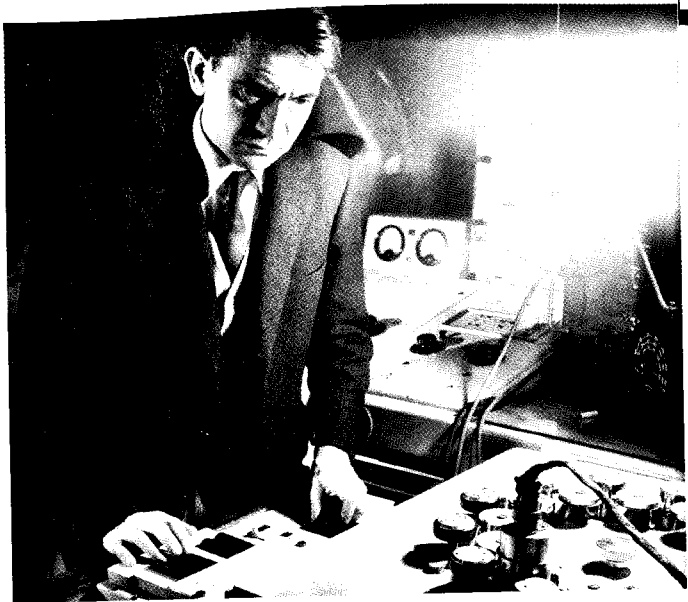


Pierre Schaeffer



l'œuvre musicale



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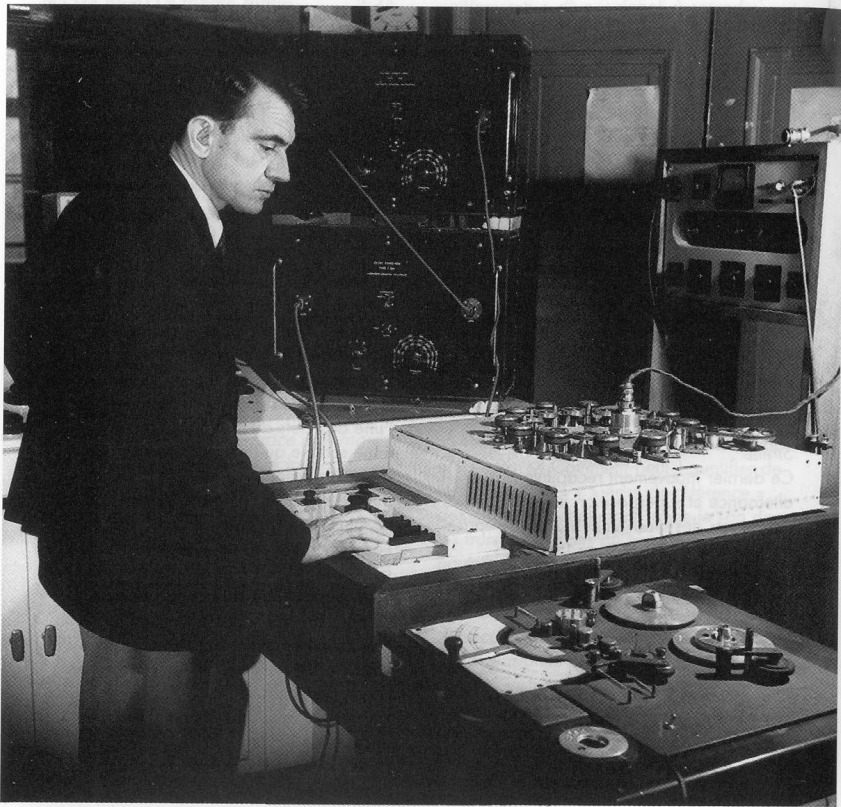
✦ Ten years after the loss of Pierre Schaeffer, the re-publication of Pierre Schaeffer's complete works is a homage and a duty.

This essential collection of documents and music is the result of an enormous labor by François Bayle and Geneviève Mâche who first compiled it for the first edition, in 1990, for Pierre Schaeffer's 80th birthday.

Some changes were made in this collection, notably in the omission of excerpts from the book *A la recherche d'une musique concrète*, published first in 1951 and now again available in a reissue by Editions Le Seuil in 1998. The book makes it possible to follow the development of music concrète and the ideas that followed.

The death of Pierre Schaeffer in 1995 has given another dimension to the work of this major thinker of our century. The music represents only one of the many facets of his personality, and much still remains to discover or rediscover in order to comprehend the richness, diversity, and originality of his ideas.

We have associated ourselves in this publication with Electronic Music Foundation in the United States, whose president, Joel Chadabe, is one of the pillars of trans-Atlantic awareness of early electronic music. It was indispensable to have access to the pioneer of pioneers as well as to the works composed with Pierre Henry that have become classics of the 20th century.



1

We'll speak about Schaeffer as a complainer (but complaining is not grumbling, and if there's a polemic there, it's about the substance of the works themselves and not in what motivates them or happens around them). Complain—there probably wasn't much of anything else that was important to do following the second world war. Did musique concrète eventually provide a counterbalance for other sounds? On that subject, we'd like to read something by someone who thinks historically without necessarily writing a history of this music.

When Schaeffer comes to mind, some questions of dates arise. At an important time (even: *real time*), he took the trouble to publish a first and second journal of musique concrète: 1948–1949 followed by 1950–1951. During those four years, he gave his collages, which were far more valuable than titles of nobility, to the history of music!

Schaeffer rhymed "sarcastique" (sarcastic) with "tourne-disque" (turntable) before finding his Harrar which he called the Service of Research, which in fact was, but was not well known as, the Service of Grumbling.

In brief, with Schaeffer, we must think of

History at least as much as, or instead of, Aesthetics.

If we imagine that the atomic bomb exploded in the 19th century (as a poet affirms), then it was Webern who gathered its echoes in his Opus 6. At the threshold of the 1950s, musique concrète was less about echo than pre-echo. Forgetting what was said and written about musique concrète at that time, let's remember this: Schaeffer foresaw (does this verb apply to hearing?).

His *Etudes de bruit* conjure images of, suggest dread of, repel, signal the coming of, and at the same time diminish what has fallen inexorably upon us since then: the most profound disregard for the human ear ever displayed in all of history. And that is where we are at the end of the 20th century. Our ears are more badly-treated than our consciences, which is saying a lot. Badly treated not by works that are more or less musical, of course, but by the production, the reproduction, and the broadcasting of all sounds that belong, as we are made to believe, to a life that we call modern.

I am gratified that musique concrète wanted to be a rampart against this tyranny of sound. Perhaps it failed. At the least, it will have testified to our times. It is not worthwhile to know whether or not musique concrète assassinates Mozart or

irritates conductors. It is fundamental to understand that this music asserted that noise could be at the source of *Etudes* rather than nervous crises. There again, History instead of Aesthetics!

2

Musique concrète will perhaps be an important moment in the history of the world before belonging, whether or not we like it, to the history of music (we won't use capital letters any more).

In our as-they-say pre-wired brains, the sounds of Pierre Schaeffer have stirred up old things that are still usable and useful, the callings of the combinative having provisionally become silent. Sometimes I write "musique concrète", sometimes "Schaeffer", but we must nonetheless take into account what Schaeffer himself, in his *Journal*, called the "irreplaceable talent of Pierre Henry". Afterwards, Schaeffer continued to live his life, like the children who had discovered the Caves of Lascaux afterwards grew up. (We can bet that his *Etudes* "hold" better in the caves of Lascaux than in the caverns of Plato.) Schopenhauer's definition of life—a business in which the revenues are far from covering expenses—applies rather well to Schaeffer's work. The work of this man (I was going to say this "devil of a man",

and indeed why not give him this pleasure?) recalls the object preferred by Cocteau in his catalog of bags of tricks: *object difficult to pick up*—an object made with what doses of guilt and self-punishment? No doubt with the usual doses, the doses that paralyze but do not kill ... Everyone tries to discover it wherever they can in whatever they refuse in real life.

The *Symphonie pour un homme seul* was one of these objects difficult to pick up, and it was a choreographer that did pick it up. He stole it! Creators pass their time stealing from one another, and then depart running so they can nourish themselves in the shade. Maurice Béjart succeeded in making the *Symphonie* his own for years. Discs have recently taken it back. Curious game of bridge. The four players are the music, the two musicians, and the dancer. Who is the dummy? Why, it's Schaeffer! One could see it as an unpublished scene from the Second Faust. Mephisto tells the spectators: "In the end, we all depend on the creatures that we were!" Homunculus becomes a dancer who shouts. Is it the Eternal Feminine who pulls up the naked man who is climbing the rope? Are Schaeffer and Henry playing the parts of Pater Seraphicus and Pater Profundus? It is very instructive to peruse *Faust* again while thinking about the *Symphonie*, a

Symphonie "in a state of confusion".

I like it when a work of art seems to go in every direction. Listening to the *Symphonie*, we think as much of the whips used by Guillaume Apollinaire as of the sounds which stay in the throat when we're frightened by dreams of dying, which stay inside the thoracic cavity, and we feel the rumble of the mountain extolled by a Japanese writer of prose. We reflect on what we want, and this desire is for the music that we become while listening. A moment ago, we needed a historian, and now we need a physiologist.

3

I listen again to the *Etude aux chemins de fer* and I think about the cinema, I think of Dziga Vertov and, as an analogy to the "man with the camera", I see Schaeffer as the "man with the disc". When I listen to those of Schaeffer's works that I like, I think of silent films and sometimes I think of Jean Vigo. I also listened to the *Etude aux chemins de fer* in an airplane. Once again I see the dancers who interpreted the woman in the ballet *Symphonie pour un homme seul*. I see Pierre Schaeffer again. To invert the expression: If Schaeffer had not existed, no one would have invented him. There's no way to write *The Magic Mountain* with him and it is for the better.

