

e s p a _

for 7 singer - performers

Yannick Guédon

composition, direction

with

Claire Bergerault
Geoffroy Dudouit
Jean Fürst
Yannick Guédon
Géraldine Keller
Aurélie Maisonneuve
Jean-Baptiste Veyret-Logerias

*Premiered in the radome of St-Nazaire, France, the 23th November 2018
as part of the Instants Fertiles festival
organized by Athénor, Centre National de Création Musicale*

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e s p a _ , for 7 singer - performers, is centered on notions of space and movement in relation to sound.

This unamplified, a *capella* piece is conceived to **reveal the acoustic specificities afforded by the architecture of a place**. In other words, we explore how a musical composition can bring us to listen to a place.

To this end, the singers not only interpret a musical score* but also a choreographic score that guides their positions and movements. These precise scores activate modes of writing and processes that remain flexible enough to make them adaptable to every new concert space. There are therefore **two main interests: adapting the piece to a specific space, and being curious about how this space is affected by the scores**.

*The visuals for this document were excerpted from a musical score that can be consulted here : http://www.thymes.fr/partitions/espa_partition.pdf



Rehearsal at GMEA, CNCM of Albi

REVEALING, LISTENING TO A PLACE

This requires that we adapt the singers' pathways and positions to each new location in order to situate—and create a unique situation for—the musical composition.

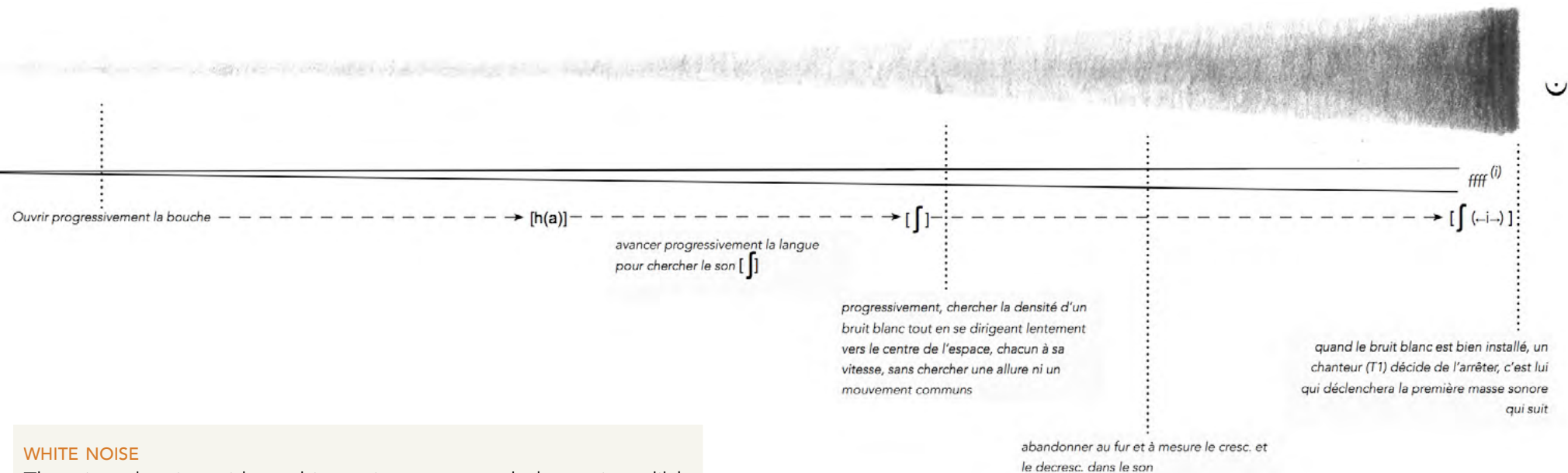


WHICH PLACE?

Ambient noise is very welcome in this piece. We enjoy the permeability with everyday life, be it through sounds or lights from outside. And so we can express our preference—albeit not an exclusive one—for spaces with openings that might allow us to enjoy the natural light—at sunset for example – when the performance schedule permits. In theaters we play in a semi-lit setting.

