

The Role of the Drawings in Kaija Saariaho's *Lichtbogen*

MIYAKAWA Wataru

Kaija Saariaho considers the *aurora borealis*, which she discovered in Lapland, to be a significant source of inspiration for *Lichtbogen*, her work for nine musicians and live electronics (1986). She created several drawings inspired by the image of the aurora to construct her musical ideas. The primary sources (including the drawings) produced by Saariaho during the composition of *Lichtbogen* are presently housed at the Paul Sacher Foundation in Switzerland. The aim of this article is to examine the role of the drawings during the drafting process of the work.

Indeed, a close study shows that Saariaho produced these drawings, not only to depict the image of the aurora, but also to conceive her own musical form. Form has been always a crucial aspect of her work. The outcome of her undertaking lies in the notion of a “timbral axis”, that is, the relation between musical tone and noise. Saariaho used this concept to replace the relation between consonance and dissonance in tonal music. She sought to create a dynamic form by organizing musical elements such as “timbral axis”, range, or rhythm in a different manner. To this end, the drawings played a crucial role.

However, our study shows that, rather than being bound by the drawings, Saariaho based her work freely on them.