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The saxophone music of Thierry Escaich

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THE SAXOPHONE MUSIC OF THIERRY ESCAICH

by

John Cummins

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the
Doctor of Musical Arts
degree in Music in the
Graduate College of
The University of Iowa

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Thesis Supervisor: Professor Kenneth Tse

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PUBLIC ABSTRACT

Thierry Escaich (b. 1965) is one of the most renowned French musicians in the contemporary music field, where he enjoys an international career as a composer, organist, improviser, and teacher. Educated in the unique curriculum of the organ class at the Paris Conservatory, Escaich's musical output reveals mastery of a traditional musical language combined with a singular artistic voice. While saxophonists in France frequently perform his works, those elsewhere, and especially in the United States, have comparably little awareness and appreciation of him: very few Americans have recorded any of his music, and none have published even a superficial analysis of his works. This lack of attention is especially unfortunate for a composer of Escaich's quality. Despite his place as one of France's leading composers, many serious saxophonists outside of France know little about him or his music.

This recording project and accompanying paper are meant to promote Escaich's music and serve as resources primarily for saxophonists, but also for listeners of any background interested in Escaich. This project contains the first complete recording of all of Escaich's substantial music featuring the saxophone, as well as an historical and analytical investigation of his compositional language and style. Significant original research lends insight into the recorded saxophone works compiled here, most notably through an interview with Escaich, a transcription of which is available in an appendix.

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INTRODUCTION

A Brief Account of the Development of French Saxophone Repertoire

The saxophone, though it was invented significantly later than the other standard woodwinds, has nevertheless been establishing its place among concert instruments with increasing success, especially in the last several decades. In the nineteenth century, the saxophone found its first home in French military bands and universities, and a few composers, such as Jean-Baptiste Singelée and Jules Demersseman, wrote original music for this new instrument.¹ The repertoire truly began to blossom in the 1930s when Marcel Mule and Sigurd Rascher gained renown as virtuoso performers and began commissioning new works. While these new compositions were essential in creating a body of literature for the saxophone, most of the pieces from that time are written in a light, neoclassical style. Since then, the saxophone repertoire has grown exponentially as the popularity of the instrument has spread around the world. While most composers of the early 1930s and 1940s wrote for the saxophone just as they would for any other woodwind instrument, since about 1970 composers have been exploring more of its possibilities. Consequently, contemporary saxophone works, often serious in nature, capitalize on the saxophone's natural strengths of virtuosity, power, and resonant tone.

Jean-Marie Londeix, a French saxophonist and influential teacher at the Bordeaux Conservatory in the second half of the twentieth century, worked tirelessly to expand the saxophone's repertoire. Through his commissioning of modernist French and international composers, Londeix helped initiate tremendous development in the saxophone repertoire, both in terms of the sheer number of pieces and their stylistic diversity. The watershed moment of this modernization of the saxophone repertoire occurred in 1970 when Londeix's premiere performance of Edison Denisov's *Sonate* for Alto Saxophone and Piano was met with rapturous

¹ Thomas Liley, "The Repertoire Heritage," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Saxophone*, ed. Richard Ingham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 52.

enthusiasm at the World Saxophone Congress in Chicago.² Denisov's *Sonate* was decidedly avant-garde at the time in its serial compositional language, frequent use of extended techniques (e.g., quarter tones, multiphonics, glissandi), great rhythmic complexity, and extremely virtuosic writing in general. This sonata quickly gained a place in the permanent repertoire and helped establish Londeix as the leading proponent of modernist music for the saxophone. He worked closely with other composers throughout the rest of his career and especially promoted the works of Bordelais composers Christian Lauba, François Rossé, and Etienne Rolin, whose modernist works entered the standard repertoire and are still widely played today. These works include Lauba's now cornerstone *Etudes* for solo saxophone, Rossé's *Le Frêne Égaré*, *Silence for a Disturbed Yell*, and *Lobuk Constrictor*, and Rolin's *Aphorismes*.³ Because Londeix fostered an unusually diverse studio of international saxophone students, including many from the U.S., this modernist literature spread rapidly and has become a staple of the saxophone repertoire: works by Lauba, Rossé, and Rolin, along with those by spectral French composers like Gérard Grisey, now frequently appear on the repertoire lists of saxophone professors around the world, including those in the U.S.⁴ Jean-Michel Goury, a former student of Londeix, carries on this tradition today at the Conservatoire National de Musique de Boulogne-Billancourt (Paris), where he champions this repertoire, teaching it to an international saxophone class that regularly includes American students.

While Londeix, Goury, and other avant-garde enthusiasts' teaching, commissioning, and performing have undoubtedly expanded the saxophone's repertoire and helped establish a place for the saxophone in contemporary music, their contributions, though critical, are necessarily

² James Umble, *Jean-Marie Londeix: Master of the Modern Saxophone* (Cherry Hill, NJ: Roncorp, 2000), 102.

³ Jean-Marie Londeix, *A Comprehensive Guide to the Saxophone Repertoire: 1844-2003* (Cherry Hill, NJ: Roncorp, 2003), 220, 320-323.

⁴ Po-Yuan Ku, "Four Recitals and an Essay: Christian Lauba and His Saxophone Etudes: From an Historical Perspective," (DMA thesis, University of Alberta, 2009), 50-54.

limited by their own philosophies about the appropriate development of the saxophone's repertoire. Both favor and actively seek out composers who write in a decidedly esoteric style, and this style is now well represented in saxophone repertoire. However, contemporary composers who exhibit more traditional language are sometimes overlooked, especially by those importing French saxophone music. Thierry Escaich is perhaps the most significant living French composer to fall into this category. Escaich's saxophone music enjoys some popularity in France, but within limited circles, and the majority of his pieces have only been recorded by saxophonists who studied at the Paris Conservatory, where Escaich serves on the faculty. Until recently, international students have comprised a significantly smaller percentage of the saxophone class at the Paris Conservatory when compared to those of Bordeaux or Bolounges-Billancourt. The Paris saxophone class has also seen a dearth of American students in recent decades, which helps account for Escaich's relative obscurity in the U.S. In the absence of figures like Londeix or Goury to champion Escaich's saxophone music, this project provides American saxophonists with a practical resource where they can hear Escaich's most important works for their instrument and learn about his compositional language so that they can intelligently contextualize his contributions to our literature.

Statement of Purpose

The main purpose of this project is to create a resource about Thierry Escaich for saxophonists outside of France, particularly those living in the United States. Very few Americans have recorded any of his music, and none have published even a superficial analysis of his works; Escaich's music therefore enjoys little prominence in the repertoires of American saxophonists, and his compositional language is not well understood or often even considered. This lack of familiarity is especially unfortunate for a composer of Escaich's stature: despite his place as one of France's leading composers of contemporary music and his growing international reputation, many serious American saxophonists know little about him or his music.

