

CONTEMPORARY ART MUSIC

MUSIQUE CONCRÈTE

MUSIC BACKGROUND:

“Musique concrète (meaning "concrete music") is a genre of electroacoustic music that is made in part from acoustic sound, or sound without an apparent originating cause. It can feature sounds derived from recordings of musical instruments, the human voice, and the natural environment as well as those created



using synthesizers and computer-based digital sound processing. Compositions in this idiom are not restricted to the normal musical rules of melody, harmony, rhythm, metre, and so on. Originally contrasted with "pure" *elektronische Musik* (based solely on the production and manipulation of electronically produced sounds rather than recorded sounds), the theoretical basis of *musique concrète* as a compositional practice was developed by Pierre Schaeffer, beginning in the early 1940s.” (Anon. 2016)

Pierre Henry

Pierre Schaeffer

Ref: Anon. 2016, Musique Concrète, (in English), [Wikipedia](#)
Musique Concrète, (in French), [Wikipedia](#)

CT-CR1 France 1978

LA CHAUVE-SOURIS

Contemporary – Concrète – Instrumental

Comp: Pierre HENRY

Rts: Editions musicales Apsome (SACEM)

Perf: Pierre HENRY (synthesizer)

Prod. Co: Phonogram S.A.

Rec. Co:

Liner Notes: Jean & Brigitte Massin, & Pierre Henry

Time: 5:47

LP: DIEU

Philips 6510 019 (stereo) (Gatefold cover)
12" 33rpm (Sd 1 – Bd 2)

Notes: Pierre Henry is considered one of the pioneers of musique concrète (electroacoustic music) along with Pierre Schaeffer.

Photo Eyedea





Inspired by an unfinished poem, "Dieu" (God), by Victor Hugo, this concrète music was premiered as musical scenes with readings from the poem during the Festival de Lille in 1977.

"The first part [of Hogo's poem] is entitled *Ascension dans les Ténèbres* ("Ascent into the Shadows") or *Le Seuil du gouffre* ("The Threshold of the Abyss").

"The second part, *Dieu* or *L'Océan d'en haut* ("The Ocean from Above"), depicts various religious and anti-religious points of view as beasts and animals, each emerging from the shadows to state its case. The first of these is Atheism: the Bat." (Anon. 2016)

"*Dieu, poème de Victor Hugo, c'est d'abord une prodigieuse épopée des religions symbolisées par des oiseaux emblématiques dont chacun n'est d'abord qu'un "point noir": toutes les religions, même celle à venir, ne reflètent encore que l'ombre de l'Absolu.*" (Massin, Jean – Liner notes)

[Victor Hugo's poem, *God*, is first of all a prodigious epic of religion symbolized by the emblematic birds [read also "bats"] where each one is first a "black point": all religions, even those to come, only reflect the shadow of the Absolute.]

An extract from the poem, "La Chauve-souris" (The Bat) –

... Et je vis au-dessus de ma tête un point noir.
Et ce point semblait une mouche du soir volant à l'heure où
l'ombre nous invite à prier.
L'homme (quand il pense) étant ailé
l'abîme m'attirant dans sa nuit toujours de plus en plus
comme une aigüe qu'entraîne un ténébreux reflux
J'eus vite franchi l'éther qui s'ouvre à l'essor des esprits!
Cette mouche étant une chauve-souris.
Ce lugubre oiseau volait seul dans l'espace et disait:
Dieu n'est pas! Dieu n'est pas! désespoir!

... And I see over my head a black point.
And this point seems to be an evening fly flying at the hour
when the shadow invites us to pray.
Man (when he thinks) has wings
the abyss attracts me always more and more into its night
like seaweed washed by a somber tide
I quickly crossed the ether, which opens to the flight of spirits!
This fly was a bat.
This gloomy bird (sic) flew alone in space and said
God is not! God is not! despair!

