

## De-ciphering Boulez?<sup>1</sup>

Robert Piencikowski

These few reflections on the different ways of approaching editorial questions could easily have born the subtitle: “Whom is Boulez addressing when he edits his writings?” What a cranky question, enough so, one might say, to lure the customer at the least expense. But to anyone, the answer would be, to whoever takes the trouble to obtain and peek inside the articles and books which, over the past almost sixty years, would have been delivered for publication – even to himself as he may have said in one or another of his essays.<sup>2</sup> Behind this apparent common sense there hides an inkling of suspicion: have you not – dear *hypocrite reader* – experienced any difficulty in grasping the exact sense of such and such a formulation, of such and such a argument? Do these writings offer no real challenge to the reader, are they presented in an absolutely seamless manner which gives the sense of indisputable coherence and immediate intelligibility? It is certainly embarrassing, if not to say annoying, even humiliating, to have to admit one’s ignorance in a milieu at the heart of which omniscience seems to be required – one would rather veil one’s shortcomings, hiding them beneath an offhand nonchalance of “this goes in and of itself,” discretely avoiding the allure of enticements in the face of which one would pretend indignation: “cover up that allusion, whose sight I can’t endure.” I’d wish, in the following pages, to give some glimpses at the pitfalls, real or imaginary, which are presented to the reader of Boulez’s writings, and to see, if in return for certain incursions into the surrounding context, there is no way of undoing the traps which are set for us, more or less intentionally by the author – traps all the more subtle that they remain, for the most part, invisible to the layman.

But first, let’s be clear on the different meanings attributed to the notion of “deciphering.” For any musician, this expression refers above all to reading at sight<sup>3</sup> - often, laborious, sometimes brilliant - by performers, of unknown scores, which the Germans call “vom Blatt spielen” (literally ‘playing – directly from the page’) or the Italians “a prima vista” (‘at first sight’) - taken up in English as “sight reading.” In the case which concerns us, and which,

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<sup>1</sup> “Dé-chiffrer Boulez?”, conference held at the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris on 5 March 2005, published in *La Pensée de Pierre Boulez à travers ses écrits*, edited by Jean-Jacques Nattiez, François Nicolas and Jonathan Goldman, Sampzon, Delatour France, 2010, pp. 73-88 ; pre-reedited in *Annäherungen*, Festschrift für Jürg Stenzl zum 65. Geburtstag, edited by Ulrich Mosch, Matthias Schmidt and Silvia Wälli, Saarbrücken, Pfau Verlag, 2008, pp. 250-265.

<sup>2</sup> “Probabilités critiques du compositeur,” in *Domaine Musical*, n° 1, Paris, Grasset, 1954, pp. 1-11; reprinted in *Points de repère I*, Paris, Christian Bourgois, 1995, pp. 27-34 [“The Composer as Critic” in Pierre Boulez: *Orientations*, translated by Martin Cooper, London/Boston, Faber & Faber, 1986, pp. 106-112 (further referred to as: *Orientations*)]; “De moi à moi,” in *Penser la musique aujourd’hui*, Genève, Gonthier, 1964, pp. 5-10. [*Boulez on Music Today*, translated by Susan Bradshaw and Richard Rodney Bennett, London: Faber & Faber 1971 / Cambridge (Mass.), Harvard University Press, 1972 (further referred to as: *On Music Today*)]

<sup>3</sup> The reader is likely already aware of the “déchiffrement” in the original French title of this article meaning at the same time, *deciphering* and *sight-reading* in English; later in the essay, it is modestly deconstructed, to suggest “ordering” or “enumeration.” *ed*

Non, car on est à l'œuvre avec le jeu à quatre de groupe A+B qui varie sur 16' fractions dans de puissantes parties (in Ex. XII).

Le jeu B est un jeu à quatre de groupe A+B qui varie sur 16' fractions dans de puissantes parties (in Ex. XII).

3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

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The page contains several paragraphs of text in French, interspersed with mathematical notation and musical symbols. Key elements include:

- Section 40:** Discusses the relationship between groups A, B, and C. It mentions "le jeu B est un jeu à quatre de groupe A+B" and provides a list of numbers: 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20.
- Section 41:** Mentions "le jeu B est un jeu à quatre de groupe A+B" and "le jeu C est un jeu à quatre de groupe A+B". It includes the notation:  $I_3, I_5, I_7, I_9, I_{11}, I_{13}, I_{15}, I_{17}, I_{19}$ .
- Section 42:** Mentions "le jeu B est un jeu à quatre de groupe A+B" and "le jeu C est un jeu à quatre de groupe A+B". It includes the notation:  $I_3, I_5, I_7, I_9, I_{11}, I_{13}, I_{15}, I_{17}, I_{19}$ .
- Section 43:** Mentions "le jeu B est un jeu à quatre de groupe A+B" and "le jeu C est un jeu à quatre de groupe A+B". It includes the notation:  $I_3, I_5, I_7, I_9, I_{11}, I_{13}, I_{15}, I_{17}, I_{19}$ .
- Section 44:** Mentions "le jeu B est un jeu à quatre de groupe A+B" and "le jeu C est un jeu à quatre de groupe A+B". It includes the notation:  $I_3, I_5, I_7, I_9, I_{11}, I_{13}, I_{15}, I_{17}, I_{19}$ .
- Section 45:** Mentions "le jeu B est un jeu à quatre de groupe A+B" and "le jeu C est un jeu à quatre de groupe A+B". It includes the notation:  $I_3, I_5, I_7, I_9, I_{11}, I_{13}, I_{15}, I_{17}, I_{19}$ .

Example 1: Pierre Boulez "Stravinsky remains," fair copy, p. 11 (Pierre Boulez Collection, Paul Sacher Foundation)

properly speaking, only touches indirectly on music, the first *decipherer* of Boulez – other than himself and his fictitious interlocutors – is quite naturally his editor, sponsor or recipient of the text<sup>4</sup> - more recently, his secretary. In truth, this apparently privileged addressee does not have an easy task. Whoever has had the opportunity to have between his hands or under his gaze, the first manuscripts that Boulez sent to his editors will know what I am referring to: written by hand, often all at once, one would be tempted to say, in the flow of the pen, they are presented in a microscopic handwriting, so delicate, so fine as to be at the same time the graphologists' delight,<sup>5</sup> and the reader's despair.<sup>6</sup> Certain manuscripts are in circulation in the form of facsimiles but I don't believe it pointless to reproduce a page here (Example 1 above) by way of reminder, so as to be all the more in a position to assess the indulgence of the first editors who placed their columns at the disposal of a composer so unconcerned with the legibility of his handwriting: it required the patience of an angel to take on such squiggles and transcribe them to type so as to be presentable for printing. Patience – the first partisans of the young composer must have had it to burn!<sup>7</sup> What editor today would agree to publish the texts of a newcomer, still unknown to the public if he came to present them to him in all innocence in such condition?<sup>8</sup> I leave it to the leisure of the reader to consider the conditions currently imposed by publishing houses and to ask himself if an author of the ilk of the young Boulez would be conceivable today.