This project includes recordings of all of Escaich's substantial music that features the saxophone and a representative piece from his pedagogical works—a compilation that provides an efficient way to become familiar with Escaich's music for saxophone. Additionally, the accompanying scholarship provides historical, analytical, and English-language research that will allow performers to better understand his music and to contextualize it within the vast array of styles represented in contemporary saxophone literature. The ultimate goal of this project is for Escaich's music to become standard literature in the United States as more saxophonists become aware of it and Escaich's brilliance as a composer.

Study of Escaich's compositional language is a key part of this project. Escaich's style is highly personal and diverse, but at the same time it consistently shows traits that mark it as part of the compositional tradition of French organist-composers that, prior to Escaich, was largely disconnected from the saxophone. This tradition stretches back for centuries and includes composers such as César Franck, Camille-Saint Saëns, Charles-Marie Widor, Marcel Dupré, Olivier Messiaen, and Maurice Duruflé. Though all of these composers thrived after the invention of the saxophone (ca. 1840), none of them wrote for the instrument. Therefore,

Escaich's music for saxophone adds significantly to the stylistic breadth of the instrument's repertoire. Calling attention to the unique place Escaich occupies in the saxophone literature and clearly explaining the elements and historical influences of Escaich's style will hopefully inspire American saxophonists to engage with an unfamiliar musical language with new ears, and eventually foster a better understanding of musical tradition.

Limitations

This study will be limited to Escaich's substantial works that treat the saxophone as a soloist or a featured member of a small chamber music setting: *Trois Intermezzi*, *Le Chant des Ténèbres*, *Lutte*, *Le Bal*, and *Phantasia Antiqua*. Escaich's septet for mixed instruments, *Antiennes Oubliées*, is not included in this study because the saxophone is just one of seven instruments and is thus not particularly featured. Additionally, only one pedagogical work is covered here: *Tango Virtuoso*, rather than the five total in his catalogue.

The Composer

A native of France, Thierry Escaich (b. 1965) maintains a busy career as an organist, composer, improviser, and teacher.

As a composer, Escaich employs traditional media in novel ways to create a highly personal style. He draws his influences from a wide variety of places, but most frequently from sacred and dance music. His compositions have been programmed and performed by leading musicians around the world, and he enjoys an esteemed position in Parisian musical circles as well as an international reputation as a leading contemporary composer.

As a performer, Escaich appears in a variety of settings. He regularly improvises accompaniments to silent films, performs with orchestras such as the Berlin Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Cincinnati Symphony, and the *Orchestre de Paris*, presents solo recitals

in the world's most prominent organ venues, and acts as one of the titular organists at St. Etienne-du-Mont in Paris.

In the global musical landscape, this dual career as a performer and composer marks Escaich as a rarity. Add in his brilliance as an improviser, and Escaich begins to appear as a musical unicorn: a one-of-a-kind savant to whom everything comes naturally. While Escaich undoubtedly possesses great native aptitude for music, it is not natural talent alone that made him the complete musician he is today. As a student at the Paris Conservatory, Escaich submitted his natural gifts for sculpting in the unique curriculum of Parisian organists, one that has been consistent in developing such musical fluency for well over 150 years. Knowledge of the French organ tradition helps immensely in understanding and appreciating Escaich's musical life.

THE FRENCH ORGAN TRADITION

Over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a school of organ performance and composition emerged and flourished in France. Many members of this school are remembered in written history as composers, performers, conductors, and scholars: Olivier Messiaen, César Franck, and Camille Saint-Saëns are among those whose fame has spread beyond organist circles. That such luminaries of French musical history share an instrument is no accident—though their combined lifetimes stretch over 150 years, all of them developed their musicianship in a common system: the stunningly rigorous curriculum of the Paris Conservatory’s organ class. Not content in developing competent keyboard executants, the leaders of the French organ school aspired to train complete musicians who could perform written repertoire, compose original music, and fluently improvise in multiple styles.

Historical Background

The organ class at the Paris Conservatory can be traced to the birth of the Conservatory itself in 1795, which occurred amid the political and social upheaval of the French Revolution. The sweeping changes of this revolution drastically affected the direction of music in the Church, the primary venue for the organist’s craft, and music education throughout the country.

Between 1789 and 1801, the relationship between France’s government and the Catholic Church shifted radically during tumultuous struggles for political power. After the monarchy was overthrown, a series of revolutionary governments sought harsh reductions in the Church’s power, wealth, and influence before eventually trying to completely excise Christianity from France. This campaign was violent and extensive: clergy were uniformly stripped of their privileges and sometimes executed; church property, including many organs, was either seized or

destroyed; and fundamental societal and religious foundations, such as the seven-day week, the Mass, and religious holidays, were replaced by secular equivalents.⁵

In 1809, Guillaume Lasceux, a prominent Revolutionary-era organist, remarked in his *Essai théorique* that the art of organ playing was disappearing from France.⁶ Even though Catholicism had been reinstated as the official state religion in 1801, there was scarcely any incentive to pursue a career as an organist given its uncertain future, low pay, and the scarcity of instruments to play and students to teach. Even the most prominent organists had to hold multiple church positions to make a living.⁷ Though the future must have appeared grim at the time, the seeds of a brighter future were being planted.

The Paris Conservatory began as a training ground for musicians serving the revolutionary governments. These governments were keen on developing a force of musicians for use in their military and at civic festivals. This desire resulted in the creation of a school for military musicians in 1793, which later grew into a state-funded, national conservatory of music.⁸ Throughout the nineteenth century, the initial goals of the Paris Conservatory faded, and it became strictly an institution that provided an education in music. Students were evaluated in semester examinations and at year-end, public competitions, which were often reviewed by the musical press. A first prize at the annual competitions signified completion of a course, brought great prestige, and opened many doors in the larger professional music world. Lesser prizes brought significantly less recognition and often prompted study for an additional year. As the Conservatory gained prominence as the country's elite musical training ground, French music

⁵ Nigel Aston, *Religion and Revolution in France, 1780-1804* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 179-193.

⁶ Orpha Ocshe, *Organists and Organ Playing in Nineteenth-Century France and Belgium* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994), 18.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

⁸ D. Kern Holoman, "The Paris Conservatoire in the Nineteenth Century," in *Oxford Handbooks Online*, April 2015, accessed October 21, 2018, <http://www.oxfordhandbooksonline.com>, 5-6.

education became centralized in a way that was unprecedented for a large country: the Conservatory published methods of instruction, collected a comprehensive music library, and set national standards for music instruction.⁹ In earlier years, choir schools and private instruction were the main avenues for learning music. In the nineteenth century, however, all roads increasingly led to Paris for the ambitious musician.

