



PRESS

ABOUT STEPHANE DE GERANDO

About Stéphane de Gérando (cf. ACEL publication 2022)

In his book *Contemporary Music. Aide-mémoire – examples and definitions*, published by Durand, Bruno Giner places Stéphane de Gérando among a new generation of composers who “demonstrate a prolific and intense activity.”

A violist with the Orchestre National de France (1961–1973), musical director of the ORTF regional orchestras (1973–1974), then of the Orchestre National de France (1975–1976), and inspector of music at the Ministry of Culture (1977–1984), Alain Bancquart—then professor of composition at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris—wrote on October 3, 1991: “Stéphane de Gérando is probably one of the most gifted young composers I know, and he possesses, which seems to me extremely important, a very personal imagination, whose audacity and insight are highly compelling [...]. Each of his scores reveals great talent, a genuine power of conception.”

Paul Méfano, composer, conductor, founder of the ensemble 2e2M, former professor at the Paris Conservatory and director of the Versailles Conservatory, describes (ISBN 9782296562837, pp. 7–8) Stéphane de Gérando’s research and compositional work as “an attempt at unifying the whole.” Stéphane de Gérando “combines the telluric force of Varèse with the meticulous and objective cruelty of Pierre Boulez, rediscovering the essence of a powerful breath.” Paul Méfano highlights an illuminating connection between Gérando’s musical language and reflection: “one finds diversity, originality, and a unifying harmony.”

Jean-Yves Bosseur, composer, researcher, and research director at the CNRS, emphasizes Gérando’s dual approach as both researcher and composer, which combines in an “undeniably fruitful manner.” He also recalls Gérando’s research on the concept of creation: “a double movement that stands in opposition—on one side an absence, the work tending asymptotically toward an absolute it cannot reach; on the other, a presence offering the possibility of sensing such movement during the concrete manifestation of the act of creation.” Jean-Yves Bosseur states that this represents “a fundamental issue that Stéphane de Gérando fully embraces, both in his reflection and in his practice.”

Costin Mioreanu, composer and professor of Philosophy, Aesthetics, and Art Sciences at Paris I University, reports a “monumental” work, an “original high-level musical and scientific research,” “a different perspective,” “a conceptually three-dimensional and topological approach to composition and musical reception,” important milestones toward establishing a “poietics.”

Jean-Pierre Armengaud, pianist, former artistic director of the Présences Festival at Radio France, and professor at the University of Évry-Val d’Essonne, highlights a “titanic undertaking,” a “surreal thought,” a “volcanic model,” a “creative energy” “with a constant drive to push beyond limits, the confrontation between parameter control and the contingent violence of a material heated to white heat, the intrusion of the out-of-time, the out-of-logic within a framework nevertheless held with an

iron hand.” “At the paroxysm of gesture and the cry of the material, Stéphane de Gérando introduces distance, questioning, a persistent re-evaluation—in short, an almost ontological doubt.”

More recently, in his article *The Labyrinth of Time and the Azadi Tower. A work by Stéphane de Gérando* (published in *La Revue de Téhéran*, Iranian cultural monthly in French, no. 154), Arash Khalili describes *The Labyrinth of Time* as a visual and sonic spectacle, a journey through different scales of time. He explains that it is a work in constant development, comprising large “cycles” and “satellites,” involving multiple techniques, deformation or invention through superposition, algorithmic processes, artistic presentation of the absence/presence concept, and fragmentation of memory. He emphasizes that the work also aims to foster new forms of scientific collaboration in order to explore original creative perspectives (both conceptual and related to the realization of a work): “one of the trajectories of the Labyrinth tends toward an attempt to unify the whole, the search for a metalanguage capable of unifying the writing of senses and artistic practices.”

From 2007 onwards, with the development of Stéphane de Gérando’s digital paintings, national and international press highlighted “an original concept,” “a hybrid work where image, sound, and technology converge” (Christy Granja, *Art et Décoration*, no. 436, September 2007), works displayed “on a flat screen mounted on the wall like a constantly moving virtual painting” (François Bliss de la Boissière, *Les années lazer*, no. 134, September 2007), an association between “art and high tech” (Clément Pétreault, *Écran plan magazine*, no. 8, August–September 2007), the creation of virtual paintings where “the artwork is no longer fixed,” “transforms itself,” “suspended between a design object and a reinvented creation” (Giorgia Vaccari, *Tutto Digitale*, no. 45, July 2007). The article by Jordan Muzyczka—*Letting oneself be guided by chance (Est Républicain*, April 18, 2018, p. 23, Citadel of Belfort, April 18–19, 2018)—addresses the evolution of the Labyrinth. The journalist describes audiences of all ages interacting in real time with the visual and sonic work via remote gesture or sound control, “letting themselves be guided by chance.”

