness about approaching her with that kind of proposal.

A portrait calls for subjectivity and a depiction that reflects the age. After a good number of lengthy conversations with Elfriede Jelinek we felt encouraged on both counts. The questions that still remained we took up with her friends and companions along the way, with theater people and teachers, editors and writer colleagues. Drawing on unresearched archival material we reconstructed the history of her family, which Elfriede Jelinek herself knew mostly from hearsay. It is a family chronicle that reflects the vicissitudes of Austria's recent past – particularly the story of her father, who was a “half-Jew” and therefore had to assist the Nazis. It was her family history that also repeatedly drove Elfriede Jelinek to occupy herself with the history of her homeland.

Her family and the city of Vienna, which itself functions like a “dear family,” are constant force fields in the author's life. For decades she lived alone with her mother. Vienna, the city of music and psychoanalysis, of “Schmäh” and chasms, is ever present in Elfriede Jelinek's writing, as is the pleasure the Viennese take in stage production – whether it expresses itself in her extravagant language or in her way of styling herself into a cigarillo-smoking female in leather, a little girl wearing braids or a woman in a sweatshirt. Isabelle Huppert, who personified Elfriede Jelinek's best-known female figure, Erika Kohut in *The Piano Teacher*, remarked, “She has the ability to penetrate the most ghastly things. But there's also a certain lightness about her. She's interested in life's superficialities, too, and knows how to enjoy them.”

In this portrait we explore the main features of Elfriede Jelinek's voluminous oeuvre. It comprises not only novels and dramas, but also poems, compositions, screen plays, radio plays, librettos, translations, journalistic texts and hundreds

of essays. She is an author who reinvented herself time and again. In her writings she explores genres which she simultaneously adopts and parodies, a realistic novel just as much as a farce with songs. Elfriede Jelinek has always had a great sensitivity for the topics of her times. She has written about female factory workers, the anarchism of the seventies and, on the eve of the collapse of the Berlin Wall, about German nationalism. Whether it was the question of historical guilt, pornography or the Iraq War, her books establish certain themes. Our book investigates these thematic relationships and orders them in a loose chronology.

In her Austrian homeland Elfriede Jelinek has often been reduced to the role of one who “fouls her own nest,” by fans as well as foes. But the very fact that she is a politically involved woman saved her from having to be a political writer. As an author she asserts the rights of an artist, and as a public personality the right to hold decided opinions. This mixture has frequently provoked reactions, primarily among men, that created extremely unfavorable impressions although some people even acquired a certain notoriety through them. For example, 82-year-old Knut Ahnlund, a member of the Nobel Prize Committee, who noisily resigned from office after reading her works. However, he only took this action in the fall of 2005, one year after the committee he belonged to had awarded Elfriede Jelinek the prize.

The Nobel Prize certificate lies on the grand piano, that relic of her career as a musician. Elfriede Jelinek plays very rarely, occasionally Schubert or Brahms Lieder when she accompanies a female friend who is a singer. The only things she lays her hands on less frequently are the guitar, violin and viola cases lying underneath the piano. After the Nobel Prize she continued to write just as she has always written – essays and newspaper articles, a play that premiered in 2005, and an additional one that she has finished.

Elfriede Jelinek's oeuvre is extremely heterogeneous, not least because she uses a wide range of media. The Internet has meanwhile become her favorite instrument. What makes her work cohesive, though, is its intense involvement with language itself, which seems to grow stronger in every piece. "All rejection of language means death," Roland Barthes once wrote. With Elfriede Jelinek it is language that survives.

- tuning – the instruments *klage (lament) 1964*

When Elfriede Jelinek practiced the piano as a student, the apartment windows stood wide open. It was noisy outside. Every few minutes in the 8<sup>th</sup> District a streetcar rumbled down the slope of Laudongasse. The building across the street housed a dubious cafe, where men came and went for the purpose of making the acquaintance of ladies via table telephones. An exhaust fan blew smoke and kitchen fumes out into the street, and the odors drifted up to the piano student on the second floor. In the evenings clusters of people moved past her building, laughing and making noise as they headed for the revue theatre at the next intersection. But the windows were not closed — the neighbors in the apartment building and the people on the street were supposed to hear the child making music. Elfriede's mother wanted it that way, referring to it as "giving a concert." And so the girl sat inside at the grand piano hour after hour, playing against that which was without.