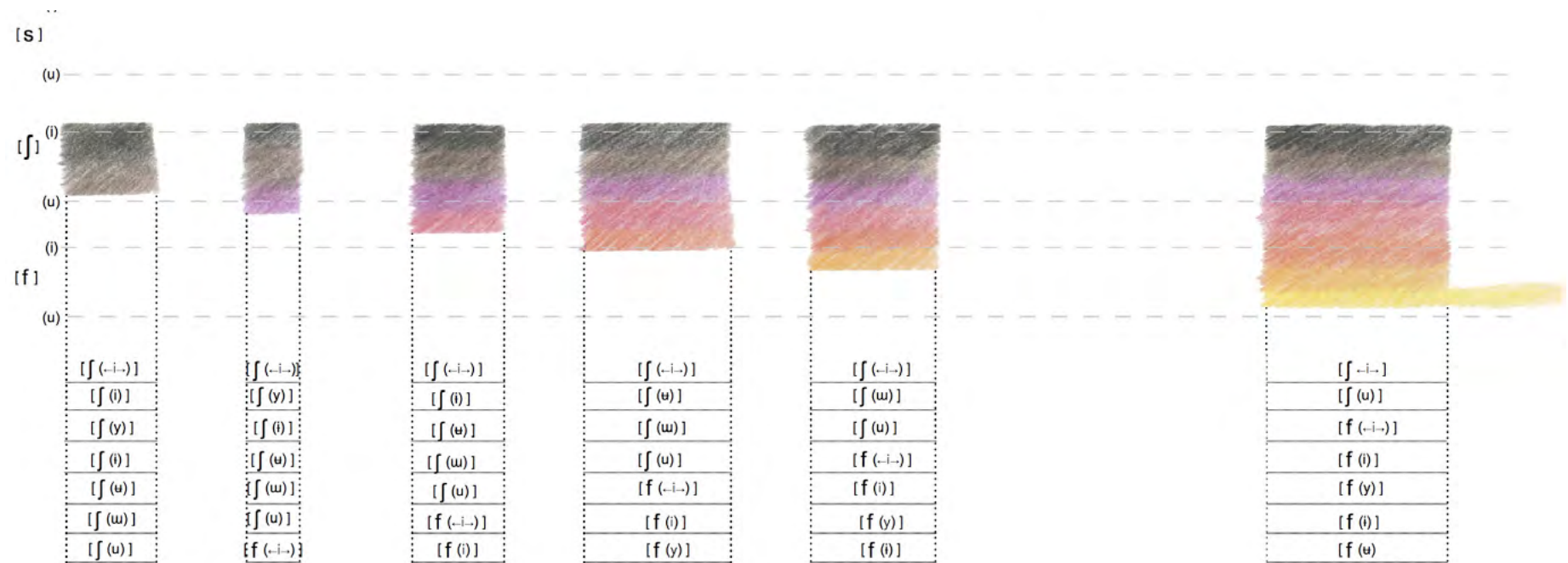
THE MUSICAL SCORE

The musical score is based on a global form that develops as follows:
out of a white noise emerge different colors of sound that slowly and gradually melt into a single unit - a sustained note that is ultimately atomized.



WHITE NOISE

The piece begins with a white noise generated almost inaudibly and imaginarily by the singers' and spectators' breathing. The singers then ever-so-slightly magnify the sound of their breathing into a kind of **sound mist** that floats just above the silence of the place. This mist gradually thickens into an almost completed white noise, to the point where it **nearly erases all acoustic perception of the space**.



FIRST DIFFRACTION

Like white light diffracted as it passes through a prism, various colors of sound are generated through this white noise. A white noise actually contains all the frequencies - emitted with a constant intensity - of the spectrum audible to the human ear. Each performer sings a particular color, developing its nuance through a slow evolution of timbres nourished by fricatives.

The progressive friction and disturbances that ensue **blur the resonance of the acoustic space.**

Voiced sound subtly appears from out of this evolution (as the vocal cords begin to vibrate), leading to a more distinct individuation of voices. For the listener, it gets easier to recognize and assign a sound to each singer. This voicing gradually dissolves the fricatives into three "pure" - that is, without any consonants - voiced sounds.