Speaking about his theatrical composition, Pierre Henry writes –

"*Théâtre plus sonore que musicale, où le bruit est musique, et la musique fil conducteur et basse chiffrée d'un texte qui devient lui-même récitatif... Ce véritable travail de reconstruction s'est fait à partir de mots clefs, de séquences d'idées qui ont été classés en répertoire, puis montés comme des objets rapprochés et collés sur une trame générale observant la continuité linéaire indiquée par Victor Hugo. Sans cesse, l'on passe donc du son au mot, du mot à l'idée et inversement.*"

[This theater is more sonorous than musical, where the noise is music and the music is the clue and the coded base of a text which itself becomes narrative... This real work of reconstruction was done starting with key words, sequences of ideas, which were classified in the repertory, then organized like objects drawn together and glued to a general thread, keeping the linear continuity indicted by Victor Hugo. One passes continuously from sound to word, from word to idea and inversely.]

This electro-acoustic music mostly consists of isolated sounds, which weave in and out at intervals with no perceptible melody or rhythm. Low keyboard single notes alternate with string notes and a few high squeals, then the intervals shorten. A brief harp strumming, more string notes and keyboard notes with knocking sounds. Then a continuous series of distant hollow roaring, squeals sounds again, and distant bell sounds recede and fade.

Ref: Anon. 2016, Victor Hugo, *Dieu*, (in English), [Wikipedia](#)
Hugo, Victor & Henry, Pierre 1986, *Dieu*, Éditions Acts Sud, Arles, p. 34-36
Pierre Henry, Bio, (in French), [Wikipedia](#) & (in English), [Wikipedia](#)
Pierre Henry, *Dieu* LP, [Discogs](#)

CT-CR2 France 2001

RESPIRATION DES CHAUVESOURIS

Contemporary – Concrète – Avant Garde – Instrumental

Comp: Pierre HENRY

Perf: Pierre HENRY (electronics)

Prod: Pierre Henry

Prod. Co: Philips Music Group France

Rec. Co: Studio Akustische Kunst, WDR, Cologne, Germany



Liner Notes: (12-page booklet) Anne Rey

Time: 4:10 or 4:12

1. **CD:** ANTAGONISMES IV

Philips 468 525-2 (Tk 7)

2. **CD:** MIX PIERRE HENRY 03.0 (2001)

Philips 468 522-2 54XCDs) (Disc 3 – Tk 7)

Notes: Another concrète music composition by Pierre Henry inspired by bats (see above).

The [Allmusic](#) 30-second sample had high-pitched electronic twittering pulses reminiscent of bat echolocation sounds and then a few hard taps together with heavy breathing sounds. Whereas the [Amazon.fr](#) sample had sharp isolated squeals and distressed cries.

The color photo from the liner notes shows Pierre Henry in 1998 at the sound console assisted by Bernadette Mangin.

Ref: Pierre Henry, Bio, (in French), [Wikipedia](#) & (in English), [Wikipedia](#)

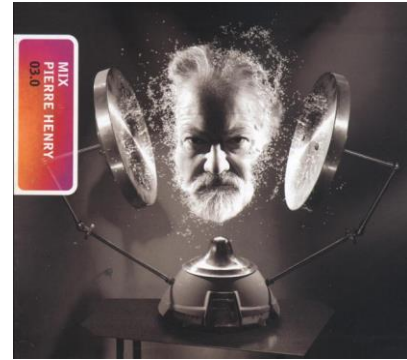
Pierre Henry, Antagonismes IV CD, [Allmusic](#) (◀AUDIO SAMPLE)

Pierre Henry, Antagonismes IV CD, [Amazon.fr](#) (◀AUDIO SAMPLE)

Pierre Henry, Antagonismes IV CD, [Discogs](#)

Pierre Henry, Mix Pierre Henry 03.0 CD, [Amazon.fr](#) (◀AUDIO SAMPLE)

Pierre Henry, Mix Pierre Henry 03.0 CD, [Discogs](#)



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