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**Réseau Varèse:  
Ambition for cultural cooperation  
at european level  
Act II**

National Library, Oslo

As part of the Ultima Contemporary Music Festival

(Proceedings reported by Malika Combes)

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**"Réseau Varèse: ambition for cultural cooperation at European level"**  
**Act II**

## Table

- 3 Introduction to the Conference

### Contributions:

- 4 Mr. Stein Olav Henrichsen, Chairman of the Ultima festival, Oslo
- 6 Mr. Yngve Slettholm, Secretary of State, Norwegian Ministry of Culture and Cult
- 8 Mr. Antoine Gindt, President of the Réseau Varèse, director of T&M
- 12 Mr. Helmut Lachenmann, Composer
- 15 Mr. Javier Güell, Artistic Director, Musicadhoy, Madrid
- 20 Mr. Geir Johnson, Director of the Ultima Festival, Oslo
- 25 Mrs Susanna Eastburn, executive producer at the LIFT, London
- 29 Mr. Jean-Yves Bainier, Adviser at the Ministry of Culture and Communication, DRAC Alsace (France)
- 31 Mrs Cecilie Ore, Composer

### Appendices

- 36 Members and officers of the Réseau Varèse
- 38 Programmes for 2003-2004-2005, Aid for 2000-2001-2002

## Introduction to the Conference

The circulation of works and ideas is, without doubt, the factor that has most profoundly contributed to the foundation of Europe. In the Europe of artists and musicians, correspondence, travel agendas and itineraries of composers help us to appreciate the need for travel and new influences.

As the political structure of Europe changes shape, cultural institutions - traditionally operating at a national level - are faced with new challenges : how to combine local (national or even regional) issues with their obligations at a European level.

The Réseau Varèse network, founded in 1999, attempts to respond to these challenges in a new way. Thanks to financial support from the European Union's Culture 2000 Programme, Réseau Varèse assists joint enterprises among its member organizations - disseminating new musical works - thus encouraging collaboration but without, however, making artistic decisions on behalf of its members.

This manner of operating reconciles two key aspects of our activities : idealism, with which we strive to disseminate the music of our time to as many people as possible, and pragmatism, which is needed in the financing of these works and their circulation.

Following on from the conference in Budapest in October 2004, the Oslo conference aims to review this manner of operating. Our wish is to allow people to express their opinions and share their experiences with others from outside Réseau Varèse who have been invited to present their own views on questions of European cultural cooperation.

**Stein Olav Henrichsen, Chairman of the Ultima festival, Oslo**

Dear colleagues,

It is a great honor for me on behalf of the Ultima Festival to wish you all very welcome to Oslo and Ultima 2005. This year the festival is launched for the fifteenth successive year, and with contemporary music and related art forms as the chosen medium the entire town is involved as musicians and artists from all over the world combine their resources with the best that Norway has to offer, creating a program we believe worthy of any metropolis, - consisting of more than 130 events.

We are very pleased to be the host to the second Réseau-Varèse conference on European cultural policies, and we sincerely hope that your stay with us - both in professional and social terms - will be unforgettable.

Locating this conference in Oslo - after Budapest last year - gives an indication that the network has a transnational ambition in its cultural policies, pointing towards a European identity and joint initiative which has not been present before in European history. Ultima wants to be an active partner in the further development of this important network, which - we believe - has the potential to greatly benefit the Norwegian community in general, but more importantly promotes contemporary art in an international context.

Networking has always been at the core of running festivals; exchange of ideas and information, professional discussions and the possibility to co-finance expensive art projects is certainly great advantages that networks can offer. Due to the cultural programs of the EU we now experience a new development where informal networks moves towards more formal structures primarily in order to attract European funding. This new development may represent some controversial aspects that should be discussed, but most of all it represents a whole new range of possibilities.

Since 1995 the European cultural programs has been through an almost constant evaluation and development. This has happened in close dialog with artist environments, art

institutions and national governments. I would say that the influence on the future development of these programs by a network like Réseau-Varèse is probably quite substantial. More important - since financing contemporary art is a real challenge - is the fact that EU has more than doubled the annual investment in each new cultural program and spends today 0,27% of total budget on culture, mainly the arts. That equals 7 cents per capita. From the discussions in the Parliament we can sense that the European ambition in the cultural field is growing and could result in much higher contributions in near future. Right now there is a political action in the Parliament called *70 cents for culture* with the aim of raising the cultural investment by 900%. This may or may not succeed, but surely Europe will be a more important financial source in the future, and it will be equally important to secure the position of contemporary art that has been - and is - strong, but probably less self-evident in the future. It is probably good timing to open a discussion with the EU Commission right now concerning more permanent and substantial support to networks in the contemporary art field such as Réseau-Varèse.

Apart from the immediate gains caused by international networking, some of the long term effects has a more fundamental character. Contemporary art is perhaps more relevant now than ever before in a world which is changed continuously by new technology, posing new challenges both on individual and community level. Individuals face new demands for greater flexibility and international orientation - more than ever do we act in an international environment. Communities face even more important challenges: because while boundaries seem to evaporate gradually in our part of the world, new boundaries are created in the form of poverty and oppression, preventing most of the global population from taking part in the expanding global economy, with conflict and unrest as results.

With this in mind it is vital not only to create new international arenas in which mutual experience and understanding can provide a basis for greater tolerance, but more than ever it is vital to strengthen freedom of speech as a basis for criticism and development. While freedom of expression in many parts of the world is limited by politics, it is challenged in our part of the world by the expanding international entertainment industry's relentless ambition to fill our private and public space with commercially viable, calculated entertainment

Networks like Réseau-Varèse can play an important part in the development of European cultural policy - and as a consequence Europe as such - by using the forward position to create a stronger awareness of the importance of contemporary art. One should not underestimate the political possibilities networks like Réseau-Varèse can represent in present and future Europe.

Thank you very much.

**Mr. Yngve Slettholm, Secretary of State, Norwegian Ministry of Culture and Religion**

I should first say that today is a special day for me in that the Government I represent is leaving power at this very time. My resignation has already been given. As from Monday, we shall have a new government in Norway. This is therefore my last appearance as Secretary of State. I have held this position for four years and have made many speeches; for me, it is good, final opportunity to stress the importance of the Ultima festival and to quickly summarise the main policies implemented over the last few years and set out the guidelines for the future.

The festival has, of course, been in existence for more than four years, but these four years represent a period of economic growth, thanks to the increase in its budget. I am also happy to announce that we have, today, adopted the budget for next year and that the subsidies for the Ultima festival will be increased again and, even better, we have signed undertaking with the city of Oslo, which ensures the finances of the festival in the long term. In some ways, this agreement is the accomplishment of an old dream!

Two years ago, my Ministry produced a report, known as "Cultural Policy up to 2014", which is a ten-year plan for cultural development in Norway. This plan concerns the Ultima festival in several ways.

One of the key aspects of the festival is that it is a meeting place at several levels. From a local point of view, it is a community event, where the public can meet international artistes. It is also a meeting place for amateurs and professionals and, like any good festival, it is, above all, a meeting place between national and international cultures. I often say that festivals succeed when the best national artistes meet the best international artistes; they then become a window on to the rest of the world and Ultima is certainly one of such windows and not the least.

Furthermore, Ultima is part of an international cooperation agreement, as represented by the presence of the Réseau Varèse. This is important not only for Ultima as a festival to be part of such a network, but also for Norway, as a nation to have active partners from

different cultural backgrounds.

As for the future, that will be the business of another government I am not concerned for the future of the Ultima festival. I am sure that the members of the new government will do what has to be done. They supported our cultural policies, which will be maintained until 2014. Of course, I cannot go further in speaking of the new government here.

Finally, I hope that the Ultima festival will continue to be a gateway between Norway and the rest of Europe and will continue to play the role it already has done in the cultural life of Norway.

**Antoine Gindt, President of the Réseau Varèse, director of T&M-Paris**

With Europe, Without Europe, Which Europe?

