Pierre Boulez
Multimedia exhibition
AN AMBITIOUS PROJECT

The Philharmonie de Paris is a joint undertaking financed by the French government and the city of Paris, with the support of the Greater Paris region, and will open in January 2015. Architect Jean Nouvel’s exceptional design for the Philharmonie de Paris stands within a cultural space that is already part of the Greater Paris project, integrating the Cité de la Musique to form an ensemble which aims to establish a new model for bringing music to the widest possible audience.

A number of major projects have been conceived, particularly involving young people, to increase the audience range for classical music, with a focus on developing original digital tools. An innovative auditorium, with exceptional acoustics, where spectators sit around the stage to enjoy a unique concert experience. An establishment that welcomes all kinds of music, from classical to pop, and from jazz to world music, thanks to the modular design of the main auditorium – exceptional for such a large space (2,400 seated or 3,600 standing). There are also two smaller auditoria: a modular concert hall accommodating 900 seated or 1,600 standing; and a 250-seat amphitheatre; a programme designed for everyone, with prestigious concerts during the week and family ones on weekends, as well as a range of activities running from morning till night, some new concert formats and attractive pricing deals for young and old.

A true musical complex that situates the concert within a wider social and cultural context. There are educational workshops and opportunities for the general public to learn about and appreciate music in a friendly and open setting – the attached Museum of Music has one of the finest musical instrument collections in the world. The exhibition programme covers a wide range of themes, including Boulez, Bowie and Chagall in 2015, and The Velvet Underground and Beethoven in 2016. There are several restaurants, cafés and lounge areas for visitors to enjoy, as well as pathways leading up from the park into and around the building, right up to the hill-like roof with its superb views over Greater Paris; A home from home for the most prestigious international orchestras and artists, and the new base for the Orchestre de Paris, with facilities befitting its status.
Presented Composer, theorist, conductor, founder of institutions, Pierre Boulez marked the second half of the twentieth century with his implacable will for modernity. The first opuses he composed at the end of the war coincide with his discovery of the great names in literature, painting and theatre as well as other cultures. His oeuvre was, from then on, threaded with multiple references, before his enriching experience as a conductor brought a new character to his compositional work.

Pierre Boulez’s qualities as theorist and pedagogue would very soon be complemented by his determination in founding organizations that favoured discovery and creation. As a result of his vigorous commitment, his career is a constellation of steps towards an exceptional vision: music at its most innovative.

Organized on the occasion of Pierre Boulez’s ninetieth birthday, this exhibition puts the multiple aspects of his work, his thought and the encounters that have marked his career into perspective. Its chronological unfolding is punctuated by a selection of major works by the composer, alternating with the undertakings that shaped his singular trajectory.

Pierre Boulez has always linked the composition of this sonata to his literary discoveries, particularly those of Joyce and Mallarmé.
THE POST-WAR YEARS

Having arrived in the capital in 1943, Pierre Boulez studied the piano, as well as harmony with Olivier Messiaen and counterpoint with Andrée Vaurabourg. He also took lessons with René Leibowitz, a disciple of Schönberg, who introduced Paris to the Second Viennese School. The works of Stravinsky, Ravel, Debussy, Bartók analysed by Messiaen were thus supplemented by those of Schönberg, Berg and Webern. Around 1946, Boulez stopped following these teachings. He visited Parisian art galleries regularly and discovered in 1947, at the Palais des Papes in Avignon, Klee’s painting on display next to works by Kandinsky, Giacometti, Mondrian... The wall display will give pride of place to this formative aesthetic experience (paintings, sculptures, mobiles).

SECOND SONATA (1947–48 CREATION IN 1950)

The three sonatas for piano by Pierre Boulez fall within a ten-year period of composition (1947–1957). Despite its restrictive form – a last reference to the musical forms of the past – the Second Sonata is a ground-breaking work that shatters language and explodes the sonata form. It bears witness to the aesthetic shocks Boulez experienced and announces the adoption of the radical positions that would follow. Its paroxysmal aspect marks his search for a more direct relationship with the material, echoing the poetics of Artaud and Michaux.

