



CRIS AND CITIES

Tōkyō no oto / japanese cantata / 東京の音 Les Cris de Paris / Ensemble Cairn

« I am interested in a vocal music which imitates, and which can describe this incredible process, essential to language: when sound becomes meaning. »

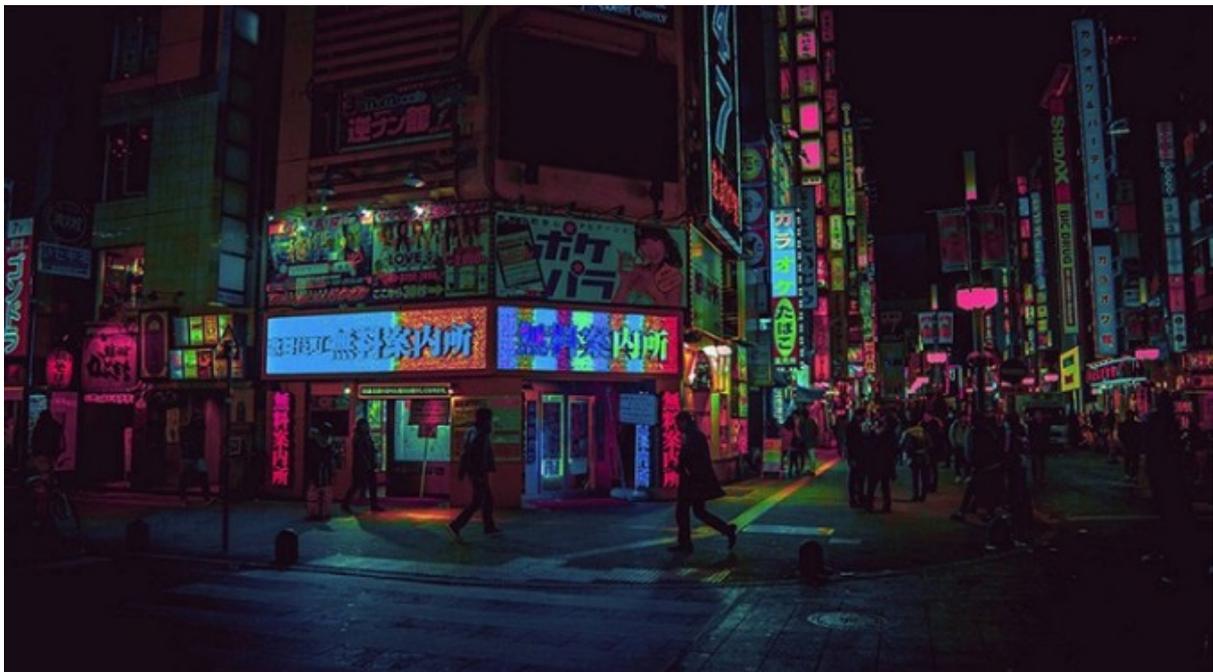
Luciano Berio

Sound geography of a town

Tōkyō no oto traces the sound perception an artist, Jérôme Combier, has of the town of Tokyo. For the past few years, his artistic approach has taken inspiration from his surrounding reality: when wandering in foreign places, he collects sonorous, musical and textual material, bits and pieces of the environment he navigates.

To help him conceive this project, Jérôme Combier has invited plastic artist Yannick Jacquet to create a staged performance, both visual and musical, around the city of Tokyo.

Tōkyō no oto furthers the musical tradition which consists in **rendering the sonorous atmosphere of a town** – its **sounds, its noises, words of people** walking in the streets – and transferring this concrete reality into music – score and electronic sounds. For this project, Jérôme Combier will roam the streets of Tokyo carrying a microphone device, which allows taping 3D recordings. This approach, which is a work method and a means of inspiration, also has its own artistic value and will be documented in its different steps.



A specific vocal writing connected to Renaissance

Tokyo no oto is a musical and visual project for 8 singers:

2 sopranos, 2 altos, 2 tenors, 2 basses

and 5 instrumentists :

microtonal-accordion, flute, clarinet, Japanese shô and trumpet

The project will be performed by *Les Cris de Paris* (a French vocal group) and *Ensemble Cairn* (music ensemble directed by Jérôme Combier). Geoffroy Jourdain, musical director of *Les Cris de Paris*, will conduct the music.

