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Florence Lethurgez

Words on Words : Interviews with electroacoustic music composers about the written presentation of their works

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Abstract

From the fifties, electroacoustic music works as contemporary music in general, come with presentation notes introducing and giving listening keys, for specific listeners, expert or neophyte, prepared or fragile.

They are recorded on concert programs as on the discographic booklets and may be written by musicologists as by the composers themselves. It is the latter that interests us here, writing becoming a kind of subtle mirror of the work, the words to "tell the music" to listeners, categories from which the compositional "being" and "making" are expressed : more particularly intentions and writing processes.

After analyzing a corpus of electroacoustic composers program notes at the EMS Network 2014, in order to update most often used processes and discursive fields, more particularly for conceptualizing the aesthetics of sound as well as to address the listener, this time we focus on the analysis of interviews with a sample of electroacoustic music composers.

According to the specific sociology "comprehensive" approach, the analysis of the interviews allows to build a typology linking the writing practices of these texts to the universe of meaning that composers combine with them.

The typology obtained allows to clearly distinguish two subgroups: exclusive versus occasional composers of electroacoustic music. The exclusivity of practice makes electroacoustic music composers more sensitive, if not in a specific way, to metalanguage and listening questions, more particularly during the interview where they are asked to have a "word on their word " to have a reflective look at the words they involve to present their music.

From a spoken word to a written word, from an interview situation to a communicative situation, from an artificial framework to a natural framework, the reflexive work of the composer reveals the principles and tensions by which he is led to theorize all practices that revolve around the creation, including ones more "external" to the compositional act.

We thus hypothesize that this practice and comments composers make, build up a renewed prism analysis of issues related to the field of music creation and more particularly to electroacoustic music.

Introduction

Electroacoustic music works as contemporary music in general, are, from the fifties, accompanied by presentation notes responsible for introducing them to specialized audiences or neophytes, armed or fragile, in that, opportunities to meet this music are actually exceptional¹.

This documentation has natural places such as the concert hall or the home of the listener, and supports, the hall program, the discography booklet and more and more often institutions, musical events or composers web sites.

They allow us to observe a rather paradoxical situation of communication, in which the same message, designed to qualify a work, to reduce its "unknowable" part, addresses the conquered audience or to conquer, seeking to consolidate here, to build there, a relationship between the protagonists of a "communication channel" specific to a musical world.

Selections assumed by a "great listener" are candidates to become references for the ear, by virtue of a social idea of the practice of music loving based on an instrumented report in a rational and progressive way. The categories mobilized in a way that owes nothing to chance, draw their symbolic force from the expertise and legitimacy of the word of their writer. What he chooses to write about the work is the sedimented and recurring elements from which builds the discourse on music, referring to what is considered as its "essence". The status of the listening framing words is thus particularly well set.

My work on this category of texts is part of a broader research program on the development of discursive forms of contemporary music mediation, as well as the critical text and its reception effects².

The special case of electroacoustic music offers a specific point of observation for many reasons: originality of the work environment, shapes and broadcast spaces, special role of technology and media, new opportunities of digital, non-stabilized directory, diversity without schools, works stretching out towards non listening, loss of the usual references

1 Pierre-Michel Menger, «Le Public de la musique contemporaine», Jean-Jacques Nattiez (dir.), *Musiques : une encyclopédie pour le XXI^e siècle*, vol. I, *Musiques du XX^e siècle*, Le Méjan, Actes Sud/Paris, Cité de la musique, 2003, p. 1180.

2 Florence Lethurgez, «Écrire et communiquer sur son œuvre : les notes de programme du concert de musique contemporaine», *Comparatismes en Sorbonne, Écrire (sur) la musique : qui dit quoi ?* Paris, Mai 2014, http://www.crlc.paris-sorbonne.fr/pdf_revue/revue5/9_LETHURGEZ.pdf.

- «Les métaphores dans les notes de présentation des œuvres contemporaines : un outil de communication avec les publics?», *Métaphore et musique*, PUR (Presses universitaires de Rennes), 2015, pp 77-102.

- «La réception de Claude Debussy au 20^e siècle à travers le prisme de la critique commémorative», *Genres et formes de la critique musicale au XX^e siècle. Explorations poétiques, historiques et analytiques*, Université de Besançon, 6-7 novembre 2014, PUR (Presses universitaires de Rennes), acts to be published.