So who were these courageous editors, ready to throw themselves intrepidly into such an improbable enterprise? The first to commission a text from the young Boulez was André Souris, then chief editor of the journal *Polyphonie*.<sup>9</sup> Next was Fred Goldbeck's turn who had charge of *Contrepoints*,<sup>10</sup> distributed initially by the Editions de Minuit and soon

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<sup>4</sup> Contrary to his scores, Boulez's writings rarely bear any dedication, one notable exception being the ambiguous one – to say the least – at the beginning of *Penser la musique aujourd'hui* (*On Music Today*).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Dominique Dupraz, "Signes," in Claude Samuel (ed.), *Pierre Boulez. Eclats 2002*, Paris, Mémoire du Livre, 2002, pp. 387-395.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Joan Peyser, *Boulez. Composer, Conductor, Enigma*, New York, Schirmer Books, 1976, pp. 5-6. It would be amusing to compose an anthology of the sometimes unintentionally ridiculous misprints which have slipped into the different publications from the confusion of the transcriber faced with the illegibility of certain words.

<sup>7</sup> The first writings date from 1948, so the author was then only 23 years old.

<sup>8</sup> Before the publication of the Second Sonata from Heugel in February of 1950, none of Boulez's scores had been edited, and their dissemination at concerts was still only known to a limited audience, an exception being the radio retransmission of the stage music for *Le Soleil des eaux* over the air waves of Radiodiffusion Française April 28, 1948.

<sup>9</sup> The editorial circumstances of "Propositions" and "Incidences actuelles de Berg" have been recounted by Robert Wangermée, *André Souris et le complexe d'Orphée*, Liège, Mardaga, 1995, pp. 272-277.

<sup>10</sup> "Trajectoires : Ravel, Stravinsky, Schönberg," (*Contrepoints*, n° 6, 4<sup>e</sup> trimestre 1949, pp. 122-141), and "Moment de J.-S. Bach," (*Contrepoints*, n° 7, 3<sup>e</sup> trimestre 1951, pp. 72-86); the archives of Frederick ("Fred") Goldbeck (1902-1981) can be consulted at the Médiathèque Gustav Mahler. ["Trajectories: Ravel, Stravinsky, Schoenberg", and "Bach's Moment", in Pierre Boulez: *Stocktakings from an Apprenticeship*, translated by Stephen Walsh, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1991, pp. 188-208 and 3-14 (further referred to as: *Stocktakings*)]

taken over by *La Revue musicale*.<sup>11</sup> As for John Cage, he took it on himself to have published in the United States his own translation of an important fragment of a letter addressed to him personally by Boulez.<sup>12</sup> Devotion was not lacking as one could judge by the diversity of figures engaged in making known the thinking of the young French musician. But the one, other than Paule Thévenin,<sup>13</sup> who would supply Boulez indefatigable support and provide the means to expand his writings in surmounting the obstacles encountered in the newsrooms, is indisputably Pierre Souvtchinsky. There would be much to say on the uniqueness of this extraordinary individual, little known to the public at large, who nevertheless played a decisive role in the musical milieu of immediate post-war Paris – himself a kind of link between the pre-war Stravinsky and Boulez' debuts. We will soon assess to what extent his influence on the writings of Boulez was far from being negligible, even if it was not always manifest in an immediately visible manner.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Albert Richard (1908-1996) successively published with Editions Richard-Masse “Eventuellement...,” (*La Revue musicale*, n° 212, April 1952, pp. 117-148), “Chien flasque,” (*La Revue musicale*, n° 215, August 1952, pp. 153-154) and “Tendances de la musique récente,” (*La Revue musicale*, n° 236, 1957, pp. 28-35). [“Possibly”, *Stocktakings*, pp. 111-140; “Satie: *Chien flasque*”, *Orientations*, pp. 323-324]

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Pierre Boulez, John Cage, *Correspondance et documents*, edited by Jean-Jacques Nattiez, new edition revised by myself, Mainz etc., Schott, 2002, p. 177-182 ; this “statement”, originally integrated into the collective article entitled “Four Musicians at Work,” by Cage in the journal *Transformation ; Arts, Communication, Environment*, I, n° 3, 1952, pp. 168-170, was intended for Henry Cowell (1897-1965), who had solicited the article for a chronicle dedicated to contemporary music in the *Musical Quarterly*, 38, n° 1, January 1952, pp. 123-136. Boulez’s second intermediary in the United States was Virgil Thomson (1896-1989), who under the title “Note to Tonight’s Concert : Webern’s Work Analyzed” published in the *New York Herald Tribune* of December 28, 1952, the English translation of what would become “Incipit” (cf. *Points de Repère* I, *op. cit.*, p. 153-154, and *Stocktakings*, pp. 215-216).

<sup>13</sup> It was Paule Thévenin (1923-1993) who prompted Jean Paulhan to publish “Recherches maintenant,” in the *Nouvelle Revue française*, n° 23, November 1954, pp. 898-903 ; reprinted in *Points de repère* I, *op. cit.*, p. 331-333 [“Current Investigations”, *Stocktakings*, pp. 15-19] ; cf. letter from Pierre Souvtchinsky to Pierre Boulez of November 14, 1952 (Paul Sacher Foundation, Pierre Boulez Collection).

<sup>14</sup> Pierre Souvtchinsky (1892-1985) was, among others, the editor of *Musique russe*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1953, a collection in two volumes in which appeared Boulez’s famous analysis of *The Rite of Spring*, “Strawinsky demeure” (“Stravinsky remains”, *Stocktakings*, pp. 55-110) ; he next committed the *Domaine Musical* collection to the Editions du Rocher from 1956 to 1966. I advise the reader to consult the collection of his writings edited by Frank Langlois entitled *Un siècle de musique russe (1830-1939)*, Arles, Actes Sud, 2004 as well as Jésus Aguila, *Le Domaine musical. Pierre Boulez et vingt ans de création contemporaine*, Paris, Fayard, 1992. Among the manuscripts of Boulez’s writings, the Paul Sacher Foundation possesses that of “Strawinsky demeure,” still bearing the provisional title of “Printemps ; Sacre ; Strawinsky,” on which appear the written annotations of Souvtchinsky intended for typed transcription. More recently (Basel, 4 April 2008), Pierre Boulez acknowledged that he was helped in having the manuscript typed by a secretary supplied by his father – but the similitude with Souvtchinsky’s handwriting remains obvious. The case of texts typed directly is exceptional with Boulez, and occurs mainly in the mid ‘60s, the author’s impatience and nervousness adjusted poorly to the discipline demanded in learning to type. His typed correspondence is generally dictated to his secretary (professional since January 1959, personal since September 1962), the rare letters typed personally (since October 1961) being generally written in small case.

This leads me now to broach the second meaning of the word *decipher*, i.e. the sense of deciphering a secret code, in other words, a *cipher*. What is to be understood by this, in the context with which we are concerned? I'll take, for example, a simple, apparently harmless title, "...auprès et au loin."<sup>15</sup> A simple, even banal phrase, while the quotation marks, commas and period invite us to read in this a quotation.<sup>16</sup> A reference? Certainly! But which one? No point in reviewing one's classics to find it:<sup>17</sup> one need only refer to the original edition of this text, published in the collection inaugurating the series of four "concerts of chamber music" organized by Boulez at the Petit Théâtre Marigny.<sup>18</sup> Framing this volume which brought together contributions of different authors positioning themselves near or far in the influence of these manifestations, was an article written by Souvtchinsky, which concluded with the following lines:

It is certain that the reform and the reformation of concepts and language, in which *living music* is now irrevocably engaged, had their precursors and attentive and helpful exegetes. But should we not expect the appearance – always so disturbing and unexpected – of a predestined musician, who will allow this movement, this generation of new recruits, at last to achieve awareness and of its historical worth; for it is always an event – a creator – who by his arrival on the scene, his presence, the assertion of his gifts, his judgment, makes everything suddenly once again visible and clear, near and far.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup> *Cahiers de la Compagnie Madeleine Renaud – Jean-Louis Barrault*, deuxième année, n° 3, Paris, Julliard, 1954, pp. 7-27; reprinted in *Points de repère I*, *op. cit.*, pp. 297-314 ["...Near and Far", *Stocktakings*, pp. 141-157].

