



Sandeep Bhagwati

Oiseaux d'Ailleurs (2011)

comprovisation pour dix oiseaux-musiciens

d'après un poème de Kabir "Ham Pardesi Panchhi Baba"
et un poème du compositeur "To Those Born Far Away From Home"

Commande de l'Ensemble Supermusique Montréal

7. Ham pardesī panchhī bābā

हम परदेसी पंछी बाबा, अणी देसरा नाहीं हो
अणी देस रा लोग अचेता, पल पल पर पछताई भाई संतो
अणी देस रा नाहीं हो (टेक)

मुख बिन गाना पग बिन चलना, बिन पंख उड़ जाई हो
बिना मोह की सुरत हमारी, अनहद में रम जाई (१)

झाया बैटूं अगनी व्यापे, धूप अधिक सितलाई हो
झाया धूप से सतगुरू न्यारा, मैं सतगुरू के माई (२)

आठों पेहेर अड़क रहे आसन, कदे न उतरे शाही
मन पवन दोनों नहीं पहुंचे, उनी देस के माही (३)

निरगुण रूप है मेरे दाता, सरगुण नाम धराई
कहे कबीर सुनो भाई साधो, साहब है घट माही (४)

KABIR

Je suis un oiseau d'ailleurs, mon pote,
Je ne suis pas de ce pays
Les gens ici sont inconscients
Chaque moment trempé dans le regret

Frères, quêteurs

Je ne suis pas de ce pays

1

Je chante sans bouche

Je marche sans pieds

Je vole sans ailes

Mon esprit est libre

De toute illusion, je joue

Hors de toute contrainte

2

Assis dans l'ombre

Je suis en feu

Au soleil je suis bien rafraîchi

Mon vrai gourou est

au-delà du soleil et ombre.

Je vis dans mon gourou.

3

Fais tout comme il le faut

jour comme nuit

mais le seigneur ne viendra pas.

Des sages et des arbitres

ont tenté en vain

d'atteindre ce pays là.

4

Pour eux, le grand donneur

dont la forme est informe

n'est devenu qu'un nom.

Ni l'esprit, ni le souffle

ne peuvent jamais parvenir

a ce pays là.

5

Tête, orteils, yeux: ce corps

Le vrai gourou l'a refait

Afin qu'il aille au-delà de la mort

Kabir dit, vous qui cherchez, écoutez-moi,

Le seigneur se trouve dans votre corps.

Ham Pardesi Panchhi Baba

I am a bird from an alien land, buddy,

I do not belong to this country

The people here are unconscious

every moment steeped in regret

brothers, seekers,

I do not belong to this country.

1

I sing without a mouth

I walk without feet

I fly without wings

My mind is free

of illusion, I play

in the limitless

2

Sitting in shadow

I am on fire

In sunlight I am cool

My guru

is beyond sun and shade

I live in my guru.

3

Do everything right

day and night

but the lord will not come

Wise arbiters

have tried all in vain

to reach that country.

4

For them, the great giver

whose form is no form

congeals into a name.

Mind and breath

can never attain

that country.

5

Head, toes, eyes, this body

the true guru has re-made it

to go beyond death

Kabir says, listen to me seekers,

the lord is inside the body.

à ceux nés loin de chez eux

le lieu n'était pas le nôtre.
ni n'aurions pu
choisir le moment

nous sommes arrivés,
aventuriers
et nous repartirons
inchangés

car ceux
qui vivent en transit,
balayés par un vent inlassable
ne trouvent guère le temps
pour sécher, faire germer, se fixer,
des voyageurs
perdus en mer et perplexe,
sans terre ferme sur laquelle se poser

tout en ailes et sans pieds
tout en pouls sans battement
ils sont à la dérive
ne prennent aucun parti
et quittent
ceux qu'ils rencontrent

vivent une vie bien fragile,
esquivant maladroitement les désastres,
en proie à des revirements soudains,
dans un tourbillon de points de vue,
dans une rafale de langues,
un pêle-mêle vertigineux
de lieux et de visages

leurs secrets et leurs joies:
yeux friands
oreilles avides
et une peau
qui chérira
toute caresse éphémère

SANDEEP BHAGWATI

to those born far away from home

the place was not ours.
neither could we
have chosen the time.

we arrived,
wanderers,
and we shall leave
unchanged.

for those
living in transit,
swept by unflagging wind,
hardly find time
to dry, germinate, set,
voyagers
always at sea, at a loss,
no firm ground to alight on.

all wings and no feet
all pulse and no beat
they glide
take no side
leave
whoever they meet

lead a life brittle,
awkwardly skirting disaster,
prey to sudden reversals,
in a whirl of perspectives
in a flurry of tongues,
a vertiginous tumble
of places and faces

their secrets and joys:
eager eyes
avid ears
and a skin
that will treasure
each fleeting caress.