The piece will be organized in 8 to 10 sections, each related to a specific district of Tokyo: **Yanaka, Shinjuku, Hueno, Asakusa ... Electroacoustic fragments** taken from the recordings of Tokyo will be used as interludes, as transitions between sections, but will also be injected in brief fragments into the vocal music. These inserts of electroacoustic music refer directly to the technique of *soundscapes*; thus emerges the presence of the city in a very concrete way.



Tokyo no oto is a profane cantata, falling within the tradition of vocal occidental music, binding together the tradition of polyphony and folk songs.

Tokyo no oto is also directly linked to the French and English Renaissance, to Clément Janequin's song *Voulez ouyr les cris de Paris* (1530) and to that of Orlando Gibbons, *Cries of London*, rewritten in 1975 by Luciano Berio. In reference to Renaissance music, Jérôme Combier's piece will explore consonance; in reference to Berio, it will explore the moving and uncertain frontier between vocal and oral, sound and sense, music and noise. More generally, *Tokyo no Oto* will explore sounds in Tokyo – whichever their origin: human, machine, from the part of nature the city conceals... The piece will resemble the diary of a westerner lost in Tokyo, a sound

map of the city that is conceived, imagined and dreamed by a foreigner whilst strolling through its streets. *In Tokyo, dreaming of Tokyo...*

Program of the concert

The concert will draw a historical perspective of vocal music from the Renaissance polyphony and madrigals, to the music of our time. Incidentally, *Cries of London* is already a re-appropriation of early music.

- Voulez ouyr les cris de Paris* :: Clément Janequin - 1539 (6')
for 5 voices and instruments (arrangement by Jérôme Combier)
- Cries of London* :: Luciano Berio – 1974 (12')
for 8 voice
- Tokyo no oto (cries of Tokyo)* :: Jérôme Combier (40')
for 8 voice, 5 instruments and electronic

Performers

Les Cris de Paris (Michiko Takahashi, soloist)

Ensemble Cairn : Cédric Jullion (flutes), Ayumi Mori (clarinets), Fanny Vicens (accordion), André Feydy (trumpet)

Japanese shô : Naomi Sato

Geoffroy Jourdain : conductor

Presence of reality - the recordings

The compositional approach will be based on the recordings made in various parts of Tokyo. The sound material used will be singled out from these, and necessarily reinterpreted: from an inflexion of voice, a melody could rise; from bells ringing, chords; a song hummed in a park or on the radio could inspire a particular acoustic which would be reproduced on stage via amplification. However, none of this can be foreseen; the encounters and inspirations will remain a surprise until the artist turns on the recorder.



Brief extracts of the recordings will be played on stage via two loudspeakers hidden between the singers and the musicians. A second solution, more complex, could be to hide several small speakers among the audience to enlarge the sensation of immersion in the sounds of the city.

Textual material

The 40 minutes- vocal piece *Tokyo no oto* will be written in Japanese. On the one hand, the text will consist in a collection of words and sentences heard in the city. On the other hand, fragments of texts of the Japanese poet **Makoto Ōoka** (including the poem *People of Tokyo*) and the French poet **Nicolas Bouvier** (*Le vide et le plein*) will be included. During the performance, on stage, three large translucent screens will translate into French the few essential words of the Japanese texts. A visual creation in themselves, these appearances will be discreet and diaphanous.

四 東京に帰った

東京には
ニンゲンの顔したヒトがいっぱいゐる
花びらの耳
木の実の顎もときどきある
目尻に深く文字の皺を彫つてるヒト
眉毛に楽曲の線引いてるヒトも
時には混じつて歩いてをる
でも東京は とにかく
ニンゲンの顔したヒトの溢れてるまちだ
都会つてものは

さういふもんだと思ふから
それでいいのだ
しかしいつもニンゲンの顔をしつづけるのは
くたびれることだ
ニンゲンの顔ばかり見て過ごすのも
くたびれることだ
顔が星空をしてゐる人
目が大洋をしてゐる人が
満員電車で一人でもゐると
そつと懂れてしまふ

