

# MUSICWORKS

№18

MONTREAL

\$2.00



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# MUSICWORKS

*arf*. That's a sound. Parisian cats purr *ronron*. Onomatopoeia? Words imitating sounds. We've been scanning the articles from Quebec for this issue and sounding some of the phrases we don't understand. Sounds imitating words. Phonetics from *phoney ethics*. Webster's lists three theories: Bow Wow, Ding Dong, and Pooh Pooh. The Bow Wow Theory suggests that language stems from the imitation of natural sounds. The DDT postulates that 'language originated out of a natural correspondence between objects of sense perception and the vocal noises which were part of early men's reaction to them.' And the Pooh Poohites insist that talking started as interjections which gradually acquired meanings.

Somehow, in this country, south of the land of forty words for *snow*, everything is packaged in two somewhat similar but generally mutually incomprehensible sets of meaning burdened sounds, the ding and dong of inherited reaction. Over here in Toronto we talk using words like: 'this', 'editorial'. Over there in Montreal, Canadiens have their own way of saying what they understand. There's translation in our interactions: *Je ne sais quois* → 'Johnny talks like a duck.' We've included some redundancy to bilingualists as relief to those not. English readers are invited to also peruse the original texts, wherein the local music resonates. And apologies (*excuses*) to our Kebequois readers for this monolingual editorial. *Arf wrench iz tèr ee bluh!*

This Montréal issue of MUSICWORKS is the second with a regional focus, the first being number 15 West Coast Issue. Many thanks to contributing editors Raymond Gervais, Chris Howard and Robert Gelinias in Montréal and Susan Frykberg in Toronto for collaborating with us on this issue. Upcoming is MusicDance in number 19, and an issue having to do with animals in number 20. We welcome input from those of you with special interests in these areas. Contact us soon — deadlines are May 7 for MusicDance and July 9 for Animals & Music.

## No 18 Winter 1982

30 St. Patrick Street, Toronto, Ontario,  
Canada M5T 1V1 416-598-2450

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Design; Bob Wilcox  
Circulation; Sandor Ajzenstat

Special thanks to Marie-France Bruyère, Parachute magazine, David Jaeger, and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

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MUSICWORKS is published quarterly with the support of the Canada Council, the Ontario Arts Council, its publisher, paid advertising and subscriptions.

Letters, and unsolicited materials for publication are welcomed, and will be returned upon request.

ISSN 0225-686X

### THE COVER

P.S. I have included a photograph of my son Antoine pretending he is playing a trumpet while using a piece of the coffee machine as his main instrument! I like this particular photograph for the genuine, uninhibited approach and feeling it reveals toward music as being an exacting, demanding, yet elusive activity.

Bien Amicalement,  
Raymond

**NEXT ISSUE:**  
MUSIC/DANCE, MUSICWORKS #19, will be published May, 1982.

Published by the Music Gallery, which is financially assisted by the Canada Council, the Ontario Arts Council, Metro Toronto and the City of Toronto. The Music Gallery acknowledges the assistance of the government of Canada through the Honourable Francis Fox, Minister of Communications.

### SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

Individual in Canada	\$6	1 year
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	\$22	2 years

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full page	(15" x 10")	\$250
half page	(7" x 10")	\$140
1/4 page	(7" x 5")	\$75
1/8 page	(3 1/2" x 5")	\$40
1/16 page	(3 1/2" x 2 1/2")	\$30

## LETTERS

### AN OPEN LETTER TO THE DIRECTOR OF MUSIC PROGRAMS FOR THE ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL AND THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE CANADIAN MUSIC CENTRE

Dear Ms. Creech and Mr. Miller,

I am writing to you in reference to a matter which is of some concern to me, firstly, as a musician engaged in the creation of new music, and secondly, as an associate member of the Canadian Music Centre. The matter to which I refer is the New Massey Hall Fanfare Competition which is being funded, at least in part, by the Ontario Arts Council and organized and adminis-

tered by the National Office of the Canadian Music Centre on behalf of the New Massey Hall.

According to the competition brochure: "The aim of this competition is to create a fanfare of two to three minutes in length, in E flat major, for twelve modern fanfare trumpets or natural trumpets, valveless and long, and full orchestra and organ. The fanfare will be played at the Opening Concert of the New Massey Hall..."

As valveless trumpets have been out of common use for over one hundred years, their existence in concert halls today is extremely rare. So rare in fact that it would be very unlikely that any orchestra would undertake to locate twelve such instruments (and hire twelve extra performers) in order to play a work of such brevity. Given the aim of this competition and the extremely narrow restrictions as to orchestra-

tion, duration and form, one would expect that it should have been fulfilled through a special commission or grant rather than a national competition. There seems to be little reason in sponsoring the creation of more than one such work when it is unlikely that more than one will ever be performed.

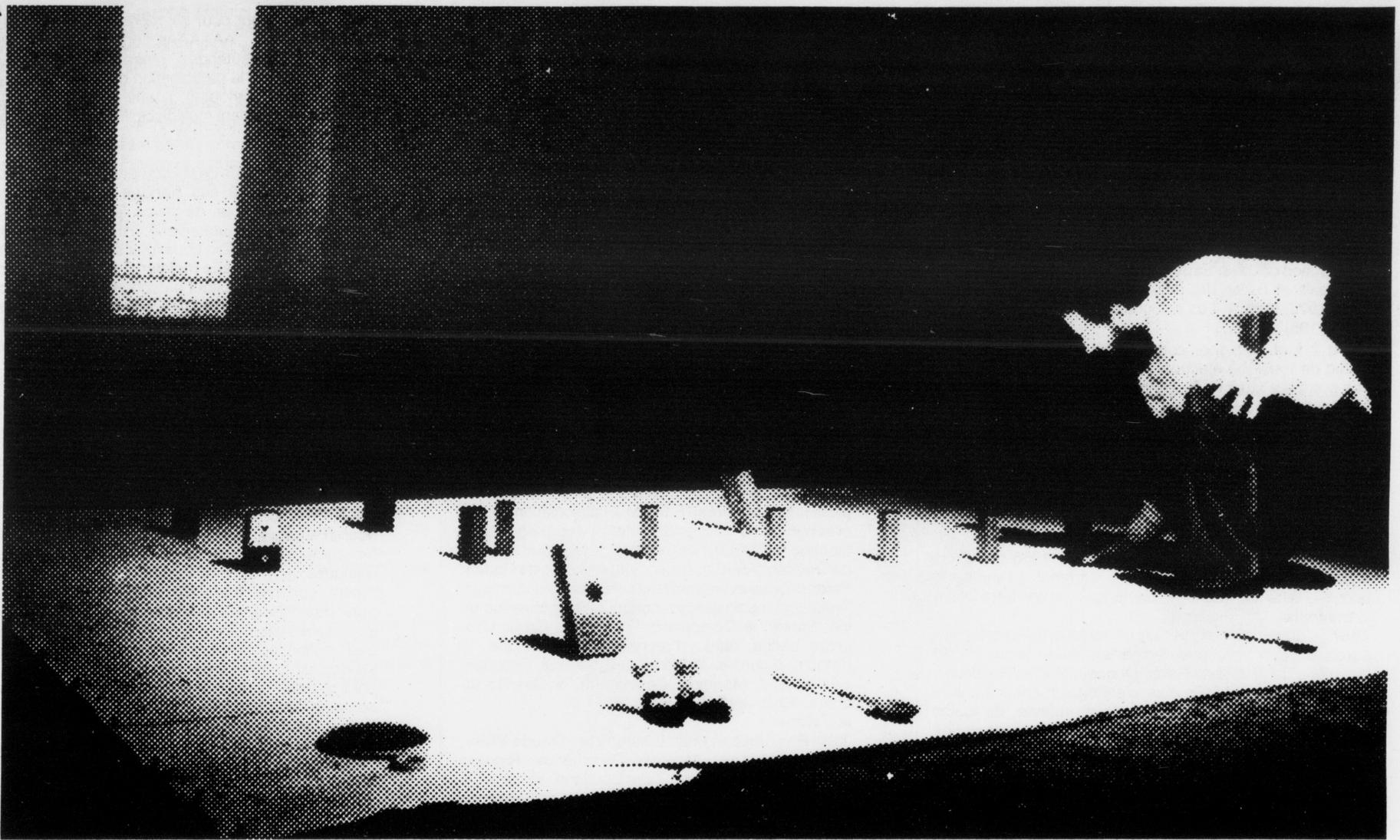
The obvious motive for holding this competition is not so much the creation of music as the creation of publicity, that is, a competition draws more attention than the commissioning of a new work. Such concentration on the publicity and exclusivity of the "opening event" rather than on the possible musical significance that the inauguration of a new concert hall might have is indeed unfortunate.

The Boston Symphony, in celebrating its 100th birthday, has recently commissioned ten new works for full orchestra by American and foreign composers — the works

are to be premiered over a period of three years. In doing so, the Boston Symphony has turned what is essentially a local celebration into one that has national and international significance, and, in the process, has managed to transcend the quality of it being a mere "event" and given its audience, and potentially audiences everywhere, a chance to enjoy the fruits of this celebration for a very long time to come.

My greatest concern as regards the New Massey Hall Fanfare Competition is that both the Ontario Arts Council and Canadian Music Centre have seen fit to become involved with it. In future, when approached with a project such as the NMH Fanfare Competition, I hope that the OAC and CMC will be able to offer alternative suggestions to the project instigators.

Paul Théberge  
Montréal



Raymond Gervais, +9=

## SONORITIES

### RAYMOND GERVAIS

#### LES MUSIQUES D'ICI ET L'ORIGINE

##### LES MUSIQUES TRADITIONNELLES

Quels rapports ces musiques (des Amérindiens, des Inuits, folklore local) pourraient-elles entretenir aujourd'hui avec la "nouvelle musique" au Québec comme ailleurs? Il faut souligner ici le travail de Ramon Pelenski, de Jean-Jacques Nattiez et du groupe de recherches de la faculté de musique de l'université de Montréal, de même que la parution d'un disque exceptionnel: Chants et Jeux des Inuits du Canada, Philips-Unesco 6586-036.

##### 1900 — EMILE BERLINER À MONTRÉAL

Les débuts de l'enregistrement, du disque et du tournage (The Berliner Gramophone Company of Canada Ltd)

##### 1918-19, MARCONI À MONTRÉAL

Les débuts de la radio. La Station XWA: "The first regularly operated broadcasting station in the world". Cf. Edward B. Moogk, Roll Back the Years, history of Canadian recorded sound and its legacy, Genesis to 1930, National library of Canada, Ottawa, 1975, p. 93.

##### 1910-1945 LES PRÉCURSEURS (quelques cas)

Alfred Laliberté (1882-1952)

Ce compositeur fit la rencontre d'Alexandre Scriabine à New York en 1907 et devint aussitôt son élève et son disciple. Il s'employa à faire connaître l'oeuvre de ce dernier au Québec par ses écrits, ses conférences, ses concerts et surtout, par le biais de son enseignement. Scriabine lui confia même les manuscrits de son célèbre *Poème de l'extase* de même que de sa *cinquième sonate*, lesquels ont été depuis 1972 remis au musée Scriabine à Moscou par madame Laliberté. Par ailleurs, Alfred Laliberté s'intéressa également au folklore amérindien et esquimaux du Québec.

Rodolphe Mathieu (1890-1962)

Ce compositeur fut initié à l'art de Scriabine par Alfred Laliberté qu'il rencontra en 1908. L'essentiel de son oeuvre fut composé entre 1910 et 1930. Ce fut à certains égards un musicien novateur incompris dans le Québec de son époque. Son *Trio* de 1922 par exemple dénote une certaine parenté d'esprit avec Arnold Schoenberg.

Ethel Stark

Cette violoniste originaire de Montréal dirigea un orchestre entièrement féminin qu'elle amena avec elle en tournée au Japon. (cf. André Asselin, *Panorama de la musique canadienne*, éditions de la Diaspora Française, 1962, p. 13)

#### JAZZ AU QUÉBEC

J'ai déjà rédigé pour la revue *MusiCanada* (no 45, hiver 81) une chronologie sommaire à ce sujet couvrant la période 1945-1980, soit des premiers enregistrements d'Oscar Peterson pour RCA en 1945 aux albums publiés tout

The following text is about new and Contemporary music in Québec, including jazz and other related musics. It covers mostly the period from 1960 until today.

The sixties were a very important decade in the history of Québec, a crucial time politically, sociologically, and musically speaking. That is when everything really began to happen. Numerous groups of musicians and multi-disciplinary artists started to work together to establish a new scene, to bring about new ideas, new works. La Semaine internationale du musique actuelle organized by Pierre Mercure in August of 1961 and for which John Cage composed *Atlas Eclipticalis* was a very important event then, together with the creation of the *Société de musique contemporaine du Québec* (S.M.C.Q.) in 1966 and Expo '67. Since then the new music scene in Québec has become more and more visible, rising from the underground to establish or confirm the reputation of several significant contributors: Richard Martin, Marcelle Deschenes, Robert Lepage, Raoul Duguay, John Rea, José Evangelista, Vincent Dionne, Robert Leriche, etc.

If the seventies were a more individualistic decade, there was nevertheless a tremendous musical activity going on which the enumeration included in this text barely accounts for. Without this being a complete summary, then, I have tried to include as much information as I could in making a short statement. The article also includes brief notes on the subject of music in relationship to the visual arts in Québec together with a bibliography and discography.

*Il ne s'agit pas dans ce court projet de texte, de tracer l'histoire de la musique au Québec sous tous ses aspects au vingtième siècle. (La chanson par exemple, un domaine en soi, n'en fait pas partie ici.) Il s'agit tout simplement d'une sélection à même l'histoire et l'actualité visant à informer le lecteur d'ici ou d'ailleurs d'une certaine diversité et pluralité de contributions au Québec sa spécificité propre quant à la musique. Sans être exhaustif donc, ce texte complémente en partie les autres écrits publiés dans ce numéro spécial sur le Québec dans la mesure où il souligne l'apport de plusieurs, groupes ou individus, qui mériteraient chacun(e) un commentaire plus élaboré, chose impossible bien entendu dans le contexte de cette publication.*

récemment sur étiquette *Cadence* par une nouvelle génération d'improvisateurs. Je ne voudrais pas répéter toute cette information ici. Certains musiciens, certains groupes sont cependant mentionnés plus loin dans ce texte en fonction d'une perspective d'ensemble plus vaste, plus globale, hors catégories. Parmi les nombreux musiciens de jazz exceptionnels que compte le Québec (Pierre Leduc, Michel Donato, Claude Ranger, Vic Vogel, Nelson Symonds, Sonny Greenwich, etc.) j'aurais aimé souligner plus en détails la contribution de deux musiciens en particulier, soit Brian Barley et Paul Bley.

**Brian Barley** est un saxophoniste originaire de Toronto mais qui vécut parmi nous plusieurs années. Il est mort accidentellement en 1971 à l'âge de 28 et seulement. C'était très certainement l'un des musiciens les plus prometteurs de sa génération. De son séjour parmi nous subsiste un très beau disque qui témoigne fort bien de son immense talent: *Brian Barley Trio*, Radio-Canada International, no 309.

**Paul Bley** est un pianiste originaire de Montréal et qui tout comme Gil Evans ou Kenny Wheeler (natifs quant à eux de Toronto) compte parmi les rares musiciens d'ici à s'être imposés à l'étranger, tant aux Etats-Unis qu'en Europe. Il a enregistré un album à Montréal pour Radio-Canada International, en décembre 1968: *Paul Bley Trio* (no 305.)

#### MUSIQUE CONTEMPORAINE (1960-70)

##### (LE QUÉBEC À L'HEURE DE LA PARTICIPATION COLLECTIVE.)

1961 constitue une date importante dans l'histoire de la musique contemporaine au Québec. C'est en effet au mois d'août de cette même année que Pierre Mercure organise à Montréal la *semaine internationale de musique actuelle* à laquelle participèrent John Cage, Edgar Varèse, Pierre Schaeffer, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Earle Brown, Mauricio Kagel, Christian Wolff, Luigi Nono, Serge Garant, Gyorgy Ligeti, Iannis Xenakis, Toshi Ichyanagi, Richard Maxfield, Morton Feldman, David Behrman, Istvan Anhalt, M. Kelemen, Kotonski, Krzysztof Penderecki, Milton Babbitt et Nikolais. C'est pour cette occasion spéciale que John Cage composa "*Atlas Eclipticalis*". Cage avait réalisé bien sûr, une dizaine d'années auparavant, le premier happening (en 1952 au Black Mountain College) et la première performance musicale post-moderne, *Silence* (également en 1952). Cependant au Québec, il nous aura fallu attendre jusqu'au début des années soixante pour qu'une telle sensibilité, une telle vision ne commence à se manifester dans les travaux de certains musiciens ou certains groupes d'artistes en rupture. Avec l'avènement de la révolution tranquille donc, on assiste à l'émergence d'une nouvelle génération de créateurs mieux informés des recherches comme des réalisations d'autrui à l'étranger. Août 1961 peut être considéré à cet égard comme une date capitale dans l'histoire de la musique contemporaine au Québec.

En effet, cette courte semaine aura en un impact fabuleux dans le milieu, dont les répercussions à long terme devaient mener à la création de la S.M.C.Q. en 1966. Cette première mise en situation du Québec dans un contexte international amena donc la remise en question de ses institutions, de son enseignement musical et de sa politique culturelle en général. Il aurait fallu traiter ici plus en détails la contribution exceptionnelle de **Pierre Mercure**, (1927-1966) à notre histoire et son itinéraire personnel, de Cage à Fluxus via l'Europe.

#### 1963-67, QUÉBEC UNDERGROUND

Durant cette période les activités souterraines se multiplient dans tous les secteurs. Il faudrait mentionner ici la contribution de **Jean Sauvageau** et des groupes L'Horloge, le Zirmate et Fusion des arts. (cf. *Québec Underground*, 1962-1972, tome 1, Les éditions Médiart, Montréal, 1973, p. 116-195)

**1964:** Il faut souligner cette année là l'installation d'un studio de musique électronique à l'université McGill (l'un des premiers studios du genre en Amérique du Nord), à l'instigation de Hugh Le Caine, un pionnier de l'électronique au Canada. (cf. sur ce compositeur/inventeur, consulter les deux articles de Gayle Young publiés dans *MUSICWORKS*, nos 14 et 17).

**1966:** Fondation de la *Société de musique contemporaine du Québec* (S.M.C.Q.) Parmi les concerts mémorables organisés par cette société depuis, on pourrait rappeler ici les soirées Varèse, Kagel, Stockhausen, New Phonic Art, Siegfried Palm, etc. C'est également en 1966 qu'**Albert Ayler** joua pour la première fois à Montréal, à l'atelier de jazz, rue de la Montagne, en compagnie de son frère Don à la trompette.

**1967:** L'année de l'exposition universelle à Montréal voit surgir plusieurs voix nouvelles dans le milieu: le *quatuor de jazz libre du Québec*, Raoul Duguay, Walter Boudreau, Richard Lacroix, etc. De plus, c'est également une année où les musiques et les musiciens du monde, de toutes traditions comme de toutes catégories, se sont donné rendez-vous parmi nous: Thélonious Monk joue à la Place des Nations, Benny Golson, Art Farmer ou Chico Hamilton au Pavillon de la Jeunesse, Ravi Shankar ou Alban Berg à la Place des Arts, Otis Redding à l'expo-théâtre, etc. ... Dans ce contexte particulièrement stimulant, il ne faudrait pas oublier de mentionner *Les Mécaniques* de Richard Lacroix et du groupe Fusion des arts au Pavillon de la Jeunesse (sortes de sculptures sonores incitant à la participation) de même le projet *Katimavik*, toujours du même groupe, ayant pour objet l'intégration (ou plutôt la fusion) à l'intérieur d'un même environnement composite, du son, de l'eau, de la lumière, de la couleur et du mouvement. (cf. *Québec Underground*, 1962-72, tome 1, p. 172-245)

#### 1968-70; QUÉBEC EN SURFACE ("OVERGROUND")

Durant cette période, les différents groupes ou individus qui travaillaient plus ou moins dans l'ombre depuis des années à renouveler le monde des arts et de la musique au Québec deviennent de plus visibles. A cet égard, l'exposition universelle de 1967 aura joué un rôle important, amenant à nouveau (tout comme en 1961) une prise de conscience des musiciens face à l'univers, un rôle de catalyseur ou de plaque tournante à partir duquel tout devenait possible, souhaitable, inévitable. Pour cette période d'activités, quelques événements majeurs seraient à signaler dont la soirée *Poèmes et chansons de la résistance*, les trois versions de *l'Osstidcho* de Robert Charlebois avec la participation du *quatuor de jazz libre du Québec*, les différents

spectacles multidisciplinaires de Raoul Duguay (*Abécédaire Babel II*, *Québec si*, *Babababellll*), en enfin, toute une série de concerts de *l'Infonie*, un groupe qui se manifesta pour la première fois à la boîte à chansons le Patriote du 17 au 22 février 1970. (cf. *Québec Underground*, 1962-72, tome 1, p. 394-431)

#### 1970-82: L'ÉNUMÉRATION

Il n'est pas possible de discuter ici, voire même de mentionner toutes les réalisations des divers groupes ou individus ces dernières années dans le domaine de la musique seulement. Elles sont beaucoup trop nombreuses. De tous ceux qui s'étaient manifestés auparavant, certains ont disparu de la circulation depuis, d'autres ont continué (la S.M.C.Q., Raoul Duguay...) ou se sont retirés en cours de route (*le quatuor de jazz libre du Québec* par exemple ou *l'Infonie*) et enfin de nouveaux noms sont venus s'ajouter à la liste plus récemment. Voici donc sous forme d'énumération un bilan sommaire (et forcément incomplet) incluant dans la mesure du possible tous ceux qui n'ont pas encore été cités auparavant dans ce texte, soit une sorte de sonoportrait temporaire, inachevé par définition, du milieu musical québécois (Jazz et Musique contemporaine surtout):

#### Groupes et Associations:

L'Atelier laboratoire, l'Atelier de musique contemporaine, Gropus 7, Métamusic, l'Atelier de musique expérimentale (A.M.E.), l'ensemble de musique improvisée de Montréal (E.M.I.M.), l'association pour la création et la recherche électroacoustiques du Québec (ACREQ), l'association de Musique actuelle de Québec (AMAQ), l'ensemble de tango de Ramon Pelenski, Les événements du neuf, Les Nocturnales, Traditions musicales du monde, Gimel, Musique en vie, Sonde, le Composers/Performers Group d'Alcides Lanza, Nébu, l'orchestre sympathique, le Komuso à cordes, le trip expansible, Yul, Djazaléa, Sax no end, Maneige, Conventum, la Guérilla urbaine musicale (GUM), etc....