MATERIALS

Oiseaux d'Ailleurs is a improvisation score that consists of several elements:

- 1) A graphic score comprising several different elements:
 - Symbols
 - Music notation (see appendix 2)
 - Verbal Instructions
 - Graphic Representations of Sound Samples (Birdsong and Speech) (see appendix 1)
- 2) Three collections of soundfiles:
 - Selected Birdsongs of Asian and African birds (see appendix 1)
 - Midi-realized tracings of recited poem samples (see appendix 1)
 - Sample Readings from the poems (Not used in performance, only for midi tracings and graphic representations)

Both elements are necessary to perform the work.

In preparation, rehearsal and performance. Musicians should both read the score and listen to the soundfiles. In this work, all the elements of score and sound are used as improvisation seeds: elements that fire the imagination and at the same time focus it on specific aspects of sound. The musicians are called upon to elaborate on these seeds, to play in dialogue with them, to echo them, to embellish them, to transform, parody, stretch, condense, hack them, wrongly remember them – in short: all the things any composer does. The only difference: they are called upon to do this in a group context where all the other musicians involved try exactly the same. It is from this flock consciousness that the music will emerge...

SETUP

Each musician wears a comfortable headphone. The sound system consists of a sound playback patch with min. 3 playback modules feeding into a 3x10 matrix and then a 10-channel system feeding each headphone individually (mono).

Musicians must listen to the headphone in all sections with the headphone symbol. In all other sections, they may take off the headphones - or leave them on, as they wish.

HOW TO READ THE SCORE

The score consists of 25 **SECTIONS**, with a longer fermata after section 14. Each section has a specific **DURATION**, indicated by the big number above it. This indicates the number of measures of 4/4 at 72↘60 bpm that this section will take. I chose to indicate duration thus in order to allow musicians to actually play certain sections (or the entire piece) with a conducted 4/4 beat for human musical flexibility.

There are only 4 different durations: 13, 8, 5, and 3 measures. If not played with a beat, these sections therefore would be of the following lengths:

Measures [4/4]	At 72 bpm	At 60 bpm
13	ca. 43"	52"
8	ca. 27"	32"
5	ca. 17"	20"
3	10"	12"

On the whole, however, the big numbers over each measure merely indicate proportions and can be applied to all kinds of time units. Therefore, the duration of the work is inherently variable: given the tempi above, the **DURATION OF THE ENTIRE WORK** would range between 12 and 14 minutes.

SECTIONS

In each section, musicians see either a box filled with symbols, word, notes or graphics – or they see a few lines from one of the poems underlying this work.

When they see the box, they play, following the **INSTRUCTIONS** and graphics – they are in the foreground of the performance. (see more below)

When they see only the poem lines, they may or may not play, depending on whether they want to react to one of the principal players, or whether the words of the poem elicit an artistic reaction to them.

BOXES

In the boxes musicians will find 5 different kinds of instructions:

- Soundfiles
- Musical Themes
- Graphics
- Verbal Instructions
- "libre"

SOUNDFILES

Whenever the box has a headphones sign [🎧] this means that the musician must listen to a soundfile.

This soundfile can be represented by three different symbols. Each symbol indicates a different way of reacting to the soundfile.



indicates a temporary leadership role within the ensemble: the musician hears the soundfile as a sequence of melodies - and makes them a leading theme. This leading theme can then be elaborated upon, can be

developed and expanded. In any case, it will dominate the entire section.



indicates an intermediate role: the musician hears the soundfile as an accompaniment to other things and uses it to support the other musicians s/he hears around her/himself. Melodies are shorter and sometimes are only varied slightly (e.g as a kind of riff or echo or like a "hear hear" in parliament).



indicates a background role: the musician uses the soundfile to create a discreet drone or background. This does not mean permanent sound: like a faraway bird, this can also translate into just very occasional musical gestures. But it does indicate a repetitive pattern or sound, little melody and no thematic development.