- «Le livre sur le disque: Richard Millet, Pierre Gervasoni et la musique contemporaine», *Le technicien et l'écrivain. Questionner la légitimité des figures de la critique musicale du 20^e siècle à nos jours*. Université Paris-Sorbonne, Salle des actes, 22 janvier 2015, PUR (Presses universitaires de Rennes), acts to be published.

that are the instruments, performers and scoring, between a mix of research and creation, displacement of the very notion of music, etc.

This documentation can be written by musicologists as by the composers themselves. It is the latter that interests us here for a reason other than that of the domination of the composer in Western music.

Indeed, the composer of electroacoustic music appears as a central actor in a musical world in recomposition, allowing listening thus to the listener a new and decisive importance³. The composer, erected to the rank of a communication expert on his work, becomes what we call, an "artist of his word", able to open a space of interlocution, mobilizing natural language to describe his intentions, paths and writing processes while being particularly attentive to the listening of his work⁴. The superposition of communication issues and creation is thus particularly noticeable.

The composer, we shall see, complies with the social representations he has of this exercise and more broadly with the representations he has of his own word and the relationship it must maintain with its practice, the overall environment that makes it possible (institutional, technical, aesthetic ...) and audiences.

The exercise which is requested in the core of this small space is complex. He can spread out a minimal or flamboyant speech with various communicative intentions (descriptive as well as expressive, explanatory, analytical or argumentative), revealing, according to the dimensions and ways he chooses to focus, trends, giving rise to a typological treatment and under social logic.

He must now be a theorist and have an expert speech on his work and on that of his models and peers⁵. In fact, the general communication system is coupled with an implicit address to peers during which he must be answerable of his compositional practice, to adopt a definite position regarding himself as a critical object to evaluate⁶. The written presentation of his work, often inserted in an overall programming, is for the composer a place of tension between a logic of assignment to a collective group, models and singular logic suitable to reflection, to self definition. He is indeed the subject of a well located word, a speech.

We thus assume that this new record is a sociologically significant prism for understanding the evolution of the figure of the composer. However, the records are not questioned for themselves, just as extra documentation by a musicology sensitive to questions of analysis. Therefore, it becomes necessary to understand how the logical use

3 Stéphane Bigot, «Les lieux d'écoute de la musique contemporaine : espaces de diffusion et de sensibilisation», *ATALA Cultures et sciences humaines* n° 16, «Sensibiliser à l'art contemporain?», 2013, pp.137-153, [en ligne], <http://www.lycee-chateaubriand.fr/cru-atala/publications/ATALA16/bigot16.pdf>.

4 Omer Corlaix, «La critique plurielle pour l'âge des possibles», Entretien avec Corinne Schneider, juillet 1996, François Nicolas (dir.), *Les enjeux du concert de musique contemporaine*, Centre de documentation de la musique contemporaine (CDMC)/Montpellier, Entretemps, 1997, p. 52.

5 Rémy Campos & Nicolas Donin (dir.), *L'Analyse musicale, une pratique et son histoire*, Genève, HEM/Conservatoire de Genève/Droz, 2009. In this book new and tight links appear and are analyzed between composition and musical analysis, from the early 20th century.

6 Pierre Boulez, «Domaine Musical», *Bulletin international de musique contemporaine*, n°1, Paris, 1954, pp. 1-11 : «L'activité critique d'un créateur est indissociable de sa propre création.» ("The critical activity of a creator is inseparable from his own creation." I translate)

of records are redefined by the electroacoustic composers from this time the comments that composers can have on their own work and that seeks the sociological interview.

The composer's voice is a toll so rich that even in a small sample it can introduce the perspective of sociology, communication and musicology.

Reminder *Electroacoustic Music Studies Network 2014*

The first empirical part of our work, presented at the EMS 2014, relied on the analysis of a corpus of records of works written in 1985 and registered in the *Documentation Center of Contemporary Music* in Paris, in any case, to identify a discourse system specific of electroacoustic music⁷.

An overall reading of a large number of records has revealed the relevant entry points in the works specific to these notices, processes and discursive fields most often used to conceptualize the aesthetics of sound and address the listener.

It is characterized by compositional purposes regarded as problems that the work has sought to solve. Tensions which the composer faces, are reduced to questions of perception on the one hand and to composition on the other. The description focuses on the dynamics of the perceived sound phenomenon, according to an *ad hoc* lexicon in charge of indexing sound reality in a specific, shared and sustainable way. Clarification is made between concrete sound, the starting material, and treatment, which is often represented as an a priori unlimited extensions possible through the technical device. The sound objects, localized in space, maintain new relationships entered by new metaphors and synaesthesia. The body of the listener is driven by the energy of a sensory experience that runs through it and which corresponds metaphorically to crossing the membrane of the speaker. Finally, the subject oscillates between detail and totality, in order to promote a synthetic as well as an analytical understanding of the work.