Nothing mystical, nothing obscured in smoke, nothing exalting, but a man who was still less pampered than the famous man who is all the men at the end of a well-known paragraph by Sartre. A man is only what he is and that's already something. He innovated a little, but not much. He irritated more than he was aware of, he pleased less than he thought, he pleased when he didn't know he was pleasing, and he displeased when he shouldn't have.

Schaeffer interests me because he does not elate me. This is never said, I know ... Little touches like these that seem bitter enable us to create a portrait of Schaeffer. He neither failed nor succeeded in any work, power did not make him happy, and he did not use his power to make anyone else happy. He is a personage of our time. It's not his importance that counts. It's him. Between sorrow and nothing, he chose music.

November 1990

François WEYERGANS

The Astonished Ear

If I attempt a few remarks in the margins of Pierre Schaeffer's well-known discoveries and works, which are surely the most singular musical achievements of all time, it is not to add any special clarification. No one better than Schaeffer himself, aware of the formidable potential of his discoveries, has scrutinized and described, seen ahead, and felt their impossible, vertiginous character. As for the music conceived in collaboration with Pierre Henry, the strange timbre that resulted from the shock of their coming together contained, in its resonance, an energy sufficient to determine the destinies of the two composers, so close and so contrary. And their collaboration produced just the right number of answers to pose all the subsequent questions.

Luckily, Schaeffer's notes from the time still exist. But as a musician mixed with writer and researcher, could he have done other than what he did? Such an eruption of problematic sonorities cannot happen without both an irrepressible flood of unthinking intuition and troubled ideas. In fact, which was the echo of the other? Was it a question of someone who intuitively liberated sounds from his anxieties, or, on the other hand, of someone who had the

serious mission of delivering a profound understanding?

With luck, then, but above all with purpose, a certain Schaeffer, a man without noble title, was guilty of overturning the existing order. He put the abstract in the concrete, the natural sound in musical culture. His *Journal*, which is informative in listening to his works, also reveals the other side of the man, the side of the worries and hopes, the misgivings and anticipations of an apprentice-writer taken by surprise but without the possibility of pulling back, provocateur and himself provoked in this unforeseen revolution of musical possibilities.

No, I don't know what to say that would add to these unprecedented moments, except that their singular value has not diminished. Yet, on the other hand, it seems to me that a reminder of them is particularly necessary today, not only because this singular man was prophetic, but because these moments directly and usefully illuminate the different varieties of our present experiences.

In his work, I hear two recurring themes, and I remember them as well as I remember the primordial quality of Schaeffer's reporting; and his lesson in the value of regret with a trace of hope. The lesson was about the ambition of *defined purpose* with the deep modesty of a

principled and penetrating observer. *These are the things that perhaps have something to tell us now: the physical and actual courage to go and see, to be silent, to construct, to manipulate devices and descriptions, to observe observation itself.* In the balance sheet: First, the strongly negative denunciation—done, if possible, as a healthy reflex rather than a painstaking yet false approximation—of the kind of knowledge that always entangles us in self-serving detail. The despair of ever finding simple music. And the hope to be able to deal with this profound despair, this basic human malady which promises an uncertainty that seems to conceal, for those who know how to understand it, *the life of sounds.* "It is not only the recreation of the past, it is its explosion. According to the humor of Pantagruel, a thousand bits of sound recompose a different symphony, not as they follow each other but as a hand takes them in whatever order is imposed on them ..." — *First Journal of Musique Concrète* Hardly had this little book, decorated with a middle-ages staff with concentric circles simulating the closed grooves of a disc, appeared and crossed my path while I was a student of music trying to decide which way to go, when—I remember very well the surprise that still stays with me, I was 20, and it was its tone, its utter sincerity

that totally fulfilled the requirements of adolescence—it gave me, and still now provides me with the most reliable guide. It promised nothing except a start in the direction of an astonished and provoked ear. But also, feeling the necessity for reticence, and with the strength to refuse, I found a treasure of *not*: not to please but to relate a musical object to its most general context, *to the spiritual destiny of the period.* And while I was being courteously discouraged by all those around me from the impossible profession of composing, I thought that in a few decisive moments I had received the gravest warning: not to become involved with sound without making a necessary and complete reevaluation, as culture and communication require, in light of the processes and materials of the most general music possible. Once revolutions are made—*liberté oblige*—the time comes for resolutions. I was warned, confronted with individual and collective work to be done. "It is because entry into the domain of *musique concrète* is so new, renewing so profoundly the phenomenon of musical communication and contemplation, that it seemed necessary to me to write this book. These first steps require what all beginnings demand: a knowledge of the object, a preparation of the subject. But the

target public, for the moment, is not a very large public, neither is it a public of specialists. It is a small fraction of the public at large—an experimental public, like us—which we'll have made the effort to prepare. It is to this public that these lines are addressed, and still more to those who will confront that public with a direct offensive of their sounds." — *A la recherche d'une musique concrète* May those who read and listen to these original works, these first aural pictogrammes traced directly on the surface of our collective awareness, be put in the most open and active state of mind by the text and the music ... marks, blank spaces, questioning forms which, according to Heraclites' words lent to the Sphinx, designate what *neither shows nor conceals, but beckons ...*

September 1990
François BAYLE

Alone

We have not always understood what it was that he tried to do.

Inventor of musique concrète, the dictionaries say. If it was just that! First, he devoted ten years of research to study the way that listening functions, to describe sounds in words (see his book *Traité des objets musicaux*, 1966), and he led this project, which no one had previously risked, with total rationalism. I would say more precisely: it was with a desperate rationalism, as if he had always been certain of being badly understood. The exploration of sound was much more important to him than adding a few bizarre samples to the Museum of Innovation or flying over a terrain of natural sound to take photos and then make beautiful maps. As a *being of language*, he put himself at risk in a virgin forest. He studied the live materiality, the substance, of sound, this archaic thing that had almost entirely been left unnamed and in limbo. Certain sounds, confined to the shadows because they had not been notated or notatable in a musical score, owe their existence for the human ear to him because he gave them names. At the same time, we must remember that this systematic researcher composed only

by impulse. He enjoyed giving the name of *Etudes* to works which were among the most unpredictable, the most dis-symmetric in contemporary music; even the three *Etudes* of 1958-59 (*aux allures, aux sons animés, aux objets*), composed in principle to show his students the correct path in musical research. It was a strange correct path, where one didn't know the direction in which one was being led from one second to the next. In fact, these works, ironic, melancholic, secret, which have the strangeness of delirium and the lightness of the concrete and of the everyday, have suffered because they have been viewed only as historical pointers, buoys on a road of "progress" too traveled in all directions for anyone to think of stopping to simply listen to them.

With Boulez, his junior, Pierre Schaeffer shares the curious privilege of being one of the best known names in contemporary music whose works are known only ... in name. Therein lies the importance of this collection, which not only revives pieces that had become impossible to find, but which also brings to light previously unpublished works and, most of all, represents the first attempt to join the diverse facets of his work—as a lover of words and an adventurer in sound—that earlier had been viewed as separate activities. It has occasionally been said that

Pierre Schaeffer loved only words, even as much as a gourmand loves food, freely and with pleasure, and that the self-proclaimed composer *did not like sounds*. It is possible. We don't demand that a poet necessarily likes words or that a painter likes colors. We ask them to make words and colors *live*. It's a different thing. As a composer, Pierre Schaeffer maintained a total and dramatic relationship with sounds. For him, sound represented a lost music (as pure "language", an ultimate state of abstraction, he preferred the music of Bach), but also an invitation to lose himself. And when a word becomes sound or rather returns to become the sound that it was—as in speech—it is only in pain. For nothing can hide the fact that there was, first, the *cut*. It has not been said often enough that Pierre Schaeffer did not invent *musique concrète* as a "music of all sounds", but first and foremost as a music based on *editing*. One "snatched" an acoustic sound—most of the time created for that purpose—from its cause-and-effect context, and worked with it as a recording where it became orphaned from its original context. No one more than Pierre Schaeffer viewed recorded sound as something cut from its original continuum—above all when he was dealing with the human voice. All recorded voices, for him, came out of a decapitated head: that of

Orpheus—he replays the original scene before his eyes without stopping—which myth he used for a long time to explain himself. But, in any case, the unity of cause and effect is always lost, and there is only the tearing apart and contradiction with which one can *compose*. If it had been only his business, "his problem" as common sense says today, when he was feeling pressed to return to what he found reassuring!

Pierre Schaeffer is not reassuring. It is for this reason that, in spite of everything, it is him, and not the beatified-alive official "revolutionaries", that is rejected—and it is towards his false note, his necessary dissonance, anxiety and truth, that one turns, because that is where there is something to hear. And perhaps we have put too many words between the listener and this music. And one day we'll have to listen to his works, not as dates in a calendar, but as works with their absolute strangeness, their irreducibility as objects designed by a man and taken in the end to their private destinies ... so that listeners may once feel "a man alone" in front of them, as Pierre Schaeffer was alone in confronting music.

February 1982 - Michel Chion

About Time

All the same, we must ask ourselves: What is it about the *flavor* of Schaeffer's work?

For it is ambiguous to us, contemporaries of the compact disc; who perceive this ancient sound and taste it as is; is it the OBJECT that we like or its patina?