NOTE: The file names behind the soundfile symbols are only for reference in setup, practice, rehearsal and playback: they do not carry any aesthetic meaning for the musicians.

MUSICAL THEMES (see also appendix 2)



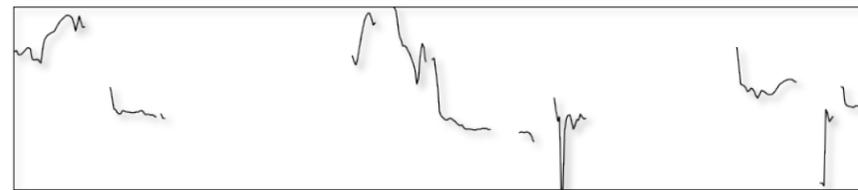
A melodic theme at the background of Oiseaux d'Ailleurs resembles traditional oriental music inflections. Cut-up segments of this melody surface throughout the score. They should be taken as examples of a lost and elusive melody that the musicians search for but never quite find.

As a musician you take this fragments as you would take a melody in a Jazz standard, or as a fugue theme, or as a

faint memory you are trying to remember. You elaborate on it, you ornament it, you chop it up or you make it more and more beautiful – and in this process, you lose this melody again – until the next musician picks it up...

NOTE: You can learn the whole melody from the appendix – and at any time, you can use other fragments from it than the one you see in your box – but not to make a strong, straightforward melodic statement: rather, to enhance the sense of a "lost melody", of a fragmented past...

GRAPHICS



These graphic images are transcriptions of either voice (more irregular, see above) or bird samples (more repetitive, see below).



These graphics should be used by the musicians as a direct inspiration for movements in musical pitch and time.

The range of the pitch and time can be interpreted differently each time: for example, the pitch from high to low could move only in a very small intervall (say microtones within a major second) or could encompass the entire range of the player's instrument. Likewise the time indicated by the box could be a) arbitrary, read *molto rubato* b) the exact duration of the section, read with

constant tempo or c) the duration of one measure, again read with constant tempo. Finally, a musician could also decide to just use one of the graphic gestures and repeat it.

What should NOT be done, is to improvise on these gestures. The musicians should always try to render these graphic curves as best they can: as movements in a scale (i.e. with discreet steps from pitch to pitch) or as glissandi.

NOTE: Musicians could even interpret these graphics as dynamics or as timbre curves: e.g. changes in the loudness of an unchanging sound or changing timbres in an unchanging pitch.

VERBAL INSTRUCTIONS

All boxes with verbal instructions have 4 words written in a specific pattern that, taken together, define a specific improvisation "language" or "habitus".

Bourdon Bruiteux
Gazouillements Parlando

These four words represent 4 different aspects of the improvisation language – and each of them has 5 settings:

- PHRASE LENGTH (éclats, signaux, motifs, melodies, bourdon)
- TONE CONTOUR (gliss↗, gliss↘, stable, tr~ gazouillements)
- RHYTHM (marchant, swing, rubato, parlando, libre)
- TIMBRE (neutre, doux, riche, rugueux, bruiteux)

PHRASE LENGTH

- **Éclats** = 1 short sound per phrase
- **Signaux** = 2-3 sounds per phrase

- **Motifs** = 4-6 sounds per phrase
- **Méodies** = longer melodic phrases
- **Bourdon** = long background without memorable features

TONE CONTOUR

- **gliss↗** = each tone slides upwards
- **gliss↘** = each tone slides downwards
- **stable** = each tone remains stable (i.e. normal western playing mode)
- **tr~** = almost each tone is ornamented in some way, no straight notes
- **gazouillements** = the tones are woven into a twittering whole, there is no single note, always quick and flitting movement between notes

RHYTHM

- **Marchant** = regular marching rhythm, almost like a machine, but also with pauses and occasional syncopes etc.
- **Swing** = a swingy, jazzy rhythmic world
- **Rubato** = stop- and-go, irregular, highly emotional
- **Parlando** = like speaking, a bit irregular, but with clear intent, fast movements. Always try of something you would speak now – and then play it on your instrument or sing it without words. As if you were giving a speech.
- **Libre** = total liberty of rhythm, can be strict or free, repetitive or amorphous – whatever you think fits best.

