

BUTTES-TÉMOINS

form proof

I – Composing/ Improvising For Derek Bailey

Throughout the history of electro-acoustic music, the techniques invented in the studio (ie. off-stage) have been gradually passing through, and continue to do so, to the practice of improvisation (ie. on stage) : objects, home-made electronics, thingamijigs, sound units, gestures...very broad approaches to the instrument (the instrument as a 'thing' and extensive techniques).

Not only the techniques, but also the listening posture of the pioneers of tape music / electroacoustic music recorded music has come through from the studio to the stage. Listening to a sound object in itself requires our attention to be somehow put into parenthesis. Husserl's "epoché" has been thoroughly theorised by Pierre Schaeffer with regards to music, even though we may ask ourselves if it is not a little "naive", purely because this naivety is itself implied in the initial process of questioning...The question of this naivety could be posed as such : is it possible to attain this "epoché", to experience this listening of a pure phenomenon, without "believing in it" ? Or rather is it about: believing in it - believing in the possibility of pure listening and doing what is necessary to make it possible, in other words making this naivety possible.

« In fact, I've stayed naive. (...) How do we escape from this naivety? By coming back to perception, not denying it, nor criticising it, but by becoming fully aware of it, which implies that we stop being immediately interested in its results: the information that it gives us concerning the perceived object. (...)

Epoché, "parenthesising", amazement, how can we describe this transformation of the way we look at things?

To this sort of naivety, that of perception in itself ("to be but an eye", Monet - "stupid like a painter- " richter) responds to another naivety (the same?) : that of the improviser in their relation to the instant, to intuition, to the space, to memory...

"The migration of listening " in parentheses (epoché) from the studio to the stage ... making music as some record material to use in subsequent compositions...

The fact is that phenomenological listening is a virus which affects all music, and this, well before being named as such, and even more still once named (phenomenology)...

It is not an application of phenomenological theories to musical practice, but an historical convergence, pin-pointed long ago by (in the fine arts = by esthetic theories about fine arts) the fine-arts (abstractions-gestalt theory, Kandinsky, Maurice Merleau Ponty, Michel Henry, but also Tony Smith, Donald Judd, also Richard Serra and even Gerhard Richter)...

But we should see just to what degree a musician (an artist) is not at least a phenomenologist to be this way... without necessarily knowing it.

The fantasy remains of research being music in itself, of an experience whose form could (also) be called music:

"It is not about returning to nature. Nothing is more natural for us than to obey conditioning. It is about an un-natural effort to perceive that which previously determined our conscience, despite itself. (...) can we, freeing ourselves from the banal, "driving out the natural" as well as the cultural, find another level, an authentic sound object, the fruit of the "epoché", which would be accessible if possible, to every hearing person? (...)" But let us rather return to the source (Husserl) : "refrain from all judgement on the being or non-being of objects, thus making possible the observation of pure conscience without prejudice. This is the kind of listening we are talking about, "epoché" or the "putting into parentheses" of our intentions, "the phenomenological reduction".

This is where these 'parentheses' meet improvisation: improvisation ? a problem of intention - or : what do we do with intention when, concretely, we don't know what we're going to do? Or better still: when no authority (no author) if it not be our own (except our own one?), is there to give orders...we must therefore rely on the first thing which imposes itself when we do music : sound, the phenomenon of sound matter, its logic, its structure, its functioning. When the idiom is missing, we can turn to matter- where 'to be able to' must be considered both as a possibility and as an authorisation: we are able to, meaning "we have the possibility to" and "then we are just able to".

Yes but : "the first thing which imposes itself" when we do music (sound) is it still the same thing when we improvise? Let's get straight to the point : do we think the same way, with the same material, when we play improvised music or when we improvise while doing music, when the music is the point of the improvisation or when the improvisation is the point of the music? "No", probably...and if we look for the 'level zero' of this activity (musical improvisation), we run the risk of falling into the analogies of the following relations : improvisation/music= action/ creation (artistic) = human/ sound matter...(and even = anthropology/ aesthetic ?...). In other words, a purely musicological analysis of musical improvisation will always miss its target as long as a dose of anthropology is not injected into a few strategic points. At level zero, (human/ sound matter) the musical improvisation material is so complex right from the outset that the notion of material is probably a concept (or a tool) which is completely useless regarding the analysis of this form of art. An artform without material? No : a danse ?

