

# RECORDINGS IN NATURAL CAVES

## LEBANON

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### Grotte de Jeïta

Nahr el Kelb, Beirut

RIC-LB1 France 1970

### JEÏTA (OU MURMURE DES EAUX) \*

RIC – Contemporary – Concrète – Synthesizer – Speleolithophonic – Instrumental

#### Selections:

*Side One* – 1. MURMURE DES EAUX [Murmur of the Waters] – 3:05/ 2. CLOCHES FOSSILE [Fossil Bells] – 1:20/ 3. MURMURE DES ABEILLES DE PIERRE [Murmur of the Stone Bees] – 4:15/ 5. RÊVERIE DE LA MULTIPLICATION [Daydream of Multiplication] – 2:50/ 7. ORACLE – 1:12/ 8. MURMURE DES EAUX – 1:05/ 9. L'EAU VERTICALE [Vertical Water] – 1:20/ 10. AILLEURS [Elsewhere] – 2:27

*Side two* – 11. RÊVERIE DE LA RESONANCE [Daydream of Resonance] – 2:07/ 12. "EAU-FORTE" [Etching] – 2:50/ 13. MURMURE DES DENTELLES D'EAUX [Murmur of the Water Lace] – 5:18/ 14. INTERVALLES D'EAUX [Water Intervals] – 0:55/ 15. ECRITURES MURMURÉES [Whispered Writings] – 1:15/ 16. ORACLE – 2:42/ 17. MURMURE DES EAUX – 1:30

**Comp:** François BAYLE (1932-)

**Perf:** François **BAYLE** (synthesizer & speleolithophones)  
Konstantin Simonovitch (souvenir elements recorded at the 1969 inaugural concert)

**Rec. Eng:** J.C. Lallemand & G. Haddad Projects & L'O.R.T.F., Beirut

**Time:** (See above)

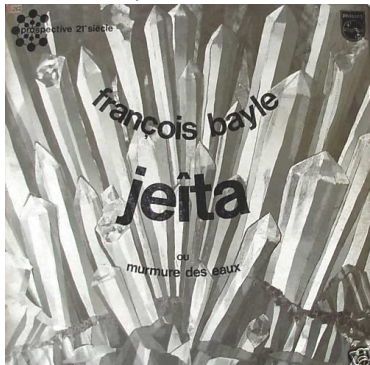
1. **LP:** JEÏTA OU MURMURE DES EAUX

Philips (Prospective 21e Siècle) 6521-016 (mono & stereo)  
12" 33rpm (Sides 1 & 2)

2. Reissue on **CD:** BAYLE Vol. 13 – JEÏTA (includes JEÏTA-RETOUR)  
(1999)

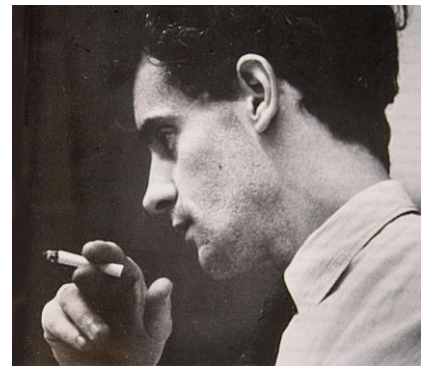
Musidisc 248122

CD (Tks 1-17 & RETOUR – Tks 19-20)



**Notes:** A masterpiece of cave music. For the first time in the history of music a major composition was entirely inspired by a major limestone cave. François Bayle was a world pioneer in the field of speleolithophonic music and one of the key figures of electroacoustics. The word "speleolithophonic" has been coined and used for the first time in this discography to designate speleothem percussion music where stalactites, stalagmites or calcite draperies are tapped to obtain notes and sounds.

In 1966n Pierre Schaeffer, founder of the Groupe de Recherche Musicale in Paris, visited the world-class show cave in Lebanon, Grotte de Jeïta and declared that the large chamber in the new upper level was suitable for concerts. (Anon. 1990) That same year when Pierre Schaeffer, left the G.R.M., François Bayle took over and went on to compose *Espaces inhabitables* (1967). Those were



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the years especially noteworthy for the development of all the new synthesizers. (Anon. n.d.)