TIMBRE

- **Neutre** = neutral timbre, no vibrato or any special colouring, use of harmonics.

- **Doux** = sweet timbre, with poco vibrato and a few portamenti, appoggiaturas etc.
- **Riche** = heavy vibrato, occasional distortions (e.g. frullato or sul ponticello)
- **Rugueux** = timbre rich with noise, but still discernible pitches. Use of many distortion techniques.
- **Bruiteux** = pitches become unimportant, multiphonics, col legno, scratching, instrument sounds (clicking of keys, drumming on the instrument etc.)

PUTTING THE LANGUAGE TOGETHER

The challenge is to create an improvisation language that combines all four instructions into one coherent mode of musical expression. This language should be developed and can be practiced by each musician alone, long before the actual performance – it really should become second nature to them, so that during the performance they can react freely to their colleagues' music making.

PROGRAM NOTE

We all have become quite alien birds. In midst of the everyday urban hustle, we listen to voices and signs from another realm. We all become strangers to one another when we listen to a sonic world in our ear. Our iPods alienate us by day, and our dreams by night – sometimes we navigate the real world as if always from elsewhere, as if we were only bodies with an always absent mind.

"I am a bird from an alien land / I do not belong to this country" writes Kabir, a 15th century Indian poet. The

country he means is our everyday existence. As an outside observer of the human condition, Kabir mocks all those who seek spiritual salvation by observing rites and rules, proprieties and ideas, theories and ideologies. If we do not understand that which is formless and elusive, he says, we will not get it. Life is more than its descriptions and models. And Kabir urges us to understand where we can really look for ourselves: "The Lord is INSIDE the body", he sings, "listen to me, brothers, seekers!"

"The place was not ours / Neither could we have chosen the time" begins my own poem "To those born far away from home". I wrote it in Paris in 1997, when I gratefully realized for the first time that in my global existence between all kinds of countries, ideologies, allegiances and languages I was neither as alone or strange as the nationalism that even to this day dominates our societies had made me believe. The lives of those who have no home may be brittle and prey to sudden reversals: but they know about this fact and can adapt. And they can indeed "cherish each fleeting caress" – because they never feel entitled to it.

These two poems lie at the core of my composition. They are transformed into a sonic map, a map as birds or iPod addicts would perhaps draw it, with musical fragments instead of notes, and with a plethora of cryptic signs. The musicians read this map with their ears and explore it with their eyes - and when they have absorbed both the signs and the sounds, they lift their heads and use their bodies and instruments to sing. They are one group, yet on stage they time and again they become aliens to each other: they listen to voices from their headphones, from another country – what do they hear – and what music do they make of it ?

SANDEEP BHAGWATI
Montréal, March 1, 2011

APPENDIX 1

SOUNDSAMPLES USED IN THIS WORK

ASIAN AND AFRICAN BIRDS (AND SOME GIBBONS)

Asian Koel (<i>Eudynamys scolopaceus</i>)	0:10
Asian Palm Squirrel (<i>Funumbalus tristriatus</i>)	0:30
Bronze-winged Jacana (<i>Metopidius indicus</i>)	0:08
Eastern Olive Sunbird (<i>Nectarinia olivacea</i>)	0:27
Hill Partridge (<i>Arborophila torqueola</i>)	0:26
Indian Peafowl (<i>Pavo cristatus</i>)	0:12
Indian Pitta (<i>Pitta brachyura</i>)	0:08
Lar Gibbon (<i>Hylobates lar</i>) 01	0:22
Lar Gibbon (<i>Hylobates lar</i>) 02	0:08
Magpie Shrike (<i>Urolestes melanoleucus</i>)	0:18
Nightingale (<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>)	0:40
Red-whiskered Bulbul (<i>Pycnonotus jocosus fuscicaudatus</i>)	0:31
Rufous-naped Lark (<i>Mirafra africana</i>)	0:05
Satyr Tragopan (<i>Tragopan satyra</i>)	0:22
Siamang Gibbon (<i>Symphalangus syndactylus</i>) 01	0:24
Siamang Gibbon (<i>Symphalangus syndactylus</i>) 02	0:04
Sultan Tit (<i>Melanochlora sultanea</i>)	0:22

