

# KÂMAKALÂ

## Press (English)

---

### CARREFOUR

November 4, 1971

Jean-Claude ELOY et Georges SEBASTIAN  
(Jean-Claude ELOY and Georges SEBASTIAN)

*Antoine Goléa*

### CLÉS POUR LA MUSIQUE (KEYS TO THE MUSIC)

December 1971

Brussels

Semaines Musicales Internationales de Paris  
Journées de Musique Contemporaine  
International Music Weeks in Paris  
Contemporary Music Days

*Harry Halbreich*

### KÖLNISCHE RUNDSCHAU

February 25, 1975

A weekend at the WDR studio for the "Current Music" Festival:

A sumptuous

"Meeting with India".

*By Hans-Elmar Bach*

### KÖLNER STADT-ANZEIGER

February 25, 1975

The fifth concert of the WDR

"Current Music" cycle, a three-day meeting with India.

*By Dietolf Grewe*

### MANNHEIMER MORGEN

February 27, 1975

The Current Music Cycle of the Cologne Radio:

A Look at India

*Hanspeter Krellmann*

### DIE WELT

February 28, 1975

"Meeting with India" at the WDR studio of Cologne

*Reinhard Beuth*

### FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG (F. A. Z.)

March 6, 1975

Meeting with India - and the cult of India - during an artistic event in Cologne

*Gerhard R. Koch*

**NOTRE TEMPS**

Brussels, March 6, 1975  
Prestige des religions  
Anciennes  
(Prestige of Ancient Religions)  
*Évelyne Sznycer,  
Serge Pahaut.*

**LUXEMBURGER WORT**

March 7, 75  
VIe Biennale de Musique Moderne à Bruxelles  
(6th Biennial Festival of Modern Music in Brussels)  
*Nicolas Koch-Martin*

**LE QUOTIDIEN DE PARIS**

Tuesday, May 25, 1976  
Perspectives du XXe siècle  
(20th Century Outlook)  
*Gérard Mannoni*

**LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR**

Monday, May 31, 1976  
Music  
*by Maurice Fleuret*  
L'amour avec les sons  
(Love with Sounds)  
"Kâmakalâ" at Radio-France  
The Magic Vibration of Origins  
PIECES BY LUCIANO BERIO  
AND JEAN-CLAUDE ELOY  
Concerts with Radio-France

**THE TIMES OF INDIA**

NEW DELHI: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1978  
Memorable session of electronic music  
*By Krishna Chaitanya*

**TÉLÉRAMA**

May 1979  
Radio  
20TH CENTURY OUTLOOK  
SATURDAY MAY 29. 2:45 PM. FRANCE-CULTURE  
MONDAY MAY 31. 2 PM. FRANCE-MUSIQUE  
Jean-Claude Eloy  
The Beauty of a Single Note  
*Paul Meunier*

**CARREFOUR**

November 4, 1971

Jean-Claude ELOY et Georges SEBASTIAN  
**(Jean-Claude ELOY and Georges SEBASTIAN)**

I was quite worried last night at Jean-Claude Eloy's concert at the Théâtre de la Ville. I had arrived a little early, and had the time to glance through the program. There I found, underneath the composer's signature, a literature halfway between philosophy and Einstein physics, which, ignorant as I am, I did not understand at all. [...]

Years ago, I had greeted him for that as one of the most promising upcoming composers of the young generation following Boulez. The work I heard then, *Equivalences* for chamber orchestra, appealed to me for its clarity, especially that of its rhythmic structures, its timbres, and its very expressive sometimes dramatic dynamic. These were the qualities of an authentic musician, and they have remained until today when so many young people believe that it is enough to strike any old how on a piano for it to be music. For several years as he was prey to a real crisis of conscience, Eloy did not compose. He traveled the world, to America, Asia, mainly in India. He came back a fervent follower of a synthesis between Western and Eastern music. It is a path that Messiaen took on before him, but that he found again alone as he never was a student of Messiaen's nor simply under his influence.

We heard the successions and superpositions of *Equivalences* again the other night, and the excellent impression that I had from this work was strongly confirmed, which is a sign of real value. Then we heard *Faisceaux Diffractions*, also for chamber orchestra. Behind this somewhat forbidding title, which refers to luminous beams, Eloy offers a much compelling work where expressive and dramatic powers are yet again accused. The composer possesses a gift now very rare: he knows how to use silences, and to give them an expressive weight. It is a gift as old as the hills in Western music, and in this area, Eloy has remained much of a Westerner.

After the intermission came the world premiere of *Kamakala*, for three orchestras and vocal ensembles. The Hindu word used as the title means "soaring desire". It is about a very ambitious musical piece which tends to illustrate the birth and development of life having the universal desire as a source. It starts a little bit like *The Rhine Gold* by Wagner that also describes the birth of a world through indistinct, pianissimo murmurs in the lowest-pitched vocal registries. It rises very slowly both as a dynamic and as a tessitura, gradually held by instruments up to the highest levels of voice. The long held voices of the beginning are progressively split up until they sound like furiously torn barks of animals in heat. It is very impressive, all the more as Eloy never overplays the sound power: he does not kill his music by overpushing decibels and deafening the listeners. Everything always remains musical with Eloy, far away though sounds sometimes appear to be from music. Once the target is achieved, everything is on the descent never finding again the silent murmur of the beginning: once life is given its impetus, it can never die; it sometimes simply reaches the shores of balance and serenity; thus ends Eloy's work, which Olivier Messiaen told me after the concert reminded him of Tibetan music to the point of obsession. The presentation by the choruses and the National Orchestra of the O.R.T.F., conducted by Marius Constant, Boris de Vinogradov and Catherine Comet sounded excellent to me. [...]