Art numbers among the first things that Elfriede Jelinek learned about in life. As a small child she was sent to a private dance school for ballet lessons. Then came the instruments. At age six Elfriede began with piano; she learned quickly. This was followed by the next instruments, recorder and violin, when she turned



nine. Even as an elementary student she had a schedule like a professional musician. In the morning she rose at six o'clock, practiced for an hour, and then went off to school. In the afternoons she attended music school or ballet, or she practiced, and in the evenings she still had her homework to do. Even during vacation she did not pause. The family usually spent their summers at the home of Elfriede's grandmother, in a house perched high above a small village in Styria. In the winter it was snowed in, and even in the summertime it was difficult to reach. Other than a few cottages scattered around it there was nothing but woods and meadows. At almost 1,000 meters above sea level, the farmstead lacked almost every comfort. But it had a piano. At the behest of Elfriede's mother the villagers had hauled a grand piano up the steep path.

While summer vacationers hiked past and the village youth splashed down by the river, Elfriede sat with her instruments. She didn't enjoy it, she played her pieces until the clock showed that practice time was up. Her mother kept a strict eye on her because she wanted the child to become a famous musician. It was the mother who set the tone in the family. Even at the foot of the Alps, the windows had to be open when Elfriede practiced.

**vienna, city of music** Elfriede Jelinek, born on October 20, 1946, was the only child of a quiet, solitary man and a capable, ambitious mother. If she had grown up somewhere else, a mother like Ilona Jelinek<sup>1</sup> would probably have put her on a tennis court or an ice skating rink. But the Jelineks were from Vienna, and Vienna is the city of music.

In Vienna, music has always served as a means of achieving distinction. The city erected an opulent monument to waltz composer Johann Strauß, a gilded statue of the musician with a violin under his chin. Any Viennese family with a good opinion of itself has a piano at home, lesser people a pianino, and the

upper bourgeoisie a grand by the Vienna-based Bösendorfer company, or better. To this day piano lessons are a status symbol for a certain class, and people who really stand for something have subscriptions to the Vienna State Opera or the Philharmonic. Frequently passed from generation to generation, these season seats represent something like the insignia of social status. There are those who stand on line all night and still only get tickets for the “Juchhe,” as the highest tier is called in Vienna. And then there are those who have always been booked into their traditional seats.

Vienna, with its century-old courtly and catholic traditions, always tends to gauge people by where they stand, rather than by their abilities or possessions. For the self-image of the Viennese bourgeoisie, all that counts are one's origins. As a consequence, labeling someone “nouveau riche” is one of the most disrespectful things you can say – for example, to individuals who visit the State Opera on the very day that it is extremely profitable, in other words on the occasion of the Opera Ball. But in another respect this implies that one is always perceived as a member of the social class of one's birth, unless one becomes an artist, preferably a musician.

Elfriede Jelinek's parents lived the life of the petty bourgeoisie. Born in 1900, Friedrich Jelinek came from a typical, blue-collar Viennese family. His father hailed from Bohemia and held a job as a warehouse keeper. Ilona Jelinek's father was a butcher by training who traveled the countries of the Danube Monarchy as a meat buyer and later worked for the postal service. But Ilona Jelinek had an idea of what a good home should be like. Her grandfather, Wenzel Buchner, was a silk manufacturer.<sup>2</sup> In the heyday of the Viennese silk industry he had become extremely wealthy and owned a fortune in securities in addition to several houses. “Our father was a building owner and a silk producer,” runs a line in a traditional Viennese song. The combination of textile

manufacturing and real estate ownership appears to fit the Viennese archetype of wealth and prestige. He lived with his family in a villa in Kalksburg on the outskirts of Vienna. Servants took care of everything, his sons had tutors from France and grew up with the idea that money didn't matter. Ilona, who was born in 1904, spent a lot of time as a child with her grandparents at the villa in Kalksburg. The family fortune had been lost in war bonds and the inflation following the First World War, but Ilona Jelinek had nevertheless developed a feeling for an upper class lifestyle. Although she herself could no longer go back, she intended for her daughter to make the leap.