In the articles “Schoenberg est mort” (“Schoenberg is dead”) and “Éventuellement...” (“Possibly...”), Boulez clearly distinguishes the serial principle from the dodecaphony inherited from Schoenberg. He wrote these two texts at the same time as he was writing Polyphonie X and the first book of Structures, works in which he attempts to extend the rules of serialism to all the components of sound. As this form of writing reduces drastically the possibilities of composition, Boulez would soon abandon it and criticize the aridity of the process.
THE COMPAGNY

Having come to play the Ondes Martenot part in the stage music of Honegger’s Hamlet, Boulez was appointed Director of Stage Music of the Renaud-Barrault Company in 1946. He met Pierre Souvtchinsky and Suzanne Tézenas, who hosted one of the last Parisian salons, became acquainted with Claudel, Char, Michaux… It was also the period in which a close friendly dialogue on composition with Stockhausen, Berio, Maderna, Nono, Pousseur, Zimermann developed. The Company’s international tours led him to discover Latin America and North America.

In New York, thanks to John Cage, he met De Kooning, Guston, crossed paths with Pollock and, through Varèse, was introduced to Calder. Next to works of art by these artists, original footage, travel books and photos trace back these numerous encounters.

LE MARTEAU SANS MAÎTRE (1955)

For the third time – after Le Visage nuptial and Le Soleil des eaux, Pierre Boulez chose to write a piece on a text by René Char: Le Marteau sans maître (The Hammer without Master). An alliance of sound and word, the poem is “the centre of the music, but has become absent from the music”.

The duration, instrumentation, organization of the texts and the solo voice link this work with Pierrot Lunaire by Schoenberg (1912), whose universe and writing was of interest to Boulez in various respects.

Just as Boulez « deprived » Char of his text, Béjard will « deprive » the composer of his music.
DOMAINE MUSICAL

Born under Jean-Louis Barrault’s kindly wing in the heart of Winter 1953–1954, the concerts held at the Petit Théâtre Marigny were known as “Domaine musical” from their second season onwards. Four, then six concerts per year were organized, according to three related plans: reference (works that could be very old but had a topical resonance), knowledge (little-known contemporary works), and research (creations). Numerous artists and intellectuals would attend, drawn by the spirit of discovery.

Having attended these first concerts, Nicolas de Staël devoted the last ten days of his life to an immense painting, Le Concert, directly inspired by the concerts of Webern and Schoenberg given on the 5th and 6th March 1955. His tragic demise prevented Boulez from asking him to design a record cover as he did with Masson, Ubac, Zao Wou-Ki, Miró and Giacometti, equally faithful auditors who would work for the emblematic record sleeves of Véga records.

PLI SELON PLI
AND THE THIRD SONATA
1957–1962 (AND LATER REVISIONS)

A “transposition” and “transmutation” of Mallarmé, Pli selon pli poses the question of new alliances of poetic text and music, proposing various solutions, giving meaning to all of the pieces that compose the cycle.

Reprised in the 1990s, Pli selon pli was composed progressively, piece by piece, in parallel with the discovery of Mallarmé’s livre, whose pages were made public in 1957. The composition of the pieces I to V is therefore not chronological.

Close to Livre pour quatuor and Third Sonata, the work fully belongs to the years marked by thoughts on the open work.

It was in Caracas, during a Compagnie Renaud-Barrault tour in 1956, that Pierre Boulez conducted a large symphonic formation for the first time. At the end of 1957, Hermann Scherchen, who was due to conduct the premiere of Pierre Boulez’s *Visage nuptial* in Cologne, in the end decided to leave the podium to the young composer. Two years later, Pierre Boulez replaced Hans Rosbaud at the last minute; in 1963 he conducted the *Rite of Spring* for the fiftieth anniversary of its premiere at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées as well as *Wozzeck* by Berg at the Opéra Garnier.

At the end of the 1960s, Pierre Boulez conducted the orchestra of Cleveland, Chicago, New York, and signed multiple contracts in Europe. In 1971, he replaced Leonard Bernstein as director of the New York Philharmonic and became a permanent conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra. The work carried out with these big formations marked the work of the composer, who set about rewriting orchestral partitions, composed twenty years previously. In the 1990s, the performance of symphonies by Mahler and Bruckner would lead him to the composition of large-scale forms.
**OPERA**