ANTOINE GOLÉA

---

## **CLÉS POUR LA MUSIQUE**

(KEYS TO THE MUSIC)

December 1971

Brussels

Semaines Musicales Internationales de Paris

Journées de Musique Contemporaine

**International Music Weeks in Paris**

**Contemporary Music Days**

[...] A particularly exciting day gave Jean-Claude Eloy the opportunity to make a comeback long awaited for by all those who consider this 33-year-old composer, a disciple of Boulez', as one of the best bets in the current French music movement...

During his few years in the United States, Eloy somehow kept a low profile in France, where many would-be artists hastily replaced the vacant spot. Today, he is emerging from a deep artistic and personal crisis, and his resurrection is nothing but stunning. For a long time, Eloy has been fascinated by Eastern music, and he explained the reasons why during an enthralling conference illustrated with striking sound examples. His whole current approach tends to throw a bridge between the East and us by defining the creative attitude that a Western musician from today can show when faced with non-European music. The lure of exoticism, which one has now gone beyond, yielded to a much more insidious one – that of intellectual colonialism, more sterile and destructive. Integrating Indian or Balinese "sound objects" is not more fruitful than developing sonatas or symphonies based on scales and rhythms from over there. Eloy wishes to go much further, and manages to do it: on the one hand, by aiming at an Eastern conception of musical time, excluding "closed" structures and architectures based on a certain periodical symmetry typical of Western music; and, on the other hand, by embracing the Eastern conception of musical matter, that of music created above all with sounds, rather than with notes: Varèse, and, in a certain way Debussy, had preceded him.

Eloy has now entered a full evolution process, an unfinished evolution yet marked by a potential great richness, which will be exciting to follow. He is not about to review his accomplishments, and he says so. However, the three creations heard during the S.M.I.P. help appreciate the speed and the ascending curve of this evolution.

Équivalences, for 18 instrumentalists (1963), that "pre-crisis" piece, although still in Boulez' wake somehow, already conveys quite a violence, and most of all an extraordinary sound seduction made of unusual refinement not in the least without power.

Faisceaux-Diffractions for 28 instrumentalists (1970) was a quantum leap. A manly and muscled music, with the beauty of a sound texture worthy of Varèse, with magnificent brass sonorities, and which contrasts with the still "pointillist" discontinuity of the previous piece for the much Eastern-like sake of filling the entire time and sound space with large static aggregates. Sumptuously ornamented melisms, glissandi of electric guitars freely reminiscent of Indian sitars and sarods come within that continuity. It is one of the most efficient and most complete music piece composed in the past few years. May Belgium hear it soon.

Nevertheless, the most awaited-for event was the world creation of Kâmakalâ for choirs and three orchestra groups, the biggest and most challenging work produced by the young composer. So far, he has only been able to accomplish the first tier of what sounds to be a huge triptych probably lasting an hour and a half to two hours. The completed part lasts about 37 minutes. "Kâmakalâ, Eloy explains, is a Sanskrit term meaning "triangle of energies" in Shivaism and, most of all, Tantrism. Kâma refers to desire, the God of eroticism, but also to the thirst for life, to the creative momentum born of the union between Shiva (the male entity, or Linga, the substance) and his

Shakti (female entity, or Yoni, the energy). Kalâ represents the Shiva components appearing in 5 degrees, from the absolute peace of dead silence to the physical appearance of the human being. Thus, the piece starts from a "pre-world deep silent sleep", and progressively builds up to the bursting of life, whose core part will describe the various expressions in a sort of giant "dance of life" before the third tier brings us back to the state of final dissolution.

Eloy considers the first part as a sort of wide gate symbolizing the presence of energy. One witnesses the slow conquest of the sound, limited for no less than 15 minutes to the men's nasal vocalisms in the sub-low frequency register: a feeling of eternity of a granitic beauty such as can only be found in some ritual Tibetan music works. Come the sixteenth minute, the phenomenal built up amount of tension is released by an isolated percussion: the first signal of life's awakening, which will emerge through the divergent explosion of music in space, then by the progressive entry of orchestral groups also subjected to the centrifugal force; a music which gives forth a sensual power unprecedented in Western productions, with peaks, vociferated choruses inspired by the Balinese Ketjak, scrambling percussions that rip you off your seat to quickly form a breathtaking planetary eddying, which the composer leads with impressive steadiness and mastery. That imposing cosmogony ends on the peaceful ecstasy of the full morning sun, which balances the conclusive notes of the violins in the treble range: the ascent is a glowing one, and leaves one happy, fulfilled and bursting with life and energy at the threshold of this "world dance", on which Eloy is now working. It had been a long time since French music had offered us a creation with such power of breath, such tranquil and confident greatness. Kâmakalâ emanates a lucid and salutary spiritual radiance. This music, which communicates happiness and serenity to its listeners, belongs with those rare and essential creations that sound familiar at once as they already existed within the universe, waiting to be materialized.

