

"The jury admired the refined sounds and immense technical command in this work. A daring and elegant composition, very carefully structured and humorous as well".

Bastet - Prix Ton Bruynèl - Pays Bas - 2005

*Mâts* is Argentinian composer Elsa Justel's "collection of music which reflects my passion, happiness, anger, and anguish", distributed over ten years of electroacoustic research. Her palette is pleasantly diverse: aggressive cut-up aesthetics, flat sounds, distorted voices, natural noises, almost humorous hiss, and gurgling Dada explorations of analog & digital compatibilities. 'Alba Sud' is a direct homage to musique concrète: "Even if I didn't experience the era of the Schaefferian revolution, his ideas always made a very strong impression on me", she says. Still, there's a certain propensity for these compositions to stray away from intellectualism – each one simultaneously mysterious and clear and imagined; suites of fragmented, minuscule details, easy to picture in rich hues that reflect nature and life, though never as merely representations of a stereotype. An exception is 'Puntos, comas y refritos', where the sounds of birds, water, and footsteps are displayed almost unfiltered – a conscious act of revisiting (some of) electroacoustic music's fixations: "I wanted to use these 'refritos' (Spanish for clichés) in order to recreate, with humour, a certain form of nostalgia". Perhaps a residual longing for the purist sound aesthetics that belonged to the more visionary 1960s... Justel's work, however, is post-Cage and post-Schaeffer, similar to the term "post-rock" which references the unrepeatability of particular aesthetics. The fact that she's still interested in forms of elemental purity just happens to be a major plus, as *Mâts* is the sort of thing that breaks many outlined scenarios.

~ by doru649 on June 27, 2010

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The electroacoustic works of Elsa Justel are striking for their rich morphological invention: canvases made of minuscule yet consistently varied sounds; stratified figures made of multiple simultaneous shots, intertwining with one another; tremblings turning into sharp and lightning objects; objects of all sizes, objects so diverse they relentlessly keep hold of your attention. This is undeniably a form of music demanding active listening, a state of awareness to the smallest palpitations, music that always has rich meanings to unveil, no matter how many times you listen to it. In fact, the more you listen to it, the more it becomes both mysterious and habitable. It is music to be cherished for its sophistication, vividness and subtlety. This music imitates nothing; it is there, warm and savant, controlled yet free, vigorous and intelligent. It adds to the real world a presence consisting of its own immanence. It is this presence that Elsa Justel has been trying to bring forth, through her unyielding work as a composer, and succeeding so rightfully that she immediately wins us over. I see Elsa Justel's music as surplus life, absolutely essential to our existence.

Horacio Vaggione, Paris (France), May 2005 [English translation: François Couture, x-07] - CD empreintes DIGITALes IMED 0785 - [http://www.electrocd.com/fr/bio/justel\\_el/](http://www.electrocd.com/fr/bio/justel_el/)

"Du libe tu , d'Elsa Justel, est un petit clin d'oeil charmant √† Pierre Schaeffer dont on cite une phrase encore porteuse de vérité, pour le meilleur et pour le pire, et qui provoque autant qu'elle fait réfléchir, comme le cycle des robots d'Asimov".

François Tousignant : commentaires sur les concerts Rien à voir in "Le Devoir" (Québec), 17 avril 2001

"Triomphe moderne de la matière sur l'esprit ! Dans une pièce d'aujourd'hui - par exemple pour flûte - peu de flûte qui ne nous fasse d'abord savoir qu'elle est un instrument à vent , avec des clés bruyantes, contingentes et fières de l'être -qui n'avoue tout d'abord son "cher corps"... Tout ce que l'on cachait, on s'empresse d'en faire l'aveu, de mettre à plat le cher causal incontournable. (...) Toute cette histoire parce que Feuillage de silence (Elsa Justel) commence aussi par du bruit blanc, des mélodies de bruit blanc tout autour de nous dans les haut-parleurs, avant de se resserrer, loukoum finalement consistant au milieu de son sucre-glace. Car ce parcours heurté et crachotant, de nature mélodique, ou disons linéaire, c'est-à-dire ayant la probité du dessin, est une musique humoristique et pantelante, fraîche, tendrement (?le hautbois sans doute) appliquée, compliquée, savante, gracieuse, sérieuse et agréable, un peu bavarde, bien écrite, avec des effarements soudains d'oiseau et des éternuements (qui m'ont rappelé l'attendrissant Oiseau moqueur ). Enfin, j'ai apprécié qu'elle sache chanter, dans une manière bien personnelle, sans trop ces conduites "d'évitements" de la mauvaise conscience moderne".

