

DOMINIQUE LAWALREE



Dominique LAWALREE (30) is a young Belgian composer. With more than 240 pieces – he covers a wide variety of instruments: voices, chamber and symphony orchestra, organ, piano, synthesizer, virginal and choir. Instead of reflecting the actual world, he prefers to give life to our deepest feelings, our quietest and serene thoughts. He's a poet and philosopher through the language of music.

He's given more than 100 concerts with various formations. Symphony orchestra as well as playing alone (piano, organ, etc.), lecturing also a lot. His music is recorded on more than 10 LP. He explains his work in two books: 1) «Documenta Belgicae N° 1» (1983) written with 7 other composers; 2) «TACITURNE: journal d'une composition» (1984). Radio and newspapers are interested in his work even in the USA. He has played all over Europe.

Trained in music education with a solid background in harmony and counterpoint, he is Inspector in music education and teaches also at the UCL (University of Louvain-la-Neuve) harmony and musical analysis.

Q: *There are many pianists recording worldwide today, but few possess your skill at creating such a wide variety of musical styles with equal ability. When did you take up the piano and what training have you had?*

- : Since I was eight years old I've been playing piano and very quickly developed a personal approach to the instrument. I tried quality of sound very soon. In my classical piano studies in the beginning the teachers didn't teach quality of sound; yet I was able to discover it early on. The creating of actual sound is important at the piano. In my training since the beginning I had solofeggio and I didn't place my sole emphasis on the piano. I had training as a composer and with music writing, the more conceptual aspects of music. My training was not necessarily to be a pianist, but more a composer.
- !: Would you say your music has been influenced by any contemporary "pop" keyboardists? Or perhaps more by some of the classical/jazz music of earlier days?
- !: No, I'm not a pianist, but a composer. And so I've written for all instruments, even if I don't play all the instruments. For instance, "The Symphony of Hope" was written two years ago for a string orchestra and will finally come out on record at Xmas. But, as I enjoy performing my music I often play keyboards (organ, synthe, piano), so my classical training in piano helps me. The only time I was influenced by a pianist is in the composing of my favorite piano work, TACITURNE. I was influenced there by Glenn Gould and his playing of Haydn's last sonatas on Columbia Records. His work showed me a new way to conceive of time in my music.
- Q: For someone with so many records, 10 to date I believe, you seem to be virtually unknown for the most part. Do you ever play concerts in Belgium, or Europe?
- A: I give many concerts in Europe as a pianist, conductor, organist and electronic keyboardist. At my concerts I only play my own music, never interpretations of other composers. And if I have done so many records, it's to give the opportunity to the audience to discover all of my different musical faces. I'm planning a concert tour in Summer of '87 of the USA. So if anyone is interested in organising a concert for me during that time period please contact me at: Dominique Lawalree - Rue Beckers, 16 1040 Brussels, Belgium.
- Q: All of your albums have been released on the WALRUS label. Is that label for your records, or are there other artists with Lps on the label as well?
- A: That's my own label and I produce it independently. I know in the USA it would be difficult to do that, but in Europe you have some people doing so. The goal is not commercial; it is to give people the opportunity to hear the music. In the same way as the American composer Alan Hovhaness. WALRUS comes from my name and I chose it in the memory of the Beatles song.
- Q: Do you make your living from the recording side of the music business, sessions, etc., or is that more of a sidelight of you overall profession?
- A: My music is my life. But as it is non commercial I'm a university teacher in music.
- Q: Your music is very pastoral and reflective. What do you try to convey with your works, a more emotional feeling or a peaceful, meditative atmosphere?
- A: I prefer to give life to our deepest feelings, our more quiet and serene thoughts. I feel I'm a poet and philosopher through the language of music. Rock music usually tries to reflect more the actual world. I can appreciate this idea, but as I'm a composer I do not work along those lines. My music is the one for our lost paradise. The atmosphere is natural to me; I don't try to create it. It is me!
- Q: Your early records seemed to make more use of organ and synthesizer. Lately, they have been much more piano oriented. Is this a conscious change or simply a natural evolution in style/musical preference?
- A: On one record one can listen to old and new pieces. That's why I always write the date and the catalogue number. A lot of pieces were composed for interpreters, but on my own records as I play everything myself, the repertoire is limited. With the forthcoming Symphony (my most successful piece, as it seems), it'll be a lot different musically. Now I think my music has a more personal touch to it. My records are not reflecting the evolution of my music and are not chronologically meant, otherwise I would have to release a record every month. They just indicate different moments of my work. In rock usually records are the compositions themselves. I'm working like the classical musicians do. I was influenced by American composers like George Crumb and Morton Feldman.

Q: What plans do you have for future records? Do you wish to be more commercially successful or is that desire irrelevant to your making music?

A: I have just released my latest album (the 10th), titled LITANIES DU MONDE A VENIR. It's a solo work for organ recorded in a cathedral. As I already have said, at Xmas THE SYMPHONY OF HOPE in four sections (with a string orchestra conducted by myself) and a cassette of music meant to be accompanying poems will come out. In 1986, two cassettes in a special box (time duration of two hours) will be released. The piece "From Time to Time" for electric piano, that I'm composing every day of this year will be included in that. Later on I would like to release some music for synthesizer. I don't try to be commercial, but if it would become more successful, I would continue to live just like I do. I would be happy if more people could hear my music. I don't want to give it to only an elite of listeners..

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SALON KITTY: SHOKUBUTSU (JAP LP)
Salon Kitty is a Japanese duo who speci
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... .. creating ethereal tapestries of keyboard
... .. centric like ZNR perhaps? Their new album