PERPETUAL CONVERGENCE

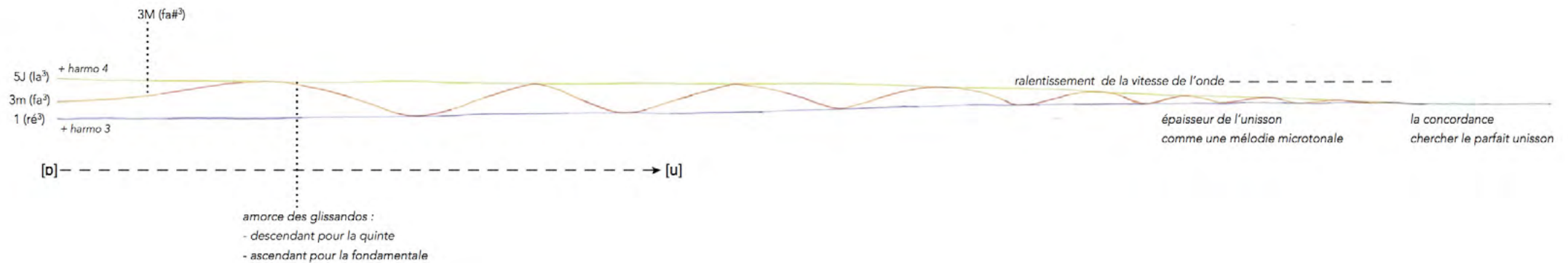
These three sounds are sung continuously using relays amongst the singers.

The upper voice performs a slowly descending glissando, the lower voice a slowly ascending glissando, and the middle voice oscillates from one to the other in a slightly quicker movement.

These glissandos swell some frequencies that reveal the resonant frequencies of the space.

The three lines then merge into a single sustained note.

The magnetic attraction toward this note creates an effect of perpetual convergence; it hones the ear to hear what these sounds become and induces anticipation for a possible intersection.



I worked on a similar phenomenon in a previous piece* where the voices finally never joined. Here, we deal with the “inevitable” meeting point of voices. Yet this intersection is not the culminating point of the piece. Rather I try, to quote Serge Leclaire, “to draw from the event what is not accomplished in the effectuation, or **bring out of the becoming what cannot be fixed by an end.**” (Démâsquar le réel – Ed. Du Seuil)

From there, we can observe multiple facets of this single note, listening to the connection between the voices’ harmonics.

**chaque chose*, created by the Dedalus ensemble in 2015
as part of the *Extension festival - la Muse en Circuit*,
Centre National de Création Musicale

SECOND DIFFRACTION

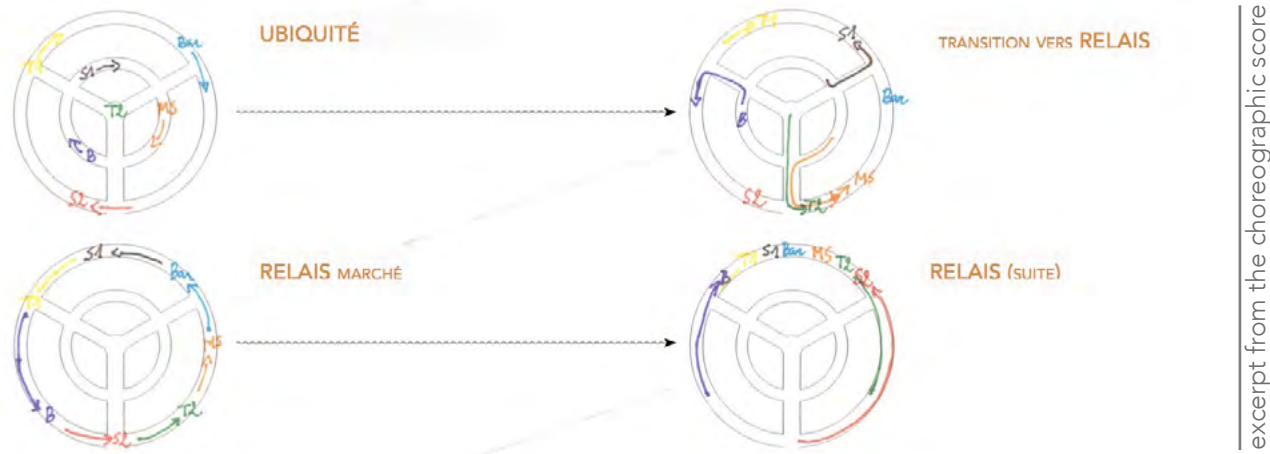
Following this, a second diffraction comes into play: gradually diffracting a single note into distinguishable chords made of specific harmonics. A sung note naturally contains a multitude of harmonics (partials), some more present than others, that shape the timbre of each singer. The issue is to create chords out of these **harmonics that will reveal the resonant capacities of the space**. These harmonics are produced through overtone singing, but not the same way as in Mongolian singing. We indeed use another technique where the harmonics remain just as audible, but also affect the sound's color.