In the middle of the 1960s, criticism of institutions and the need for their reform were the subject of fierce interventions by Pierre Boulez. In 1966, he said “No” to the minister of culture André Malraux, on matters of musical policy, leading to a strident debate in the press. In 1967, Pierre Boulez called for opera houses to be “blown up”. His critical eye led him to work alongside Jean Vilar and Maurice Béjart on a project to reform the Paris opera – abandoned by Vilar in 1968. Inaugurated in 1963, Pierre Boulez’s experience in lyrical music continued with Parsifal et Tristan, which he directed in Germany and Japan, between 1966 and 1970. The end of the 1970s was marked by collaborations with Patrice Chéreau: the centenary Tetralogy, that in the course of several years went from being a great scandal to a great success in Bayreuth (1976-1980), then Lulu in 1979 at the Paris Opera. Pierre Boulez then conducted two productions directed by Peter Stein – Pelleas et Méliande by Debussy and Moses und Aron by Schoenberg –, as well as a Falla-Stravinsky-Schoenberg triptych directed by Klaus Michael Grüber, before reuniting with Patrice Chéreau in 2007 for From the House of the Dead by Janáček.


For this article, Pierre Boulez was reacting to the creation of a separate Music Department within the French Ministry of Culture, and the appointment of Marcel Landowski, by André Malraux, to head it. Responding to Émile Biasini’s consultation not long before, Pierre Boulez had made a number of proposals regarding the organisation of French musical life, which went unheeded.
“Imaginary ceremony” for orchestra in eight groups of percussions, Rituel in memoriam Bruno Maderna is a tribute to the Italian composer who died on 13 November 1973. The instrumental groups are arranged separately on the stage. Each of them is attached to a percussionist (or two), who is responsible for keeping the tempo within the group.

The work is organized into fifteen sequences. In the odd-numbered sequences, the conductor maintains a certain synchronisation while in the even-numbered sequences, the groups are not synchronized with each other – they thus progress like processions that, following different paths in a city, have their own unity but finally join up without being coordinated.

Resulting from the simultaneous management of several works– including Marges, …Explosante-fixe… then Mémoriale – Rituel makes use of a material that would be put to use again, many years later, in Anthèmes for violin solo. The work is situated at the intersection of different research into the division of instrumental groups in space and by an interest in rituals nurtured by ethnology, theatre and poetry.

Pierre Boulez and Francis Bacon met in London in the 1970s, when the composer was conducting the BBC Symphony Orchestra. Bacon was drunk at that first meeting, and there wasn’t much of a conversation. But over time, both continued to take an interest in the other’s work, noting this strange yet familiar link between their approaches. In 1989, Bacon dedicated one of his largest lithographs, after the Second Version of Triptych 1944, to Boulez. Although Bacon’s œuvre is not mentioned in Boulez’s writing, it still demonstrates a familiarity with certain poetics of a language that “skids all over the place” in the blackness of human existence, poetics which the composer envisaged tackling in the course of planned collaborations with Jean Genet and Heiner Müller.
TOOLS FOR CREATION

Pierre Boulez has often stressed that the steps of a composer – like those of an architect – must be part of a collective research giving rise to new musical material: it is the coming together of musicians and scientists that spawns the invention of tools for creation. Boulez’s long-awaited wish that a structure allowing this kind of exchange be established was achieved in 1977, with the launch of the IRCAM (Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique).

At the beginning of the 50s, Pierre Boulez briefly studied concrete music with Pierre Schaeff. In 1954, Pierre Boulez presents the creation of Déserts de Varèse at the ORTF. Its electronical parts cause a real scandal. At the same time, Stockhausen pursues his researches in Cologne; Berio, Nono and Maderna in Milano; the Studio of the SWF in Baden Baden and in American universities.

But the “tools” were not just about making instruments: the concert hall itself, like at the Cité de la Musique, was an object of transmission open to the imperatives of creation; the constitution of a repertoire also required an instrumental ensemble of a new kind, the Ensemble Intercontemporain, which brought to light the instrumental techniques and orchestral work the contemporary repertoire called for.

In 1976 the chair “Invention, technique and language of music” was created at the Collège de France, and Pierre Boulez was awarded the professorship. Always attentive to the transmission of learning and experience, Pierre Boulez worked increasingly with young musicians.

