
Book reviews

Marcus Erbe and Christoph von Blumröder (eds.), *Le monde sonore de / The sound world of / Die Klangwelt des François Bayle*. Vienna: Verlag Der Apfel, 2012. ISBN: 978-3-85450-418-4
doi:10.1017/S1355771813000459

There can be no doubt that the French composer François Bayle, successor to Pierre Schaeffer as director of the Groupe de Recherche Musicale in Paris and inventor of so-called 'acousmatic' music, is not only one of the most enigmatic personalities of twentieth-century music history, but also one of those setting the standard in theory as well as in compositional matters, in particular in the field of interpretation of music for loudspeakers.

Now more than 80 years old, he can be seen as one of the most influential musicians of recent decades. It was Bayle who transformed the theoretical approaches regarding media and sound proposed by Pierre Schaeffer into an art theory in the proper sense, focusing on listening strategies and initial creative actions as well as on composition theory in a wider sense. He was also one of the first composers to deal with the special – historical – experience of the middle of the twentieth century in his writing. As the inventor of the term acousmatic music, Bayle can also be seen as the father of the Acousmonium and thus as one of the creative spirits behind the idea of loudspeaker orchestras more generally.

It is therefore not surprising that a good deal has been written and published about François Bayle's work and life: articles, essays on his music and ideas, editions of his fascinating writings and so on. For example, an impressive and significant volume in the French series 'Portraits polychromes' is available (Ina-GRM 2003). Nevertheless, this new publication on the composer and his work, part of the series 'Signale aus Köln', is in a way, unique.

Over the years a long, intense collaboration has developed between the composer and the Musicological Institute of the University of Cologne, which has for many years been strongly committed to what is called the 'School of Cologne'. In consequence the tradition of electronic music in the narrow sense has widened its research interest to encompass what can be seen as the classics of electroacoustic music in general. Under the direction of Christoph von Blumröder several research activities have approached the oeuvre of François Bayle from a theoretical as well as from a more practical perspective, through concert presentations as well as

analytical study. The volume can be interpreted as a compendium, making the variety of these possible approaches accessible to the international discourse.

This publication is therefore the result of the longstanding commitment of the Musicological Institute at the University of Cologne to research dedicated to the work and philosophy of François Bayle. It has a documentary character primarily, which may explain the diverse and heterogeneous nature of the published material. The book also contains laudatory speeches acclaiming the role of the composer in the development of twentieth-century music and its theory, proceedings of an international conference dedicated to his work, transcriptions of round tables and discussions from several events, comments on an impressive number of works played in personal concerts within the Cologne project and finally several lectures given by the composer himself in that city on different occasions and therefore addressed to different audiences.

The diversity can be seen as a special merit of this publication, because within the discourses the complexity, vigour and variety of approaches to acousmatic music are obvious from the background of the contributors – in matters of culture, training and, most particularly, research tradition. Providing several different analytical approaches to the same work is an interesting idea and means that the publication offers interesting research material. The subjectivity of analysis acts as a meta-topic and makes this book enlightening.

Over the years von Blumröder brought together musicians and researchers from different cultures, at different stages of their career and, most importantly, representing very different positions on acousmatic music as well as musical analysis in general. When Rudolf Frisius, the German specialist in electroacoustic history; John Dack, the British 'Musique concrète' expert; Jean-Christophe Thomas, a French intimate colleague of Bayle; and the younger researchers Pierre Couprie, Jan Simon Grintsch and Marcus Erbe present their studies on the piece 'La fleur future', it is precisely the differences of approach which provide a lot of information on the work. Thus – to a greater extent than any previous publication – this book deals not only with the sound world of François Bayle, but with its reception, and is therefore a book on Bayle's influence on modern musical thinking, rather than on his sounds.