The Paris Conservatory played an especially large role in the recovery and eventual flowering of the organ profession in France after the Revolution. Though the organ class struggled initially (it was even suspended from 1802-19), an organ professorship was one of the original thirty granted to the school in 1795. Aside from the educational opportunity this presented for young organ students, this position gave the organ profession a measure of recognition it badly needed: it placed the organ in a common environment with other branches of professional music, in view of the musical press at the year-end competitions and out of its usual isolation within the Church. After some initial stumbles, the organ class began to grow when a new organ was installed and a new organ professor, François Benoist, appointed in 1819.¹⁰

As Benoist faced into the challenge of bringing the organ class up to Conservatory standards, he implemented a curriculum focused on fluency in improvisation. As almost all music played by the organist during a Mass was improvised, this focus on extemporaneous playing was natural preparation for a professional organ career. Records from 1834 show two requirements for the year-end competition in organ: (1) an improvised four-part accompaniment of a given plainchant melody, and (2) an improvised fugue in four parts on a given theme. In 1843, a third requirement was added: the improvisation of a free piece on a given theme. This addition ensured that graduates were equipped to not only accompany chants and improvise

⁹ Holoman, 14.

¹⁰ Ocshe, 147-148.

fugues, but also to perform the many improvised pieces that were a part of each Office liturgy.¹¹ Though Benoist was not a virtuoso by the standards of later leaders of the French organ school, by all accounts he was a capable teacher who established a quality program at the Conservatory in the trying circumstances of post-Revolutionary France.

As the organ class at the Paris Conservatory developed its reputation, advances in organ construction were fundamentally changing the capabilities of the instrument. While several organ builders contributed to this advancement, none were more influential than Aristide Cavallé-Coll. Cavallé-Coll capitalized on his circumstances in the mid-nineteenth century: there was demand from the Church for new organs following the decimation of its instruments during the French Revolution, and there was a burgeoning public fascination with feats of mechanical genius due to the ongoing Industrial Revolution. Cavallé-Coll's breakthrough occurred when he won the bid for a new organ at St. Denis, the royal abbey of France.¹² Finished in 1841, the St. Denis organ was hailed as the "largest and most complete organ" in France and solidified Cavallé-Coll's reputation.¹³ For the next several decades, Cavallé-Coll was in-demand as one of the world's most innovative and admired organ builders, and his firm was hired throughout France, in several countries in Europe, and even in South America, where he outfitted dozens of churches with organs of unprecedented size, beauty, and mechanical capability.

The presence and reputation of French organists in the national and international music scene increased remarkably between 1850 and 1900 as musical culture moved in new directions. As people became aware of the new organs throughout Paris, the public showed great curiosity in hearing the capabilities of these new, symphonic instruments. The traditional organ

¹¹ Ocshe, 149-151.

¹² Fenner Douglass, *Cavallé-Coll and the French Romantic Tradition* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 10-11.

¹³ *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris* 8, 415, quoted in Ocshe, 35.

inauguration—a demonstration of a newly-built or renovated organ’s quality and specifications for a committee of experts—grew to include one or two full recitals by the most famous virtuosos of the time for increasingly large and curious audiences. Performers with a knack for showmanship (e.g., Louis Lefébure-Wély) delighted listeners by designing improvisations to show each organ’s particular resources of dynamics, registration, and other effects. These inaugurations were the first public performance setting for organists outside of the liturgy, a crucial step in widening organists’ exposure beyond that of Church servants.¹⁴ This exposure was further widened in 1878 when Cavallé-Coll was commissioned to build a magnificent organ for the enormous concert hall of the Trocadéro Palace, the site of that year’s World’s Fair. Seating more than 5,000 people, this concert hall, the first public, secular organ venue in France, hosted a wildly successful series of organ recitals each year for much of the late nineteenth century.¹⁵ These performances primarily featured Alexandre Guilmant and Eugène Gigout, two of the most distinguished virtuosos of the time, performing a mixture of improvisations and organ literature to audiences that gradually reached capacity. While vocal and instrumental music was interspersed among the organ works to provide variety, these concerts proved that the organ could attract large audiences, even if some of those in attendance, especially at the performances during the World’s Fair, stopped by only to observe the general spectacle.¹⁶ Fueled by this success and their increasing renown, organists such as Guilmant, Gigout, and Widor began performing all across Europe. By the end of the nineteenth century, French organists had established a place for themselves as virtuosos worthy of attention in both religious and secular settings, a development that brought great prestige to the French organ tradition.

¹⁴ Ocshe, 11, 48-50.

¹⁵ Rollin Smith, “The Organ of the Trocadéro and Its Players,” in *French Organ Music from the Revolution to Franck and Widor*, ed. Lawrence Archbold and William J. Peterson (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1995), 300-305.

¹⁶ Ocshe, 94-97.

As the top organ performers were gaining increased acclaim and exposure, performance standards rose for the Conservatory organ class. Beginning in 1852, a fourth requirement—a memorized performance of a fugue with pedal—was added to the year-end competition for organists. This marked the first time that composed repertoire received official recognition in a Conservatory organist’s education.¹⁷ When César Franck succeeded Benoist as organ professor in 1872, he broadened this requirement to simply a memorized “classic piece.” While fugues by J. S. Bach were popular choices before and after this change, his other compositional forms, such as preludes, toccatas, and chorales, were included after 1872 along with works by other composers, such as Mendelssohn, Franck, Handel, and Schumann.¹⁸ This new emphasis on repertoire was almost certainly due to the influence of Jacques-Nicolas Lemmens, a Belgian organist and composer who, beginning in 1852, made waves in a series of Parisian concerts in which he stunned audiences with his fluid manual technique and brilliant pedaling. Supported by Cavallé-Coll, Lemmens made many trips to France during his career, and his frequent performances of J. S. Bach’s organ works were important in spreading the influence of this repertoire. Several of the most successful French organists of the late nineteenth century studied with Lemmens in Brussels, including Guilmant and Widor. When these two served as professors of organ at the Paris Conservatory in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they both taught technical development from Lemmens’s treatise *Ecole d’Orgue*, demanded unprecedented technical precision in the performance of repertoire, and gave Bach’s music an esteemed status in the curriculum.¹⁹ By the twentieth century, the organ class at the Paris Conservatory had been elevated from Benoist’s early handful of students struggling to achieve competence as church servants to an extremely competitive and prestigious class of musicians, who, under the guidance

¹⁷ Ocshe, 149.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 155.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 186.

of their world-renowned professors, sought a pathway to the pinnacle of artistic expression in the performance of repertoire, improvisation, and composition, both inside and outside the Church.