#### Individus:

John Rea, José et Matti Evangelista, Claude Vivier, Georges brégent, Marcelle Deschênes, Richard Martin, Robert Lepage, Yves Bouliane, Vincent Dionne, Bernard Gagnon, Michel Di Torre, Raymon Torchinsky, Bryan Highbloom, Kevin Austin, Bengt Hambraeus, Mario Bertoncini, Andy Homzy, Robert Léonard, Lorraine Vaillancourt, Walter, Boudreau, Marie-Claude de Chevigny, Ginette Bellavance, Micheline Coulombe St-Marcoux, Michel Gonville, Otto Joachim, Billy Robinson, Sayd Abdul Al Khabyr, Sadik Hakim, Bruce Mather, Robert Leriche, Gilles Tremblay, Jean Derome, Claude Simard, Jean Beaudet, Tristan Honsinger, Mathieu léger, Jane Fair, Pierre St-Jacques, Pierre Moreau, Robert Gélinas, Pierre Cartier, Karen Young, René Lussier, Gisèle Ricard, Philippe Lamarche, Ron Proby, Michel Madore, etc....

(cette liste encore une fois n'étant rien d'autre que l'esquisse d'une situation beaucoup plus complexe, d'où les omissions inévitables).

Pour cette période 1970-82, j'aurais aimé discuter plus en détails l'apport des musiciens suivants:

#### Richard Martin

(Sur ce compositeur/exécutant, consulter l'entrevue publiée dans la revue *Parachute*, no 23, *Musique et Participation*.)

#### Marcelle Deschênes

De l'opéra au théâtre musical à la performance (de

Moll, opéra lilliput pour six roches molles datant de 1976 à Operas...AAAAAAs, "un drame co(s)mique, symbolique et ésotérique" présenté tout récemment en Europe avec la participation de Raoul Duguay et des mimes électriques), l'oeuvre de Marcelle Deschênes résolument multidisciplinaire, éclatée, reste insaisissable.

#### Robert Lepage

Robert Lepage joue de la clarinette ou du saxophone comme il réalise ses bandes dessinées: avec beaucoup d'humour, de savoir faire, d'invention, et un sens aigu de l'autocritique. Il travaille l'improvisation et la composition sous tous ses aspects depuis une dizaine d'années maintenant, alliant le ludique au spontané, le gestuel au sonore avec une expertise considérable. Trouvant très souvent et de son propre aveu, une inspiration au départ le banal, le commun, l'ordinaire, il parvient toujours malgré tout, et avec beaucoup d'originalité, à transformer ce matériau initial pour atteindre à une sorte de vérité qui serait à l'opposé d'une certaine conception du beau. D'où cette difficulté sans doute à laquelle il fait référence de trouver des musiciens qui partagent comme lui, au même niveau de lucidité, sa fascination particulière pour le quotidien en situation. Dans cette musique improvisée, tout peut arriver, tout est en tournant au sublime tout-à-coup!

#### Michel Madore

Ce compositeur/exécutant vit en France depuis quelques années maintenant. Son projet le plus récent, consiste à réaliser une oeuvre musicale à partir des différentes musiques du monde telles qu'il les trouve ou qu'elles jouent dans les innombrables couloirs du métro de Paris. Ce travail en cours (à suivre) est complété par de nombreux concerts en solo, à Paris comme en province. Un disque sous son nom devrait paraître très bientôt en Europe.

#### Rober Racine

Pour un compte rendu de sa performance de *Vexations* d'Eric Satie, consulter *Parachute*, no 15, p. 50.

#### Marie-Claude de Chevigny

Il est peut-être significatif que ce soit une femme qui ait compilé un premier bilan de la musique improvisée au Québec où les femmes sont jus-qu'à tout récemment singulièrement absentes. Marie-Claude de Chevigny joue des saxophones alto et soprano et fait partie de l'EMIM. Elle représente avec d'autres (Jane Fair auparavant, Louise Babin, Odile Gruet, etc. ...) l'émergence des femmes dans la nouvelle musique au Québec. Ce dossier sur la musique improvisée de même qu'une série d'enregistrements sur cassettes peuvent être consultés à la Bibliothèque Vanier, section audio-visuelle de l'Université Concordia, Campus Loyola au 741 ouest, rue Sherbrooke.

## AUTRES ASPECTS DE LA MUSIQUE AU QUÉBEC

#### MUSIQUE ET DANSE

De Françoise Sullivan ou Françoise Riopelle à Marie Chouinard, il y aurait toute une histoire à raconter qui n'est pas discutée ici.

#### MUSIQUE ET ECRITURE

Là aussi, des musiciens qui écrivent sur la musique

# PERFORMANCE

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## COLLUSION

COLLUSION is a brand-new, three-times-a-year magazine, poised to revolutionize the experience of music reading pleasure. In the first issue we have banded together an incongruous collection of pagemates: regulars from the music press (liberated from their editorial and advertising bonds), people who are usually written about themselves (if they're lucky!), skilled operatives of the coloured and monochrome image — and people who've never written more than a letter to mum and dad.

Here's a taster of the first issue:

Robert Wyatt... on Short Wave Radio's Distant Voices  
Irish Music at the Forum Ballroom  
The Roots of Salsa  
Esquirità  
The UK Music Biz: Who Owns What?  
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Rap, New York  
ESG  
Insulting with Flattery: Nigerian Praise Songs

I wish to subscribe to a year of COLLUSION and enclose a cheque/postal order for 5.00 (air mail inclusive) to cover the cost of three issues and their postage.

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(LéoPol Morin, Rodolphe Mathieu...) aux écrivains qui composent dans l'esprit de certaines musiques (Gilles Archambault par exemple ou Patrick Straram), il y aurait tout un univers à inventorier qui n'est pas abordé ici.

#### MUSIQUE ET ARTS VISUELS

En dehors des différents groupes d'artistes qui souhaitent réaliser l'intégration ou la fusion des différentes disciplines entre elles y compris la musique (cf. L'horloge, le Zirmate, Fusion des arts, L'infonie), voici une liste d'artistes qu'il serait intéressant d'étudier séparément dans cette optique.

##### Miljenko Horvat

Pour son tableau: "Conversation avec Lennie Tristano."

##### Charles Gagnon

Pour son rapport à Lee Konitz (*Cassation Konitz*). De fait Charles Gagnon s'est toujours intéressé de très près au jazz et à la musique électroacoustique comme en témoigne par exemple le bande sonore du film en hommage à Pierre Mercure qu'il réalisa en 1969.

##### Yves Gaucher

Pour le titre de certaines de ses oeuvres en référence à Boulez, Stockhausen ou la musique en général.

##### Lee Plotek

Pour la série de tableaux en référence au *Pierrot Lunaire* de Schoenberg. (cf. Parachute no 16, p. 49)

##### Robert Lepage

Pour ses bandes dessinées (de l'autobiographie en musique improvisée).

##### Yves Bouliane

Pour divers travaux, photographies, peintures, installations, depuis plusieurs années. Yves Bouliane joue également de la contrebasse et du violoncelle et compte parmi les musiciens d'improvisation les plus authentiques qui soient au Québec.

##### Paul-Emile Borduas

Pour l'oeuvre de François Morel qu'il a suscitée: *L'étoile noire* (tombeau de Borduas).

##### John Heward

Pour certains tableaux récents en référence à Steve Lacy ou autres musiques.

##### Otto Joachim

Pour certaines oeuvres démontrant les rapports de la lumière et du son, (cf. *Illuminations I* (1965), *Illuminations II* (1969) et *Mankind*, 1972)

##### Véronique Vézina

Pour ses travaux récents exposés à la galerie Gilles St-Pierre, une esthétique de l'ambidextre où la main gauche joue un rôle très important. (Peut-être serait-il possible d'établir un parallèle ici avec certaines compositions du pianiste Borah Bergman dont albums sont disponibles sur étiquette Chiaroscuro, *Discovery* (no 125) et *Bursts of Joy*, no 158).

##### Marcel Barbeau

Pour sa collaboration avec Vincent Dionne au musée d'art contemporain.

##### Norman McLaren

Pour certaines partitions et certains films d'animation réalisés à l'O.N.F.

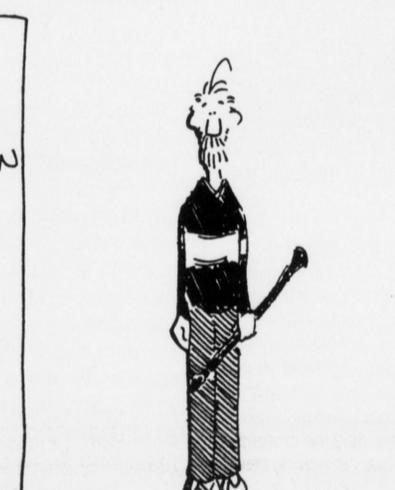
## LES LIEUX DE LA MUSIQUE AU QUÉBEC

(En dehors des lieux officiels, la Place des Arts/lieu d'élection de l'O.S.M. ou de l'opéra de Montréal, la salle Claude-Champagne, Pollack Hall, etc.)

Le milieu des arts visuels s'est également impliqué à divers niveaux dans le domaine de la musique ces dernières années. Ainsi par exemple, certaines galeries ou musées prêtèrent leur espace et autres services à quelques manifestations importantes dont: *le carrefour électroacoustique* organisé par Micheline Coulombe Saint-Marcoux et Jacques Thériault à la Galerie III du Vieux-Montréal en 1972, *Le cercueil* de Richard Martin présenté à la galerie La Sauvegarde en 1973, *l'ensemble de Philip Glass* présenté au musée d'art contemporain par la galerie Véhicule Art Inc., en 1974 (pour ne rien dire des nombreux autres concerts — Richard Landry, Don Druick, L.A.M.E., etc. — qui eurent lieu dans cet espace de 1972 à 1975 approximativement), ainsi que plusieurs sessions de musique improvisée présentées dans divers endroits dont la S.A.P.Q., Media, Le Conventum, le vidéographe, le balcon de l'image... et plus récemment la galerie Motivation V (une nuit d'improvisations organisée par l'EMIM).

Par ailleurs, il faudrait également mentionner la participation de l'*Institut d'art contemporain* de Normand Thériault (Médiart) qui finança de 1973 à 1975 environ, plusieurs concerts importants de l'A.M.E. (Roscoe Mitchell, René Thomas, *Dollar Brand*, *The Artist's Jazz Band*, Dionne-Brégent, etc), l'apparition sur la scène québécoise de la revue *Parachute* en 1975 qui consacre une place importante dans ses pages à la nouvelle musique et qui fut directement impliquée dans l'organisation de certains événements où la musique occupe une place de choix (L'ensemble de *Steve Reich* au M.A.C. en 1977, 03-23-03 avec les participations de G. Chiari, M. Snow et C. Palestine, sinon plus récemment *Performance et multidisciplinarité: postmodernisme*, avec cette fois-ci Laurie Anderson, Jana Haimsohn, Joan la Barbara, Daniel Charles, Ivanka Stoianova et Robert Wilson), et pour terminer le programme musical audacieux et stimulant du *Musée des beaux-arts* de Montréal depuis sa réouverture en 1976 (cf. Cecil Taylor, Alvin Lucier, Terry Riley, Charles Rosen, Evan Parker, Gropus 7, etc.)

De fait la musique au Québec comme ailleurs n'est pas confinée dans quelques lieux privilégiés seulement. On la trouve partout et souvent là où on s'y attend le moins: dans la rue, dans un parc, un cinéma, une église, un loft et même récemment dans une piscine (cf. *Concert subaquatique*, — fluide et sonore — de Michel Redolfi à la piscine de l'Université de Montréal ce samedi 23 janvier dernier). Un



R. Lepage 10 janvier 1982

autre exemple: ces jours-ci, alors que je me promenais dans le quartier où j'habite, j'ai aperçu, un barbier qui jouait du violon dans sa boutique à l'heure du midi et cette image m'est restée comme représentant une certaine quotidienneté de la musique en tant qu'activité éludant tous nos efforts d'appropriation et de classification, un phénomène difficile sinon impossible à circonscrire, à cerner dans tous ses aspects, à appréhender globalement et qui nous échappe dès qu'on cherche à lui mettre le grappin dessus. Quoi qu'il en soit, le lieu sans doute le plus immatériel pour la musique reste encore aujourd'hui la radio, un lieu que l'on peut même transporter avec soi suivant ses déplacements (au réseau FM de Radio-Canada, on peut entendre à l'occasion des musiques ou des musiciens d'ici aux émissions suivantes: *Alternances*, *Musique de Canadiens*, *Jazz sur le vif*, *Musique de notre siècle* et *Jazz soliloque*).

## QUELQUES RÉFÉRENCES COMPLÉMENTAIRES

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Une compilation de textes effectuée par Raoul Duguay, éditions du Jour, Montréal, 1971, 331 p. (textes de Jean Sauvageau, Pierre Leduc, Pierre Mercure, etc...)

#### Encyclopédie de la Musique au Canada

Je n'ai pas encore eu l'occasion de consulter cet ouvrage paru récemment en anglais aux éditions University of Toronto Press et publié sous la supervision de Gilles Potvin, Helmut Kallman et Kenneth Winters. L'édition française devrait paraître sous peu.

#### Compositeurs canadiens contemporains

Une compilation effectuée par Louise Laplante. Les presses de l'Université du Québec.

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Editions de l'Aurore, Montréal, 1979, 255 p.

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De Willy Ammann, éditions de l'Homme, Montréal, 1976, 420 p.

#### REVUES

*Compositeurs au Québec*, une collection de brochures publiée par le centre de musique canadienne à Montréal sous la direction de Louise Laplante, (Le numéro 9 est consacré à Pierre Mercure.)

On trouve également certaines informations sur la musique au Québec dans diverses revues: *MusiCanada*, *Musicworks*, *Compositeur canadien*, *Parachute*, *Hobo Québec*, *Sonances*, *Aria*, *Interventions*, etc....

#### CATALOGUE

Françoise Sullivan, catalogue d'exposition, Musée d'art contemporain, 1982.

#### CINÉMA

*L'Infonie inachevée*, un film de Roger Frappier.

*Pierre Mercure*, un film de Charles Gagnon.

*Le réel du pendu*, un film d'André Gladu.

Etc....

#### VIDEO

*étamorphoses*, un vidéo de Richard Martin d'après Alvin Lucier, 1974, Le Vidéographe.

*Musique improvisée au Québec*, 1973, un vidéo de l'A.M.E. réalisé au vidéographe en 1973-74.

#### LE SONOGRAPHE

Ce projet intéressant esquissé en 1974-75 se voulait la contrepartie au plan sonore du vidéographe. Logé dans le même édifice que ce dernier, le projet ne s'est malheureusement pas poursuivi malgré la parution de quelques cassettes au tout début.

#### DISCOGRAPHIE SOMMAIRE

*Canadian Music in the 20th Century*. Columbia Odyssey Y-31993 incluant *triptyque* de Pierre Mercure et *l'étoile noire* de François Morel. L'orchestre symphonique de Toronto est sous la direction de Seiji Ozawa.

#### Anthologie de la musique canadienne

Une série de coffrets consacrés par Radio-Canada international à certains compositeurs, entre autres, du Québec. Le catalogue de R.C.I. comprend également plusieurs albums consacrés à des compositeurs, interprètes et musiciens de jazz d'ici.

#### Rodolphe Mathieu, l'oiseau-coeur OC-S-02

Un disque récent incluant *le quintette pour quator à cordes et piano* (1946), *six mélodies* et *la sonate pour piano* (1927).

**Bruce Mather**, McGill University Records, no 77002 (Ce disque comprend des oeuvres d'Ivan Wyschnegradsky, de Bengt Hambraeus et de Bruce Mather.) D'autres albums sont également disponibles sur cette étiquette.

**Le quatuor de jazz libre du Québec**, Radio-Canada International, no 271 (Déc. 1968)

L'Infonie (disques Polydor)

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**Nébu/Motus**, Cadence CAD. 1008 (d'autres disques de l'EMIM, de Pierre Moreau, de l'orchestre sympathique, etc. sont disponibles sur cette étiquette).

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#### CASSETTE

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# NON-MUSIC

## ROBERT RAYER

Lately it has come to my attention that there are a number of disparate individuals & groups of folks playing something which I just plain can't help but call *non-music*. The very concept seems either silly or such a banalism that it hardly seemed worth mentioning. Except that it isn't just noise. Quite the contrary. Something is being produced that SHOULD be music.

By what criteria could someone who admittedly worked with sounds to the end that something thereby produced would be listened to profess bluntly & without particular passion that "I'm not a musician."?

Maybe we need to rethink the very possibility of 'music' itself. Webster's: "The science or art of pleasing, expressive, or intelligible combination of tones; the art of making such combinations, esp. into compositions of definite structure and significance; the art of inventing or writing, or of rendering such compositions."

To say that something comprised of sound is non-music is virtually as untenable as to say that something that is comprised of words is non-language. This latter is demonstrated in non-sense verse, abstract and concrete poetry. All these are assumed into the realm of 'language', as easily as Cage's non-expressive compositions are assumed into the realm of music. Yet boundaries do exist, both with sounds & with words. It is not of great import to locate these boundaries, because they are always changing (the modernist avant garde played this game for some 60 or 70 years), but rather it does matter why boundaries do exist at all & how they come into being & are maintained. In order to understand this, it is necessary first to map out the principle of inadequacy.

Language is always in the process of assuming itself. That languages are continually growing, changing & expanding is not in itself insidious; however, that with language one can only speak in forms that are understood to be language is. It took Proust 13 volumes of prattle to make a nest for a few crystals of memory\*; it took Beckett three novels to arrive at the point where language can indicate its own ceasing\*\*; it took Cage 4'33" to frame silence within the concatenation of its own plenum. Yet is was 'music' which assimilated 'silence', not the other way around. Language by its own reflexive constructs becomes synonymous with the possibility of expression, of communication, and what is worse, with essential intelligence. Language is attempting to usurp thought. What does this mean? To begin with, it means that 'saying something meaningful' must be said in language. All the equations, analogies and metaphors for exchange can only, finally, rest on the concept of language. We can't SPEAK of them in any other terms. This comes about because language as a system is purely self-supported, purely interrelated. None of its constitutive definitions come from without. All attempts at discovering systems of corollaries for words & their references, onomatopoeia included, can be at best partial explanations.

What is a constitutive definition of language: a process manifest in any number of modes for transferring (making manifest) information or expressive matter or ideas. This is generally understood in a systemic sense, and with this there is an assumption that language implies a consciousness which generates the 'linguistic impulses' (at whatever level one would like to take 'consciousness' — be it mechanical, or human) and that something which contains or is representative of 'sense' is the content of both this impulse & its manifestation. In the past hundred years (if not 2500) western (European) culture has striven to make an equation: all sense is conveyable within language. This is a very interesting proposition. For one it allows us to speak of all things. For instance it means that we can talk about music, & can come to aesthetic understandings about music through language.

"A picture is worth a thousand words." Language is vague. Language proceeds through myriad likenesses. 'Analogy' comes from the Greek *analogos*, literally: proportionate. Another quite interesting word in this context is 'synonym' (one of two or more words or expressions of the same language that have the same or nearly the same meaning in some or all senses). Words can only be defined through the use of other words. Yet definition is not a matter of simple explanation (equivalence); since a word is only completely equivalent to itself. Any attempt at a definition of a word is purely provisional: is the sum of all its 'correct' (which is a completely enigmatic concept) usages at a particular point in time including certain (again, undeterminable by any less vague set of rules) prior historical usages. (Definition: "A statement of the meaning of a word or word group or a sign or symbol".) It is not a new philosophical quandry that it is impossible to adequately (definitively) define, for instance, the word "table" to account for every object or situation for which the word can be applied. Definitions (as synonyms) are in fact approxima-

tions which always imply that there is a difference between word and definition, and that this difference can never be bridged, illuminated or isolated.

"... (reading) is an eminently telepathic process ..." (Walter Benjamin). The leap from the state of individual words to that of context in even the simplest exchange is enormous. Language being understood as a mode of communication becomes understood as the paradigm of communication. It has become absurd to have a mode of communication which is not linguistic in nature. How can something communicate which is not, at base, a language? English is a language, French is a language, Mathematics is a language, Body Language is a language, music is a language, bees 'dancing' through the hive 'telling' other bees where the pollen is is a language. What are the words of these latter languages? Our understanding of language has in fact made it impossible to refer to these phenomena as anything but language or as essentially linguistic in nature or structure. Within language it is inconceivable to speak of these things in other terms.

### (un résumé)

Dans cet article, le cinéaste Robert Rayer entreprend un examen des frontières qui existent entre ce qu'on appelle la musique et ce qu'il a nommé la non-musique. En partant de la donnée le langage est un mode de communication qui est sensé pouvoir transmettre toute signification, il discute l'insuffisance du langage — le langage est inadéquat puisqu'il ne se réfère qu'à lui-même. Le langage est insuffisant parce qu'il manque de corrélatifs — il tisse une sorte de toile.

Il poursuit en suggérant que le non-langage naît au moment où le langage entre en conflit avec lui-même — ce qui confond les sens constitue le non-langage. Les paradoxes, les oracles, les rêves, le déjà-vu et les prémonitions sont autant d'exemples de vides dans le langage qui sont comblés par le non-langage.

Le non-langage indique l'origine du langage dans l'esprit: la pensée prélinguistique qui se traduit en langage afin de permettre le discours. Existe-t-il un langage dans la pensée? La communication est-elle toujours de nature linguistique? La musique est-elle un langage? Est-elle insuffisante? La non-musique existe-t-elle?

La non-musique naît du contact des auditeurs avec un événement musical qui se transforme en une situation de nature non-musicale. Cette situation de non-musique se caractérise par son insuffisance. Les auditeurs réagissent en comblant ce vide ou en élaborant une résolution. La non-musique ne résulte pas dans la production d'une oeuvre esthétique finale ou indépendante. On ne peut identifier aucune composition musicale. Un sujet de réflexion ou de contemplation est mis évidence de manière musicale. Mais dans la non-musique les sonorités inspirent des réactions qui ne sont pas strictement liées à la musique. La non-musique exerce une influence externe au sein de l'assistance. La résolution de l'expérience n'est pas une partie intégrale de la représentation musicale.