<sup>16</sup> This title poses only one philological question, it appears in undifferentiated capitals at the head of the article while the table of contents differentiates the capital of "Auprès" from the other small case characters. The manuscript of the first state of the text, as it appears in the Pierre Boulez Collection at the Paul Sacher Foundation, has simply "Auprès et au loin," with neither dots nor period: this supplementary distinction only appears in the printing, which allows one to suppose that the idea of drawing to the attention of the readers that this was a matter of a borrowing comes from the chief editor of the collection (in principle, Boulez himself, but it is not excluded that Souvtchinsky would also have had something to say). The re-edition in the *Relevés d'apprenti* (Paris, Seuil, 1966, pp. 183-203; *Stocktakings*, pp. 141-157), on the contrary, only retained the period at the head of the article, omitting it in the running title, the bibliography and the table of contents (in the latter, as at the head of the chapter, use is made furthermore, of italic characters.)

<sup>17</sup> Among the innumerable literary references available to the repertoire of citations, we can mention *Le Livre d'Esther*, 9.20, in the Louis Segond translation ("Mardochee écrit ces choses, et il envoya des lettres à tous les Juifs qui étaient dans toutes les provinces du roi Assuérus, auprès et au loin." Alliance Biblique Universelle, 1910 ["And Mordecai wrote these things, and sent letters unto all the Jews that were in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, both nigh and far"]; it is according to the Old Testament, a matter of the institution of the Feast of Purim on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the month of *Adar*, considered the Jewish carnival or *mardi gras* coinciding with a day in February or March of the Gregorian calendar); the phrase is also to be found in Chateaubriand as well as Pierre Loti.

<sup>18</sup> First concert January 13, 1954; these concerts would become the *Concerts du Domaine musical* in the following year.

<sup>19</sup> "Il est certain que la réforme et la réformation de concepts et de langage, dans lesquelles s'est engagée maintenant, irrévocablement, la *musique vivante*, avaient leurs précurseurs et leurs explicateurs attentifs et utiles. Mais ne fallait-il pas attendre l'apparition, toujours troublante et inattendue, d'un musicien prédestiné, pour permettre à ce mouvement, à ce recrutement d'une nouvelle génération, de prendre définitivement conscience de soi-même, de sa valeur historique ; car c'est toujours un événement – un créateur – qui, par sa venue, sa présence, l'affirmation de

In reading this text written in a quasi-prophetic tone (since it is really for the announcement of a new messianism to which we are apparently invited - one might wonder with curiosity about the identity of the “precursors and attentive and useful exegetes”: Messiaen?, Leibowitz?) one would be at some pain to see it asserted, if not insolently proclaimed in an article figuring at the volume head in the manner of declaring “to whom it may concern.”<sup>20</sup> But this would be judging by appearances. Pushing the investigation further, and going back a few years, our attention is caught by an epistemological skirmish between two famous correspondents a propos the negative judgment pronounced by Boulez on the scores addressed to him by Morton Feldman:

He [Morton Feldman] is somewhat mollified knowing that you also do not like Mondrian. The difference of opinion seems to me like one of distance. *Close up or far away.* (Far away, the entire earth is seen as a single point).<sup>21</sup>

Thus this phrase which one would have been inclined to consider only in terms of the whatever minimally emphatic tone of the new context into which it must have been displaced, is nothing but an aside – in collusion between accomplices - a nod to an opinion expressed by Cage, translated, then reformulated by Souvtchinsky deliberately for Boulez, who thus enjoyed taking up the challenge by presenting it as a chapter heading. We'll admit there was much in this that does not meet the eye. And in case the reader would be inclined to accuse as distorted interpretation what we propose to attribute to this harmless phrase, he need only refer to some further letters to note that, far from passing

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ses dons, son jugement, fait que subitement tout devient à nouveau visible et clair, auprès et au loin.” Pierre Souvtchinsky, “A propos d’un retard,” *Cahiers de la Compagnie Madeleine Renaud – Jean-Louis Barrault, op.cit.*, p.127 [*Stocktakings*, p. 142]. The thought is not excluded of Souvtchinsky’s scholarship prompting the association of the notions of “reform” and “reformation” with an expression coinciding with the borrowing from a translation of the Bible intended for Protestant readers – the faith which happened to be that of Suzanne Tézenas (1899-1991), future President of the *Concerts du Domaine Musical*. This would explain the accent placed on *predestination*, one of the most controversial theological arguments of Lutheran, then Calvinist reform. The “predestined musician” moreover, is the same qualification as that attributed to Mozart by Alexander Oulibicheff, whose famous *Nouvelle biographie de Mozart suivie d’un aperçu sur l’histoire générale de la musique et de l’analyse des principales œuvres de Mozart*, [New biography of Mozart Followed by a General Historical Survey of the Music and Analysis of the Principal Works of Mozart] Moscow, Auguste Semen, 1842-43 (reedited : Paris, Librairie Séguier, 1991, p. 30)], could not have been ignored by Souvtchinsky, who cites the author by name (under the transliteration *Oulibichev*) in his study “Sur la critique musicale russe,” cf. *Un siècle de musique russe, op. cit.*, pp. 223-224.

<sup>20</sup> This being far from passing unnoticed by certain early commentators; in his account of the chamber music concerts organized by Boulez at the Petit Théâtre Marigny, and in the relevant publications, André Hodeir, after summarizing Souvtchinsky’s article and citing his concluding sentences, added these somewhat awkward lines: “On ne saurait qu’approuver une vue aussi nette de l’évolution musicale actuelle. Il reste que cet article eût gagné, peut-être, à figurer ailleurs qu’en un numéro dont la pièce maîtresse – l’article de Boulez – s’intitule précisément *Auprès et au loin*.” [“One would far from disagree with such a clear-cut view of current musical evolution. However, this article could have benefitted, perhaps, by appearing elsewhere than in an issue whose centerpiece – Boulez’s article – is entitled ‘*Auprès et au loin*.’”] André Hodeir, “L’activité du ‘Groupe Marigny’,” in *Musica*, n° 7, October 1954, pp. 30-32.

<sup>21</sup> Letter from Cage to Boulez, Summer 1951, cf. *Correspondance et documents, op. cit.*, p. 190 (my emphasis).

unnoticed, it was on target to the point that Boulez did not hesitate to take it back into account to further affirm his disagreement:

You said: "This difference of opinion seems to me like one of distance. *Close up or far away.*" I think even so that it is "close up." For I do not hold essentially "to see the entire earth as a single point." That would give me the dizziness of "infinite spaces" and would have as result only interstellar silence. (And absolute zero from the point of view of temperature understands itself! *sic.*)<sup>22</sup>

The double-barreled referential volley which the title concealed, in addition to clarifying the sense of our reading, invites us retrospectively to understand Boulez's article as taking an indirect position, a public reaction addressed to the response proposed by Cage in the private sphere. This exposé of recent developments in Boulezian musical technique is revealed to be as much a tributary of the models as of the counter examples which Boulez chose for himself. Beyond the allusion to Cage which will appear in the concluding lines, multiple references would be revealed to his own *Marteau sans maître*, still in the process of composition,<sup>23</sup> along with the criticisms leveled against *Studie I* of which Karlheinz Stockhausen had allowed him to hear fragments in the process of realization during a brief visit to Cologne:<sup>24</sup> which readers, except the principals concerned at the time of its first publication, and even beyond, would have been able, in a simple reading, to imagine the density of such a text, without the help of a critical apparatus prompting them, not just to understand, but to even suspect the presence of so much innuendo?

