

When a flock of ravens rises to the sky, there is a hoarse *kraah kraah*. At first, it may be surprising that ravens are considered songbirds, and are even considered the culmination of songbird evolution by ornithologists. They master a gentle chatter song and have an extraordinarily broad vocal spectrum, even though it is only rarely used, and that barely audibly. The outcome of this is analogous to the human voice, which hardly uses the potential of the larynx and its related resonances, and leaves a splendid register unplayed. The ravens' world of sounds and their mythological meaning inspired this album. How do you become the talk of the town when the bird that sings within croaks?

When the speech centre and capacity for remembering are compromised, you are confronted with a completely new form of communication. I had to deal with this for a while, and started integrating the non-verbal expression of the human voice into my work and experimenting with it. It was then that I developed a big empathy for yodeling, because untempered, natural alpine tones and pre-linguistic sound connections unfold incomparably therein. However, this joyful, brute expression of cheerfully applying the glottal stop was still ill-reputed at Swiss music academies. But for me it became a discovery that left a crucial impression on my music. In the end it was yodeling that brought me closer to an understanding of the natural voices of various cultures of our world.

It is commonly thought that my overtone singing is of Asian, that is to say Mongolian origin, but this is not quite correct. My overtone technique is based on western ideas and is different from Asian vocals. It was only in the past few years, when I started really mastering the technique, that I visited these countries and worked with musicians from other cultures, and found my expression surprisingly autonomous. In Asia I was told that the whistling tones of overtone singing do not come from your own throat, but rather from the spiritual bird that sings from within, and that those who possess it have a faithful messenger to the other world, the world above. If I climb to the peak of an alpine ridge, heaven comes closer. Sometimes I shout and cheer and yodel; also to get closer to the valleys again.

*kraah* contains raven songs. But the raven does not sing about death, but rather of love - contrary to its reputation, against which it repeatedly has to stand up, toing and froing between reverence and demonisation. The story of the encounter with wonderful musicians, first and foremost Georg Beinschmid and Thomas Weiss, who have conjured a completely new sound into my music and given my voice a new home, is also told. This trio takes the limelight, in the studio as well as on stage. Guest musicians create instrumental counterpoints and comments, and add versatility with personal and Helvetic cross-references. Thus *kraah* starts out with pop and ends with contemporary orchestra, but the raven awaits throughout...

I sing songs perched between words and sounds, dabble with the untouched. Clarity of thought sometimes seems to be swallowed up, slipping away. Words and language topple, turn upside down. Or, as Paul Celan once put it, "when you stand on your head, heaven becomes an abyss below."