The year 1985 marks the end of a period favorable to electroacoustic music in terms of using public policies⁸, articulating, in an original way, music and research, all the more interesting according to our research as it recognizes the identity complexity of this music. The displacement of aid from the composers to work environment, studios and research centers rather than placing a single order, also questions the traditional individualistic conception attached to the figure of the creator⁹.

7 "Read music at the concert: program notes of electroacoustic music composers", EMS14 (Electroacoustic studies network), *Electroacoustic Music Beyond Concert Performance*, Universität der Künste, Berlin, juin 2014, <http://www.ems-network.org/IMG/pdf EMS14 lethurgez.pdf>.

8 Especially with Maurice Fleuret. Cf. Anne Veitl, *Politiques de la musique contemporaine : le compositeur, la «recherche musicale» et l'État en France de 1958 à 1991*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1997 ; Noémi Duchemin & Anne Veitl, *Maurice Fleuret: une politique démocratique de la musique, 1981-1986*, Paris, La Documentation française, «Travaux et documents», 2000.

9 Stéphane Bigot, *op. cit.*, p.149 ; Hyacinthe Ravet, «Les nouvelles frontières du métier de compositeur», *Composer au XXI^e siècle: processus et philosophies*, actes du colloque de l'Observatoire international de la création et des cultures musicales (OICCM), Faculté de musique, Université de Montréal, 28 février au 3 mars 2007.

About ten electroacoustic music composers interviewed by us in 2013 actually composed and filed that year a work with its notice, allowing us if necessary to confront practice to its retrospective commentary¹⁰.

This retrospective vision is even more interesting that the electroacoustic music composers were confronted, from the 90s to a withdrawal of the Government, to critical factors such as the democratization of digital tools, the crisis of the records and programming, questioning all the more acutely the relationship between creation and broadcasting.

A biographical dimension necessarily underlines the comments of composers, mostly belonging to generations that experienced both periods, characteristic of composers accustomed to experience collective work situations, and therefore prone to interweave their own story in a general history of electroacoustic music or even in that of contemporary music.

Survey Results

1. Exclusive composers *versus* non exclusive electroacoustic music composers

Electroacoustic music exclusive composers write out the notice as an exchange forum with the auditor about the musical object, of which perceptual criteria become determinant. The exercise is to move from the idea, the concept commanding the sound aesthetics, to the perceptible thing. The speech is relevant if it provides a perceptual work input in order to allow the listener to grasp its sensible qualities.

The composers build a figure both ideal and concrete, as if records were written since the very act of listening¹¹, as the composer represents it and manages to put into words. Ideal, we shall see, in that the general scheme linking all the protagonists is that of duty, obligation; concrete in that composers develop a cognitive model of their music based on the living body experience¹². The auditor who is approached by the composer is a macro listener, minus the sum of all the existing auditors, rather than an universal subject considered in all its dimensions: physical, existential, moral, aesthetic, etc.

10 Especially F. Bayle, B. Cavanna, P. Criton, B. Ferreyra, A. Fourchette, C. Mioreanu, G. Racot, J.-C. Risset, D. Terrugi. The interviews have not yet being fully transcribed nor have they been validated by the composers, hence I have not given them as verbatim examples.

11 To quote the title of the Marcelle Guertin' contribution, «Les sens de l'œuvre musicale contemporaine depuis l'acte d'audition», *Contrechamp : Composition et perception*, pp.75-84.

12 Grazia Giacco, «Musique et métaphores spatiales», *L'Enveloppe. Lettre d'information et d'analyse de musique contemporaine*, mars 2001, p. 7.
http://www.lenveloppe.fr/cms/documenti/ARTICLES/musique_et_metaphores.pdf

Metalinguage established by the composer, in close continuity between do, say and hear, reports the vocabulary in charge of indexing the sound entities to referents related to the perception of the listener¹³. The composer's words must thus be the link through which unification specific to electroacoustic music of compositional modes and listening are established¹⁴. Art, craft, in one gesture, seizes this new set¹⁵. We have to understand the meaning of the quest of unity between the composition, the commentary and the listening.

A reversal of perspective is performed, making the listening, some kind of listening, the purpose, and the work, some kind of work, a consequence.