La source de l'impulsion musicale n'est ni dans la pensée ni dans la musique elle-même. La non-musique agit comme un tremplin pour la pensée.

The search for (myth of) an *original language* (or Adam's language) has surfaced throughout the history of the literary imagination. The primary feature of this language is that there is no mediation: all words act as names, which are in themselves definitions of the things which they name. The idea really comes down to names being essences, & essences being identical with things. Which is to say that literally to name something (to "call it up (to mind)") would be to produce it before one as one spoke. In this original language, ideas would have real physical being. "Table" would present a physical (graspable) thing in front of one

which would in fact be the essence of all possible tables. Discrepancy, just as ambiguity, would not exist. Nor in fact, would abstractions. The words of this language would be concrete, in that they would present one with 'the thing itself' but at the same time it would be absolutely transparent because it would leave no trace of itself.

"Tell me: how do we transform the thought, the idea, into the word; and do we ever have a thought or an idea without its hieroglyph, its letter, its script? Truly, it is so: but we do not usually think of it." (Johann Wilhelm Ritter). Since dreams cannot be communicated as dreams, Freud relied on language for this task. As he could not establish the truth of what the patient told him of their dreams, he had to take what they told him as the dream itself. Soon Freud discovered that these dreams (sic) were heavily endowed with linguistic games & properties. Perhaps the most interesting (& amusing) of these for us is 'irony.' ("The use of WORDS to express something other than and esp. the opposite of the literal meaning.") For Freud comprehending that this irony could apply to the rendering of the dreams opened an enormous possibility for the interpreting & understanding of dreams. But for us, it is interesting to note that by definition, irony is only a literary phenomenon, & that only metaphorically can it be applied to something other than language. Thus the dream work became a literary activity, both as extant material (the rendering of the dream in language) & in interpretation.

Not just since Freud, but at least since Homer, the ironic form has held a special position within the possibilities of language. Odysseus escapes from the Cyclops (Poly hemos) by saying that his name is 'Nobody'. After his eye is put out, the Cyclops cries out that 'Nobody' has done him an awful harm, & his fellow cyclopes take it as the ravings of a drunk & proffer him no assistance. Once one goes to an individual word, extracting it from context to clarify its meaning, two things happen: each word doubles its realm of meaning by assuming its opposite (becoming ironic), at the same time the word becomes 'linguistic'; whatever it refers to becomes subject to linguistic rules, such that the only adequate understanding of that thing will be through an understanding of language per se.

'Sense' = 'language', 'non-sense' = 'language. What is *non-language*? The inadequacy in language lies in its inability to allow anything 'linguistic' to exist outside itself. Through assuming its opposite, at every point by accepting & integrating (embracing) that which is different, that which is not included, that which is other, it disallows itself the possibility of speaking of anything which is not included in itself, which is not like itself. The ultimate linguistic property is to spread a sameness across everything it touches.

But how does this interact with our understanding of and our ability to speak of music? In language, as has been put forward above, a language can be understood as 'a process... for transferring (making manifest)... information or expressive matter or ideas.' This definition assumes all activities; in fact, to try to say that something is NOT a 'language' is simply fallacious. Especially in the 19th century this has been stated again & again; within the social sciences, where it probably made its first appearance as the sociological understanding that nothing, no fact in life, can be ignored as meaningless, but must be taken as an indicator of some statement that is made in the course of simple existence. Within all our parlances, existence has become synonymous with speech, with language. So then, to understand any of these parlances, we must apply our understanding of language (be it rhetoric, which was popular in latter Rome & in the Baroque mentality, or 'linguistics', which has been the mode in western thought for the past hundred years). This understanding has, in fact, yielded amazing results; it has allowed us to be aware of minute details of life which otherwise we might overlook as unimportant. However, it has also robbed us of not only the method of speaking, but almost the possibility of thinking of any activity, any evidence, as non-linguistic in nature; we have the greatest difficulty grasping the idea that something might best be understood within some other system than language. Even 'understanding' has been tainted: can anything be understood which is not language, which does not 'convey sense'?

What is the possibility of something which is 'non-language'? Are we then to understand that through language's very inclusiveness that it closes itself off — it excludes by its very act of self-mirroring & inclusiveness? 'Inadequacy' arises within language because language has no correlatives — it is a system entirely enclosed upon itself & through closure binds everything within it into a web. Once one enters this web, enters the system of language, it is impossible to traffic outside it. Everything that it is possible to say in language refers to language, not as an infinite regress, but rather as a circle or perhaps a Mobius strip — traveling along it one moves along its inside and outside edges, but never off the strip.

\*Marcel Proust: *À la Recherche du temps perdu*.  
\*\*Samuel Beckett: *Three Novels*.

If this principle of inadequacy holds, perforce there is 'non-language'. There is an ironic twist which we can play on language itself! If language 'conveys sense' then something which confounds sense, or better, something which uses language to arrive at a contradiction which language cannot explain, can be a possible non-language. We cannot locate non-language purely outside language, because as language assumes everything, this could only serve to expand the boundaries of language by breaking an old boundary, or better put: "breaking new territory FOR language." Thus non-language will be found in pockets, folds & holes in language itself. Language is a porous medium because it is self-referential. Therefore non-language arises when language comes into conflict with itself. One can say that this conflict has its origin when original language becomes non-transparent: when it becomes language in the full sense.

Paradoxes arise only in language. Oracles are often pronounced in words. Paradoxes point to the inability of language to hold reason. Paradoxes are not logical problems as much as an inevitable manifestation of language: Language itself conforms to no truths outside itself. Thus it is entirely possible to place incompatible (logically) statements together. They can appear to not contradict each other in language, though they may on other levels. Likewise it is entirely possible to put together two mutually exclusive linguistic entities, which might reflect some compatible situation in the world. (Paradox: 2a: a statement that is seemingly contradictory or opposed to common sense and yet is perhaps true. b: a self-contradictory statement that at first seems true. c: an argument that apparently derives self-contradictory conclusions by valid deduction from acceptable premises. Websters.) Oracles pronounced in words often reveal their truths only through paradoxical means or linguistic scrutiny. However, both oracles & paradoxes, as well as dreams, *deja vu*, premonition and many other events point out the holes in language through which non-language surfaces.

In a rudimentary way, we can begin to grasp what non-language is through one of its functions. Non-language, though it arises in language & is made up of the material of language, leads outside language; confounds language. This is accomplished not by reference to outside things or ideas, which is the illusionistic basis of 'communication' in its usual sense. Rather non-language points towards the processes from which language arises. Non-language refers fundamentally to the origin of language in the mind. In this sense it is pre-referential. This combined with its formation IN the realm of & the material of language causes it to both superpose & disjoint, at the same time, the illusionistic/referential function of language and its emerging unformed origin/impulse. (It should be noted that this is itself an ironic function which gives rise, so to speak, to non-language.) The discrepancy of these two stages of language is immediately apparent as soon as one thinks of the universally experienced situation of having a word on the tip of one's tongue, but not being able to call it forth to say it. Now here the levels of the impulses for speech & for language itself are brought into contrast. How is it that we

can distinguish between two people with the same name in thought without ever clarifying for ourselves which person we are thinking of. Clearly we do not think in words (in this case in names) but rather on some pre-linguistic level which must be translated into language for speech. In this prior impulse to language linguistic in nature or structure? Is there a 'language' of thought?

What does this indicate for music? Is music a 'language'? Does music suffer from 'inadequacy'? Can we conceive of *non-music*? First of all we have to ask whether music can be spoken of in terms of language, spoken of as a language. As a consequence of what has come before, we cannot answer this question — or rather there is no point in asking it. Since language can only find its final meaning within its own structural principles & atomic parts, then if music is a language we must either proceed to linguistics or, to the underlying glue (linguistics) of music itself — "a combination of tones" — the structure of combination. Now as follows from the preceding, neither of these can lead us beyond the tautology of closure. But beyond this it also makes apparent that these languages (i.e. music & language) can only speak of themselves within themselves, or to put it differently, one can only speak of music with music, if music is in fact a language. Different languages are then, strictly speaking, untranslatable, except through analogy. Analogy will always suffer from inadequacy — an analogy within one language for another can only be finally understood in terms of the first language — so it cannot, finally, bridge the gap between the two.

Is the musical impulse at the level of thought the same as the impulse to language? Obviously, to attempt to answer this question we need to invoke a theory of mind, and of major consequence is: if mind is an emergent quality of our physiology, then the physiological/mental connection for send/receiving thought and/or information will condition to what extent physiology influences thought per se.

Non-music can be manifest in many ways. However, there is one constant, one underlying principle which constitutes non-music as such: a 'musical thing' is not produced; rather a situation arises in which an audience person engages. The audience takes this situation and from it derives a thing or another situation which is not musical in essence. The non-musical situation is characterized by its incompleteness. It can be entirely lacking in definiteness in any manner. The audience person responds to this situation by completing it or working it out. It is not entirely unlike an oracle or paradox.

The basis of 'music' as we know it is that one listens to IT. Non-music is a situation in which one comprehends or assimilates aural material for an end which is essentially non-aural. In a 'piece' of non-music there is no final or ultimate aesthetic object-in-itself. Non-music is outside the realm of musical 'sense' because it does not strictly comprise a musical entity. A piece of music is an aesthetic object for reflection or contemplation (on the emotive and/or intellectual level). A piece of non-music is a group of

sounds which acts as a catalyst towards something else. When one experiences a piece of music one has many reactions, but one of the primary is that the piece is a whole and that one may begin to have an understanding/appreciation of the piece based on what the piece is & how it operates internally. To consider these things in relation to non-music is inconsequential. Inconsequential because the non-music does not operate internally, in fact it operates only externally: within the audience person. To have an aesthetic appreciation of the piece of non-music is at most only a technical concern; for how it is constructed, or its make up, whereas in music these are crucial & necessary aesthetic concerns.

Non-music might be characterized as a secular form of inspiration. The 'resolution' for a piece of music is within the piece. The 'resolution' for a piece of non-music is not. The experience of music takes place during the realization/performance of the work, while the experience of non-music is not temporally or spatially coordinated with its manifestation. Often the actual experience of the non-music will be long after hearing the piece. Direct reflection upon the piece in most cases will only retard this 'resolution'.

The musical impulse, the impulse to play or create music, does not derive from language. Likewise it does not derive from music itself. The idea of an 'original music' paralleling 'original language' is interesting, and has perhaps its deepest expression in 'bio-music'. But this too is quite a naive idea as, if there is an 'original music' its manifestations cannot derive from reference or association to sources in the real world, but it must manifest itself purely, as a musical wind or a 'music of the spheres'. Direct reflection on a piece of non-music may prevent one from grasping the piece precisely, as with language & non-language, because music is at all times trying to assume non-music. If one approaches non-music as music, misapprehension is most liable to occur. Non-music, rather than being something to regard, is a springboard for thought in its deepest manifestation. Music will always refer, even at the level of musical ideas or ideas arising out of a musical work, to music, & perhaps, if one is lucky, to the world. Only through a sociology or archaeology of music can we begin to relate these ideas to thought, and to corrective thought. Non-music needs no such translation, though for precisely this reason it is all the more enigmatic, because it skirts the realm of expression.

Thanks to Dena Davida, Kathleen Yearwood, Keith Daniel, Chris Howard & Erosetta Stone.

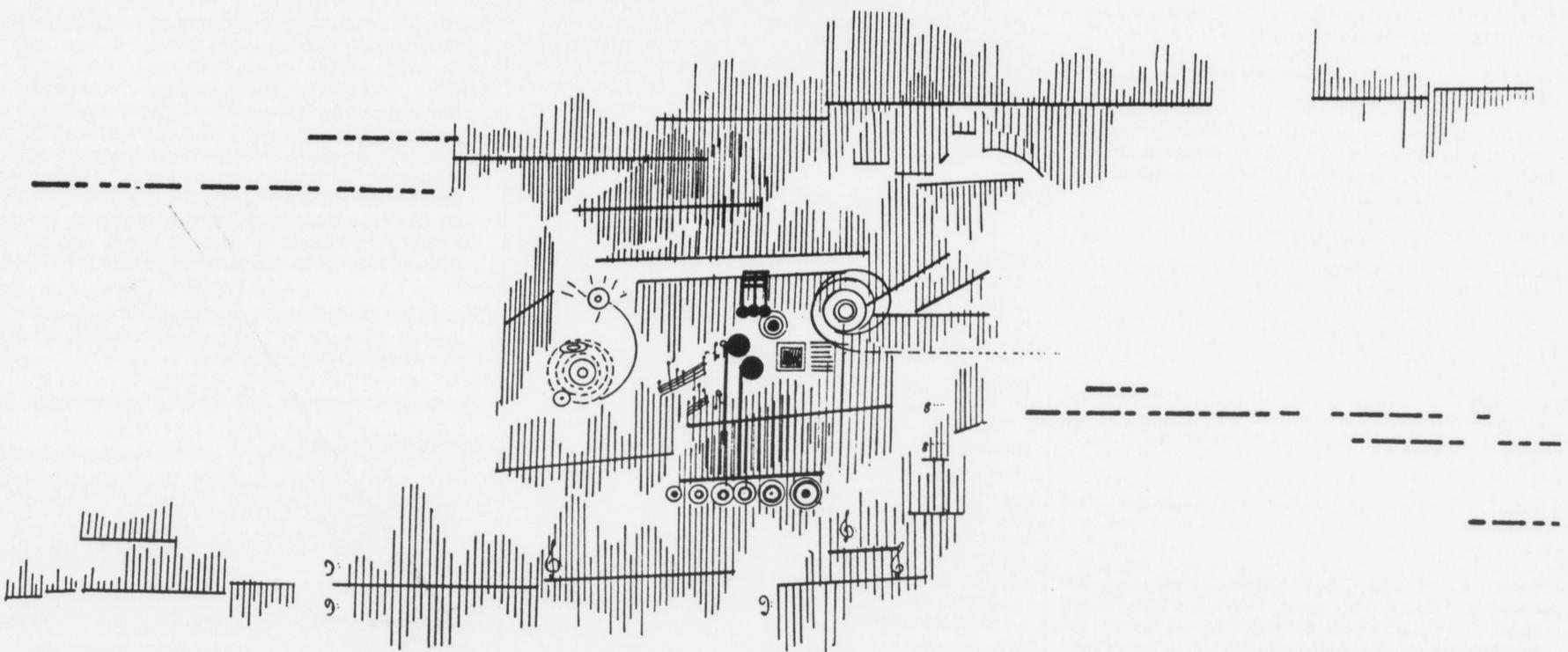
Robert Rayher is a filmmaker & also works in video, still photography, words & music. He is currently working on a film for live music.

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## CLAUDE VIVIER IN CONVERSATION

Susan Frykberg had this talk with Claude Vivier in the summer of 1981.

**Claude:** Why do I write music — that's a very important question ... Basically, when I was young, I went to a college to become a brother, and my first contact with music was midnight mass, Catholic midnight mass, so I sang, and basically from that moment on, I wanted to repeat that experience. I mean, taking it in a mythical way, it's trying to do the deeds of the gods. So to compose, I need to feel as if it were Christmas day, and of course there's a lot of psychological side effects to that. It means that there's got to be something terribly important to be said, and also, at that moment of creation, there's a basic expression of purity.

**Susan:** And you could only express it in music?

**Claude:** Yes, only music... well it could be something else. I did a video... but basically I think it's music. This urge for purity, it's created a style of its own. Because I think there's a misunderstanding, especially here in Québec because we're very Catholic, purity is a very badly used word. As far as my music is concerned, purity is only expressing exactly what you have to express; to write music and try to get to this thing that is exactly what you want to say. Purity is a total acceptance of what comes out of me and an attempt to say it in the most appropriate way. Also, at one point during the levels of creation, there is something more, you call it inspiration, or you call it god or you call it love. I work on two levels in this respect, there's my own self, time-bound self, which is only a little point on the infinite history of humankind, and on top of that, we call it immanence... A whole of ideas, just purely ideas that are made into something, artworks or music or political systems. I guess there's always a relation between one's own life and this...

**Susan:** Collective unconscious?

**Claude:** Sort of collective unconscious... but on a higher level, there's something more than the collective unconscious... the collective unconscious has been formed by millions and trillions of human beings, but on top of that, I think there's something more, uh... somehow masterpieces have what I'm talking about.

**Susan:** Do you perceive your style as being similar from piece to piece, or what?

**Claude:** I'm a human being, with one history, which no other human being has. And it has its own unity, and of course when this human being expresses something, there's a unity of style.

**Susan:** Ok, but that's not necessarily on a perceived level.

**Claude:** On a perceived level, it's got to be the same thing too. A unity of style and a unity of personality. All Bach you can say is Bach, all Mozart you can say is Mozart, all Beethoven, all Stravinsky. Even if Stravinsky has so many so-called styles, it's one personality, it's one style.

**Susan:** Stravinsky is a good example because if you were to listen to *Pulcharella* and the *Rite of Spring*, as an outsider you would never know it was the same composer.

**Claude:** As an outsider, you'd probably feel something.

**Susan:** Not much!

**Claude:** Well there are different styles... life is not a one shot deal. I guess in my music, I went through different styles, but those different styles arose only through the fact that I refined more and more my musical technique.

**Susan:** But also, if you're talking about this purity coming from yourself as well as from outside, there is change, and the perception of the god or the immanence or whatever it is changes too.

**Claude:** But my personality as a whole stays always the same. You always feel like a little child anyway. You

don't see yourself grow old. I think that's what makes the unity of a human being. Of course there is what's called in paintings periods, where you discover things, because you work. That's why you write another piece. Those questions you ask when you create, most of the time, they're unanswerable. They're just questions to be asked in the infinity of time. The problem in the western world is that they always wanted to have answers to questions, and they thought that any system, whether artistic, political or social, had to have an answer. And this is a half truth, because this whole way of thinking belongs to a very manly way of thinking. In the Bible, God didn't say to the woman to go and create, or go and name things, he said that to the man... and the Bible is a very influential book. But this is only one half of it. Instead of naming things, you are an elephant or a tiger, you can say, ah ha!! you're a big nice animal. Are you angry or are you dangerous?... if you ask questions without answering.

**Susan:** I think this is the idea of eternal self discovery. If you think of self and outside-self, then you're always asking questions.

**Claude:** But in our civilization, people always expect answers. An aesthetic answer, to say, ah ha! this is the truth. And political systems are the same thing. They try to find answers and they try to apply those answers to masses of human beings. Which is sometimes very dangerous to individual lives. What's happening now is that there's a total shift in the political fuse and...

**Susan:** So you always ask questions in your music... what sort of questions?

**Claude:** Time, love, intimate ones usually. But it's hard to say I ask questions in my music, because music is such a... Once you've got the piece there, it's done, you know. My music is a paradox. Usually in music you have some development, some direction or some aim, the big bang or the crescendo or whatever which in my music, happens less and less. I just have statements, musical statements, which somehow, lead nowhere. Also on the other hand, they lead somewhere, but it's on a much more subtle basis. Not on the basis of mastering the crescendo or mastering the actual expectations of the listeners, I mean expectations in the dramatic sense. Very often my music doesn't have these expectations. It's often only statements, very clear statements, sometimes with dramatic curves, but not as in romantic music.

**Susan:** With that attitude, can you compare yourself with any past composers?

**Claude:** I could compare myself with some Japanese musics or Balinese musics. Among the western composers I could compare myself with Mozart and Chopin.

**Susan:** Mozart or Chopin?

**Claude:** Yeah.

**Susan:** How? I mean, Chopin's really romantic, with dramatic curves and...

**Claude:** Well, there's always curves... but there is in both those composers a purity in terms of line, melody, harmony and style of development, that you don't find in other composers. There's an episodic development, where you have a cell, getting bigger and bigger and developing itself.

**Susan:** But that's not what we were talking about before, which was about clear statements. They're definitely going somewhere.

**Claude:** Yes, it is going somewhere, but it's not going where —

**Susan:** Brahms takes it.

**Claude:** or Beethoven or even Bach. Oh! It's hard to define this. Because I'm not anti-gestural per se — anti-gestural would be some pieces of those artists in New York, where you have nothing. But here, if you have a melody then it has to go somewhere.

**Susan:** You could almost say then that it's anti-romantic.

**Claude:** It's anti-romantic, but people would say it is romantic sometimes. Which shows a very bad understanding of romantic music itself. Actually maybe the best examples of my music are those last pieces... *Copernicus*, *Lonely Child*, *Marco Polo*, *Samarkand*, *Orion*... *Boukhara*. There I dropped completely what was terribly important in western music, counterpoint, and I was only working with melody. That's the most important link with non-western music. The melody is almost automatic. There's a lot of automatism in my music in fact, even if it doesn't sound like it. The melody gives the colors, and sometimes even a counterpoint, but only as a matter of phase-shifting, and even the phase-shifting, I use it less and less.

**Susan:** Well, *Lonely Child* seems to me to be pure melody.

**Claude:** It's pure melody, with colors on top of it, and the colors are contrapuntal. Whereas *Boukhara*, which is the purest one I've done — 13 minutes of melody — there's only the colors. And the very last one, *Et Je Réverai Cette Ville Etrange*, there's only melody. In the opera I used harmony, in *Orion* I used mirror chords, things like that, to get the colors, and in *Lonely Child* I use the colors. I've gotten maybe to the purest form of one melody, in *Et Je Réverai Cette Ville Etrange*. In *Marco Polo*, I did a whole development with one sound; interval, harmony, harmony plus colors, interval plus colors, and that made up the whole piece. And in that piece, there is a fluidity of melodic treatment and development to color. And there are sometimes lines, and even directions... and transformations of the colors. For instance, sheer color to rhythmical patterns to noise...

**Susan:** This is getting back to your notion of cellular development.

**Claude:** Yeah. But it's also process development... Though not in the last one. There's a process, somehow the color goes somewhere. But at the same time, because of the melody, there is a stasis, it doesn't really go anywhere! The last one though, I took it all out, everything. I took a chance. Somehow those colors were a crutch. There was something artificial about it. It was as if the basic thing in those other pieces was still the melody, but in order to sustain the melody, to have it live

**Susan:** But I think that's musical tradition. Everyone in the past used various devices to sustain a melody, harmony or orchestration or whatever.