1 (SIGN OF THE TIME) In changing us, time changes objects that it does not even touch: It's our perception that has changed. *Masquerade*, as Chion would say; one should not confuse, however, and not make allowances for the perversity of the author of *La Ronde*, who deliberately plays with the "medium" (sign of the times), as if it were an instrument. That's not the case with Schaeffer, who, dealing with his medium in 1948, is innocent. Like his contemporaries, who naively believe that "the drama of their time is engraved in this wax without honey" (Obaldia) ... and therefore will remain intact? mistake: time has since added its honey to a honey already there. And for us from now on, each work is a flower dried in lava, at once preserved and changed, compromised, made of similar substance as the wax that welcomes it; one hears the work as well as the wax: it's the amalgam that is precious.

But even without fetishism, we can still taste the pathetic *Etudes* of 1948! Absolutely ... The "signal" remains stimulating even if one does not take into account its "noise" from the time. It's that something very mysterious comes to us from the marvel of the discovery. The first impulse was "frozen" with the wax. One enjoys a simple voice in reverse, so long as it is in Pierre Schaeffer. Why? Perhaps it's because this music, as a genre, has little descendance. It maintains a unique way of hesitating between poetry, literature, and sound art. It does not therefore stay for us as a respected (obsolete) "primitive", but as an example without anything following it, an intact fermentation.

2 (CRYSTAL OF TIME) And then it has a singularity, which is that it stops time. Schaeffer, more "photographer" than "cineast" has a known weakness for ... the object, the fixed image. And he does not get beyond the marvel of the "closed groove", this device to petrify, to make discoveries, this insolent toy. The closed groove, in comparison with the actual and fertile editing, and also perhaps the principle of purity. In any case, a snatching of time. He is enchanted by the "fragment of sound that has neither beginning nor end, burst of sound isolated from any temporal context, crystal of time with sharp

edges".¹ The everyday flux frozen, appearing as a strange nugget, a piece of something that "doesn't belong any more— says Schaeffer—to any time". In freezing the movement, we extract the banal. The added value of the fixed image is evident. Schaeffer does not satisfy himself by dismissing sight (invention of the acousmatic), he tries to dismiss time: his poetry arises from a universe where "hateful" movement is something that dilutes an unsuspected beauty: "We were creating a number of little motifs ... some of them were unforgettable, and would never have been heard so well had they been included, stuck in their initial matrices".

3 (SPELLBINDING) These marvelous snapshots ... If need be, Schaeffer could do without making music with them: and he would content himself with a catalog of motionless shimmering images (like black discs) ... A scandalous or mystical composer who quit, he would like to arrange his findings in "herbals": "By warning people that it is enough to know how to listen, that the whole art is in hearing" ... He dreams of a certain music.

While waiting to have a sense of their aura, he drugs himself with them, he gives in to the charm of repetition (that a

"young" composer, Parmegiani, will later² call "the power of Orpheus"), to the spell cast by staying in place: "Drugged with this new substance, we would pass them around, we would play them for one another when it seemed to us that we had a good take."²

4 (TIME FOUND AGAIN) They must in some way be put back into action in a temporal situation ("in the era when one thing followed another"): music calls for it, "ars bene movendi". The first pieces, jewels still very close to the material from which they were derived, are focused on their discoveries. What they so arduously capture is all the more full of meaning to the ear; these musics continue to have an erupting, explosive side. Musics of stealing. Stutterings and rumbings (there are a lot of human voices), hoarse blossomings of material. The pick-up picks up, in the magma, some shapes, some sensations. By whiffs. It plays with the implicit and the explicit ("on your lips"), with the musical, the dramatic, the semantic. Not without jolts, badly polished charm, we pass from constraining structure to sharp spurts, so stimulating and sharp that they seem heroic conquests. It is sufficient to listen, to draw out ... As in a minute of the *Etudes aux tourniquets*, limping and glittering in an "exotic"

polyrhythmic shaking, everything floating in its precision ... or as in all of the allegorical piece *Paroles gelées*, with its delicate surface, its burlesque rejection of patterns, glazing over the "horrific" recitation ("For God, give me more!"). The pathetic *Etudes aux casseroles*, which takes off decisively, becomes fluid again, puts wings to objects, and takes flight: With what good humor it reconciles time and the eternal!

August 1990
Jean-Christophe THOMAS

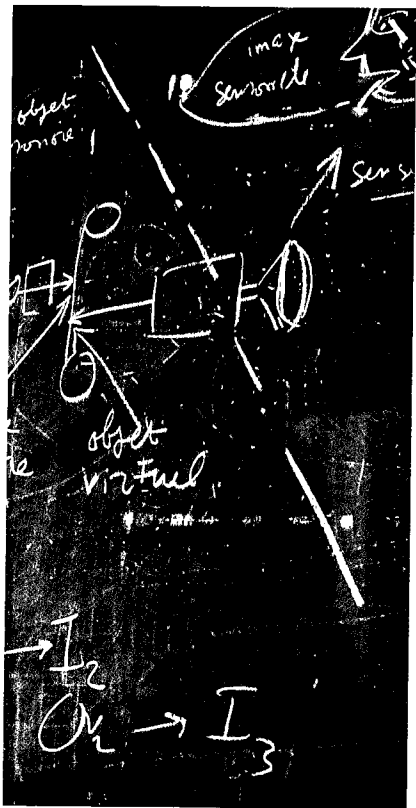
¹ The quotations are from Schaeffer's *A la recherche d'une musique concrète* (Seuil).
² (THE TIME TO LISTEN) The great art, for Schaeffer, is to listen. If one stops time, it is for that reason above all. To listen. And to reflect. To reflect on listening, on the object, on the subject. That was the program of the Research. *Sapiens* ... Sometimes judged at the wrong time, doing came only afterwards. *Faber* is often bashed about: musicians have no ears, they have only a will of their own; composers are not musicians ... The primacy of listening (rather than of doing) is already suggested, it seems to me, in a tendency towards vertigo. This contemplative fascination above the black well of the findings: "As soon as a disc is put on the turntable, a magical force captivates me ..." Out of this came a program of research based essentially on the study of listening: "What subtle musical pleasure could a practiced ear feel, by learning to listen ..." and the writer Schaeffer, brilliant alternate for the faltering composer (or put momentarily on hold), eloquently paints "the sequence of color, the

changes of time" ... all "the secret, qualitative life" of sounds. It follows that the research is the same dialogue of dizziness, continued, led differently, between the subject and the object. But the aesthetic abyss becomes a well of science, and the silence becomes a law of the universe. The object really has "something to tell us", and one goes there to find out what that is. Study—like music—is there "to settle vertigo" (Rimbaud).

And the *concrète* adventure (music and reflection) emerges in good form from this stopping of time: necessary, it seems, to freeze the infinite richness—of the actual, the subtle—so that we can rub against it, add to it, learn it. The "image" that a closed groove opens up for the first time, turns out to be an ideal meeting (... and because it is material, given through a medium) between the subject and the object.

The confusion of the special relationship of subject-object has not yet been fully explored: Bayle (who is himself the composer of motion) says: "The more fixed the object that one observes, the more variable is the sense that one gets from it ... Freezing the moving object allows us to do an in-depth inquiry on the different layers of awareness, sometimes based on the feelings of one day, sometimes of another day".³

It was an inquiry that Schaeffer led, given his tendency as "researcher", without working too much with the objects (without composing—or almost: certain *Etudes*). With a minimal "vertical" material, what he scrutinized above all was the internal experience. "Research is not in the thing, but in the subject". His findings were mirrors for him. "If music is a thing, its place is in the man (...) who experiences it". And he preferred the experience to the things. The object and the subject, finally, were declared twin requests for attention, separated only (we know the formula) by the thickness of the ear drum.



Pierre Schaeffer

French composer (born Nancy, 1910; died Les Milles, 1995). Pierre Schaeffer is known primarily as the "father of *musique concrète*", but he was also an excellent writer, pioneer and veteran of radio, and founder and director of many special projects within the French national radio, in particular *Le Service de la Recherche* (The Research Service) which he directed from 1960 to 1975. Finally, he was a thinker and researcher whose ideas had applications in audiovisual communication and, most directly, in music. His theoretical work is as important as his limited production of music.

After graduating from the Ecole Polytechnique in 1934, Schaeffer started working at Radiodiffusion Française (the French national radio), where, in 1944, he created a studio dedicated to radiophonic training and experimentation. It was in this studio in 1948 that his curiosity led him to "invent" *musique concrète* through the succession of trials-and-errors that he described with humor in his book *A la recherche d'une musique concrète*. Even at that time, he was occupied with finding a basis for understanding and defining what was both an empirical and rigorous method for proceeding, even when the incongruity of that approach to music

fascinated and horrified him at the same time. His own deeply felt ambivalence for the music that he invented became one of the dominant characteristics of his creativity and thought.

In 1949, Schaeffer engaged Pierre Henry as his collaborator and worked with Henry in composing several works, among them the well-known *Symphonie pour un homme seul* (1949–50), which became the first classic of its genre. In 1951, within the structure of the French national radio, he formed a musical research group that he named *Groupe de Recherche de Musique Concrète*. In 1958, he formed the *Groupe de Recherches Musicales* (GRM), which continues today. GRM was at first mobilized to conduct group research into its founder's idea: The goals were to define a "solfege" (i.e. define the "elements") of the sound universe based on the perception of sound and to question what were clearly false notions about music, listening, timbre, sound, etc. Schaeffer's monumental *Traité des Objets Musicaux*, written in 1966, encompasses the breadth of this research.

