



Observatoire international
de la création musicale

Call for papers

Écrits de compositeurs 1850-2000

International Conference – March 12-15, 2008

To mark the creation of the *Réseau International d'Étude des Écrits de Compositeur* (international composers's writing study network), the *Observatoire international de la création musicale* (OICM) organises its fifth international conference on the theme «*Écrits de compositeurs 1850-2000* ».

Context

The way musicology and musical criticism have developed since the end of the XIXth Century, gradually drawing the listener's perception towards the conceptual coherence of musical works and the truth such coherence is meant to convey, shows that these disciplines have been involved in shaping music history itself. In this context, the growing part taken by the composers' own writings in the field of musicology is an indication that they consciously see their written contribution as a potential way to make their musical work more complete by joining the "oeuvre" to its idea. Writings by composers such as Wagner, Debussy, Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Koechlin, Milhaud, Boulez or Nono (which range from musical criticism and theory to aesthetics and philosophy) have largely contributed to forming new relationships between their musical works and ideas, but also between musical works in general and their author and listeners. This marks a new intellectual approach to music, which has emerged together with the idea of modernity, and of which it seems to us necessary to precisely define the origins, content and tendencies. Such study is all the more important today, since the growing role given to technology in compositionnal activity emphasizes this intellectual aspect of modernity and tends to profoundly modify the very essence of art works.

According to the sociology of music, composers abandoned in the middle of the XIXth Century their condition of independant artists in order to become gradually involved in teaching and reflective thinking about their own activity. And in fact, composers' writings show this new willingness to reflect on music as an intellectual object concerning not only aesthetical decisions but also ethical, political and epistemological ideas. Composers' writings have thus created a new space where their musical work can integrate its cultural context and reflect its ever changing social, artistic and moral needs. The acknowledgment of the rise of an artist's willingness to participate in the history of ideas has played an important role in the evolution of musicological

research towards a contextual approach to music. By focusing on a composer's writings, contextual musicology emphasises the collective, intimate, but also intellectual, emotional, and in some cases, spiritual spheres involved in his/her work.

At a time when contemporary music questions its own legitimacy in relation to the listener, studying a composer's writings allows for a better understanding of the creative process and musical thinking, but also, and more importantly, draws us towards the larger question of a possible dialogue between a composer and an audience. Aesthetic, ideological, political and even financial aspects of a composer's writings are important here, and raise some fundamental questions: has there been an exponential growth of intellectualism at some point in the history of the arts? Is the composer-writer's activity a gratuitous one? Is there not something suspicious in the fact that a composer communicates his art through written texts? These questions, among many others, open upon a larger reflection that extends well beyond the musicological domain towards the world of art in general, communication and media, the history of mentalities, sociology and the music industry as a whole.

Themes of the conference

- Definition and typology
- Forms and genres
- Critical study
- Publishing (new forms of transmission, evolution and present state of musicological publishing)
- Historical, sociological and aesthetic role
- Epistemological role

Specific orientations

The selection committee will choose primarily papers proposing a methodological and theoretical questioning of composer's writings. In order to be acceptable, corpus studies should be based upon a scientific method and have a strong relationship with one or more of the suggested themes. The theme (or themes) at the center of the proposed paper should be clearly stated in its abstract.

Papers' presentation

Abstracts should be between 750 and 1000 words long and be composed of three sections: 1/ subject (with reference to one or more of the proposed themes); 2/ research methodology; and 3/ findings/results. Abstracts must be accompanied by a selective bibliography.

Abstracts must be followed by a short biography of the author (or the first two authors for collective works), including his/her academic affiliation and e-mail address. Abstracts in French or English (the language of the proposed paper shall be the same as that of the abstract) must be sent **by e-mail**, within the text or as an attachment (preferably a Word file) to the following address: frederic.chiasson@umontreal.ca

Abstracts will be evaluated anonymously by a panel of international specialists. The conference proceedings will be published by the OICM.

Abstracts should be sent no later than September 10, 2007.

Organizing Comitee

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