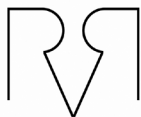


*You ask me where I get my ideas.
That I cannot tell you with certainty;
they come unsummoned
I seize them from the open air,
in the woods while walking,
in the silence of the night.*

Ludwig Van Beethoven



MUSÉE RÉATTU

Sound Art
Department

No.4
May
June
2024

*In the beginning
was listening...*

Francis Dhomont

Francis Dhomont, a prolific sound artist and composer born in Paris in 1926, composed some of his work during the vibrant summer nights of Les Baux-de-Provence and Saint-Remy-de-Provence, where he set up his first own recording studio in 1951. A close friend of the Danish sound poet and advocate of ecosophy* Knud Viktor, with whom he shared a contagious enthusiasm for the soundscapes of the Alpilles and the Lubéron, he died in Avignon on 28th December 2023 at the age of 97, to the relative indifference of the French media, leaving behind an extensive body of work. He is widely known on the North American continent where he trained several generations of composers. A lover of contrasts of all kinds, alternating between the dry, sonorous summers of Provence and the icy winters of Quebec (where he taught during the university year), his works sometimes probe the depths of the unconscious, silence and night, and at others, march, bloom, stridulate, leap, hoot, roar, chatter, chirp, wax and wane in a lush blooming spring.

At the Musée Réattu, he chaired the prestigious jury for the “Phonurgia Nova Awards” (2006-2008). His links with Arles go back a long way: in August 1986, thanks to the hospitality of Actes Sud*, he launched an avant-garde experiment in ‘cinema for the ear’ at the Méjean cinema. In other words, exclusively sound film, without projected images. This has been continued by the current Listening Room at the Musée Réattu, drawing on the numerous narrative repertoires of audio. As well as being on the jury for the Phonurgia Nova Awards, he has led several editions of the seminar *Penser le sonore* (Thinking About Sound) during the Summer Universities of Radio in Arles (2003-2005).

* environmental as well as “social” and “mental” ecology

** and Jean-Paul Capitani’s openness to new ideas...

Francis Dhomont, the wheel of time

The balcony

(4 Hi-Fi headphones)

Level 1 / Loggia

Sous le regard d'un soleil noir

(*Beneath the Gaze of a Black Sun*)

1979-1981, 51'35" (**Cycle of depths**)

Texts by R.D. Laing, Plato and Franz Kafka.

With the voices of: Arthur Bergeron,
Marthe Forget, Pierre Louet.

Device: sounds fixed on a support.

Creation, University of Montreal,

3rd February 1981

9 scenes: - *Like a Lost Traveller* - *Engulfment*
- *Stop! Stop! - She's Killing Me* - *Implosion* -
The Divided Self - *Inner Citadel* - *Petrification*
- *The Message Come Evening*

At the end of the 1970s, Francis Dhomont, who had discovered the anti-psychiatry movement, read and worked on the writings of Ronald D. Laing, in particular *Knots*, his collection of poetic texts on the confusions of the mind and the difficulties of relationships. *Beneath the Gaze of a Black Sun* deals with schizophrenia. This composition, arranged in nine successive scenes, is inspired by the book *The Divided Self*. It is a good example of an approach that led him to a composition close to opera in its dramaturgy, but an opera without singers, without instruments and completely free of the conventions of lyrical art.

Forêt profonde (*Deep Forest*)

1994-1996, 58'32" (**Cycle of depths**)

Commissioned by the French State, GRM de l'INA* with the Canada Council for the Arts

Inspired by the essay by Bruno Bettelheim
Psychoanalysis of Fairy Tales

Texts by Madame d'Aulnoy, Bruno Bettelheim,
Dante, Pavol Dobsinsky, Grimm, Arturo Parra,
Charles Perrault and Shakespeare.

With the voices of Ned Bouhalassa,
Aurélien and Circé Dhomont, Francis Dhomont,
Lujza Duris, Myriam Fabian, Else Hansen,
Clara Kaufmann, Gunda König, Pierre Louet,
Colette Mersy, Odile Misfud, Arturo Parra,
Marie Pelletier, Laurie Radford, Danielle Ros,
Daniel Teruggi, and several participants.

Device: sounds fixed on a support.

13 scenes: - *Children's Bedroom* - *On the Cusp of a Fairytale* - *Forbidden Bedroom* - *Il cammin di nostra vita* - *The Enchantments of the Imagination* - *The Antechamber* - *The Wall of Thorns* - *Chamber of Darkness* - *Furious Forest* - *Chamber Music* - *Spells* - *Chamber of Light* - *Fantasy, Instructions for Use.*

This is the second part of a triptych that began with *Beneath the Gaze of a Black Sun*. This work, in turn, bears witness to a sensitivity to psychoanalysis.

"It is a long-standing preoccupation of mine to bring together the imaginary world of 'depth psychology' and the mental images projected by acousmatic art; what could be more appropriate than the language of the latter to stage, through sound, phantasmatic representations of the former?" F. D.

The listening room

(4-speaker diffusion)

Level 1 / Room 18

Figures de la nuit (*Figures of the night*)

1991-1992, 27'15"

Bilingual radio work

dedicated to Inès Wickmann

With the voices of Loïc Baumans,
Arthur Bergeron, Suzanne Binet-Audet,
Ned Bouhalassa, Pierre Daboval,
Jean-François Denis, Francis Dhomont,
Myriam Fabijan, Jacques Lejeune,
Cécile Le Prado, Myriam Lombard,
Pierre Louet, David Olds, Justice Olsson,
Marie Pelletier, Laurie Radford,
Françoise Schmitt
and Claire-Isabelle Vauconsant.