The potential of the French method of organ training was perhaps no more thoroughly realized than in the career of Marcel Dupré (1886-1971), who was called “the Liszt of the organ” by Olivier Messiaen.²⁰ Renowned throughout his life for his remarkable discipline, memory, and general musical prowess, Dupré committed himself early to meeting the now-lofty standards of a professional French organist. As a result, he shined in his time at the Conservatory, creating a stir among students and faculty alike with his preternatural skill in technique, improvisation, and composition: Dupré left the Conservatory with several first prizes and the *Prix de Rome*.

Exuding the status of a chosen one, Dupré made a splash in 1920 with an incredible feat: the memorized performance of J. S. Bach’s complete organ works, a task he completed over the course of ten recitals—one each week during late winter and early spring.²¹ As his reputation grew, Dupré performed relentlessly on increasingly ambitious international tours that took him throughout the United States, Africa, Australia, and Europe. He attracted audiences of unprecedented size for an organist, astonishing his listeners with remarkable extemporaneous displays, such as improvising a complete symphony in four movements based on themes submitted by the audience.²² With his virtuoso status well-established through his touring in the early 1920s, Dupré became the organ professor at the Paris Conservatory in 1926 and later succeeded his former teacher, Widor, as titular organist at St. Sulpice in 1934. During this time and throughout his career, Dupré continued to compose, and though his renown as a composer has never matched that as a performer, several of his works have maintained a firm place in the

²⁰ Olivier Messiaen, “Hommage à Marcel Dupré,” *Le Courrier Musical de France* 35 (1971): 113.

²¹ Michael Murray, *Marcel Dupré: The Work of a Master Organist* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1985), 65.

²² Marcel Dupré, *Cours Complet d’Improvisation à l’Orgue*, Vol. 2, trans. John Fenstermaker (Paris: Alphonse Leduc, 1973), i.

standard organ repertoire. In these ways, Dupré's career fulfilled all of Widor's dreams for his prize pupil: he dazzled audiences internationally as a virtuoso, presided at Cavallé-Coll's grandest organ at St. Sulpice, added original compositions to the canon of French organ repertoire, and passed on the tradition of his forebears as organ professor at the Paris Conservatory. To Widor, Dupré was the consummation of the French school of organ playing—all of its potential distilled and realized in a single musician.²³

From the second half of the twentieth century and to the present day, the same tradition of organ training in France has remained, brought forward by champions of new generations: Jean Langlais, Jehan Alain, Marie-Claire Alain, Jeanne Demessieux, Maurice and Marie-Madeleine Duruflé, Olivier Messiaen, and Daniel Roth, among others. While the core tenets of the French school remain firmly intact, organ instruction has undoubtedly changed with the times, mirroring the societal and economic shifts towards specialization that mark the information age. At the Paris Conservatory in 1971, Rolande Falcinelli—who served as organ professor from 1954-87—split the organ class into two, requiring students to study execution and improvisation separately.²⁴ While Falcinelli taught both classes during her tenure, now organ students study repertoire with Olivier Latry and Michel Bouvard and improvisation with multiple professors, including Thierry Escaich.²⁵ The improvisation classes include traditional forms such as prelude and fugue, theme and variations, and symphony movements, but now also incorporate free improvisation, an addition that provides students a broader base of skills more flexible in secular settings.²⁶ Since the Catholic Church in France is struggling and not the source of employment that it once was, organists today more frequently improvise outside the

²³ Murray, *Marcel Dupré*, 65-66.

²⁴ Craig Cramer, Notes for *The Pièces de Concours from the Paris Conservatory* (Arkay Records AR6146, 1995), CD.

²⁵ Olivier Latry, conversation with the author, October 27, 2017.

²⁶ Thierry Escaich, conversation with the author, July 15, 2018.

Church by accompanying silent films or other media, for example.²⁷ Despite these changes, the French organ school, still exemplified at the Paris Conservatory, has retained its mission of creating complete musicians—performers, improvisers, and composers—and graduates like Escaich are a testament to its power and efficacy.

The French Organ Tradition and the Saxophone

As the French organ tradition grew and eventually flowered in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it gained global renown not only for its famous virtuosos, but also for the number and quality of composers it produced. Wallace Goodrich, an American organist who studied in Paris with Widor in the 1890s, observed this phenomenon:

In no other country has the organ achieved so high a position of honor among musicians, or have so many of the greatest contemporary composers interested themselves in the organ, both as executants and as writers of organ music. I refer particularly to composers of established reputation and recognized pre-eminence in all forms of music: orchestral, instrumental, and choral.²⁸

This link between organ-playing and composition was present from the beginning of the Paris Conservatory's organ class: Benoist started, and his successors continued, a class that focused on music-making as a whole, teaching students to become fluent at the keyboard while mastering principles of musical form and style. This attitude about the organ class was so ingrained that in 1850, when the Conservatory revised its general rules, it placed the organ class in the same category of instruction as harmony and composition. It is thus no wonder that, throughout its history, the organ class has trained organists into composers and vice versa. Franck himself turned the organ class into a *de facto* course in composition, and his teaching was so revered that, according to Charles Tournemire, "fugitives from harmony, fugue and composition classes"

²⁷ Latory, conversation with the author, October 27, 2017.

²⁸ Wallace Goodrich, *The Organ in France* (Boston: The Boston Music Co., 1917), xi.

secretly began auditing his organ class.²⁹ While the curricular emphases have varied from teacher to teacher, the link between composition and organ-playing remained strong at the Conservatory throughout the twentieth century. Table 1 shows some of the most well-known composers who learned from Conservatory organ teachers.

Table 1. Well-Known Composers and Their Conservatory Organ Teachers

Conservatory Organ Teacher	Pupils
François Benoist	Georges Bizet Léo Delibes César Franck Jules Massenet Camille Saint-Saëns
César Franck	Ernest Chausson Claude Debussy (reportedly) Vincent d'Indy Gabriel Pierné Charles Tournemire Louis Vierne
Charles-Marie Widor (includes students from his composition class)	Marcel Dupré Arthur Honegger Darius Milhaud Charles Tournemire Edgard Varèse Louis Vierne
Alexandre Guilmant	Nadia Boulanger Marcel Dupré
Eugène Gigout	Maurice Duruflé André Marchal
Marcel Dupré	Jehan Alain Pierre Cochereau Jeanne Demessieux Jean Guillou Jean Langlais Gaston Litaize Olivier Messiaen

²⁹ Charles Tournemire, "La Classe d'orgue du Conservatoire de Paris," in *Le Monde musical* 41 (1930): 141-142, quoted in Ocshe, 159.