**Claude:** But they never used colors in the same way.

**Susan:** Yes they did!

**Claude:** But what I did in those pieces is to make the colors totally independent from the melody. That was my counterpoint. Except in the last piece, I took everything out except the melody. I think this will be the last melodic piece I do.

**Susan:** So in a sense, it's trying to attain an absolute purity in one element of music.

**Claude:** Yeah. In another piece where I try to do this kind of thing is *Pulau Dewata*. But this was more a tribute to the Balinese people, so I didn't actually achieve anything. Well, I did achieve an 11 minute melody...

**Susan:** But in fact *Pulau Dewata* is a very different piece depending on the instrumentation. It's beautiful with the

percussion, but I think with strings say, it wouldn't sound that good. So if you're going to do that, then you're automatically involved in color. You can't ever get away from it.

**Claude:** But you're talking about the timbre. Color's different. Color's a spectrum which arises from one or two notes, or three or four notes. We should put this straight, the way I think about music as a whole, especially the vertical side. On the horizontal side, counterpoint is the most noticeable characteristic. But for me, it's very important for the ear, if you hear many instruments together playing many notes, that they have to have a conscious relationship.

**Susan:** Could it be an automated relationship, like serialism, for instance?

**Claude:** But that's one thing that serialism couldn't do. Actually, if you go back to serialism, you have to understand what they wanted to do. Serialism wanted to give individual notes their own weight, their individual weight and their individual balance, so you would hear all the notes, consciously. Then you would hear all the groups, and all the groups would have their own weight too. But if you do a cluster, and you say, well I have all my twelve tones there, it's nonsense.

**Susan:** Exactly. There's no correlation between the weight of an individual note and its weight, vertically.

**Claude:** Yeah. So harmonically, the only thing you could do is to give each of the notes, when you got out all 'eating intervals' like the fifth and the octave, its own weight and its own personality. But they couldn't serialize the harmony. They couldn't serialize the weight of the vertical relationships. So somehow, it turned into this nondescript vertical world, and the good composers, they finally managed to shift the serial world into a world of harmony, superimposed tone relationships. They had to make compromises and work something out from that. But they didn't do it in a very refined way, not as refined as they did with the durations and the timbre and dynamics. Also in those years, they made a lot of mistakes. When you talk about balances, you can't do it by simply saying, 1 to 12 pitches, and 1 to 12 dynamics, and 1 to 12 for everything. It doesn't work at all. Usually, those pieces, they sound fortissimo, though actually the sound that a good serial piece was supposed to have, was mezzo forte. I'm talking very very purely of course. If you look in the *Traite Harmonleirer* of Schoenberg, he tells you why there were no octaves, thirds and fifths in a row in classical harmony, because if you do that with four voices and you have three fifths in a row, then its not four voice harmony anymore. It's three voices. And the same laws were carried on in the serial world, where they still worked with the same concepts of harmony, counterpoint, number of voices and so on... That's why Webern used canon... they all used canon. But they didn't succeed in doing that. The only thing they could do is to create certain kinds of harmonies, wished or unwished. So me, when I looked at that, I preferred to take a much more general approach to music, as sound and form together. And sometimes, instead of working with the actual tiny relationships between notes, I would work with the full concept. The concept of harmony or interval, or directionality or non-directionality, polarization or non-polarization. Even in counterpoint I worked the same way. It's very simple, my thinking. The whole vertical world, it can have 1 note, interval, chord, mass. The difference between a chord and a mass of sound is very important. The chord is where you hear different notes, and their tensions going toward another note, which have to be somehow respected. And a mass, you don't hear those relationships any more. But a mass, it doesn't have any acoustical specificity. It's just a mass, and it can be juggled around and... usually, it's from about 6 or 7 notes up, depending on how they're arranged. Also, rhythmical patterns. It's the same thing too. After mass, you get color. And color has a basic acoustical relationship with a single sound, an interval or a chord. What happens acoustically is that those two or more notes add together and give you all the harmonics. Depending on the tension of the interval, you get different colors. Same thing with the chord. Horizontality is different.

**Susan:** So do you think you've tried consciously in each of your pieces to develop those notions of verticality?

**Claude:** Yeah. Like *Pulau Dewata* is single notes, chords. The last piece is only 1 note and intervals.

**Susan:** Do you think eventually, having developed a refined sense of each of those, that you'll no longer have to categorize them like that?

**Claude:** I will always have to categorize them like that. But now I want to talk about the horizontal world. The relationships of having two or three melodies superimposed is not necessarily counterpoint. Counterpoint is when two or three melodies exist together, and have coming together points. Those coming together points are very important for me. At one point, when I did counterpoint, I wouldn't work on the horizontal relationships, until after I'd sketched out some meeting points in time. Then in between those meeting points, they wouldn't be together, the three, four or five melodies. The second way of looking at counterpoint is the much more refined way of looking at homophony, or heterophony, which is the phase-shifting. But even there, you have to have points where they're coming together. And I'm working with tempis too. A tempis counterpoint. If I didn't use the different tempis, then it wouldn't be counterpoint. It would be just superimposi-

tion, putting things together, no matter what happens, which is not in itself a musical gesture, it's... construction gesture. A musical gesture has got to be a very conscious gesture, that is very important. For years I've refined my counterpoint system. Instead of having only one line, I tried to have three voice counterpoint in chords, as in *Orion*. And when the chords would come together, I would achieve a kind of harmonic clarity, at the same time as melodic clarity. Then it would shift and the harmonic clarity would be gone, and the music, the chords, they wouldn't be chords any more, they would become masses, because there would be three chords superimposed.

**Susan:** So you have defined these points in time which are coming together points, or harmonic points, or contrapuntal points. Could they also be points of mass?

**Claude:** Yeah. That's a matter of composition, where those points arise.

**Susan:** Yes, but I'm asking what they can be.

**Claude:** They can be anything. But for me, that's really part of composition, more than pitch organization say, which for me is not very interesting. Somehow, I discovered that notes are not very important themselves, only their relationships. So it's much more important to establish the relationships first. Also, what happens in this kind of situation, is that you always have some spontaneous beauty. And that states relationships. Then you apply on top of that — you transcend this whole music, with an art structure. Time comes and cuts things up. Brings things

together, takes them apart, whatever. That makes a very subtle, and also a very conscious act of composing, writing music. Much more conscious than working completely with abstract tools. I can't work like that.

**Susan:** But in a sense, these time things you're setting up are abstract tools. They have no meaning in themselves.

**Claude:** They are, but they give also... time is very important. If the whole duration system is subtle, and follows certain laws that are harmonic, natural, yet very refined... One thing that is very important is that you have to feel time. That is a very refined tool. It's a domain that has remained untouched by abstract organizations. One day maybe...

**Susan:** But people tried it when they used the fibonacci series...

**Claude:** But fibonacci series and all those other series like that are the basic harmonics of time.

**Susan:** It's still an abstract system.

**Claude:** On the level of hearing and perceiving time, it's not. If you want to be very subtle and make the difference between 54 and 62, then maybe.

*Claude Vivier was born in Montréal in 1948. He studied music in Montréal, Utrecht, Cologne and Paris. Now he lives in Montréal, most of the time.*

## MUSICIANS OF NOTE(S)

JOHN REA

Some years ago in Cologne, I had the pleasant experience of meeting Walter Zimmermann at his warehouse/loft called Beginner Studio. His name was already known to me because I had read his book of interviews with American composers called *Desert Plants*, and he was an old school chum of Claude Vivier, a friend of mine, who had kindly provided me with Walter's address before I left for Germany. "Herein!... come in!" a voice answered behind the third floor door which I now swung open putting me into the presence of a man whose countenance and carriage made me think immediately of a gentle buddha. "Hello... I'm from Montreal," I said among other things, "... and I'm a composer." "Ah...", said Walter with the assurance, poise and understanding which, more than ever, contrived to make me believe he was a buddha, "... are you the kind of composer who STILL composes with notes?" In a flash, this koan-like question had caused the blood to rush to my head and I truly didn't know whether it was due to some feeling of shame or pride, or just simply the fact that I wouldn't be able to instantly respond, to find the appropriate illuminated answer.

Well, I've thought about this question many times since then, and of the marriage, so to speak (for better or worse) between notes and composers, and how it is that in Montreal there are so many fine composers of note(s) as well as informed and agreeable performers of and listeners to new music/alternative music. The conviviality of it all, however modest when compared to other large urban areas, is nevertheless quite telling and perhaps more in tune with the musical sensibilities of cities such as Cologne or Paris rather than, let's say, New York or Toronto. The following aperçu on the Montreal scene, I trust, will be illuminative.

For the past number of years, the quantity of prizes awarded in and out of Canada to Montreal-based, Montreal-trained composers has grown rather remarkably, so remarkably in fact that one might think composition (with or without notes) is alive and well in Canada but only being practiced in Montreal. Now, although such a statement may seem presumptuous (I really don't wish to flaunt anything here), the following non-exhaustive list of winners may nonetheless reveal something of the liveliness with which Montreal maintains the art of composition.

Claude Vivier:	Composer of the Year (Canadian Music Council) 1981
Yves Daoust:	Grand Prize at GMEB in Bourges, 1980
Bruce Mather:	The Jules Léger Prize, 1979
Serge Garant:	The Jules Léger Prize, 1980

John Rea:	The Jules Léger Prize, 1981
John Burke:	CBC Young Composers Competition, First Prize, 1978, 1980; PRO-Canada Young Composers Competition, First Prize, 1981
Serge Arcuri:	CAPAC Young Composers Competition, First Prize, 1981
John Winiarz:	Canadian Federation of University Women Award, 1981

plus various second and third prizes won in the CAPAC and PRO-Canada Competitions in 1980, 1981 by Robin Minard (two second prizes), Claude Frennette, David Lytle and others. One can also add that a work by Michel-Georges Brégent was selected by the International Jury of the ISCM as the only Canadian work to be performed during the 1982 Graz, Austria World Music Days.

Teaching and professional instruction, as one might imagine, have no little part to play in all of this. With Gilles Tremblay at the Conservatoire, Serge Garant, André Prévost, Jean Papineau-Couture and José Evangelista at the University of Montreal, and Bruce Mather, Bengt Hambræus, Alcides Lanza, Brian Cherney, John Rea and Donald Steven at McGill University (just to mention the principal schools and academies), young composers have at their disposal a rich variety of opportunity to learn from and to apprentice themselves to composers whose aesthetic and professional concerns are wide-ranging as they are provocative, stimulating and, above all, convincing. I think it goes without saying that good composers reproduce themselves while bad ones just fade away.

Then too there is the radio. Although we composers, performers and listeners in Canada are in no way as well cared for in the area of new music creation, production, recording and radio-diffusion as, let's say, the Germans or the French are, we in Montreal are significantly better served in this domain than Toronto, for example. Not only do we receive in Montreal the weekly CBC-FM network program *Two New Hours*, but we also have our tuners tuned to other weekly Radio-Canada productions: the one hour long broadcast of recorded classical 20th century compositions on Serge Garant's *Musique du vingtième siècle* which often transmits current SMCQ concerts as well; the hour long broadcast *Musique de Canadiens* which surveys all aspects of new music creation, instruction and production in Canada by way of interviews, playing new works and discussion; the hour long broadcast *Alternance* whose goal it is simply to record and broadcast new Canadian chamber works and electronic music which have never been aired before. I may add that this programme is without question one of the greatest incentives to the crea-

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(Monty Floyd, Saskatchewan, Canada, 1977)

Monody: horn and percussion with  
Russell Hartenberger, percussion 7:15  
(Jarmo Sermila, Finland, 1975)

Mono: solo horn 7:20  
(Harry Freedman, Toronto, Canada, 1977)

## SIDE 2 HORN AND ELECTRONICS

Sonic Landscape no. 1: horn and tape 5:00  
(Barry Truax, Vancouver, Canada, 1970)

Extro-Intro: amplified horn with synthetic echo  
and ring modulation 9:23  
(John Rimmer, New Zealand, 1977)

Chaser: two horns, tape, random voltage generator,  
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tion of new music by many young composers. Its existence acts as an incredible encouragement; one other programme, the two separate half-hour editions of *Musiques d'ailleurs* hosted by composer Ginette Bellavance, though not specifically connected to new music production, nevertheless overlaps with the aesthetic preoccupations of many composers interested in the relationship of traditional non-Western musics with new music/alternative music.

But, to my mind, the most critical factor at work in this atmosphere of conviviality, this atmosphere where people talk to one another, composers, performers, radio producers, is most certainly the creative scope and energy of the numerous groups, ateliers, and university sponsored programs which promote the dissemination of new music.

The premiere group of all groups in Montreal, of course, has been the **Société de musique contemporaine du Québec**, this year celebrating its fifteenth anniversary season. Many things have changed in contemporary music over the last decade and a half, to be sure, and for the most part the SMCQ has responded to a goodly number of these changes while still retaining its identity essentially as a performer-based ensemble with conductor (much like a company of actors who always work with the same stage director). In this regard, the SMCQ presents a different public image from the one that the impresario-style societies do such as the Toronto or Vancouver New Music Concerts. Thus, the repertoire of works, premieres, commissions, etc., is generally presented by way of the ensemble membership rather than by invited guests. This policy is not, however, a hard and fixed rule.

Moreover, in the last few years (though not in this current season, sad to say), the SMCQ has collaborated with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra in inviting internationally renowned composers such as Penderecki, Xenakis, Messiaen and Lutoslawski to participate in tandem concerts of their orchestral and chamber music. On some occasions it has been Charles Dutoit who conducts the MSO and on other occasions it's SMCQ's director, Serge Garant. Apparently this collaboration will resume next season when none other than Pierre Boulez is scheduled to visit Montreal.

One of the most extended and exploratory of the SMCQ's recent premieres took place last December 10, 1981 when Serge Garant directed the ensemble in the performance of *Espaces* by Montreal composer Alain Lalonde (b. 1948). This work called for about 7 or 8 players on stage, the moving panels (baffles) invisibly drawn across the stage by stage-hands, three percussion players located around the audience using closed-circuit television monitors enabling them to see Garant when the panels block the audience's view of the ensemble, plus a four-track amplification system and an involved lighting scheme with colours and spotlights. Upcoming concerts in March will present Marius Constant as conductor and composer, while in April, a *concert monographique* will be presented by Mauricio Kagel.

Another group, which has existed now almost seven years, is very well respected and known for its particularly imaginative approaches to music theatre, and that ensemble is called **Gropus 7**. Nicolas Desjardins (single reed instruments), Pauline Vaillancourt (voice) and Anne Jalbert (flutes) have, since its founding, remained with the group which has had over the years other members including pianists and mime/actors. Last spring, in what must be one of their most spectacular presentations in recent memory, **Gropus 7** with other musicians and performing artists gave Montrealers an evening of *Musique et Magique*. In the first part of their cabaret-style event, Gropus performed Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*; and Vaillancourt was superb. In the second part, together with, among others, a mime, a juggler, an illusionist, a unicyclist and man-shot-out-of-a-cannon, they performed to everyone's delight the North American premiere of Kagel's *Variété*. This season, Gropus premiered Gilles Tremblay's *Dzei* (... *voies de feu* ...) a highly personal and provocative work by this master. The ensemble gives a kind of musical dissertation on a fragment by Heraclitus and on the second Alleluia in the mass for Pentecost.

University-based activities in new music, especially those sponsored by the respective faculties of music at McGill and at the University of Montreal, have often generated tremendous interest in the community. At McGill University last year, the Faculty of Music presented the premiere performances of three new orchestral works as part of its current program to issue long-playing records of various faculty ensembles and of the works of its staff and student composers. A *Cello Concerto* (1975) by Donald Steven, *Hommage à Vasareky* (1977) by John Rea and *Adieux* (1980) by Brian Cherney were all played by the McGill Symphony Orchestra directed by Uri Mayer. During this coming month of March, McGill will offer a 4-day Contemporary Music Festival whose theme is ... *around keyboards*.... Many premieres will take place including two specially commissioned works from John Winiarz and Steven Gellman. Carlos Santos will be the specially invited artist. His one-man-show plus the fact that he is a filmmaker (3 of his films on/about/with music will be shown) has already created a feeling of great expectations.

At the University of Montreal last year, the **Atelier de musique contemporaine** and the **Atelier d'art lyrique** gave what was the Canadian premiere of Schoenberg's rarely performed *Die Glückliche Hand*. The staging was appropriately Kandinskian, while the music was rendered in the two-piano reduction by Anton Webern augmented on this occasion with plenty of percussion. Truly a challenging undertaking!

This season, the Faculty of Music at McGill has sponsored two events which have drawn extraordinary response both from the public and the media. Last October, Nicolas Friese, a French composer invited to spend some weeks in Montreal in order to rehearse and train his co-workers, presented *Sons d'essaim* (sounds of the swarm), a multi-media work involving about 100 singers and instrumentalists drawn from the student body. Just recently, Michel Rodolphy, also a French composer but who works in

San Diego, presented two performances of his so-called subaquatic music in the university's olympic size swimming pool, the water temperature of which was purposefully overheated for the comfort of the wading public. With swimming trunks and bathing caps a requirement, the amphibious audience heard sounds emanating from a specially outfitted speaker system designed for underwater use. The music... well, a combination of flute sounds, and synthesizer figurations all blended together in a score of some note(s).

**Traditions musicales du monde** and **Les Evénements du Neuf**, two societies in which I take particular pride because I was one of the founding members of both, have captured not an insignificant share of the public's attention since their inception in 1978. **Traditions**, a non-profit society dedicated to informing Montrealers about non-Western music through concerts, lectures and films etc., has worked in close collaboration with, among others, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (service d'animation) and the Asia Society of New York. A sampling of its programming in the past few years speaks for itself.

In 1978: Ali Akbar Khan; Bharatanatyam Dance with Alarmel Valli; Classical Koto and Shakuhachi music from Japan; an Indonesian *Wayang Kulit* (shadow puppet play) from Java.

In 1979: Aak, theatre, music dance from Korea; The National Troup of Dancers from Bhutan.

In 1980: Fukien Hand Puppets (miniature Peking Opera) from The People's Republic of China; Flamenco singing with Enrique Morente from Spain; Kathakali Dance from India.

This season, 1981-82, so far has seen the visit of The Okinawan Troup of musicians and dancers (Japan) and the masterful playing of the saranghi by Ram Narayam (India).

**Les Evénements du Neuf** (events on the ninth, at nine-novel, new events), during the first three years of its existence, collaborated closely with the **Atelier de musique contemporaine** from the University of Montreal and received its financial support from the latter's Faculty of Music. The group's four founders — composer José Evangelista (also a founder of **Traditions**), myself, Lorraine Vaillancourt (also director of the **Atelier**) and Claude Vivier — were quite concerned with familiarizing audiences with seldom performed new music as well as with seldom exploited perspectives on 20th century musical awareness. The result has been nothing short of extraordinary as an enthusiastic public response acknowledges our originality and our desire to make an impact.

During the first season, three concerts, each with a separate theme, additionally underlined the work of an often unknown or forgotten Quebec artist. For example, *La nouvelle mélodie* concert, besides offering the Canadian premiere of Stockhausen's *Tierkreis* (plus a surprise addition of one of his 12 Swiss music boxes containing the *Tierkreis* melodies), also gave the audience an opportunity to see, during the intermission, some of the early films (1920's) created by a pioneer in the field of film animation who later would work for Walt Disney. This man's name was Raoul Barré. Similarly, the *Musique en bouche* (new vocal music) concert offered premieres by Eotvos and Manguashca; it also presented a reading from the poems of Yves-Hébert Sauvageau, who died tragically some years ago at the age of 23. *Les musiques immobiles* (motionless musics), dedicated to Montreal-born Colin McPhee, composer and author of books on the musical culture of Bali, presented premieres by Takahashi and Kotonski.

In our second season, two of the four events received particular attention: a concert-shock by the Toronto-based sound poetry group known as The Four Horsemen (Rafael Barreto-Rivera, Paul Dutton, Steve McCaffery and bp Nichol); and the realization of our *Noah's Ark* extravaganza: a 12-hour long event (starting at 9 pm) with the participation of guest composer/performer Christian Wolff, plus a host of other performers and ensembles. There was even a sleeping room for those who couldn't take the complete journey.

Last season: four events. (1) an invitation to the ever-imaginative Glass Orchestra of Toronto; (2) a café-théâtre evening of cabaret where the master of ceremonies' subject was the Tango and its fulgurating effect on morals, manners and music (we played the tangos by Satie, Stravinsky, Léhar, Krenek and Weill); then the highlight of the event: the debut of *Tango x 4*, a new group in Montreal which performs genuine Argentinian tangos (more than 800 people enjoyed two performances); (3) *Travel Books*, a concert of works by Vivier, myself and Evangelista wherein the music revealed our admiration for Far East and Indonesian musics; (4) *La nouvelle mélodie II* presented the Canadian premieres of Stockhausen's masterpiece ... *in the sky I am walking* ... sung to perfection by Pauline Vaillancourt and Jocelyne Fleury-Coutu; preceding the Stockhausen, Walter Zimmermann's *Leichte Tänze* for mixed ensembles.

Having received a kind of legal separation (for better or worse) from the University of Montreal this season, **Les Evénements du Neuf** collaborates with **Traditions musicales du monde** and the Museum of Fine Arts to present *Three Days of Vocal Music*, on May 7-9, 1982. This festival will be based on diversity and contrast as it joins together musical cultures and artists from, among other places, Korea (Du-Yee Chang will perform a shamanistic ceremony of inauguration), California (Extended Vocal Techniques Ensemble), New Quebec Territories (Inuit throat singing), Montreal (Les Mimes électriques and the Black Community Youth Choir), Toronto (The Four Horsemen), Ottawa (Peter Froelich interpreting Schwitter's *Ur-sonate*), France (Michèle Métail) and Japan (Michiko Hirayama singing Giacinto Scelsi's *Canti di Capricorno*), to mention but a few. Iroquois singers from Cornwall Island are also expected and a repeat of last season's highly acclaimed performance of Stockhausen's *Indianerlieder* (... *in the sky* ...) will be heard.