The story of this phrase does not stop there: it apparently must have been the delight of both interlocutors, to the point that it would be seen thrown into other circumstances, no longer in reference to Cage, but a propos Stravinsky. And so it is found taken up first under a lightly altered form in the laconic homage given by Boulez on the occasion of Stravinsky's 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary: "an homage? too near, too far ... a thousand pardons!"<sup>25</sup> Souvtchinsky, not wanting to be undone, even surpasses this in his inaugural text of the second volume of the *Cahiers Renaud-Barrault* dedicated to contemporary music and published on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the *Domaine musical*:

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<sup>22</sup> Letter from Boulez to Cage, after November 28, 1951, *ibid.*, p. 198 (again my emphasis). Note that the echoes are not only in one direction: the "interstellar silence" evoked by Boulez will suggest in turn unexpected resonances to his correspondent.

<sup>23</sup> Announced for the Donaueschinger Musiktage für Neue Tonkunst [Donaueschingen Music Days for New Sonic Art] (the concert October 16, 1954), the premiere was reported on the 18<sup>th</sup> of June 1955 during the ISCM Festival at Baden-Baden.

<sup>24</sup> This brief excursion, during which Boulez was driven by car to Cologne par Michel Fano, to be joined by Henri Pousseur, took place from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> of December 1953, hardly more than a month before the publication of the article.

<sup>25</sup> "un hommage? trop près, trop loin ... mille pardons!", "Pour ses quatre-vingts ans" ["For his eighty years"], in the program of the first concert of the ninth season of the *Domaine Musical*, in Paris, November 8, 1961, reprinted with other homages from different composers in the cultural supplement of the daily *Die Welt*, dated from June 16, 1962, and in *Points de repère II*, Paris, Christian Bourgois, 2005, pp. 607-608.

The authenticity of a great creator is confirmed by the clarity which he gives to all that surrounds him; everything becomes *otherwise* clear and visible – from near and far, from behind and in front, and also in a certain way, by its *historical purpose*.<sup>26</sup>

They bring it back in another Stravinskian context at the time of the publication of a collection dedicated to the author of the *Rite*.<sup>27</sup> The contribution of Souvtchinsky, bearing the date of 1975, and entitled namely “Stravinsky auprès et au loin” [Stravinsky from near and far] (a phrase which will be used again in the body of the text, p.30) takes up almost literally certain ideas dear to the author, already expressed in his articles of 1954 and 1963.<sup>28</sup> The text of Boulez, written in adopting a graphic disposition suggesting an inscription in stone, the memory of “from near, from far” creeps in with the turn of a phrase evoking the confrontation of Stravinsky with other innovators of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>29</sup> And hence quite an extensive lineage from such modest origins.

The simple comparison between the different editions and translations of the writings and correspondence of Boulez and Cage reveals in itself the readers’ capacity for comprehension. The French version of the correspondence proposed as for itself “trop près ou trop loin”<sup>30</sup> [“too near or too far”]. The English translations of the article opted for two diverging solutions: in his inability to retrace the origin of the citation, the first translator of *Relevés d’apprenti* resigned himself to use the French title which figured in the collection edited by Paule Thévenin;<sup>31</sup> the second, through inability to locate the allusion to Cage’s letter, used the phrase “... Near and Far” in sole reference to the citation of Souvtchinsky.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>26</sup> “L’authenticité d’un grand créateur se confirme par l’éclairage qu’il donne à tout ce qui l’entoure ; tout devient *autrement* clair et visible – auprès et au loin, en arrière et en avant, et aussi, et aussi, en quelque sorte, par son *utilité historique*” Pierre Souvtchinsky, “Ceux du *Domaine musical*,” *Cahiers de la Compagnie Madeleine Renaud – Jean-Louis Barrault*, n° 41, Paris, Julliard, December 1963, pp. 141-146.

<sup>27</sup> *Stravinsky, études et témoignages*, edited by François Lesure, Paris, Jean-Claude Lattès, 1982.

<sup>28</sup> Among others: “toute création est un phénomène essentiellement hiérarchique” [“any creation is an essentially hierarchical phenomenon”] (1954, p. 125) / “[...] toute création et la création artistique, particulièrement, est un phénomène éminemment, mystérieusement hiérarchique, un champ hiérarchisé” [“(...) any creation and particularly artistic creation is an eminently, mysteriously hierarchical phenomenon, a hierarchized field”] (1963, p. 142-143) / “la création est un phénomène éminemment, supérieurement *hiérarchique*” [“creation is an eminently, superiorly *hierarchical* phenomenon”] (1982, p. 22). The reader will appreciate the variants in the evolution of the adverbs and of the typography.

<sup>29</sup> “Un bilan?,” *ibid.*, p. 55-65 ; reprinted in *Points de repère II*, Paris, Christian Bourgois, 2005, pp. 412-423 (here p. 418).

<sup>30</sup> Pierre Boulez, John Cage, *Correspondance*, translation from the English and French adaptation by Gaétan Martel, Paris, Christian Bourgois, 1991, pp. 176 and 186.

<sup>31</sup> Pierre Boulez, *Notes of an Apprenticeship*, translated from the French by Herbert Weinstock, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1968, pp. 182-204.

<sup>32</sup> *Stocktakings*, pp. 140-157. Lets be clear that at its release that the English translation of the Boulez – Cage correspondence, including, for the first time in English, the complete version, in Cage’s own translation, of the letter in which Boulez repeated his phrase, was only published in 1993: *The Boulez-Cage Correspondence*, translated and edited by Robert Samuels, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993, p. 110 et 117.



The German translator of Boulez's writings opted for the title "Nahsicht und Fernsicht"<sup>33</sup> ["Near View and Far View"] with neither brackets, comma, nor period, while the translators of the correspondence proposed "Nah dran oder sehr weit weg"<sup>34</sup> ["nearby or very far away"]: to such a degree of distance from the source, any hope of guessing the least trace of the citation is definitively lost. The Italian readers would be more fortunate: the translators of the article and of the correspondence would agree on the same expression.<sup>35</sup> It is clear: the interpretive choices can incite connections or, on the contrary, definitively hide them according to the various insights into the literal, textual proposition.

This digression over a title will help us measure the effort required in an attentive reading: it is, of course, exposed to the accusation of being reductive to the extent of bringing the generality of speculation to the particularity of the circumstance – an inconvenience which to me appears, on the contrary, more than compensated by the advantage of its historical perspective, assuring consideration of the development of a thought instead of fixing it in the absolute of a petrified temporality.