Eloy's light apparently blinded a major part of the critics, disorientated and a prisoner of a narrow and formalized concept of time and sound space. However, the audience was not mistaken, and gave the composer and his remarkable interpreters (choir ensembles and the ORTF National Orchestra under the triple direction of Catherine Comet, Marius Constant, and Boris de Vinogradov) a warm and never-ending ovation. A few moments later, I witnessed Olivier Messiaen's enthusiasm and emotion. Many of us are now impatiently waiting for Kâmakalâ's sequel. Jean-Claude Eloy just offered us a third of a masterpiece. My trusting admiration will support him as he will carry on his great endeavor.

HARRY HALBREICH

---

## **KÖLNISCHE RUNDSCHAU**

February 25, 1975

**Für drei Orchester halbe Bestuhlung ausgebaut**

**Moving half of the seats for three orchestras**

**A weekend at the WDR studio for the " Current Music " Festival:**

**A sumptuous "Meeting with India".**

*By Hans-Elmar Bach*

"Ex oriente lux" – the Eastern light –, so was the slogan pronounced almost as a program by Baselian musicologist Hans Oesch for the first informative conference of the Meeting with India Festival organized by the WDR for three days. [...]

It was not so simple for the organizers to select the authenticity of Hindu music played by German musicians as a topic. Their prime goal was to show how Hindu elements had infiltrated vanguard music. The series of concerts ended up taking place under the "Current Music" label.

These past few years have witnessed a boom in everything related to India. In vogue terms as "transcendence", "meditation", "awakening of self-awareness" have stirred and are still stirring some fascination on a generation that makes no secret of its rejection of the Western spiritual and social situation. During an interview, composer Peter Michael Hamel, who is familiar with India, admitted that, for years, he had proclaimed the horror that struck him and that he had interpreted it as socialism.

Nevertheless, the discussion clearly showed that expectations developed by young people as to Hindu music make Hindus skeptical themselves. A Hindu woman taking part in the debate declared that the Europeans, like the Americans, consumed the music of her country in lieu of psychotherapy.

[...] Jean-Claude Eloy uses three orchestras and three choruses for which nearly half of the seats of the big WDR studio had to be moved.

With self-denial-filled heroism, the symphonic orchestra of the WDR, the West-German radio chorus and the Schola Cantorum of Stuttgart tackled "Kamakala" by Jean-Claude Eloy, who applied the principles of the raga structure in this piece.

This deployment with three conductors (Michel Tabachnik, Bernhard Kontarsky and Jacques Mercier) purely and simply gives the impression of a sound framework intensifying and coming undone again along the crescendo and the diminuendo, beginning with deep bass passages after Penderecki's style and ending with the highest violin pitches decreasing until they are hardly audible. [...]

HANS-ELMAR BACH

---

## **KÖLNER STADT-ANZEIGER**

February 25, 1975

### **The fifth concert of the WDR "Current Music" cycle, a three-day meeting with India.**

Wenn Gott Shiva tanzend durch die Welt saust

When Shiva dances through the world

Karlheinz Stockhausen was there with his "Indianerlieder"

*By Dietolf Grewe*

Yogas, gurus and Krishna followers are in vogue. Europe is on its way to the Levant. Today, the West-German Radio invites us to a "Meeting with India" too: three days with eight artistic events in three halls including five concerts of "current music".

The event featured the premiere of "Ananda", a work by young Peter Michael Hamel. The composer himself declared during a discussion in the conference hall of the Roman-Germanic Museum: "They had the thick score of Jean-Claude Eloy's "Kamakala", and they thought: "By the way, Hamel is high on India. There must still be something in his drawers that has not been presented yet. Let us invite a few Hindus, and then we will have a Hindu festival!"

To explain what pushed him to turn towards interiority today, the former leftist said: "Eventually, it is not very rewarding to proclaim the horror that has struck you and to call it socialism." He will also admit that the Hindu Spirit all in all remains foreign to Europeans.

In terms of the composition, the arrangement with Hindu music also stirs the deepest nostalgia: a music evoking a longing for the sacred world, for the end of the ongoing conflict in Europe between the spiritual and material world. That is what Hamel, as far as he is concerned, calls "Integral Music".

[...] Jean-Claude Eloy's "Kamakala" for three choruses and orchestras thrives, not without success, to reach a meditative state yielding an impression of time stretching through the very slow transformation of basic sound events, thus making the listener aware of time. However, this music evolving through crescendos and decrescendos hardly manages to express itself. For the end, the composer had the idea of bringing the violins towards the heights of mouse sibilance.

Rehearsal time was also obviously short: as the high priest, Tabachnik, the master of ceremony of the orchestra performing on the platform, and his peers Jacques Mercier and Bernhard Kontarsky discreetly exchanged many desperate glances in which one could read the feverish anxiousness to reach the next organ point hoping to find their way again.

The program featured Stockhausen's "Indianerlieder", premiered in 1972. According to the composer, the cycle unveils exactly like an improvisation of Hindu music on a raga. One could indeed think so by hearing those chants sang in English after American Indian texts for the first time. This type of development form does not claim to be a pattern, however, as with the raga, only becomes fully present as the piece is executed. [...]

An event entitled "Terry Riley meets Don Cherry" should wrap up these three days. The WDR had managed to organize the meeting of Hindu-inspired organist Terry Riley with exoticism-lover free-jazz trumpeter Don Cherry for a opening act. Nevertheless, once together, both musicians just gave a repetitive stereotype with the organ and a velvety sound with the muted trumpet. [...]