These have been the terms of the vital debate taking place on much of the continent, and particularly in France, concerning European construction. The debate has political, social, agricultural and industrial aspects.

In Oslo, where we are meeting today - in a country which is not a member of the European Union! - it is perhaps more fitting that the debate should be focused on cultural policy (however little cultural questions are at stake) and how our work should fit into it.

In Budapest, exactly a year ago, we held the first Réseau Varèse public conference on the subject of 'the aim of European cultural cooperation'. We recalled the efforts that have been made since 1999 to establish a European network promoting musical creation and performance. We stressed our goal of working with cultural organisations (festivals, concert halls, theatres and other cultural bodies) which are dedicated to cultural exchange and which share our commitment to contemporary artists, and to unite with them around the idea of musical composition, which is one of the founding practices of European culture.

Speakers at the conference also recalled the premises, the difficulties, the successes and the support we have received, particularly from the French Culture Ministry, and our first European financing through the triennial Culture 2000 programme set up by the European Commission in 2000. This support remains precarious, but has enabled us to develop and widen our network - since June 2005, the Réseau counts 21 members from 17 European countries. Above all, this support has allowed us to finance 30 programmes (with works by 20 composers of different nationalities) of aesthetically and geographically

diverse musical creation over the past six years, ranging from soloists to opera, from the concert hall to music for children.

The thirty programmes include the tribute to Helmut Lachenmann, whom we have the honour of welcoming here today. A series of events to celebrate the composer's seventieth birthday began at the Ultima festival and has continued here in Oslo with last night's dance performance by Boris Charmatz, 'Herse, A Slow Introduction', first performed eight years ago in France. The festivities will continue until Sunday evening with the concert by the Ensemble Modern of Frankfurt, conducted by Brad Lubman, and which will feature Helmut Lachenmann's most recent work, *Concertini*, which was first performed not long ago in Lucerne.

This living portrait of one of the essential composers of our times, a German composer whose work is played by performers of a wide variety of origins, and which has brought together five members of the Réseau Varèse in 2005, is a perfect illustration of how an ambitious and challenging artistic project can benefit from coordination at a European level.

But as Elisabeth Schweeger brilliantly reminded us in Budapest last year, while with hindsight this review of our activities justifies our European orientation, it must not lead us to forget the practice, development and importance of older art forms. Today these forms exist within a changing society, which is breaking with the sedentary nature of nineteenth century culture. From that period derive the museums, the theatrical and musical institutions as we still know them today, as well as, most importantly, the financial organisation of the arts.

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#### With Europe, Without Europe, Which Europe for Culture?

One could say that artistic works and artists were crossing borders long before the construction of the European Union. This movement is as old as our civilization, and is closely linked to the great events of our common European history, first to the spirit of the court and later to capitalist competition. It created the idea of a Europe based on the value of knowledge, the highly subtle result of the contamination of regional identities by the universal values of art and the humanities. In this sense, Europe took shape, from Ljubljana to Oslo, from Tallinn to Porto, from Rome to Helsinki, thanks, among other things, to its cultural institutions. The idea of Europe was formed by Europeans looking inwards and outwards, at other continents and other cultures. These cultures, some older, some more recent than our own, which are based on other ways of thinking and other organisations, have in turn influenced our European identity.

But it could also be predicted that culture and the arts as we know them today (as we want them to be) will not survive without structured European cultural organisations, which will guarantee the transmission and preservation of our cultural references. 'Preservation' here means the idea of a living cultural heritage which must be continually enriched and changed. This heritage includes the processes of artistic creation taking place within

certain boundaries coinciding with our basic and necessary cultural reflexes, with our individual and collective, our particular and universal development. Our common home.

At a period of unbridled circulation of consumer goods, what is at stake in European culture is not so much geographic as ethical. And the price to pay by the community must be examined in all honesty, knowing what culture can and must give order to. Our aim should be to go beyond tendencies for each nation to withdraw inside itself, to give a new meaning to the notion of belonging, with the aim of creating an area of solidarity and generosity.

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A short time ago, we entered what is definitively the post 'post-war' period. Collective institutions and aspirations in the arts and in social life are no longer determined only by a need to bring peace to the continent, to build democracies, to criticize and renew the intellectual and political systems which led to a disaster whose catastrophic effects racked Europe for half a century.

Today we are confronted with rich and unequal, safety-conscious and forgetful societies situated on an ill-defined and heterogeneous continent. In Europe, the influences arising from recent history have also given rise to inequalities.

For our part, we are faced with the challenge of reorganising and reorienting our cultural methods if we want them to remain vigorous and relevant and not simply subservient to developments that vacillate between entertainment and tourism, between mass demonstrations and televised products.

If we wish to bring the arts back to the heart of European society's vital forces, that is to say education and the humanities, we need to reinvent an historical tradition within which ideas of modernity and cultural heritage will be harmonized. We need to put artists back into the centre of our education system so that original work can regain its central position in the arts, as a vital force keeping our collective memory alive.

In many ways, these ideas represent the end of the theory of rupture in which modernity and cultural heritage are opposed, and perhaps the beginning of a theory of displacement. The aim is not to find some hypothetical direction to history, since history is more radial than linear, but to redefine the artistic field as a merchandise-free area (which should not be confused with the economic system in which it is situated). This space will be protected from the destructive effects of the market, not because of some historical privilege or elitism, but because it will be confided to institutions with real means for real tasks which are relevant to our times, such as education and the need to establish shared values.

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More than a century after the invention of the means of mechanical reproduction (cinema, sound recording, etc) which in turn gave rise to new art forms involving spectacular intellectual and economic developments, at a moment when technological

revolutions are overturning the means of distribution and communication, to the point of threatening the narrative structures of our societies, the field of debate concerning older art forms and their social practice is immense.

Advocating the pure and simple preservation of established artistic practices will result in nothing but an inevitable impoverishment. Doing without them altogether would lead to certain disaster. These are the terms of reference of a debate in which the past will give us clues to the future, as it always has when humanity finds itself in times of doubt and fear.

The creation of a Europe of Culture, as well as our position regarding this cultural Europe, may help us to address some of these questions. In particular, it will enable us to redefine what we mean by the common good, allowing us to go beyond regional and national interests.

## Helmut Lachenmann, Composer

Upon the outbreak of the First World War, when German and Austrian newspapers were busy outdoing one another in their patriotic enthusiasm for the war, the Austrian publicist Karl Kraus, editor of the journal *Die Fackel* between 1895 and 1935, published that legendary article entitled 'In dieser grossen Zeit' [In These Great Times], in which he not only warned the public, but in fact directly opposed this enthusiasm and prophetically foresaw the European catastrophe and the 'last days of humanity'. When the Nazis came to power in 1933, Kraus remained silent, to the horror and disappointment of all like-minded persons, who had expected another fiery protest. After causing his followers further confusion with a four-page issue of *Die Fackel* containing nothing but a Shakespeare sonnet and its German translation - confusion and irritation, not least when he filed a lawsuit against a newspaper on account of an incorrectly-set comma and printed the comments on his silence published everywhere in a further, substantially longer issue of the journal, Kraus presented the public with that over 400-page article in which he reacted to the outrage directed at him with the statement: 'You are expecting me to spit into a crater' and the conclusion that there could now be only one concern: 'to bring language to safety'. The suppression of freedom and culture in European democracies no longer takes the form of outright fascism. Staring at the mechanisms of oppression in partly bygone fascist systems, we are largely blind to those mechanisms of oppression operating more or less subtly and crippling the spirit in our western profit- and fun-oriented civilisation. They have not been seen through anywhere near enough to counteract what they have caused: the evidently unstoppable destruction perhaps not of mankind, but certainly of humanity. With regard to the increasing erosion of our culture under the dictatorship of ignorantly manipulated majority decisions and economically-based practical constraints, the sole concern of those who are vigilant and think responsibly must -" following the Kraussian dictum -" be to bring the 'spirit' - " i.e. 'art' -" to safety. And as art itself has evidently become the medium of a false security for a liberally-styled