Elfriede Jelinek was trained to become a musician and be something better. The girl had hardly mastered the Flea Waltz when she was given a Steinway concert grand. Ilona Jelinek had gone into a music store in nearby Alser Straße one day and wheedled the instrument out of a temporary employee, far below its value. Later, the store owner tried in vain to buy it back. This grand piano — it stands in Elfriede Jelinek's reception room today — was probably the most expensive object in the antiquated apartment building. Most of the tenants didn't even have a toilet to themselves. Curiously, Ilona Jelinek didn't know a great deal about music, although she did have a "beautiful natural voice," as the family recalls from attending church. For her the most fascinating thing about music was actually the musicians themselves, the sight of people accomplishing something on an instrument. The tragedy for Elfriede Jelinek during these years lay in her musicality; she had the ability to meet the demands her mother imposed, generally without rhyme or reason.

**the organ professor** At age 13 Elfriede Jelinek was to begin a career as a professional musician. Her piano teacher advised her to switch to the organ, and Elfriede applied for admission to the Vienna Conservatory.

Like the University of Music and Performing Arts, the Conservatory trains professional musicians. Its curriculum is extremely demanding; the selection process is rigorous. Each year thousands of students apply from all over the world. Only a fraction of them make the grade and finish with a diploma. For her entrance examination in September 1960 Elfriede was taken out of her school classroom unprepared. At the examination the thirteen-year-old stood out as a “very good musical and rhythmic talent”<sup>3</sup> and was accepted – as the youngest student at the Conservatory. When she appeared for her first organ lesson, her mother was leading her by the hand. Ilona Jelinek also sat next to her when Elfriede practiced her finger exercises. At the second organ lesson it was only with difficulty that her mother could be persuaded to wait for her daughter outside the practice room.<sup>4</sup>

Elfriede’s teacher was Leopold Marksteiner. He received an honorary doctorate, is now retired and lives in the imperial section of downtown Vienna, surrounded by books, works of art and his organ. If he leaves his windows open when he plays, people on the Graben below can hear his music. He was immediately taken by the girl who came to him for a lesson back then. At the time he made a notation in the student file where the teachers entered their semi-annual evaluations: “Intelligence and musicality in equal measure.” Elfriede sat down at the conservatory organ four times a week and practiced for two hours. Once a week she had a double period with her instructor. Her progress, Leopold Marksteiner noted, was “phenomenally resonant.”<sup>6</sup>

Elfriede enjoyed the organ, in that one had to have absolute control over the instrument and yet something almost intoxicating could emerge. “Somehow your circuits are constantly overloaded,” she later wrote in an essay for her teacher, “as if your being were totally inundated with information that is searching for you, and at the same time you must flee from it in order to save

yourself, because otherwise you would snap from all of the tremendous energy that is coursing through you. Paradox. As if the music (in my case later, as the last stop so to speak: language) were the earth that you are walking on, but you repeatedly want to run away from the ground you are moving across, which is naturally impossible, because you would otherwise fall into boundless depths”<sup>7</sup> But playing the organ also entailed great physical exertion for Elfriede since she was very delicate. She struggled through just as she had been accustomed from earliest childhood, she took her intermediate examinations and performed at student recitals. “I told myself, you must be capable of doing it and you will be, no, the other way around, you will be capable of it and you must.”<sup>8</sup> What her mother expected of her was achievement; achievement was the only thing that mattered to Ilona Jelinek at all.

Elfriede Jelinek studied at the Vienna Conservatory for ten and a half years. Located in the vicinity of the State Opera House in a narrow, gray, inner city street and under municipal administration for the longest time, the atmosphere at the Conservatory is as much like a government office as a school. The faculty includes many members of the Vienna Symphony Orchestra or the Philharmonic, and so it is said that the Conservatory teaches the Viennese sound. Music is played everywhere. Students with their violins quickly practice one more time in the restrooms before having to go into class. These conservatory restrooms, by the way, will resurface in Jelinek’s novel *The Piano Teacher* as the site of sexual practices that abuse the body like an instrument.