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So much for detail. If one takes into account the whole, the question of *deciphering* is posed naturally in other terms. Before broaching the question of the choice of texts, of their condition, of their order of succession and grouping, I would like to first cite five authors so that the reader can become aware of the different editorial options which have been observed till now:

The reader need not be surprised to find sometimes in one text ideas already expressed in another. Most of the articles were prompted by very specific circumstances [...] It was natural to return each time to certain major ideas, to make once again important observations [...] It could have been objected that the collecting of these texts into one volume was the right moment to rewrite some parts of the articles. But the book would then have lost its essential value as a record.<sup>36</sup>

In 1966 Paule Thévenin published a collection with the Editions du Seuil in Paris, in which Boulez's essays of the years 1948 to 1962 are collected under the title "Relevés d'apprenti" [...]. As it went to publication in the German language there was in the first discussions between Pierre Boulez, Karl Ulrich Majer, the initiator on the publisher's behalf, and myself, a unanimity over this, that the layout of the German edition should be carried out under other perspectives. The following volume is based on such principles.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Pierre Boulez, *Werkstatt-Texte*, from the French by Josef Häusler, Frankfurt/M-Berlin, Verlag Ullstein GmbH, 1972, p. 58-75.

<sup>34</sup> *Dear Pierre – cher John : Pierre Boulez und John Cage ; der Briefwechsel*, [*Dear Pierre – cher John : Pierre Boulez und John Cage the Correspondence*] translated from the English and French by Bettina Schäfer and Katharina Matthewes, Hamburg, Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1997, pp. 123 and 130.

<sup>35</sup> Pierre Boulez : *Note di apprendistato*, edited by Luigi Bonino Savarino, Torino, Einaudi, 1968, p. 164 : "... Vicino e lontano" ; Pierre Boulez, John Cage, *Corrispondenza e documenti*, edited by W. Edwin Rosasco, Milano, Archinto, 2006, pp. 196 et 206 : "Vicino o lontano."

<sup>36</sup> Paule Thévenin, "Postface," in *Relevés d'apprenti*, *op. cit.*, p. 382; *Stocktakings*, p. 306.

<sup>37</sup> Josef Häusler, "Vorbemerkung," in *Werkstatt-Texte*, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

Like Debussy (whose prose writings also leave their mark), Boulez was clearly anxious to distance himself from the pedagogical manner of most contemporary writing on music, not excluding Leibowitz's, and to bring to his writing a flair and vitality of allusion which would both enrich the content and support the polemic. But such a style presupposes a well-read response, and at least some of the notorious obscurity of Boulez in translation must spring from the attempt to make sense of these passages without the benefit of such a response. The footnote solution adopted in the present translation is obviously a pale substitute for spontaneous recognition, but it is certainly better than unmediated opacity, and probably better than paraphrase, which loses the precision and sharpness of the original, and may weaken the thought by over-explanation. [...] When the texts were first edited for publication in book form, Boulez made or permitted a number of changes of a substantive character, some to spare the feelings of colleagues who had fallen foul of his polemic, some to generalize points that had previously been tied to particular events that no longer held any interest, some to strengthen or moderate the expression in the light (presumably) of mature consideration. To attempt even a reasonably thorough collection of these variant texts would be a caricature of modern scholarship, but now and then the differences tell us something about the development of Boulez's ideas, and in these cases I have presented the original versions in footnotes.<sup>38</sup>

The English edition of *Relevés d'apprenti* points out in its notes, and with much care, a certain number of variants between the first version of the published articles and the revisions which were the motivation for *Relevés*. If we haven't repeated this information it is because it appears to us premature to undertake such an edition: in the preparation of *Points de repère* in 1980 Pierre Boulez meticulously corrected the texts written for the unedited portion of *Penser la musique aujourd'hui* and some others, such as his 1961 conference on the *Deuxième Improvisation sur Mallarmé*. Was it necessary fifteen years later to undo what he insisted on revising, in light of the insertion of these texts into a collection which would juxtapose some featuring critical notes with others which would not? We don't believe so. And what is more, the object of a critical edition is to access the totality of the evolution of the author's thought. A true critical edition would demand not only a return to initial publications, but equally to the manuscripts, even to the notes, and to the totality of variants. The breadth of the task surpassed the editorial scope at our disposal.<sup>39</sup>

- At the moment of composition of *Pli selon pli* you proceeded to a quite theoretical work which had a general value and which opened into *Penser la musique aujourd'hui*.
- Yes, but I never gave the detail of the processes.
- In any case, this is whole difficulty with the book, because it would require user's directions for certain examples ...
- It is just for that that I didn't provide them! So that one could reflect, based on certain information without necessarily arriving at the same result. This is what I have often done in my composition class in Basel: I would give certain material to the students, asking them to develop it, and I, for my part, would develop it myself. After a month, we would look at what each had deduced from the initial structures. This is what I did in *Structures I*: I took an object found in Messiaen. I don't like quotations, but I like to take an object to displace it, to derive it into a new context.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Stephen Walsh, "Translator's Preface", *Stocktakings*, pp. vi-vii.

<sup>39</sup> Jean-Jacques Nattiez, "Publier Boulez," in *Points de repère I*, *op.cit.*, pp. 23-24.

<sup>40</sup> Philippe Albéra, "Entretien avec Pierre Boulez," in *Pli selon pli de Pierre Boulez*, Genève, Contrechamps, 2003, p. 11.

Considering the different options proposed in their chronological succession, the least to be said is that none in themselves achieves unanimous acceptance. Contrary to what is written in its postscript, the French edition, outside of the arbitrariness of its selection and groupings, has sometimes brought substantial modifications to the original texts. The first English translation and the Italian translation scrupulously respected it in all cases with neither modification nor commentary. But ever since the German translation, the situation has become complicated by the fact that its almost equivalent title covers not only a different selection of texts but certain important corrections, which already lends to confusion.<sup>41</sup> The author of the second English translation, all the while returning to the original selection of the French edition, on the contrary, regardless of Paule Thévenin's allegations, took care to remove the re-workings which had been carried out in it, while at the same time bringing in an important number of explanatory notes designed to orient the reading of an anglophone public with little familiarity with the Boulezian sources. This first attempted critical edition found itself almost immediately refuted in turn by Jean-Jacques Nattiez in his re-editing the writings into new collections in the original language. Finally, as if that were not enough, and in such a way as to re-ignite the debate, the author has himself recently issued the challenge of liberating the reader unto himself, to push him to interpret, with the only means on board, the pronouncement of the writings whose deliberately allusive and elliptic character he assumes it justifies – all of which brings us a beautiful flight of fancy over the composer's relationship to citations and to their relocation.

Faced with these contradictory propositions, what to chose? How to chose? Let's take some examples of the mixed blessings offered by the different editions. I will begin first with a view of the results obtained by grouping the writings according to their categories, since uniquely in themselves they already propose an interpretation of the texts: their order of succession represents a form of "ciphering" in the double sense including here, that of *enumeration*, each text being attributed a very particular position in relation to the others. Each collection proposes a sort of portrait of the author at different stages of his career, throwing a retrospective glance upon himself through the "lens" of the intermediary to whom was confided the task of having the model pose: in this sense, the presentation, the illustrations, even the choice of publisher bear responsibility in the image which is conveyed to the reading. It is not above suspicion that that since the first collection, the adopted order should not be chronological: this corresponded to the necessities of the moment, in the aim of conforming the writings to an overall view, according to the perspective of Boulez's engagement in French cultural politics in the mid 1960's.<sup>42</sup> Once this order is upset, their

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<sup>41</sup> Josef Häusler was the first to correct the omission of an important fragment of "A la limite du pays fertile" (Paul Klee)" (cf. *Werkstatt-Texte*, *op. cit.*, p. 9), hitherto unnoticed by the first francophone readers of this text, the text having appeared initially first in a German translation, thus having only access to this truncated form more than ten years after its first publication (in *Die Reihe*, n° 1, Vienne, Universal Edition, 1955, pp. 47-56). It would be necessary to wait another almost thirty years for the complete version based on a second German translation, to be finally accessible in French (*Points de repère I*, *op. cit.*, pp. 315-317; "At the Edge of Fertile Land", *Stocktakings*, pp. 159-160). Boulez's correspondences with Paule Thévenin, the Editions du Seuil and Josef Häusler (archived at the Paul Sacher Foundation) bear witness to the resistance raised by the rewriting proposed by the German editor.