While it is clear that Parisian organists were highly effective in training the next generation's composers, it is equally clear that these composers rarely wrote for the saxophone. Table 2 summarizes the notable contributions of Conservatory-trained French organists to the saxophone's solo and chamber repertoire.

Table 2. Contributions of Paris Conservatory-Trained Organist-Composers to the Saxophone Repertoire

Composer	Contribution to Saxophone Repertoire
Vincent d'Indy	<i>Choral Varié</i> , op. 55 (1905) – Asx/Orch
Gabriel Pierné	<i>Introduction et Variations sur un Ronde Populaire</i> (1937) – Saxophone Quartet
Fernande Decruck	<i>Chant Lyrique</i> , op. 69 (1932) – Asx/Pno <i>Pièces Françaises</i> (1943) – Asx/Pno <i>Sonata</i> (1944) – Asx/Pno Various short pieces

Given the distinguished history of great composers from the Conservatory organ tradition, it is unfortunate, even puzzling, that saxophonists have been unable to procure more quality compositions from this branch of musicians. However, Thierry Escaich's contributions to the saxophone repertoire, in their substance, number, and variety, have emphatically reversed this trend. Saxophonists are indeed fortunate that Escaich has embraced their instrument like so few of his predecessors in the French organ tradition.

THIERRY ESCAICH: THE COMPOSER AND HIS MUSIC

Biographical Sketch

A composer, organist, and improviser, Thierry Escaich has cultivated a musical career that is in some ways traditional and in others quite unusual. As did his forebears in the French organ tradition, Escaich holds a title position as organist at a prominent Catholic church in Paris and displays his mastery of music in traditional ways: he improvises in both strict and free forms, performs masterworks of the organ repertoire, and composes original music for his instrument. However, he also plays jazz, improvises for silent films, and writes music for the ballet, and his compositions reveal an affinity for the waltz, the tango, and even pop music. This diversity of interests and activity reflects Escaich's insatiable musical curiosity and the depth of his inner musical resources, a condition that has allowed him to build an uncommonly rich and diverse career.

Escaich's musical aptitude and knack for improvisation revealed themselves early. As a child in Rosny-sous-Bois, an eastern suburb of Paris, he was raised by non-musical parents but was encouraged to pursue his obvious talent for music from an early age. The accordion was his first instrument, and he quickly became familiar with the various styles of tango, waltz, and other popular forms traditionally played on the instrument. Soon his curiosity spread to other instruments, including the organ at the local Catholic church, Ste. Geneviève at Rosny-sous-Bois: Escaich's parents would often take him to visit the church so that he could play the instrument. He experimented with improvisation from the start, exploring the instrument's capabilities on his own.³⁰ After this initial period of self-instruction and preliminary training at the conservatories of Rosny-sous-Bois and Montreuil, Escaich entered the Paris Conservatory in 1983, where he excelled, winning eight first prizes at the year-end competitions, including those

³⁰ Thierry Escaich, interview by the author, Paris, February 12, 2018. See Appendix A for transcript.

in harmony, counterpoint, fugue, improvisation, organ, analysis, composition, and orchestration.³¹ Clearly possessing preternatural musical facility, Escaich emerged as a composer and performer outside the walls of the Conservatory during and immediately after his time as a student: among many honors, he won first prize in the André Jolivet Composition Competition with his *Antiennes Oubliées* in 1989, and in 1991 he won first prize in improvisation at the Strasbourg International Organ Competition. Escaich joined the faculty of the Paris Conservatory in 1992, just two years after his graduation, and he has been teaching composition and improvisation there ever since. Escaich's performing and composing careers have continued to expand until the present day: he now keeps a busy schedule that includes frequent commissions for original compositions from a variety of international ensembles, performances as an organist in concert and liturgical settings, improvisation for silent films, teaching at the Paris Conservatory, and adjudicating organ competitions.

Escaich's catalogue contains well over 100 works in a variety of genres and forms, including opera, ballet, symphonic music, chamber music, concertos, instrumental pieces, vocal music, and soundtracks. His music is regularly performed by leading orchestras in Europe and North America and by musicians such as Lisa Batiashvili, François Leleux, Valery Gergiev, Paavo Järvi, Alan Gilbert, Alain Altinoglu, Louis Langrée, Renaud and Gautier Capuçon, Emmanuelle Bertrand, and Paul Meyer. Escaich's compositions for his primary instrument, the organ, hold a special place in his oeuvre: his solo pieces, chamber works, concertos, and symphonic poems that include the organ are played widely, and premiering these works has provided Escaich with many opportunities to perform with orchestras of international profile.

In addition to premiering his own works, Escaich performs as an organist in a variety of other settings. He regularly improvises accompaniments to silent films such as *Phantom of the*

³¹ Bernard Desgraupes, "Escaich, Thierry," last modified February 13, 2015, accessed October 23, 2018, http://www.musicologie.org/Biographies/e/escaich_thierry.html.

Opera, performs classical masterworks with orchestras such as the Berlin Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Cincinnati Symphony, and the *Orchestre de Paris*, presents solo recitals in the world's most prominent organ venues, including Royal Albert Hall in London and Mariinsky Theater in St. Petersburg, and acts as one of two titular organists at St. Etienne-du-Mont in Paris, where he succeeded the legendary Maurice Duruflé. In all of these capacities, Escaich demonstrates the remarkable musical fluency that has resulted from his own natural talent and his comprehensive education at the Paris Conservatory.

Escaich's multifaceted career has led to a bevy of awards and recognition, which include four *Victoires de la Musique* Awards (France's highest honor for a composer of classical music), residencies with the *Orchestre National de Lyon*, *Orchestre National de Lille*, and the Paris Chamber Orchestra, an election in 2013 to the *Académie des Beaux-Arts of the Institut de France*, and a designation as the featured composer at Radio France's 2018 *Festival Présences*, to name a few.^{32 33}

Compositional Language

Escaich's many professional musical roles—interpreter, improviser, composer—rely on one another in an interplay that forms the source of his creative energy, and it is from this source that he shapes his compositions. In a practical sense, the multifaceted nature of Escaich's career necessitates a scattered approach to composing: because he is constantly shifting roles due to his numerous professional obligations, he simply cannot give dedicated time to any one of them on their own. Instead, they perpetually coexist, and Escaich uses insight from each to stoke his artistic imagination. Escaich frequently borrows a phrase from German philosopher Friedrich

³² Thierry Escaich, "A unique figure in contemporary music," accessed October 25, 2018, <http://www.escaich.org/en/blog/bio/biography.html>.