ATOMIZATION (PASSING FROM CONTINUOUS TO DISCONTINUOUS)

Finally, once this fundamental note has been diffracted into multiple harmonics, the sound is cut up in time – becoming shorter and shorter – so that the previously sustained and continuous sound is cut into the finest fragments, until it disperses into tiny points of sound. Each singer thus becomes a kind of **marker in space** that reveals the specific acoustics of the spot where he or she is singing.

THE CHOREOGRAPHIC SCORE



The musical score is correlated with the movements, trajectories and positions of the singers in space, knowing that **the singers evolve alongside the spectators**.

During the white noise sequence, the singers are scattered amongst the public, without any hints as to their role. Then, gradually, as colors of sound emerge and become more distinct, the singers follow defined pathways. They sing moving in concentric circles, circulating from one to another following lines of diameter. Once they have converged onto the single note, six singers head to the periphery, while the seventh one remains fixed at the center of the space, their note creating a kind of landmark in relation to the same note being sung by the performers moving along the edges.

The choreographic score addresses a phenomenon related to our primary interest: **how sound is moved**.

During our previous residencies, we worked in particular on the **Doppler effect**, the effect on sound when, for instance, a siren is modified by a moving ambulance. This inspired the idea of compiling a sound sung by a static person with a similar sound interpreted by singers moving through the space.

This is the same Doppler effect used by radar to determine an airplane's position in the sky. In fact, *e s p a _* first premiered in a radome—a semi-spherical shelter used to cloak the radar's orientation. The piece was also performed in other singular spaces and even in theaters—for example on the stage of *Maison de la Musique* in *Cap Découverte* as part of a GMEA (Centre National de Création Musicale d'Albi) residency—but this very first place where we started the creation, the radome, has naturally imbued the piece and how we adapt it to every new architecture and, by extension, context.



The choreographic score also uses the typology of a space such as the entrance door (the piece actually begins as soon as the public enters the concert space), the audience seating, the edges of the space – as well as simple postures: standing, kneeling or sitting with the public. These postures invite a way of integrating with the audience, or being absent from it, or on the contrary, addressing spectators in a more direct or obvious manner.

In this way, the singers' movements and pathways explore notions of distance, moving close or far apart, proximity and convergence, presence and absence.



Dress rehearsal at the radome - *Athénor*, CNCM of Saint-Nazaire

e s p a _ , leads us to experience a way of listening to sound phenomenon as it develops, in its interaction with the performance space, and in an intimate listening setting with the public.

By questioning the subjectivity of perceiving time and movement, we invite the audience to sense time as a moment of being available and open to the possible.

LIENS

Below are links to excerpts from the piece *e s p a* _ recorded during the premiere at the radome of Saint-Nazaire during the festival Instants Fertiles, organized by Athénor, CNCM of Saint-Nazaire, November 24, 2018:

s'approcher, affleurer, s'éloigner _ http://www.thymes.fr/son/espa_/Athenor_2_Sapprocher-Seloigner.mp3
s'approcher, infiniment _ http://www.thymes.fr/son/espa_/Athenor_3_SeRapprocherInfiniment.mp3
ma _ http://www.thymes.fr/son/espa_/Athenor_5_ma.mp3



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Rehearsal at GMEA, CNCM Albi

BIOGRAPHIES

Yannick Guédon is a french born composer, singer and performance artist, currently living in brussels.

His work focuses on tiny variations of timbres, the inner pulsation sensations and subjective notions of time, silence and error. He pays particular attention to the place and context in which each musical situation is displayed.

In 2006 he wrote his first piece, *pitulatif*, for a solo voice. He followed it with *ticdê* (2007) a vocal trio, *infimie* (2007) for voice, electroacoustic, video and light, *soupir* (2009) and *pause* (2010), for clarinet, guitar, percussion, cello and voice.