Ōoka Makoto

The project *Tokyo no oto* requires a mix of Japanese and French texts. If the French language refers to western vocal writing, mostly polyphonic songs of Renaissance and madrigalesque writing, it will be necessary to consider the Japanese language in a particular way and to question the various possible forms of this language (erudite - popular). The songs will be written according to the Latin transcription of Japanese (Rōmaji), or with the help of the International Phonetic Alphabet. It will also be necessary to reflect upon the phonetic articulation of the Japanese language, which is a language comprising accents of height (strong ascents and descents of the height) and its integration in a Western song. On the other hand, *Tokyo no oto* refers to certain aspects of Japanese traditional vocal music: the Jiuta repertoire, popular during the Edo period (1601-1868), was practiced by noble women who sang, accompanying themselves with shamisen or koto, and sometimes with the addition of shakuhachi.



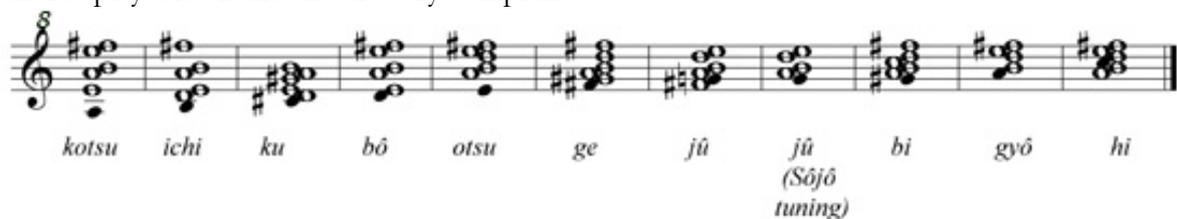
Naomi Sato

Japanese shô

Japanese shô is a mouth organ, a cousin of the Chinese sheng, which was originally used in gagaku music. It consists of 17 tubes, each connected to a metal reed and to a resonant chamber in which the performer breathes. Fifteen of the seventeen tubes produce a fixed sound:



The shô, because of its peculiar tuning, made the understanding of Japanese music structure possible from a very practical angle. In the book *Theory and Aesthetic Japanese Music*, Akira Tamba refers to a fundamental theoretical text of the thirteenth century, the *Kyôkônshô* written in 1233 by Chikazane Koma : it clearly explains how to tune the shô, and we understand how this tuning, following the resonance of the tubes by successive fifths, fixed a certain temperament. By its tuning, the fixed sounds, the shô was precisely one of the founding instruments of the theorization of music in Japan. On the other hand, the shô can also deploy harmonies and is used as such, in the music of *Kangen*, instrumental music of the profane Kagaku. The eleven chords playable on the shô are very complex:



Precisely because of these harmonic possibilities, quite strange, almost immaterial, many contemporary composers were attracted to this instrument: John Cage, Toshio Hosokawa (*Landscape V*-1993, for shô and string quartet), Joji Yuasa, Klaus Huber (*Black plaint*-1995), Helmut Lachenmann (*Das Mädchen mit den Schwefelhölzern* -1996) Aurélien Dumont (*Croisées dormantes*), Chaya Czernorwin (*Die Kreuzung* -1995 for shô, saxophone and double bass).

Stage disposition

The singers will be set in a circular arc in the center of the stage, on the model of *Cries of London* by Berio. The instrumentalists will be placed behind them, elevated by about 1.50 meters. The instruments chosen are all wind instruments (the accordion is also part of this family) and, in a sense, share with the voice a method of producing sound that needs breath. The accordion, a central instrument, will play side to side with the Japanese shô. It is said that the family of accordions, created in Europe in the nineteenth century, is linked, by a filiation perhaps mythical, to mouth organs of the Far East who have been using for thousands of years the same principle of the free reed. Strange LED screens, digital kakemonos, will hang three meters above ground around the musicians. Movement of the musicians will be minimal, but the movement of a soloist or an instrumentalist will nevertheless draw several configurations.

