

(Translated from German)

FRANKFURTER RUNDSCHAU

FRANCFORT CULTURE

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Freedom of Resonance

Musician and creator Jacky Craissac

By Michael Rieth

The Hesse Land and the Aquitaine Region are twinned. Jacky Craissac, a musician who creates his own instruments and who has come straight from Bordeaux, has answered positively to the question whether this twinning program can really work – at least in the course of the evening spent at the Frankfurt *Gallus-Theater*.

When Jacky Craissac moves among his varied groups of instruments on stage, he remains in the background. Hence the different tones he draws from these assembled creations, which reveal their distinctive nature and whose outward differences merge into a whole, are all the more significant.

Mr. Craissac is not one to play the autocratic percussionist sitting at his drums like a leader imposing his will on the instruments, but “one who allows the possible to happen”, one whose respectful way of playing bass drumsticks, other drumsticks and mallets allows the various metals, hides and woods – as well as stones – to freely let out part of the volume they hold inside, each instrument being there for itself and at the same time always integrated into a general context.

The instruments reaching our ears come from the master’s workshop where he welded them, screwed them, glued them or nailed them together. The process has given birth to sculptures which are magnificent to look at and which, gathered in groups, already give an impression of spatial tension on a visual level, and which, when moving (for example when an imposing curved brass instrument is set resonating and the spots of light it reflects begin dancing) become united with the superimposing sound and have a reciprocal effect on it.

The way in which components are bound to one another – thanks to strings or strips of metal – which lets them communicate with one another, is not directly visible, yet the listeners’ understanding begins to grow because of the correlation existing between the sounds. When a bass drumstick hits a resonance chamber, then the piece of sheet metal it is fastened to will be induced to add its own tones. When the mallets strike the strips of metal of the gamelans, then we can perceive the acoustic link with the deep resonance of the metal even without recognizing the mechanical link; and when a bow strokes a string, then the fastening poles naturally become the “contagion path” of the harmonics.

It is quite evident that Jacky Craissac’s work is supported by the rhythmic element in music. He does play with melodic fragments, yet when he begins experimenting for example with sequences of fifths and fourths, it is not rare for his playing to overflow like the bed of a river and remain in the background with regard to the tension components and compared to the harmonic aspects. At the end, it is the wind which blows upon a stand full of mobiles (a few consist of finely cut pieces of agate) whose sharp cracking sound, together with the song of various resonance metal tubes, wonderfully complement one another.

When Napoleon dismantled the 365 small independent German states and replaced them with self-governing regional entities, it was a lucky thing; the centralisation of French organs in Paris was a curse. The noble portrayal of a united Europe can be but the undertaking of regions which are quite aware of their values and traditions and which – just like Jacky Craissac’s various groups of sound sculptures – connect their own life with the effect produced by the harmonious whole, as was the case in the *Gallus-Theater*, where the entire auditorium was set resonating – and the audience with it.

It is significant for this “First” stemming from the twinned relationship between the Hesse Land and the Aquitaine Region that culture has found such a prominent place. Tonight the world of politics is called upon just as an exhibition on the Aquitaine Region (young, politically speaking and old, culturally speaking) is opening in the inner courtyard of the Darmstadt “*Regierungspräsidium*”, with in addition a concert by Jacky Craissac.

Today Tuesday, Jacky Craissac is playing in the inner courtyard of the Regierungspräsidium in Darmstadt, Luisenplatz 2., at 8 PM. Tickets: 069 / 75 80 60 20