But let's get back to sound and have a look:

A composer comments an improvisation:

-"Where is the form ?"

Possible answer :

- "Yes, precisely ! The dilution of form into a stomachy diarrhoea, made up of consecutive crescendos and decrescendos ("the shit pump" as Varese put it concerning improvisation) is definitely a foible? of collective improvisation. Accordion form, propagation, mass movement, contagion...must we see here the insurmountable slope of collectiveness?

Here, there are two problems of representation :

1 - It would be about having a closer look/ listen at what happens when improvisation is the work of improvisers and not musicians doing improvisation as an exercise (of style?). Institutions (politics, the press, and common sense) like writing and they like fashion :

what is not written and not fashionable, cannot be accounted for, cannot be represented... if it could, we would see that precisely, and perhaps more so than anywhere else, a number of musical improvisation adventures are trying to climb back up and avoid that slope of 'collectiveness' (where the main material is the network of influence, over and above anything that has to do with sound matter...)

2 – It's about not confusing form and the will for form ; not confusing form and the perception, in the music, of a signal (therefore sound) of a decision, of wilfulness, of an authority, meaning an author (would it be him or herself that the composer is missing ?)

- The form is not necessarily signalled or indicated (signposted at the side of the road indicating the hill). To not confuse form and its index (the map and the territory and even more : the map re-placed inside the territory). The form is not necessarily located (in the geographical sense of location) : this does not prevent us from hearing it. It can be un-represented and yet still be present (present "once only").
"Our ignorance is dripping with predictions." (Alfred North Whitehead.)

- The fact is that during a collective improvisation, any sound produced has at least a double function (relating back to a complex intention) : that of participating in the resulting sound (= as pure acoustic phenomenon) and that of transmitting information (and thereby the destruction of any possibility of époqueé?)

- But what information are we talking about ? First of all, this:

" I'm here, I'm playing (the game), I'm with you, with you all" – fundamental information, without which no staging is possible... and the obligation to move into action, often reflected with non-action, attempted by some, in the theatre of their own presence : a show (and in the last case that of an action, as minimal as it may be)

- But over and above all (getting back to influence), this information is made up of the leafy mass of everything within the sound that will influence the course of the sound itself (gestures, attention, music – "I understand", "I don't understand", "don't worry, I'm on it", " I'm going to stop soon", "am I lying?", " perhaps I'm lying", "support him!", "leave him alone!", etc) in other words, everything that will influence the other musicians (the intention and the attention in general). The information is the influence which is spreading, and we cannot be further from composition (or from so-called instantaneous composition) than in this suspension point : inscribe in the present of the sound, the end, the beginning, the continuation of a sound event, sprinkling the music with outliers, whose functions are very real... It is the marker which is not a marker : it is operative and brings about that which would not occur without it (far from the signpost, and even : the furthest from it as possible.)

- Or, what improvisation would be attempting to construct is an époqueé no longer applied to the perception of sound matter, but to the conception of the forms itself...at the frontiers of that which appears in the mental for the mental... something to do with the survival of thought in-music (within the limit of music, made out of music , happening within music as a fact ?)

The conception (and the adopting) of this influence network as the main material of this 'doing' music (improvising), is inseparable from the experience of groups carried out from year to year with the same people (from acoustics to ethos, passing by the situation). As such, from sport to love, passing by research groups, or various adventurous escapades ... escaping teams improvised music maintains many relations with what can be lived (most) intensely between two and/or more people in the world as it is. The analogy, even if it has certain limits, can go very far and even reveal how improvised music may have an anthropological value "in-music" of certain human relations-all be it schematic anthropology.

Each concert is like the reinvention of mutual help (boxing also). Improvisations are as many schemas as possible in a genealogy of conflict and alliance between humans, they are like perpetual questionings of what could have been the progressive construction of altruism, of playing, or the reasons for controlling conflicts, but also the brisk outlining (in-music of course) of what may be the story of a couple, a love-story (duos), a separation.

From the laws of the jungle, to the escapade (the struggle) for power, from the perpetual bellows with their crescendos and decrescendos, to the invention of a kind of freedom to reinvest (together), concert after concert, musical improvisation is making a place for itself in the history of music, by overflowing, and more than that, much more, the imaginary (over)load of sound phenomena by the incarnation "in-music" of all the tension and relaxation that humans haul along ! (to the point where, in turn, we imagine it can serve as an example).