Then in 1968, partly due to recommendations from Pierre Schaeffer, François Bayle was contacted by Sami Karkabi the director Jeita Cave (Sami was also one of the founders of the Spéléo Cub du Liban), who had just heard the LP recording *Espaces inhabitables* and wanted François to compose a work for the grand opening of the magnificent upper level of the cave. Sami envisioned something special – “Classical music is not enough for concerts in a fantastic cave like this.” (AP Dispatch 1968) So he invited François Bayle to come and visit the cave.

When François came to the cave in 1968 the development of the upper level for visitors was not yet finished. “*Lors de ma visite, le seul moyen d'accès, c'étaient des échelles attachées les unes aux bouts des autres et avec des lampes sur la tête.*” (Chion 1994) [During my visit, the only means of access were ladders joined one to another and with lights on our heads.] He made acoustic tests (see photo) and taped a few samples of tapping on musical stalactites. In Paris he composed and constructed three sketches.



Then on January 11, 1969 François Bayle gave the inaugural concert in the Salle de Concert in the cave where the stage and audience seating areas were designed by the architect Ghassan Klink. The three new pieces were – *Ailleurs 3* – electronic collages of music of Pierre Schaeffer and Karlheinz Stockhausen; *Monde* – from Richard Wagner, beat and musique concrète; and *Nadir – Bouche d'ombre, Réverie la resonance, & Oracle* – electronic and live sounds of three vocalists and four instrumentalists directed by Konstantin Simonovich. (Anon. 1969 & Bayle et al. 1969) He would later use the first and last three titles here for select pieces in his opus *Jeïta ou murmure des eaux*, and include chosen elements from those concert pieces.

“For the first time in musical and caving history, music is composed to honor the sound resonance in a cave’s space.” (Anon. 2013)

As a direct result of this concert François Bayle became fascinated with Jeita Cave and the possibilities it provided for a longer concrète music composition. With the help of J. C. Lallemand and G. Haddad Projects and the O.R.T.F. (French National Radio) in Beirut he returned to record more lithophonic music by tapping on various musical speleothems, plus the sound of water drops in the cave, and also workers playing rustic string instruments. (Anon. 1990) He then took these samples back to Paris and in the summer of 1970 worked with them on the prototype G.R.M. synthesizer to create his composition. This new synthesizer in Studio 54 had been designed and built by Francis Coupigny and Henri Chiarucci that year. (Chion 1994) The resulting definitive work is a suite of 17 sketches, but only those sketches that include sounds actually recorded in the cave are mentioned here. Only two sketches do not use sounds recorded in the cave. (For full information on the complete work see under Contemporary Art Music – *Jeïta ou murmure des eaux*).

Several sketches incorporate sounds of tapping on stalactites and draperies: Tks 1 & 17 – *Murmure des eaux*; Tk 2 – *Cloches fossile*; Tk 3 – *Murmure des abeilles de pierre*;

Some movements use sounds of water drops, but these were not all necessarily recorded in the cave: Tk 1 – *Murmure des eaux*; Tk 5 – *Rêverie de la multiplication*.

There were all sorts of sounds of water and water drops. Regarding these sounds François Bayle revealed – “*Presque tous viennent de la grotte, sauf ceux qui n'étaient pas très réussis et qui j'ai enregistrés*

*simplement dans les toilettes du centre Bourdan (ils étaient parfois plus intéressants que les sons de la grotte eux-mêmes). Il y avait dans ce lieu modeste un goutte à goutte qui m'a beaucoup inspiré. Je me souviendrai toujours de m'être dit: c'est trop bête, j'ai des sons mal enregistrés, et là je peux en avoir de merveilleux. Je sors mon micro et voilà de belles images d'eau. Cela ne m'a pas du tout dérangé" (Chion 1994)*

[Nearly all came from the cave, except those that were not very successful and that I simply recorded in the bathrooms of the Bourdan Center (they were often more interesting than the sounds from the cave itself). There was in this modest spot a drip-drop that greatly inspired me. I will always remember having said to myself: this is stupid, I have badly recorded sounds and here I can have some really great ones. I got out my microphone and, there you are, some beautiful water sounds. It didn't bother me in the least.]