The pace is one of giving and counter-giving. The composer must offer a credible experience to the listener and the last must be actively engaged in listening. His perception, linked to body experience, submit music to a verification requirement that the composer seeks to translate into verbal statements. This duty of composition and speech from listening becomes the composer's responsibility as the consequence of the upheaval of the usual ways of organizing the broadcasting of music¹⁶.

On his side, the auditor must convert to music basically "interpellative" which requires active, willful, demanding, deep and personal listening¹⁷, the notice being considered as the Ariadne's link from the listener to the common world¹⁸. The work of listening, is

13 Michel Chion & Guy Reibel, *La musique électroacoustique*, INA-GRM/Edisud, p. 293 : «*Il faudra que l'image acoustique occupe l'espace constaté.*» ("The acoustic image must occupy the experienced (found) space." I traduce)

14 Michel Chion, *La musique concrète, art des sons fixés*, Entre-deux, 2009, p. 24. The author evokes "the to-ing and fro-ing between doing and hearing" («*va et vient faire-entendre*», I traduce), and the close link between musical thinking and listening mode.

15 As shown by the title of François Bayle's text : *L'image de son, technique de mon écoute*, *Klangbilder* (Imke Misch-Ch.v. Blumröder/Lit Verlag, Münster, 2003), quoted by Gaël Tissot, «*La musique électroacoustique de François Bayle : un éclairage par la métaphore visuelle*», *EMS08 - Electroacoustic Music Studies Network International Conference, Paris, 3-7 juin 2008*, Paris, INA-GRM et Université Paris-Sorbonne (MINT-OMF). <http://www.ems-network.org/ems08/papers/tissot.pdf>

16 Michel Chion & Guy Reibel, *La musique électroacoustique, op. cit.*, p.290 : «*[La musique électroacoustique] bouleverse la façon d'aborder la question du contact musique-auditoire*» ("The electroacoustic music] changes completely the way of approaching the question of contact between music and audience." I traduce).

17 Françoise Barrière described at length whatever requires listening to this music : «*La musique électroacoustique exige de celui qui l'écoute aujourd'hui (...) un effort de concentration, un état de réception active. Elle demande à l'auditeur de faire la synthèse de ce qu'il entend au moment où il l'entend avec ce qui subsiste dans sa mémoire de ce qu'il a écouté avant. Porté par une concentration qui ne peut pas se contenter d'être superficielle, l'écouteur accueille la musique électroacoustique en la faisant voyager à travers les espaces de sa sensibilité, de son intelligence, de sa vie psychologique, de son monde affectif, de son jardin secret, de son imaginaire.*» ("Electroacoustic music requires from today's the listener (...) an effort of concentration, a state of active reception. She asks the listener to synthesize what he hears when he hearsit with what remains in his memory of what he has heard before. Carried by a concentration that can not just be superficial, the listener receives electroacoustic music by making it travel through the spaces of his sensitivity, his intelligence, his psychological life, his emotional world, his secret garden, his imagination." I traduce), «*Qui écoute et qu'écoute-t-il?*», Académie IML Bourges, *Les relations diverses entre celui qui fait la musique électroacoustique et celui qui l'écoute*, Actes des travaux 2002-2003, Mai 2007, p. 27.

18 It refers to the ascetic test of "withdrawal", intended for deconstruct certainties, as expressed by Michel Chion and Guy Reibel : «*La musique des haut-parleurs semble couper le fil entre les auditeurs, qu'elle*

defined as a response, consent, acceptance, the composer renders carefully. It is defined as potentiality, echoing the potential offered by technology, capable of not reducing those contained in the work.

The relationship between the composer and the listener, a dual relationship of reference and reverence, during a practice obeying a new ritual, where everyone recognizes what he brings to the other and in which each one makes the experience possible: what listening brings to music on the one hand and what music brings to the auditor on the other hand. This one is not an externality but a decisive extension of the work. Creation and listening are unified in one inner experience through which the component and listening subject which consists in going beyond the apparent contradictions, especially between sensible and intelligible, as we noted here above about these records themselves.

Non-exclusive composers, if they invest concerns about the sensitive part of their music, do not perceive them on this general mode of duty, of gift, which explicitly requires from the composer and the listener an agreement of such a requirement.

Thus the analysis of interview data allows, at first, to observe the theories of composers' own hearing. These tint, in a transversal way, with no clear dividing line, the three positions based on other criteria that we will now point out, including criteria of identity, and other questionings, more particularly on the status they give to their speech on music.

Composers articulate thus an approach to a role. Their word has the status of a speech, in which they are cautious to clarify the position, the purpose and mode.