Schaeffer later left the administration of GRM to François Bayle and devoted himself mainly to directing *Le Service de la Recherche*, which he had founded in 1960 and which kept him busy until 1975, at which time he was dismissed from his

position as part of a general reorganization of the French national radio, and Le Service de la Recherche was replaced by l'Institut National de l'Audiovisuel. Even after the publication of his *Traité*, however, Schaeffer did not abandon musical experimentation: Beginning in 1968, as an adjunct professor at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris, and within an educational framework developed at GRM, he led a seminar on experimental music. In numerous lectures, publications, and other presentations through subsequent years, he continued to develop the ideas first presented in his *Traité*.

Schaeffer's musical production, which was exclusively electroacoustic, consists of a small number of works that were composed during several brief periods of activity. The first series of short compositions, the *Etudes de Bruits* of 1948, sometimes referred to as the "primitives" of musique concrète, remain as fresh and engaging as when they were first composed. *La Flute mexicaine* (1949) and *L'oiseau RAI* (1950) are brief and unpretentious "genre pieces", whereas the curious *Suite 14* (1949) seems a serious attempt to reintegrate old music with notes and instruments into a new music based on sound. The seeming lightness, the unpretentious surrealism, and the comic titles of these works scandalized

the serialist musicians at the time who were more serious in their musical attitudes. Schaeffer made extensive use of the "closed groove", the equivalent of the later tape loop, and it was on recordable discs, indeed, that the first pieces of musique concrète were realised.

A second series includes works composed with Pierre Henry. In addition to the short *Bidule en "ut"* (1950), there are two more ambitious and longer compositions: *La Symphonie pour un homme seul* (1949–50) and the concrète opera *Orphée* (1951–1953), for which Schaeffer wrote the libretto. The very particular tone, grating and nostalgic, of these two expressionist works come from Schaeffer. They also remind us that Schaeffer was a "man of radio". The provocative association of classical song and tape music in *Orphée* was considered a scandal at its performance at Donaueschingen in 1953, as if it had been a crime of high treason against the avant garde.

A third series of works, from a few years later and different from the first two, represents an attempt to create a purely "musical" musique concrète, without surrealist and anecdotal effects, based only on qualities intrinsic to sounds—the same qualities described in Schaeffer's experimental "solfège" of sounds. The third series consists of three *Etudes*—Schaeffer

liked the form and the word—called *Etude aux allures* (1958), *Etude aux sons animés* (1958), and *Etude aux objets* (1959). *Etude aux allures* (1958) and *Etude aux sons animés* (1958) are successful works, but *Etude aux objets* (1959) is Schaeffer's masterpiece. It contains a limited number of "sound objects" which are assembled in five contrasting movements. It has the poetry of beautifully-written prose—with well-marked rhythm but also with whimsical moments, discoveries, and unexpected fits of madness. Its influence is noticeable in the works of many composers of musique concrète and electroacoustic music.

In 1960, reasoning that music had a greater need for "researchers" than for composers, Schaeffer stopped composing. In 1975, his release from official responsibilities gave him free time to compose, with the assistance of Bernard Durr, the *Trièdre fertile*, a series of compositions in which he used electronically generated sounds for the first time.

The fifteen years that Schaeffer passed without composing were nonetheless largely occupied with music, primarily with writing the *Traité des objets musicaux*. The "T.O.M.", as it is called by those familiar with it, still not well known, is nonetheless a monumental work, not easily accepted

because it upsets too many well-established ideas. It is an interdisciplinary work in which music is seen as an art-crossroads where we encounter linguistics, psychoacoustics, phenomenology, etc. To quickly enumerate some of the revolutionary guideposts that this work poses for new music: the distinction of four ways to "hear" (hear, perceive, listen, understand) and the analysis of this "circuit of musical communication" into four sectors: complementary definitions for "sound object" and "focused listening", two key notions introduced by Schaeffer; a dialectic in perception relating to "sound object" and "musical structure"; critique of classical notions of timbre and parameters that seek to describe in a useful way the phenomena of sound, and a counter-proposal of seven principal perceptive criteria, perceived in the triple "perceptive field" natural to the ear; and the use of all this to achieve a large program of musical research, for which the *Traité* would serve as a preamble.

The "T.O.M." more particularly illustrates the double thesis: *that music is made to be listened to* (a challenge to all a priori conceptions of music as composition on paper, which neglect the perceptive factor); and *that music has two sides: a cultural side, of course, as everyone agrees, but also a natural quality, which is to say that*

music depends on the natural perceptive proprieties of the ear (the octave phenomenon, for example) that are understood in traditional music and that contemporary developments cannot ignore with impunity.

The relative unpopularity of the *Traité des objets musicaux* is understandable. It does not pretend to be a new bible of modern music, but rather an inquiry that many have not yet dared to make. The rigor, the depth, and the great honesty of this inquiry make Schaeffer a man as important for music through his research as he is through his limited productivity as a composer. Published in 1966, the *Traité* proved to be prophetic, with many of its theses subsequently confirmed by experiments done with the computer. Schaeffer was a fascinating character, rare, even unique in a musical avant-garde that cultivates, without qualification or nuance, a progressivist optimism. The scruples, the questions, and the scepticism of this "man alone", in a concert of such unanimity, represent a necessary and vital dissonance, a note of anxiety and truth.

Based on an article by Michel Chion, in *Larousse de la Musique*, 1982
In 1967, Schaeffer was awarded the Prix Charles Cros. In 1982, he was awarded the Grand Prix de l'Académie du Disque

Français. In 1976, he was awarded the Grand Prix des Compositeurs de la SACEM. In 1990, he received le Prix Mac Luhan.

Pierre SCHAEFFER

■ **CDI** 58:39
Les Incunables 1948 -1950

We have learned to link the lute with the Middle Ages, plainchant with the monastery, the tom-tom with the savage, the viola da gamba with the dress of the royal court. How could we not expect that a music of the twentieth century, of machines and of the masses, would be linked with electrons and calculators? The findings of 1948 surprise me alone. Having come to the studio to "make noises speak", I stumble onto music ... Although fragments of words or phrases may be included (like plants may be included in minerals), it goes without saying that they are diverted, if not from their meanings, at least from their use. For lack of music, a sort of sound poetry is thus created ex abrupto.
P. Schaeffer, "Que sais-je ?", *La Musique Concrète*, 1967

This disc reunites, in their complete

versions and with the sounds "of the time", a series of works from the first period of musique concrète that Pierre Schaeffer liked to call *the primitives*.

In collaboration with Pierre Henry, and with the assistance of François Bayle, Jean Schwarz, Geneviève Mâche (Acousmathèque Ina-GRM), Franck Dufour (Phonotèque Ina), and, especially for the first two volumes, Bernadette Mangin (SON/RE), different versions of this music, from among proofs on disc and tape transfers made at the time of the first tape recorders (November 1950), have been compared. In the transfer of these very innovative works to digital media, the goal was to maintain the most complete (and austere!) fidelity, so that Pierre Schaeffer's humor and tenderness, and ironic poetry "in black and white", are reconstituted.
François BAYLE

■ **CDI-1/5 Cinq études de bruits** 15:12
1948
Original version - First Performance, Concert of Noises, French National Radio, Paris Channel, October 5, 1948 - First concert performance (Etudes 1 - 3 - 5), Ecole Normale de Musique, Paris, March 18, 1950

■ **1 Etude aux Chemins de Fer** 2:50
■ **2 Etude aux Tourniquets** 1:54

■ **3 Etude Violette** 3:18
■ **4 Etude Noire** 3:54
■ **5 Etude Pathétique** 4:01

The following commentary gives the order and titles of these studies as they were called for the Concert of Noises of October 5, 1948.

Note that the *Etude* listed below as number 3 later became the *Diapason Concertino* (Tuning-Fork Concertino) and that *Etude 4* was divided into the *Etude Violette* (Study in Purple) and *Etude Noire* (Study in Black).

Etude 1 Déconcertante ou Etude aux Tourniquets

The sonic material for this study was provided by exotic and non-exotic thin-metal instruments, wooden percussion, and two whirligigs which supply two characteristic musical figures.

A certain abstract organization, suggested by the form of an initial composition by Gaston Litaize, was planned for this study. The techniques used, however, led away from the execution of that plan, which was ultimately considered too brief. The principal themes were played at 33 RPM and a certain number of rhythmic figures were isolated with the intent of creating a fuller orchestration.

Etude 2 Imposée ou Etude aux Chemins de

Fer (Study 2 Imposed or Railroad Study)
The railroad theme is treated freely in the first part, which contains numerous rhythmic developments. The first part is a bit like a theme and variations; then the second part, still made up of the same elements, moves with determination away from the anecdotal character of the noises. At the end, a coda recalls the initial theme.

Etude 3 Concertante ou Etude pour Orchestre

In answer to *Etude 1*, called *Déconcertante*, which followed the idea of an initial score, *Etude 3*, called *Concertante*, takes as its basic material a few moments of an orchestra surprised in the act of tuning. A series of freeform manipulations of this initial recording brings out a very large variety of ideas that were initially provided by chance, then chosen from among the possibilities, then composed.

An orchestration was thus born, which very naturally led to a dialogue with a concertino instrument. It is J. J. Grunewald who interacts with this reorganized orchestra through a series of piano improvisations. The *Etude* consists of four movements.

In this composition, which was purposefully based on a limited selection of raw material, it is not surprising to find a

concentration on a tonality based on A, with a certain number of modulations to G due to the 33 RPM.

Etude 4 Composée ou Etude au Piano

Whereas the *Etude* called *Imposed or Railroad Study* is based on natural sounds which are difficult to use in composing, *Etude 4* or *Composed* illustrates rather brilliantly the process defined by the term "musique concrète".