DIETOLF GREWE

---

## **MANNHEIMER MORGEN**

February 27, 1975

### **Belebung aus fernen Kulturen ?**

### **A Revival coming from Far-Away Cultures?**

### **The Current Music Cycle of the Cologne Radio: A Look at India**

The phrase "Europe meets India" has long yielded a profound fascination in the area of ecology as well as of the arts. In terms of music, the phrase has found a spectacular expression since Ravi Shankar, with his sitar, and Yehudi Menuhin, with his violin, jammed together and recorded their improvised songs on disk. Today, the West-German radio (WDR) wanted to materialize the said phrase by organizing the "Current Music" cycle in Cologne. [...]

The Western liking for far-Eastern music systems lies, especially nowadays, on philosophical and ideological dogmas, from which composers such as John Cage and Karlheinz Stockhausen or American composers-musicians Terry Riley and La Monte Young have drawn their inspiration for absolute identification purposes for several years, even decades. For others, it gave birth to a hybrid style stirring a feeling of distress, especially under the influence of Herman Hesse, who became popular again, and under the impulse of not always compelling tendencies of assimilation [...]

In the future, the issue will be about determining whether the Hindu raga style itself, which by nature has a monodic structure, will merge with Western polyphony. With works such as "Stimmung" and "Indianerliedern", also presented in Cologne today, whose length of execution should be able to be stretched at will after the Hindu raga model, Stockhausen managed to obtain results in a virtually intuitive manner. At age 36, the former student of Milhaud's and Boulez', Jean-Claude Eloy, so far unknown in our country so to speak, has also focused on exploring Eastern music. His giant thirty-minute opus (for three choruses, three orchestras, three conductors) entitled "Kamakala", premiered in front of a German audience at the studio of the Cologne radio, already says it all in the title. However, Eloy does not work with Asian tonal systems. On the contrary, he integrated the atmosphere that is so delightful about Eastern music into the structures of his own music. Within the first fifteen minutes, it produces – with the sound fabric that is being built by getting thicker through the very low sounds from the deep voices of men and the subsequent sound of the instruments – quite a striking effect, which will however fade later.

The fact that exotic cultures from Asian and African countries form, in the absolute, not only a rich pool but also an alternative for new Western music, a complex music that sometimes retreats onto tonality, has long been known. Whether one can make the most of it remains to be verified. Meeting the sources is still the most important element to this day. In that regard, artistic events such as the ones taking place today in Cologne will always prove beneficial.

HANSPETER KRELLMANN

---

## **DIE WELT**

February 28, 1975

Als die Avantgarde ihren Shiva tanzte

As the Vanguard had its God Shiva Dancing

**"Meeting with India" at the WDR studio of Cologne**

For the WDR, the Current Music Festival is no longer an account from the vanguard front. Today, modern music is the "in vogue" music that is talked about, as long as it does not fall into the blockbuster commercial pop category. [...] The " Current Music " Festival of Cologne, organized by the WDR, offered those composers a forum allowing them, with the support of Hindu musicologists and musicians, to make their God Shiva dance for three days. [...]

In his "Kamakala", which had been waiting for its first public presentation for four years already, Jean-Claude Eloy does not refer to the Hindu philosophy as much as to the creative principle of the raga-genesis – an elaboration to a slow rhythm of the tonal material and sound meditation. He mainly leverages on the abiding means available in a radio studio, and calls for three choruses and three orchestras, which, together at first, then in an asynchronous way, cover the forty minutes, from the deepest bass pitches to the higher ones, reaching the ultimate breath. They start their journey quite slowly, and halfway there, fall prey to the roaring forces of thunder and the dismal screams of tormented creatures before finally attaining a radiant height. [...]

REINHARD BEUTH

---

**FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG (F. A. Z.)**

March 6, 1975

**Musikalische Verlockungen eines erträumten Nirwana**

**The Musical Charms of a Dreamed-of Nirvana**

**Meeting with India – and the cult of India – during an artistic event in Cologne**

After organizing a weekend in October 1973 around the theme "Meeting with Japan" in the Beethoven Hall in Bonn as part of the "Current Music" concerts, the West-German Radio (WDR) presented a "Meeting with India" cycle in the studio of the radio and in the new Roman-Germanic Museum of Cologne. The attraction towards India, the wonderland, as a legendary kingdom of redemption for all the evils on Earth dates back further still than the "charm" of its music exoticism. Schopenhauer praised the precepts of the renouncement of the world in the philosophy and religion of Ancient India as the remedy against the Hegelian "slaughterhouse of the world history". Today, gurus haunt the West, gathering their disciples around them and preaching meditation as a universal remedy against "stress" and the economic crisis. The cult of India is also beneficial in terms of tolerance and open-mindedness towards foreign cultures.

For Western music, it fairly often meant enrichment. The adaptation of Olivier Messian's Hindu rhythms and bird songs definitely contributed to the constructivism of serial music whereas for the new irrational vanguard movement with Stockhausen as a distinguished spokesperson, India precisely represents an anti-technological standpoint.

The same could certainly apply to John Cage and its affinity for Zen Buddhism. However, for him, authentic Japanese music does not play any immediate role. Traditional Japanese music has remained attached to its limited cultural framework and has never gone through any historical evolution. That is why it is also exotic for young Japanese composers and why it can be confronted to modern orchestras.

In Hindu music imbued with influences of rustic, courteous and individual art, the dynamic is stronger – which is why no synthesis of European music and Hindu music on the part of Indian composers has so far been heard of. The complex and endless music of Hindu ragas has influenced vanguard Western musicians just like pop musicians in a unilateral way. Today, the situation is observed in Cologne where Hindu and Western musicians indeed never performed together on stage. Both spheres remained separate, and the attempts at fusion led to partly limited partly insignificant results in terms of novelty.