Visual Creation – Yannick Jacquet

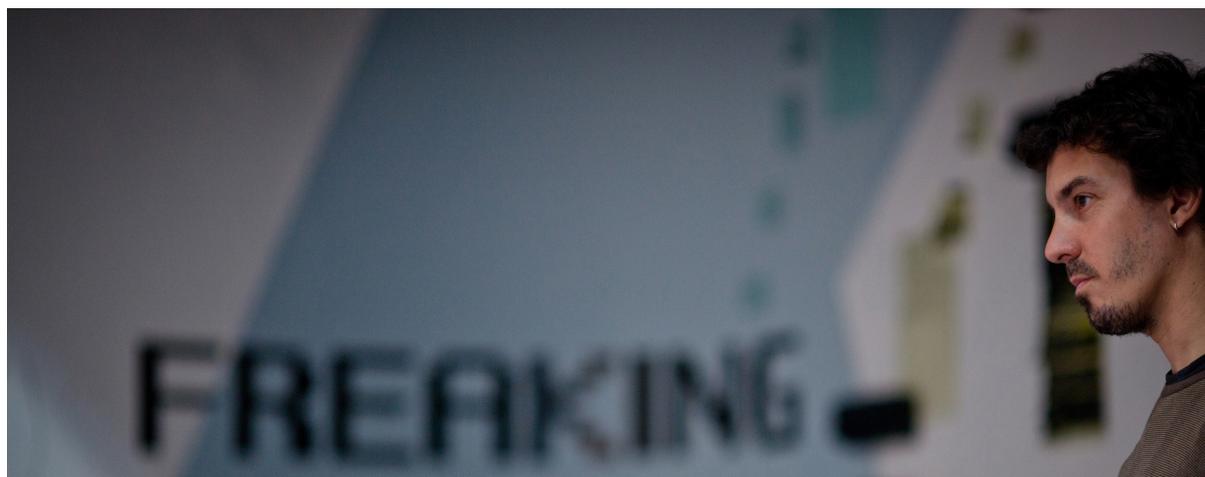
The French-Swiss plastic and video artist **Yannick Jacquet** will design the visual creation meant to counterpoint this Japanese Cantata, these *Cries of Tokyo* – the visual and stage proposal being a starting point for dialogue. The video will have a double purpose: to evoke the multiple geographies of Tokyo in an abstract way; but also to underline the French and Japanese words present in the text in an evocative way. It will be a crossing point between the mapping of a city, and a digital piece of calligraphy. This will be the starting point for Yannick Jacquet's work.



Biographies

Jérôme Combier - composition

Jérôme Combier began studying composition, harmony and counterpoint, analysis and orchestration under Hacène Larbi. In 1997, he was admitted to the Paris Conservatoire in the class of Emmanuel Nunes. In 1998, he received a premier prix in analysis in Michaël Levinas's class. In addition, he completed a Master's degree on Anton Webern at Paris VIII University. In September 1998, he was resident at the Royaumont Foundation and in the framework of an exchange with Royaumont, he was a composer in residence in Japan, in Akiyoshidaï for two months. In 2001, he earned a premier prix in composition, and was selected to enter the programme in composition and computer-assisted music organised by IRCAM and studied with Philippe Leroux. Jérôme Combier is a prize-winner of the Bleustein-Blanchet Foundation and the Pierre Cardin Foundation. In 2002, he was commissioned by Radio-France to write a piece for the Orchestre National de France, *Pays de vent*. In 2003 and 2004, with the support of the Paris Conservatoire, he organised concerts and courses in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. From 2004 to 2006 he was a scholarship holder at the Villa Médicis (the French Academy in Rome). During this time he met Raphaël Thierry who was to realise the visual installations for the cycle *Vies silencieuses* written for the Ensemble Cairn. The cd *Vies silencieuses* won the Grand Prix Charles Cros. At Rome, in the Sabine Villages, he took part along in the exhibition '20 eventi' under the patronage of Giuseppe Penone. In collaboration with Pierre Nouvel, he created the installation *Noir Gris* for the Beckett exposition organised by the Centre Georges Pompidou. In 2011, in association with the video artist Pierre Nouvel, he imagined the Opéra *Austerlitz* based on the novel by W.G Sebald. *Austerlitz* was produced by the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, the Opéra de Lille and the Kaaitheater of Brussels. In 2008 he is invited as composer teacher in Royamont abbey. In 2009 is obtain a commision by Le Musée du Louvre during the cycle of concerts " Le Louvre invite Pierre Boulez". His piece, *Anima Foglia* for violin, is played also at Lucern Festival. In 2012, the Opéra de Lyon commissioned an opéra based on the novel *Terre et cendres* by the afghan writer Atiq Rahimi. His music is published by H.Lemoine and Verlag Neue Musik (Berlin). Some of his works have already been recorded by the Ensemble Cairn on the Æon label. Jérôme Combier is the artistic director of Ensemble Cairn, he is teacher at the school of arts : Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts de Paris-Cergy. In 2017 Jérôme Combier obtain Grant award from Koussevitzky Foundation (Library of Congress, Washington).