The whole study that we're going to hear has, as its only source, the noises and sounds that can be derived from a piano. Particular attention was paid to excluding all normal ways of playing the piano, not from principle but to make the demonstration more vivid. This composition was based on the "closed groove" technique; it consists of isolating sound fragments or rhythmic figures in different tempos and at different pitches, to be used structurally with different techniques: reverberation, reverse playback, etc.

The *Etude* includes a first rhythmic movement, followed by a melodically slow movement, then a reprise of rhythmic variations, again cut off by a slow motif based on musical ideas in three opposing ranges. The *Etude* concludes with a rhythmic reprise that recalls the initial tempo.

Etude 5 Pathétique ou Etude aux Casseroles

After a short opening from one then two rolling boxes, an opposing slow theme brings out a rhythmic leitmotif that continues until the end.

Then vocal elements appear, treated in such a basic way as to conserve the same rigorous character in the entire sonic ensemble.

After a crescendo sustained by tonal ritornelli, a diminuendo leads to the conclusion, which is given, of course, to a rolling box.

Due to the composer's ignorance of customary action in this situation, he believes that it is indispensable to mention that he is working with voices found on a disc that had been thrown away and where the only identifiable voice is that of the marvelous comedian Sacha Guitry.

■ CD1-5/9 *Diapason Concertino* 1948 9:49

Original version - First performance on the antenna of Radio Paris IV, April 29, 1951 - First concert performance, (movement 1 - 3 - 4) Salle de l'Ancien Conservatoire, Paris, May 25, 1952

- 6 *Allegro* 1:17
- 7 *Andante* 2:19
- 8 *Intermezzo* 2:44
- 9 *Andantina - Final* 3:19

Previously called *Etude 3 Concertante ou Etude pour Orchestre* (Study 3 *Concertante* or Study for Orchestra) for the Concert of Noises in October, 1948. See commentary above.

■ CD1-10 *Variations sur une Flûte Mexicaine* 1949 3:45
Radio version, Pierre Henry

First performance on the antenna of Radio Paris IV, November 3, 1949 - First concert performance, Centre Culturel du Conservatoire de Paris, January 21, 1950

These variations are drawn from a little flute with six holes, brought back from Mexico. The percussion sounds, even the lowest pitched, come from hitting a ring on the flute. This piece, conceived as an exercise, nonetheless projects a very poetic atmosphere. The sensitive use of reverberation gives the enchanting character of an impenetrable forest to the intentionally limited range of sounds.

■ CD1-11/15 *Suite pour 14 instruments*
(Suite for 14 instruments) 1949 25:24
Original version - First performance on the
antenna of Paris Inter, November 6 -
December 3, 1949 - First concert
performance (movements 2 - 3), Ecole
Normale de Musique, Paris, March 18,
1950

■ 11 *Prélude* 3:22
■ 12 *Courante/Roucante* 6:40
■ 13 *Rigodon* 5:31
■ 14 *Vagotte/Gavotte* 2:41
■ 15 *Spharadie* 6:58

■ CD1-16 *L'oiseau RAI* (The Bird RAI)
1950 2:55

Original version - First performance on the
antenna of Radio Paris IV, May 6, 1951
Presented by the author as a *genre piece*,
this is a fantasy on the bird song that was
used as the signature music for the Italian
radio. Pierre Schaeffer's variations on the
theme illustrate the power of the machines
in transforming and composing.

Pierre SCHAEFFER - Pierre HENRY

■ CD2 63'42

*The collaborative works 1950 - 1953 and
1988*

The window separating the studio and the
booth will soon also be the line separating
the responsibilities of the first two
researchers: In 1949, Pierre Henry joined
me at the Club d'Essai ...

Like two explorers surprised by a flood,
terrified by the unleashed elements, it is
"the force of circumstance" that brought us
together, Pierre Henry and me, for years ...
It all started with a new series of exercises,
the most famous of which is still *Bidule en
ut*—a sort of "fugue" obtained by
superimposing the false scale of a
prepared piano with varying accelerations
or retards ...

A few months later, our collaboration
resulted in the *Symphonie pour un homme
seul*—the first great success of *musique
concrète*, perhaps because it prolonged the
embarrassment of its authors, put by the
unsuspected power of their means between
an attraction to theater and a desire to
further musical research, to the point of
general awareness ...

As much as the true success of the
Symphonie showed that *musique concrète*

had without doubt reached a level of
"work of art", so the different versions of
Orphée will always have oscillated
between this level of work and
experimentation ... What we had called,
not without irony, *Toute la lyre*, the
preceding year, became *Orphée 53*,
which was going to affront the cabal ...
Perhaps it was necessary that someone
thus prove that retreat is forbidden, at the
same time demonstrating that it was
possible to have characters sing and dance
on tape. The "battle of Donaueschingen" in
1953 was consequently a sort of Waterloo
for *musique concrète* ... For years, we
were immersed in international reprobation
... But *Orphée* like Phoenix did not stop
being reborn ... Pierre Henry reworked the
leftover fragments in his particular way for
a gigantic ballet by Maurice Béjart that
took the *Symphonie* three times around the
world!...

Pierre Schaeffer, "Que Sais-je?", *La
musique concrète*, 1967

In 1966, Pierre Henry returned to some of
the original materials of the *Symphonie
pour un homme seul*, restored them, and
created a stereophonic version in 12
movements. It restored the dimensions of
the cinematic version already envisaged at
the time of the premiere of the eleven-
movement version on July 6, 1951 at the

Théâtre de l'Empire, in Paris, with the first
experimental control console designed by
Jacques Poullin. It was for his "40 years of
music in 15 concerts" at the Festival Estival
of Paris in 1988 that Pierre Henry, in
homage to Pierre Schaeffer, conceived this
Echo d'Orphée based on a selection of
elements from *Toute la Lyre*, *Orphée 51*
and *Orphée 53*.

The performers in the premiere of *Orphée
53*, on October 10, 1953 at the Festhalle in
Donaueschingen, were:
Jeannine Collard, Orpheus - Andrée Lescot,
Eurydice - Philippe Arthuys, harpsichord -
Janine Gruter-Rauch, viola

■ CD2-1/12 *Symphonie pour un homme
seul* 1950 21:30

First concert performance (22 movements),
Ecole Normale de Musique, Paris, March
18, 1950 - Version in 12 movements -
revision Pierre Henry 1966 -
First concert performance, Halles Baltard,
Paris, February 26, 1971
New version by Pierre Henry, 1998.

■ 1 *Prosopopée 1* 2:58
■ 2 *Partita* 1:12
■ 3 *Valse* 0:58
■ 4 *Eratic* 1:21
■ 5 *Scherzo* 2:33

■ 6 <i>Collectif</i>	0:57
■ 7 <i>Prosopopée II</i>	1:02
■ 8 <i>Eroica</i>	1:57
■ 9 <i>Apostrophe</i>	2:26
■ 10 <i>Intermezzo</i>	1:57
■ 11 <i>Cadence</i>	1:09
■ 12 <i>Strette</i>	2:54

The title of the *Symphonie pour un homme seul* must be understood in the etymological sense of the word: "ensemble of sounds". Did the authors intend to compose a symphony of human noises? In fact, overwhelmed by the sound material and with the goal of creating an ensemble of sounds that was as expressive as possible, Schaeffer and Henry found quickly that they had to restrict themselves to a limited group of initial materials so that they could construct a coherent architecture.

The *Symphonie pour un homme seul* did not put noise and musical sound in opposition; it attempted, still clumsily without doubt, to find a synthesis between noises that tended to be musical and an instrumental ensemble that produced sounds that were not too distant from noises.

The *Symphonie* has been continually altered since it was first heard on March 18, 1950 [at the first concert of musique concrète, organized by the "Triptyque" at

the Ecole Normale de Musique de Paris]. The definitive version presented here includes an extra section (6 - *Collectif*). The version used for the Maurice Béjart ballet (eleven sections) is described in the following text:

Prosopopée I presents various sonic materials that form an initial sentence and continue in a development where a "prepared piano" and a humming voice alternate. *Partita* provides a rest between *Prosopopée I* and *Valse*, in a ternary group where vocal fragments are placed in opposition to samplings of an orchestra. *Eroica* follows, then a humorous *Scherzo*. *Prosopopée II* resumes and develops some motifs of *Prosopopée I*. Then *Eroica* follows, then *Apostrophe*, which contains the only explicit vocal element of the whole work: the word "absolument", pulled for a moment from the indistinct texture, disintegrates and returns to the sound mass.

A rather slow *Intermezzo* with some mysterious verbalization, is followed by a *Cadence*, "suspense" that prepares for the *Strette*, which, after a profound beginning, ends the work on a note of strident shrillness, as if filled with jubilation. This work, which was to consecrate the collaboration of Pierre Schaeffer and Pierre Henry, has been heard by a very large

audience: It was broadcast approximately twenty times in France as well as abroad; it consisted of both the music and the story of the first musique concrète ballet that was played throughout the summer of 1955, at the Théâtre de l'Etoile, by the Compagnie des Ballets de l'Etoile, directed by Maurice Béjart and Jean Laurent.

■ CD2-13 *Bidule en ut*
1950

1:51

First performance on the antenna of Radio Paris IV, June 2 1951 - First concert performance, Amphithéâtre Richelieu, Sorbonne, Paris, March 16, 1950

Commentary on the occasion of the first release as a phonograph recording of *Panorama de la Musique Concrète*: All aesthetic phenomenon is an original perception, a sensation and a reflection on this sensation. The advantage of publication on disc is therefore great, since for the first time the public will not only be able to hear, and perhaps feel some surprise, but listen again, and without doubt better understand musique concrète.