**Voilà!! Music works in Montreal.**

# OTTO JOACHIM



Tina Pearson

*MUSICWORKS (Tina Pearson, Susan Frykberg and John Oswald) visited Otto Joachim at his Montréal home last November.*

There are very, very few composers around who are human beings. Very, very few. Whom you can talk to. When I talk to Hugh LeCaine we talk about anything else but electronics and music. When I talk to the Israeli composer Tal — and you know he's clever, as a matter of fact Hugh LeCaine helped him a lot and gave him machines — we talk about life. See. If I talk to any musician in the symphony, of which I was a member, twice, you can only talk about cello or violin, or conductors — try to talk about composers. Or analyze, or talk about asparagus or talk about guns or whatever. A violinist has a library of violin works.

I was always like that. I always, maybe I was rebellious. My teacher never told me personally that I was a rebel, but he told my friends that I sent over just to look him up. To say hello. And he said I was a rebel, all the time. And yet when I visited him he put his house, the size of this, he put it full of flowers — there was not a table without flowers — for me. I'm not saying he was god, but I don't think a parent or a wife could have done that what he has done. Yet he considered me a rebel — good GOOD! Because if he tells me I'm a rebel, good! Because I was one. You see, I was not obedient, put it that — I was obedient to him, yes, because he was a great musician. He was a man who could take your body apart. I mean if something was wrong, if you played something wrong, he knew, physically, which muscle was involved, which bone was functioning. He knew all that. As a chamber musician, I could not have thought of a greater chamber musician teacher. As a human being... I played his viola — Italian, great viola. Not only did he lend me this viola, it was worth thousands of dollars, he asked his father, who was also a musician, to put new strings on and play in the instrument so I wouldn't have to do it. Because new strings drop, ah? You see. So. But with him I could talk — ABOUT EVERYTHING. He came to the class for instance in the morning at eight o'clock, I used to pick him up because I was living in another town. I picked him up and he opened the door. There were all the students, they have to be there together at the same time, so he says, did you practice? Yes — No — Yes — No — fast, fast. No, I said. Close the door, he says. Alright. Opposite was a coffee shop. So we went out for coffee, and we stayed there for three hours when we went in there.

So these are my little experiences here and there accumulated over the years, good and bad. Are you plastered?

*Otto Joachim was born in Germany in 1910. He lived in the Far East from 1934 until 1949, when he came to Montréal via Brazil.*



Tina Pearson

**Otto:** I think more or less everything is explainable.

**Tina:** Or nothing is...

**Otto:** No. Everything is explainable. In the arts, in the sciences, life, or religion. I'm not saying I have an excuse for everything, but everything is explainable. I used to give lectures at the Conservatoire on absolute pitch for instance. I can make anybody have absolute pitch.

**Tina:** How?

**Otto:** How? Through recognition. You know what colour that is, don't you? That's a frequency. You depend on this — you have to know it... otherwise you couldn't go to Loblaw's or wherever and buy, you see. You go by sight, don't you? If you would have to go by sound...

**Tina:** It could be done —

**Otto:** Well, otherwise you'd starve. The cavemen had to depend on sound. Every bird has absolute pitch — goes after its own species. But the nightingale, I mean its a nasty little bird who lays its eggs in somebody else's nest and lets the other bird breed it. The other bird thinks its her own.

**Susan:** The cuckoo does that as well. The cuckoo is so big that it kicks all the other little chickies out of the nest and takes over. It's a real shmuck.

**Otto:** You find this among human beings too, the same situation, ah? Only they're smarter. We're supposed to use our... what do you call this — noogin?

**Tina:** Nogin.

**Otto:** Ya. So. That's why I say that everything is explainable.

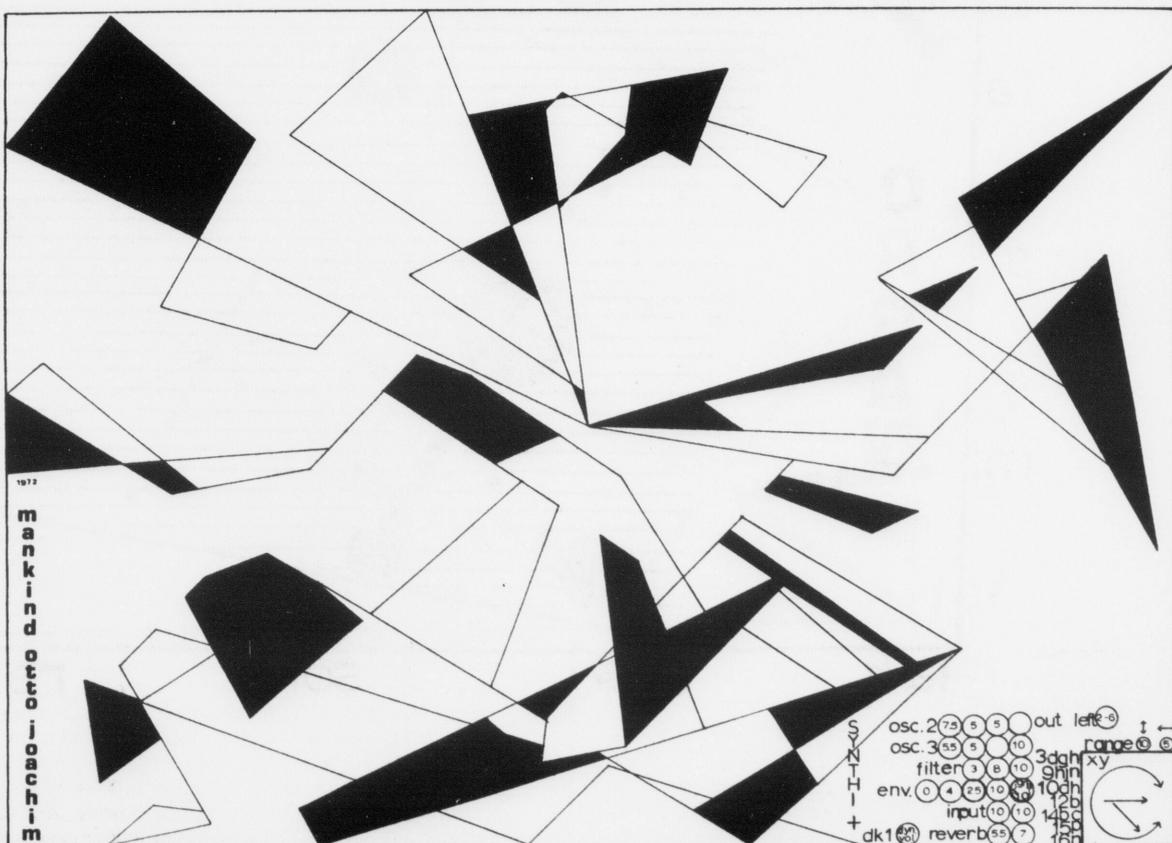
Otto Joachim at home.

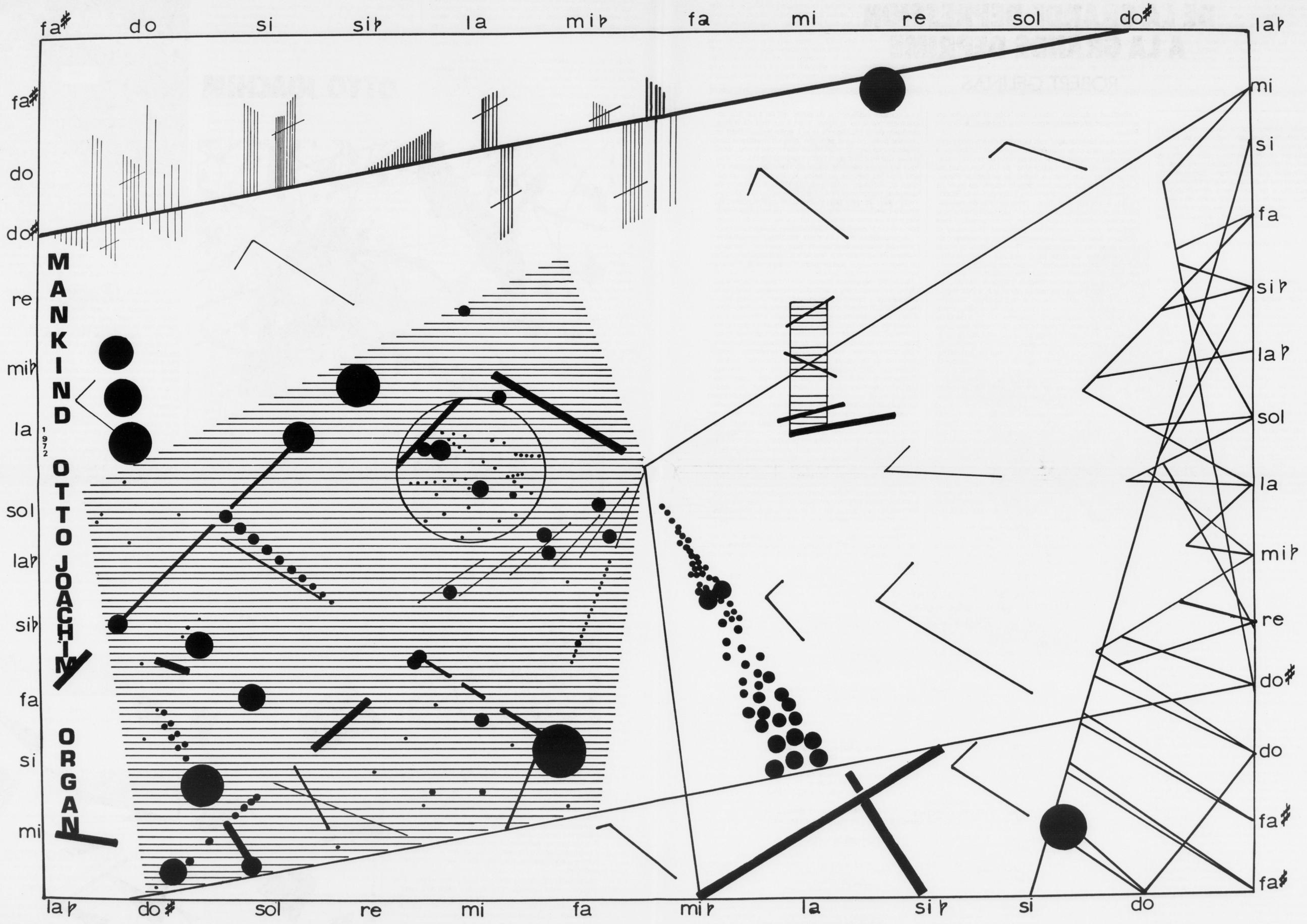
*Mankind is a multi media work that was commissioned by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in 1972. Its first performance was February 17, 1973 at the McMillan Theatre in Toronto under the direction of the composer. The work calls for 4 reciters, 4 synthesizer players, 1 organist, and 1 tympanist. Slides are projected onto multi screens employing 4 projectors, and incense is burnt during the performance.*

*The reciters are authentic representatives of the Catholic, Jewish, Mohammedan and Bhuddistic faiths. The recitations are about peace. The projected pictures represent atrocities.*

*The score is based on a row, and so are most of the graphics. Each performer has his information on a transparent film which is placed in a box with lights. These lights are controlled by the conductor through a master switch-board with variable intensity for each light source. Each performer follows this information as to intensity and/or speed.*

*The text of the reciters is taken from the scriptures. The performers are only partially dependent on the conductor as their choice of graphics is not predetermined. (Score reproduced with permission of the composer)*





# DE LA GRANDE DEPRESSION A LA GRANDE DEPRIME

ROBERT GELINAS

ou débris de délire d'interprétation dérivés de la durée déprimante des débats d'actualité dépourvus de divination mais désirant doter de divinité le douloureux drainage dramatique d'énergie dodécaphonique dont le dosage dormitif de dorure d'emblée draconienne dira en doléances doctrinaires des dommages dominants du domaine domestique sur la distribution et la diffusion d'un discours dithyrambique tel que divers divertissements distillés à distance dans la dissonance d'une dissolution dissuasive distendront distinctement des distorsions distraites du drelin dessiné sur le droquet drabe de la dame déshabillée au destin dynamique dormant dur...

"DA! DA! ..." (extrait du commentaire du correspondant de l'agence Tass.)

Je ne vais pas — cette fois-ci du moins — réaliser le relevé complet de tous les concerts EMIM, en spécifiant qui y a joué quoi, bien que l'existence d'un tel dossier complet, avec photos et tout, (qui nous fait défaut), serait un argument de poids dans la présentation de n'importe quel projet, un outil de promotion collective fabuleux. Cependant je vous ai parlé de "débris de délire d'interprétation" ... alors les quelques événements dont j'ai ici choisi de parler ainsi que les citations (hors contexte, évidemment, je suis un affreux) ne servent que d'exemples ou points de départ à une interrogation ouverte sur le mode d'organisation. Je ne prétends pas porter le jugement final -bâton après vous avoir "asséné" l'analyse la plus rigoureuse, je cherche simplement à réfléchir tout haut (sur) des préoccupations qui sont présentes à l'esprit de tous ceux concernés par le développement de la M.I. Je me propose de relire l'histoire de la Grande Passe, ce qui pourrait nous aider à apprécier ce qui peut se passer pour la M.I. dans la catégorie des bars/café (tel le Cargo). Sonder la distance existant entre ce qu'il convient d'appeler le "ghetto" de la M.I. au coeur du royaume de la musique binaire. Puis nous pourrions nous interroger sur la "validité" du réseau institutionnel, surtout en période de compressions budgétaires. Ma charge contre l'Etat sera brève, je ne dispose pas d'une équipe de recherche, statisticiens et sociologues me permettant d'étayer ad nauseam les dossiers noirs, cependant il est possible que vous entendiez résonner les "héroïques" échos de l'Ouverture de Guillaume Tell au-travers le cafouillis indépatouillable auquel il est fait allusion. Pour terminer, je lance tout simplement un appel sur la nécessité de concertation, de saine auto-critique et d'un renouveau d'imagination dans l'élaboration de nouveaux types d'interventions afin de permettre à la M.I. de survivre à la période économique pénible que nous traversons et d'occuper enfin la place qui lui revient dans le champ valorisé de l'activité culturelle.

J'ai froid d'effroi au fond de mon troublant trou blanc, c'est le milieu de l'hiver ... à partir de ce moment qu'est intervenu le délire d'interprétation, lorsque s'est perdu le sens d'une transcription intégrale, mot pour mot, des entrevues que j'avais réalisées à l'automne. Faut dire que l'alcool et la fumée aidant, j'avais réussi au cours de ces entrevues à amener à un point de queue de sardine certaines questions qui sont intéressantes autrement. N'empêche qu'au moment où on s'apprête à allumer une quatrième chandelle sur le May West de fête de l'EMIM, je vais laisser la parole à Daniel Buisson (animateur à Radio-Centreville et organisateur d'événement de M.I.) pour nous relater les débuts de l'EMIM, à la Grande Passe:

"Moi, j pense qu'à Montréal, la M.I. (musique improvisée) est surtout née avec les ateliers de la Grande Passe. J pense qu'avant ça, y'avait rien; si les musiciens travaillaient dans ce sens-là, j pense qu'ils le faisaient très pour eux-mêmes, ils le faisaient dans des p'tits groupes, dans leur cave; en tout cas y'avait pas d'endroits publics pour que ce genre de choses-là se passe, excepté peut-être le Musée (des Beaux-Arts) qui allait chercher quelques personnes au cours de l'année. J me souviens, à cette époque-là, c'était Raymond Gervais qui était au M.B.A. et qui organisait peut-être 4 concerts (par année); là-dessus y'avait de la musique contemporaine, tu pouvais aussi bien voir Alwyn Lussier que George Lewis... Encore là, M.I. à la Grande Passe, attention, j pense que l'idée était différente, j pense que c'était des ateliers parce qu'y'avait des journées vacantes et les spectacles de fin de semaine c'était rare... J pense que le premier show du samedi où on a accepté de l'improvisation, ça l'a été Tristan" (à noter que c'est Buisson/Radio Centreville qui est responsable de l'organisation de ce show. ... "A part ça c'était les ateliers du mardi et, en dehors de ça, en fin de semaine c'était des groupes très structurés comme Nébu ou l'O.S. Faut faire la nuance, c'est pour ça que j'dis Musique improvisée, oui mais...! c'était plutôt des ateliers, si on pense à des ateliers de l'Enmieux, ça restait quant même assez gentil, ça restait des p'tits orchestres où c'était assez mélodique et finalement y se produisaient le mardi soir et c'était mort... Il y a eu des ateliers plus improvisés que d'autres, en général je dirais que le principe de la M.I. a débuté là, sans que ce soit la M.I. telle qu'on la connaît aujourd'hui et telle qu'elle

s'effectuait à époque. Disons que l'idée de travailler ensemble spontanément des canevas est partie de la Grande Passe."

Je voudrais bien dégager trois éléments différents qui sont impliqués dans cette relation des origines de l'EMIM, car il m'apparaît important de ne pas sombrer dans une nostalgie trompeuse (genre "La Bohème" de Ch. Aznavour) qui risquerait de créer tout un mythe de la Grande Passe. D'abord, il y a les musiciens dont la volonté de jouer de l'improvisation est bien antérieure à l'époque de la Grande Passe. A cet égard je trouve indispensable de rappeler (avant que ce ne soit complètement refoulé du champ de la conscience collective) que Leriche, en compagnie d'Yves Bouliane, Patrice Beckriche, Raymond Torchinsky et quelques autres jouaient constamment (sinon souvent) du "Free" dans ces maigres années 75-77, même si ce n'était que dans des galeries parallèles (ou indépendantes comme "Balcon les Images") et que ces endroits n'étaient pas particulièrement fréquentés par... (par qui, d'ailleurs?) De plus, tous ceux qui ont effectué le stage le l'O.F.Q.J. en l'été '77 étaient déjà intéressés par la M.I., à des degrés divers, et si le contact avec des organisations "fonctionnant", en France, a été une stimulation indéniable, l'intention préalable existait avant l'automne '77. Le collectif de gestion de la Grande Passe, somme toute, comme le disait Buisson, n'a fait que laisser la place (qui était vide de toute façon) à la disposition des musiciens pour des "ateliers" où ils ne recevaient d'autre salaire que le proverbial "chapeau". C'était déjà "bien bon de leur part" si on considère le contexte musical qui prévalait à l'époque. En ce temps-là, en vérité en vérité je vous le dis, il y avait bien peu d'endroits où l'on pouvait entendre du Cecil Taylor, du Albert Ayler ou du Globe Unity Orchestra (aujourd'hui même, d'ailleurs...) Le public de la Grande Passe qui vivait la domination du "Folklore Revival" avait très peu d'intérêt pour le Free Jazz ou la M.I., aucun goût pour un produit culturel "AUTRE". Il fallait souvent procéder à une présentation didactique des pièces (explication des structures, etc...) pour tâcher d'en assurer une réception "probable". Dans cette perspective, ces toutes premières semences de la culture de l'improvisation musicale en milieu montréalais "ordinaire" (un bar où le populisme des uns et des autres a pu se prendre à rêver) revêtent quasiment un caractère "héroïque". En gros il m'apparaît surtout que ce fut là le résultat d'une entreprise "volontariste" de la part des musiciens, on ne répondait pas à une quelconque demande.

Effectuons un saut dans le continuum spatio-temporel et transportons-nous mentalement au Cargo, en 1982. Le seul fait qu'il se soit écoulé plus de trois ans entre la série de la Grande Passe et cette reprise d'une programmation hebdomadaire de spectacles de l'EMIM suffit bien à indiquer

une certaine indifférence du public qui ne s'est pas absolument plaint du sevrage. Y a-t-il eu, tout de même, évolution de la situation de la M.I. entre-temps? Pour un premier point, on peut souligner que les musiciens sont payés et que la continuité devrait attirer, peu à peu, "son" public. Car il y a bien un public qui apprécie la M.I. on l'a vu tous les autres concerts qui se sont déroulés depuis '77, soit dans les galeries parallèles, les Musées, les universités ou Cégeps, ainsi que lors de ces événements spéciaux, happenings multi-disciplinaires (tel les "Diseurs Improvisés" en avril 80), Symposium de Chicoutimi, ou encore dernièrement lors des 2 nuits de musique improvisée qui se sont tenues au Café La Vie Douce (12 septembre) et à Motivation V (23 décembre). Avant d'examiner d'un peu plus près ces deux derniers événements, j'aimerais vous parler d'une de mes récentes lectures (le genre à vous transformer l'existence, complètement) qui a pu inspirer quelque peu le genre d'analyse auquel je me livre.

Il s'agit d'une oeuvre absolument indispensable, une recherche colossale (il y a en tout VIII tomes) réalisée par le célèbre ethno-musicologue Charles Saint-Mars et qui s'intitule: "La Dominante, critique de la composition et économie politique de l'improvisation." Dans ce traité magistral, auquel les générations à venir ne manqueront pas de se référer, Charles St-Mars rapporte des centaines d'anecdotes qu'ont vécu toutes sortes de musiciens: solistes dans des orchestres symphoniques, jazzmen, compositeurs de rangines publicitaires, folkloristes du Kurdistan (en URSS comme en Iran) etc. Cette somme d'expériences vécues sous tous les climats (aussi bien physiques que socioculturels) constitue autant de variations (à l'infini) sur le thème central de la subtile discrimination qui existe au sein même de toutes les organisations de musiciens, de la hiérarchie insidieuse qui vient même à bout des groupes les plus "tights". De cette division qui semble même s'étendre à tous les secteurs de l'activité humaine et qui serait (si vous me passez l'expression) LA grande passe en question lorsque l'on parle de l'origine des malheurs de l'humanité et qui, nous révèle l'auteur en premier, donna son nom à l'ex-bar de la rue Ontario!! Publié par les Editions du Compte-à-rebours, Montréal, Genève, Tokyo et San Francisco; disponible chez tous les libraires dignes de ce nom et indispensable à tous ceux qui sont "sensibles à l'écriture critique qui cerne vraiment bien, en trois lignes presque, tout le phénomène de la musique... au point de ne pas du tout entendre, faute de savoir écouter..."