MIDI TRACINGS OF POEM READINGS

OA_Kabir_Phrase1__Clarinette Basse	0:02
OA_Kabir_Phrase1_Trombone	0:02
OA_Kabir_Phrase2_Cello	0:06
OA_Kabir_Phrase2_Percussion	0:06
OA_Kabir_Phrase3_Percussion	0:06
OA_Kabir_Phrase4_Clarinette Basse	0:05
OA_Kabir_Phrase4_Contrebasse	0:05
OA_Kabir_Phrase5_Clarinette Basse	0:06
OA_Kabir_Phrase6_Violon	0:05
OA_Kabir_Phrase7_Contrebasse	0:07
OA_Kabir_Phrase8_Voix	0:07
OA_Kabir_Phrase9_Percussion	0:06
OA_Kabir_Phrase9_Batterie	0:06
OA_Kabir_Phrase10_Percussion	0:06
OA_Kabir_Phrase10_Batterie	0:06
OA_Kabir_Phrase11_Trombone	0:06
OA_Kabir_Phrase12_Contrebasse	0:07
OA_Bhagwati_Phrase1_Violon	0:05
OA_Bhagwati_Phrase2_Contrebasse	0:04
OA_Bhagwati_Phrase3_Contrebasse	0:06
OA_Bhagwati_Phrase3_Batterie	0:06
OA_Bhagwati_Phrase4_Clarinette Basse	0:08
OA_Bhagwati_Phrase5_Cello	0:08
OA_Bhagwati_Phrase5_Electro	0:08

MELOS SAMPLES (FINALE)

OA_Melos_C2	1:10
OA-Melos_B1	1:15

APPENDIX 2 The Lost Melodies of Oiseaux d'Ailleurs



Oiseaux d'Ailleurs

pour 10 musiciens-oiseaux

dedié a l'Ensemble Supermusique Montréal

Sandeep Bhagwati

Partition

	1	13	2	8	3	13	4	5	5	8	
Voix			[Indian Pitta]	Signaux Rugueux Gliss ↘ Rubato							
Sax Appeaux			[Indian Pitta]	Bourdon Bruiteux Gazouillements Parlando							
Clarinete basse			[Kabir Phrase 1]	Signaux Rugueux Gliss ↘ Rubato					Mélodies Rugueuses Gliss ↘ Rubato		
Trombone			[Kabir Phrase 1]	Bourdon Bruiteux Gazouillements Parlando	A1		B1				
Violon					A1		B1			Je chante sans bouche Je marche sans pieds Je vole sans ailes	
Cello									Mélodies Rugueuses Gliss ↘ Rubato		
Contrebasse				Je ne suis pas de ce pays					Frères, quêteurs, Je ne suis pas de ce pays		
Electronique						Les gens d'ici sont inconscients Chaque moment trempé dans le regret					
Percussion		Je suis un oiseau d'ailleurs, mon pote									
Batterie											

Kabir dit, vous qui cherchez,
écoutez-moi: le seigneur
se trouve dans votre corps.

	11	12	13	14	15
V	5 A3				
S/A	Pour eux, le grand donneur Dont la forme est informe N'est devenu qu'un nom	Ni l'esprit ni le souffle Ne peuvent jamais parvenir A ce pays là.	Tête, orteils, yeux: ce corps Le vrai gourou l'a refait Afin qu'il aille au-delà de la mort		
Clb			Mélodies Doux Gliss ↘ Parlando	Eclats Doux Gliss ↗ Parlando	
Trb		[Satyr Tragopan]	Mélodies Doux Gliss ↘ Parlando	[Kabir Phrase 11]	
Vn	Bourdon Neutre Gazouillements Parlando	[Asian Koel]			
Vc	Bourdon Neutre Gazouillements Parlando	[Asian Koel]	Mélodies Doux Gliss ↘ Parlando		
Cb		[Satyr Tragopan]	Mélodies Doux Gliss ↘ Parlando	[Kabir Phrase 12]	
E				Bourdon Riche Gazouillements Libre	
P		[Kabir Phrase 10]		Mélodies Bruiteuses Tr ~ Libre	
Bt		[Kabir Phrase 10]			Le lieu n'était pas le nôtre