The first *Panorama de Musique Concrète* was composed to give the listener a general idea of the means and results of seven years of research in this fascinating world. The *Bidule en Ut*, considered one of the "classics" of musique concrète, is a short piece in the form of a fugue, tightly and brilliantly put together, the sounds for which have been taken solely from the piano. Some people have heard factory or locomotive sounds; this proves to what degree an inattentive ear can fail to recognize the source of a sound. In reality, a little attention will reveal, after the initial

attack, a sort of complex scale (hence the title "in C") which, transposed to a lower register, then to a higher register, at times respectively twice as slow and fast, enters into counterpoint with itself, not without a few "accidents" which transform the unfolding of the piece to the point of a brilliant conclusion.

Homage to Pierre Schaeffer

Dear Pierre, today it is my duty to take the pen, forty years after our meeting (to reverberate rods that vibrate with lamentation). Our adventure was epic (theme destiny neo-classical style), difficult for the colleagues (cymbal resonance, piano resonance) and rare: who are the musicians that compose together and moreover sign together (orchestra transformation into harpsichords, then into organs)? Ever since then, only terrible collaborations between us (periodic brief friction, stormy fluttertongue, reboundings, tearings, Greek shouts)!

Gracq said, "... this thing more complicated and confusing than the music of the spheres: a couple". There it is, we did form a couple (cadence of klangfarbenmelodie, sustained Aeolian notes, harmonic superimpositions from thin to thick without changing tessitura). A couple, as you have just written to me (September 29, 1990), modest, violent, tormented. White sound (noise from a radio, drop of water). Black sound (muffled shout, double voices, short pinched noise). An overlay of adventures was our share and our part of multiple joys (the first concert, Rapallo, the sounds of Orpheus, the arrival of the first tape recorder, the

getting together again in 1966). When you asserted in 1950 that the two musics were difficult to mix, you were already right. I also like these sentences that I often tried to make my own: "The other music, insulting and offensive, would attempt to take parcels of remembered time, to make an object of painful contemplation, who knows, promising eternity ... A supreme music would then be to isolate as crystals of time ..."

After the *Deuxième Symphonie* (1972) and *Pierre Réfléchies* (1982), here, as I like to do it, is a patchwork of "fragments" from *Orphée* for you. Some "echoes" conceived in your style rather than mine. It is recording-wise a magnetic present (*Eurydice's* song dissolved into a blurred pastoral + plants, birds, jungle vines, monsters, and a few pizzicati). Good bronze birthday, Dear Companion (without tragic vibraphone and without a duo of misunderstanding).
Pierre Henry
October 1990

■ CD2-14/26 *Echo of Orpheus, for Pierre Schaeffer* - 1988 Pierre Henry

After Orpheus 51 and 53 by Pierre Schaeffer and Pierre Henry
First performance, Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris, September 29, 1988

■ 14 <i>D'un sillon l'autre</i>	6:12
■ 15 <i>Clavecin sarcastique</i>	3:29
■ 16 <i>Eurydice</i>	2:50
■ 17 <i>Harpe et violon</i>	1:05
■ 18 <i>Jazz et plaintes</i>	2:35
■ 19 <i>Le biguina</i>	2:59
■ 20 <i>Premier air, éléments</i>	3:54
■ 21 <i>Divinités du Styx</i>	1:49
■ 22 <i>Débat</i>	2:00
■ 23 <i>Les tâtons</i>	2:43
■ 24 <i>L'amour aveugle</i>	1:03
■ 25 <i>Voix intérieures</i>	3:49
■ 26 <i>Grand air</i>	5:23

Return of Orpheus

The battle of Donaueschingen—as we know—was such that from *Orphée 53* nothing remains but vestiges, echoes, fragments. Trace of a viola melody, bits of accents deformed by the saturated grooves ... Some myths persist, and among them is the myth of music returned to hell, although there has been some discussion about extracting it from there. But contrary desires and destinies had to be taken into account. And this battle was actually a very strange combat between two men who met and came to know each other. But at the price fixed by the Parcae of a famous Veil. The fate of the two Pierres, with identical first names, seemed to be mixed together at the beginning. At the end, for reasons of temperament if not temperament, it was different. The heat of the furnace and the infernal sounds took care to bring the project, and also the identity of the authors, to the point of fusion, even fission. They then revealed themselves to each other and from then on, by the power of the myth forbidden to be looked upon together, devoted themselves to their own research. The rest is known. Instead of a single history, we were given two superb adventures—who would complain? And as for the work, undoubtedly impossible, there would

remain only the echo, a wealth of imagination.

If, long after these galactic exploits, it came to pass, through my innocent intervention, that the spirited culprits became reconciled, the means to seal their alliance would be provided much later by the publication of this *Echo*. Recomposed by Pierre Henry in 1988, here is Orphée revisited, with an intact lyricism and a modern mastery, for a Pierre Schaeffer still worried about a revival of the risks. But protected now by distance—as if predictions had to be realized—the two authors, the one of the *Book of the Dead* and the other of *Keeper of the Volcano*, can finally offer us an encore of their extraordinary enterprise. It gives the incongruous but also the most moving testimony from the time. It has kept the surprise, the insurrectional value of the complete poetic act. In this capacity, the failure of that time remains a sign of the ever invisible, unacceptable, and cruel newness.

François BAYLE
September 1990

Pierre SCHAEFFER

■ CD3

74:23

Revisions 1948 - 1952 and later works 1957 - 1979

The first concrète works, and in particular the *Etudes de Bruits*, provide good illustrations of the problems that were encountered by the first researcher of musique concrète as well as the solutions that he was able to find at the time. Closed groove techniques, the use of superimpositions which miraculously obey the "god of turntables", use of the piano as an "instrument to do "everything" thereby assuring each composition a greater continuity ... yet it was an idea that did not turn out satisfactorily for the piano concertino part in the *Diapason Concertino* or for the editing of a real instrumental score with the *Suite 14* ... On the other hand, as soon as one knew how to avoid sounds that were too traditional and objects with identities that were too complex, our machinery, even when it was as unpolished as when we began, enabled us to make more satisfactory sketches. Thus the first music for a film on black masks called *Masquerage* (revised by Bernard Parmegiani) or the radiophonic experiment on *Paroles Dégelées* by

Rabelais in a realization by Alain Trutat (revised by François Bayle). After four years of absence, I resumed contact ... The balance of successes and limitations made clear the necessity to start methodic research in developing a solfège. The postulates for the work, to which the new Groupe de Recherches Musicales of 1958 intended to conform, were especially affirmed in my three experiments, the *Etude aux allures*, *aux sons animés* and *aux objets*, composed in 1958 - 1959. Pierre Schaeffer, "Que Sais-je?", *La musique concrète*, 1967

During the last days at the Halles Baltard in 1971, at the occasion of the Journées Rencontres of the GRM, the "world premiere" of the complete works of Pierre Schaeffer was presented, in the revised versions that he preferred, in two Schaeffer-only concerts.

In comparison with their first versions, these new versions—some of them significantly shortened—offered a re-reading that tried not to ignore the principal enemies of all experimental activity, the abundance of material and, above all, facile manipulations.

The revisions of the works following the first period—the *Etudes* of 1958-59—dealt only with the quality of sound combinations and the way they were mixed in space.

Barely a few musical touchups in the *Études aux objets*, the work considered by its author as the most definitively finished. It was in the form of a "post-scriptum" that two supplementary works, conceived "twenty years later", were found. The *Trièdre Fertile* of 1975—in an allusion to the well-known "reference trihedra" of physicists who "confine sound in the three dimensions of time, pitch and intensity"—represents a foray into a world of electronically-generated sound that Pierre Schaeffer had forbidden to himself. Helped by Bernard Durr, he provoked the triple ear with some quasi-rough structures. This enabled the composer to apply his enduring principles even through variations in a material that was "exotic" for him. As for *Bilude* of 1979, a light joke on the second prelude in Bach's French Suite #5, the composer closes the loop and offers us, with a bittersweet elegance and a smile fitting the circumstance, the playfulness of his last word.

■ CD3-1/4 *Quatre études de bruits*
1948 12:25

*Revised 1971 - First performance, Halles
Baltard, Paris, February 16, 1971*

■ 1 *Étude violette* 3:15
■ 2 *Étude aux tourniquets* 1:54
■ 3 *Étude aux chemins de fer* 3:42
■ 4 *Étude pathétique* 3:22

■ CD3-5/6 *Concertino Diapason*
1948 4:20
*Revised 1971 - First performance, Halles
Baltard, Paris, February 16, 1971*

5 *Allegro, andante et Intermezzo* 2:41
6 *Andantino et final* 1:35

■ CD3-7/9 *Suite 14* 1949 9:15

*Revised 1971 - First performance, Halles
Baltard, Paris, February 26, 1971*

■ 7 *Courante, Raucante et Rigodon* 2:14
■ 8 *Vagotte* 1:46
■ 9 *Spharadlé* 5:08

But did he have to write this Suite for fourteen instruments in order to cut it up in pieces and put them in a suitcase? This

work, undesirable and interminable, was cosmetically improved and cut up for a second time by the composer, aided by François Bayle. It remains all the more tragic and hateful. The sobs of the assassin remain there, haunting the scene of the crime ...

■ CD3-10 *Masquerage*
1952 3:37

*First performance, International Film
Festival, Cannes, May 23, 1952
Revised 1971, Bernard Parmegiani
First performance, Halles Baltard, Paris,
February 26, 1971*

The original version dates from 1952. At that time, Max de Haas (one of the first people to listen to musique concrète and the first film person to use it) commissioned Pierre Schaeffer to accompany silent and rhythmic images in a film on masks. In 1970, at the occasion of the presentation of Schaeffer's complete works, this piece was "tightened up" and reworked with the collaboration of Bernard Parmegiani. Closed grooves, accidents of turntables, fragments of historical voices—Jean Toscani, Pierre Schaeffer—monsters of sound who speak in their original language, organized in a chiaroscuro

rhythm, a scherzo of scintillations, an andante of shadows.