2. Second Typology : a link identity

In this second typology, for which the axis exclusiveness *versus* non-exclusiveness of the electroacoustic composition is no longer valid, the question of the identity of composers receives a particular configuration in that it defined itself as a link identity. The composer defines himself as "I" in relation to a "you" or including himself as a "we" and as a subject defining himself by speech or by its absence, the first name becoming impersonal "it" working to define minimally a "that". Thus, the mobilization of pronouns which partly structures the typology defines the identity of the composer in terms of communicational link oriented or not significantly towards others¹⁹.

devrait apparemment unir et faire vibrer en commun : elle les isole au contraire et renvoie chacun face à lui-même, pour une écoute personnelle, dans sa propre "aventure intérieure" : elle s'écoute en solitaire, car elle n'offre aucun relais vers qui se projeter, s'incarner, comme c'était le cas avec les interprètes ; perpétuelle "symphonie pour un homme seul".» ("Speakers's music seems to cut the link between listeners that, apparently, it should unite and cause to vibrate together: it isolates them on the contrary and makes each person confront his or her own image, for private listening, in his own "Innerspace": it should be listened to alone, because it offers no relay toward whom to project, to incarnate, as was the case with the interpreters; perpetual 'symphony for a lonely man'." I traduce), La musique électroacoustique, op. cit., p.289.

19 According to the comprehensive approach developed by sociologists Max Weber, Alfred Schütz, George Herbert Mead, etc. The analysis here is attentive to observe how the categories making sense for the actors are located within the frame of a narrative, either retrospective or focused on the moment, which, therefore, are not of the same nature.

One type, articulated in "I" versus "you" is the composer-communicator, which we will call the "voice of his master", as an image.

A second type, articulated in "he" versus "that" represents the composer-mute, which we will call the "voice of silence", as a picture.

A third type, articulated in "I" included in "we" is the composer-experimenter (and non experimental), which we will call "the middle-voice".

If the first two positions are opposed from speaking to silence, the third is an attempt to go beyond this duality.

Position 1: the composer-communicator or "the voice of his master"

The composer's record core is both to develop a speech concerning first person identity and a planned speech to be interlocutory, addressed to "you" or rather a "you" corresponding to the sociation still uncertain being the public. He therefore writes in it, without really thinking of it necessarily, a "dialogical"²⁰ conception specific to tonal music and its historically stable rhetoric.

This dialogue is structured by the implicit form of question and answer game. The notice is upstream the public work relationship, and aims an open meeting which questions the work necessarily responded to. The composer, opening this rhetorical space thanks to the notice, wishes above all to be understood.

Being a good communicator of his own work is an obligation of competence and of his own responsibility. He must know what must be indexed in the work to make sense to the listener, to develop abstract and intelligible speech able to structure the concrete situation of broadcasting, to put words on the complex path leading to the work, etc...

A judgment is then focused on the nature of the composer's relevant word. A coherent link is assumed between verbalization and musical occurrences to meet the expectations of the protagonists, composing music on the one hand and receiving it on the other.

The writing of the notice is seen as a period in which the composers contribute to the crystallization of common sense, which optimizes the transmission of information on their work. This raises the question of the nature of common knowledge which socially and culturally makes possible aesthetic experience conveyed through speech.

In the specific case of electroacoustic music, composers seek to establish an ad hoc meta-language, shareable by all interlocutors of the communication channel, due to the lack of the traditional components of the musical system that manages to balance actual listening and typological abstraction. They, then, refer to the work of Pierre Schaeffer at the *Groupe de Recherches Musicales* (Musical Research Group) in 1948, in the *Treaty of musical objects*²¹, establishing a common vocabulary, a "general *solfeggio*", dedicated to the "sound object". The latter is localizable in a three dimensional space and grasped in

20 In reference to the « dialogic » principle established by Maurice Bakhtine, *Esthétique et théorie du roman*, Paris, Gallimard, 1978.

21 Pierre Schaeffer, *Traité des objets musicaux*, Paris, Seuil, 1977 (First edition 1966).

its morphology. Thus, can solfeggio account for an aesthetic based on another conception of music.

The instrumental functions of modern information and communication are clearly mobilized. The composer wants to get through the fairest message and make it understandable to others, in terms of information; enhance his work and orient the listener favorably in terms of communication.

The composer sees the notice as a new space of communication permitting him not to "abandon" his work, to control not only the creation but also the listening. The moment of creation is sometimes described as critical, risky, that the word of the composer tries to compensate. The notice thus serves as a transitional object securely anchoring the work to the name of its author, which allows him to synthesize his scattered identities and get recognition from the public.

