



FINNADAR
SR 9002
PROCESSED STEREO

JEAN DUBUFFET
MUSICAL EXPERIENCES

Side One (28:15)

1. AGUICHEMENTS
Enticements (7:10)
2. L'EAU
Water (4:15)
3. DÉLIBÉRANTS
Deliberators (5:30)
4. PLEURE ET APPLAUDIT
Cry and Clap (11:20)

Side Two (24:33)

1. HUMEUR INCERTAINE
Uncertain Humor (7:43)
2. BATEAU COULÉ
Sunken Ship (9:03)
3. DILIGENCES FUTILES
Futile Diligences (4:17)
4. GAI SAVOIR
Joyful Wisdom (3:30)

All the music on this album was
composed, performed, recorded and
realized by Jean Dubuffet

Collation, editing, sequencing and
processing supervision by İlhan Mimaroglu

*The lacquers for the present release were
cut directly from the original single-track
tapes without the intervening tape duplication
for mastering purposes. Processing for
stereophonic reproduction was done at the
mastering stage and the amount of
equalization for each channel was determined
in a way not to "improve upon" or alter
the original sound. Mastering: George Piros.*

Cover art & design: JEAN DUBUFFET
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FINNADAR RECORDS
Distributed by
ATLANTIC RECORDING
CORPORATION
1841 Broadway
New York, N.Y. 10023

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Made & Printed in U.S.A.

"In my music I wanted to place myself in the position of a man of fifty thousand years ago, a man who ignores everything about western music and invents a music for himself without any reference, without any discipline, without anything that would prevent him to express himself freely and for his own good pleasure."
—Jean Dubuffet

A few years ago when, quite possibly for the first time in the United States, I presented the music of Jean Dubuffet over radio station WBAI in New York City, the program folio stated: "The Music of Jean Dubuffet. Note: this is not a typographical error." This caption, in its own joyful way, had perfectly summed up the magnitude of the discovery.

After making my own acquaintance with Dubuffet's music under some unusual circumstances (never before had the existence of a highly significant bulk of music been brought to my attention by its composer himself, and I very much doubt that the future reserves for me a similar occasion) I set forth to share my enthusiasm with others, only to find that, even in the most erudite musical circles of the United States, there was no one who had heard about Dubuffet as a composer; and in Europe only a handful of persons knew.

Yet, like anyone familiar with his biography, I was aware that he was not a total stranger to music. Decades ago, in the days of my early interest in jazz, my first acquaintance with Dubuffet's art was through a reproduction of his *Grand Jazz Band*, which had urged me to know more about his musical side. He had studied the piano, played the classics, enjoyed Duke Ellington, but eventually closed the book on all "culture music". Later, I also came across a passing remark on Dubuffet in Pierre Schaeffer's book, *A la recherche d'une musique concrète*. I could have used all this as a starting point to further explore the matter, but having not done so, what's in the grooves of this record strikingly came my way.

Among my earlier efforts in electronic music was a set of Visual Studies, one of which, the third, was based on a Dubuffet drawing, a *Bowery Bum*. I sent him a recording of the piece, and he replied using kind words to the effect that my music reflected the spirit of his drawing. He also noted that he too, a few years before, had done certain musical experiments and that he was forwarding them to me.

I happened to first hear them in a blindfold-test situation. I was expecting in those days a recording of something new by a renowned composer. I mistook what I heard, which was totally unanticipated, as the work of that particular composer and thought that he had finally broken new ground and created music of surpassing significance. A fascinating surprise ensued. The composer turned out to be Jean Dubuffet.