<sup>42</sup> I have proposed a survey of the historical and socio-cultural context of this publication in my introduction to the second English translation *Stocktakings of an Apprenticeship*, *op. cit.*, pp. xiii-xxix.

sense is modified, which has been particularly sensitive ever since the German translation in which the image emerges of a much less polemic Boulez – and which explains in part why it was so urgent to adjoin a second volume well before the initiative of completing the *Relevés d'apprenti* had been accomplished in French.<sup>43</sup> This movement underway since the first initiative of assembling the writings into collections, is confirmed again in the project of overhauling the articles pursued by Nattiez since 1981, in which not only is the retrospective outlook substantially different, but it transforms itself, so to say, *before our eyes*, in accordance with its successive realizations. We are thus placed in the presence of a multiple evolution of these texts, more precisely of an ensemble of superimposed evolutions: that of the writings considered in isolation, and those of the collections which graft their implicit retrospective interpretations onto the chosen texts. Since the selection reveals at least as much as their positioning, the absence of certain texts is being as revealing as the presence of others: the mnemonic “degree zero” in some way.<sup>44</sup> I’ll go even further: the fact that Boulez *did not* write certain texts is also quite revealing - although numerous pretexts can be invoked for this (lack of time, priority accorded to other authors etc.)<sup>45</sup> Let’s take the contrary case: that of writings which were not conceived for publication, and whose coming to public life was, so to say, forced – thus raising the question of the boundary between writing and correspondence. When Boulez integrates into the body of a letter addressed to Cage, a fragment intended to provide matter for publication, it appears legitimate to divide up the writing between the part which relates to the public domain and that which relates to the private.<sup>46</sup> But when later, Nattiez takes an extract from a letter written and intended for a private recipient in order to transform it into an article, there is a quasi deliberate *removal* of the text to allow it a capacity *a posteriori* for insertion into a collection of writings.<sup>47</sup> Which poses by extension the problem of the transcription of oral premises, be it with a particular interlocutor or before a wider audience: the nature of re-editing, confided most often to a third party, and even if it had been later touched up by the speaker, denaturalizes the level of the communication – the stylistic quality of the expression becomes, for this, particularly

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<sup>43</sup> Pierre Boulez, *Anhaltspunkte*, from the French by Josef Häusler, Stuttgart-Zurich, Belsler Verlag, 1975, published on the occasion of Boulez’s fiftieth birthday during his European tour with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra from August 17 to September 21, 1975. It shows up in her correspondence with Boulez that Paule Thévenin had considered the realization of three volumes since the conception of *Relevés d'apprenti*, which only Boulez’ procrastinations in writing a new preface prevented from coming to pass.

<sup>44</sup> The revealing omission, for example, among others, of the note dedicated to John Cage in the *Encyclopédie de la Musique*, published under the direction of François Michel, in collaboration with François Lesure and Vladimir Fédorov, Paris, Fasquelle, vol. I, 1958, p. 474, absent from the *Relevés d'apprenti*, still absent from the *Points de repère*, whereas it has since been integrated into the Correspondance Boulez – Cage (*op. cit.*, p. 246).

<sup>45</sup> In particular, the brief note dedicated to Varèse in the *Encyclopédie de la Musique*, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 1961, p. 380, entrusted to the musicologist Jean Maillard, specialist in the Music of the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, whereas everything, or almost everything, pointed to Boulez for this task.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. *Correspondance et documents*, *op. cit.*, p. 177, fn. 5.

<sup>47</sup> “Le système mis à nu” [“The System Unveiled”] (title with Baudelairian resonances suggested to Nattiez by Boulez - personal communication from Jean-Jacques Nattiez, July 30, 2007), in *Points de repère*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, Paris: Christian Bourgois / Editions du Seuil, 1981, pp. 127-140; cf. *Correspondance et documents*, *op. cit.*, pp. 155-163; “The System Exposed”, *Orientations*, pp. 129-142.

artificial.<sup>48</sup> Finally, to complete our goal relative to the choice of texts, another trap – more dangerous this time – is set for us by the apocryphal texts which, in spite of the evidence, either of plagiarism, or of stylistic heterogeneity, have nevertheless been integrated into the collections.<sup>49</sup>

So that one is not mistaken on the intention of our issues, our goal is not to unfairly overrun assuredly honorable initiatives, these being all the more instructive that they had the merit, among others, of calling our attention to the pitfalls which we evoked at the outset of our study. We are far from the idea of afflicting on our predecessors the insult of the hypothesis that they were unaware of those: their testimonies are witness to their good faith. But a question arises: considering the totality of these difficulties, why not stick with the simple chronology? This would avoid torturing the mind in constantly imagining the section titles to attribute to these ever arbitrary selections, and it would offer the advantage of not proposing a parasitic interpretation, delivering to the reader a raw material, without exterior intervention other than the critical apparatus allowing him to circulate within and among the texts as he wishes.<sup>50</sup> To this proposition which would seem to arise from pure common sense, Nattiez has already posed several objections, not the least of which is the *urgency* of putting the writings at the disposition of the public. Beyond the fact that the retrospective movement has already been launched for a long time, and the author having intervened himself in proceeding, after re-reading, to the revision of certain writings, it would be at least presumptuous, if not to say naïve, to imagine an innocent approach, free of the interpretive levels which have sedimented since the first publications. And these not being posthumous publications, it would be no less premature to embalm the writings in order to deliver them definitively to an autopsy: isn't avidly indulging in their vivisection ample proof of abuse of authority?

<sup>48</sup> It is particularly sensitive in a text such as “Musique traditionnelle: un paradis perdu?” [“Folk Music: A Paradise Lost?”] *Points de repère* II, *op. cit.*, pp. 585-58; “Oriental Music: A Lost Paradise?”, *Orientations*, pp. 421-424. The question is posed in different terms for the impromptu digressions brought on in the conferences, interviews, or public debates, such as the lectures at the Collège de France : cf. Jean-Jacques Nattiez, “Boulez professeur,” *Points de repère* III, Paris, Christian Bourgois, 2005, pp. 13-14. Since the beginning of the '60s, certain texts are the fruit of handwritten revisions on typewritten transcriptions realized by different secretaries from recordings of different public conferences, even statements taken on a hand-held recorder.

<sup>49</sup> The note, among others, appearing on the back of the disc jacket of the *Domaine musical* dedicated to Varèse and Schoenberg (VEGA C 30 A 271, 1960), for a long time attributed to Boulez but whose paternity was ultimately claimed by Gilbert Amy. cf. *Points de repère*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, *op. cit.*, p. 365-370 (*Orientations*, pp. 370-371), and *Revue musicale suisse*, 119<sup>th</sup> year, n° 2, February-March 1979, pp. 67-68, whose chief editor, Jürg Stenzl, accompanied the re-release with the following introduction: “Non signé, le texte de présentation de la pochette du disque l'était toutefois par son style, par les idées émises, par la position esthétique, pour ceux qui avaient lu les textes de Boulez. Monsieur Boulez nous a aimablement confirmé qu'il est l'auteur de ce texte oublié qui n'a pas encore trouvé sa place dans les différentes éditions des écrits de son auteur.” [“Unsigned, the text of the jacket notes of the disc was, nevertheless (genuine) by its style, by its presented ideas, by its esthetic position, for those who have read the texts of Boulez. Mr. Boulez has kindly confirmed for us that he is the author of this stray text which has not found its place among the different editions of the author's writings.”] Also cf. Fernand Ouellette: *Edgard Varèse*, edition revised and augmented by the author, Paris, Christian Bourgois, 1989, p. 324, fn. 12; more recently, I have noted that two texts were still attributed to Boulez, this time due to the pen of Souvtchinsky, (cf. *Points de repère* II, Paris, Christian Bourgois, 2005, pp. 548-551).