Reprenons notre observation des deux événements "Nuit de musique improvisée" qui se sont déroulés à Montréal ces derniers mois. D'abord consultons le tableau comparatif: comparatif:

## COMPARATIVE CHART OF 2 EVENTS — "ALL-NIGHT IMPROVISED MUSIC"

	(1981)	Nuit du 12 septembre	Nuit du 23 décembre
Lieu/ Location		Café Ecologique "La Vie Douce" (rue St-Denis)	Galerie Parallèle "Motivation V" (rue Bleury)
Organisateurs/ Organizers		Radio-Centreville: Daniel Buisson, J. Derome	Productions-du-Compte-à-Rebours: Robert Gelinas
# Musiciens/ # Musicians		32	20
Revenus/ Income		0	\$980 (\$800-subsvention Musique Conseil des Arts/ Canada Council Music Grant-81% \$180-entrées/ door receipts-19%
Coûts/ Costs		\$65-loyer et affiche/rent and flyer (Buisson)	\$455 (Affiche, piano, chaises, etc./ Poster, piano, chairs, etc.)
Salaires des Musiciens/ Musicians' Salaries		0	\$525 (\$26.25 x 20)-54%
Public/ Attendance		300	300
Profits/ Booze		100% Café La Vie Dance	100% Motivation V
Contexte/ Context		Diffusion radiophonique/ Radio broadcast	Au sien de l'installation/événement "Alarme" de Robert Deschênes et Collectif./ In the midst of a 3-day exhibition/ installation, "Alarme", by Robert Deschênes.

Je me remets à interpréter ... le tableau et sans trop délirer, espère. Il m'a semblé déceler au cours des entrevues avec Buisson et Fauteux qu'ils j'souffraient d'un préjugé anti-économique. C'est-à-dire qu'ils n'ont jamais été effleurés par l'idée de chercher des fonds soit en subides ou auprès de producteurs (autres qu'eux-mêmes) ou auprès du public (avec un prix d'entrée.) Dans ce dernier cas il semble qu'ils aient voulu faire un événement "qui rejoigne le plus de monde possible", qui soit surtout axé sur une diffusion radiophonique ... Ceci est suspicieux, on dirait que les organisateurs eux-mêmes doutaient de la capacité d'attraction qu'exercent 32 musiciens dès lors qu'on aurait mis un prix d'entrée "raisonnable", d'autant plus que l'on aurait pu effectuer une publicité plus élaborée.

Ainsi donc, à cette occasion, seule l'entreprise (coopérative et écologique) de "La Vie Douce" a su retirer des bénéfices financiers grâce à la soif plus que spirituelle du public. Je ne crois pas superflu de considérer comme vitale la nécessité de générer des revenus, pour toute organisation, afin de couvrir les frais et d'envisager la possibilité de payer tous les participants (musiciens, techniciens, graphistes...) On parle partout de créer une activité économique, cela veut aussi dire voir à donner à des événements culturels une dimension économique, après tout ça prend des bidous pour s'promener en skidoo...

Partant de ce point de vue (qu'on me corrige si je me trompe) que les musiciens improvisateurs ne sont pas opposés en principe à l'idée d'une rémunération pour leur

travail, j'ai voulu organiser une autre "nuit" où il y aurait du fric d'impliqué. Rendons d'abord à César... C'est grâce au travail inlassable de Alan Mattes si le service de musique du Conseil des Arts a créé un fonds annuel totalisant \$15,000 et qui est mis à disposition des galeries parallèles (à raison de \$200 par événement) **sur demande**, pour la production spéciale de concerts de musique dite "expérimentale". J'ai réussi à obtenir \$800 pour la nuit à "Motivation" en faisant valoir qu'il s'agissait d'un événement à tout le moins "quadruple". La tenue, simultanément, de "ALARME" de Robert Deschênes a permis une publicité redoublée, cependant ce deuxième événement n'a pas su, lui non plus effectuer une percée auprès du "grand public"; d'ailleurs la quasi-"parenté" d'une grande

## DOES BILINGUAL MEAN DOUBLE-TONGUED?

Is the total discrepancy between these English and French texts antagonizing, or does it just reflect the varying preoccupations I have towards the two completely different audiences that this special Montréal (and bilingual) issue of MUSICWORKS will be distributed to?

My wrap in English to the Canadian readers starts with a very short and condensed history of the origin of EMIM and is translated from a previous article which was published last year in a Quebec City magazine called *Intervention*, then goes on to a comparative look at Toronto and Montréal from a point of view relative to cultural institutions.

The French text does not produce an exhaustive list of improvised music events to point out the multiple facets of EMIM's productions in the past years but takes a closer look at a couple of them, within and without institutions, to put forward the appropriate questions (since I can't pretend to have resolved them) pertaining to the survival or development of improvised music. The title, quite pretentiously, announces: *From the Great Depression* (economic, '29) to *the Great Depression* (moral, '82) and the concluding part of the article is just another rallying cry, claiming the necessity of collective self-management in a more coherent form to outlast and overcome the undertow.

June 24, 1974: L'Amorce burns down. This was a jazz-club run by the *Quatuor de Jazz Libre du Québec*, in Old Montréal. This 'accident' grants the booming cultural life in Montréal yet another indispensable asset: a "Spékatti" Warehouse. For the *Quatuor de Jazz Libre* and for the Montréal improvisers it marks the end of an era. (We might say that, up to that period, the future could be looked at promisingly, while since that brutal caesura, day-to-day preoccupations seem to blot out any mid or long-term perspectives). This setback, along with the "Folklore Revival" that went on in the following years (resurrection of the Québécois feeling) one might have thought that it would be impossible for the free jazz movement to ever again blossom in these regions.

I'd like here to add a comment that Tristan Honsinger made on that period:

*"When I left Montréal, I was playing in the streets, if you know, and I was almost always playing alone, and there were always people watching but there was no way to develop anything and I really thought I was alone to do what I was doing. This was at the end of '74... Sure I played with the Quatuor de Jazz Libre, I knew Bouliane... those guys; I knew this Dutch cat whose name is Peter von Himpel, yeah... I knew a lot of people, but I really felt like... There was this thing I was doing and they were doing it in Europe so I went there..."*

(Back to my original story, now.) Nevertheless, a group of "irreducible" improvisers kept on doing their thing, in spite of adverse conditions. After an O.F.Q.J. (Office Franco-Québécois de la Jeunesse) trip to France (summer 1977) during which some 20 Montréal musicians toured jazz festivals and met well-organized free music co-ops, pianist Pierre Saint-Jacques, who was working in the self-managed bar "La Grande Passe", organized in the course of that fall-winter a series of Tuesday evening improvised jazz workshops at one of which the trio made up of Derome (flute) Leriche (sax, bass clarinet) and Simard (bass) was the first to use the name EMIM for *Ensemble de Musique Improvisée de Montréal*. Most of the local jazz groups (varying degrees of modal or jazz-rock tendencies) had their members participating in these workshops and all of this animation was fed by the notorious "foreign agitator" (Che) Tristan Honsinger, who had accepted a private invitation to come back to Montréal and participate in different concerts with local musicians along with New York bassist Hal Honsererud. From that period on there were different solo/duet and trio concerts of improvised music staged in small bars/cafés, in the Galleries parallèles, at Conventum, in all available and willing places, including one evening at the Musée des Beaux Arts (produced by Raymond Gervais) and so the Ensemble grew to the size of some 15 musicians experimenting with various instrumental combinations an infinity of colours and textures, ranging between the traditional poles of Contemporary Music and Free Jazz.

(I'll give the exact reference for those of you who can read French and might be interested in the rest of that article, since I'm not going to translate it all the way. "Pour le droit de parole," in *Intervention* #10-11, mars 1981 C.P. 277, Haute-Ville, Québec, P.Q. G1R 4P8.)



Tristan Honsinger, Musée des Beaux Arts, 1981

In this new article, here, we've come to the point where I've failed to compile the exact statistical data that might have produced an accurate accounting of all EMIM concerts in the past 4 years, and also some sort of graph illustrating the inter-weaving of the musicians in all the different formations to have used the generic name EMIM. In a way that kind of data is indispensable in our context where some sort of historical trace (the institutionalized inscription) proves to be a powerful promotional tool; Eric Dolphy had said, shortly before dying: "When the music's over, it's gone... in the air and we can never capture it again..." So we all know we have to *hear it live*... otherwise music is meaningless. The actual sense of the music can never be replaced by any kind of intelligent comment, but the production of such (well-praised) discourse over this and that type of music gives it legitimacy, credibility, existence in the second degree, life beyond its acoustic death and it upgrades the musicians' social status. Therefore such graphical "proof" might have served to counter-balance or nuance an opinion Alan Mattes (director of the Music Gallery in Toronto) had expressed last spring in Pat Darby's office at the Musée des beaux Arts, that Toronto is the high point of improvised musical activity in Canada. So much music goes on in Montréal, but it is not noticed because of all sorts of organizational failures. There is an obvious under-production of records, and the absence of any kind of publication to support or underline activity in Montréal's improvised music scene. So the way I would put it is to say that Toronto is the focal point of institutional investment relative to improvised music. Toronto does have the only government-subsidized Music Gallery I know, and a lot of the funding is a direct result of Alan Mattes' irrepressible

militant activity — his energy at going after bureaucrats is legendary. The prestigious presence of Michael Snow in the surroundings is another asset lacking in Montréal to succeed in attracting funding. On the other hand we've got Mayor Drapeau and the world's largest concrete toilet bowl. Right on, I mean the 1976 "Canadian" Olympic Stadium, that the Québécois and specially Montréalais will be paying for for eons to come. Lotteries are doing fine in Québec, you know — the working class will buy 50 cent dreams anywhere, anytime — but the profits don't go 50% to Sports and 50% to Arts, no it pays back the Olympic debt, that our very own regional concern. So, in Québec, cultural institutions are poor which means that the artists... Even our Ministry of Cultural Affairs functions without the responsibility of having specific (if not coherent) policies concerning cultural development. Cultural sovereignty, association-sovereignty... shit, what kind of phony political issues are those. I want to hear the poetic noise of my pen when I'm endorsing a cheque. Culture has only been a pretence for the worst demogogy I've heard.

In these comments over comparing fund flows in Montréal and Toronto, I'm not trying to activate a metropolitan feud. Whenever such rivalry occurs between Québec and Montréal (over any issue) I always reject it as so much inane. What goes on in Toronto and Montréal is the direct result of the specific activity in each of these cities given the economic and socio-political margin of manoeuvre relative to the two different contexts of these cities — comparing, analyzing and criticizing should only serve the purpose of improving the general situation.

*Robert Gelinas organizes concerts of improvised music, plays concerts of improvised music, writes articles about improvised music and collects welfare as a form of economic gratification.*



Robert Leriche, Musée des Beaux Arts, 1981

partie de l'auditoire avec les musiciens et collaborateurs (ceux d'ALARME y compris) explique que tout ce monde n'ait pas produit les recettes au guichet que l'on pouvait escompter. Et il faut dire que ce salaire était encore loin au-dessous d'une norme "syndicale".

Ainsi donc la question, toute simple, est donc de trouver le moyen de rejoindre le "grand public". Cela passe-t-il nécessairement par la séduction préalable de quelques chroniqueurs(ses) des grands journaux ou de la radio-télé? J'aime mieux penser que non, parce qu'ils me semblent beaucoup moins réceptifs à ce qu'il y a d'intéressant, voire de passionnant dans la musique improvisée que ce public anonyme qui semble constamment nous échapper. A cet

égard, je me permets de vous raconter une anecdote où je suis impliqué faute de connaître toutes les meilleures histoires de chacun.

Ça se passe un dimanche après-midi d'automne, au Musée du Québec, à Québec, lors d'un spectacle de QUIDAM. Comme pour la plupart de nos programmes, il y a toujours un moment où les danseurs prennent un "break" et où il se passe donc un duo musical. A cette occasion particulière, Jean Derome n'avait pas pu faire le gig et c'est Robert Leriche qui le remplaçait. Ajoutons que le gardien-de-musée-statisticien avait dénombré 289 personnes. Si on enlève tous les chums de la revue *Intervention* et des radios communautaires, ainsi que les "spécialisés" de la musique (AMAQ et autres) ainsi que des danseurs curieux de ce quatuor mixte d'improvisation, l'avant-garde cul-

turelle sensibilisée et favorablement préjugée pour un total de 40 ou 50 personnes, il restait quand même un tas de monde ordinaire, flâneurs des Palines d'Abraham entrés se chauffer, vieux couples et familles avec des bébés en carrosse, "amis du Musée" certainement: un bel échantillon de "grand public"... Eh bien, je puis vous le dire, le duo était assez bien réussi, ça a levé et ça a réussi à soulever l'enthousiasme de la foule. Une ovation en règle (je me sens à l'aise d'en parler parce que c'est la seule fois que j'ai connu ça). C'est donc dire que dans un contexte au moins neutre, le grand public, quand il y est, s'avère sensible et réceptif à l'improvisation musicale.

De ceci il est important de retenir que toutes les foules ne se précipiteront pas nécessairement dans les bars/discos du Plateau ou dans les galeries parallèles (sans qu'il soit pour autant question de renoncer à jouer aussi dans ces endroits) et il importe de multiplier les représentations de toutes sortes pour réclamer le droit de faire entendre cette musique qui s'élabore dans notre ville depuis au moins quatre ans, sous le nom collectif d'EMIM, dans tous les endroits possibles. Il faut aussi que les musiciens puissent se distancier d'un contexte de contradiction musicale trop criante (chaque "set" étant sans répit entre-coupé de Rock-Disco dansant trop à côté de la track, vraiment trop...) où le piège de l'auto-censure les guette et risque, sous couvert d'une problématique formaliste de "popularité" ou d'"accessibilité" douteuse, de démunir la M.I. de son réel caractère dynamique et spontané (ce qui, en fait, est tripartite dans l'improvisation, ce qui fascine et séduit) laissant le public aux prises avec un répertoire mélo-mollo, slick-shlack, clean-cut, mais plus ou moins improvisé (pour reprendre l'expression de Buisson). Ça peut profiter sur le coup, mais à moyen ou long terme ça ne sert pas du tout la cause de la M.I.

tout la cause de la M.I.

Je reviens aussi sur la notion qu'une attitude plus confiante et/ou plus convaincue (dans le jargon on parle d'agressivité) sur la capacité à se vendre d'une telle musique de la part de ses promoteurs (musiciens ou chums de musiciens) pourra gagner, à force, petit à petit, de meilleures conditions de production qui sont indispensables, en fonction aussi d'une salutaire auto-critique sur les expériences accumulées et à condition de proposer des dossiers en conformité avec les normes qui prévalent.

Je ne m'étendrai pas longuement sur les lacunes du système institutionnel québécois de la culture et de la plus méprisante ignorance qu'on y oppose à toute demande reliée à la M.I., disons simplement que l'état de crise (qui affole tout le monde) qui s'étend à tous les secteurs de la société est un genre de syndrome permanent au M.A.C. Au risque de me rendre ridicule à répéter ce dont tout le monde est fort conscient, je me vois dans l'obligation de rappeler aux politiciens et aux bureaucrates, que ça leur plaise ou non, tôt ou tard eux aussi devront bien avouer "L'improvisation est parmi nous pour y demeurer...!"

Enfin, en supposant qu'il soit possible d'élaborer une liste de priorités sur les gestes stratégiques à poser (trouver un lieu de production et diffusion, constituer un centre de documentation avec cassettes, dossiers, C.V. photos TOUT sur la M.I., investir tous les organismes susceptibles de participer à une ou des productions de M.I. etc. ...) il serait utile de procéder à une relative répartition des tâches. Certes j'entends déjà dire que la première responsabilité du musicien va à sa pratique musicale et que tous, les uns comme les autres, ne sont pas doués pour toutes ces fonctions bureaucratiques et de marketing, mais maintenant, plus que jamais, il est nécessaire de lutter contre la Grande Déprime de cette seconde grande(?) Dépression et pour s'en sortir sans s'être fait fourrer à l'os, il est indispensable de faire preuve de solidarité et de cohérence dans l'élaboration de la contre-attaque qu'on doit leur préparer (rien moins que ça) pour assurer une Invasion Totale du Champ Valorisé et Marchandisé de l'Activité Culturelle. Et ça implique une collaboration de tous et chacun pour réaliser ces objectifs qui nous concernent

emprunté le ton belliqueux et militariste de ce dernier passage à un homme pour qui j'ai une admiration qu'il me rend bien, mon grand ami, l'honorable ministre de la Défense du Canada, M. Gilles Lamontagne qui me confiait récemment: "Robert, tu sais pour moi, un concert de musique improvisée c'est comme piloter un chasseur F-16..." Salut bien... Robert Gélinas

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# NIGHT KITCHEN

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*Nightkitchen is the performing duo of Kathleen Yearwood and Ross White. They were interviewed in Montréal by Chris Howard and Robert Rayer, January, 1982.*

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## (extraits de l'entrevue)

**Kathleen:** Je ne pense pas qu'il y ait de rapports, il s'agit plutôt de hasards.

**Ross:** A nos débuts nous étions le groupe en permanence à Riverview, énorme asile d'aliénés en Colombie Britannique.

**Kathleen:** Ils l'appréciaient beaucoup. Ces gens-là, ils étaient notre meilleur public. Ils ne s'attendaient à rien de bien précis. Ils écoutaient tout simplement. Ils aimaient bien les bruits et la folie.

En fait, qu'est-ce que nous exigeons de la part des auditeurs? Je veux qu'ils essaient de tout entendre. Il faut qu'ils soient vraiment attentifs. En plus, je les respecte réellement — c'est presque comme un jeu ou une danse. Nous réagissons à leur moindre changement d'humeur, à leur moindre mouvement. Tout se rejoint. Je leur accorde autant de respect que je dois aux membres du groupe; ils jouent eux-aussi avec nous. Et quand on joue, le principal, ce n'est pas de se produire, de distraire les gens, ni de leur faire l'exposition de notre production artistique. Il s'agit plutôt de stimuler leur imagination, leur penchant pour l'irrationnel et l'absurde, stimuler leur pensée quoi, les exciter.

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**Kathleen:** I don't think there's any relationship to anything ... it's totally accident.

**Ross:** I don't know how it got there at all either.

**Chris:** Well, how did YOU get there?

**Ross:** Both of us come from totally different directions...

**Chris:** But out of music school?

**Ross:** No, "success without college"! The music that most affected me then, and still most affects me, is jazz, the freedom, what we all wanted was to find freedom in what we were doing...

**Kathleen:** I was never interested in categories of music. When I first started writing music, I was twelve, and I just wrote sound, straight sounds ... improvisational voice and guitar. When we started playing together and performing, spending so much time with music and with writing, and realizing the possibilities, it started to come back ... not in little boxes!

**Ross:** Even a lot of the music that people accused us of being influenced by were things that we hadn't heard yet. When we first started playing, we were sort of the house band at Riverview, an enormous mental institute in B.C.

**Kathleen:** They appreciated it. They were our best audience, they had no expectations. They listened, it seemed. They liked the noises and the craziness.

**Ross:** People would talk about the healing power of the music...

*We're in a small Montreal cafe. Echoes of the "Eagles" are dying away; the cook has turned off the stereo because the band is about to start up. There are only two of them, but instruments enough for five. He has an acoustic bass, an electric with a small amp, and a cello. The tuning pegs of the bass are hidden in a multi-coloured wool tassel. She has an accordian, a bicycle wheel, and a dark steel-strung guitar. Between them a few bright toys, some bells, a lopsided grin, and there is music again.*

**Kathleen:** I think what we've both been striving for in sound and music, the main component, is ... I don't know what you'd call it, maybe "soul". There's a lot of emotionalism in the music. What we try and play is something very very human, that appeals to something instinctive in people.

**Chris:** It seems to be aimed a lot at the imagination, and perhaps at the child in everybody. Not to say it's oversimplified, but it needs to be taken with a certain amount of patience.

**Kathleen:** A certain amount of innocence.

**Chris:** Is that one of the things you demand of the audience?

**Kathleen:** Innocence?

**Chris:** Yeah.

**Kathleen:** What DO we demand of the audience? I expect them to be trying to hear everything. I expect them to be really attentive. And with that, I really respect them — it's almost like a game or a dance. With every slight fluctuation in their mood or their movement, we make a change. It's intertwined. I respect them as though they're part of the group; they're playing with us.

**Chris:** Yet you've said you could go on doing the creative side of your work without concerts.

**Kathleen:** Yeah. In a way I, personally, would prefer to perform never —

**Ross:** I don't feel that way at all! Performance is really important. We've played quite a bit; we push ourselves to play a lot. I think that performance is necessary to stimulating the music and bringing it together. If you just work on music without ever performing it, it loses out.

**Kathleen:** I think you're right. My ideas about performance ARE changing. I'm interested in creating a "Magic Theatre" — not just presenting our compositions. Our performance has always had something to do with magic. It's casting spells. You have to have things prepared, you paint the circle and do a few incantations, there has to be silence and respect for the spot. Then you conjure up these things and make them work. The concert situation is perfect that way, it lets those things happen. It encourages madness and magic, it opens the door.

**Ross:** The music fits in well with that sort of atmosphere, after we're finished and the music's gone, it's OVER. We stand around and talk to people about what happened.

**Kathleen:** Nobody really knows what happened. But when it's over it's gone. That kind of performance is really regenerative for us. We need the magic too. We're tired, but a good one makes up for that. Usually things are rather frenzied before a performance, and by the time we get around to playing, I really need the sounds myself! I make them for me, too.

**Ross:** Quite often people respond very deeply, they claim to have been really moved by the music —

**Kathleen:** It's not just encouragement for our musicianship or our technique, but human beings appreciating other human beings. It renews your faith in people's ability to hear, and to listen to themselves.

**Chris:** And the other nights?

**Kathleen:** Well, our best performances are in a way *not* performances, when "they" are part of the group, and integral to the sounds in the room. If they're not picking it up, the sounds are just for us. That's all. In some ways, we're oblivious to the audience. We look like we're oblivious ... we never talk. Basically it doesn't matter if they're there or not, but if they're there it really matters if they're THERE. Like if they're going to be there, then the more there they are the better! But if they're going to be half-there, they might as well not be at all. It's not going to make any difference to our performance. If they're really there, though, it'll make all the difference.

**Chris:** Of course in any audience, there are some that are really there, some that are really there from time to time, and some that are never there.

**Kathleen:** THEY always leave!

**Ross:** As long as those that aren't really there at least shut up ...

**Kathleen:** Yeah, be nice, drink their coffee, wear their sportshirts...

**Ross:** It's a bit depressing how sometimes you can tell right when people come in that they're not going to like it; you can almost tell when they're going to leave.

**Kathleen:** If we're a little sparse for them I want them to go back into their imagination and supply what they need.

**Ross:** It ought to be almost as hard on the listener as it is on us to play it.

**Kathleen:** I feel good when you can tell they had to work for one.

**Ross:** Sometimes they just keep eating the cheesecake.

**Kathleen:** They need the strength.

**Ross:** It was interesting in the Maritimes. People came already granting us a certain amount of credibility. They came in order to hear us. We were from Montreal! They seemed more sensitive, too.

