

Karlheinz Stockhausen 9/11 comment

In a press conference in Hamburg on 16 September 2001, Stockhausen was asked by a journalist whether the characters in *Licht* (a Stockhausen opera) were for him "merely some figures out of a common cultural history" or rather "material appearances". The composer replied, "I pray daily to Michael, but not to Lucifer. I have renounced him. But he is very much present, like in New York recently" (Stockhausen 2002, 76). ' The same journalist then asked how the events of September 11th had affected him, and how he viewed reports of the attack in connection with the harmony of humanity represented in *Hymnen* (a Stockhausen composition)

He answered:

'Well, what happened there is, of course—now all of you must adjust your brains—the biggest work of art there has ever been. The fact that spirits achieve with one act something which we in music could never dream of, that people practise ten years madly, fanatically for a concert. And then die.[Hesitantly.]

And that is the greatest work of art that exists for the whole Cosmos. Just imagine what happened there.

There are people who are so concentrated on this single performance, and then five thousand people are driven to Resurrection. In one moment. I couldn't do that. Compared to that, we are nothing, as composers. [...] It is a crime, you know of course, because the people did not agree to it. They did not come to the "concert".

That is obvious. And nobody had told them: "You could be killed in the process." (Stockhausen 2002, 76–77.)

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'At the press conference in Hamburg, I was asked if Michael, Eve and Lucifer were historical figures of the past and I answered that they exist now, for example Lucifer in New York. In my work, I have defined Lucifer as the cosmic spirit of rebellion, of anarchy. He uses his high degree of intelligence to destroy creation. He does not know love. After further questions about the events in America, I said that such a plan appeared to be Lucifer's greatest work of art. Of course I used the designation "work of art" to mean the work of destruction personified in Lucifer. In the context of my other comments this was unequivocal'. (Stockhausen 2001a)