For two sketches (Tk 3 – Murmure des abeilles de pierre and Tk 16 – Oracle) he used recordings of workers in the cave playing small rustic violins. “Ce sont des prises de sons de musiciens sur place, des travailleurs de la grotte de Jeïta, et qui pendant la pause jouaient de la musique avec de petits violins rustiques – une corde tendue sur une boîte de conserve – et qui chantaient de façon très nasillarde. (Chion 1994)

[Those are the sound recordings of musicians on the spot, the workers in Jeïta Cave, who, during their break, played music with little rustic violins – one string stretched on a tin can – and who sang in a very nasal fashion.]

This rare LP can sell today on French eBay for 90 Euros. The 1967 Lebanese postage stamp shows the Dais drapery formation in the underground river section.



**Ref:** Anon. n.d., Du studio d'essai de la RTF au GRM, Panorama musiques électroniques, [free.fr](http://free.fr)

Anon.1969, Beirut – Trauma: Israel, *Die Zeit*, n. 5, Jan. 31, 1969, [zeit.de](http://zeit.de)

Anon. 1990, Spéléologie Source d'inspiration, *Al Ouat'ouate*, Nouvelle série n. 5, 1990, p. 105-107, & 112-117

Anon. 2013, The Caves of Lebanon – Jiita Cave, Spéléo Club du Liban, [speleoliban](http://speleoliban)

AP Dispatch 1968, Space Age Concerts in a Cave, *The Milwaukee Journal*, July 23, 1968, Part 1, [Google](http://Google)

Bayle, François et al. 1969, *Jeïta 1969*, (Program booklet for the inaugural concert), 11 Jan. 1969, Beirut, Lebanon, 14 p.

Bayle, François 2000, Personal communication, May 2000, Paris

Brison, David 1998, Caves Celebrated in Recorded Music & Songs (sic), *Al Ouat'ouate*, Nouvelle série n. 11, 1998, p. 99, 101, 106

Chion, Michel (Ed.) 1994, *François Bayle, parcours d'un compositeur*, Musiques et Recherches, Ohain, France, p. 57-62, 113-115

Fleuret, Maurice, Spéléophonie au Liban, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 20 Jan. 1969

François Bayle, Biography (in French), [Wikipedia](http://Wikipedia) & (in English) [Wikipedia](http://Wikipedia)

François Bayle, Jeïta ou murmure des eaux LP, [Discogs](http://Discogs)

François Bayle, Jeïta, Part 1 (11 :27), [YouTube](http://YouTube) 1 Part 2 (9 :38), [YouTube](http://YouTube) (◀COMPLETE AUDIO SAMPLES)

Grotte de Jeïta, History & Description, (in French), [Wikipedia](http://Wikipedia) & Jeïta Cave (in English), [Wikipedia](http://Wikipedia)

Jeïta Grotto, Website, [jeitagrotto](http://jeitagrotto)

Karkabi, Sami 1972, *Jeïta – Architecture des temps*, Bayrouth

Spéléo Club du Liban, [Wikipedia](http://Wikipedia)

Trimmel, Hubert 1969, Die Erschließung der Tropsteinhöhle von Jeita (Libanon), *Die Höhle*, 20 Jahr, Heft 2, Juni 1969, Verband Österreichischer Höhlenforscher, p. 35 & 37, [landesmuseum.at](http://landesmuseum.at)