The book is therefore attractive not only for readers interested in the sound world of François

Bayle in the narrow sense, but also as a contribution to a methodological and theory-oriented discussion of acousmatic music. In an almost provocative way its heterogeneity serves – fruitfully – to encourage further discussion, demonstrating several perspectives on music coming solely from loudspeakers. The character of the publication means that it can be accessed from several perspectives and it therefore offers a lot of material to an open-minded reader.

All of this makes this volume an interesting educational resource for electroacoustic studies in general, although it is of course at first glance a book to honour François Bayle as one of the figureheads of contemporary French music.

In particular, the DVD accompanying the book publication provides extremely illustrative sound material.

Of course the linguistic mix of French, German and English deserves note. Some articles are translated into one of the other languages, but not all – and more particularly the presentation of the material is a challenge for the reader. Still, the book represents an impressive omnibus volume for future research on the analysis of electroacoustic music as well as on the sound world of François Bayle.

Finally it is worthy of note as a special merit of the publication that the wide and multilingual discussions of the conferences and seminars are transcribed in their plurality and thus offer a good deal of material pertinent to lacunae in research on the reception of acousmatic music.

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REFERENCE

Ina-GRM (ed.) 2003. *François Bayle: Portraits polychromes*. Paris: Michel de Maule.

**Karmen Franinovic and Stefania Serafin (eds.), *Sonic Interaction Design*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2013. ISBN: 978-0-262-01868-5
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The main theme of this publication is to highlight how sound can be an active medium within design, and its implications upon interactivity. It presents a robust argument of how sound can or should be more than functional, representational or signalling within design, and draws together research findings from a broad range of scholars, artists and designers in the field of SID (sonic interaction design) alongside electronic music composers and cognitive science theorists. As such, this is a book aimed at interactivity research and designers, and *Sonic Interaction Design* will, for most of the readership of *Organised*

Sound, be of some interest as peripheral reference. However, for those who seek to understand this emerging cross-disciplinary field, this book will be of great benefit, bringing a broad range of knowledge from a wide range of perspectives.

The book focuses on both theoretical approaches to most of the major themes within SID, and presents alongside these case studies of exemplary practice and system design such as mobile music, sensorimotor learning, rehabilitation and gaming. The chapters are organised in two sections: the first is composed of longer chapters presenting key themes and theoretical frameworks, with the second section presenting recent practice, design and system research as case studies. Chapter 1 offers an historical perspective of how sound-producing objects have been applied as sources of information, or as noise control through such innovations as acoustic cocooning. Although many areas here mirror the discourse with similar territories in electroacoustic music, the chapter's multi-disciplinary approach does offer an interesting perspective. While this might not deliver significantly new insights, it does present the discourse in a slightly different context.

Chapter 2 deals with the use of interactive sound in art and design, with a particular focus on the social and cultural aspects. Again, there is nothing overtly new here that cannot be read in Dyson (2009) or Kahn (2001), but it does discuss the 'multisensory experience' (p. 39) from a different perspective, which can offer some interesting insights and novel applications of interactive sound.

Chapter 3 presents the most valuable insights to *Organised Sound* in its discussions around the tactile and kinaesthetic aspects of interactivity and sound. Of interest here is the cross-disciplinary strands that come together to deal with the fluid issue of subjectivity. This chapter treads this quicksand well, and could be a useful reference point for the *Organised Sound* reader who wishes to follow a similar path.

Chapters 4 and 5 deal with pedagogy and auditory cognition, respectively. Chapter 4 presents some valuable insights, methods and examples of pedagogic approaches to enhancing the learning of students dealing with sound and interactivity. Chapter 5, whilst presenting a new framework with which to understand the processes in auditory cognition, doesn't add anything significant to the existing tools of, for example, spectromorphology. However, the taxonomy on p. 152 presents a range of methods – including psychophysical, dissimilarity, semantic and multisensory – that may indicate new avenues of analysis for the *Organised Sound* reader. It is the final section of this chapter on motion capture that indicates some enticing avenues of research, especially for the *Organised Sound* researcher who is dealing with the performer's cognition within human-computer interaction.