

Promenade d'enfance (1990) 11'35
(A Walk through Childhood)

Because of its non-instrumental sound matter electroacoustic music (also known as « concrete music ») whether narrative, dramatic or descriptive, often seems to be mainly literary. One is therefore struck when listening to Christine Groult's compositions by their strictly musical quality. She eschews the representational character of music thus giving immediate access to the abstraction quintessential to music. The piece entitled »A walk through childhood » for example does not lend itself to imagining the contingent events of an individual life-story but, shrouded in the violence of a legendary past, Groult suggests the tragic fate of each one of us who, right from birth, must of necessity combine existence and distance, presence and separation. Jean Louis BAUDRY

L'heure alors s'incline ... (1991) 18'40
(Then the Hour Bows Down...)

Commissioned by the Regional Cultural Direction (DRAC) of Burgundy

This is a homage to Luigi Nono, so aware of the essence of music that he has never dissociated art from real life : music has always been a quest going beyond the artist and his work.

Written by the 5th century A.D. mystic Denys the Areopagite who played a great part in orienting the Mediaeval world view , certain passages of his « Celestial Hierarchy » provided the inspiration for this piece. For example : « The solar rays easily cross through primary matter which is more translucent than any other. The splendour of the ray shines through it dazzlingly. But when it encounters more opaque, denser matter its diffusory power weakens for the matter crossed through ,because of its nature, resists the passage of light more. Such resistance progressively increases to the point of almost blotting it out ».

This piece is a slow journey towards the beyond, a sort of meditation on « passing through ».

Thème d'Ubu (1992) 5'53
(The Theme of Ubu)

This show was subsidized by the Department of Music and Dance.

This is the overture to a piece of music for the theatre called « Ubu in Chains » written by Alfred Jarry in 1899.

Having lost his throne in Poland and run away to France where he becomes a slave willingly condemned to rowing on Turkish galleys, Ubu, the triumphant tyrant, tries, at the end of the play, to find a country in which to settle. Since then, the course of History has monstrously given him a wide choice of destinations.

I have incorporated passages from Central African horn polyphonies.

Passagers Imminents (1993) 5'30
(Imminent Passengers)

Charles Péguy wrote in « Money » (1913) : »We have known a world where a man who confined himself to poverty was at least guaranteed that. It was a sort of unspoken contract between man and his lot. Fate had never failed to honour it before the coming of modern times. It was understood that the man who went in for eccentricity, who tried to gamble with the system and escape from poverty could lose all. Since he tried to wriggle out of the rules he could quite possibly lose. But the man who played it straight couldn't lose. Nobody could imagine that a time would come – and that it already had come - (and it's precisely modern times) when the man who didn't gamble would always lose and even more surely than the one who did ».

Dévoilement (1997) 9'28
(Unveiling)

With Françoise Ducos playing the flute and Jacques Saint-Yves the violin. This is the concert version of a choreographic fiction devised and interpreted by Dominique Dupuy. Any dancer will tell you that of all the types of dancing the solo is the riskiest. That's where the dancer reveals him- or herself, where the traces of their itinerary, the reverberations of their work and the wounds of their passion show up the most sharply. The more the dancer dances, the tauter the tension. The dancer's body is memory incarnate. Opus 67-97 was a way of calling that corporal memory into question. It was provoked by Nijinsky-Debussy's « Fawn ». Here, I have attempted to resurrect that ultimate state of fragility stretched to physical or psychological breaking point.

« Si l'oiseau par hasard... (1998) 17'05
(« If perchance the Bird... »)

Commissioned by l'INA-GRM (National Institute of Audiovisual Groups in Musical Research) Karen Fenn playing the flute ; Elisabeth Robert playing the violin. A studio recording.

« If perchance the bird... » is a work on mazes and Icarus. The inspiration for this rêverie was provided by some of Bachelard's images. I quote freely : Imagine the essence of the maze in contrast with that of lightness, airy freedom, insubstantial floating stuff. A mazelike quality can be experienced by losing oneself in one's own meanders ; it's a viscous phenomenon, somewhat like being aware of a painful dough stretching out with many a sigh ; it quivers, as though before being sick or giddy or having a stroke. The dream associated with it is viscerally familiar with this languidness. The maze experience triggers deep, primal emotions. The initial images are of splitting and twisting, of rasping breath and a deep, husky voice uttering something before finally straightening up. On the other hand, the airy experience, on the verge of gravity – fleeting, swift, shopping short and flitting here and there – is one of substantial lightness set off by a slight, easy, simple flick of the finger : a little kick on the ground gives the impression of being set free. This tiny motion liberates a previously unprecedented power of mobility. If we touch down another impulse immediately gives us back our freedom. We are inhabited by a secret power we know how to activate.

When one has been running for a long time through millions of rooms and corridors, when one has got lost in countless meanders, dodging from one dead end to another, there comes a time when one has had enough. Then it is that you can hear the sound of your own breathing ; you dare lend an ear to your distress, you dare keep still so as to no longer lie to yourself. Icarus means the maze. The rising up of the airy element is a slow, painful liberation, never attained once and for all.