16

13

17

8

18

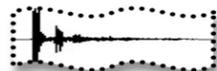
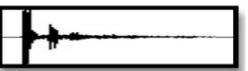
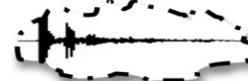
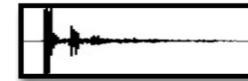
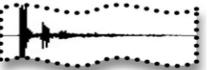
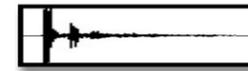
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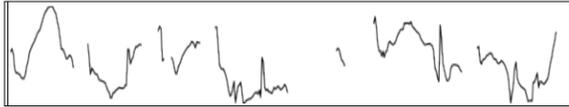
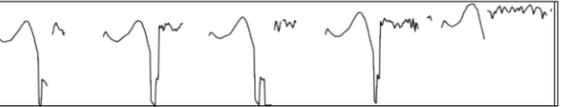
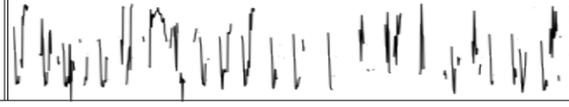
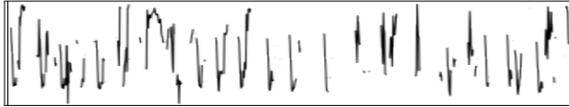
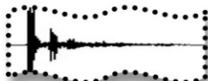
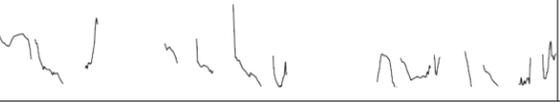
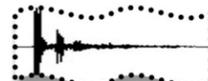
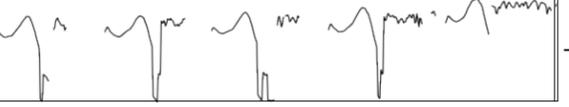
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20

13

v			  [Sultan Tit] 		
S/A	Ni n'aurions pu Choisir le moment				
clb			Car ceux qui vivent en transit balayés par un vent inlassable		
Trb					  [Hill Partridge]
Vn	  [Bhagwati Phrase 1]			Ne trouvent guère le temps Pour sécher, faire germer, se fixer,	
Vc	  [Melos C2]		  [Sultan Tit]		Des voyageurs Perdus en mer et perplexe, Sans terre ferme sur laquelle se poser
Cb	  [Bhagwati Phrase 2]	  [Bhagwati Phrase 3]			
E		Nous sommes arrivés Aventuriers Et nous repartirons Inchangés.			Bourdon Neutre Stable Swing
P				 	  [Hill Partridge]
Bt		  [Bhagwati Phrase 3]	Bourdon Bruiteux Gazouillements Parlando	 	  [Hill Partridge]

Et une peau
Qui chérira
Toute caresse éphémère.

	8		5		13		8		13
	21		22		23		24		25
V									 
S/A									
Clb	  [Bhagwati Phrase 4]						Leurs secrets et leurs joies: Yeux friands Oreilles avides		
Trb	D2 	Mélodies Riches Tr~ Libre			Dans un tourbillon de points de vue Dans une rafale de langues Un pêle-mêle vertigineux De lieux et de visages		 		
Vn					D2 		Bourdon Neutre Marchant Swing		
Vc	Tout en ailes et sans pieds Tout en pouls sans battement Ils sont a la dérive Ne prennent aucun parti Et quittent ceux qu'ils rencontrent	Bourdon Neutre Gazouillements Parlando			  [Bhagwati Phrase 5]		Bourdon Rugueux Marchant Stable		
Cb		Vivent un vie bien fragile Equivant maladroitement les désastres En proie à des revirements soudains					 		
E		Mélodies Riches Tr~ Libre			  [Bhagwati Phrase 5]				
P		Mélodies Riches Tr~ Libre					Bourdon Neutre Marchant Swing		
Bt							 		