[...] Not long ago in Berlin, Frenchman Jean-Claude Eloy already bowed to Indian music with "Faisceaux-Diffractions", and he is doing it again today with "Kamakala", a work for three choruses and three orchestras. He does not use any Hindu instrument in this piece. The title refers to the Hindu idea of love as well as to the principle of static/dynamic amplification, to the absence of movement on the pulse. The subtitle is "Triangle des énergies" (Energy Triangle). Eloy developed his work from the deepest chorus tonalities up to the highest, shrillest orchestra tonalities from the absolute silence to the most vivid figure plays. The three sound groups intensify separately, simultaneously or in unison. Upon attaining their peak, one reaches the searched-for asynchronism as the virtually symbolic representation of the play between the vital forces. [...] Conducted by Michel Tabachnik, Bernhard Kontarsky and Jacques Mercier, the WDR chorus and orchestra and the Stuttgart Schola Cantorum yielded a good overall performance. [...]

GERHARD R. KOCH

---

## **NOTRE TEMPS**

Brussels, March 6, 1975

### **Prestige des religions Anciennes (Prestige of Ancient Religions)**

On Wednesday and Thursday, people saw "Moïse et Aaron" (Moses and Aaron) by Schoenberg. [...] Henry Pousseur performed his "Epreuves de Pierrot l'Hébreu" (trials of Peter the Hebrew) two days earlier [...] "Has the God of the Bible stopped speaking in history ? I do not think so" (2). Western religions are still incarnated in our art work.

One may see here a cause for the remarkable intolerance that J. C. Eloy's work "Kâmakalâ", which was presented to the public this past Friday 28 as this week's finale, was subjected to.

The Brussels music profession managed to rise to a good level of modern culture since the appearance of serial music born after Schoenberg. Everybody deployed treasures of intelligence to execute and listen to unheard-of combinatorials. But then there was a piece of music, which, instead of starting by deploying the theme, the cell or the articulated code that it will recombine, let time stretch for an increasingly intense exploration of something that, for the first fifteen minutes, was still not a developed work. A piece of music that does not accept the forced departure on a theme; that does not conform right from the start to the musical note, that pasteurized, stabilized, normalized thing for the decadent plain-chant ([...]), and the polyphony (work on the diagram of the point against point).

In a diffuse vocal and instrumental space, Eloy lets progressive concretions of singularities and differential speeds play: three juxtaposed orchestral masses that three conductors ran on sometimes synchronized sometimes offset rhythms. A subtle game adding to the effects of music in space an interesting experimentation of these relations between the vibratory beats and the musical rhythms that Stockhausen referred to (3).

It has been a few decades after all since some musicians among the best have been looking for the formula for this ecstatic dilation of the conditions of a problem, this local freeze of a time that others want to be irreversible. The endeavor was particular sensitive with Eloy.

Is it for reasons of religious incompatibility that it was disliked by those dauntless Brussellers able to recreate an atmosphere of hostilities and even uproar ? Other Brusselers are wondering. Seriously.

ÉVELYNE SZNYCER,  
SERGE PAHAUT.

(2) Henry Pousseur in "la communication par le geste" (communication through gesture) Acts of the sessions organized by the center of research on the Sacred at l'Arbresle 1965-1968. Paris le Centurion. 1970.

(3) "... Wie die Zeit vergeht..." (How time passes by). Die Reihe III (Series III). Vienne 1956. See Henry Pousseur: "Fragments théoriques sur la musique expérimentale à Bruxelles" (Theoretical fragments on experimental music in Brussels). 1970, pp. 141 and 212.

## **LUXEMBURGER WORT**

March 7, 75

### **VIe Biennale de Musique Moderne à Bruxelles (6th Biennial Festival of Modern Music in Brussels)**

[...] Great was the success, in the big hall of the Belgian radio, of the performance of the symphonic poem "Kâmakalâ" by Frenchman Jean-Claude Eloy, born in 1938, a "classical" composer. It is the first tier of a vast triptych inspired by Hindu and Tibetan music and culture. Written for three orchestras (each composed of 35 men) and three vocal ensembles, "Kâmakalâ" means "Energy Triangle"; the second part will feature "Kshara-Akshara" (the moving and unmoving), and the third one "Pralaya" (the Dissolution). All three orchestras were conducted by Irvin Hoffman, conductor of the major Belgian radio orchestra, as well as by Belgian conductors Pierre Bartholomé and Ronald Zollman.

The work starts with long phonemes stretched a dozen times by a bass voice on the M in the extreme low-pitch register, first hardly audible, then gradually growing: there is no music yet, but the vocal masses join this haunting and religious (?) chant; the same note is repeated endlessly by 130 voices, and all these magnified phonemes are fascinating, - the volume of the incantation is still rising, and only 15 minutes later do orchestras come into action, first with the stroke of a gong, then with the bang of a bass drum. Next, all three percussions reply to one another, then the trumpets, the other wind instruments; the insistent chant still continues, the orchestras produce a formidable "underground roar" as written in the program note. The string instruments being played are inaudible as they are covered by the sound thunderstorm and the chant. And then, all of a sudden comes a calm spell, but the racket resumes and inflates until it reaches total chaos, "from which all the vital energy is released". This loss of strength will lead to an orchestral and vocal descent into appeasement and calm. The piece is thus a long crescendo followed by a shorter decrescendo.

