



## DESACCORDES – inC

/ paru le 10-06-2005 /

Ceux qui, oubliant tout préjugé, ont eu la saine curiosité de découvrir l'album **Pseu** par le groupe **Pseu** et «□ Cordeyades» par le groupe **DésAccordes** connaissent un peu mieux **Erik Baron**, bassiste et compositeur génial, qui cette fois s'attaque à l'œuvre difficile d'accès de **Terry Riley**, intitulée «□ inC□». Ce dernier est, avec **LaMonte Young** et quelques autres, un des pionniers de la musique minimaliste et un des modèles de **Jon Hassell** (voir la chronique de «□ Maarifa Street / Magic Realism 2» sur ce site). **Jon Hassell** est un éminent musicien aussi inclassable que l'est **Erik Baron**, un de ses disciples spirituels.□

□

Basée sur 53 motifs planifiés selon des règles strictes mais où une grande place est laissée à l'improvisation lors de l'exécution, l'œuvre de **Terry Riley**, «□ inC□» joue généralement en continu. L'originalité d'**Erik Baron** est de l'avoir divisée en une introduction et quatre parties (ou quatre mouvements, si vous préférez), comme s'il s'agissait d'une symphonie classique. Autre choix personnel, il n'a pas fait appel à des voix et a choisi le tout instrumental. Pour **DésAccordes**, c'est le deuxième album et il est encore plus déroutant que le premier. Il demande de la part des musiciens à la fois un savoir-faire et un sens musical largement au-dessus de la moyenne et une bonne dose d'enthousiasme.□

□ Le «□ line-up□» comprend sept joueurs de guitare classique, **Philippe Cauvin** (voir la chronique de ses albums «□ Climax» et «□ Memento» sur ce site). Il y a aussi neuf joueurs de guitare électrique, six joueurs de basse électrique, une harpiste, deux violoncellistes, un percussionniste, un batteur et le bassiste, arrangeur et chef d'orchestre de génie, **Erik Baron**.□

□ Dans sa version, l'intro dévoile la note Do (d'où le nom «□ inC□») par une fréquence aiguë qui se transforme lentement et n'est pas immédiatement audible. Ce lent bouillonnement part en crescendo pour se confondre en un magma de sons polyphoniques divers et de percussions polyrythmiques qui préfigurent un monde chaotique, pour se terminer en un bourdonnement épais de tout l'orchestre.□

□

La première partie a une dominante Majeur en Do. Chacun improvise ses motifs plus qu'il ne les joue et cet amalgame de sons à la fois semblables et dissemblables, qui s'entrecroisent et se décroisent, devient lacinant par sa répétition. Le rythme contenu dans ces motifs répétés à l'envi, en crescendo puis en decrescendo, crée une sorte de dépendance que l'on imagine pouvoir comparer à celle de certaines substances psychotropes ou de médicaments□ : on en redemande toujours plus.□

□

La deuxième partie s'apparente plutôt au Mineur en Mi et est tout aussi hypnotique. Là aussi un bouillonnement de sons est très perceptible derrière ces thèmes répétés à foison. De crescendo qui génère la tension jusqu'au paroxysme en decrescendo qui crée l'apaisement, on arrive ainsi progressivement au calme.□

□

La troisième partie se déroule sur le mode tonique et comporte un thème binaire. Ce foisonnement de sons se fond en un amalgame très riche qui croît et décroît selon le bon plaisir du maître de cérémonie, qui souffle le chaud et le froid au gré de son inspiration. Un peu moins longue que les autres, cette partie est la plus optimiste et la plus vociférante de l'œuvre, en fort contraste avec la fin de la partie précédente.□

□

La quatrième partie tourne plutôt autour de la note Sol, toujours selon le même schéma. Cette musique propice au rêve, voire à la méditation, conclut la pièce.□

□

Cette œuvre très élaborée fait une large place à l'interaction entre les musiciens, avec des groupes qui se forment et se déforment pendant le déroulement des opérations, au gré de leurs perceptions et de leur inspiration. Qualifier la musique de répétitive est un pléonasme. Dans ce genre d'exercice, elle l'est par définition mais en écoutant attentivement, on se rend compte que des variations subtiles empêchent justement les thèmes de se répéter□ : ils ne sont jamais tout à fait pareils. C'est là que se révèle le grand talent des musiciens et, bien plus encore, celui du chef d'orchestre.□

□

Vouloir apprécier cette œuvre sans se rendre totalement disponible et sans faire abstraction de tout ce qu'on a appris relève de l'utopie. L'impression de cacophonie ressentie au départ disparaît très tôt pour faire place à une écoute attentive nécessaire pour tenter de comprendre. De plus, dépasser les préjugés est une condition *sine qua non*.□

□ Il me reste à remercier chaleureusement **Erik Baron** pour ses explications techniques, dispensées avec beaucoup de gentillesse, mais il me reste aussi à préciser que les approximations, erreurs ou omissions sont bien de mon fait.□



### DésAccordes "In C" (Musea 2005)

Terry Riley's "In C" is a challenge. The Styrenes have mastered it; and of course many other bands have failed. The classic of Minimal Music is a pulsating piece of music, far removed from stiffness and oblivion. Dangerously complicated and demanding endurance, it requires nerves to meet this work. And then comes the French Avant rocker Erik Baron with his ensemble DésAccordes to intonate the piece. 7 classical and 9 electric guitars, 6 electric basses, harp, 2 cellos, percussion and drum set as well as Erik Baron as conductor and further bassist have the mammoth task of arrangement to fulfill, endurance at this hellish work has been shown and "In C" 49 long minutes are to be allowed. The notes had to be transcribed, on the instruments, which many individual string instruments were distributed. The dynamics of the work were rebuilt, so the polyphony of the ensembles here to stillness and dramatic sound intensity. It cuts at the ears and senses, music that would function as torture and yet from such splendor and harmony is. Like a living creature, it flows through the day, cautious, careful, all movements controlling.

