

Andrew Lewis

Danses acousmatiques

The impetus behind *Danses acousmatiques* was the sense that while in theory space is a fundamental aspect of acousmatic music, in practice most acousmatic music uses spatialization in a relatively generalised way, in something of the manner of an ‘effect.’ Since acousmatic music is, above all, about exploring the inner nature of sound in a very detailed and intentional way, it seemed odd that spatial aspects have not always received the same level of careful attention. Even in music which claims to use space as part of its consciously composed fabric (Boulez’s *Répons* springs to mind) the question arises as to whether such complex and detailed spatial operations can actually be *perceived* by the listener.

In response to this state of affairs, *Danses acousmatiques* represents a quest for the creative, musically significant and *perceptible* use of the spatial aspect of acousmatic music. The work is cast in the form of a suite, with nine movements comprising three interlocking series each of which draws on a different model of spatial movement, on a scale stretching from the atomic to the cosmic:

Series 1 — movements *Vacuum (la scène vide)*, *Torquetum (pas de cinq)*, and *Nebulum*: the cosmos — stars, planets, the music of the spheres;

Series 2 — movements *Shoal*, *Flock (pas d’action)*, and *Swarm*: the natural world, especially emergent flocking behaviours;

Series 3 — movements *Danse des coups (solo)*, *Danse atomique (pas de deux)*, and *Danse des gestes (pas de trois)*: the human world — dance and choreographic movement.

The individual series may be performed as discrete three-movement studies. Alternatively, individual movements might be performed as part of a larger program.

Danses acousmatiques was realized in the spring and summer 2007 in the Electroacoustic Music Studios of Bangor University (Wales, UK) and premiered on October 25, 2007 at SARC in Belfast (Northern Ireland, UK). Thanks to dobroide for the pigeon and bee samples.