**RIC-LB2** France 1999

## **JEÏTA-RETOUR: ORACLE DES EAUX 1 ET 2 \***

RIC – Contemporary – Concrète – Synthesizer – Speleolithophonic– Instrumental

**Comp:** François BAYLE

**Rts:** (SACEM)

**Perf:** François BAYLE (synthesizer & speleolithophones)

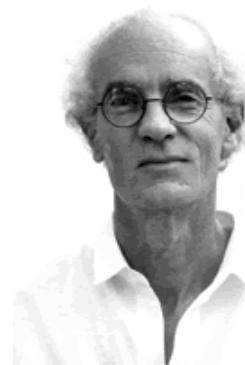
**Prod:** François Bayle

**Prod. Co:** Magison; 31 rue de la Harpe, Paris –

Email: baylemag@cybercable.fr

**Rec. Date:** 1985 & 1999

**Liner Notes:** (24-page booklet) F. Bayle, Gérard D. Khoury (poem), Georges Shéhadé, & Maurice Fleuret



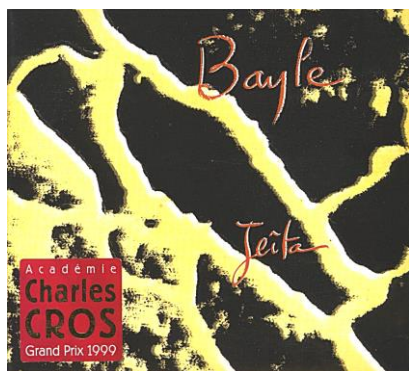
**Time:** 5:23

**CD:** BAYLE Vol. 13 – JEÏTA (includes JEÏTA-RETOUR)

Musidisc 248122 (Tks 19-20)

**Notes:** For the 1985 concert in the Salle Olivier Messiaen at the Maison de Radio-France in Paris François Bayle revised his composition of *Jeïta* and added these two variations dedicated to the memory of Jeïta Cave, which had been walled up for years during the Lebanese war. He wanted a version of his former work renewed by the recent progress in sound technology while at the same time remaining faithful to the music by staying as close as possible to the original. (Liner notes)

Regarding this he says – “*Pour les deux études intitulées, Jeïta-retour, j’ai voulu surligner ce ‘retour’ (sur la 17<sup>ème</sup> et la 1<sup>ère</sup> étude) par un travail en variation, portant l’écho d’un drame. Entre Jeïta murmure des eaux et Jeïta-retour en trouvera, avec L’infini du bruit un mouvement dynamique plus ample mais conçu dans une esprit proche.*” (Liner notes) [For both studies entitled, *Jeïta-retour*, I wanted to highlight this 'return' (on the 17th and the first study – *Murmure des eaux*) by working on variations, carrying the echo of a tragedy. Between *Jeïta murmure des eaux* and *Jeïta-retour* one finds, together with the *L’infini du bruit* [an unpublished work from the 1980s, *La fin du bruit*] a dynamic movement that is broader but conceived in a similar spirit.]



This CD was awarded the “Grand Prix 1999” by the Académie Charles Cros. Cros was the first to conceive the idea of a cylinder phonograph on April 30, 1877, but before he had a chance to construct a working model Thomas Edison introduced his first working phonograph in the United States and patented it on January 15, 1878. (Anon. 2013)

This CD cover design was taken from the design of the 1969 *Jeïta* concert poster & the program booklet.

**Ref:** Anon., François Bayle, Compositeur “acousmatique,” *L’Orient*, 1999, Bierut, Lebanon

Anon. 2013, Charles Cros, Biography (in French) [Wikipedia](#) & (in English) [Wikipedia](#)

Beffa, Karol, François Bayle (CD record review), *Classica*, Oct. 1999

Cazaban, Costin, François Bayle (CD record review), *Le Monde de la musique*, Oct. 1999

François Bayle, *Jeïta – L’Infini du bruit* CD, [Discogs](#)

*Jeïta* Grotto, Website, [jeitagrotto](#)

Sikora, Elizabeth, François Bayle (CD record review), *Diapason*, Oct. 1999

Vermeil, Jean, *Jeïta* ou murmure des eaux, *L’Infini du bruit, Jeïta-Retour* (CD record review), *Répertoire des CD*, n. 128, Oct. 1999

**RIC-NZ2** West Germany 1974

## **MURMURE DES ABEILLES DE PIERRE \***

RIC – Contemporary – Concrète – Synthesizer – Speleolithophonic– Instrumental

**Comp:** François BAYLE

**Perf:** François BAYLE (synthesizer & speleolithophones)

**Prod:** François Bayle & Rudolf Frisius

**Prod. Co:** Ernst Klett Verlag;, Stuttgart

**Time:** 1:20

Compilation **LP:** MUSIQUE CONCRÈTE – ELEKTROAKUSTISCHE MUSIK

Klett 92422 (Sd 2 – Bd 7)

**Notes:** This German compilation album includes an excerpt of the third piece on the original LP album, *Murmure des abeilles de pierre* [Murmur of the Stone Bees]. However, this might also be a new, shorter performance of the piece performed by François Bayle specially for this album.

**Ref:** Musique Concrète – Electroakustische Musik LP, [Discogs](#)

Musique Concrète – Electroakustische Musik LP, [music-releases](#)