³³ Gérard Billaudot, Editeur, "Thierry Escaich," accessed October 21, 2018, <https://www.billaudot.com/en/composer.php?p=Thierry&n=Escaich>.

Nietzsche to explain this process, saying that when he composes, he is “shap[ing] his internal chaos.”³⁴ ³⁵ Escaich elaborates:

Actually, the music flows around my head. . . It goes on for a while, while I’m with [an] orchestra, while I’m teaching, it continues to unfold, and when I have time at home, I put it on paper. . . I compose in a way that is not at all organized, because I leave the music alone and it organizes itself—in spite of me, throughout the day.³⁶

In another instance, Escaich describes this phenomenon further:

For me, composing is being alive. . . If, apparently, I compose in a rather disordered way, between my classes, my travels, and my concerts, the thread of what I want to express remains tense, and I take advantage of the least moment of freedom to put it on paper. Everything I do outside feeds this flow that takes shape mentally and is organized gradually until the final outcome.³⁷

In both of these instances, Escaich highlights the fact that the compositional process is for him nearly a kind of transcription: when he has a moment of time, he distills on paper the ideas that have been forming in his mind throughout the day. While any type of contact with music can spur this creative instinct, improvisation especially keeps him in touch with this part of himself: “The practice of improvisation permits me to stay in tune with [my] outpouring of ideas and to try to keep in my written work a certain clarity, a certain spontaneity, despite the structural complexity of music and the months it takes to write it.”³⁸

Escaich’s “internal chaos” reflects the extensive knowledge of music he gained during his formal education, but it also shows the influences of his childhood, when he absorbed popular styles as a young accordionist and keyboard player. His training as an organist is certainly

³⁴ Thierry Escaich, interview by Christian Wasselin, printed in *Thierry Escaich: Un Portrait*, official program of Radio France’s *Festival Présences 2018*, October 5, 2017, 16.

³⁵ Thierry Escaich, interview by Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Cincinnati, OH, trans. Maria Miller, accessed October 23, 2018, <http://cincinnatisymphony.org/stories/fanfare-cincinnati-articles/interview-with-thierry-escaich/>.

³⁶ Thierry Escaich, interview by Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Cincinnati, OH, “CSO Presents the Concerto for Orchestra Project – Thierry Escaich,” December 1, 2016, accessed October 23, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hJAJwS_umTs.

³⁷ Escaich, *Présences* interview, 18.

³⁸ Escaich, Cincinnati Symphony interview, trans. Miller.

evident: he frequently uses Gregorian chant melodies, such as the *Dies irae* and *Victimae Paschali Laudes*, as the melodic basis for his works; he shows fluency in counterpoint in his polyphonic textures; and he uses sophisticated harmonic and rhythmic palettes that make reference to music spanning centuries, including the music of the Renaissance, Baroque, and Romantic eras. This learned aspect of Escaich's music reflects the comprehensive education of a renowned Parisian organist. However, it is the more sensual side of Escaich's music that truly makes it his own. This influence most obviously reveals itself in the way that dance lies at the center of his rhythmic language. Escaich confirms this aspect of his style:

When I compose, it can be contrapuntal, abstract, complex music. But in the end, it's based on the dance, on rhythm. Even if I do Gregorian, it's rhythmic Gregorian. . . [the rhythmic aspect] comes from many composers but it also comes from the music. My music is fairly organic, like a lot of music by Mahler or Franck. . . There are almost psychological pulses that play out in the music. . . and to give off these pulses, these advances in music, I need a fairly strong rhythmic force. Because, for me, dance—the expression of the body—is part of musical expression. It's the first musical expression, I think, in the world, since the dawn of time. It's true that there are composers who influenced me too, who had that approach to rhythm. . . it's that rhythmic force in Bartok's music which really intrigued me.^{39 40}

In this way, Escaich uses materials taken from the history of Western art music and makes them his own by combining them with the elements of dance and popular music that ingrained themselves in his musical consciousness from an early age. Escaich summarizes:

My way, I forged myself, grafting the world of scholarly music on my culture, my memories of musette balls and the memory of my first improvisations on the organ. . . for me, there are many influences: there's sacred music, Gregorian chant, pop music. . . my experience as an accordionist, as an organist, my love of Romantic music, my interest in popular music, like traditional music from Africa and elsewhere—all of them are in my music. The composer really is a fusion of these heterogeneous materials^{41 42}

As a fuser of many different styles, Escaich looks up to the example of past masters with a similar approach, especially J. S. Bach: “Indeed, if there is an excellent composer of synthesis it

³⁹ Escaich, Cincinnati Symphony “Concerto for Orchestra Project” interview (video).

⁴⁰ Escaich, interview by the author, 59.

⁴¹ Escaich, *Présences* program, 10.

⁴² Escaich, interview by the author, 59.

is Johann Sebastian Bach, who used his contrapuntal virtuosity to integrate the styles of North Germany, Italy, and France. . . As for me, composers like Bartók, Messiaen, Dutilleux, Franck, and some filmmakers have left traces in my musical universe.”⁴³

This fusion of a remarkably vast collection of styles and influences is clearly on display in his music for saxophone. In the six pieces presented here, influences as disparate as Claude Le Jeune’s rhythmic style, J. S. Bach’s technique of implying harmony within single-line melodies, and the sensuality of popular tango masters like Carlos Gardel and Astor Piazzolla all come together with a mystical element taken from the Church. Armed with a remarkably broad and deep musical fluency, Escaich is able to seamlessly combine these influences with his own creative impulses in a singular, personal style. In the notes that follow, observations are made on the ways in which this synthesis is apparent in Escaich’s music for saxophone.

Works for Saxophone

Trois Intermezzi (1990)

Escaich wrote *Trois Intermezzi* at the request of saxophonist Jean-Pierre Baraglioli, who wanted a chamber work for his woodwind trio with Emmanuelle Ophèle (flute) and Rémi Lerner (clarinet). Wanting to extract as much color as he could from this unusual configuration of instruments, Escaich calls for multiple saxophones and clarinets throughout the piece: the saxophone part includes both alto and baritone saxophones, while the clarinet part includes both bass and B-flat members of the family. This piece exhibits several of the characteristics of his compositional style, especially those of his early years: great timbral variety, use of Gregorian motifs, an emphasis on “duality” (*dualité*)—sudden or stark contrasts of music from seemingly different worlds—and an obsessive, driving rhythmic language.⁴⁴

⁴³ Escaich, *Présences* interview, 17.

⁴⁴ Escaich, interview by the author, 46.