Excerpts from the first reactions to *Verticale Mémoire* (CD ACEL 2022)

Damien Michel, French pianist, performer of the premiere at Radio France (Paris) of *Metathesis*, one of Stéphane de Gérando’s early works

Purity. Journey. Finesse. — three words to describe *Verticale Mémoire*, an electroacoustic cycle by Stéphane de Gérando: a totality, a path that cannot be defined in fragments of time but rather globally, as a detachment or intrinsic distancing in order to enter the heart of listening. No trace of duality nor of a binary world—no good nor evil: this is another dimension. This music represents a vertical abyss of tranquility and universal peace. With quiet strength, Stéphane de Gérando draws us into his Labyrinth—or rather, our own labyrinth. Space, in all its immensity, is offered to us in abundant, as enigmatic as self-evident ways. The degree of mastery over the constitutive elements of the discourse (timbres, rhythms, balances, durations, space, technologies...) brings forth a multitude of images, a direct expressive trajectory that touches the essential, without ornamentation, without excess. A sense of lightness (a tendency toward absence) adds another dimension to this refined listening experience, resulting from a virtuosity of writing. In the final part, *Algorithmique grand cycle*, everything that came before seems to disappear, consumed, absorbed; only a floating in space and time remains. This section itself seems to tend toward disappearance, perhaps serving as an entry or exit key to another labyrinthine space... Decades of research emerge through this recording, blending numerous scientific disciplines studied by Stéphane de Gérando, drawing us into a placeless abyss.

Karan Salajegheh, Iranian composer, co-creator with Behjat Kariman and Stéphane de Gérando of the monumental projection of *The Labyrinth of Time* on the Azadi Tower in Tehran

Verticale Mémoire, an electroacoustic cycle from *The Labyrinth of Time*, seems impossible to imagine—and therefore to anticipate—at every moment. We experience joy in listening through the gradual discovery of the work, via a dual sensation of non-relation and coherence. The listener senses that this work belongs to a much larger whole. There is a coexistence between the cosmos and grains of space-time from which this cosmos expands. We lose a purely chronological reading of events, much like our life-images, which include both projection and reflection of memory at every moment of existence.

Ling Chen Lylia Fang, Taiwanese flutist

Listening to *Verticale Mémoire* by Stéphane de Gérando, one perceives a coherence that runs through both the entirety of the work and each independent piece (the LDT satellites), all coexisting within a great unity. Titles are evocative, such as *Theatre of the Labyrinth*, suggesting a visual sensation of being in a theater, or *Day of the Dead*, with its suspended, frozen time... In *Horizon chaotique*, the constantly varied timbres of the singer create the impression of a vocal movement where anything is possible: gestural temporal sounds, expression of a state, of a chaotic phenomenon. The voices and instrumental sound in *La mique* trace independent linear movements, with or without direction, in progression; each part's monologue becomes, at the moment of interaction between instrument and voice, a conversation, a dialogue. More broadly, in this work, voices combine with technological fluidity, diverse emotions, and sensitivity... listening, feeling, perceiving until gradually discovering ideas and messages... “so let's enjoy the music...”—setting off on a musical journey, imagining...

Kaori Tsustsui, Japanese composer

From 2014 to 2021, I had the opportunity to hear and feel *The Labyrinth of Time* (concerts–lectures). This monumental work is in constant transformation, development, and evolution. Time, space, infinite mobility, sensitivities, transparency, anxiety... as soon as I touch the sound of *Verticale Mémoire*, I am “trapped”: I travel through time and space, descending into the Labyrinth...

Liburn Jupoli, composer and researcher from Kosovo (Albania), political advisor at the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports of Kosovo, Director of UBT-CMMDPM Center for Modern Music, Production and Digital Management

Verticale Mémoire by Stéphane de Gérando is filled with bursts of color and breath; his detailed and profound understanding of timbre, from both acoustic and digital perspectives, merges with a musical awareness equivalent to a hybrid real and virtual world. The work represents both a continuation of 20th–21st century traditions, with pioneering creators such as Edgard Varèse, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Pierre Boulez, Alain Bancquart, and a new approach to creation—a visceral and rich approach, sensorially realized toward a universal connection between the mind and contemporary humanistic developments. Beyond a very clear and powerful conceptual method, the work demonstrates the composer's ability to imagine, synthesize, and de-synthesize a musical world. The multidisciplinary nature of *The Labyrinth of Time* also has pedagogical value, serving as an example of an “integral” approach to the arts. Stéphane de Gérando's pedagogical practice includes this holistic aspect, where the arts are seen as a unified expression of humanity, existing on separate planes yet coexisting and contributing as a single body with a common source. With its wide range of expressive qualities, complex structures, constantly shifting states, and multitude of vertical and horizontal musical planes, *Verticale Mémoire* is a fascinating and beautiful work to discover.