Les Frontières de L'autre (2002)12'55
(Bordering Otherness)

Commissioned by the DRAC (Regional Direction for Culture) of Lower Normandy and by the Musical Promenades of the Pays d'Auge.

This piece of music was inspired by the following excerpt from the talk on dullness given by Georges Didi-Huberman.

« What does » dull » evoke ? something faded, dim, crumbling, disintegrated, decomposed. Matter blown around by the winds of time. What I call the wind, mediaeval writers called it – after Aristotle – translucency. For the Ancients translucency was the basic physical requirement for anything to become visible : « a container for colour », itself colourless, for viewed as regards power, in its mingled nature of air and water. In this respect « translucency » provided an ideal theoretical tool to justify the fact that earthly matter (i.e . the place par excellence of sin, humiliation, Adam's fall and Death itself – since matter is defined, in contrast with the heavenly bodies, as being corruptible, decomposable) is nevertheless crossed by the breath of power which is divine and incorruptible and consequently can accede to something akin to splendour ».

[Le temps du ciel : entropie \(2000\) 14'](#)
(Heavenly Time : Entropy)

to Stéphane Druais

This piece was commissioned by the Musical Promenades of the pays d'Auge

On the one hand, Time...

The first part consists of loud metallic beating which grows louder and louder and goes faster and faster and seems to leap towards neverending expansion. But gradually it is treated differently, breaking free and seeming to move towards disintegration in order to evoke the entropy of the universe and the irreversibility of Time.

On the other hand, the heavens...

The second part draws its inspiration from the harmony of the spheres and cyclical rhythms such as the course of the sun, the phases of the moon, the position of the stars on the vault of the sky at night with their reassuring reappearances enabling one to find one's marks in space. But the regular movements of the heavens are sometimes perturbed by unpredictable phenomena. It's as though the scattered and tormented outline of great craters led us into imagining meteorites endlessly bombing away at the world and scattering their débris far and wide.

[La condition captive \(2003\) 12'38](#)
(Being a Prisoner)

At the mill in Carrouges

Commissioned by the state and « The Caen Summer Evenings » Festival for an open air concert on the grounds of the castle in Caen.

The war in Irak has more than once made me painfully realise that we are prisoners to a Manichaeian ideology. Does it irreversibly confuse us and make us toe the line of the official version of things ?

The Iraki tragedy forced back on to my memory the cataclysmic and traumatic violence of a brutally destroyed house.

It's the familiar Vedic image of the driver and cart. Like the driver, the soul cannot rein in the bolting horse. And when the Driver finally manages to control the beast then the soul can get down from the Cart and free itself from the body.

We are captives of the human condition.

Most of my musical ideas came to me in the place where the music was played, i.e. on the grounds of William the Conqueror's castle in Caen, out in the open.

[Canal Instantané \(2004\) 7'57](#)
(Instant Canal)

Commissioned by the DRAC (Regional Direction of Culture) of Ile de France

Instant Canal is an electroacoustic scenography inserted in Variation 19.

The group called « Daily Art » proposed this musical creation « in situ », i.e. spanning the banks of the canal.

This is a series of musical variations inspired by a walk along the Ourcq Canal flowing from Paris to Bobigny. The idea is to let oneself be carried along by the tempo of the canal which brings together a succession of » places « with very special atmospheres.

Etincelles (2005) 15'
(Sparks)

To Marie Claude Defores

This piece is the stereo concert version of a commission by the Curie Institute to inaugurate « A garden for Life, a daffodil for Curie » which was a charity weekend to benefit cancer research. It was enacted on twelve tracks on the esplanade of the Panthéon with lighting conceived by Zelda Georgel.

A Zelphis production. P.A. system by Seco.

Frank Ravail recorded the sound effects.

The music was elaborated from the most striking stages in the history of radioactivity. This history retraces : the discovery of radium by Pierre and Marie Curie in 1898 ; the relentless efforts made by Marie Curie in her hangar, raking through a ton of ore with an iron rod for hours on end, in order to extract just one gram of the precious radium ; the discovery of the therapeutic virtues of radioactivity ; the new chapters written daily by scientists, doctors and patients alike.

The intermittent evocation of dazzling images and fleeting sounds gives rise to gay, jubilant dancing particles, or else to great streams of metallic sounds - gongs, bells, Tibetan bowls, cymbals - summoning one to meditation. Two very contrasted registers alternate ; one is grave, slow and secret like the course of time during a lengthy ordeal ; the other is lively and optimistic, expressing the revival of hope when life picks up again.

Si je les écoutais...(2008) 15'
(If I listened to them...)

To Rivka Cremisi

Commissioned by the state, created at Radio France within the framework of the GRM (Group for Musical Research) multiphonic season (2007 - 2008) to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the GRM.

Sound recording by Esteban Anavitarte and Marco Marini.

This composition is the first musical experiment of a project around a triptych inspired by the figure of the Angel in the three monotheistic traditions (Jewish, Christian and Moslem).

Intercultural dialogue is another sort of way towards human development, especially in need of such virtues as tolerance, solidarity, altruism - in short the rejection of uncompromising self-centredness.