



**EUROPEAN ACADEMY**  
of Sciences and Arts

## **Prof. Dr. Oliver Korte**

**EASA Member of Class III**

Lecture 21-4-2023

Colloquium 'Art meets Medicine'

### **Why coding? On the purpose, aesthetics, and techniques of cryptography in music.**

With the invention of writing systems came the need to keep written messages secret. Cryptography is the art of encoding a message so that it is incomprehensible to foreign eyes. In my talk, I will present my research on hidden verbal messages in music. One might think that the art of encoding text in music (not to be confused with the setting of a text to music, e.g., in a song, cantata, or opera) is quite marginal. In fact, a rather strong current exists, beginning in the Middle Ages and extending to the present. I will show some spectacular cases of encoding verbal messages in music throughout history, also discussing the purpose of each.

Coding also plays a role in my own music. I will present some brief examples from my own work in order to put contemporary possibilities of coding in music up for discussion.