The first movement immediately shows the variety of tone colors possible among the three instruments: the piece begins at a hushed dynamic with soft, hesitant, truncated lines in the flute and clarinet placed over the top of a low, subtuned pedal note in the baritone saxophone. This low extreme in range is balanced by the flute's shrieking high C at the climax of the movement, which is repeated insistently. Between and after these extremes, Escaich shifts expertly between blending and opposing the tone colors of these instruments.

The second movement is the longest and most substantive of the work, and it showcases Escaich's compositional affinity for "duality." At the opening of the movement, Escaich alternates between placid, almost expressionless motifs based on the *Dies irae* and radically contrasting segments of great virtuosity and manic energy. This contrast is a trademark of Escaich's style, and it is especially prevalent in his compositions from the early 1990s. He describes this "duality" as something that both came from within and was inspired by visual art:

[Duality] is very present in the pieces from . . . those young time periods. It was something internal that I wanted to translate. Maybe now I had already gone beyond duality. In certain orchestral pieces, like my *Le Vertige de la Croix*, for example, there are three or four superimposed zones, like in a painting. It's based on a certain culture of painting, like the painting of Rubens's *La Descente de Croix*. And in [*Trois Intermezzi*] it's really superimposing different musical worlds, like in a painting. . .⁴⁵

Escaich describes this phenomenon in the opening section of the second movement as an instance of "successive" duality: "There are interruptions of quick movements, which practically cut off the others to superimpose themselves progressively. So it is even a successive duality like that."⁴⁶

The third movement is notable for the way it reflects Escaich's characteristic rhythmic language: asymmetrical meters and syncopation combine to form a relentless rhythmic drive from beginning to end. These features are evident from the outset, where the three instruments

⁴⁵ Escaich, interview by the author, 47-48.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 47.

play a theme in rhythmic unison that chromaticizes the plainchant melody *Victimae Paschali Laudes*, a melody that Escaich also uses in his organ piece, *Cinq Versées sur la Victimae*

Paschali. Escaich explains his use of the same material for two pieces:

[The two pieces] start the same, but develop differently. And I kind of do what Baroque composers did; that is, I like to use one idea from one piece in multiple different pieces with different instruments. There's Handel, for example, who has a concerto for organ which becomes a sonata for flute and bass, etc., or a cantata. And for me, it's kind of the same thing. I need to pick up again the idea from one piece, and here I had written verses before this piece, and I picked up again the idea of doing verses, but this time I went in different directions than the verses after. I really exploited the idea of the first verse, which was very brief. . . and I need to develop it differently.⁴⁷

After a middle section that features a clear example of Escaich's duality between the syncopated, lyrical saxophone melody and manic sixteenth-note accompaniment of the flute and bass clarinet, the piece returns to the opening material, closing the piece energetically with a variation of the *Victimae Paschali Laudes* melody in unison rhythm once again.

Le Chant des Ténèbres (1992)

Dedication: Claude Delangle

Le Chant des Ténèbres is a concerto for soprano saxophone and saxophone ensemble or string orchestra. Written as a lament for a recently deceased friend, *Le Chant des Ténèbres* has the darkest character of any of Escaich's works for saxophone, and the ways he expresses this character clearly reveal a compositional language rooted in tradition.

The influence of tradition is apparent from the beginning of the piece, when a baritone saxophone plays fragments of a passacaglia theme, gradually establishing the ground bass on which subsequent variations are built. This ostinato-based variation technique has centuries of historical precedent, which includes J.S. Bach's *Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor*, BWV 582,

⁴⁷ Escaich, interview by the author, 47-48.

an example that is central to the organ tradition in which Escaich was educated.⁴⁸ As in earlier models, the ostinato in *Le Chant des Ténèbres* is stated at the outset in bare form, emerges from a low register, and outlines a clear triple meter.⁴⁹ Once this passacaglia is introduced, the solo soprano saxophone enters for the first time with agitated ornamentation above the bass line. These hesitant, rhythmically unstable, and fragmented lines also show the influence of tradition: they wind chromatically around the *Dies irae*, an ancient plainsong melody best known for its use as a sequence in the Catholic Requiem Mass.⁵⁰ The first large section of the work consists of a gradual intensification of the solo part's ornamentation above the passacaglia: the solo lines become longer, increasingly virtuosic and higher in range; concurrently, the ensemble affects a

⁴⁸ The histories of the passacaglia and the chaconne stretch back to the sixteenth century, and though the terms were originally distinct, they have become interchangeable in the past two-hundred years. Escaich's use of a ground bass as the underlying structure for theme and variation technique reflects an approach to passacaglia technique common in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Composers from this time period often modeled their technique on the example of J. S. Bach, who famously used this theme and variation technique in his Chaconne for unaccompanied violin, BWV 1004, and in the *Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor* for organ, BWV 582. (For more information, see Alexander Silbiger, "Chaconne, §7: The chaconne and passacaglia after 1800," in *Grove Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>, accessed October 25, 2018.) Escaich has acknowledged the profound influence of Bach in his compositional style, and the *Passacaglia and Fugue* for organ is especially relevant to Escaich because it is a canonic work and one that Escaich has played regularly throughout his career. (For a detailed account of Bach's influence on Escaich, see Bernard Bloch and Hélène Pierrakos, dirs., *Thierry Escaich au Miroir de J. S. Bach* (L'Oeil Sauvage, 2007): accessed October 21, 2018, <https://vimeo.com/50048252>.) His passacaglia in *Le Chant des Ténèbres* and Bach's example for organ are both typical: the bass lines establish a slow tempo, severe character, clear triple meter, and they feature the same rhythmic pattern: alternating quarter and half notes.

⁴⁹ Silbiger, "Chaconne."

⁵⁰ The *Dies irae* melody frequently appears across several centuries in the works of some of Western music's most distinguished composers. Their settings are typically inspired by the text of the chant—a vivid portrayal of the Last Judgment attributed to Thomas of Celano, a thirteenth-century Franciscan monk—and thus usually express the despair of a terrible doom. The melody has been used frequently only in part, especially in more modern times, so that now its opening phrase is immediately understood as an icon of sorrow or terror. Escaich's treatment of the *Dies irae* follows this pattern: he only explicitly uses the first several notes of the melody, invoking the sorrow associated with it. Composers who have used the *Dies irae* include figures such as Mozart, Berlioz, Brahms, and Liszt, in addition to French organists like Saint-Saëns and Duruflé, among many others. French organists across many generations have frequently improvised on this melody as well.

gradual crescendo and accelerando beneath this unfolding ornamentation. Escaich describes the relationship of these two structural pieces:

I'm always looking for a stable structure. In this case, it's the idea of the passacaglia in three tempos, and at the same time I love the duality of zones that are completely unstable rhythmically. It's that duality in all my pieces that interests me. In the solo saxophone part, for example, when I go very far in this rhythmic destabilization, it's really to have that anxious, stressful, nervous [feeling]. . . Every time I go beyond in terms of ornamentation. I wanted the ornamentation [in the solo saxophone part] to be intoxicating, abundant.⁵¹

Escaich uses this swelling of intensity and activity to spur formal progress: the unstable, nervous energy of the solo ornamentation and the *crescendo* and *accelerando* of the ensemble bubble over in a climax that initiates the next section of the piece: a quick, rhythmically unpredictable *danse macabre*.