Leopold Marksteiner, Elfriede’s teacher, did not fail to notice how much pressure she had to endure. She was shy and quiet and had nothing at all in common with other young people her age. As time went by, he became a surrogate for his pupil’s reclusive father who was suffering from a progressive dementia and could no longer relate to his environment. When Elfriede Jelinek

grew older she would discuss literature and art with Leopold Marksteiner and exchange ideas about films. Particularly during her teenage years her organ teacher was an important attachment figure, and they were both aware of it, even without discussing it at length. She did experience him as strict, but she was certain that she would learn more from him than from anyone else. Her instruction periods were a place “where, granted, the world wasn’t any slower but you could counter it with something, the thing that music is, an audibility of the passage of time.”<sup>9</sup>

She played pieces by Buxtehude, Bach, Reger and Hindemith, as the curriculum required. And she was interested in everything that was modern. At the time the country producing the most interesting organ music was France. Elfriede Jelinek asked her teacher to go through pieces by composer Olivier Messiaen. If it was avant-garde, nothing was too difficult for her. She had an “almost fanatical drive to learn contemporary music,” noted Leopold Marksteiner.<sup>10</sup> Elfriede Jelinek’s interest in new forms and techniques originated during these years. Absorbing each of the most modern forms of expression is a theme that runs through her life and work.

One year after passing the entrance examination for organ, Elfriede Jelinek applied for piano instruction at the Conservatory. The teacher stipulated a half-year trial period because she was appalled by how many subjects the girl was carrying simultaneously.<sup>11</sup> Elfriede was still playing violin and recorder at a district music school, later adding guitar and viola. Her heavy course load notwithstanding, Elfriede passed her trial period and was always prepared when she arrived for instruction. Although she was now also being trained as a pianist, the instrument did not appeal to her as strongly as the organ. At the organ, to use her words, she pressed “a button and the tone color was there, and I couldn’t change the sound even with my hands.”<sup>12</sup> The piano, however, implies a “culture

of touch,” as she wrote in *The Piano Teacher*. The force of the instrument and the “unemotional aspect of playing the organ, where the strongest feelings have their mathematical measure”<sup>13</sup> suited her more. Her piano teacher viewed Elfriede Jelinek as an exceptionally talented and “very interesting pupil”<sup>14</sup> but found that she was somewhat awkward because she was growing and her hands were too big.<sup>15</sup> Elfriede fought her way through Reger’s “Special Studies for the Left Hand” and Bach’s “French Suites,” played Beethoven and Schönberg, and Czerny’s “The Art of Finger Dexterity” in between. Schubert’s “Winter Journey” fascinated her the most. This lieder cycle based on poems by Wilhelm Müller, where a wanderer departs on his cold journey in search of a lost love, accompanied her throughout her studies. The final songs in the cycle that speak of loneliness and hopelessness appealed to her particularly.

**anna, erika and clara** Elfriede Jelinek drew on her musical career as material for her novels on two occasions. In her 1980 book, *Wonderful, Wonderful Times*, a secondary school student named Anna – “rendered asocial by an insane mother” – grows up in a petty bourgeois family. While all the other youths are listening to hit tunes, Anna is devoting herself to the piano. She is confronted with her foreignness at every occasion. On a school field trip she and her class come to an inn that has a jukebox. One of the girls jokingly claims that it also contains a record by Bach. Anna dashes over “so that she too has her own music, that nobody understands, only she alone, and that she can explain,” Jelinek sarcastically writes. But all Anna finds is Elvis Presley, and her classmates have yet another reason to poke fun at her. In the end, she winds up roaming the area with a band of youths.

The novel *The Piano Teacher* which was published three years later tells of pianist Erika Kohut who teaches at the Vienna Conservatory. She had walked a difficult road to get there. As a child she was forced into a musical “harness”

and “wound with the cords of her daily obligations like an Egyptian mummy.”<sup>16</sup> Four retrospective chapters roll out the story of Erika’s youth and the stamp of compulsion and musical obsessiveness it bore. As a girl, Erika rushes from one rehearsal to the next, wedging herself together with her violin, viola and flute – “like a clumsily draped butterfly” – into a street car at rush hour. The “people’s wrath” descends on the girl and ejects her at the first best stop. When the next electric tram comes along, the student, who is seething inside like a terrorist, goes on the attack: “studded with her instruments, she careens into the people who are returning home from work and detonates a cluster bomb right in their midst.”<sup>17</sup>

Even though Elfriede held up under the pressure and was almost always prepared when she appeared at the Conservatory, her teachers looked on with concern. After enrolling for organ and piano at the Conservatory, she also registered for recorder and, not yet 16, had then added composition – all of this over and above her schoolwork. In addition to her required subjects at the “Gymnasium,” Elfriede signed up for four electives: Russian, French, Literature Appreciation, and Choir. On several occasions her teachers tried unsuccessfully to persuade Ilona Jelinek to allow the child her youth, but to no avail. “Elfi can handle it,” her mother would typically reply.