Hypothesis : the work of the improviser consists in finding a balance, the closest possible, at the heart of each sound, of each silence, in the passing time, between what is made to sound out, and what is made to influence (the gesture's value). "A distinction between the surroundings (environment) as material and the surroundings (environment) as a process, apparently imposes itself. In both cases, a common line can apparently be drawn : relative causal transparency. The surroundings are vehicles for causality but (or perhaps because) the underlying causal interactions only affect them marginally (and they only affect them in as much as they must undergo a modification in order to transfer causality.)"

The world (ecosystem) of improvisation ? In this case influence is literally a trial of intention(s). "It's possible that listening to music is less about turning one's mind away from aural suffering than trying to rebuild animal alertness. The main characteristic of harmony is the resuscitation of aural curiosity, defunct since articulated and semantic language has spread through us." (Pascal Quignard). Making music purely with the quality of one's intention, then seeing in the end what sort of sound could come out of such a set-up, of such a posture. But also, getting music out of the perpetual circus of instrumentalists' show-time- no stage without theatre?- "Stratagem n°7 (...) A fake one, a fake one, a real one"

Playing where you can find a place for it, and simultaneously making a place for yourself by playing (to avoid saying making time for it) : the sound's line, its duration, its history as a line of crests passing between (entre ≠ through) attractive basins that it points out to our ears- this line as the index to what it is avoiding, and at the summit of falsehood or

strategy, the frontier which has just been constructed, seems so obvious – like a second nature. Faraday's probe bodies (field theory) : the listening point as the probe body of an acoustic field, of a given field of influence...

DETOUR : As guarantor of the « epoché », musicians speak of non-intentionality... But there is an equivalence in the relation between non-intention and improvisation, and the relation between transparency and secrecy, or quite simply : between transparency and information, it's all about sending out (intentionally therefore) signals of one's non-intention, which places the musician in a double constraint (double bind) with no solution apart from the (usual) escaping elsewhere, in other words, doing what must be done to ensure that the problem does not arise (and this detour as a creator of form...) But there is often confusion between non-intentionality and absence of the body.

« Music suffers from two evils, the first fatal, the other exhausting. The fatal is always inseparable from the instant that follows the one where it expresses itself, and the exhausting one is in its repetition that make it vile and contemptuous.»

Leonardo Da Vinci's comment does not say that music is (necessarily) bad; it mainly says that we do not know how to talk about time...that words are very poor tools for the task because before teaching us about time, they speak to us about their own relation with it and that this word, this process, is endless- and from here on, the relationship is closed! If it is a good thing that the measuring tool reminds us that it is measuring first and foremost the relation between itself and the object to be measured, it owes its existence to all that can not be brought_down to this 'closedness'- the function is looped on itself. The stage is also a tool, a measuring tool even, for example : the Romans invited troupes of Greek actors to Rome to perform traditional plays and ended up asking them to fight each other instead, which was far more amusing... - the show looped on itself!

Hypothesis : it is not to avoid what has already been done (regardless of what they say?) that the instrumental improviser often ventures into the extreme zones of their instrument (on the edge of the instrument) entering into an extreme relation with it; but so that each sound may be extraordinary, irreproducible (even by the musician him/herself?) and to return to a sort of (cutting) indexation of the present moment. It is not the necessity to invent new sounds that drives the musician to make the instrument come off its hinges, but rather the necessity to be in a situation where the intention or non-intention are in the foreground, the quality of the intention... bringing about a situation which is completely unpredictable...

But the instrument implies a lot (too much ?) : the listener knows what the musician is playing at (and which instrument) ; the musician obviously also knows that the listener knows etc. Everyone is playing about what each one imagines they know (about the knowledge of the others), and thereby constructs a domain of possibilities (playing who knows what creates a huge barrier to the "epoché) : a bundle (sphere?) of possibilities, a horizon of expectation (Husserl)

« How do I know that what I've found is what I was looking for ? (that what happened is what I expected, etc)

I cannot embrace what happens and the expectation that precedes it, at the same time.

The event that substitutes expectation is the answer to this.