society that wishes to see its own standardised moral concepts preserved within it, as it seems -" as a demanding, yet at the same time rather museum-like variant of the all-suffocating, all-pervasive service sector, that industrial factor known as 'entertainment' - to have become a sort refuge for those who, as cultural enthusiasts, are capable of no other reaction in their paralysis before the threats to human existence they seek to repress than burying their heads in the sand of a false philharmonic security through the misuse of tradition, the demand to bring art to safety must at once mean to bring art to unsafety. This means that in society's public discourse the European concept of art - " and within it the concept of music, the concept of beauty - must be brought up for discussion. It must/should be delimited, in its substance and by definition, from that of entertainment - with all respect, I might add, for I do not question the latter's right to exist. Only thus can its indispensable nature become evident as a medium of mankind's recollection of its spiritual capacity, a recollection without which it would stagger to its downfall. This seems to me to be what is called for now. The European concept of art must also be set apart from all the non-European forms of art by which we allow ourselves to be fascinated as something exotic, not least because, beyond their mere aesthetic magic, we also sense their authenticity and rooting in an intact conception of the world as a challenge to our own fundamental loss of the same, though we often try to repress this aspect and comfortably relish the aesthetic magic of the exotic as cultural tourists and, as creative artists, are frequently guilty of cleverly appropriating it: non-European art, the music of Gagaku, of Gamelan or of Tibetan monks as fresh sustenance for a society whose cultural fatigue is a result of its own lack of orientation. I spoke of delimiting. But delimitation does not mean a turning away, let alone any contempt, but rather a sensitised, perhaps enlightened engagement. European culture has always poached in the domains of foreign cultures. Important works have sprung from this (Mahler, Ravel, Schubert). But the same condition that applies to dealing with the fascinations of our own tradition also applies to dealing with those exotic fascinations: their magical energy must not simply be used, but rather transformed wisely by the creative spirit. But this also means: it must be broken through intervention in its given structure. Music, as it has developed its autonomy as art in European cultural history - at the expense of its former ritual bonds - defines itself, or perhaps displays itself in retrospect, as a magic that has been seized by the human will and its creative energy, and thus taken over by the spirit; in this sense it has been broken, i.e. divested of its irresistible irrational dominance and relativised in its collective magic. The concept of art, as delimited in this perhaps provisional definition and at once freed of its socially standardised self-image, and for all its discipline infinitely open, should - and this seems to me to be what is called for now - recognise itself in this sense. Far from becoming academically-cemented, it could thus rather become the entrance to infinite and ever new adventures in perception and self-experience. The music of the old masters, as also that of composers like Schoenberg, Webern, Nono or Boulez, could be examined from this perspective. Concerning the phenomenon of 'breaking': the medium of that breaking in creative practice is what, since the middle of the last century, we refer to as the 'musical material', the sounding reservoir for the shaping of sonic and temporal spaces, mediated through what I have referred to in the past as the 'aesthetic apparatus'. This latter constitutes the totality of that which belongs, in the broadest sense, to the socially- and historically-developed practice of music-making. The instruments, the institutions, the conventions of performance and notation and the accompanying theories and orders, systems and hierarchies -" but equally the corresponding forms and rituals of reception. Composing means starting with these found components as collectively familiar, and hence

magically charged elements, and reflecting upon, transforming, even eroding or destroying them, shifting them from their familiar setting to a new, and indeed newly individuated one: the C major triad, familiar since Palestrina, but radically different in its orientation and newly defined through its changed context in Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, and once again in Wagner's *Meistersinger*, extending to the 'cheap C major coin' (Adorno) in Berg's *Wozzeck*. This process of constant rupture of the magical and familiar in the name of an individuality that gradually emancipates itself, even to the point of conscious self-erasure, has given rise to the rapid process of stylistic change from early monody to Bach, Mozart and Beethoven to Schoenberg, serialism, the complexity of the structuralists and the non-music of John Cage.

Concerning the problem of communicating a concept of art (and culture) that has fulfilled and reflected upon itself in society. Musical education, informing of those who make decisions, the role of the media, publicity work in orchestras etc.

## Javier Güell, Artistic Director, Musicadhoy, Madrid

### **Music and Mass Culture**

There are two stages in the development of modern ideas concerning the masses. The first dates from after the *Great War*, beginning at the end of the twenties and lasting until the end of World War Two. Its main representatives are Sigmund Freud (*Mass Psychology*), José Ortega y Gasset (*The Revolt of the Masses*), Elias Canetti (*Crowds and Power*) and Hannah Arendt (*The Origins of Totalitarianism*). Walter Benjamin and Theodor W. Adorno could also be added to this list, but with certain reservations. The second stage corresponds to the 1950s and 1960s and took place mainly in North America.

In the first stage, the discussion is centred on mass *society*; in the second, on mass *culture*.

During the first stage, the masses are influenced and led by charismatic political leaders and totalitarian political movements. In the second, on the contrary, the masses retreat into the private sphere, where they are guided, educated and modelled by the large industrial, entrepreneurial and state influences usually known as *mass means of communication*.

Freud stressed the following aspects: the tendency to act immediately on suggested ideas, the disappearance of all conscience and sense of responsibility and impatience concerning any delay in the fulfilment of wishes. The masses have a sentiment of omnipotence, since individuals in a crowd tend to reject the idea of anything being impossible. The masses are easily influenced and gullible; have no critical sense; tend to think in images which are linked to each other by association; respect brute force and always see kindness as weak; demand force and violence from their heroes and want to be dominated and subjected by their masters. *The masses are always, so to speak, in love*, that is to say, in an eternal relationship of receptivity and passivity with the father-figure, embodied by the big boss, the *caudillo* or the *Führer*.

Many of José Ortega y Gasset's ideas coincide with the analysis of Sigmund Freud. Ortega begins with the existence of the urban environment. Everything is crowded - cities, buildings with tenants, hotels, trains, cafés, parks, theatres, beaches. 'There are no more heroes, there is only the chorus.' Society has always been a dynamic unit made up of two factors, the minority and the masses. The masses consist of people who do not see themselves as individuals for one reason or another, but who feel 'like everyone else'.

'It is characteristic that the commonplace individual, knowing he is commonplace, has the arrogance to assert his right to being commonplace and vulgar and to impose it wherever he goes.' This is why the masses revolt. Ortega's book is less the result of contempt for the masses on the part of a minority, as was the case in the 19th century, and more the product of this enlightened, cultivated minority's fear of the masses, who were imposing their tastes, judgements and values on society, and who held the minority and their way of life, art and culture in sometimes violent contempt.

The masses revolt at a time when they dispose of abundant possibilities and almost unlimited means, or absolute material ease. The diagnosis of the mass individual is as follows. He is characterized by a radical ingratitude towards everything that has made the ease of his existence possible. He can only conceive of one form of action, which is what the French have called, since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, *action directe*: action undertaken without delay. While in liberal democracies violence was the last resort, for the masses, it becomes the first, the only resort. We see here a manifesto for barbarism, an affront to civilisation, which implies a radical challenge to minority or 'avant-garde' culture.

Here we can add the complementary ideas of Hannah Arendt: the totalitarian movement is precisely that which manages to give form and a voice to the anonymous subject who finds a perfect role and place in the totalitarian system.

The important philosophical, phenomenological-existential ideas of Martin Heidegger in *Being and Time* should also be mentioned here. One of Heidegger's great merits was to think both of this neutral subject, which is divested of qualities, and his own specific environment: the world of *everyday life*. In this phenomenological-existential analysis appears the *Dasein*, the 'being there' or being in the world, which constitutes the 'subject' of his ontological ideas: *Man*, in whom the *Dasein* shows itself before understanding and projecting itself in a free and responsible way onto the - ontological - horizon of death as a *finality*.