**Chris:** They're probably not as ground down as people here.

**Ross:** Yes. It's not very urban music.

**Chris:** It's not country!

**Ross:** But it has a lot more wilderness in it than it has of the city.

**Robert:** Why is that? Why does it grow better there?

**Ross:** I think it's just where we come from. Kathleen grew up on the prairies, and I was virtually in the country. Both of us had only to go a mile to be out there. It's sort of hard to tell what effect living here has had...

**Kathleen:** It's been rather good for us here. We found that the French people here reacted really quickly and really positively here, to make a gross generalization. As a matter of fact, the management of the only English coffee house at the time wasn't interested in us, whereas at the cafes they wanted us "next weekend".

**Chris:** That does seem to be where the counterculture is. How does it feel to be thirteen years behind your times?

**Kathleen:** Or thirteen years ahead? Maybe there's a restoration coming.

**Ross:** There's always a counterculture.

**Kathleen:** There's always an underground. Somebody's got to do it.



### Kathleen Yearwood

**Ross:** There's a theatricality in the music that's beginning to develop. It's not especially conscious, but the audience is beginning to pick up on it, and it seems to work well. There's always been a tendency to the dramatic in our work, and I think it's growing into something, evolving.

**Chris:** Specifically in the subject matter?

**Ross:** Very much so. Most of the songs are quite intense. They're basically humanistic, involved in the politics of human beings. To express that clearly requires a certain amount of acting. They are very powerful themes and they have to be expressed powerfully.

**Kathleen:** I don't think that we overstate ideas; they state themselves.

**Chris:** How do you see the relationship between the music and the lyrics? Do you generally start with the lyrics?

**Kathleen:** No. At least I didn't in the past. I'm writing now, but in a totally different way. I'm always learning new techniques for writing stuff. It's starting to move away from the idea of music alone. Other things come out of the music, and seem necessary to its proper presentation.

**Chris:** To the music or to the lyrics?

**Kathleen:** The music. The latest pieces don't use lyrics, at least the most theatrical ones.

**Ross:** The titles are almost like the lyrics in a lot of cases. There's a very definite idea being expressed. More than what the sounds are.

**Robert:** What's the feedback like when you're playing?

**Ross:** It's really important when it's happening. We're very dependent on the feedback, on the sense that they are with us. It's really draining — I can never believe how wiped out I am the next day. When we're playing and there's no sort of feedback coming from the audience it's even more draining. It detracts, too, from the way we play a lot. Generally when we feel the audience isn't responding it sort of lessens our inventiveness and how far out of our normal lines we'll go. Although occasionally, if the audience just seems really dense, it sort of spurs us on that way!

**Kathleen:** When they're obviously not listening we just go crazy sometimes. We've done great things!

**Chris:** Well, since THEY'RE not here...

**Kathleen:** Right! "... let's have some fun!" I've thought about the relationship between being audience and being performer — is there a difference? And with what we're playing, I believe there's no difference between being a listener and being a performer.

**Chris:** How would you feel if they started making noises?

**Kathleen:** Them? Oh, great! They've done it! People do contribute, ringing bells and such. And people yell things.

**Robert:** Do the sounds that happen during the performance affect you?

**Kathleen:** Very much.

**Chris:** I noticed that at the "Rican" — a bus going by every ten minutes.

**Kathleen:** They're important though; a lot of sounds I improvise with. I hear them, because I'm listening really hard, and you just can't miss it, you know?

**Ross:** I've noticed for myself that I DON'T hear the outside sounds. Listening to that recording, I heard all those buses, and said "What — I don't believe it!"

**Chris:** Recording defeats that power of the ears to pick out the stuff you're interested in. We've noticed in SONDE a large difference in what you hear when you're playing and what's on the recording. You talk about "listening hard", do you find the same difference?

**Kathleen:** You can't be objective. That's where intuition comes in, and practice.

**Ross:** A lady came up after a concert last month and said she'd never heard "dream-music" before, the sound of dreams.

**Kathleen:** People hear music in their dreams, and it's always very pure. It comes straight from the imagination, it's right there. There's nothing to stop it! I've always been interested in giving voice to that; when I was young I'd dream music and get up and write it at night... and it never worked!

**Ross:** I remember lots of times listening to music in dreams. It was always totally amazing, and it was always totally gone the next day. Sometimes I think audiences have a bit of difficulty. We generally start off quite normal, the first few pieces...

**Chris:** Is it that some pieces are stranger than others, or just that you don't take them as far at first?

**Ross:** Some of them are quite old.

**Kathleen:** Those are simpler pieces — what makes them simpler is that they lack chaos, and they are more melodic. They make quite a bit of sense. Unless you listen carefully! If you really listen, there seems to be something wrong. That's why we've kept those pieces.

**Ross:** Strangeness isn't something we're striving after, though. I can't distinguish one from the other sometimes.

**Chris:** So there's just stuff that's better for the beginning?

**Kathleen:** Right. We have to work up to it, get in the mood to improvise, too.

**Chris:** The amount of improvisation varies, then.

**Kathleen:** Yes, according to circumstances.

**Chris:** I've always wondered to hear it how much is written down?

**Kathleen:** So far one piece.

**Ross:** Most of the music begins with a skeletal structure. The pieces are filled in with improvisation and repetition. Gradually it takes on a shape that is fairly static, although it seems that there's a lot of improvisation. But the openings are still there to take, of course, if we feel like extending or altering.

**Chris:** Performing as a duo, do you find often that one of you is extending and one isn't?

**Ross:** No, there's a lot of feedback between the two of us, and we're quite dependent on how each other feels. Both of us have to be feeling quite good to feel like extending things. Occasionally we do do things that are complete improvisations.

**Chris:** You keep doing pieces; you keep them in repertoire a long time.

**Ross:** Yeah, we do. It takes almost a full year for a piece to become what it's supposed to be.

**Chris:** And then you keep it for a while, having invested that time!

**Ross:** They grow too, they really grow a lot. Some songs that we've been doing since we started three years ago are totally different from where they started.

**Chris:** And then they reach a point where you stop using them?

**Kathleen:** They're always developing. There's no need to stop playing them.

**Ross:** There's a possibility of reaching a point where we just don't feel there's anything new in the piece. Up until now, it hasn't seemed to happen. One thing that's amazing about a lot of these pieces is that they'll often seem to take off on their own while we're playing, almost as if we're outside of the music, and then it doesn't seem to matter what we do, everything works perfectly. They're very "living" pieces.

**Kathleen:** To play them takes a combination of skill and



### Ross White

practice, learning the techniques you're using in a piece, and intuition. They live on their own, it's true. After playing them and getting comfortable with the pieces, then we can tune in to the life of the piece. It's interesting... say with this new piece, *Men Who Work Can't Dream*, we recorded it the third time we'd ever played it. I was really interested in recording it at that stage — it was so fresh! We couldn't even deal with all the things that were happening in it. New ways we had to play... but I wanted to record it then because there was also an incredible freshness in that piece being just ready to play. That recording contains the germ of what it'll be in a year. It'll take us a year to learn how to play it.

**Chris:** How much of your stuff do you record?

**Ross:** We've been very limited in the recording we've been able to do, just in the facilities. Recording has been very frustrating because it's been so scattered. It seems that every time we've really gotten involved with it, we only have access to the equipment for a certain amount of time, or something else comes up... so we have sort of a motley collection of things. Sometime in the near future we hope to be producing some sort of disk recording. Maybe an EP.

**Chris:** Would you feel differently once you had something committed to a disk?

**Ross:** There are no perfect versions!

**Kathleen:** They don't exist!

**Ross:** And we learned that that's not the way it is.

**Kathleen:** We learned that that was never really going to happen. They aren't really songs that ARE definitive, they do what they want.

**Chris:** I've always wondered about your not using microphones in performance, whether that's deliberate or a matter of convenience.

**Ross:** When we started, in Vancouver, we used to play amplified quite a bit. We were playing in situations that needed amplification. Even in small places people were so noisy it was standard procedure to amplify everything. It seemed to take things out of our hands a lot... even as we got better at it and more adapted to it it still got to a point where we only wanted to do it if it was absolutely necessary. It just took everything away, the highs and lows.

**Kathleen:** It completely destroys the delicacy. Our music depends a lot on the air between us and the people. And the air between us, to improvise with. The air is the vehicle. We do some things that are so delicate they wouldn't pick up, they wouldn't be amplified.

**Ross:** I think we both feel pretty strongly that the music is most effective in a small place, for a small crowd.

**Kathleen:** I'm really interested in microscopic sounds. I listen so carefully that way that it's always interesting for me; I don't know, people have to be listening pretty carefully too, or else it might not be interesting at all! They have to hear very very small things.

**Chris:** Yeah, you do a lot of things, especially I've noticed on the guitar (because I used to play it), that always make me think, "Gee, those are neat sounds! It's too bad they're too small to do." If there's more than five people in the room though, there's no hope at all.

**Kathleen:** But those things generally ARE quite visual anyway. So even if they can't hear it they can IMAGINE that they hear it. Sound exists on so many levels that you can see it, you can see sound! "She did THAT to a guitar, it would probably sound like THIS..."

**Chris:** How do you feel about playing for kids? Have you done much of that?

**Kathleen:** A little bit. Playing WITH kids, too.

**Ross:** We'd like to do a lot more of it. We played at a community school in B.C., doing a normal set, and these little kids were really attentive for forty-five minutes.

**Kathleen:** One piece, "*Night Animals at the Zoo*", is fifteen to twenty minutes long, and they just sat there the whole time. Every once in a while they'd make these really wide eyes, like they were BEING night animals. They listen harder than most adults... kids, though, kids NEED music, kids need improvisation, they're just getting shit, they're getting stuff... they have the first access to imagination. They don't have to dig for it, to imagine things. You play them imaginative music, and let them play imaginative music, and they really get off on it. It's really important.

**Ross:** You've got to get the — it seems the record companies are aiming at them so young now — you really have to hit the kids young. They're buying their disco or new-wave albums when they're eight now. There was a little girl who lived beside us who used to come over to jam. She was really good at improvisation. About a year later we had a project of recording spontaneous music by children and we looked her up. In that year all these lines from AM songs had crept in, and if you asked her to do a song she thought she had to do a "real" song. It had to rhyme, only certain changes would do, and so on...

**Kathleen:** The death of music.

**Ross:** At eight she was so rich and sensitive: every so often she'd look up and laugh as if to say "This isn't music!"

**Chris:** You lose the idea that it's something you can play at. It only used to be a recreation, now it's an enterprise.

**Ross:** At least before they'd lay off you until you were ten, you didn't HAVE to have the collected works of the BeeGees. I know for myself, though, until I was fifteen I listened to utter garbage. I didn't know any better until I heard something real.

**Kathleen:** It only takes one piece of music to start the change. When I was a child — when I was a younger child than I am now! — I was listening to classical music on the radio. It activated my imagination, it taught me things about everything, about the world and myself. I didn't even know it was music then; it was just sounds that came out of the radio and fascinated me. Kids are like that. They don't make qualitative judgements about sound. They just listen. What we'd like to do is play with kids and for them. They wouldn't have to emulate us, but through improvisation and listening emulate themselves. They've got all the parts to put together incredible music. They imagine so well. In our performance, the main thing is not to "give a performance", entertain people, and show them some art that we do. It's to activate their capacity for imagination, for irrational and absurd thought, for exciting thoughts, to give them some stimulus, and to excite them about themselves, too.

**Ross:** An interesting thing happened last weekend at l'herberie. All of a sudden the smell of burnt toast started to take over. I went back to the kitchen at the break and the people who work in the kitchen said "the music was so exquisite we burnt the toast". I was really thrilled by that. That's what's supposed to happen.

**Kathleen:** Something I wonder about is what will happen — we do play in cafes where people aren't expecting anything *different* — when we start in the art galleries. And the performance scene. For instance, I called Radio-Canada again this week about *alternances* and this year they've got a new producer who says the mandate of the show is to have people who are doing their master's in composition. He listened to the tape that we made for them last year and said that it didn't fit anywhere. He couldn't think of a show it would suit. That may be a compliment, but we'll be out six or seven hundred bucks if we can't find one! I wonder, with people who have this taste for contemporary music, what reaction they'll have. I can see them saying, "I like it. It's very nice. You have a lovely voice. But we don't know what it is. We don't know whether to take it seriously, because there's a lot of stuff all over the place — simple tunes here, then you improvise, then you've got structured things that sound classical but you've got the wrong instruments, more like jazz. So we don't know whether we like it, or whether it fits the mandate of this joint."

**Ross:** I believe what we'll have to do — and this is why we're trying to play a lot and travel a lot — is to create an audience, to find people. There are a lot of people who are very receptive to what we're doing, because in a way it's almost popular music.

**Chris:** I see that. It's one of the most intriguing things about it. It's certainly approachable. It's always interesting when something comes along that does stretch people but doesn't require a particular background.

**Kathleen:** That makes it political, too. It's political in that it can reach the common people, people who aren't studying music, aren't studying anything that has to do with art. It has that capability.

# ELECTRONIC MUSIC STUDIOS IN MONTREAL

CHRIS HOWARD

With the opening of an electronic music studio at le Conservatoire Nationale, Montreal's population of institutional studios has reached five. The others are those of McGill University, Concordia, l'Université de Montréal, and l'Université de Québec à Montréal (UQAM). While local taste in pop music has always been receptive to electronics, their use in either tape or live concerts of non-commercial music remains still both relatively infrequent and rather sparsely attended. At the same time, work from these centres is attaining both national and international notice. The history, prospects, and human and physical resources of Montreal's "public" studios are the subjects of this brief survey.

The senior member of the group is of course the McGill Electronic Music Studio. There has been activity in the field there for over fifteen years, and the studio has had, to some degree, its present form for ten. This early start, collaboration with the National Research Council's ELMUS project under Hugh LeCaine, a long period of adequate funding, and an effort to keep the studio flexible, have all contributed to its stature. Its equipment may not be the most up-to-date, but together the four studios of the complex encompass the widest range of possibilities for analogue tape music likely to be found in the country. The two aspects that have been left undeveloped there are recording with more than four tracks, and the use of digital systems. (Another program at McGill concentrates on recording itself, and that has absorbed the lion's share of funds for new equipment for a few years.)

Quebec got a head start on 'Reaganomics' and the results are now making things very difficult for the universities in general. In a capital-intensive but essentially economically useless field such as electronic music, constraints are so tight that the maintenance of a large studio is nearly as hard as the development of a younger one.

Eric Johnstone is technician at McGill's EMS. His responsibilities include keeping the aging equipment running, production of custom devices and interfaces where required, and, recently, a major re-arrangement of the main studio (the old classical studio). In his view, there are some positive aspects to a lack of money for new components. Reaching a plateau in that direction, an opportunity exists

to spend some time and effort making the various units work together better. "The studio should be an instrument itself", he says.

The editing and beginners' studios were the first to see much of this philosophy, but it is in the central studio that it comes closest to actuality. The old vertical racks of equipment have given way to horizontal cabinets. One of these swings in a six-foot arc to give a nice small studio with most things within reach for individual use. In the other position, the U-shaped workspace opens to a large L to facilitate work with a class. Closing the U are two mixing boards, one a standard Tascam and the other a special piano keyboard which mixes signals from a sine bank or any other source, according to how far the keys are depressed. This, the LeCaine Polyphonic Synthesizer ('Pauli'), and his Variable-Speed Tape Player\* give this room some very unusual possibilities. The 'Pauli' has had many other voltage controlled modules made compatible with it, demonstrating the policy at McGill of keeping the LeCaine equipment as versatile and as easy to use as its age makes possible. A tape-loop-table incorporating a special non-slip surface at the height of the Ampex transports along with a set of weighted bearings is another example of an inexpensive addition that makes the composer's work a little less of a chore. Comfort and convenience in use have been achieved, with the next challenge that of making it seem a little less a room full of grey machines.

McGill has electronic music courses in three streams. There are 15 non-composers enrolled in that course, 10 composition undergrads in theirs, and 3 graduate students working there. The studio is rented to outside composers occasionally. One such, Bernard Gagnon, is a finalist in the CBC composers' competition. The last professor to visit for an extended time was Luis de Pablo; the Argentinian Dante Grella is expected next year. In 1984 it is hoped to re-establish the formal program of visiting professors' appointments which in the past provided much of the studio's vitality, while this year has seen short visits by Joel Chadabe and Lars-gunner Bodin.

Works from the McGill Studio continue to achieve relatively good exposure. A week of electroacoustic music at the Maison du Canada in Paris organized by another

Argentinian, Horacio Vaggione, will give an entire evening to the studio's products. The Latin-American connection is not coincidental — the studio has been directed for many years by Alcides Lanza, whose tours in Europe, the States, and Latin America offer wide exposure to the studio's best works, as do several of the McGill University Records.

The three newest studios and programs are those of le Conservatoire, UQAM, and Concordia. Of these, the first is the youngest; its first crop of students are in their second year. At present facilities are modest, with some bias towards 'concrete' work — two old Putneys, four Revoxes, and a Teac four-track deck. There is a sister studio a little older in Quebec City; there public concerts have begun. Interest in multi-media work and alternatives to the loudspeaker-concert syndrome is encouraged here.

At UQAM, the electronic music facilities are part of the Communications program, and again both 'concrete' and multi-media work are highlighted. The number of users is the highest of all five studios, at around one hundred. They share ten little (editing) studios and an eight-channel mixing studio. Much of the production begins on Uher portable recorders, and ends up in film and radio documentaries. Notable, especially for a 'non-music' program, are the concerts arranged last year by director Philippe Menard: both Hugh Davies and Don Buchla came as guests, and there was also a multi-media presentation from the studio's users.

The situation at Concordia this year is one many students of electronic music might be quite happy with: there are about a dozen enthusiastic users but no money with which to teach a course! Situated on the west-end Loyola campus, this studio is centred on a large 'Aries' analogue synthesizer. Eight of the users are to collaborate — one track each — on a group piece in the near future. The studio is part of the Fine Arts department, but there is also some activity in the Communications department, who have had R. Murray Schaeffer teaching on soundscapes for two summers, and are starting a small facility based on an Apple microcomputer.

The biggest plans and brightest prospects are probably those of the studio of the Université de Montréal. It has both

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### TENNEY, HAND, BRADY FEATURED IN O.A.C. COMMISSIONED PROGRAMME NEW WORKS PREMIERED APRIL 17

As a result of the continuing support of the Ontario Arts Council, ARRAYMUSIC has commissioned 5 composers for this season, of which 3 will be featured on this concert. James Tenney, well-known throughout new music circles in North America, returns to our series after 4 years. His last work written for ARRAYMUSIC has been performed over 30 times, quite a record!! His recent sabbatical from York University, taking him to Bali, has made the influences on this new work most exotic in nature. CBC National Radio Competition prizewinner Mark Hand joins Timothy Brady, prizewinner in CAPAC's William St. Clair Low Competition, in this very special concert. All composers will be in attendance for the premieres of their works, making this concert, one not to be missed!!

the kind of support from below — widespread student interest — and from above — an enthusiastic dean with an engineering background — to allow growth even in the present financially hostile environment. There is an established electroacoustics laboratory and a high academic regard given to studio work. This is well on the way to becoming self-perpetuating; not only has Alain Thibeault also become a finalist in the CBC competition, but of the last four Bourges Festivals three have seen a piece from the UdM facility take first prize. (1977-Marcell Deschênes, now teaching there; 1979-Yves Daoust, now in charge at the Conservatoire; 1981-Francois Dhomont, who came from France to continue studies here).

The Faculty of Music is about to move into the building now used by the Ecole Vincent d'Indy, best known as the site of the Salle Claude-Champagne, often used for CBC recordings and concerts. It is hoped to build a triple studio, one of twenty-four tracks, into the new premises. The projected cost of these improvements is nearly half a million dollars, yet they are put forward with a surprising air of seriousness and confidence. Modifications to further

strengthen the academic programme are also in the works. There are at present eight students in electroacoustics as such, with another six in composition-specializing-in-electronics.

One cloud on the otherwise bright horizon is the departure of Professor Dennis Lorrain, who will be returning to work in France. He had been appointed to head a section to concentrate on computer music, and ran a very interesting series of tape concerts last year which included much of the better work recently done in France. While there is a lot of interest in "l'informatique" as it applies to music, the difficulty of restarting the university's programme in this field on current budgets has proven excessive at present. Should even the first stage of the expansion plans go through, a system to include analogue-to-digital conversion, a Synclavier, and digital delays will become available.

