

Segments et Apostilles 2012

for bass flute, harp, cimbalom, cello and electronics, 26 min.

Commissioned by the Festival d'Automne à Paris 2012, Segments et Apostilles was written for the wonderful players of l'Instant donné. "Apostille" (apostil) means: what is appended on a previous text, in the form of a footnote, of a marginal note. Sometimes, what is said there, while being seemingly hidden, happens to be at least as important as what appears in the body of the text. In my composition, where electronics "footnotes" are continually appended on a musical text made of instrumental fragments, one is unable to say which part is leading and which is following the other. If not the sound, at least the composing method has to do with a previous piece of mine, Circulations (2003-2005): I first wrote drafts for each instrument, then recorded them separately, composed a tape part out of the sounds, on which finally the instruments were invited to play. Here the (almost) constant clicking of electronics acts like an index of how it was all made (cutting, moving, sequencing sonic blocks), as well as it brings the typical sound and "guests" of experimental electronic music into the context of written chamber music. The electronic is nothing here but an atmosphere or a background texture: it is an integral part of the musical discourse, each note of which being notated on the score. As the composition took shape, both "segment" and "apostille" became the names I gave to two different types of material: the first consisting in a sharp dialogue between the whole ensemble and electronics, and the second, duets associating an instrument to the "ghost" of another one.

(text editing : Andrew Jordan)