From 2011 to 2015 he developed the cycle of sound situations *a _ t e m p _ s*, with:

a t t e m p _ s (2011), for treble viola da gamba, voice, birthday candles and electroacoustic setup;

a t _ e m p t _ (2012), sound research on the absence of the artist previously in residence;

_ _ _ _ _ (2013), counting piece for voice and electroacoustic setup;

a _ _ _ _ _ (2014), for voice hidden in the sound of a treble viola da gamba hidden in a noisy environment;

_ _ t e m p _ _ (2014), the four previous sound situations re-actualized for an exhibition made by Thomas Bernardet;

a _ _ _ _ _ (2015), version for voice, treble viola da gamba, turntable, video, windows and doors;

(_ _ _ _ - _ _ _ _) (2015), performance in cemetery for one spectator with visual artist Grégory Edelein.

From 2015, he has come back to the composition of ensemble pieces, in particular with:

chaque chose for flute, clarinet, trombone, timpani, violin, cello, guitar, cellphones and tiles, a piece commissioned by the *dedalus* ensemble for the *Extension* festival / la Muse en Circuit,

l'insistance des possibles (2016), a trio with Deborah Walker (cello) and Cyprien Busolini (viola),

e s p a _ (2018), for 7 singers, created as part of the *Instants Fertiles* festival organized by Athénor, CNCM of Saint-Nazaire.

Since 2018, he has premiered different pieces by Éliane Radigue such as *Occam XXII*, a piece for solo voice, the duo *Occam XIX* with the violist Julia Eckhardt in Tabakalera (San Sebastian), as well as the quartet *Occam Delta XVI* with Carol Robinson, Bertrand Gauguier and Julia Eckhardt in Palais de Tokyo, invited by the artist Tomás Saraceno during the Festival d'Automne, Paris.

In 2019, he premiered *Occam Delta XIX* with Bertrand Gauguier and Carol Robinson, in ZKM-Karlsruhe for Giga-Hertz award to Éliane Radigue.

He recently premiered *Prisma Interius IX*, composed by Catherine Lamb with the Dedalus ensemble during the *Riverrun - GMEA* festival Albi, recorded for the New World Records label.

As a performer, he also worked with Roland Hayrabedian's contemporary chamber choir, collectif Muzzix and composers such as Antoine Beuger, Rodolphe Bourotte, Pascale Criton, György Kurtag jr, Michael Pisaro and Marc Sabat.

He also collaborated with, among others, the following musicians Christophe Albertijn, Didier Aschour, Mattieu Delaunay, Bryan Eubanks, Loïc Guénin, Rebecca Lane, Thierry Madiot, Carole Rieussec, Michael Schmid (Ictus), and choreographers as Varinia Canto Vila, Marcos Simoes&Lilia Mestre, Sara Manente.

In parallel of his musical career, he performed also as a dancer.

In 2002, he took part in the program *exerce* in the National Choreographic Center of Montpellier, directed by Mathilde Monnier. There he met the choreographer Laurent Pichaud with who he has been performed in numerous site specific performances. He also collaborated with the choreographers Chazallon&Chaput, Philipp Gehmacher&Vladimir Miller, and Rémy Héritier.

Claire Bergerault studied piano and singing at the Conservatoires of Poitiers and Versailles. She received her master's degree in musicology from the University of Poitiers, and studied composition with Pierre Pincemaille and Yvonne Desportes. She deepened her approach to contemporary voice with Guillermo Anzorena and Donatienne Michel-Dansac.

She is currently involved in several projects in the field of experimental and improvised music, with musicians such as Jean-Luc Guionnet, Thomas Tilly, Fabrice Favriou, Fabrice Favriou, Sophie Agnel and Eric Brochard.

As a performer, she also sings in contemporary music projects for composers such as Pascale Criton, François Rossé and Simon Steen-Andersen.

She takes part in performances with the artists Alexandre Burton, Christophe Macé, Patrick Dekeyser, with the dance company Alea Citta, and with the sound poet Edith Azam.

She has more than a dozen discs released on the labels Orkesme, Nocturne and Cathnor.

Geoffroy Dudouit

It is through choral singing that Geoffroy Dudouit began his musical training. Encouraged by Manuel Coley, he joined international choirs like Mikrokosmos (director: Loïc Pierre) and Le Jeune Chœur de Paris (director: Laurence Equilbey).

He took part in workshops relating to dance-contact (Claire Filmon), improvisation (Phil Minton), harmonic singing (David Hykes and Daï-Nouri Choque), Body-Mind Centering (Vera Orlock). For ten years, he led a career in the lyric scene, in choir and as a soloist, while cultivating his taste for contemporary poetry.