The composer thus guarantees a properly instrumented sense of listening. The work required from the auditor is to identify the specific properties of the work as they are covered by the word of the composer. To do so, the auditor recalls all past listenings. Hence the importance of common sense.

A paradoxical variant of the communicator type, and his concern for rational control of the communication channel, is the expressive composer. His writing, often literary, poetic, metaphorical is used to approach the sense of music yet regarded as "untranslatable". He paradoxically responds to this challenge by the concern he has to comment his work. In order to communicate authentically, the exercise to overcome a purely instrumental framework for transmitting information is to mobilize as many underlying meaningful inaccuracies by metaphorical language.

This is an ambiguous status logic under the modernist conception of an autonomy of the musical work opposite to language. The mediation of the composer's word is used to structure the musical experience with the memory of its historical links with the meaning, expression and subjectivity specific to the tone.

Position 2 : The composer-mute or "the voice of silence"

The notice, belonging to the nature of language, here is the subject of a normative judgment in which is questioned its status instance of meaning.

Composers who belong to this trend, negatively assess the capacity of notices to account and restore the reality of the musical phenomenon with listeners. They radically question the vernacular comment on the music, like a weight, that works carry around with them, both unnecessary and harmful in the information of the listening process.

They adopt as their own the issue of the presentation of a book on *Les enjeux du concert de musique contemporaine (The Challenges of Contemporary Music Concert)*²²: "Should we accompany the concert of prior discursive activity (ad text, program notes...) that elevates and thematizes in words the aim of the concert, which doubles its point by pinning categories involved in the works?"

22 *op. cit.*, Présentation, «Pour une nouvelle discipline : l'analyse musicale du concert», p. 5.

Language is a doubtful "shadow pattern" endowed with an irresistible power, powerful and illusory, to impede the ability to hear and understand the works for what they are. Composers are sensitive to the ambivalence of a word that has both the power to guide and to lose the listener. The language of notices overshadows the music, even though it serves to enlighten. Actually, the notice is given as a metaphor of the work it presents, rather a catachresis or improper speech, in which the musical work or referent is blurred or even dissolved. Language is only an imprecise palliative, a kind of replacement, mediation that could distort the relationship between listeners and the work.

The composers emphasize the pressure of concert organizers that require the writing of these texts. Now, the assiduous reading of program notes, added to the reputation of the composer, act as reception and prevent the public from listening to the music itself. The works become objects of "conferences", which replace them, while the purpose of music is precisely to bring something irreplaceable that could not be expressed otherwise²³.

Composers are reluctant to write notices on their own works. If they have to write, they adopt a minimalist discourse and submit it to ascetic conditions. The writing tries to be objective, impersonal, denotative, to reduce any ambiguity, any over-interpretation. The composers as well as their work break loose from the contact surface that represents the record. They speak in the third person, "he", an object exhibited from far, with a "that." If they are brought to deepen their speech, they favor a logic of identity that leads them to say that their work is "this and not that". They then expose the links of logic, the cause and effect relationships between the elements that constitute it, based on what the listener is supposed to know. The contents of the notice of the work concern the most material part, which concern the immanent sound qualities, its relationship to space and less its evocative power. Composers explicitly distance themselves from the subjectivist meaning approach and favor a logic of rational evidence.

The normative judgment may even be on the quality of works, inversely proportional to that of its instructions. A composer sent me, after our interview, an email in which he relates, taking to his account, the judgment of the writer Régis Debray on the speech of the composer, taken from his book *Dégagements (Clearances)*: "*The comment valuation especially in the 1950s and beyond, has left its mark, and the word of the New York critic on the expression "the less you-have to see, the more you-have to say" - could have resulted in side acoustic by a facetious "the less you get to hear, the more you'll have to read"... This raises the rating in the intelligentsia, but lowering the index of attendance in concert halls*²⁴."

On the contrary, a work of quality, has to have what Danielle Cohen-Levinas calls a "self-analytical value": "*The musical work would be operative, and therefore contemporary of that on which it operates, because it is to itself its own critical or exegetical*

23 Nicolas Vérin, «Quelles notes de programme pour la musique d'aujourd'hui?», *Le son et la voix*, Marie Thonon (dir.), MEI (Médiation et Information), n°8, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1998, pp. 69-82.