■ CD3-11 *Les paroles dégelées*
1952 4:19
*First performance on the antenna of Radio
Paris IV, 1952 - Revised 1982, F. Boyle*

Turning around, this time it is towards the external that the imagination turns; musique concrète adds its quick and bright touches to the quasi-prophetic fantasy of Rabelais. "This is the beginning of the Frozen Sea, and at the beginning of last winter, there was a great and bloody battle here between the Arimaspians and the Cloud-riders. The shouts of the men, the cries of the women, the slashing of the battle-axes, the clashing of the armour and harnesses, the neighing of the horses, and all the other frightful noises of battle became frozen on the air. But just now the rigors of winter being over, and the good season coming on with its calm and mild weather, these noises are melting, and so you can hear them. "By God," cried Panurge. "I believe you. But could we see just one of them?"... Then Pantagruel threw on the deck before us whole handfuls of frozen words, which looked like crystallized sweets of many

colours. We saw some words gules, or gay quips, some vert, some azure, some sable, and some or. When we warmed them a little between our hands, they melted like snow, and we actually heard them, though we did not understand them, for they were in a barbarous language." From François Rabelais, *The Histories of Gargantua and Pantagruel*, Book IV, Chapter 56, p. 568. Translated by J. M. Cohen. Penguin Books. First published, 1955.

■ CD3-12 *Etude aux allures* 1958 - 3'28

First performance, *International Exposition, Brussels, October 5, 1958*
Revised 1971 - First performance, *Halles Baltard, Paris, February 26, 1971*

Listening to *Etude aux allures*, Pierre Schaeffer's last work, one notes the absence of all surrealist anxiety, all literature, in favor of the internal core essentials, a sort of asceticism, that set the pace for the durations and dynamics of joyful and awesome sounds. Although very rich, the so-called "channelized sounds"—which were produced with little round light-bronze Chinese bells and percussion of lamp shades in opaline—pass in the background. The durations, and the more or less tight vibratos of those durations, are hallucinating.

Olivier Messiaen, 1958

Commentary of the author at the time of the first performance, in "Expériences Musicales", *La Revue Musicale*, 1959

Etude aux Allures might as well have been called "study of the channelized sounds" or "study of profiles". It might even have represented a return to purposeful melody and a search for simple melodic and harmonic relations between sounds that were complex enough not to demand an excessive amount of gymnastics in the way that they were used. The sounds chosen for this study are, in effect, rich in themselves as complex groups of harmonics, and this or that "nucleus" starts to emerge according to the environment in which it appears. Certainly the "speeds" are important, and there is a long development in the sonic exposure of each object which follows, in the course of time, varying or unchanging laws. One can also hear an enjambment from each speed to the next, from tight to wide speed variation, causing parallel changes in timbre. But the dynamic aspect of this study cannot be neglected; its very slow tempo is set by design to enable the ear to grasp with complete clarity the lives of these long sounds, rather than to dazzle it with a useless virtuosity. In the same issue of *La Revue Musicale*, the author explains his return to composition

and to musical research.

After a rather long hiatus, I got involved again in music by undertaking the composition of three studies called: *Etudes aux allures* (1958), *Etudes aux sons animés* (1958), and *Etudes aux objets* (1959).

Instructed by experience, I no longer ignored the primary adversarial concerns of all experimental work: on the one hand, the abundance of material, on the other hand the plurality of dimensions that is now available in musical invention for whoever has not become involved with functioning systems. Above all, I had learned to distrust facile manipulations. I was now wary of those manipulations that I had played a part in promoting, and, in the course of seminars that I was organizing, I never stopped warning others. The less the original sound is changed, the better it is. Numerous manipulations, such as reverberation, filtering, accelerations or retards, only weaken and caricature sounds. My three new studies are based on the following triple asceticism: a purposely limited number of sounds, the use of only those manipulations that are essential in "assemblage" and not deformation, and finally, a well-defined approach to composition that consists of submission to the object rather than preconceived and

excessive modulation. It is the object, I think, that has something to tell us, if we know how to let it tell us, and consequently we should use it in assemblage according to its familial relationships and the concordance of its characteristics. Thus the central idea is to study the "musical object", a generalization of the "musical note", for its own sake, and to discover, as closely as possible to the great musical tradition whether occidental or exotic, the laws of association and evolution of these objects, as well as the number and the order of the dimensions that are presented in their evolution in musical space.

I had noticed, in fact, that many natural sounds had remarkable structures, as much in their harmonic makeups as in their dynamic profiles, as much by the laws of forming and extinguishing sound as by melodic, harmonic and dynamic evolution. All such sounds have been badly heard and, until the present time, not well understood. The acoustic apparatus can be taken as the opposite of the first experiments with musique concrète: a microphone is a microscope rather than a variable-speed tape recorder; the object is respected, magnified, diversified according to its own nature, and not submitted to arbitrary editing, whether random or systematic. It goes without saying that these studies do

not pretend to be artworks, in the sense that this word connotes a purposeful expression, but they are preliminary studies, and more precisely "studies following nature". In the same way, instead of abstract or psychoanalytical wanderings, a painter may prefer to recreate the exactness and the intensity of the objects in a still life.

As often happens, these three studies appear chronologically in the reverse order of logic, or more precisely in the reverse order of formal logic. The study called *aux objets* should have come first, then *aux sons animés*, then *aux allures*, in the sense that the total object constitutes the largest world, its animation a world equally large, and the study of some of its particular characteristics, such as the speeds at which it occurs, a more detailed theme for research.

In practice, it was in the reverse order that the researcher proceeded: pleased with having found a *characteristic* as precise as speed (including all sorts of generalized vibrato in timbre, as well as in dynamics, rhythm, and density), he began to use this as a clear point of departure. Then he allowed himself a sort of fantasy on animated sounds, which is to say the processing demonstrates a pronounced *causality* ... With this recreation concluded, he returned to the more serious: the assemblage of *objects* by their reciprocal

correlations, and the selection of these objects for their better internal logic. Certainly, some of these studies are not sufficiently specialized to earn their titles: an ensemble of objects always conveys everything at once: and the logic of its assemblage, and the animation of its treatments, and the rapport between its characteristics. The compensation of the researcher is the satisfaction that his studies have been well rooted in nature: whatever direction he may have taken, if he has scrupulously respected at least one of these new laws, he can be assured that his procedures are safely appropriate to the entire domain.

Thus the compositional discourse that I try to follow is contrary to more ambitious proceedings which tend to include everything and even to link parameters to each other through systematic relationships. Not only do I think that this ambition is futile, but I am persuaded that the ear alone, and not an anticipation of the intellect, is capable of choosing, among so many intangible variables, that which always appears as *dominant*. Just as in the dominant of a scale, I think that all sound phenomena are instinctively perceived by the ear with greater or lesser importance as in an aristocratic hierarchy, and not with the equalities of a democracy.

■ CD3-13 *Etude aux sons animés* 4'12
1958
World Premiere Brussels - International exhibition October 5, 1958 - Revision 1971 - Premiere Paris - Halles Baltard February 26, 1971

This study, like an entr'acte between two more serious efforts, is more lighthearted than the preceding one. It brings together such particular sounds that they last because of their anecdotal familiarity, but they also continue to interest us musically. This study is deliberately somewhat unpolished, as if it had been first of all intended to demonstrate the breadth of natural processing in its sounds: the quasi-dramatic unfolding of a roll, a creak, a rub, a rebound can actually be treated very differently, in an allusive or explicit manner. The composer wanted to refer back to his primitives: the études de bruits of 1948.

The reciprocal is also true: "composite" sounds developed from simpler sounds, for example sounds taken from a horn made to revolve like the whirligigs in playful fireworks, can be very well combined with naturally animated sounds. Commentaries by the composer, from *Revue Musicale* (see above)

■ CD3-14/18 *Etude aux objets* 17'10
1959
First performance, Salle Gaveau, Paris, June 30, 1959 - Revised 1971 - First performance, Halles Baltard, Paris, February 26, 1971

■ 14 *Objets exposés* 3'34
■ 15 *Objets étendus* 2'54
■ 16 *Objets multipliés* 3'02
■ 17 *Objets liés* 3'07
■ 18 *Objets rassemblés* 4'19

A short time ago, in *musique concrète*, one had to be content with choosing from among many objects that chance provided with an inexhaustible extravagance. Apparently, at least. This extravagance may also have hidden a certain laziness. It is fitting that, from this time on, we can want sounds and make sounds. Thus the creation of original sound objects, thanks to the invention of a very special instrument, has become an essential concern. Consequently, we must choose from among these sounds and create a sampling which allows us to choose. It is the best kind of problem. At the end, one has only to deal with problems of assemblage and relationships mentioned earlier.

The *Etude aux objets* is only a hasty exploration within a large area. Not only

is the choice of objects fascinating, but the laws of their association and development are still completely unknown to us. And above all, let's not inappropriately recall the famous line: "Inanimate objects, do you have a soul?" To be sure, the object is a state of mind, but it is the opposite of vagueness.

In the first movement, *Objets Exposés*, eight different sound objects form a phrase given to the first loudspeaker, to which the second loudspeaker replies with a "counter-theme", formed also with eight sound objects. The developments are obtained by varying the theme which imposes its form on the successions and superimpositions in the different sequences of objects. The second movement, titled *Objets étendus*, brings together sound material common to the five movements by linking the sounds together as closely as possible.