<sup>50</sup> This is the principle which has been followed by Angela de Benedictis and Veniero Rizzardi in their remarkable edition of the writings of Luigi Nono, *Scritti e colloqui*, Milan, Ricordi, 2001.

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That being, and before concluding, I would like to return upon some particular cases which will prove, if still necessary, that the consciousness of the chronology and the variants is far from being superfluous, and that to ignore them is equivalent to depriving oneself of an important part of the meaning. Let's take among the oldest texts, that entitled "Trajectoires: Ravel, Stravinsky, Schoenberg."<sup>51</sup> As it was published in *Relevés d'apprenti* and later in *Points de repère I*, the text presents a large number of variants in relation to its original version,<sup>52</sup> variants subsequent to the account of the critiques put forth by André Schaeffner in his response published in the following issue of the same journal<sup>53</sup> – modifications which are at the root of the flagrant anachronism brought about by the reference to Schaeffner's article which was published two years *after* the original version mentioned above.<sup>54</sup> A comparable anachronism occurred subsequently to the dating of "Tendances de la musique récente" ["Tendencies in Recent Music,"] according to its publication, four years after editing;<sup>55</sup> there is no way to understand the motive for the unexpected return of Cage, any more than that of the sudden emergence of Varèse. On the other hand, if one places this article back into its context, one understands that Boulez's stake consisted precisely in substituting Varèse for Cage in his transatlantic dialogue, in order to bring Varèse back up to date shortly before his return to Europe on the occasion of the premiere of *Déserts*.<sup>56</sup>

Beyond these inconsistencies produced by the redistribution of the whole over the points of detail, an intermediary dimension is also particularly smoothed over by the subordination of the chronology to the themes. I want to speak about the evolution of these texts, of the almost imperceptible modification which one can track if one respects the chronology of their writing and/or publication.<sup>57</sup> In retracing the path followed by Boulez and in

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<sup>51</sup> Cf. fn. 10.

<sup>52</sup> Re-edited in the meantime in Pierre Boulez, André Schaeffner, *Correspondance 1954-1970*, edited by Rosângela Pereira de Tugny, Paris, Fayard, 1998, pp. 131-161 ; these variants had already been indicated in the first edition of the *Correspondance Boulez – Cage* (Winterthur, Amadeus, 1990, p. 55-57); *Stocktakings*, pp. 188-206.

<sup>53</sup> "Variations Schoenberg," in *Contrepoints*, n°7, 1951, pp. 110-129 ; reprinted in *Correspondance 1954-1970*, *op. cit.*, pp. 163-196.

<sup>54</sup> "Ainsi que l'a précisé André Schaeffner, Ravel fut inspiré par l'idée que Stravinsky lui donna verbalement de cette œuvre," *Relevés d'apprenti*, *op. cit.*, p. 242 ; *Points de repère I*, *op. cit.*, p. 44 ["As André Schaeffner has pointed out, Ravel was inspired by the verbal impression Stravinsky gave him of this work.", *Stocktakings*, p. 189.]

<sup>55</sup> The German translation created as much confusion in its inscription of the date of publication even in its adaptation of the title: "Tendenzen 1957" (cf. *Werkstatt-Texte*, *op. cit.*, p. 92).

<sup>56</sup> For which he would write the program notes announcing the live radio retransmission from the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées on December 2, 1954 (cf. *Points de Repère II*, *op. cit.*, pp. 528-530) ; I have treated this question in my study "Between the Text and the Margin: Varèse und Pierre Boulez, 1952-1965", in *Edgard Varèse – Composer, Sound Sculptor, Visionary*, Felix Meyer and Heidy Zimmermann (eds.), Woodbridge (Suffolk), The Boydell Press, 2006, pp. 382-389.

<sup>57</sup> A dimension which would not have escaped the perspicacity of Jean-Jacques Nattiez, when he was lead to re-edit *Points de repère* in 1995, and of which part of the conception rests on the recognition of an autograph document dating from 1955-57, the first uncompleted project of a

taking account of the journals in which the texts were first published, one will not miss noting the growing distance with which he treats the subjects addressed. This is manifest quite particularly in the progressive reduction of the musical examples, which is explained not only by the degree of maturity of the composer, by his willingness to distinguish himself from didactic pedantry with which his adversaries wielded their theories, but again by the fact that this coincided with what I will call the extension of his operative domain. Since 1953, he no longer entrusts his articles to specialized musical journals, but to literary journals – and not to the least: this began with the *Cahiers de la Compagnie Madeleine Renaud – Jean-Louis Barrault*, followed by *La Nouvelle Revue française*, leading to *Médiations*, *Le Mercure de France* and *Tel Quel*. This is not to mention the American,<sup>58</sup> British,<sup>59</sup> or Germanic<sup>60</sup> journals to which he would sometimes go so far as to grant priority of publication. His penchant for literature and the fine arts had already led him to reinforce his argumentation through references and allusions borrowed from these two domains. Addressing himself from this point on to the layman public, in order to raise himself to a more general level, he is reluctant to indulge in technical explanation, thus assuring himself the expansion of the scope of his issues.<sup>61</sup>

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collection of Boulez's writings; cf. Jean-Jacques Nattiez, "Publier Boulez," in *Points de Repère I*, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-24.

<sup>58</sup> The notes entitled "Notes on Tonight's Concert: Webern's Work Analyzed" was commissioned to Boulez by Virgil Thomson for the *New York Herald Tribune*; cf. fn. 12, and Virgil Thomson, *A Virgil Thomson Reader*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1981.

<sup>59</sup> "Schoenberg est mort," published initially as "Schoenberg is Dead" in the British journal *The Score*, n° 6, February 1952, pp. 18-22, was commissioned by William Glock (1908-2000), who was ultimately at the source of the nomination of Pierre Boulez to the head of the BBC Symphony Orchestra (1971-1975) of which he was Controller of Music from 1959 to 1972; cf. William Glock, *Notes in Advance*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991.

<sup>60</sup> With the journal *Die Reihe*, published in Vienna under the direction of Stockhausen and Herbert Eimert (cf. fn. 40), it was the journal *Melos*, whose chief editor was then Heinrich Strobel (1898-1970), who regularly published Boulez' articles in German translation by Hilde Strobel from 1955, and, from 1958 the *Darmstädter Beiträge zur neuen Musik*, under the direction of Wolfgang Steinecke (1910-1961) then of Ernst Thomas (1916-1997).