But for this to occur, the event must have the necessity to substitute it - and this means that the expectation must be in the same space as what is expected.

[...]

Could we ever imagine a language in which the expectation that "p" produces be described without resorting to "p"?

Is this not just as impossible as a language which could express "p" without ever resorting to "p" ?"(Wittgenstein)

This expectation, this horizon, these possibilities, this bundle (this sphere) reveal the importance of the numerical/analogical machine as an instrument, and particularly the computer, in the very perception of music : what happens to this horizon when the musician plays a computer? When, beyond the secret of the musician's own gesture (what do we see of it? : "nothing"), the instrument is acoustically capable of everything. In other words, is the horizon of expectation only possible outside of the purely empirical convention which, as contemporary as it may be, means that those who use the computer are rather more prone to produce such and such a kind of music, such and such kind of sound (Richard Chartier or Phil Durrant) and what happens to the listening of an improvisation when this horizon is impossible? (Mattin or Taku Unami)

And the level of knowledge, the quality of knowledge etc. is inscribed in the form of music that is made and perceived- the knowledge of duration leads to the form of attention ... thus the instrument implies several loops in the attention, a lot of feed-back in listening...The fact is also that having been consumed by the performance, the music lacks the culture of the workshop : between writing and improvisation there is nothing besides the workshop. Perhaps this is also one of the reasons for acousmatics to be gradually entering onto stage, or at least for some of their methods, their desire, more and more frequent, to improvise, to try it, to go to the motif (time, the audience's attention, the space's noise).

The fact is that improvisation is living folklore...from here to say: « yes but you have to be born in it to understand ». And yet there is the desire for non-idiom, the desire for something universal (a universal folklore)- a western desire... Reminder : wasn't the "epoché" supposed to be a way of listening "which would be, if possible, accessible to every hearing person". Then what would avant-garde folklore be ? Quite simply, folklore which is alive...and perhaps folklore which is alive is precisely the kind which generates its own people...Where is it? ...With those who are making it exist, quite simply - on the brink of a sectarian break-down...

But surely there is a difference between the presence of idiom and the absence of idiom : on the one hand, we believe in strong communality through music and/or in universality because of this communality...;

On the other hand, we believe that an opening to universality is possible from the start, within the music itself (through music). In either case, it is about tending towards something, a utopia (1- on the right ? community, 2-in the centre ? universal through communitarianism, 3- on the left ? purely universal) and this tension can be a driving force for music.

There is also a difference between the absence of idiom and the non-idiom. In the non-idiom there is something of a “meta-idiom”, the “idiom of the idiom” etc. and it would be one, nonetheless - in which, for example, we could not be born...a way of considering all music as matter

(perhaps this is where we can find the ‘epoché’, no longer applied to sound nor form, but precisely on an idiomatic level) in other words : a true utopia (concerning the use of NON, the non-disciplines- non-philosophy, non-art, François Laruelle’s non-philosophical books demonstrate the complexity of the NON as a prefix.)

Do we recognise Husserl ? « But with the fracturing of naivety by the changing of the transcendental-phenomenological attitude, an important change has come about, important for psychology itself. As a phenomenologist, I can of course at any given moment, revert to the natural attitude, to the simple fulfilment of my vital interests, theoretical or otherwise; I can, as before, act as a father, a citizen, a civil servant, a “good European”, etc precisely as a man in all my humanity, in my world. Just like before - and yet not quite like before. Because the former naivety, I can no longer reach, I can only understand it. My views and transcendental visions have quite simply become outdated and yet remain my own views and visions.” ...

Memory of a woman who, after having been to an acousmatic concert for the first time, said to me “there is something moving about having nothing to see, just hearing, just listening, feeling the sounds coming towards you without having to worry about where they’re coming from and what or who is producing them”.

To be able to speak of music as Gilles Grelet speaks of thought :

“[...] Begin by putting aside all content (quantitative or qualitative), for not only does it not approach the question of thought (the opposite is not true : thought does approach content - factual or existential truths), but also, especially if it is desubjectifying, as is overwhelmingly the case today, content prevents the question being asked as a pure question of form.

That thought is a question of form and not (primarily) a question of content, is to suggest that there is a realness which can not be summed up by reality, but which insists on it in as much as thought, as the requirement of a last moral resort (in other words over and above utility and beyond ethics) is working on it.”