“In my personal opinion she is the victim of a misguided upbringing,” her composition teacher stated.<sup>18</sup> Elfriede attended a dancing course at the Conservatory, played viola in the orchestra there, and performed chamber music at the district music school. With a daily schedule like hers, she actually viewed the stringed instruments as her salvation. As time-consuming as the orchestra rehearsals were, at least Elfriede was among people and had social contacts. Where art took precedence, the company of her peers was superfluous. Elfriede Jelinek, the child prodigy who had been robbed of her youth, was supposed to



have as little contact with others as possible outside of her studies. A standpoint that has become second nature for Erika in *The Piano Teacher*: “SHE is always superior to others, but during this period her mother elevates her far above the others.”

A grotesque mixture of dressage and functioning under obligation defined Elfriede Jelinek’s youth. Her cousin, Hans Uhl, who also visited Styria often and whose traits can be seen in the figure of “Burschi” in *The Piano Teacher* remembers one scene to this day: Elfriede was on vacation in Styria and wanted to run across a meadow but her mother was close behind, ordering her to turn cartwheels so that she would become graceful. To avoid jeopardizing Elfriede’s career, Ilona Jelinek at times even prohibited contact with relatives, for example, her husband’s two sisters, Elfriede’s aunts Vilma and Emmy.

Elfriede practiced; the others lived their lives. She was supposed to register as little as possible about reality, about the dubious “Theatercafé” across the street. Her mother would fetch her from the street car or wait for her at the entrance to their building. Every Sunday she took her daughter to mass at the Maria Treu Church. Elfriede was to remain the sweet, decent girl who had been a forceps delivery and that Ilona Jelinek would not release again. Elfriede did not attend any balls, as Viennese secondary school girls do, and she didn’t go out. She witnessed from afar the pastel-colored world of the fifties and sixties, to which she so dearly wanted to belong, the artificial idyll between kidney-shaped tables and espresso cafes, the “streams of neon light,”<sup>20</sup> the dolled-up girls with their rustling petticoats, stiletto heels and bouffant hairdos. In the evenings she noticed how street car “Number 5” disgorged working people, “musty stairwells suddenly come alive, family women lunge for the door to welcome the men who pay their upkeep, tearing away their shabby brief cases, the dented food containers, the thermos bottles; among the better classes they wrench away their attaché cases plus newspapers, the remains of knockwurst, the greasy papers etc.

[. . .] The first of the maltreated children to be slapped in the face are raising their shrill voices.”<sup>21</sup>

For Anna, the piano student in *Wonderful, Wonderful Times*, being alone with herself and her music is also a fundamental experience. When she practices at home she hacks “away and thinks, how good that finally there is somewhere I can vent my intense hatred, without having to turn it against myself, where it would be misplaced.”<sup>22</sup> Her rage over her desperate situation renders her speechless, and as the novel progresses she stops speaking entirely, in antithesis to the tales Elfriede obsessively spun, attracting attention at home and at school.

Elfriede Jelinek’s contempt for Anna knows no limits. As soon as she introduces her own life into her books, she turns merciless. “Anna wants to express most things in music. Today, she has already laid Schumann and Brahms into the keyboard, tomorrow it might be Chopin and Beethoven. The music speaks the words that her mouth cannot utter, even something that comes from the dear Lord, as many composers (Bruckner) have claimed about themselves.”<sup>23</sup> For the entire length of the novel Anna is defined by hatred and her inability to hold her own among her peers. The motif is repeated so monotonously that at some point it even the narrator herself is nothing but irritated. When Anna screams for help she adds, “Which comes across as ‘squawk, squawk.’ ”

Anna’s boy friend Hans, the son of a blue-collar family, does not take her seriously; her twin brother Rainer reads Sartre and Camus all day and is no help either. The scholarship to America that is supposed to take Anna out of Vienna is awarded to Sophie Pachhofen (“formerly von Pachhofen”) a schoolmate with an upper class background. In this incident Elfriede Jelinek grapples with a trauma from her own school days: she was awarded a scholarship to the United States but her mother would not allow her to accept it.