The following movement, *Objets multipliés*, presents the same "orchestral material" in a different form. The highly articulated sounds of the first movement become liberated in an expanding space.

The fourth movement, *Objets liés*, contrasts percussion and sustained sounds, and long melodic profiles and short explosions to create a theatrical sonic "suspense".

The final movement, *Objets rassemblés* or *Strette*, brings objects together equally well

on structural and sonic levels. This movement demonstrates the infinite possibilities that can come from using the same group of sounds to form predefined orchestral material.

Commentary by the composer, 1960

■ CD3-19/20 *Le trièdre fertile* 1975 11'37
First performance, Salle de l'Ancien
Conservatoire, Paris, December 17, 1976

■ 19 *Impromptu* 3'28
■ 20 *Strette* 8'03

This *Trièdre* is the result of a late repentance. Without the friendly insistence of François Bayle and fertile support by Bernard Durr, I would not have once again dared to attack the enigma of musical composition. As it is said in laboratories, I undertook a new "slice of research"—a research always begun again.

How can I explain my return to electronic sounds when I had always refused their simple causalities? It's only thanks to Bernard Durr, so inventive with electronics, that I was able to work on sequences entirely provided by an electronic robot, just as in the old times I used to receive sequences prepared by Pierre Henry. It does not matter, then, that the objects are ungrateful or not much alive. The enigma that they pose comes precisely

from the musical effect of their quasi-automatic "discourse". It is, in short, music in reverse: Instead of shaping, sound by sound, the materials of a thought-out work—whim of the author—here one must choose "eloquent" fragments from "what is presented" for a quasi-automatic work whose author is not directly responsible for it. The surprising thing in "music in reverse" is that one receives more than one has given. Confronting the aesthete, I declare more firmly than ever that the *experimental genre* is interesting because it means that, thanks to ideas that may also appear randomly, one can pursue musical research to the level of the structure of perception and what the subject does ...

The *Trièdre fertile* is a peculiar crown for the career of a musical researcher known for his taste for concrete objects as well as traditional sound. How could Pierre Schaeffer have used electronic material in his recent and last work? How could he have qualified as fertile the famous "reference trihedra" of physicists, which imprisons the sound in the three dimensions of time, pitch and intensity? It is because the author, aided by his accomplice in electronics, Bernard Durr, carefully examined the synthesizer with a sensibility stethoscope rather than a slide rule. The electronic instrument delivered ready-made "structures" in that same way

that electroacoustic techniques produced raw objects. The idea was to choose them after having caused them, to assemble them after having heard them with a "triple" ear, which implies also: rhythmic, melodic, harmonic, along with more subtle characteristics: instinctive, and, to say it all, traditional. The *Trièdre fertile*, therefore, offers a "new way to listen" in addition to classical-music listening.

Of the seven movements of the original version, only the first, *Impromptu*, and the seventh, *Strette*, have been retained here.

Impromptu

A pseudo-cello and a pseudo-flute answer the parodistic flight of a bumble bee. Then two original and typically electronic themes respond to the imitative anachronism.

Strette

Through alternations and superimpositions, this last movement recapitulates the prominent passages from movements 2 to 6. It is a reprise which reaffirms the structure, presenting precise melismas that resolve, after a few cuts, to finish in counterpoint.

■ CD3-21 Bilude
1979

2:17

For piano and tape

*First performance, Musée Guimet, Paris,
December 11, 1979 - Minka Roustcheva,
piano - Second Prelude from The
Well-Tempered Clavier.*

*In homage to René Daumal. Previously
called Eternels regrets—ou le clavier mal
tempéré (Eternal Regrets—or The Badly-
Tempered Clavier) Became Bilude.*

It is useless to look for some coherent link between the homage to Daumal and the little work that I risk under this title, constrained to forced behavior as I was by the friendly insistence of Nicole Lacharte. I therefore assumed a contradiction between the most and least noble, the most obvious and most obscure, the surest and the riskiest keyboard. It is well-known that, according to Gurdjieff, music is one of the keys to the world, perhaps the key. It seems to me that we lost it and that we were wandering far from the traditional place where it is hidden. Many of our contemporaries look towards the Orient in the hope of renewing their inner lights. But not everyone can become Hindu. Why would there not exist a traditional wisdom in the Occident, a "directed exercise" whose music provides the vehicle? It's a

subject too serious to dare to develop. With the author's excuses, a little irony will do the job.

*Program note at the first concert
performance at l'A.C.I.C.*



Pierre Schaeffer et Pierre Henry en public, le 27 février 1989, lors de la diffusion du concert du Cycle Acousmatique du GRM au Grand Auditorium de Radio France, concert pour l'Union Européenne de Radiodiffusion
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Pierre Schaeffer and Pierre Henry in a public concert by GRM, the 27th of February 1989, at the Radio France Grand Auditorium, for an UER radio broadcasting.

■ CD1	58:39	■ CD2	63:37	■ CD3	74:23
Pierre SCHAEFFER		Pierre SCHAEFFER - Pierre HENRY		Pierre SCHAEFFER	
<i>les incurables 1948-1979</i>		<i>les œuvres communes 1950 - 1953 et 1988</i>		<i>les révisions 1948 - 1952</i>	
■ CD1-1/5 Cinq études de bruits 16'12		■ CD2-1/2 Symphonie pour un homme seul 21:30		■ CD3-1/4 Quatre études de bruits 12:25	
■ 1 <i>Étude aux chemins de fer</i> 2:50		■ 1 <i>Prosopopée I</i> 2:58		■ 1 <i>Étude violette</i> 3:15	
■ 2 <i>Étude aux tourniquets</i> 1:54		■ 2 <i>Partita</i> 1:12		■ 2 <i>Étude aux tourniquets</i> 1:54	
■ 3 <i>Étude violette</i> 3:18		■ 3 <i>Valse</i> 0:58		■ 3 <i>Étude aux chemins de fer</i> 3:42	
■ 4 <i>Étude noire</i> 3:54		■ 4 <i>Erotica</i> 1:21		■ 4 <i>Étude pathétique</i> 3:22	
■ 5 <i>Étude pathétique</i> 4:01		■ 5 <i>Scherzo</i> 2:33		■ CD3-5/6 Concertino Diapason 4:20	
■ CD1-6/9 Diapason Concertino 9:49		■ 6 <i>Collectif</i> 0:57		■ 5 <i>Allegro, andante et intermezzo</i> 2:41	
■ 6 <i>Allegro</i> 1:17		■ 7 <i>Prosopopée II</i> 1:02		■ 6 <i>Andantino et final</i> 1:35	
■ 7 <i>Andante</i> 2:19		■ 8 <i>Erotica</i> 1:57		■ CD3-7/9 Suite 14 9'15	
■ 8 <i>Intermezzo</i> 2:44		■ 9 <i>Apostrophe</i> 2:26		■ 7 <i>Courante, Roucante et Rigodon</i>	
■ 9 <i>Andantino - Final</i> 3:19		■ 10 <i>Intermezzo</i> 1:57		■ 8 <i>Vagotte</i> 1:46	
■ CD1-10 Variations sur une flûte mexicaine 3:45		■ 11 <i>Cadence</i> 1:09		■ 9 <i>Sphoradie</i> 5:08	
■ CD1-11/15 Suite pour 14 Instruments 25:24		■ 12 <i>Strette</i> 2:54		■ CD3-10 <i>Masquerage</i> 3:37	
■ 11 <i>Prélude</i> 3:22		■ CD2-13 <i>Bidule en ut</i> 1:51		■ CD3-11 <i>Les paroles dégelées</i> 4:19	
■ 12 <i>Courante/Roucante</i> 6:40		■ CD2-14/26 Echo d'Orphée, pour P. Schaeffer - Pierre HENRY 6:12		<i>les œuvres postérieures 1957-1979</i>	
■ 13 <i>Rigodon</i> 5:31		■ 14 <i>D'un sillon l'autre</i> 3:29		■ CD3-12 <i>Étude aux allures</i> 3:28	
■ 14 <i>Vagotte/Gavotte</i> 2:41		■ 15 <i>Clavecin sarcastique</i> 3:29		■ CD3-13 <i>Étude aux sons animés</i> 4:12	
■ 15 <i>Sphoradie</i> 6:58		■ 16 <i>Eurydice</i> 2:50		■ CD3-14/18 <i>Étude aux objets</i> 17:10	
■ CD1-16 L'oiseau RAI 2:55		■ 17 <i>Harpe et violon</i> 1:05		■ 14 <i>Objets exposés</i> 3:34	
		■ 18 <i>Jazz et plaintes</i> 2:35		■ 15 <i>Objets étendus</i> 2:54	
		■ 19 <i>Le biguillage</i> 2:59		■ 16 <i>Objets multipliés</i> 3:02	
		■ 20 <i>Premier air, éléments</i> 3:54		■ 17 <i>Objets liés</i> 3:07	
		■ 21 <i>Divinités du Styx</i> 1:49		■ 18 <i>Objets rassemblés</i> 4:19	
		■ 22 <i>Débat</i> 2:00		■ CD3-19/20 <i>Le trièdre fertile</i> 11:37	
		■ 23 <i>Les tâtons</i> 2:43		■ 19 <i>Impromptu</i> 3:28	
		■ 24 <i>L'amour aveugle</i> 1:03		■ 20 <i>Strette</i> 8:03	
		■ 25 <i>Voix intérieures</i> 3:49		■ CD3-21 <i>Bilude</i> 2:17	
		■ 26 <i>Grand air</i> 5:23			