Despite the stage and yet thanks to the stage, improvisation helps first of all to understand this necessity, but before this, could also bring all music to be confronted by it.

II – Improvising/ Composing (with loud speakers) To André Almurô

The materiality of the sound unit, of the means of recording, of the cabling, and to finish the loud-speakers’ membrane, can in the end be mingled into a sort of perception cluster (where materiality= soundprint).

- The imprint of the sound unit: instruments, objects, various electronic set-ups and electricity itself as a sort of sound unit.
- The imprint of the means of recording (itself an imprint) : its technical texture (various tapes, CD, computer etc)
- The imprint of the cabling, its level of transparency (meaning non-transparency).

- The imprint of the loudspeaker's membrane : what it is made from, its size, its position, its orientation, (in short its location and all its capacities)

[Joe Colley, waste of songs, psychic stress soundtracks, desperate attempts at beauty]

For improvisers, the success of membranes as sound units (an otherwise string?) of metal plates, of friction, and of various electronic set-ups...no doubt also comes from this. (as well as the fact that the person producing the given sounds likes them-a question of taste...)

This success also comes from the simple fact that the sound actually heard, is produced by a membrane and by electricity, a vibrating surface, variation in tension, looping the loop of causality, and throwing our listening into array as far as the location of the vibration's source is concerned : making the electronic set-up plausible- that its presence in this given moment be "heard". In fact, this is the problem that arises concerning improvisation with loud-speakers-as though we were used to watching (so-called) live performances on a cinema screen. Moving towards a perceptive unification (symbolic and phenomenological) of the sound production system?

The fact is that there is not one sound to be diffused there is a whole system of sound production. Creating a true sound diffusion system, in other words a system of non-diffusion. Technicality is never transparent for the intelligence of our ears, even less so than we think!

So ... Playing an instrument often consists in creating disturbances- or at least trying to. Disturbances? ... for example, concerning where a sound may be coming from. How a sound, that is just able(not too much, nor too little) to fill the room, can disguise its spatial origin...how sounds hide behind each other, to in the end artificially (but is it not always?) resemble an acousmatic situation etc. but also concerning its "nature" (=its cause ?)...

If, within the composer's set-up, the loud speaker along with all other technical intervention lead to confusion in the perception of causality_(and its claimed consideration) – in other words leads to the disappearance of the eye's role in musical attention (acousmatics) – or of speculation in the true sense of the word- on the other hand, it introduces to music something with which music has never truly been confronted : representation and realism (representation of that which is not here – image- as well as the representation of sound itself- let's say : an advancement?)

The eternal out-pouring of the triviality of our world, of its objects, the eclectic procession of utensils, characters, landscapes, "scenes", reports, imprints, cars, coffee-cups etc. has burst into and not yet-finished its invasion of music, without ever a shadow of the doubt aroused in painting concerning this form of representation being able to peep its nose around the corner...(shall we say a regression?). The tenacious separation of film music/sound-track speaks a lot for the backwardness in this so-called "music" – its actual possibilities- see/hear/listen to a few examples to give us an idea of what this "music" could be : Prénom Carmen (Godard); Mother and son (Soukourov); Stalker (Tarkovsky) or more recently Battle in Heaven (Reygadas), I don't want to sleep alone (Tsai Ming-Liang)...

A remark concerning the representation of sound- its absence...the example of reverberation: a “touch of reverb » is enough to send what is happening in the loud-speakers, the membrane’s vibration, back to an imaginary “somewhere”, often quite useless. This effect – this “touch”- is enough to distance the sound phenomenon, to make it absent, to send it into a virtual spatiality, despite being heard here and now. We suddenly jump therefore, from what is happening here (a present phenomenon) to a representation, to what is an image, even though we do not exactly know what it is an image of...and all the more so if we do know what...Reverberation in itself is not a problem : the problem is that too much (through habit? the easy option?) can lead the ear to question the degree of reality of all this-an often useless question-a useless dead-end (without mentioning the irresolvable conflict between this particular reverb, this imaginary space, and the very real space of the performance space, with its own reverberation.