In all the analyses mentioned, the mass-individual is described and conceived in terms of a widespread and highly intense social phenomenon, and also as the raw material of politics. In the new authoritarian dictatorships, and above all in the vast Mass Movements and totalitarian regimes (National-Socialist or Stalinist), the masses find their highest expression and manifestation. Adolf Hitler, Hannah Arendt reminds us, said to the masses: 'Everything you are, you owe to me; everything I am, I owe it all to you.'

Today, fifty years later, this mass subject is more in evidence than ever, led and encouraged by an unbridled capitalism without any other strategy than rapid and immediate gain. Nothing seems able to stop it. But this *hybris*, in the face of apocalyptic forecasts of a catastrophic collapse, cries out for a restatement of simple common sense: pleasure is to be found in the just measure and in Aristotle's *happy medium*, without which no culture can survive.

In any event, a *subject* is lacking which could provide an alternative to the social-historical capitalist subject in its social and economic orientation which finds its concrete form in the mass subject. The self-satisfied barbarity of the latter makes his own poverty

of values and principles more flagrant, and cuts him off from all possibility of a better life, or rather that Good Life - *eudaimonía* - which, since the Greeks, has constituted a model for directing our conduct or *éthos*.

The aim is to evaluate the 'demassification' strategies that are generated by the conditions producing and reproducing this omnipresent mass subject, which is an intrinsic part of ourselves. But we must not use this *emptiness* of social, communitarian and historical substance as a pretext for withdrawing into a postmodern nihilism.

Even in the sphere of government, it is conceivable and perfectly possible to find forms of behaviour that represent a break with the historical and traditional methods, which were based on the 'survival of the fittest', on fear of others as a universal and fundamental sentiment and on public safety as the supreme value.

We are faced with the tragic contradiction between a world full of material possibilities - but also monstrous inequalities - and a spiritual and intellectual poverty which is so great that the mere fact of making a utopian reference, or advocating a project oriented towards the future, seems to be absurd. But this absurdity must be set against the eroticism of a subject that wishes, desires and loves a better and more peaceful society; or a new way of understanding life on this planet which has been left to fend for itself.

At the top of the tree of the Future (Nietzsche), the real tree of life, we can perceive the construction of a *frontier city* in which music and thought can come together. And in which a new *paideia* (culture, education) could perhaps lead to that unified humanity evoked so splendidly by Friedrich Schiller in his *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*.

Contrary to those who believe in a recourse to a historical-collective subject as the *sine qua non* of all *proposition* aiming at a reorientation, a change, a transformation of mental (and essential) habits, I consider it perfectly legitimate to appeal to personal experience as a criterion which has the capacity to anticipate and predict. Especially since the objective, socio-economic and technological conditions exist that could bring about this change. But barriers and obstacles - of unbridled capitalism, based on neo-conservative principles, impervious to all culture, education, *Bildung* - prevent this *potential reality* from taking root and spreading through wide sections of the global community.

From personal experience is born and develops the *philosophical proposition* which must assume - for the time being - an admittedly utopian nature. But this is a *critical utopia* - or rational dream - with the status of a Regulatory Idea capable of directing and guiding the *ethos* of subjectivity, or of promoting an internal change of direction leading it out of its current historical prostration. Today, this subject (or this *being which is us*) is stuck fast in the magma of the masses. This is what constitutes the outer, immediate, primordial and inevitable appearance it has assumed in the contemporary period.

But memory, *Mnemosyne*, invites us to return to the quintessential substance of a distant past. It is like a catapult which enables us, with a critical eye, to foresee the future. As in all true Platonism (and Pythagorism), prophecy draws on reminiscence, *anamnesis*.

Today more than ever it is perhaps necessary to advocate a new Pythagorism, a new society, which is constituted by a minority but which will play a public and political role, capable of transforming the sensibility and thinking habits of our times.

In this new Pythagorism, in our search for a reference point signposting an *age of the spirit* which is the matrix of all utopian thought, music suggests itself. Music is the

antidote which is opposed, in the most radical way, to that *power of domination* which constitutes the Minotaur with which all life and culture are put to the test. In music, the *power of recreation* is exercised and displayed through its perpetually changing forms. Its expanding and spiral movement can overcome and go beyond the ordeals arising from the *power of domination*. Music also has enough demonic forces, as Goethe could see, to face this ordeal successfully. Music evokes shapes and figures in which all our faculties and capacities - sensory and intelligible, material and spiritual, rational and hedonistic - will achieve their full unity.

Music alone can reconcile magic and rational thought, the linguistic and the supralinguistic (and also the prelinguistic). Music allies and harmonises tangible and sensual mathematics with the most abrupt and radical negation of harmony and measure. The most divine harmonies coinhabit with the most extreme dissonances. Perfect chords exist side by side with the *diabolus in musica*.

Music, as Kleist says, is the algebra of all the arts. Everything seems to flow into and come out of its magic substance. Music is the art form which shapes its time, which models it with its arguments and which erects its monuments on it. But music is also an art form which seems to transcend its times in the most surprising way, bathed in the light and the reflection of the Eternal.

Music can give a form and shape to all the dimensions of time, the distant past, the eternal present, the transcendent future, since it is always incarnated in the very *instant* it is pronounced. In this instant is rooted the *fone*, the voice or sound, to which music gives form - a form that takes shape necessarily through the modality of *movement*. A movement which finds its number and its measure in time (according to the Before and the After).

Music cannot only be subsumed or apprehended in and through language or writing (of whatever kind). Music neither allows nor accepts such reductionism. Thanks to its immense power of suggestion, integration, expression and communication, music always soars beyond the reach of such attempts. Perhaps the time has come to reverse and subvert the traditional, modern and post-modern relationship and to promulgate the philosophical and musical proposition whereby music is the hermeneutic key which can give a sense and meaning to the other fields of art, culture, science, the humanities and technology. To take just the last example, thanks to music, the most refined technology can be transcended and become an art form and *poiesis*. Music and technology, taken together, can rejoin the long-lost source which the Greeks were able to keep in seamless unity, as symbolised by the word *tejne* - at the same time art, technique and science, or *know-how*. This has begun to happen with electro-acoustic music, with its capacity to harmonise and combine with traditional sound sources.

Our mass society and culture increasingly celebrates the unique splendour of music, which is ever more present in our lives and in our leisure and business environments. Music is part of the new rites of the *société du spectacle*, and of the mythologies of this mass culture, which removes all trace of subjectivity from us, except that which it shapes and configures and which, in an essential sense, constitutes our being.

Today this society is kidnapped and blindfolded by complex capitalist, financial and industrial arrangements, which direct and channel musical demand along paths that are both foreign and hostile to quality and standards or to the achievable aim of unifying art, science and advanced technology (or to the search for fertile links with philosophy).

The present text, situated in the antipodes of the globalised, mass society in which we live today, is written at the *nadir* of hope and is the fruit of a bare, threatened

subjectivity - a subject without baggage, like the sons of the Sea evoked by Antonio Machado. It takes the form of an exalted appeal that a generation living in better times will be able to understand perfectly.

Eugenio Trías, who is, alongside Ortega, without doubt the greatest Spanish philosopher of all time, explained that from a hermetic circle can emerge a Voice, which is audible on the edge of the *limit*. The voice is ethical, but of a musical *éthos*, uniquely clear, with a sound that is verbally or orally untranslatable, but bears witness in our most intimate subjectivity to that 'harmony of the spheres' which already thrilled Pythagoras and reminded him of its astral origin and vocation, along with its founding mission in a world in need of a new *musical gospel*.

This Voice is the only available testimony of a potential transformation which might allow us to distance ourselves from the mass element which is still an integral part of our present condition and of our historic destiny.

This Voice enjoins us to raise ourselves to the edges of the Limit, so that it can become inhabitable. This Voice stirs our *éthos*. This Voice is not a siren's song. It is more like the Voice that moved the seven strings of Apollo's lyre, the Muses, the celestial spheres or the entire musical scale, the *diapason*.

As the sole Pindaric imperative, this Voice forces us to listen to the necessity of being or of becoming the lineage of the frontier, that secret land which borders the hermetic circle where the gods have their home (particularly Apollo, the patron of music).