With Tartine de Clous, he deepens his interest in traditional singing, a practice that he mixes with an in-depth study of medieval music with people such as Marcel Pérès, Dominique Vellard and Damien Poisblaud.

Jean Fürst

After having worked for many years as a portrait photographer, he turns to performance by becoming an interpreter for several theatre and dance groups. Interested in voice work, he meets musicians and performers such as Joan La Barbara, Meredith Monk, Phil Minton, David Moss, John Giorno, Dieter Schnebel, Alessandro Bosetti, etc. At the same time, he follows classical song classes, developing more particularly counter tenor's tessitura. His current ground of preference is vocal experiment and it leads him to creator-performer's activity in that field.

He also provides vocal training for theatre and singing performances.



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Géraldine Keller

Her repertoire as a soprano extends from early music to premiers of contemporary works that underline the complementarity of written and improvised music. She earned a master's degree in Visual Arts while simultaneously studying voice, jazz, and contemporary vocal repertoire at the Music Academy of Strasbourg. She also pursued complementary studies in contemporary dance and theatre. She has sung for many composers, including François Rossé, Gualtiero Dazzi, Jean-Pierre Drouet, Christophe Havel, Hans Joachim Hespos, Thierry Alla, and José Luis Campana. She has performed works by Giacinto Scelsi, Georges Aperghis, John Cage, Luca Francesconi, and György Kurtág. She has collaborated with dance, musical theatre and théâtre d'objet companies, including Cie Adèle Riton (Strasbourg), Cie Blu (Italy), Cie Le Grain (Bordeaux), Cie Malene Hertz (Denmark), Cie Archipel Indigo (Strasbourg), Cie Médiane (Strasbourg), and La Cie Toujours après minuit — Brigitte Seth and Roser Montlló Guberna (Paris), with whom she has premiered many works in France and elsewhere in Europe.

Aurélie Maisonneuve initiated her musical background with flute, and then studied singing at the music Conservatoires of Angers (France) and Amsterdam. As soon as she met Françoise Kubler at the National Conservatoire (CNR) of Strasbourg in France, she started to dedicate her works to contemporary music.

She now explores the grounds of improvisation through experimental, researchful and creative paths, having regular collaborations with Philippe Foch, Toma Gouband, Martine Altenburger, Christophe Havard and Fabrice Arnaud-Crémon.

By cooperating with Théâtre Athénor, Aurélie develops the resourceful relationship with very young children, thanks to which she creates and performs several shows dedicated to young audience.

Jean-Baptiste Veyret-Logerias is a performer and performance maker, and lives in Paris (fr). In 2005-2006 he became one of the first students of the 'Essais' program at CNDC in Angers (fr), directed by E. Huynh. He has been singing since he was a child, and started dancing when he was studying linguistics at the university. He has worked with artists such as Myriam van Imschoot (be), Martine Pisani (fr), Dennis Deter (de), Begüm Erciyas(tr/de), Robert Steijn & Frans Poelstra (nl/at), Ivana Müller (hr/fr), Daniel Larrieu (fr)... He has also been a vocal coach on many artistic projects, particularly with Mylène Benoît (fr), Nina Santes & Celia Gondol (fr), Emmanuelle Vo-Dinh (fr)... Since 2007 he has been actively involved in the constitution and the organization of events from the international network 'Sweet & Tender collaborations'. In 2010 he was awarded the danceWEB scholarship to take part in the ImPulsTanz festival in Vienna (at), and was selected in 2013 to be part of the French delegation at Festival Transamériques in Montreal (ca) for the Encounters of Young Makers and Critics of Performance. In 2015 he graduated in Perceptive and Somatic Psychoeducation / method Danis Bois at the Fernando Pessoa University in Porto (pt).



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e s p a _ is a creation supported by

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with the kind support of the town of Montpellier and the Conseil Régional Occitanie (fr)

co-production

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GMEA, Centre National de Création Musicale, Albi (fr)

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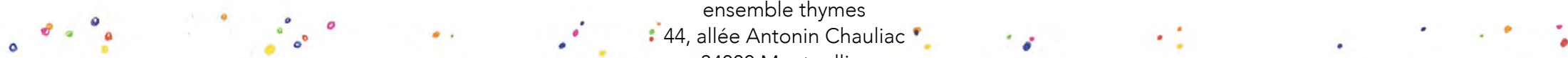
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