Il y a, présent dans l’écoute, une attention particulière portée au réalisme du phénomène lui-même — une question de survie : quoi de plus important pour un corps que de savoir si ce qui lui arrive du dehors est vrai ou faux (et bien sûr quoi de plus excitant que de le mener en bateau). Les implications esthétiques de cette attention sont (apparemment) paradoxales : plus le son est plausible (comme représentation) moins la technique l’est, moins l’ensemble de ce qui est senti est présent (entraînant le dispositif tout entier dans un retrait de la réalité, un retrait d’un phénomène à son image).

In listening, particular attention is given to the realism of the phenomenon itself- it’s a question of survival : what could be more important for our body than to know whether that which is affecting it from the outside world is real or not (and of course, what could be more exciting than to trick it). The aesthetic implications of this attention are (apparently) paradoxical : the more plausible the sound is as a representation, the less the technique is, the less everything that is felt is present (leading the entire set-up into a withdrawal from reality, the withdrawal of a phenomenon into its image).

Celibidache : “[...]Discs kill musical consciousness. The conscience of tempo is the ability to react spontaneously to a richness which is different every time. The tempo, justified by the original acoustics, becomes physical data when you listen to it in your own surroundings, and loses all musical justification. Discs remain dead-letters. They can never be music. Discs un-learn the capacity to be interested in that which changes, each time. They kill spontaneity, they kill our ears, and in the long term, musical consciousness. Discs have nothing to do with art or music. Disc culture is a culture of non-music. [...] Sound can only be lived and experienced within its original space.”

Apparently, to be sure of being heard clearly in the present moment, in other words, so that the sound can be ‘held’ in the present (as we can say of a sculpture ‘it holds itself up’), we must be careful not to resemble that which could have been recorded, that’s to say, that which comes from elsewhere. Even more so, we need to begin thinking about the very presence of loud-speakers. In amongst our listening habits there lies the persistent idea of what a sound should be (including and above all synthesised) contrary to all evidence of what happens precisely when electricity and sound go together without the need for representation. What is a sound? Not even a musical sound or a beautiful sound, no: just a sound. That is what should be underlying. When the usage (the rule) means that a synthesised sound should imitate the structure of a sound which is not synthesised, even and especially if it is not in the image of something, the diktat is something like the compulsory contour ...As though what is being played out once again, being displaced to the (non?) nature of acoustic phenomena, is what was at stake a long time ago, about the opposition of sound/noise.

DETOUR – formalism and formalism. There are many kinds of formalisms (at least 3 different ones concerning their aesthetic suppositions.) “That’s formalism” can mean (going from the simplest to the most complex) :

1 – (pejorative ?) « it’s just a form and that’s all...it doesn’t express anything and anyway, it’s just the result that counts...”

2- The art (science ?) of form, or the blind application of formal principles leading to newness by replacing the face-to-face with decision making, instead of choosing objects, inventing principles (choosing them), principles which chose for us this or that...

3 – finally, historic formalism as defined by Greenberg (nothing in a work of art which is not absolutely essential to the medium, a sort of Ockham’s razor for artists-a sort of reduction). According to Clement Greenberg,

« The essence of Modernism lies, as I see it, in the use of characteristic methods of a discipline to criticize the discipline itself, not in order to subvert it but in order to entrench it more firmly in its area of competence.[...] It was the stressing of the ineluctable flatness of the surface that remained, however, more fundamental than anything else to the processes by which pictorial art criticized and defined itself under Modernism. For flatness alone was unique and exclusive to pictorial art. The enclosing shape of the picture was a limiting condition, or norm, that was shared with the art of the theater; color was a norm and a means shared not only with the theater, but also with sculpture. Because flatness was the only condition painting shared with no other art, Modernist painting oriented itself to flatness as it did to nothing else. »

If this reduction concerning the medium has for a long time been considered a synonym for modernity, even avant-garde (and leading also, despite it all, to the questioning of our framework) practices have not been defined by the medium for a long time. And yet, this reduction through the logic of the medium remains a prerequisite, an access, a peep-hole through which everything becomes visible, listenable and possible – the test one must pass so that the form remains and that representation (what’s left of it if there is still one) may not/ no longer be a dead letter or image.

Is the loud-speaker still a monitor for something ?