24 Régis Debray, «Méchant oreille», *Dégagements*, Paris, Gallimard, 2010, Folio 5316, p.251. I traduce.

*commentary*²⁵. This is a continuation of the ambitious enlightening project of listening by mere listening, specific to modernity, from Schoenberg's *Verein*²⁶.

This position, which turns out to be the most prescriptive, which evaluates both the word and the work, presents a natural concern for actors involved in the development of the value scale and aesthetic judgment as the composers can be. It is for us to integrate these normative elements to our analysis, without relay, to observe precisely in what way the actors seize them in this situation, otherwise we would contribute to produce unthought on a phenomenon belonging to the "musical reality" referred to.

These composers are part of a "naturalist" thought, as opposed to a "media" one, the musical experience owing all to the intrinsic strength of the work, which must be listened to only for what it is, an object existing in its own pure ontology, a given phenomenon, the musical experience owing nothing to its discursive mediations escort, semiotically non specific.

Position 3: The composer-experimenter or "the voice of the middle"

This is an emerging position, probably related to a new figure of the composer, more elusive than the previous two in that it articulates positions and concerns both wider and diverse.

The composer, sensitive to the complexity and heterogeneity that governs the act of composing²⁷, reveals himself as particularly "reflexive" and wonders, like a sociologist, about his position, as an individual actor, within the collective represented by the musical world to which he belongs, itself inserted in a particular socio-historical context.

Particular awareness of a tension between the individual and the collective is expressed in this position, "I" versus "we" rather than "you", because the situation of writing a notice inserts a singular contribution in an overall programming, in a necessarily collective broadcast protocol. It exacerbates the paradox of under implicit pressure of a musical institution assuming notice performance, depositing a sense supposedly common, even as what is being build and partly at stake, is the individual value of the composer²⁸ by putting in words the originality of his work and of his approach. This

25 Danielle Cohen-Lévinas (dir), *La création après la musique contemporaine*, L'Harmattan (l'itinéraire), coll. «Musique et musicologie-Les dialogues», 1999, p 11. I traduce.

26 Nicolas Donin, «Le travail de la répétition : deux dispositifs d'écoute et deux époques de la reproductibilité musicale, du premier au second après-guerre», *Circuit : musiques contemporaines*, vol. 14, n° 1, 2003, pp. 53-86, <http://id.erudit.org/iderudit/902301ar>

27 «On voit que la mise en chantier d'un travail musical obéit à toute une série de mobiles complexes et de niveaux très différents.» ("We see that the start of construction of a musical work follows a series of complex mobile and very different levels." I traduce), Chion & Reibel, *op. cit.*, «La composition expérimentale», p. 209.

28 «(...) le compositeur actuel commente ses œuvres sous forme de notes de programme ou autres écrits. Reste à expliciter la fonction de ces textes, qu'ils soient notes de programme, ou présentation, ou analyse de l'œuvre ou explications de techniques de composition ou prises de position esthétique. Sans soumettre ces différents genres de textes à un classement systématique, on peut en dégager quelques traits généraux qui s'imposent : le regard du compositeur est presque toujours conditionné par ses propres préoccupations de créateur à un moment donné. Qu'il s'exprime sur ses propres œuvres ou sur celles d'autrui, l'actualité est

position entails to go beyond this paradox, to start from the particular to reach the collective, society, and to experience a new link both aesthetic, communicative and social.

The experimentation of new devices must be the manifestation in act of the will to mingle communication and creation within the same open approach.

This approach expresses the desire to be consistent with the specificity of electroacoustic music, which involves reorganizing the components of a music different and that we must listen to differently. The electroacoustic music is not an evolution of music on a linear scale, but displaces the notions and representations of music itself, of work, of writing, of the artist, concert and auditor, recycles the relationships, the articulations, contact details and usual codes. In this new art, we should experiment new circuits in which the word of the composer on his work will intuitively have to find its way and place. Thus, no *a priori* is attached to its status, no predetermined functionality either, in continuity with the idea of a music both unprecedented and unpredictable.

The composer can then be cautious about his approach, mobilizing an argumentative speech aimed at socially sharing new musical experiences making sense within a global intention. He may, by his word, a word of conviction, challenge and invite the listener to react, to participate²⁹. To break with traditional ideas of the solitary artist and closed work, he does not defend an embodied design in his work by opposing others. For this, he does not directly focus his remarks on it but on new situations to which it gives the opportunity to participate.

He perceives the concert as a complex circuit, an open time-space, hybrid and decentralized, core of a new protagonists network. During a sharing of experience, they now co-build the interactive event, sensitive and open to the life of a musical event designed to link. The word of the composer is one element among others of a comprehensive process with a strong symbolic and relational value.

