

Our Friend Jean-Claude Risset

DANIEL TERUGGI and THE GRM (Groupe de Recherches Musicales)

In life you have friends, and Jean-Claude was indeed a friend, and in music you have musical friends, musicians who have the wonderful capacity of listening to other people's music, to relish when listening to it and to share their impressions and thoughts with enthusiasm, always trying to understand the music and the musician, creating a link between reception and the exchange of ideas. Jean-Claude was indeed one of those rare musicians who, while being a notorious scientist, never left music and musicians aside.

I could write this comment from a personal point of view, however, I would like to stress here the continuous friendship that the GRM has had with Jean-Claude Risset since the 1960s. In that period, the GRM was starting to explore or at least to understand what was happening with computers and music. Contacts were made with the Bell Labs and, despite the resistance that came from Pierre Schaeffer regarding any kind of preconceived music, François Bayle commissioned him to contribute the first digital work of our repertoire, *Mutations* (1969), which was first performed at the UNESCO meeting for Music and Technology in Stockholm in 1970.

That first work was the door that opened a continuous collaboration with Jean-Claude in the fields of sound computing and composition. In the beginning of the 1970s, there was no Digital to Analog convertor at GRM, so calculated sounds would be sent over the Atlantic to the Bell Labs to be transformed into audible

sounds and then sent back again for researchers to discover an interesting or often deceiving result. He brought to France and to the GRM the Music V code so that it could be implemented in our awakening computer room and collaborated with our team to make it run and adapt it to the GRM's vision. Then using the Syter system, he produced in that studio one of the outstanding works of the 1980s: *Sud* (1985), a homage to Marseille and its region, which has become a classic for so many musicians, including high school students who analyse the work still today, and a masterpiece of hybridation.

Other works came later: *Avel*, *Elementa*, *Voilements*, *Nature / Contre nature* – all rich in sound and always exploring new ways of inventing sounds for a beautiful musical result. Jean-Claude regularly returned to visit us, discussing new issues, investigating our new tools, discussing the future. We had planned a new work for his eightieth birthday, and then...

In 2001 I wrote this conclusion after analysing his work:

Sud is a work to listen to over and over and discover and rediscover. It reveals its nooks and crannies little by little, its transformations bewilder, but above all it astonishes with its vitality and by the force conveyed by sounds apparently so distant from the instrumental world, but so strong and powerful when set in music.

Let us keep on listening eternally to *Sud*, in our minds and our hearts. Thanks Jean-Claude.