Jean-Christophe Thomas en "Recherche/musique" à propos du concert du 20 février 1995, au GRM, à la Maison de la Radio -Paris - France.

"... works as Elsa Justel's intensely rhythmic *Mâts*. Focused frequency bands from the composer's carefully crafted sounds were presented in three-dimensional space by projectionist David Behar in a way which musically articulated the larger structures of the work. The rhythmic suppleness and vitality of the work seems to grow out of the smallest materials, primarily samples of small hand drums, and extend into ever-expanding phrases to create a work of powerful unity and drama".

Futura 2000, Crest, France, 23-26 August, 2000 - Reviewed by Lawrence Fritts, University of Iowa, Iowa City, USA.

"Elsa Justel's *Mâts* (1999) was one of the rare conference works inflected with humor and wit, refreshingly balance between concrète, archaic (based on the sounds of very early instruments) and electronic sounds."

Reviewed by Thomas Gerwin in "Music for Humans" - Computer Music Journal, vol.5, nro 2, summer 2001, pp.64-68

"Je parlais plus haut de travaux d'aiguille : Feuillage de silence d'Elsa Justel est un ouvrage de dame, minutieux, soigné, un peu expérimental dans son dialogue, bien maîtrisé, de la flûte (Hélène Devilleneuve), du hautbois (Vincent Touzet) et de la bande, mais sympathique, ne fût-ce que par le titre et les références aux travaux de jardinage. Artisanat sérieux du compositeur, en acousmatique comme ailleurs. Mais il y a plus, l'oeuvre se double d'une réflexion esthétique sur la beauté idéale que poursuit la création. Pourtant, aucune flatterie auriculaire : la matière en est souvent assez brute et heurtée, râpeuse et décapante, mais c'est cela même qui lui confère son identité, et qui met en évidence la tension, les déchirements que suppose une création sensible aujourd'hui. Vers la fin, lorsque l'on entend ce fourmillement de sons comme craquelés auxquels répondent les tremolos ou les bribes de discours des deux instruments, on se dit que cette quête de l'harmonie, du jardin parfait est restée inachevée, mais que cela est plus authentique qu'une pièce trop immédiatement séduisante".

Jacques Bonnaure en "La lettre du musicien" à propos du concert du 20 février 1995, au GRM, à la Maison de la Radio -Paris - France.

"Elsa Justel, seeks to integrate real and virtual elements into a fusion of discourse. Her conception of sound space and structure aim to reflect the dynamic interaction of both aspects, thus the direct instrument is alternately protagonist and imperceptible actor of the tape material. The language of Elsa Justel is blended principally on rigorous, energetic surfaces, energy, some times violent; it retains nevertheless, a strong poetic nuance".

Revue eContact 3.3, 2000 - about concert March 23, 1999 at Merrill Ellis Intermedia Theater, University of North Texas, USA

" *Fy-Mor* by Elsa Justel : Sharp, mechanical rattling timbres were the most prominent feature of this work. Crunching, percussive, and liquid sounds appeared and disappeared. Soon the effect lightened with the addition of a large variety of new timbres, some with humorous associations but with the mechanical, repetitive character still in evidence. Most memorable was a section filled with "squidging" sounds, as if hundreds of balloons were being rubbed simultaneously. This was followed by tongue-popping and clicking sounds. In the final section, the short, individual sound events were transformed into long, continuous sounds through the use of very fast repetition".

Reviewed by Doug Scott in Revue Array, about concert october 16, 1992, ICMC San José State University

"Other pieces which particularly captured my attention included Elsa Justel's *Du Libe Tu?* (1997), a brief but effective work which aptly opened the program. Its rhythmically active environment prepared the listener for the longer and more slowly evolving pieces which immediately followed".

Steven L. Makela in eContact 3.3,2000 , about the concerts Electroacoustic Music by Women Composers; University of North Texas, Denton, Texas, USA, March 23 & 25, 1999