"In C" is in 5 Parts selectable, at first it seems like the beginning of such a track in the middle of the action to stick, then again it takes a long time to come to pulsing. The picture in the middle of the booklet shows it impressively, the chef of this ensemble needed patience and care, the band itself, in its personal size, functions only in the interplay. The recording itself will, after many trials, like a mass. DésAccordes make no noise out of "In C". Much more brings the large sound body the work rather to the sum than to the rumble. The stillness is intensive and fascinating. Despite this, only fans of Minimal Music will find their joy here, who have no patience, lose the thread. This is like with small rooms, who has fear there, can not find it beautiful.



Août 2005

**Prolusion.** DESACCORDES is a French ensemble, which bassist and composer Eric Baron formed five years ago with the intent to perform non-typical music (hence the name, Disaccords). This rendering of Terry Riley's "In C" is their second album, following "Cordeyades" from two years ago. Legend has it that Riley composed this 49-minute composition in one sitting on one piece of paper in 1964. This is experimental music from 4 decades ago, which is said to have influenced people ranging from composer Philip Glass to The Who & Tangerine Dream. Terry Riley was at the heart of the Minimalist Movement in music. More recently he has worked with The Kronos Quartet on no less than 16 pieces.

**Analysis.** Imagine, if you will, the sound of a finger gliding around and around the rim of a fine crystal goblet, emitting a pitch that grows and grows with intensity out of nothing. This is the first impression of Terry Riley's "In C", as it is performed here. However, soon, that pitch begins to segment and you realize it is not a glass, but strings. The strumming, tapping, picking continues to build with more and more instruments becoming evident, fanning out from the one original tone. Deep, resonant tones of the cello (the bow drawn slowly and seamlessly) rise from the depths beneath the upper strings. At times the sounds produced resemble horns in the distance, the finely strummed guitar impersonating the mandolin. Throughout the 5 parts, the tempo continues mostly unchanged, the underlying rhythms carried out as much by stringed instruments providing a pizzicato percussion, as by the drums & traditional percussion. (It is not until the late in *Part III* that the drums come forward strongly and make themselves known.) The other musicians seem to be improvising within this framework, sometimes pulling forward with some variation, then easing back into the rhythms of the whole, whilst others move to the fore. By the close of *Part III*, the rhythm becomes nearly imperceptible, but is kept alive by the upper strings, as the basses rumble and recede like a departing thunderstorm. It is the basses themselves then that pick up the rhythm, as *Part IV* begins. Now the higher strings are like birds in a forest, chirruping, tweeting, warbling, calling here, answering there. This fourth movement climaxes in the second half, reaching a point of discord and competing rhythms, but still the constancy of the beat remains. *Part V* opens with notes that will remind those who know American TV of the theme to The Twilight Zone. By the end of *Part V*, the guitars, electric & acoustic close the piece sounding much like the ticking of an alarm clock, the kind my grandfather had, made of a metal body, where even the ticking had a resonance. So "In C" ends, like a metaphor of the passage of time, which perhaps was what Riley had in mind when he composed "In C", because there is a relentless nature to the beat, that at times is obvious and at times is almost forgotten, but never disappears. Through the business and activity, the interplay of all the various elements represented by the instruments, the beat drives on.

**Conclusion.** This is avant-garde minimalist music and it is particularly for people who understand such music that I would recommend this album. It is repetitive, yet intricate. It takes time and patience to discover the subtleties of the music, which are much more based in rhythm and tonality than in melody. Riley himself has said, "To me it's about the magic of what's in the notes themselves." Musically, "In C" is a bit like watching a fire in the hearth, where, though there is the constancy of the flames, the pattern of sparks and individual tongues of flame work in concert to form the whole, continually changing, undulating for the duration of the blaze. This is not for someone in a hurry. I do not recommend this for the casual listener or the progressive rock listener who wants to hear melodies, or rock, for that matter. It is progressive, but it is not rock. It is too

esoteric to be generally accessible.



### **DesAccordes: In C**

*"The quality of this music depends on the spontaneous interaction that will develop within the group of performers. A good performance reveals a world teeming with groups and sub-groups that continually form, separate and reform..."*- Terry Riley

A review of any version of "In C" begins with a brief mention of the piece's author. Terry Riley allegedly wrote all 53 patterns that compose "In C" in one night, back in the spring of 1964. The piece is seen as revolutionary, and it's author may be considered as the father of the Minimalistic movement.

The piece itself isn't extremely complex in that it's basically comprised of repeating musical motifs, all done in C. Different instruments are grouped together, weave in and out of the motifs constantly, as the motifs themselves expand and retract, as if the music itself were breathing. The groupings can change as the piece goes along, giving the music different textures. Now what seems simple enough on paper can apparently be very difficult to play. As quoted above, if the group of musicians playing this piece doesn't have an almost telepathic synergy, the piece can sound discordant. The version under review today is by the French ensemble DesAccordes. This version is adapted for classic and electric guitars, electric basses, harp, cello, and percussions. It has been divided into a 4-part piece, like a symphony, which is an unusual interpretation as this piece is usually played as one continuous movement.

If you enjoy hypnotic, repetitive music, then this piece can be seen as the benchmark. This is the only version I've ever heard so I can't compare it to others. Personally, I like the instrument selection on this disc and it seems to suit the nature of the music perfectly. This can seem to drone on if one isn't paying attention, but the careful listener can pick up all the subtleties the piece offers and may find it most gratifying.