## **Geir Johnson, Director of the Ultima Festival, Oslo**

### **A Strategy for Norwegian Participation in a European Artistic Collaboration**

It might seem a contradiction in terms to presume to work with international art promotion in a country whose citizens have on several occasions turned down the opportunity to participate in the European community. And seen from a central European point of view it must sometimes appear absurd that we, in a country blessed by natural resources with which we are able to secure our high standard of living - compared with most other countries - show so little interest in building a common Europe which, from 2005, also includes the former East block countries. Is Norway inhabited by a population of totally egocentric individuals? And if not, why do we not take part, especially since we can afford to?

The answers are many, and they are complicated. Some of them contain references to national idiosyncrasies which would seem irrelevant were they not at the very heart of the ideological hegemony of the national state. We must remember that we are in a country where sport is the national religion, not art and culture.

Therefore it is not possible for me to answer such a question simply; this is a matter with which I have been concerned for many years - to defy the apparent wish of the people and to work actively to secure as broad as possible a European arena in an area of the arts that is one of the most difficult to promote - contemporary music. The very least one can say of the Greek mythical figure Sisyphos is that he was fortunate in knowing what his task involved.

To cut a long story short: When Réseau Varèse was established in 1999, we at Ultima saw it as a chance to contribute to building a European project presenting modern music

and stage productions of a high standard, also to Norwegian audiences. Our motive consisted of two key points:

1. In order to strengthen the cultural frame of reference in Norway with regard to concerts and stage art it was necessary to enter into an international collaboration so that the best Norway had to offer could be measured against international standards.

2. It is self-evident that working in a relatively small cultural organization on the European periphery does not necessarily offer an overview or the chance to collaborate on the international scene. We believed that increased contact with Europe could only bring positive effects for Norwegian contemporary music and stage art, and possibly even lead to increased opportunities for presenting Norwegian music in a broader international context.

“THE WORD TRAVELS FURTHER THAN THE MAN” (Norwegian proverb)

The first meetings of the Réseau Varèse were chaotic in a constructive manner. Everybody was eager to contribute to a project that was greater than anything their own organizations alone could create. Several informal networks already existed; many of the active participants knew some of the others - but nobody knew everybody. This would prove to be both a strength and a weakness. The first discussions in the network were certainly interesting for all of us, for there was no given solution as to how the collaboration should be developed and implemented.

When we attempt to understand current developments in Europe we do not usually think of Europe as a continent consisting of a central area and a periphery, but as a continent of equal regions. This poses a problem for us who work with contemporary artistic forms of expression: the lack of a common frame of reference. Coming from the Nordic region I experience a certain lack of interest in central Europe towards artists from other regions who have chosen to settle there. We do have a common frame of reference when it comes to the central European avant-garde from the 1950s onwards, but these common references do not extend to artists coming from other regions, who have approached the avant-garde from a different angle than that which is recognizable from a central European perspective.

The major challenge facing a European cultural collaboration, seen from a Scandinavian perspective, is to create conditions which will make Europe an integrated area in which all the regions interact on an equal basis. The imbalance in the rate of cultural exchange up to the present day is due of course to long historical, economical and political processes in many dimensions - which countries first achieved industrialization, which were subject to neighbouring powers and were therefore prohibited from developing democratic rights naturally, etcetera. We meet in an arena bringing with us our different historical, cultural and economic terms and - seen from a Scandinavian point of view - we must undoubtedly recognize the fact that despite our economic privilege, we have fallen behind in certain aspects of culture and the arts. Visitors to our region should, however, be aware that there are major cultural differences within Scandinavia itself: The first university in Sweden, for example, was founded in the twelfth century, whereas Norway's first

university was not established until the nineteenth century. Denmark had a highly educated clergy throughout the eighteenth century; it was the mission of many of them to educate the uneducated Norwegians. Therefore it is not so that the centre is found only at the centre. There are centres in the periphery, and, not least, there is a periphery within the centre.

#### WILL QUALITY WIN IN THE END?

There exists perhaps a greater understanding of the cultural preferences of the European central region in the periphery than vice versa. Ideally one would wish that quality and high standards were equally appreciated everywhere, but we know that this is not the case. Artistic choices are based primarily on three factors: network, trust, and expertise. As the leader of a cultural organization one builds up a network of people and institutions with whom one interacts, relying on their judgements and on one's own expertise.

In such a broad and compound area as modern art production, however, individual expertise is not sufficient, since there is rarely an opportunity to develop one's own expertise. Therefore networks and reliance on others are of relatively greater importance when it comes to making the right decisions. This might sound abstract, but it is simply about making the right choices in an artistic context when important decisions must be reached to ensure the best possible use of the available funds. Perhaps this is also the reason that so few new voices have managed to break through in this network.

#### SAARIAHO - A CENTRALLY ACCEPTED COMPOSER FROM THE PERIPHERY

The first project realized by Ultima in a European context was in fact Finnish, not Norwegian, and actually involved a Finnish composer who for many years had lived in Paris - namely Kaija Saariaho. The project was built around a particular aspect of the opera she was in the process of writing at the time. We were given project responsibility for the production when the work was sent on tour following its Finnish premiere. Kaija Saariaho is a composer from Finland, from the periphery, one of a growing group of artists who have managed to make their mark at the centre.

Already in 2001 Ultima had the opportunity to experience the potential of the network when we put together a major project together with Konzerthaus Berlin and an external partner, the Gaudeamus Foundation, with support from the Culture 2000 programme. It is doubtful whether this project would have been possible had it not been for the contact established with Konzerthaus Berlin through Réseau Varèse, because our meetings there had laid the foundation for mutual trust. Such trust is also expressed in this year's focus on Helmut Lachenmann at the Ultima Festival, a project shared equally between Konzerthaus Berlin, Wien Modern and Ultima. The project in 2001 gave us the necessary incitement to continue our committed participation in the network, because we saw that it had positive consequences which were not previously evident in the same way. The results can be experienced this weekend in Oslo.

It became clear to us at an early stage that to take economic responsibility for new productions was well beyond Ultima's economic means. Our contribution at a European level had to be primarily based on hosting visiting productions and using our network of contacts to promote Norwegian composers and performers in future improved financial conditions. The reason for this was to be found in the lack of funding at the Norwegian end. This fact had been drawn attention to in a letter to the Norwegian government in the spring of 2000. The situation was that whereas the Norwegian government contributed substantially to European cultural programmes, few Norwegian organizations were able to draw support from the same programmes in the way that their European counterparts were able to. This was seen more or less as a political contribution from the Norwegian end in conjunction with the EEA agreement of 1994. For those of us working in the arts and culture it was important to come into a position from which we would be able to receive the financial support to which we were entitled.

Ultima found itself in the fortunate situation that the Arts Council Norway helped us to establish our position as an active participant despite not having secured the financing of the festival at that time. From 2002 Ultima was granted an annual subsidy over the state budget. Ultima's financial means, however, were still too small to be able to contribute to Réseau Varèse's greatest and most original projects, and my summing up of Ultima's participation in the European network cooperation is that we have so far not had the resources needed to participate at a high level. Therefore we have had to find other ways to finance our participation, which has involved collaborating on smaller projects, such as commissioning works for the Arditti Quartet or even solo productions which could be realised without too great an expense.

This was not a difficult position to work towards, since very few other Norwegian institutions had attempted to strengthen collaborations within international networks. At the same time that Ultima joined the Réseau Varèse, however, an international network for avant-garde theatre was started up, and in the course of the last two years a similar network for dance has been established; thus it must be said that the international exchange of modern stage art has achieved a much better fundament in recent years.

When working with the dissemination of contemporary art forms in a small country one must always be prepared for lower audience numbers than in the major cities. It may be the case that it is easier to draw attention to a project in Oslo than in London, but it is also nearly always the case that the level of knowledge in the media and other channels of information is lower, and more locally orientated.