It was music that, by its unequivocal quality, had urged me to accept it as the most original and revolutionary since Varèse. And, if classifications are unavoidable, it readily gained access to the category of electronic music. His process consisted of improvising on various musical instruments, occidental as well as belonging to other cultures, and on other sound sources (i.e. piano alone on *Diligences futiles*; piano, chinese mouth organ, various flutes and bowed string instruments on *Humeur incertaine*; piano, trumpets, violoncello, tambur on *Gai savoir*; cimbalom, balafon, Geisha tambur in *L'Eau*; crumpled paper, voice and two bassoons on *Délibérants* . . .) and, using a number of tape recorders and a mixing box, he would record the performances, superimpose them, edit out on tape unwanted sequences, hence finalize the musical creation on tape.¹ These are all, of course, basic processes of electronic music. The fact that he used non-professional equipment and that his sound-engineering skills were empirical proved to be advantageous to the musical objectives at hand. Indeed, he believed that professional techniques, despite their obvious advantages, often prove to be inhibiting. After all, what is expected from an electronic music composer is not the exclusive application of known and properly instructed procedures, but the discovery of a music that belongs to himself. As to Dubuffet's use of the musical instruments, almost all of them he did not know how to play "correctly"—which offered the benefit of unforeseeable results.

His views on music ring the bell of a truth that many a wise thinker may have arrived at, but would refrain from voicing too loudly for fear of shaking an established order:

I believe that our western music is an avatar among all the possibilities that were offered to music. Now, by an optical error, one imagines that this is the only music possible, while, in reality, it is only a very specious mu-

sic among millions of possibilities that were available and, without doubt, will be available tomorrow . . . In my music I wanted to place myself in the position of a man of fifty thousand years ago, a man who ignores everything about western music and invents a music for himself without any reference, without any discipline, without anything that would prevent him to express himself freely and for his own good pleasure. This is what I wanted to do in my painting too, only with this difference that painting, I know it—western painting of the last few centuries, I know it perfectly well—and I wanted to deliberately forget all about it . . . But I do not know music, and this gave me a certain advantage in my musical experiences. I did not have to make an effort to forget whatever I had to forget . . .²

Dubuffet is even more radical, and as logical, when he comments on the question of written music:

I find that true music should not be written, that all written music is a false music, that the musical notation which has been adopted in the west, with its notes on the staves and its twelve notes per octave, is a very poor notation which does not permit to notate the sounds and only allows the making of a totally specious music which has nothing to do with true music. It is impossible to write true music, except with a stylus on the wax, and this is what they do now in recordings. This is a way of writing and the only one that's proper to music.³

Let us note that his reference to a cutting stylus on the wax as the only possible means of writing music is made partially in a figurative sense. By this he also refers to all the other means of sound recording, including the magnetic imprints of a record head onto a tape—a means that he himself used, not only to keep, but above all to construct his music. It is therefore futile to discuss whether this music can be recreated by performance and, if so, aptitudes of a special nature are required in other musicians who would want to play the instruments the way Dubuffet did. Our criteria are not those of the musical performance, but of musical creativity in all its vastness. It should suffice to note that his music is the product of a mature artistic mind which would not allow the hands to perform anything incongruous with it. In an incidental way, it marks historical change, although its importance lies primarily in the domain of intrinsic merit. It is among the purest products of imagination, unadulterated by conceptual thinking. The propulsive succession of its sound images may someday lead others to conceptualize about it, and only then perhaps, in an ironical way, it will begin to acquire universal recognition. Like all good modern music that drives bad listeners out of their minds, it cannot be expected to receive instant acceptance even if it ever gets to be widely distributed.

It remains to be indicated, while closing this brief commentary, that Dubuffet eventually abandoned his musical pursuits, not because they contrasted with his work as a painter, but because they claimed the same amount of time, dedication—and passion.

İLHAN MİMAROĞLU

1) The eight selections on the present release were culled from a total of twenty pieces that were issued on six 10" LPs in a limited edition of fifty copies, each numbered and signed by Dubuffet. A book on the subject has been written by Beniamino dal Fabbro under the title of *Esperienze musicali di Jean Dubuffet*, published by Edizioni del Cavallino, Venice, 1962. Eleven other pieces, realized by Dubuffet with Asger Jorn, between December 1960 and March 1961, were issued on four 10" LPs in a limited edition of fifty numbered copies.

2) From an interview I conducted with Dubuffet, in Paris, July 1966. Translation mine.

3) Id.