The melting pot of this emerging conception, distant as well as present, is the *Centre de recherche musicale* (musical research center) in which they were able to experience an artist's identity in collective, a porosity of functions and missions, directed at creating new social relations and practices, aesthetic, communicational and scientific³⁰.

celle de sa démarche individuelle.» ("(...) *The current composer comments his works with program notes and other writings. The function of these texts still needs to be explained, whether they be program notes, or presentation, or analysis of the work, or explanations of composition techniques, or taken aesthetic standpoint. Without subjecting these different kinds of texts to a systematic classification, we can identify some general traits that are needed: the vision of the composer is almost always conditioned by his own creative concerns at some point. He can talk about his own works or those of others, but the information is only that of his individual approach.*" I traduce), Jürg Stenzl, «Textes et contextes. Composition et perception», *Contrechamps* 10, L'âge d'homme, p. 128-139, 1989, p. 137.

29 «*Mais pour retenir l'attention du public de concert, il n'est pas obligatoire de l'appâter par un argument dramatique. Le public est d'abord sensible à la conviction d'un artiste ; s'il voit que ce dernier croit à ce qu'il fait, c'est-à-dire à une forme d'existence acousmatique de la musique se suffisant à elle-même, il sera mieux disposé à y croire lui-même.*» ("But to hold the attention of concert audience, it is not mandatory to lure it with a dramatic argument. The public is first sensitive to the conviction of an artist; if they see that he believes in what he does, that is to say to a form of acousmatic existence of music sufficient to itself, they will be more willing to believe it themselves." I traduce), Michel Chion, *La musique concrète : art des sons fixés*, op. cit., p.80.

30 Such as the *Experimental Music Group of Marseille* (GMEM) or the *Musical Research International Center of Nice* (CIRM). Their specifications, alongside the functions of production and diffusion, aims to "promote

A composer can move around the three positions regarding the status of his speech. Therefore these positions could be related to other characteristics like the compositionnal being and making, as we have already started doing between both exclusive *versus* non-exclusive electroacoustic music composers, and the duty to the listener.

Conclusion

Unlike interviews as media type, made of closed questions, of pre-categorizations closely articulated to an explicit problematic that the interviewee perhaps did not ask himself or did so too often, the semi-directif interview allows to observe thanks to what the problematics emerge among the actors themselves and to sort out specific typologies.

The goal of this analysis is to clarify a complex and dense field of research, using Max Weber's concept of "idealtyp" (a mind mapping), social logic magnified, in order to arrange a more relevant sample and to avoid prematurely reducing the results by creating preconceived interpretations.

The return on a certain practice of his word, is the opportunity for the composer, to reassess or to link his compositional thinking, questions of meaning of music and forms of communication with the listener, the process by which he establishes a relationship with the latter.

A response to a different word practice is a different conception of speech, which seems obvious however had to be verified and described. What seems to be less obvious is that it also structures the differences of electroacoustic music composers' figures and work creations considered successively as objects of dialogue, pure objects, and objects of experience.

If the size of our sample is not wide enough to create the usual socio-demographic characteristics, it permits, by the richness of its material, to observe, in the underlying biography resulting from the dynamics of the interview, the importance of the generation effect. Behind the diverse and changing main lines of direction unveiled, it is actually the generational belonging that structures the trend of the first positions passage among older composers, the third position among the younger composers.

This work is therefore a step and needs to be extended. Its purpose is to contribute understanding other figures from analysing wider and diversified corpuses. This preliminary Survey will require more methodical work to be carried out in the future. To have a balance view, it is essential that you make a comparison with composers of non electroacoustic music, in order to verify, if and how, this is in relation to the aesthetic concept of electroacoustic music. This Survey is particular to the situation in France. It would be interesting to compare it with both specific national traits, and also in an international context.

integration and hosting of young musicians; have the ability to provide vocational and continuing training", Specifications of the National Centers of Musical Creation, 2010, quoted by Bigot, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

The very point is to analyse natural situations and to be aware of the links between everything within them. These situations are a complex arrangement mixing various protagonists, aesthetic objects, the institutional, materialistic and symbolic system which makes it possible. From this small point of view, the notices, altogether develops a holistic electroacoustic musical world.

The analysis of these records and judgments they bring up from their authors offer a ground observation of the evolution of writings on music, the increased diversity of their discursive terms, position and functions attached to them. Thus we consider them as a strong mediation entering the configuration process of existence and social experience of music, especially electroacoustic music.