#### THE "PRINCIPLE OF MATTHEW" AS A RULE OF CONDUCT?

It proved to be, however, that in many instances the focus of the network was on the major projects - an opera or a multi-media production - which required financial and practical resources well beyond the means of Ultima and many of the other smaller organizations. This created a certain frustration in the network which sometimes gave rise to an A-team and a B-team, where it was really the weight of the institutions themselves that released funding within the EU system. And it seemed that the "Principle of

Matthew" from the Bible was applicable: "Because whoever has, to him will be given, and he will have more; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away."

Without my interpretation becoming too biblical it may thereby appear that the EU's original cultural-political ambitions have strengthened the position of those organizations possessing a combination of the following qualities:

- a) the ability to reach major decisions in a short space time;
- and b) having the necessary economic resources and liquidity to realize them.

We are therefore still of the opinion that the Norwegian government should work to provide a guarantee for the members' individual share, which would enable the smaller culture institutions to commit themselves to cooperation at a European level - naturally within the regulating framework of the organization - but with the possibility of financial security in relation to funding released at a trans-national level. This would make the arts sector more dynamic and stimulate collaborations between large and medium-sized institutions in quite another way than we see today.

#### WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

Firstly we have learnt over these years that it is a demanding task to agree on a European dimension. Secondly we have come to understand that were it not for the visions of the artists themselves, there would hardly be any reason for us to meet. For it is in realizing the artistic potential of the network that we find its justification and expressive power.

Art is thus the be-all and end-all of the network. In the midst of all discussion about the distribution of funds and the choice of which artists to profile, the essence of the matter is the potential of the individual work to reach its audience. To finish, a quote from the Japanese poet Basho, a haiku which has served as a motto for this year's Ultima Festival:

There is nowhere to search for the spirit  
it is like the footprints  
of birds in the sky

## Susanna Eastburn, executive producer at the LIFT, London

### Forms of Engagement

Recently I attended a talk at the National Theatre in London, between the British playwright David Hare and the director Stephen Daldry. The subject was political theatre, and connected to a new collection of lectures by David Hare entitled *Obedience, Struggle and Revolt*. The title of the volume comes from a Balzac quotation, listing the three paths in life available to the young. Obedience, Balzac said, is dull; revolt is impossible and struggle is hazardous.

I was struck by a certain irony as I listened to these two leading lights of British theatre. Here we were, discussing how the performing arts can illuminate and bring forward key political issues in a more profound and memorable way than any kind of jaded journalism. And yet, here we were, sitting in the heart of an institution - a hierarchical institution that in itself is a manifestation of the kind of privilege politics that we were talking about fighting against.

What I want to talk about today is how I believe that the contemporary arts can connect with people and the current issues of the world in a way that traditional, or repertoire, arts can never do. And how the works that have the most meaning and impact on me, intellectually and emotionally, are those that do not exist in a separate space from the world but actively engage with the key questions about what it means to be alive today. Also, how the process of international touring of contemporary work is not just about allowing as many people as possible to have the sensory enjoyment of a wonderful performance (although it is that as well...). It can be about expressing something about contemporary life that everybody will relate to, understand and respond to in their own ways and in their own contexts, making connections and creating shared experiences between countries, between cities and towns, between people. These are fragmented times. It is all too easy to sit at home and interact with the world through the filter of technology. The live experience of performing arts is where we come together in the hope

of a shared experience that will change us. To do this on an international level through touring is what we must aspire to.

I also want to touch on the issue of how we, as contemporary arts organisations, actively engage with our audiences through our programmes and through our ways of organisation. I offer you the question, is it possible for us to move from the provision and consumption of art as a commodity, which the audience buys and enjoys, to a more genuine kind of co-production with our audiences, both in terms of a shared negotiation around the protocols of making a programme, and also the active experience of listening to the work?

I have to leave Oslo at lunchtime on Sunday, so will miss the closing performance given by Ensemble Modern. But next month Ensemble Modern will come to Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, where I was artistic director until last year, and perform the two works by Helmut Lachenmann - the *Concertino* and *Mouvement (vor der Erstarrung)*. So I can hear them there. Isn't international touring wonderful! Although this year's Huddersfield programme has been brilliantly created by Tom Service (so I cannot take any credit for it) I'd like to think that this is an event that I would have wanted to put on.

As I said earlier, the music that interests me the most, intellectually, emotionally, that I care most about, is that which tells us something about the world and what it means to be alive today. For me Helmut Lachenmann's music does just that, not explicitly, for that would be crude, but in its many subtleties and complexities, and in the way that it requires an active engagement on the part of the listener for its multiplicity of messages to be comprehended. For me, there is no lasting value in contemporary music that does not do this (although of course we all need to be entertained now and again!) Furthermore, this is why contemporary performance has the power to engage and be meaningful to a far wider range of people than conventional performance. In that sense it is political. During my time at Huddersfield, I actively sought to programme work that had this capacity to turn the listener from passive consumer to active producer of a once in a lifetime experience. In the context of this conference, I must say that some of the finest and most influential performances I put on in Huddersfield were brought to us via the Réseau Varèse. I can't list them all now for reasons of time, but these include such things as the UK premiere of Salvatore Sciarrino's *Lohengrin*, *Mare Nostrum* by Mauricio Kagel, or, on a smaller scale, an exquisite programme of contemporary works for the Hardanger fiddle devised by our very own Geir Johnson here. In Huddersfield, all of these events provoked the most astonishing responses, good and bad, in our audience. I'm sure they did similarly throughout Europe. Whilst I can't say what it means exactly, the idea that there are thousands of people around Europe whose lives have been somehow changed by hearing these pieces, and that they therefore share a bond even if they're not conscious of it, is one that heartens me.

In the summer I became Executive Producer of LIFT - the London International Festival of Theatre. In some ways, a major shift out of my sector into an unknown region, and yet for me it seemed a natural progression. I wanted to move beyond doing solely contemporary music, and I had a sudden realisation that what really stimulated me about my work at Huddersfield was not that it was music (which is my background) but the fact that it was contemporary, and the different audiences and perspectives contingent upon this. LIFT offered a world of new perspectives on this. But more than this, LIFT

presented to me a new proposition which not only rethought traditional programming paradigms but proposed radically new ways of engaging with an audience.

Key to this new vision is a new building called the LIFT New Parliament, which will be a beautiful building like no other. It is a performance space where audiences and artists can meet, debate, meditate and rehearse the very important global issues that affect us all. It is a space where conversations that aren't happening elsewhere can happen. And unlike other buildings it is flexible and transportable and will travel to where it needs to go.

We will be launching an architectural competition to design the New Parliament in January. Central to its design will be a consultation process which will be led by artists and which will engage diverse groups in imagining answers to a wide set of questions such as: What will the New Parliament look and feel like? What are the protocols of gathering there? Who will speak, who listens? What is public? What is private? By involving people in this way LIFT will create a group known as the New Parliamentarians, artists and audience, who will become our advocates and ensure that the LIFT New Parliament is an active space.

Once built, the New Parliament will be the heart of LIFT. From November 2007, LIFT will once again have a biennial festival. In that year, we imagine that the New Parliament will be built in East London and then travel by boat down the river Thames to the South Bank, where it will be publicly erected and form the centre piece of the Festival. Those of you familiar with London will be aware that the South Bank Centre sits diagonally opposite the Houses of Parliament - the Old Parliament, if you like - so there is an element of provocation in this.

We will commission site specific work for it, including an unforgettable opening ceremony. We will bring important conversations to a wider arena, and it will be our "home". It will be designed in such a way that it will be a beacon in every sense of the word, communicating the messages of its activities to a wider public through the medium of theatre, and also a physical beacon, projecting light and sound.

