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59E TRIBUNE INTERNATIONALE DES COMPOSITEURS
Stockholm, 22 – 25 juin 2012

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2. ERIC GAUDIBERT



Eric Gaudibert, essential figure of new music in Switzerland.

With his amazingly rich personality that immediately strikes by its restrained manner, perspicacious attention and ascetic language, Eric Gaudibert would not need music to express the energy that radiates from within. And yet music is his whole life, he has dedicated himself since the 1960's to all activities associated with academically trained musicians: interpretation as a pianist, theoretical analysis, composition, mostly carried out at the same time, in constant interaction.

Allied to his nimble mind and generous curiosity that frequently lead him to stray far afield, to reach towards the borderlines of creation, Eric Gaudibert's faculty for meditative internalization inhabits all his works. His creations thus avoid the school hallmarks that were rather squandered by the musical world during the second half of the 20th century. His works ignore all style references and calmly follow their own logic as autonomous beings intimately linked to their often literary pretenses.

This constant quest towards authenticity is naturally served by the composer's extensive culture and acute sensitivity, *with a broad sound and optical spectrum*.

Eric Gaudibert's teaching activities, vital to his career, have revealed the intricacies of both the classical repertoire and new music to many school children and students, whether amateur or professionals. His teachings at the Neuchâtel and Geneva Conservatoires particularly encouraged a new surge of important composers in the following generations, including Michael Jarrell, his successor in Geneva.

More recently, he has also encouraged the emanation of young creator-interpreters associating mastery of writing, improvisation, new technologies and drama skills to an impressive musical virtuosity. Enough to kindle the whole country's artistic life!

The whole of Eric Gaudibert's creations includes the most varied genres, novel or dedicated, instrumental and vocal, from solo to orchestral works, from opera to oratorio, through all the variables of chamber music, electro-acoustic, exotic cultural incursions and instrumentations...

Presented work

Gong

For solo piano and ensemble

Recorded 30th March 2012 during the Festival Archipel in Geneva

Musicians

Antoine François : piano

Namascae Lemanic Modern Ensemble

Ensemble Contemporain de la Haute Ecole de Musique de Lausanne

Conductor : William Blank



D.R.

The title of this work is a reference to boxing, to the gong in the ring that launches and calls off the fight. For Eric Gaudibert, it is an issue of life and death, obvious to the listener from the very first notes.

Eric Gaudibert does not consider this work as a piano concerto in the classical sense. The pianist plays on a piano “enlarged” by a symphonic bass drum on either side, by crotales whose crystalline notes are amplified by the resonance of the piano’s open case. This creates a balance between the extreme low and extreme high register. The piano is also “prepared” with rubbers between the three lowest sets of strings, creating a quality of sound somewhere between percussion and keyboard.

The eleven musicians play without a conductor and the composer imagined a whole stage scenography when it comes to the place and role of the instruments: the piano is fore-stage, the pianist with his back to the audience, facing a circle of eight musicians. To his right, the percussion, to his left, two violas who only intervene at the very end of the work.

This dramaturgy holds a depth of meaning for the composer, who conceives music as an initiation, a pilgrimage towards an unknown, yet sought after universe.

Inside the score is this annotation: «inspired by popular music from far-away lands », in particular concerning the micro-tonal play of the two violas at the end of the work. Indeed, Eric Gaudibert has steeped himself for years in Persian, Arab (Egyptian), and even Portuguese music: “it is something I have been obsessed with for over ten years. Ordinary contemporary

music in its small enclosed world does not quite suit me, I need to draw on far more important and vitals things.”

Gong

...

arrêt, reprise du combat

...

à vie,

à mort

Ce jour-là

quelqu'un t'attendra au bord du chemin

pour te dire que c'était bien ainsi

que tu devais terminer ton voyage

démuni

tout à fait démuni

Nicolas Bouvier, *Le dehors et le dedans*, 1982

Si nous devons tomber

Que ce soit d'une même chute

Etincelants

Et brefs comme l'oiseau

L'arbre

La foudre

Anne Perrier, *La voie nomade*, 1986

Biographie des interprètes



Antoine François, piano

D.R.

After studying in Switzerland and United Kingdom with professors Paul Coker, Yonty Solomon, Andrew Ball, Ashley Wass (piano), Laurent Estoppey (saxophone) and Michael Oliva (composition), Antoine François performs nowadays in Europe and further as a soloist, chamber musician, with ensembles and orchestras. At the term of his studies at the Royal College of Music in London, he was awarded the prestigious Tagore Gold Medal, for his outstanding talent and dedication to music.

Fascinated by the repertoire of the 20th and 21st centuries, as well as all new expressions of modern music, Antoine is founding member of the Mercury Quartet and the François-Green piano duo. He is also principal pianist of Nouvel Ensemble Contemporain (NEC, Switzerland) and Rarescale ensemble (London). He collaborates very often with percussionist Serge Vuille and different orchestras, such as London Contemporary Orchestra, Ensemble Contrechamps, London Sinfonietta, London Philharmonic Orchestra or City of London Sinfonia. He performed as a soloist with NEC, RCM symphonic orchestra and Orchestre national de Lorraine and played under conductors such as Diego Masson, Vladimir Jurowski, Elgar Howarth or Pierre-Alain Monot. He also had the chance to work closely with composers George Benjamin, Hans-Werner Henze, Hans-Peter Kyburz, Julian Anderson and Eric Gaudibert.

Recent successes include the English premiere of Hans-Peter Kyburz's piano concerto, Pierrot Lunaire at the Wigmore Hall with LPO and V. Jurowski, a series of performances of the complete Beethoven symphonies for piano 4 hands with François-Green Duo, the UK premiere of Edgar Varese's Ameriques transcribed for 2 pianos 8 hands and a residency at Dartington Summer School with the Mercury Quartet.

In addition to his classical pianist activities, Antoine is very engaged on the free improvisation stage, both as pianist and saxophonist, and the first improvisation album of the Mercury Quartet is out since November 2010 under Non-classical label. As a composer, Antoine has a few pieces for solo instruments or chamber groups with and without electronics in his opus and most of these were premiered in Switzerland or in the UK.



Namascae Lemanic Modern Ensemble

D.R.

The Namascae Lemanic Modern Ensemble is a collectif of professional musicians very dynamic in the field of modern and contemporary music. Created in 2005, this cross-border ensemble receive the financial support of the town of Annemasse. With five productions in a year they are the ensemble in residence in the Rhône-alpe region.

The Ensemble collaborate with the Festival Archipel in Geneva, the Viena's Theatre in France, Les Jardins Musicaux de Cernier, The Dampfzentrale in Bern and the Contemporary Music Society of Lausanne.

The Namascae Academy is organised every years in collaboration with the professional department of music of the Conservatory of Lausanne. The professional students have the occasion to practice contemporary music in professional conditions and young soloists can play on famous stages.

The Namascae Lemanic Modern Ensemble's repertoire consists of « classics » of the modern works and experimental music as well, this in collaborations with composers.

Web site :

<http://www.namascae.com/ensemble.php?PHPSESSID=5b3ceff7b2bbd3e919c12c79868feb2d>