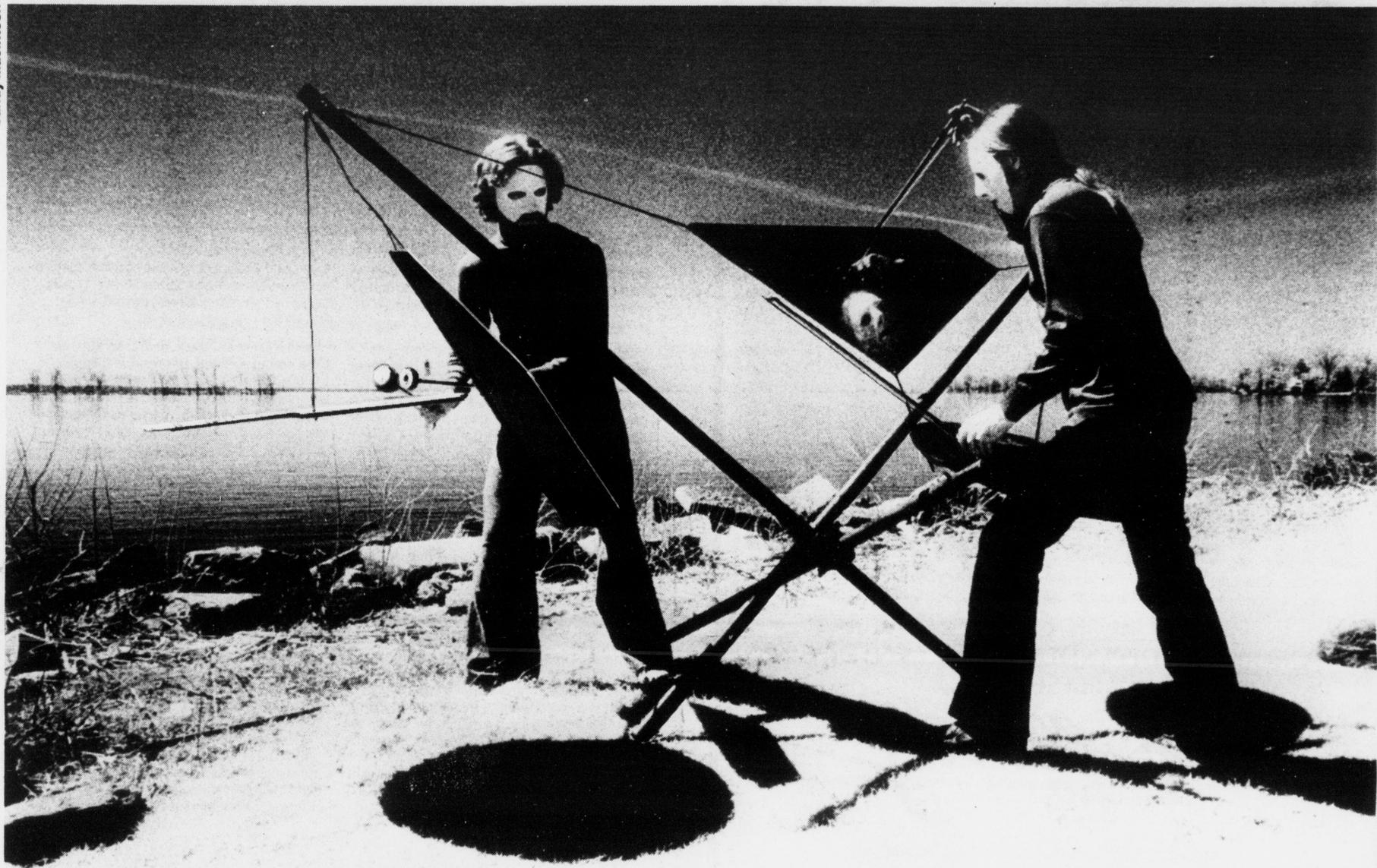
A normal year will see three concerts of works from the studio given, while of course others are to be found in the regular programmes of the S.M.C.Q. and elsewhere. Next year an entire concert of the S.M.C.Q. season will come from this studio and its users. A multi-media opera is plan-

ned, to include twentyfour slide projectors, an infamous local group that specializes in the tango, and poet Raoul Duguay.

Two other aspects of electronic music in Montreal should be mentioned. One is the emergence, especially among the teachers in the above institutions, of significant private non-commercial studios — often the main source of equipment for live electronic music performances. The other is the group ACREQ (Association pour le Creation et Recherche Electroacoustique du Quebec) which is composed of many of the same teachers, at least in the French institutions, and which has produced a number of music events, including recently a sell-out underwater tape concert by Michel Redolfi of France. If the number of regular listeners to electroacoustic music ever gets much larger than the number of creators of it there, their work in building an audience outside of the academies will likely have been critical to this development.

\*see MUSICWORKS #'s 13 and 17 for information on Hugh LeCaine's work and instruments.

Sandy MacIntosh



## SONDE

CHARLES DeMESTRAL

On March 29, 1976, le groupe MUD gave its first concert in Montréal. Six years later, after some changes in membership and a change of its name to SONDE (a French word translating to 'probe'), the group continues to play new music.

Since its beginning, SONDE's approach to music-making was based on two principles — *Musique construite* (musical design) and the practice of group improvisation.

The concept of *musique construite* was introduced to SONDE by Mario Bertoncini, a composer who was a visiting professor at McGill University at the time of the group's inception. *Musique construite* is music made from 'sound sources' conceived and built by the musician. It is a different approach than instrument building in that an instrument is usually built to play any number of externally-conceived pieces; whereas the sounds found by exploring a 'sound source' constitute the materials and ideas for a single piece. This is a kind of sculpture in sound in which no parts are predetermined and in which the only guide is the kind of sound one wants to explore.

The use of electronic amplification of a 'sound source' makes it possible to discover a world of sound in any type of material. Each successive degree of amplification is like hearing further and further inside the material with a kind of musical microscope. Bertoncini sometimes used electronic processes such as filtering, ring modulation, and frequency shifting to modify the amplified sound.

*Musique construite* has not been used by members of SONDE as a means of individual composition, as it was by Bertoncini — rather it has been applied in the context of group improvisation. Bertoncini introduced the group to the mysteries of improvisation by offering his negative principle approach: avoid tonal pitch association and periodic rhythm. The point of this approach is to turn the ear away from its attachment to remembered patterns, and toward attentive exploration of new sound areas.

SONDE worked a great deal with metal in its first few years in the form of sheets, strings, rods and gongs. Since then, softer materials such as wood, rubber, paper, water and air have become 'sound sources'. Rubber, for example, in the form of amplified balloons, sheets stretched on boxes, elastics on frames, has characteristic rhythms that come out in the music each time it is used. Phrasing, structure, and mood are all initially suggested by the objects. Wood can do infinitely more than produce tuned percussion tones. Through amplification there is a world of tiny, beautiful sounds to make music by tapping, scraping, stroking, or bowing in a range of woods from redwood to rosewood. In the soundtrack for the film 'Splash' (Productions Mouton Rose) SONDE used the sounds of water gurgling in pipes, ball bearings rolling down plastic tubing, and air bubbling through water. These sounds and materials were suggested by the objects used in the urban performance documented by the film. A recent develop-

ment is body sound: heart beat, breathing, and brain frequencies in pieces where a body itself improvises.

SONDE most often uses contact microphones for the amplification of 'sound sources'. Magnetic guitar pick-ups have been used to explore objects with a large iron content. Recently, electret capsule microphones have been used for installation in sound sources. Electronic modification devices are used in about one-fourth of the pieces. Filters are the basic tool, but use has been made of ring-modulators, frequency-shifters, tape and spring reverb, tape echo and delay, envelope followers, and sample and hold circuits. The general idea in using modification is to avoid the classic 'electronic music sound' based on the perfect sine tone. The initial sounds are physical, including all the irregularities of materials, and the human imperfections of performance that contribute to the beauty of music played on traditional instruments. Modification is used sparingly, only to compliment the sound qualities of the 'sound sources'.

In the past 3 years, SONDE has collaborated a great deal with artists involved in other media: Catpoto (contact improvisation-dance), Mouton Rose (film), Inter x section (visual performance) and l'Eskabel (theatre). In each case, the materials used or suggested in the other media determined the physical 'sound sources' used to create music.

Present members of SONDE: Eric Brown, Charles DeMestral, Pierre Dostie and Chris Howard, with the technical assistance of Keith Daniel.



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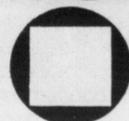
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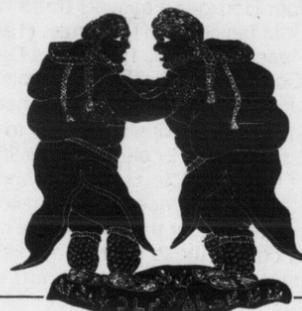
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stand face to face to produce extraordinary  
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breathing techniques.  
Included are throat songs, and Inuit Jew's  
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SONDE MGE 14 1978

Enregistrement en directe d'une sculpture  
sonore. Andrew Culver, Keith Daniel, Pierre  
Dostie, Charles de Mestral, Chris Howard,  
Linda Pavelka.

Live performance of musical sound sculpture.  
Andrew Culver, Keith Daniel, Pierre Dostie,  
Charles de Mestral, Chris Howard, Linda  
Pavelka.

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des sources manipulées à l'archet, frappées,  
grattées et soufflées... armés de maillets sur  
les doigts, faits d'aiguilles à tricoter et des  
bouchons chimiques en caoutchouc et même  
des baguettes chinoises parfois... il s'agit  
d'extraire... d'improvisations... absolument  
incandescent... comme si l'on fourrait dans  
des troncs d'arbre à la recherche du miel.»  
-Adele Freedman, The Globe and Mail.

"From Montreal... bow, strike, scrape, and  
blow sound sources... armed with finger  
mallets, constructed from knitting needles,  
and chemical rubber stoppers, and even the  
occasional chopstick... it's an extraction pro-  
cess... improvisations... positively aglow...  
as though plunging deeply into tree trunks in  
search of honey"  
-Adele Freedman, Globe and Mail

SUR LA COTE NORD MGE 17 1979

Musique folklorique de Tadoussac, au nord du  
Québec. Johnny Dugas: accordéon et vocali-  
sations; Orel Quinn: accordéon; Henri Otis:  
accordéon et harmonica; Noel Tremblay:  
violin.

Folk Music of Tadoussac Northern Quebec.  
Johnny Dugas: accordian and vocals, Orel  
Quinn: accordian, Henri Otis: accordian and  
harmonica, Noel Tremblay: fiddle.

«Quelques morceaux sur ce disque sont  
assez vieux. *La Marche du Pendu* raconte la  
légende d'un condamné à tort qui aurait em-  
prunté le violon de son geôlier pour composer  
cette marche émouvante sur un instrument  
qu'il n'avait jamais joué de sa vie. D'autres  
morceaux sont plus récents et témoignent la  
popularité actuelle de l'idiome folklorique.»  
-Pierre Ouellet (Production)

"Some pieces on this record are quite old. In  
the case of *La Marche du pendu* (The Hang  
Man's March) the legend tells us that a man,  
falsely condemned to hang, borrowed his  
jailer's violin and composed this moving  
march on an instrument that he had never  
played before in his life. Other pieces are  
quite recent and attest to the lasting popular-  
ity of the folkloric idiom."  
-Pierre Ouellet (producer)

### NOUVEAUX DISQUES / NEW RELEASES

COMPOSERS BRASS GROUP:  
CANADIAN ANTHOLOGY, VOLUME I.  
MGE 34 1981

Vue d'ensemble de la musique de chambre  
pour cuivres, de l'époque entre 1950 et 1980,  
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gut, trompette; Anne Arley, cor; Cameron  
Walter, trombone; Scott Irvine, tuba. Dans le  
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prennent: les inflexions «vocales» «plus ou  
moins de vibrato, la modulation vocale, les  
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tiphoniques, les sons présonores, les modifi-  
cations de ton et de timbre, les harmoniques,  
de la variété dans les articulation, et de  
maintes combinaisons de ces techniques. Je  
pense que cette façon de jouer du saxo en-  
courage une plus grande capacité expres-  
sive.»  
-D.M.

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tion. These techniques include: "vocal" in-  
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# Lloyd Garber

GUITAR PLAYER Magazine

AUNTIE NATURE, UNCLE TREE AND COUSIN BLADE-A-GRASS, by Lloyd Garber is an ambitious undertaking (265 pages) for a method book on avant-garde guitar technique, and more important, it is written by one of its more visible exponents. But despite its great length, it isn't as formidable as one might fear. Garber gives straightforward information concerning intervallic relationships, tonal schemes, inversions, and clusters (as well as other topics), and keeps the language at an understandable level. In many cases, he uses nonmusical examples to relate such musical concepts as tone quality, tendencies of harmonic motion, etc. These are backed up with musical examples, as well as exercises. Sections encompassing the use of harmonics and prepared strings are also present, as are sketches for several of the author's compositions. Besides offering technical guidance, this softbound is also an enjoyable way of wading into the turbulent subject of the avant-garde. All illustrations are done by Garber, and the softbound book is available from him for \$37.00 at Box 7020, Station A, Toronto, Canada M5W 1X7.



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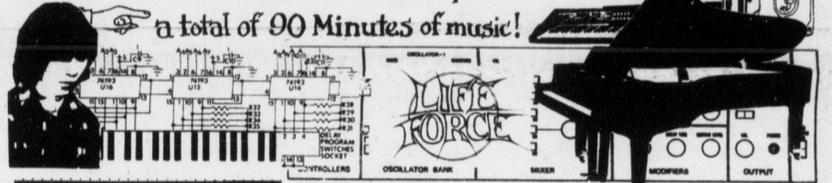
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# MICHELINE COULOMBE SAINT-MARCOUX

The following is a transcription of a telephone text prepared by Micheline Coulombe Saint-Marcoux for broadcast on the CBC's *Two New Hours* program.

To write music is for me maybe the most essential function in my life. I would say that I absolutely need to create, and create in the way of writing music, of course. If for a different reason I have to postpone or delay for a while a composition, for example, I have a strong feeling that something very important is missing in my life, and then I feel, I can tell you, really unhappy. (It's like if my life is meaningless, I would say.)

Even though, still, writing music does not give you always hours of happiness, every time I am ready to write, before I start to write I am so afraid — a kind of dizziness up to the time I decide to put down the first note. Because to be alone in front of a large empty white paper makes you feel that the idea you have in mind is so fragile that you are afraid to destroy it. But after you put the first note then you feel more comfortable and then you're ready to really start again.

So writing music is for me a strongly dramatic action, I would say by which the composer tries to adjust his own trajectory to the evolution of the world surrounding him. In a way the composer tries to enter in another dimension where he has the impression that he can reach a part of the infinity. It may sound pretentious, and it is maybe pretentious, but it is also an essential aspect of creating music — that very close relation, a kind of communion, to participate with the energetic stream, the primary principle of the existence.

So writing music gives me the opportunity to translate the abstraction or the abstract forms that are closely integrated in our life — to translate that in the dimension of the space and the time certain moments of life into the concrete, sonorous world.

That's composing for me.

I am living a very exciting moment, I would say, in my existence — still, I hope, a young composer, but in the process to reach the maturity. So I can, in a circular sight perceive a past which is still very close to the present, and a future which still gives the impression of being limitless. So that period of life gives also the opportunity to analyze the logical aspects — the continuation of the works created from the beginning of composing music. But I will come back again on a certain point of that aspect.

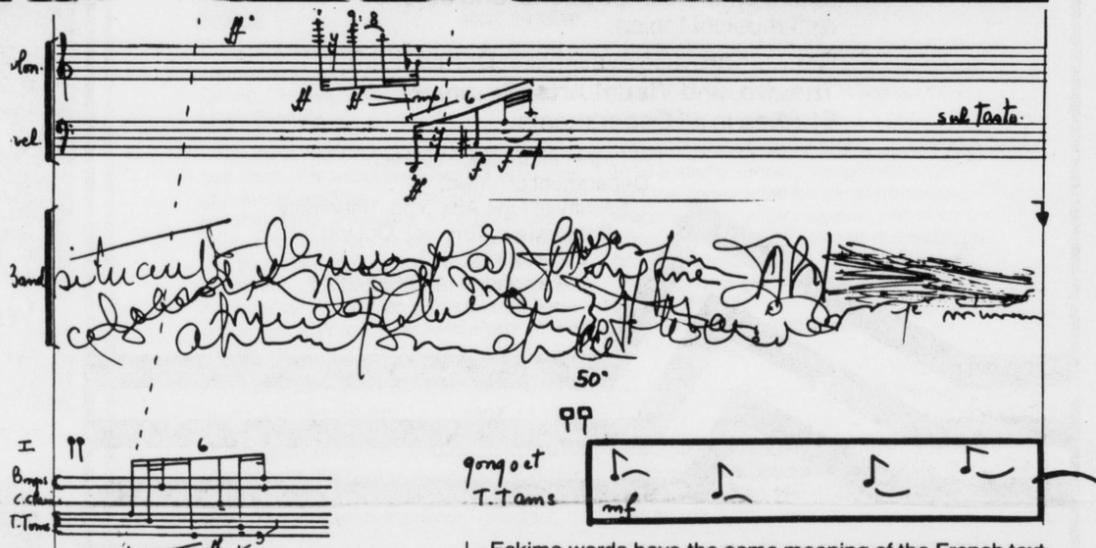
Let us see what are the most important elements that have contributed to define my style. I think really the first stage after I have finished my studies at the Conservatoire de Montréal in 1967, instead of going to France, because I am French-speaking, of course, to continue in the same, I would say, traditional option as my studies in Montréal, I decided to get very much involved with the new technical aspect that was more and more integral to the composition field — I mean the technique "electroacoustique". I had the opportunity to meet Xenakis in Montréal, who recommended me to study modern mathematics and to go to the *Groupe de recherches musicales* with Pierre Schaeffer, which I did. That was, I think, a very positive meeting with Xenakis — the most decisive moment in the process of my evolution. As I was also working in Paris with private composers, I would say that the traditional instrument style aspect of my writing music was still one of my first preoccupations. I didn't get rid of the instruments, you know. As for example, the evolution of musical notation up to the most recent avant-garde works, interests me very much. At first, the two ways of composing, tape music — or pure electroacoustic music — and instrumental composition were really separated. But very soon, the electroacoustic aspect, as for example, 'stereophonie montage' (which is the equivalent in English of splicing piece to piece, I think), filtering, amplification, any kind of modulation influenced very much my way of writing for instruments. After a while it was more than an influence and it started to be really integrated. As for mixed music, I wrote a work for tape and percussion, and later on for harpsichord and tape, using amplification and different electronic extensions — also directly in the concert hall. This is one of the very important aspects of my style, I would say.

The treatment of the voice is another very important aspect. I had not so much before wrote for the voice because for me the voice is the most interesting instrument, within all, but also the most delicate, the most fragile. I was very lucky — due to the fact that Gilles Potvin from Radio Canada International asked me in 1969 to write a work for the Swingle Singers. That was the second stage in the evolution of my style I would say. So I had this marvellous instrumental group which I had the opportunity to work. I met many times Walt Swingle and all the other members of the group — we had rehearsed all together — and they collaborate very closely. Unfortunately, the group broke up before the premiere, and this work, *Makazoti*, was premiered by singers from Toronto at New Music Concerts. So the voice started to be more and more integrated in my works.

At the same time, another aspect emerged — that's the scenic aspect, for example — the set-up on stage, the light, the gestures of the instrumentalists. I would say that the space and the scenic aspect became another parameter, as much important as the four traditional parameters in music. I hope I know quite well how to write for instruments and voices, using or not technical extension and I think now that I am well prepared to write a musical theatre which



Bob Wilcox



From *Alchera*

interests me very much. But a musical theatre work in which all the elements — text, musical, visual; everything — are on the same level of importance and are existing in a very intimated fusion. This is the dream I have at the present time.

When I look back — in a kind of retrospective sight — FROM THE BEGINNING OF MY DETERMINATION TO WRITE MUSIC, I can see, I can feel, a continuous line, and I am certainly lucky, because I can tell you that each commission I received from a different society, or each work that I wrote for friends — every time the work is an extraordinary possibility to bring a temporary answer to the question that is my main preoccupation then. So each work is a stage — an answer which brings the question a little further, or raises other questions on a pure technical aspect, for example, on the musical language I am using, on the perception, on the structures, on the problematic of time and space, and mainly on the energetic current that leads the evolution of the world, returning to its primary cellular aspect. This specific point — I feel it, I can see it in most of my work.

Often a work seems to emerge spontaneously — it's not true. Because the generating idea had been brought to life after a long period of deep thinking — of course at the subconscious level — and then appears with a highly clarified existence. That idea emerged from a kind of labyrinth where it had to find a way and appear strong enough to force the composer to express this idea or to bring this idea in a sonorous life.

Earlier, I mentioned the influence of the 'electroacoustique' on my writing. While I was still at the *Groupe de recherches musicales*, I had a commission from the Montréal Symphony Orchestra. And only 9 months to write it. I could do it, because many months in advance I was planning an orchestral work applying some techniques to my orchestration — mainly based on the perception of a mobile — being always made from the same element, and being always different. So *Hétéromorphie* was born easily enough.

From 1970 until now, I can say I have tried to integrate the voice into instrumental groups without having the feeling of an extraneous body — but really, the voice is integrated on the same level of any other instrument. I also work very closely with poets from Québec and I composed a set of three works with voice: *Makazoti*, *Alchera* (commissioned by the CBC) and *Ishuma* (commissioned by SMCQ.)

*Ishuma* is very representative of this preoccupation beside with the scenic aspect. For example, in *Ishuma*, besides the using of amplification, I am trying to apply the technique of montage, or splicing, into the text from the poet Chamberland, and words from the Eskimo dictionary. The

Eskimo words have the same meaning of the French text, plus the sonorous aspect, so I am using the montage, or the splicing with the two texts. Using, for example, the French word 'miroir' and the equivalent in Eskimo; each syllable of both words is spliced together alternately, making a composite 'word' with the same meaning. So the main theme of the work is métamorphose — métamorphose on the text, with the amplification, with synthesizer used in the concert sometimes modifying the voice. Also on the stage, all the musicians play in complete darkness, except for desk lights, and at the end a very brightly brilliant object, depending on the hall, appears. So that's the symbolism of métamorphose.

A more recent work, *Régard* (New Music Concerts) is a kind of a game with a psychological process. If you compare with the reaction of a group of children together for the first time, for example. So you have different levels of reaction. If you have a look at children being together for the first time, they try to fight, to co-operate, they discover each other, they want to impress, they want to be friendly — any kind of reaction. So I tried to apply this process to the musicians up to the rediscovering of the relation between the musician himself and his instrument — the gesture which is the source of the song. The instrumentalist sees himself in facing the others. So they have — all the instruments have to speak roughly, to speak nicely, to laugh, to stand, to walk, to enter in a scale of different attitudes which are very definitely written in the score. Even the disposition on stage is specified. So that's a nine-instrument work and tape. This is a very representative work and it's going in the direction that I was talking before a little — a very intimate musical theatre work.

I have also a recent work which was commissioned by Days Months and Years to Come in Vancouver, and it's called *Mandala I*, and this is another step, or stage. The mandala is of course an image researched by Jung. And it represents the fusion of all the contradictions — of the contrary streams, I would say. Jung's work was also used parallel with Isaac Asimov, whose discovery of the enigmatic voyage of the atom within the confines of the universe is a scientific confirmation of the dynamic coexistence of opposing forces, matter/anti-matter, in which the concept of unity is determined. And also assures the evolution of the universe. So also there is a symbolism between this idea and the disposition of the instrumentalist on the stage. There are four, and in front is the cellist, which is like the energetic nucleus of the work. So, *Mandala I* is based upon the permanent interaction of the five instrumentalists who the constant awareness of a collective pursuit ensures its unity.

As we play on the big stage, I would say, of the universal theatre — the life is a big universal theatre — sometimes isolated because of our ideas, or our not living like any others, often plunged into society inimical to our personal aspirations, each of us tries to reconcile his personal touch to the evolution of the world.