

Musique concrete

Musique concrete, choose one of its main artists, analyse their workflow, technology, and what was happening historically and socially back then?

Pierre Schaeffer, the “initiator” of musique concrete, was a French composer and a radio engineer for France during the second world war, whose “purpose was to find a breach in the fortress of musical tradition”¹. Schaeffer’s first piece that could be classed as musique concrete was “Études de bruit”, which has sounds of trains on tracks, whistles but mainly all sounds in his pieces are distorted/muffled due to the microphone quality which gives it an unintentional feeling of weariness. In Schaeffer’s diary, it is revealed that his workflow consists of creating different sounds using objects like “percussion[s], prepared pianos and sounds from the human body onto shellac locked grooves”². Comparing his workflow to current times, his way of recording was similar due to using a microphone and gathering sounds via that method. The only difference would be that Schaeffer had to record on vinyl and tape compared to modern times using digital methods. At that time, Schaeffer did not have the technology we currently have, making it difficult to record and mix. Even so, he still was able to create pieces of music and create the genre of musique concrete. Historically, Schaeffer’s pieces were classed as “classical”³ titles compared to now which are classed as soundscape and of course Musique concrete. Socially, Schaeffer was well respected due to his affiliation with French radio, but his pieces were regarded as classical. To conclude, Pierre Schaeffer was the creator of musique concrete who recorded different ambient sounds. His workflow was similar but only different due to the technology difference. His music was underrated due to it being peculiar. He had experience in sound from his job being a radio engineer. His creation inspired many off branch genres. In the end, Pierre Schaeffer was a pioneer for soundscape and musique concrete.

¹ Young, R., 2022. *Pierre Schaeffer and the Birth of Musique Concrète*. [online] Frieze.com. Available at: <<https://www.frieze.com/article/music-22>> [Accessed 13 October 2022].

² Young, R., 2022. *Pierre Schaeffer and the Birth of Musique Concrète*. [online] Frieze.com. Available at: <<https://www.frieze.com/article/music-22>> [Accessed 13 October 2022].

³ Young, R., 2022. *Pierre Schaeffer and the Birth of Musique Concrète*. [online] Frieze.com. Available at: <<https://www.frieze.com/article/music-22>> [Accessed 13 October 2022].