That was really beautiful – but why three orchestras? They had such little opportunity to speak. The audience gave a long ovation to the 160 artists, the three conductors, and the attending composer. Afterwards, a much lively debate took place between the composer, both Belgian conductors and the public, which asked many questions. Later, "Kâmakalâ" was played and sung a second time, which was excellent not only for the audience, but also for the critics, many of whom had suggested the repetition of the most complex and interesting new works so as to be better able to judge them.

NICOLAS KOCH-MARTIN

---

**LE QUOTIDIEN DE PARIS**  
Tuesday, May 25, 1976  
**Perspectives du XXe siècle**  
**(20th Century Outlook)**

There were as many musicians as they were auditors in the Wagram Hall for this concert of the Perspectives du XXe siècle (20th Century Outlook) series. Three orchestras, a vocal ensemble, a major electro-acoustic equipment: the various levels of the hall were overpopulated. A 35-minute-long "crescendo", "Kâmakalâ" by Jean-Claude Eloy is a work by which nobody remains unmoved. First, the listeners are struck by the sincerity of the thought that motivates it. It is never about using artificially applied processes with a view to following a fad or meeting the current trend. It is the fruit of a personal reflection and approach truly achieved and lived. The form is extremely polished and the desired effect is attained through a set of means mastered with the highest lucidity. In the second part, and before hearing "Shânti", the National Orchestra performed "Gruppen" by Stockhausen, a work likely to stir every nostalgic memory of post-serial supporters. Fifteen years separate "Gruppen" from Kâmakalâ. The evolution of musical thought never seemed so rapid. The concert was conducted with authority and intelligence by the excellent conductor Gabriele Ferro, with the assistance of Pierre Stoll and Alain Bancquart.

GÉRARD MANNONI

---

## **LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR**

Monday, May 31, 1976

Music

*by Maurice Fleuret*

L'amour avec les sons

(Love with Sounds)

*Two creations in the depressing vanguard no man's land finally take off and sweep you along "Kâmakalâ" at Radio-France*

The Magic Vibration of Origins

**PIECES BY LUCIANO BERIO**

**AND JEAN-CLAUDE ÉLOY**

Concerts with Radio-France

At the end of a Parisian season dedicated to premiered pieces, which again will be more noticed for their abundance and quality of execution than for their originality, one always wonders where young music is going. No matter how Boulez explains that, to him, there is no crisis but a transfer, he still draws the future directions of the I.R.C.A.M. (1) from a particularly critical – or should he say much desperate – analysis of the current situation (2). To tell the truth, to him and to many others who do not admit it as openly, everything happens as though the bursting of languages and the creative scattering one is witnessing today stimulated the longing for the serial dogma and in any case awakened the pressing desire for a general theory governing the entire thought and the act of music.

Preached about like a new crusade, will the systematic cooperation of scientists and musicians be able to give creators, in the best of cases, something else than technical means and renewed material whereas, obviously, it is the reflection on the nature and function of music, and in what is here the most comprehensive and most abstract form, that needs a shot of life?

On the opposite side, is it with view to creating a diversion, to moving into action or is it because they realize the vanity and the sterility of any strictly intellectual approach that so many young composers recently decided to immerge themselves in the social fabric of blue color district and underprivileged areas in order to try all kinds of educational and collective creation experiments that do not require any invention in absolute terms? There is no going back over those who, being unable to accept the current situation and, all the more, the future situation, content themselves with modernizing or even reviving the past word for word. After the digestion process, here is that of hybridization considered as a type of fine art! The international vanguard of music has never deserved its name less than in this aesthetic no man's land where it now stands and which already displays every dull color, every characteristic of end-of-the-century ambiguity.

That is where I stood in my disquieting meditation when two pieces displaying a powerful vitality drew me out of the mists of pessimism and restored my appetite for the unheard-of [...] However, the "Concerto for two pianos and orchestra" by Luciano Berio, and "Kâmakalâ", for three orchestra and choir ensembles, by Jean-Claude Eloy, are not quite recent. The first one is three years old while the second one is five years old, but both enjoyed such a polished execution by the Radio-France ensembles, so accurate and in such a good setting, that one had the feeling of hearing them for the first time. Whatever programs say, a world premiere is sometimes postponed without anybody noticing it. However, that is when it is time to celebrate the real birth of the work and to finally appreciate it with full knowledge of the facts. [...]

## Energy Triangle

In 1971 "Kâmakalâ", which I had commissioned to Jean-Claude Eloy for the S.M.I.P. (4), had not completely convinced me. Indeed, at the Théâtre de la Ville, the "activation of the vibrating power" of three choir and orchestra ensembles scattered on stage remained a show that made it impossible to take part in intimately from the inside. This time, in the outmoded yet extraordinary sounding box that the Wagram Hall is, at the very intersection point of all music sources, I was able to experience, to finally share this huge Eastern asceticism where "the acoustic energy emerges" in its pure state, with an unequalled evidence.

Like a magical ritual of origins, and in such a way that no reference to India, Tibet and Japan emerges too visibly, "Kâmakalâ" (energy triangle, in Shiva and Tantric philosophy) gradually lifts you up from the lowest-pitch breath to a paroxysm of power and complexity, the very image of the created world. One imperceptibly loses the Western notion of time to spiral up into a state not of unconsciousness but, on the contrary, of acute awakening to everything that would normally escape us, a state of love with and through sounds.