<sup>61</sup> "Et qu'ai-je trouvé dans *Das bildnerische Denken* qui puisse à ce point séduire un musicien et m'amener plus tard à comprendre d'une autre façon le phénomène de la composition ? Cela touche au problème même du langage. Quand on est soi-même impliqué dans une technique et dans son langage, on se comporte en spécialiste, on peut en devenir incapable de dégager des schémas plus généraux ou, si l'on y parvient, ne le faire qu'en termes très spécifiques. Un musicien qui cherche à fournir une explication va la donner en termes musicaux et elle échappera à son interlocuteur si celui-ci n'a aucune familiarité avec ce langage. Tous les vocabulaires techniques peuvent produire ce même décrochement, cette même incompréhension, on en fait chaque jour l'expérience. Rien de tel avec Klee. Il n'utilise aucun vocabulaire spécialisé, le sien est tellement courant, il prend des exemples d'une telle généralité, d'une telle simplicité de base qu'il est possible d'en déduire une leçon s'appliquant à n'importe quelle autre technique." ["And what did I find in *Das bildnerische Denken* which could seduce a musician on this point and lead me later to understand the phenomenon of composition in a different way? This touches the problem even of language. When one is implied one's self in a technique and in its language, one behaves as a specialist, one can become incapable of disengaging from the most general schemes or, if one does succeed in this, in only doing it in the most specific terms. A musician who searches to provide an explanation will give it in musical terms and it will escape his listener if the latter has no familiarity with this language. All technical vocabularies produce this same disengagement, this same incomprehension, and one experiences this each day. Nothing of the sort with Klee. He uses no specialized vocabulary, his is so everyday, he takes examples from

He did not renounce however, as far as aiming at specific targets: thus as we have seen previously, these articles are also directed to privileged addressees who did not avoid feeling concerned, the allusions being sometimes more than lucid at least for those interested.<sup>62</sup> Hence these parallel dialogues, which can be followed through the different correspondences which he entertains with his close friends, and which have as a corollary this particular taste for hiding his own positions – relative to his predecessors, his emulators and himself – behind borrowed figures: the *alter ego* going as far as designating itself forthwith in the inaugural dialogue of *Penser la musique aujourd'hui* – an evocative title, this time of a famous model, *Das bildnerische Denken* by Paul Klee.<sup>63</sup> In reading certain texts one is amused to imagine Boulez organizing a type of masked ball, where the characters advance disguised as their predecessors. Hence, the observation "Debussy is truly great in his ability to profit from the discoveries of Wagnerian language while repudiating its esthetic"<sup>64</sup> could also just as well be translated by "he would be truly great in his (meaning Boulez himself) ability to profit from the discoveries of Schoenbergian language while repudiating its esthetic." All, or almost all, in this article suggest the theater of shadows and mirrors in which the author indulges when he implies his own story under cover of treating that of his predecessors: read *Schoenberg* for Wagner, *Stravinsky* for Moussorgsky – and consequently *Boulez* for Debussy, and you are attendant to the evolution of three personalities on the stage of the debates raised in Paris about the rediscovery of the Viennese School (soon, *Cage* will make his appearance under the borrowed name of Satie). Writings and compositions thus bear communally the traces of the *stimuli* which have inspired them: with some curiosity one could follow step by step the sources upon which the author drew to turn to his advantage.

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The temptation is great to scribble these pages with notes and commentaries in the desperate hope of revealing, of detecting, should I say, all that they reveal under their surface, by exploring their supposedly ultimate depths. And to return to the question which we had in broaching our subject, the reader will have understood where we were leading when we brought up in an apparently provocative manner the question of the addressee of the writings: a world separates the "happy few"<sup>65</sup> in the confidence of the author, to which in all evidence he accorded priority in his presentation, from the uninitiated reader, generously invited to attend the debates which passed over his head without him suspecting at all. A

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such generality, of a basic simplicity that it is possible to deduce from them a lesson applicable to any other technique."] "Paul Klee: le pays fertile," [Paul Klee: The Fertile Land] in *Points de repère* II, *op. cit.*, p. 725-726.

<sup>62</sup> See Boulez's irritation following Cage's reactions to "...auprès et au loin.," of Pousseur and Stockhausen to "Alea," in Pierre Boulez, John Cage, *Correspondance et documents*, new edition, *op. cit.*, pp. 31 and p. 33. This annoyance in the face of personal identities will incite him to pursue allusion in anonymity in *Penser la musique aujourd'hui* (*op. cit.*, p. 31-32) and beyond.

<sup>63</sup> *The Thinking Eye*, Jürg Spiller (ed.), translated by Ralph Manheim, London, Lund Humphries/ New York, Wittenborg, 1961.

<sup>64</sup> "Trajectoires: Ravel, Stravinsky, Schönberg," article cited, *Points de repère* I, *op. cit.*, p. 58; *Stocktakings*, p. 203.

<sup>65</sup> Original (in English) borrowed from Stendhal's famous dedication at the end of *La Chartreuse de Parme ed.*



phenomenon subsequent to Boulez's realization of the necessity of generalizing the range of his perspective, a type of imperceptible slide occurred in the direction of the debate from the confidential (I will go as far as to say: semi-clandestine) public of his beginnings to the vast audience of his current potential readers, the exception of past times having become the rule of today. No lesser, consequently, is the temptation to leave the situation as *it stands*, without bringing supplementary interpretation to an already overabundant documentation. Hence the dilemma: where does scholarship end, where does pedantry begin? The exact boundary which separates that which clarifies from that which burdens is uneasily defined, especially as the scope of the texts themselves has evolved over the years. Where it would seem legitimate to contribute to the simplification the readers' task in giving them the means of identifying an invisible source (which is justified quite particularly in the case of a translation), there is opposed the didactic weight which insists on wanting to underscore everything, explaining the implicit at all costs – and one falls into the very trap which these texts had themselves set out to avoid, wasting their riches instead of bringing them out. Up to what point does faithfulness to the letter take account of that to the spirit? Is it paradoxically necessary to respect the “will of the author” in leaving the reader to himself, allowing him to struggle like an insect caught in the mesh of a net, of an inextricable web as he himself suggests? Is not the notion of *Urtext*, of *authenticity*, in absolute contradiction with its own object, fundamentally incompatible with the thought which conceived it? To use a paradox dear to Boulez, is any misunderstanding necessarily fertile, any comprehension condemned to sterility?<sup>66</sup> The question is no longer posed in terms of context, but of tact, or to take up another metaphor borrowed from the world of performers, of *fingering*.<sup>67</sup> Upon reflection, I wonder if the net of contradictions in which my argument is debated is not due to the simple fact that I have quite simply misconceived my title, and that, instead of placing the point of my intervention too didactically in evidence with a hyphen, I shouldn't renounce it, as well as its overly ostentatious *fortissimo*, in order to - more discretely - no longer *decipher*, but *tear*<sup>68</sup> Boulez apart? Not – as certain malicious spirits would be perfidiously inclined to understand – in the sense of carving him up to have him better thrown on the scrapheap, but much in the way as delicately separating the voices which have superimposed in the course of the expansion of his polyphony, in the density of its texture, which supposes a placing in perspective of its diverse paths of access between its different layers of intelligibility, including in the margin, the understood, and the *unspoken*.

translation in collaboration with the author by John MacKay

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<sup>66</sup> For a view of the Boulezian allergy to the different meanings covered by the notion of *authenticity*, see, among others, “Court post-scriptum sur la fidélité,” [Short post-script on fidelity] *Points de repère II, op. cit.*, pp. 261-267.

<sup>67</sup> In French, the term *doigté* (fingering) is also used as a metaphor for *diplomacy*.

<sup>68</sup> In French, when eliminating the two *ff* s of *déchiffrer* (decipher), one obtains *déchirer* – to tear apart.