RÉPONS 1981–1984

Elaborated in the studios of IRCAM, Répons bears a title referring to the response in plainsong, whereby a solo singer alternates with a choir. This form dating back to the Middle Ages encompasses recurrent principles of composition in the oeuvre of Pierre Boulez: the proliferation of a musical idea around a simple element, the alternating between individual and collective playing and the movement of sound in space. The work integrates sounds produced both by computers and by traditional instruments. It also breaks up the traditional layout of a concert hall; the audience is placed all around the musical ensemble (the central stage) and is in turn surrounded by six soloists and six loud-speakers that restore the sound, treated in real time.

This spatialized set-up device will be reproduced in the exhibition, allowing the visitor to seize the circulation of sounds playing from different sources.
ARCHITECTURES VIRTUOSOS

Be it setting up a precise project (Ircam, Opéra Bastille or the Cité de la Musique) or discussing the creative process, Pierre Boulez has forged privileged dialogues with architects – including Renzo Piano, Christian de Portzamparc and Frank Gehry – while retaining a clear predilection for certain older constructions such as the spiral of New York’s Guggenheim Museum.

The relationship between technical virtuosity and artistic outcome is at the heart of the composer’s fascination with architecture. Just as the composer and the instrument stimulate each other, the architect’s undertaking and the material interact: tools drive invention and invention requires new tools; their combined logics lead to the creation of innovative forms.

Pierre Boulez has thus found in architecture a source of practical, aesthetic and political inspiration satisfying his taste for matters of pure virtuosity – “the flying trapeze aspect of a problem overcome”. In Incises and then sur Incises (1996-1998), he gives free rein to this virtuoso writing.

“I truly strive to make architecture appear natural, not overbearing or imposing, so that one forms an attachment to it. This requires considerable organisation, rigour and precision.” In emphasising the importance of preparatory work on final shape, Frank Gehry makes a link with Pierre Boulez’s conducting and composing. The oval-shaped Pierre-Boulez Saal designed for the Barenboim-Said Academy, is set to open in 2016.
The multimedia exhibition proposed here is divided as follows:

I - 14 PANELS

The panels are available in French or English. It is possible to modify one of the two proposed languages (for an additional cost, available on quotation). Fourteen 100x120cm panels illustrated with photos, documents and texts, which follow the theme and chronology of the exhibition presented at the Philharmonie de Paris. Contextual panels alternate with panels dedicated to musical works. Reproduction of the principal works of arts presented in Paris.

II - MULTIMEDIA INTERFACE

An interactive interface displays the principal documents presented at the exhibition in Paris. It can be viewed at a computer workstation and includes over two hours of audio-visual content. Musical works by Pierre Boulez, Interview extracts and their transcription, Documentary video archives, Concert extracts. A mouse is used for browsing and headphones for listening.

III - INSTALLING THE EXHIBITION

Devised to be adaptable to all types of exhibition space of under 50 m2, with no particular security or conservation requirements, it offers the host institution a high degree of flexibility for hanging works. Content can be supplied, upon request, in digital format or as downloadable files.

Digital format includes all of the exhibition materials:

- Graphic templates for the panels, to be printed onto equipment adapted to the host venue
- A multimedia interface to be installed onto one or several computers, for visitor consultation
- Reproduction and presentation rights of the works

Installing the exhibition

- Print the panels using the graphic templates provided
- Install the multimedia interface onto computers (no specific settings required)
- Set up, according to the equipment available at the venue: the panels, which measure approximately 80 x 100 cm computer stations that present the multimedia interface (number of stations according to venue)

Host venues must:

- Supply computer equipment: computers and headsets
- Cover panel printing costs
- Submit to the Philharmonie de Paris a merchandising plan and any communications documents before printing
- Declare on-site music broadcasting to copyright collecting agencies
- If a language is modified, cover translation costs as well as graphic and multimedia integration costs, coordinated by the Philharmonie de Paris

IV - COST OF THE MULTIMEDIA EXHIBITION AND AVAILABILITY

The cost of the exhibition is €1,700 ex. VAT (€100 per additional location from 1 to 5 locations)

Cost of integrating a new language (Latin-based) for panels: €300 ex. VAT
Cost of integrating a new language (Latin-based) for interface: €600 ex. VAT

The exhibition will be available until 2018.
La Compagnie

La Compagnie à sa tête par André Landowski, rupture avec la tradition qui allait devenir l'Espace de l'Espro. Ce triptyque Falla-Stravinsky-Schoenberg mis en scène par Klaus Huber à Los Angeles, à l'automne 1954, produit un choc et éveille l'intérêt des auditeurs.