As regards fashion, several constant elements of the piece may seem regressive: "integration of repetitive phenomena", "long harmonic polarizations", "fixed underlying chromatic modality"... But what are fashion and pretence worth in the face of a creation whose greatest virtue it to deliver us from them in order to go back to the very essence of music?

Although inimitable, and perhaps hardly likely to gain an immediate posterity, successful work like the "Concerto for two pianos" (\*) and "Kâmakalâ" (\*\*) obviously belong with those that can restore our confidence in the future in the darkest moments.

MAURICE FLEURET

(1) Institut de Recherche et de Coordination Acoustique/Musique. (Institute for Musical and Acoustical Research ; Gallimard-IRCAM)

(2) "Donc on remet en question" (So we're questioning) by Pierre Boulez, in "la Musique en projet" (Music in the planning stage),

(4) International music weeks in Paris.

(\*) Bériot (\*\*) Eloy

---

## **THE TIMES OF INDIA**

NEW DELHI: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1978

### **Memorable session of electronic music**

*By Krishna Chaitanya*

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 26: Though electronic music has been presented in Delhi on two or three occasions, the session last evening at the Max Mueller Bhavan under the joint auspices of the Bhavan and the Alliance Française will remain memorable for various reasons, the most important of them being the stature of the composer.

Forty-year-old Jean-Claude Eloy had a firm grounding in classical music before his association with Boulez and Stockhausen, the most distinguished figures in the field of electronic music. Eloy has worked in Cologne - the most important centre for the new, experimental music. He has also taught at Berkeley University in California and travelled widely, especially in the east.

Another reason why the presentation was -so successful was the very helpful introduction given by Eloy. With the recording and broadcasting repertoire in India mostly confined to European music of the nineteenth and earlier centuries, adequate familiarisation is necessary for the twentieth century music and electronic music is relatively recent since it has developed in the years after the second world war. Nevertheless, its origins date back to the earlier decades of the present century and even to the nineteenth. Currents deviating from the classical tradition emerged in France with Debussy and were continued by composers like Messiaen and Varese. In Germany the radical movement was led by Mahler, Schoenberg, Alban Berg and Webern. Atonality replaced the classical scale. Live sounds from life - the motor horn, the locomotive engine - were incorporated into music. Then came the phase of electronic gadgets creating new sounds and modulating, filtering and synthesising them, and now this is being done by the computer.

If, initially, the vastly enlarged repertory of sounds led to a riot of aural sensations, the enriched material is now being sensitively used for new and genuine aesthetic realisations. Here, integrative tendencies are also beginning to merge. They could be experienced in the two compositions by Eloy presented this evening. One was "Gaku-no-Michi" which showed the influence of the music of the Zen Buddhist monasteries of Japan. But a far greater impact was made by the other piece "Kâmakalâ".

The title has no relation to Vatsyayana's treatise on erotics, but is used in the tantric sense where Eros stands for the "desire that entered the one to become the Many", to use the pregnant Vedic idiom. Created by three orchestral and five choral groups, it opens as a solemn, liturgical chant. This is the music of genesis, of the great world growing out of the primal germ. As Eloy himself said, he has learned from Pandit Ram Narayan and the Dagar brothers the incantational power of the Vilambit, the controlled use of all musical resources, their slow - but steady and ultimately monumental - build up. Abrupt silences and detonations recall the many catastrophes before the universe stabilised itself and the music traces a parabolic curve to end in a note of serenity and fulfilment of a divine purpose in the cosmos. This great meaning straddled the utter strangeness of idiom and texture to make itself deeply felt.

KRISHNA CHAITANYA

---

## **TÉLÉRAMA**

May 1979

Radio

20TH CENTURY OUTLOOK

SATURDAY MAY 29. 2:45 PM. FRANCE-CULTURE

MONDAY MAY 31. 2 PM. FRANCE-MUSIQUE

**Jean-Claude Eloy**

### **The Beauty of a Single Note**

*A disciple of Boulez', he quickly turned his back to serial combinations. To the brilliant addition of Western musical notes, he prefers, like in the East, the power of a single sound.*

Nine years ago (Télérama issue #910), we presented a young angry composer who courageously said out loud what many thought under their breath and who, after publicly standing against everything that stifled French musical creations, left for the United States "hoping for better days". Jean-Claude Eloy was 27 then, and he was already considered one of the most gifted musicians of the French music school.

After teaching composition and analysis for two years at the University of California at Berkeley, Eloy, once again slams the door and splits from the American music movements and teachers. He then becomes involved with underground groups and hippies, and lives in the Arizona deserts and Death Valley. Back to France in 1970, he resumes his activities as a composer, and each new creation by this little wordy musician ("I only write, he says, when I have something to say") will be greeted like a true event. Today, we will hear his latest two compositions.

Upon his return to France, Eloy is offered a chair as professor at the Paris Conservatory probably as a token of reward towards the prodigal son. His refusal is flat and clear: "Permanent teaching leads to ossification." How could he forget his years at the Conservatory as a student? This man from Rouen who arrived in Paris at a very young age left the Rue de Madrid in a mad rush after being awarded several first prizes and just when a brilliant career as a piano virtuoso was there for the taking.

To that, he replied: "After six years of harmony as it was understood in 1890, discovering recent music and attending the first Domaine Musical concerts as well as the Darmstadt summer classes was a breath of fresh air for me. As soon as I heard that Boulez had just started to teach in Basel I ran to sign up for his class..."