Although the New Parliament will have its home in London, central to its conception is the idea that it can travel to where it needs to go, taking its artistic programmes, protocols and iconic significance on an international journey. A key aspect of the development of the artistic programme of the New Parliament will be the recruitment of a team of Seekers, both international and UK-based. As artists, festival programmers, producers, cultural researchers, anthropologists and activists, each Seeker will have an in-depth knowledge of the cultural activity of their region or locality, with specific insight into performance-oriented work. This expertise will be complemented by their awareness of the present day sensibility of their region and its national attitudes - both mainstream and marginal, current and emerging - as well as their position as witnesses to its particular relationship to its history. They will be involved in the consultation process around the New Parliament's design, contributing to the processes determining its design, protocols and programme. They will also select and, where practical, produce work for LIFT across all of its activities. They will facilitate the international touring of the New Parliament and enable global connections to be made between local audiences.

Going back to my starting point in the National Theatre, I'd like again to consider Balzac's quotation - "Obedience, revolt or struggle". As producers of contemporary performance, obedience sits uncomfortably with us, so we are inevitably politicised whether we choose revolt or whether we choose to struggle within the system (which is perhaps the most familiar path for most of us). Therefore I genuinely believe that contemporary performance is strongest and best when it in some way engages with the world and the extremely pressing global concerns that surround us. The active engagement of an audience, in listening, watching or creating, allows a heightened intensity of performance, a co-production rather than a passive experience.

The kinds of forms of engagement I have been talking about allow us to step out of our institutional hierarchies, make new connections with our audience and they also allow the space for artistic practice to flourish in new and unexpected ways. If this can take place internationally through touring and through international collaboration, then more people can be involved and be touched by the work that we present. In this model, we must ourselves be prepared to change as arts organisations as we actively engage. We will make change, and be changed in the making.

**Jean-Yves Bainier, Adviser for Foreign Affairs at the French Ministry of Culture and Communication, DRAC Alsace**

I have the honour of representing the French Ministry of Culture here today. I myself play an active role in the Regional Department of Cultural Affairs of Alsace, which is based in Strasbourg. The Ministry of Culture is represented in each region of France by a regional department which is responsible for applying national policies in conjunction with local authorities in all cultural areas, from the preservation of cultural heritage to artistic creation. In Strasbourg, the international, cross-border and, above all, European dimension of culture has a special significance due to the presence in the city of two major European institutions, the European Parliament and the Council of Europe, which, I will remind you, counts Norway among its forty-six members.

The Ministry of Culture encourages contemporary artistic creation in diverse fields, among which the music of our times occupies a vital place. European networks, of which the Réseau Varèse is the most important, are in this way supported regularly through regional subsidies as well as through contributions from the Regional Department of Cultural Affairs of Alsace. Since the Réseau Varèse's headquarters are located in Strasbourg, the city of the Musica Festival, it seemed natural for us to give it our support.

The Ministry of Culture shows its commitment to contemporary music in a variety of ways. Here I will mention a few of the most important examples:

- Partnership contracts between composers and performers. These are based on the association of important figures in the music field with national theatres and concert halls. The aim is to reinforce the role of music in the elaboration of an artistic programme in each venue. The first project will begin at the end of 2005. Eight more contracts will be signed with different national theatres by 2007.
- The main tool of direct public subsidies to composers is the commissioned work. Each year, some sixty works are commissioned from composers representing diverse musical trends and categories. Debates are currently being held about how

- the commissioning system will be taken forward. We should not forget that some thirty commissioned works are also created directly for Radio France. Once again, the works are from the most varied genres, such as for orchestra, chamber music, choral music and jazz.
- Widening access to contemporary artworks today means drawing up an inventory of our electro-acoustic musical heritage, which is often threatened with deterioration or destruction. It also means implementing conservation and restoration measures and cataloguing works, so giving the public greater access to our artistic heritage.
  - The development of a system of national centres for musical creation. The aim of these vital centres of creation is to promote the composition of new works, to facilitate access to equipment and technologies, to increase the number of venues and centres available to composers and to promote performances of the contemporary repertoire.
  - I will mention one last example of the commitment of the Ministry of Culture to musical creation today, namely the increased support given to artistic festivals in which contemporary music is programmed. A system has been created which enables one-off grants to be made to cover additional expenses arising from the inclusion of works from the contemporary repertoire in concerts of classical music.

In conclusion, and to echo the remarks of Antoine Gindt, our response to debates about the future of Europe involve committing ourselves as clearly as possible to supporting all projects liable to develop productive exchanges and meetings. In this respect, the Réseau Varèse is exemplary beyond its terms of reference. In the eyes of many cultural figures, it represents a model in Europe. For these excellent reasons, we hope to continue supporting it for a long time to come.

### Cecilie Ore, Composer

When Geir Johnson phoned me and asked if I could make a short statement on 'Why does art matter?', I was standing in a book-shop in Amsterdam with a book in my hand having just read the following lines:

'One of the most salient features of our culture is that there is so much bullshit. Everyone knows this. Each of us contributes his share. But we tend to take the situation for granted. Most people are rather confident of their ability to recognize bullshit and to avoid being taken in by it. So the phenomenon has not aroused much deliberate concern, nor attracted much sustained inquiry.

In consequence, we have no clear understanding of what bullshit is, why there is so much of it, or what functions it serves. And we lack a conscientiously developed appreciation of what it means to us. In other words, we have no theory. I propose to begin the development of a theoretical understanding of bullshit, ...'

The book I am referring to is written by the moral philosopher Harry G. Frankfurt, and it has the title 'On Bullshit'.

So there I was, with the book on bullshit in one hand and Ultima on the phone in the other, and I thought that, yes, I would like to say some words about 'Why does art matter?'. Because art does matter. Art is, in fact, one of the most sophisticated tools we have in order to fight bullshit. And by making art or by being confronted with art we can prevent ourselves from becoming bullshitters.

Ludwig Wittgenstein once said that the following bit of verse by Longfellow could serve him as a motto:

In the elder days of art  
Builders wrought with greatest care  
Each minute and unseen part,  
For the Gods are everywhere.

Frankfurt comments this motto in the following way:

'The point of these lines is clear. In the old days, craftsmen did not cut corners. They worked carefully, and they took care with every aspect of their work. Every part of the product was considered, and each was designed and made to be exactly as it should be. These craftsmen did not relax their thoughtful self-discipline even with respect to features of their work that would ordinarily not be visible. Although no one would notice if those features were not quite right, the craftsmen would be bothered by their consciences. So nothing was swept under the rug. Or, one might perhaps also say, there was no bullshit.' (end of quote, from 'On Bullshit')

So there was no bullshit and there was no fakery. Bullshit is in fact not a matter of falsity but of fakery. A bullshiter is faking things, not lying. And as we are more tolerant of the fake than we are of lies, we tend to accept bullshit more easily. This, I think, is why bullshit is such a tricky matter, and why there is so much of it.

And this is where and why the attitude and function of art becomes extremely necessary: By dealing with art we are forced to ploung profoundly into depth. All art of importance is born here, in the depths of slow, careful and conscious thinking, where we again and again attempt to approach the essence of our existence. In these realms bullshit and fakery is left behind. Art matters.

Art versus entertainment, is gaining insight, versus seeking experiences. The one does not necessarily exclude the other, and sometimes they even mingle. But if one looks at how they are presented in the various media today, one can really start to wonder. Media's role in democratic countries should above all be to bring forth the widest possible spectre of variation from the purest art to the purest entertainment. It is evident that this is not happening. The media is becoming gradually more one-dimensional and gradually more filled up with trash.

It seems like the media is being a vehicle for people who want to become famous, not because they have anything to tell us or convey to other people, but merely for the sake of fame itself. And the more ordinary and trivial you are, the more you mingle with all the onlookers, the more the onlookers identify with you and the better are your chances of succeeding. It seems like we are living through an era where the agenda of cultural politics is governed by feelings of inferiority.

So, in this huge common room called the media, where a manifold of expressions should be presented and prosper, it seems like we are choosing triviality instead of talent, quantity instead of quality and money instead of mental profit as an overall goal. Europe has today one of the world's most highly educated populations, and what do we do? We embrace, consume and celebrate stupidity.

What is, in fact, the mental condition of Europe?