Le Marteau sans maître

À Suzanne Tézenas, Pierre Boulez propose son « non à Malraux » sur des questions de poésie, de musique, de théâtre, et rassemble autour d'elle une vingtaine d'écrivains et de musiciens. C'est également à cette période que Pierre Boulez dirige le triptyque au titre trompeur « Das bildnerische Denken » de Guernica-Parsifal-Le Concert, tableau inachevé, qui allait devenir l'Espace de l'Espro, qui allait devenir l'Espace de l'Espro.

La direction d'orchestre


Les années d'après-guerre

Les années d'après-guerre sont exposées, dont des trésors nationaux et internationaux. Les années d'après-guerre sont créées à la Cité de la musique dans l'Est, la Cité de la musique à Paris.

La Deuxième sonate

La Deuxième sonate est l'articulation réversible de quelques unes de leurs calcule d'abord et qu'on ait les quelques unes de leurs signification proches des exigences de la Compagnie. Précision. » précise Frank Gehry, qui parvenant, il faut beaucoup d'exécution et les exigences de la Compagnie à sa tête par André Landowski, rupture avec la tradition qui allait devenir l'Espace de l'Espro. Ce triptyque Falla-Stravinsky-Schoenberg mis en scène par Klaus Huber à Los Angeles, à l'automne 1954, produit un choc et éveille l'intérêt des auditeurs.

Le Domaine musical

Le Domaine musical est la poésie de Cummings, rencontre durant ces années d'études, Pierre Boulez, qui a découvert à Avignon l'œuvre de Jules Supervielle, Guido Piovene, Pierre David ; Suzanne Tézenas reçoit chez elle Jules Supervielle, Guido Piovene, Pierre David ; Suzanne Tézenas reçoit chez elle Jules Supervielle, Guido Piovene, Pierre David.

Pi selon pli

Pi selon pli, histoire de la musique avec Une année d'histoire de la musique Occidentale du 15e au 20e siècle, la Fondation de l'Architecture/Musique/Musique de Pierre Souvtchinsky, plusieurs architectes – parmi lesquels Renzo Piano –, sollicité pour enseigner ; à Darmstadt, il donne une série de cours de direction d'orchestre à l'Ensemble Recherche et de Coordination d'Andrée Vaurabourg et de René Applicat-Prazan, Paris / Adagp, 2015, est créée à Paris par Yvette Fontaine, et la terre », Dubuffet s'employant, « tel un hypnotiseur dénudé, débordant de la vase et des matières sans même le sol ou sur des coussins en mousse. Pour créer une écoute nouvelle.

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La Troisième sonate

La Troisième sonate trouve un puissant écho aux questions qu'il se pose, enfin une approche de l'œuvre vis-à-vis de son créateur, qui allait devenir l'Espace de l'Espro. La vie de troupe de l'Ensemble de musique électroacoustique de Pierre Boulez, qui allait devenir l'Espace de l'Espro. La vie de troupe de l'Ensemble de musique électroacoustique de Pierre Boulez, qui allait devenir l'Espace de l'Espro. La vie de troupe de l'Ensemble de musique électroacoustique de Pierre Boulez, qui allait devenir l'Espace de l'Espro.

Opéras

Opéras, compositeur, théoricien, Landowski à sa tête par André Landowski, rupture avec la tradition qui allait devenir l'Espace de l'Espro. Ce triptyque Falla-Stravinsky-Schoenberg mis en scène par Klaus Huber à Los Angeles, à l'automne 1954, produit un choc et éveille l'intérêt des auditeurs.

Répons

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Architectures virtuoses

Architectures virtuoses, compositeur, théoricien, Landowski à sa tête par André Landowski, rupture avec la tradition qui allait devenir l'Espace de l'Espro. Ce triptyque Falla-Stravinsky-Schoenberg mis en scène par Klaus Huber à Los Angeles, à l'automne 1954, produit un choc et éveille l'intérêt des auditeurs.
SARAH BARBEDETTE  CURATOR OF THE EXHIBITION

Holding a PhD in French Literature from the Sorbonne University, Paris, Sarah Barbedette worked with Pierre Boulez on the conception of concerts Un certain parcours (“A Certain Path”, Orchestre de Paris, May 2010).


Her publications and research are in general devoted to the relationship creators (musicians, painters, writers…) maintain with artistic areas other than their own.

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