Sophie stems from one of the Viennese families that lost the “von” in front of their names, but not their influence, after the First World War. She lives in a villa in the Hietzing section of Vienna, her parents have a subscription to the Philharmonic. From birth, Sophie has everything that Anna will never acquire – not even through art, “the only realm that stands open to you, if you’re lucky.”<sup>24</sup> Because art has been even more monopolized by families like the Pachhofens, with their home full of paintings and objects “that exude antique art and a culture you can only share when you have somehow acquired these things.”<sup>25</sup>

Anna and Erika: two different pianists with one and the same problem. They want to become someone else. The one gives free rein to her pubertal rebellion and attacks people on the street with a gang of youths. The other, 20 years her senior, succumbs to sexual aberrations. Neither of them can escape music or their own milieu.

They were not to remain the only female pianists in Elfriede Jelinek’s oeuvre. Her *Die Kinder der Toten* (1995) (the children of the dead) tells of Karin Frenzel, a woman in her mid-fifties who earned her living by playing the piano and is now among the living dead. In the novel *Gier* (2000) (greed) an elderly woman named Gerti who played the piano for extra income is cheated out of her house by a police officer. For her play *Clara S.* (1982) Elfriede Jelinek took aim at the myth of a handicapped female artist, the life of Clara Schumann, née Wieck, who was raised to be a pianist by her father and was forced to support her eight children by the side of a husband who would later become mentally deranged. In *Clara S.* music appears as the yoke to which one (in this instance a woman oppressed by a man’s obsession with genius) must bend in order to achieve social status. Even the first stage direction of this “musical tragedy,” as the piece is ironically subtitled, points to the compulsive character of music. The author

calls for a concert grand as a stage prop. “Strapped into a kind of training brace [ . . . ] that is meant to teach the pupil the correct posture for playing the piano, little Marie is piercingly and obtrusively practicing Czerny’s finger and trill exercises.”<sup>26</sup>

- notes

**tuning – the instruments** *klage (lament) 1964*

**1** Elfriede Jelinek’s mother was named Olga Ilona. Since she was called by her middle name her entire life, however, we will also use it in the following.

**2** Betriebsarchiv Wienenergie – Wienstrom (BAWS), Personalakte Friedrich Jelinek (Wienenergie – Wienstrom Company Archives. Personnel file for Friedrich Jelinek)

**3** Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv (WSLA), M. Abt. 813, Studentenakte Elfriede Jelinek, Studienjahr 1960/61. (Archive of the City and State of Vienna, Municipal Department 813. Student file for Elfriede Jelinek, 1960/61 academic year.) The record reflects 6 years of piano and 3 years of recorder and violin as preparatory musical training.

**4** Conversation with Leopold Marksteiner in Vienna on November 8, 2004

**5** WSLA, M. Abt. 813, 1960/61.

**6** Ibid.

**7** Elfriede Jelinek, “Die Zeit flieht. Für meinen Orgellehrer Leopold Marksteiner,” in *Siebzig. Felicitationi (Festschrift für Leopold Marksteiner)*, edited by Andreas Vejvar, (Vienna: Apokryphen-Verlag, 1999), 9.

**8** Ibid., p. 11.

**9** Ibid., p. 9.

**10** WSLA, M. Abt. 813, 1964/65.

**11** WSLA, M. Abt. 813, 1961.

**12** Elfriede Jelinek, Conversation with Adolf-Ernst Meyer, in *Sturm und Zwang. Schreiben als Geschlechterkampf*, edited by Jutta Heinrich and Adolf-Ernst Meyer, (Hamburg: Ingrid Klein Verlag, 1995), 71.

**13** Ibid.

**14** WSLA, M. Abt. 813, 1963/64.

**15** Ibid., 1961/62.

**16** PT (The Piano Teacher) 104

**17** PT 22

**18** WSLA, M. Abt. 813, 1965/66.

**19** PT 105

**20** PT 73

**21** WT (Wonderful, Wonderful Times) 26

**22** WT 8

**23** WT 181

**24** WT 14

**25** WT 45

**26** PL (Plays) 81

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