And what does all this trash in the media mean to us? Why do we think we need it? Has there always been so much junk around? Or is it just spread more effectively today? It seems like not only art but also some of the most important features of democracy are drowning in this overwhelming tsunami of mental garbage.

A society which does not accept nor enable its artists and thinkers to be a counterpoint to all its bullshit and bullshiting is, I would say, a poor, unhealthy and vulnerable society. It is an uninterested and, thus, uninteresting society because it is self-satisfied and self-contained. When a society starts to ignore its own intellectuals it is a serious sign of possible decay. All alarmclocks should start ringing.

One of society's most profound ways of understanding itself is through thinking in terms of art. It is necessary for every society to digest itself by continuously questioning its own condition. Therefore, art is opposition and art is criticism, art serves as our mental digestive system. If the society we live in denies or ignores this fact, then we are all in deep shit. And this is not bullshit. It is human shit. Selfmade, so to speak.

To be civilized means to respect differences, it means to enhance what is out of the ordinary and to seek manifold. This is of vital importance for a society if it does not want to degenerate and loose its sanity. And it is of vital importance to democracy and the further development of democracy.

It is tempting to ask: Is our notion of democracy changing without our proper awareness of it? Where will such a development lead us? Democracy is a very fragile and vulnerable condition. It is something we have to fight for every day and never take for granted. Here art can and should play an essential role by always looking at society with fresh eyes and from many different angles, without prejudice, with provocation, encouraging manifold and investigating into unknown expressive possibilities. This makes art one of our main protections against barbarism.

Democracy is about equality, but equality can be defined in various ways. A democratic society can encourage its inhabitants to strive upwards, to strive downwards or to remain the same. When we are forced to think the same, the result will always be that we stop thinking. Art matters because it can prevent us from doing this. It can prevent us from becoming homogenous and it can enhance tolerance by encouraging different and new ways of thinking. The balance between individual art on the one side and mass entertainment on the other has become distorted. And this is a serious problem concerning democracy. In a healthy democratic society it is of the utmost importance that as many qualitative different voices as possible are encouraged to be present.

What is, in fact, the mental condition of Europe?

I would like to end this talk by drawing the following comparison:

When a culture starts to crumble it looks similar to an old person becoming senile or dement. Dement people lose their ability to orientate in the present, in the here and now. Only the long term memory is left as they re-enter their childhood, raving around without direction. They know who they once were. They do not know any more who they are. When a society no longer is interested in what is contemporary, when it looses its short term memory, it becomes senile. A culture can not function without both short term and long term memory. Therefore, contemporary art matters.

## Appendices

## RÉSEAU VARÈSE

### EUROPEAN NETWORK FOR THE CREATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF MUSIC

The Réseau Varèse was founded in Rome in 1999, at the initiative of the Festival Musica, brings together 21 partners from 17 different European countries. Since the year 2000 with the support of the European Commission's Culture 2000 programme, it has encouraged European exchanges and the distribution of contemporary music projects. The Réseau Varèse meets twice a year as a General Assembly - as part of an event organised by one of the members - to raise current questions, draft its support programme and discuss different points of view concerning the creation of music in Europe.

The Réseau Varèse, which is an association under French law, has the support of the European Union's Culture 2000 programme and aid from the French Ministry of Culture and Communication (DMDTS, DRAC Alsace)



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## Members of the Réseau Varèse (June 11, 2005)

Germany	<b>Schauspielfrankfurt</b> , Frankfurt (Elisabeth Schweeger) <b>Konzerthaus</b> , Berlin (Heike Hoffmann) <b>Berliner Festspiele</b> , Berlin (Matthias Osterwold, André Hebbelinck)
Austria	<b>Wien Modern</b> , Vienna (Berno Odo Polzer)
Belgium	<b>Ars Musica</b> , Brussels (Tino Haenen)
Spain	<b>Musicadhoy</b> (Javier Güell)
Estony	<b>Baltic Network of New Music Festivals</b> NYYD Festival, Tallinn (Madis Kolk)
Lettony	ARENA Festival, Riga (Raimonds Melderis)
Lituanly	GAIDA Festival, Vilnius (Remigijus Merkelys)
Finland	<b>Musica Nova</b> , Helsinki (Kimmo Hakola)
France	<b>T&amp;M</b> , Paris (Antoine Gindt) <b>Ircam</b> , Paris (Franck Madlener) <b>Festival Musica</b> , Strasbourg (Jean-Dominique Marco)
Greece	<b>Megaron</b> , Athènes, Athén, Athens (Nikos Tsouchlos)
Hungary	<b>Festival d'Autumn</b> , Budapest (Zsófia Zimányi)
Italy	<b>Romaeuropa</b> , Rome (Monique Veaute / Fabrizio Grifasi) <b>RAI Trade</b> , Milan (Mimma Guastoni)
Norway	<b>Festival Ultima</b> , Oslo (Geir Johnson)
Portugal	<b>Casa da Musica</b> , Porto, Oporto (Antonio Pacheco)
United Kingdom	<b>South Bank Centre</b> , London (Gillian Moore) <b>Contemporary Music Festival</b> , Huddersfield (Tom Service)
Slovenia	<b>Ljubljana Festival</b> (Darko Brlek)
Sweden	<b>Stockholm New Music Festival</b> (Magnus Andersson)

## **Officers of the Réseau Varèse**

Chairman	Antoine Gindt (T&M, Paris)
Vice-chairmen	Heike Hoffmann (Konzerthaus Berlin) Jean-Dominique Marco (Festival Musica, Strasbourg)
Treasurer	Elisabeth Schweeger (Schauspiel Frankfurt)
Secretary	Antonio Pacheco (Casa da Musica, Porto)

## Programme for 2003-2004-2005

Titles	Composers	Genres
Dos Coyotes	Magnus Lindberg	1
Momo / Jojo	Pascal Dusapin	2
Fourth String Quartet	Jonathan Harvey	1
Mare Nostrum	Mauricio Kagel	3
Theseus Game	Sir Harrison Birtwistle	1
Richter	Mario Lorenzo	3
La Frontière	Philippe Manoury	3
The Contemporary Hardanger Fiddle		1
Ob:scena	Georges Aperghis	5
Eraritjaritjaka	Heiner Goebbels	3
Philomela	James Dillon	3
Anima Mundi (Symphony III)	Brice Pauset	1
An Index of Metals	Fausto Romitelli	4
Two Interludes	Jonathan Harvey	1
String Quartet n°1	Hanspeter Kyburz	1
Italia Anno Zero	Olga Neuwirth	4
Avis de Tempête	Georges Aperghis	3
Portrait	Helmut Lachenmann	1

- 1 = concert
- 2 = the young
- 3 = musical theatre, opera
- 4 = concert/video
- 5 = dance

In 2000, 2001 and 2002, thanks to the Culture 2000 programme of the European Union, the Réseau Varèse contributed to the distribution of the works by:

- **Wolfgang Rihm** (Paris, Oslo, Strasbourg, Huddersfield, Brussels)
- **Georges Aperghis** (Strasbourg, Brussels, Paris)
- **Kaija Saariaho** (Oslo, London, Huddersfield)
- **Heiner Goebbels** (Rome, Berlin, Nanterre, Huddersfield, Frankfurt)
- **Salvatore Sciarrino** (Berlin, Brussels, Strasbourg, Huddersfield, Nanterre, Rome, Paris, Frankfurt)
- **Magnus Lindberg** (Helsinki, Brussels, Paris)
- **Martin Matalon** (Strasbourg, Huddersfield, Paris)
- **Morton Feldman** (Oslo, Huddersfield, Berlin, Paris)
- **Evan Parker** (Oslo, Huddersfield, Paris)
- **Steve Reich** (Strasbourg, Berlin, Paris)

The conference of the 14 October 2005 in Oslo (National Library) was organised by the Réseau Varèse in collaboration with the Ultima Festival.

Organisation:

Vanessa Lassaingne, delegate of the Réseau Varèse  
Nina Hodneland, Ultima Contemporary Music Festival

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