Precisely... when it is not at all, perhaps something is happening in the present moment. However, when it is absolutely a monitor for something, when the loud-speaker is the witness of something mysterious, obscured from eye and ear, that our listening may reside in the present moment (installation, interaction etc). Feedback (and all looping of machines into themselves) as a way of inscribing the loud-speaker and technicality into the present (and therefore the space) as a self-auscultation of the machine.

The indexation of an instant operates by establishing unstable systems, risky positions, extreme postures... music becomes a sound signature for a physical/mechanical/computerised set-up. It becomes a form of interaction, whatever that form may be. By unifying temporalities, by clearly constructing a duration, a servomechanism, besides the perception of how it works, it is also intuitively accepted as the proof that something is truly happening in this moment (feed-back as level 0 of the

servomechanism). The loud-speaker is also a machine and what's more, the microphone is a loud-speaker inside out.

RETURN- on guard/ apnea (instant/ duration). And "mixed" music in all of this? Something does not work when in a live concert the loud-speakers are there purely to diffuse the sound whose medium, whatever it may be, is intangible, and for whose temporality the present moment remains obscure... Our attention refuses (and more than that even) to overlay two profoundly different temporalities when they are presented as being identical, not to say mingled (the risk taken by the improviser who starts diffusing sound). The ear is apparently very sensitive to this sort of problem-a very dirty little trick...-which is the reason for all the effort to progressively transform "mixed" into "interactive" ... Remains to be seen! Could it be just a way of avoiding the problem, a way of not confronting the question, when we know very well that it will have to be confronted it at some stage. Or else, we should talk about having a true dialogue with the machine.

Concretely : either we play precisely on the differing temporalities, or we miss the point (and the theme of the material doesn't change anything : "everything is material... a recording is a material like any other"- "well...no. Precisely. It's not material like any other, and nothing is material 'like any other', always be very cautious when handling this material stuff- far too quickly dismissed"), we miss the point therefore, or rather we force listening, we impose on it the most ridiculous effort that exists (for it) : an impossible confusion between the present moment, and a dive into the texture of a duration previously inscribed that nothing can modify (that of cinema for example) ; between being on the alert, on guard (anything can happen (to me)), and being in apnea (nothing can happen (to me)). In brief, the question of survival emerges in a confusion which is atrocious for the ear.

Should the spectator's body be on guard for an: "anything can happen"; or should it on the contrary plunge itself into a predetermined duration, a real techno-biological parenthesis during which the zero- risk factor from the point of view (point of ear) of animal survival in its habitat makes a certain relaxation possible, a (large) specific opening.

Could no apnea be possible without falsehood (even the decision – concerning the maximum risk that being in apnea supposes – to secure the milieu). Whereas apparently, being on guard imposes itself as soon as necessary... it is always a question of survival. Something prevents us from being truly in apnea and truly on guard at the one time, except in certain extreme circumstances when apnea becomes on guard and vice versa. Only when driven to extremes.

But each situation allows the possibility, more or less adequately, for us to be on guard (paranoia) or in apnea (schizophrenia). And not only for the listener or the audience : when doing a solo the problem inevitably arises, and ...taken literally, (apnea : a-pnea : without breath= without breathing : in one go, etc)

Being solo with a wind instrument, the problem invariably arises (and here we can see that a metaphor is not always a metaphor) : how can one be in apnea and at the same time breathing all the time...how can one construct a duration which is not that, trivial (and off-putting), of breathing itself, and further on, being on guard, watching out for the presence of holes to breathe in the thickness of the given sound (survival-paranoia) – for the audience and the musician, a sort of "being on guard" is imposed by the music itself- by its

production method-whereas everything is leading towards apnea : thus circular breathing from many soloists.

Being able to say of a musician what François Laruelle says of intellectuals :

“It is from the depths of immanence that the future emerges, and not from the heights of transcendence. Obviously, everything urges us to be in action, to short-circuit thinking in order to act, or to transform thinking into action. One could think that the intellectual I am describing takes their time. But that’s not quite it, because it is not a question of unitary temporality. They take time backwards and give it.”

Hypothesis : if we name authority the body (thinking) that is the source of the music (the composer, improviser etc), it seems that the more local the authority is, the more the ear will be lead to be on its guard, and conversely the more the authority is non-local, the more the ear will have a tendency to plunge into apnea over time – the perception of this. We can see here the ambiguous yet crucial position of the loud-speaker...