As a response to Bernd's work *Entfernte Kusinen (Distant Cousins)*, the accompanying sound composition aims to support both the structure and mood of the video installation. As such, each 'cousin' gets her own sonic backdrop, which follows her appearance on-screen closely in terms of length, as well as dynamics. The latter unfold slowly and steadily over a time span equal for each picture, revealing a palindromic format, which has each photo fade in and out with equal proportions.

Equally, the sound unfolds with increasing dynamics and density towards the turning point at 3. 45 when both music and picture together begin their gradual withdrawal.

The basic sound material used for this composition was a 1924 recording of Schubert's *Ave Maria* performed by German soprano Elisabeth Rethberg, and it was carefully chosen to match the photographs both in terms of dating back to roughly the same point in history (early 20th Century) as well as gender, imagining Frau Rethberg lending her voice to our eight cousins.

The recording was subjected to extensive digital processing allowing me to produce heavily abstracted sound events, mainly of two types: waves of sustained blocks of sound occasionally revealing and continuously transforming Elisabeth's vocal utterances, and short, sharp, snapping noises which were derived from the crackling sounds of the old Gramophone recording. Within these two groups of sounds I built a collection of events with varying dynamics and spatial movement (left Channel, right Channel), and with regards to the former, began to outline an arrangement, which would run analogous to the development of the video, increasing in loudness and complexity, then decreasing in volume and density.

The Soundtrack for each cousin is unique, just like the photograph. They all use the same sound material but never sound completely identical. They all follow the same palindromic macro-structure, but each introduces local variations with regards to the sequence of sound events, as well as their juxtaposition with other sounds of similar dynamics.

To achieve this, I have written a Computer programme which takes instructions I have pre-determined and combines them with simple chance operations. These are confined to produce Variation within segments of 1.15 minutes in length (6 in total for each 7.5 minute Version), meaning each segment has a collection of distinct samples, carefully chosen to follow the overall structure of the piece, but with their ordering and layering left to chance. This produces unexpected and interesting results; new relationships between sounds are formed continuously, with each new Version, generating ever-changing sound morphologies not just with respect to timbre, but also spatial movement.

Listening to the sound composition I imagine someone turning the dial on an old analogue radio, tuning in to voices of the past. Every now and then, the dial is turned again and we can hear the crackling sounds between stations, until a new voice is found.

Michael Beiert, Liverpool 2013