Nightingales in Haute-Provence recorded
by Marc Jacquin.

Device: sounds fixed on a support.

Created by CKLN-FM Radio, Toronto, Canada,
3rd June 1991.

"I've always loved the night. It fascinates, attracts and embraces me; it draws me in. I love its intimacy, complicity and contemplation, and the time that is suspended until dawn, in Provence in the springtime, to the song of the nightingales. Nighttime also means sleep, dreams, sometimes nightmares and fear. For some, it's the night is eternal; for others, it's a night of love. White nights, inky nights, gentle nights or deep nights: a night transformed... So many faces of the night. Night is kind to me." F.D.

Diary Radio

The "To tie" issue of *Métaclassique*
about Francis Dhomont.

A program hosted by David Christoffel.

In the presence of the visual artist

Inès Wickmann and the sound
engineer and writer **Daniel Deshays**,
with participation - slightly delayed -
by psychoanalyst **Brigitte Lalvée**

June 8 | 4:45 pm - 5:45 pm

Librairie-boutique du musée

Free entrance

Movie

My cinema for the ear

A documentary film by Uli Aumüller

(2000, 59')

Production ARTE and ZDF

Through a look that is both impressionistic and humorous on nature and creative process, this documentary features two composers with different orientations, Francis Dhomont and Paul Lansky, and follows their search for a musical art based on the recording of their environment.

Moirures

Francis Dhomont/Inès Wickmann

Videomusique, (2005, 13'16)

In *Moirures*, the images only reveal the music, like a score of shapes, textures, and colors. The origin of these abstract images comes from reflections on the water and on windows in a permanent vibration.

June 9 | 11 aM - 5 pm

Gallery Bistro Phonurgia Nova

19, place Honoré Clair

The **DAS** a trailblazing Sound Art Department in a museum that was already pioneering in photography

Through a programme that draws on the Phonurgia Nova Awards and the patrimonial activities of the eponymous association, this Sound Art Department, (*Département d'Art Sonore*) which is supported by the CNAP, is making unique inroads into the history of radio and sound creation, reconfiguring the field of what is audible and redefining the traditional boundaries resulting from the division of knowledge

and sensibility, which have long pitted the visual, spoken and aural realms against each other. By deliberately putting images on the back burner, the Listening Room and its offshoot, the Listening Balcony, restore the original emotional power of sound. Revealing the narrative and visual power of works that use sound as their primary, if not exclusive, construction material.

The Listening Balcony

First opened in 2007 and revamped in 2024, the Listening Balcony provides an unparalleled view of today's international sound creation landscape, highlighting authors who explore the narrative and visual dimensions of sound.

Phonurgia Nova Awards

launched in Arles in 1986, awarded each year by an international jury deliberating in public, and transferred to Paris in 2011, are awarded to authors of audio narrative.



Born in 1926 into a sheltered artistic milieu and taught to compose by Nadia Boulanger and Charles Koechlin, Francis Dhomont began, like all musicians of his generation, by composing instrumental music. However, as early as 1947, before the beginnings of *musique concrète* as theorised by Pierre Schaeffer, he began experimenting with one of the first Webster wire tape recorders. He began recording what were not yet called *sound objects* and composing with them. In 1951, in Baux-de-Provence, where he worked in the wood industry to earn a living and bring up his children, he composed in his spare time in a studio he created for himself from primitive recorders. Away from the Parisian music scene, he began producing closed-circuit pieces based on the opportunities provided by “sound recording manipulation”. After discovering Pierre Schaeffer’s GRM* productions, he completed an internship there in 1973-1974 and programmed creations at the Musiques Multiples Festival in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, which he founded and chaired until 1979. After a residency at the Faculty of Music at the University of Montreal, he embarked on a long Canadian career, spanning twenty-six years, during which he wrote, composed and taught. Returning to France in 2004, he settled in Avignon, where he continued to compose in his new studio right up until his final days. His extensive catalogue bears witness to his abiding interest in this art form (known as acousmatic), which is based on a lack of visual spectacle.

Affected by sight problems, the composer was forced in his youth to remain in the dark as part of his treatment.

These circumstances, at the time of his musical apprenticeship, made music strictly sonic for him. This is probably also the reason for the recurring theme of darkness and night in his catalogue which the Musée Réattu chose to highlight in this selection.

Often bordering on the textual, even lacking words, some of his works are figurative and aim to develop an idea, while many others take the listener down a more abstract musical avenue.

His discography provides an opportunity to explore his work. But much of it remains to be discovered.

He was one of the founding members (1986) of the Canadian Electroacoustic Community (CEC), becoming an honorary member in 1989. In October 2007, the University of Montreal awarded him an honorary doctorate.

A five-time winner of the International Electroacoustic Music Competition in Bourges (France) and 2nd prize winner of Prix Ars Electronica 1992 (Linz, Austria), he has received numerous awards for his works.

* The Music Research Group (GRM) is the direct successor of the Concrete Music Research Group (GRMC) created in 1951 by Pierre Schaeffer within the RTF.

Attached to the Research Department when it was set up in 1960, the GRM survived the closure of ORTF in 1974. It is now one of the departments of the INA, the National Institute for Audiovisual Media.

To find out more

Daniel TERUGGI (dir.),


“Francis Dhomont”,

Portraits polychromes, Paris, INA-GRM, 2006.

Théo BOULENGER,

“Francis Dhomont, a career”, a radio portrait.

An act of transmission between two sound artists 60 years apart, recorded in Avignon at the composer’s home in 2011.

 [YouTube Francis Dhomont, un parcours](#)



RÉATTU THE PIONEER

An innovative commitment:
the creation of the photography
department, the invention
of a sound art department.