Eloy owes the presentation of his first major work to Boulez: Etude III was performed at Domaine Musical in 1962. A year later, Equivalences was heard in Darmstadt and in Donaueschingen before proving to be a triumph at Domaine Musical.

For the one who listens to these works today and who likes categories, they could belong to the "post-serialism" group. Indeed, as a young musician, Eloy, who still considers himself as a "Disciple of Boulez', neither an iconoclast nor an idolater", fell on the strictest serial combinations that existed at the time, which, according to him, did not bring him "any satisfaction when he heard them at a concert."

He embraced that system – which dried up more than one –, however he quickly went beyond it by shattering rigid and restricting structures and instilling new yet millennium-old Eastern life in it.

In Etude III, one already notes the "frequent use of very long durations linked to the steadiness of the pitch registry, which helps convey the predominance of the static characteristic that evokes some aspects of Eastern music: the sonority and the use of Shô in Japanese gagaku, the slow and long staggered increase of the Hindu raga complexity."

## The Energy Triangle

The refusal of "fast zipping small notes" and of "nervously prattling and chattering music" will push Eloy to make the "short Western sound duration" collapse. His 1964 Poly-Chronies are one of the examples.

"The most obvious characteristic of *Silence du lac des étoiles* and of *Vitres d'aurore*, he wrote, is the desire to highlight a specific aspect of time, or rather a sensation, a way of living and perceiving time... A certain quality of slowness, a "stretching" of events take place in very different disciplines, eras and civilizations. The comparison may sound arbitrary but I particularly think, in that perspective of desired slowness, of the analogy that appears between various types of Eastern music (Japan, India) and, for example, recent cinematographic productions especially that of Antonioni."

As he realized that Western music reached "a limit in terms of sound mass", Eloy, instead of accumulating sounds, rediscovers the beauty and power of a single sound, which he endlessly refines. He finds that "art of time" again that must lead to the union of Western and Eastern music.

It is the first time that *Kâmakalâ* and *Shânti* are presented during the same evening. Both pieces are "born of a same movement of the spirit in their aesthetical and theoretical options as well as in their deep meaning: that which their titles borrowed from the Sanscrit language underline even more."

*Kâmakalâ* dates back to 1971. It was written for three orchestra and choir ensembles set in a triangle around the audience and directed by three orchestra conductors. We will hear the first 35 minutes of what will become a sort of "ceremony".

*Kâmakalâ*, in tantric philosophy, refers to the "energy triangle" where "every phenomenon" springs up. "It is the first appearance of the worlds' creative energy, the very slow then very progressive deployment by almost imperceptible increments of a force starting from the simplest, of the undifferentiated unity, to reach what is the most complex, the multiple and the explosion of diversity."

A piece of "Meditation Music", *Shânti* is the first electro-acoustic creation by Eloy. It is dedicated to Stockhausen who opened the doors of his studio at the Radio of Cologne to the French musician. During a dozen stays over a year and a half, Eloy worked about 1,500 hours with technicians and had access to equipment that even America could not provide him with. He went there to produce a 15 minute magnetic tape and left with a hundred-and-thirty-five minute piece that was the highlight of the Royan Festival in 1974.

"The title means "Peace", the author explains. However, it would not be appropriate to imagine a production in which only one center of quietness and peaceful meditation is offered. It is impossible for me to fathom Peace (peace of the world as well as peace of mind, consciousness and the universe) without its counterpart on all levels. Hence those long moments of sometimes extreme violence that are slowly reached and absorbed into an intense "meditation through the powers of the sound".

"Although it uses different acoustic means, *Shânti* is an extension and a continuation of *Kâmakalâ*, to which it perfectly connects. Thus come the life, the struggle and the diversity of the moving worlds before reaching the *Pralâya*, the huge final dissolution that leads *Shânti* not only to its starting point but also to the point where another *Kâmakalâ* starts again."

## The Eyes Need Nothing

To become better imbued or absorbed with this slow fabric of elements that intertwine, oppose and complete one another, by evolving from the most abstract sound to the realistic raw material (1968 demonstrations, Mao's poems, Eldridge Cleaver's speech, children's voices, exchanges of shots, etc.), Stockhausen gives this piece of advice: "You have to close your eyes and listen. In my opinion, it is no longer necessary to see anything else... the best thing is to close your eyes and sit, completely relaxed. In this piece, I think the eyes do not need anything..."

Well, enough talking, explaining, analyzing and advice giving: "One must make love to music before talking about it, said Eloy. There will always be enough time later on to get into the details... I believe in the power that some music creations have to penetrate and influence the human being, hence their consciousness, hence the world. That is why, to me, "Making Music" means more and more taking part in and integrating the great mystery of man and the cosmos that surrounds us every second, while celebrating it." Greet Shânti as a piece of music that belongs to the happy few creations that cannot leave a willing man indifferent and unmoved.

PAUL MEUNIER

---

---

*Full press documentation realized by  
Usha Levingstone*

For all works :

*The translations from German to French, Brazilian to French, Dutch to French, Indonesian to French, Mexican to French, Polish to French, have been realized by the translation office "Par l'éclair".*

*No translation from the Chinese and Japanese languages have been realized until now - at the exception of the text by Wataru Uenami devoted to the work; "A l'Approche du Feu Meditant..." ("Approaching the meditative flame...").*

*The translations from English to French and French to English have been realized by :  
Hélène Demortier and Meredith Escudier.*