Yannick Jacquet – plastic and video artist

Yannick Jacquet has spent ten years developing an visual arts project exploring how to reverse the deterioration inherent in our exchanges with the world. His process of visual creation draws on structural elements as disparate as the architecture of the Centre Pompidou-Metz and a Ravel string quartet. While the precise stratagem may vary, from the spectacular to the intimate, each undertaking is always rooted in the concept of resilience. This is art haunted by a discourse on the end of time. Jacquet makes no mystery of it. He invokes parallels with the Belgian artist Berlinde de Bruyckere's work on mutations in living matter, the Japanese Ryoichi Kurokawa's stellar visions, and his fellow Swiss artist Jean Tinguely's sardonic laugh and his 1960s machines designed to self-destruct. The installation *Mécaniques Discursives*, created in 2013 in collaboration with the artist and engraver Fred Penelle, is something of an artist's manifesto. A step in the dark. Sonar, alarms, and radio frequencies resonate in the shifting glow of vectorial impulses and cut-out silhouettes that reference pop culture. Yet the experience challenges expectations. The electronic signals lead nowhere. The sounds and figures have no referent beyond themselves. The message fails in transmission. Yannick Jacquet developed a subtle kinesthetic method that strips the viewer of his conditioning via an immersive process. 2016

has seen the creation of the generative work Flow on a floating building at the foot of the Alexandre III bridge in Paris. Jacquet's twofold research into color and the notions of time and natural cycles has led him to flesh out a new paradigm: slowness. Slowness as one possible path to the urgently needed restoration of sensibility. Born in Geneva in 1980, Yannick Jacquet lives and works in Brussels. Media & plastic art artist, his work was presented at Contemporary art events, museums & galleries, in Paris, Moscow, Tokyo, Brussels, Montreal and Taiwan. He has received awards at the Milan Design Week and the collector's prize at Brussels Slick Art Fair. His regular collaborations with different artists lead him to the Mécaniques Discursives work-in-progress, developed with the printmaker Fred Penelle, a project that is frequently exhibited in Europe and Asia. He is one of the founders of the Antivj visual label.



Geoffroy Jourdain - direction

While he was studying musicology at the Sorbonne University and doing researches in the Italian musical collections of several European libraries, Geoffroy Jourdain got involved very soon in conducting vocal ensembles and founded Les Cris de Paris. The ensemble became quickly renowned for the audacity of its artistic project and for its commitment to defend contemporary creation.

Geoffroy Jourdain is interested in finding ways to create innovative musical performances, by working with stage directors, actors, choreographers and plastic artists. With the stage director Benjamin Lazar, he creates many shapes of lyrical shows and musical theatre.

He is invited by the Atelier lyrique de l'Opéra de Paris in order to conduct lyrical works (Orphée et Eurydice and Iphigénie en Tauride by Gluck, L'Orfeo by Monteverdi), and also by ensembles like the Capella Amsterdam, the Sao Paulo Symphony Orchestra Choir, the National Symphony Orchestra of Colombia or the orchestra Les Siècles, entrusted by François-Xavier Roth (Israel in Egypt by Handel)...

Geoffroy Jourdain commissioned and created works by Beat Furrer, Mauro Lanza, Marco Stroppa, Francesco Filidei, Oscar Strasnoy (including the opera Cachafaz), Ivan Fedele, and is also passionate about 17th and 18th centuries repertoire and about ethnomusicology. His curiosity about varied repertoires and the originality of its approach led him to perform at the Opéra Comique, the IRCAM, the Cité de la Musique, the Présence festival of Radio France or at the Venice Biennale, to be invited in residence at the Fondation Royaumont, at the Opéra de Reims, to be a major artist of the Beaune festival and of the Chaise-Dieu festival.



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