Danse macabre, translated in English as “dance of the dead,” is a genre in visual art that originated in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. In this genre, death is typically depicted as a skeleton leading the living to the grave.⁵² Composers have created musical settings of this genre for centuries, and Escaich acknowledges the influence of a predecessor in the French organ tradition for his inclusion of a *danse macabre* in *Le Chant des Ténèbres*: “It’s a sort of ritual dance of the dead, a little like Camille Saint-Saëns did a little bit earlier. The idea of dance was always very close to my music, and I really experimented with it in [*Le Chant des Ténèbres*] for the first time, I think.”⁵³ Escaich’s *danse macabre* clearly borrows elements from Saint-Saëns’s *La Danse Macabre*, an orchestral tone poem, and from typical Romantic settings of this genre: it is energetic, quotes the *Dies irae*, and highlights the interval of the tritone in the solo part.

⁵¹ Escaich, interview by the author, 42-43.

⁵² Musical activity is not always present in Medieval and Renaissance depictions in this genre, and dancing is not shown in most either. The nineteenth-century tradition of the *danse macabre* as a midnight festivity by resurrected, dancing skeletons is largely due to the popularity of Goethe’s poem *Der Totentanz*. Liszt’s *Totentanz* for piano and orchestra (1849) and Saint-Saëns’s tone poem *La Danse Macabre* (1874) take their inspiration from this tradition.

⁵³ Escaich, interview by the author, 45.

Escaich's dance section, once established, swells gradually in intensity, as did the first section of the piece, and eventually culminates again in formal progress: the *Dies irae* melody returns in its original form with maximum intensity in the ensemble parts. This melody finally gives way to a solo cadenza, which marks a clear formal barrier between the two halves of the work. In using the passacaglia, *Dies irae*, and *danse macabre* in each of these ways, Escaich exhibits several traditional musical features of the lament.

Though it thoroughly reflects numerous traditional elements, *Le Chant des Ténèbres* is far from academic: Escaich wields these elements uniquely, saturating them with his special brand of "duality," a concept that engrossed him especially when he wrote *Le Chant des Ténèbres*. It happens first in the fifth measure of the piece, when the baritone saxophone's first attempt at stating the passacaglia is halted by an abrupt shriek from the rest of the ensemble. The baritone saxophone resumes the bass line after a pause, but these interruptions continue to occur, before finally leading to the soprano saxophone's piercingly high G-sharp, which is sustained above the beginning of the passacaglia's first full statement; the soprano saxophone subsequently descends in intricate counterpoint with the bass line. In this way, Escaich initiates an opposition between the low and high tessituras: the soft dynamic, low range, and stability of the passacaglia conflicts with strident, unpredictable outbursts of the higher voices, and this initial conflict then develops into a general polarization of the high and low ranges. The solo soprano saxophone's entrance deepens this sense of opposition—its hesitant, scattered, and syncopated ornamentation extends the opposition beyond range and into rhythm. While this kind of opposition defines much of the rest of the piece, it is nowhere more extreme than in the hushed, contrapuntal setting of the passacaglia that follows the solo cadenza. In this central, most delicate section of the work, the ensemble soprano saxophone softly sings the passacaglia theme while the two ensemble soprano saxophones play counterpointing lines beneath it to form

a delicate three-voice polyphony. After a few measures, the solo soprano saxophone upsets the simple beauty of this setting with intense, rhythmically irregular interjections in a distant mode that create a harsh, dissonant clash with harmonies of the ensemble. The diametric opposition of these parts is so extreme that they seem to come from, in the enthusiastic words of Escaich, “two different worlds!”⁵⁴ This polymodal setting eventually fades, and after a short transition, the solo soprano saxophone initiates a new section in which it has strings of sixteenth-note septuplets, sometimes on the beat but frequently offset as well. These increasingly lengthy and technically demanding passages not only comprise the most extreme technical demands in the piece for the soloist, they also create a profound rhythmic conflict with the straight quarter notes and half notes of the accompaniment. In this way, Escaich follows the harsh, polymodal duality of the choral section with a section of polyrhythmic duality to match.

By using ground-bass variation technique, the *Dies irae*, a *danse macabre*, and contrapuntal texture in *Le Chant des Ténèbres*, Escaich reveals the traditional side of his compositional language. On top of these elements, he injects abrupt and striking contrasts that come from a visceral, internal impulse.⁵⁵ The resulting duality is a trademark of Escaich’s compositional language of the early 1990s, and certainly in no other piece for saxophone is this particular trait of Escaich so clearly on display.

***Lutte* (1994)**

Dedication: Claude Delangle

Lutte is a work for solo alto saxophone lasting about six minutes. Escaich wrote a matching piece for organ at about the same time, called *Le Cri des Abîmes*, his fourth in a series of *Esquisses* for solo organ. Similar to the way in which *Trois Intermezzi* and *Cinq Versées sur la Victimae Paschali* are related, *Lutte* and *Le Cri des Abîmes* feature the same chant-like melody

⁵⁴ Escaich, interview by the author, 45.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 47.

at their outsets before moving on to different developments of the melody. *Lutte*, meaning “fight” or “strife,” is comprised of two main themes: a melody resembling the incantation of Gregorian psalms and an unstable and obstinate rhythmic theme; the gradual fusion of these two ideas guides the form of the piece. When he combines these ideas, Escaich makes effective use of the slap tongue, a performance technique in which the player smacks the reed sharply with the tongue, creating a distinct popping sound. Escaich uses this technique to add clarity to the polyphonic texture of the combined themes:

In the part where there’s slap, I really needed layers: up to three superimposed layers. What really interested me was differentiating at the level of melodic motifs, but also at the level of manner of playing. So I needed a different manner of playing for the bass part, a different manner of playing for the middle part, and a different manner of playing for the top part. . . It’s interesting because it is really a reference to the music of Johann Sebastian Bach for a [single-line instrument], precisely because it’s melodic music, but it is also harmonic. When you play a solo cello sonata by Bach, you have the harmony, which is magnificently made, but it’s only implied [within a single melodic line]. So here [in *Lutte*] it’s the same thing: in a way, it’s polyphony, but with a single instrument.⁵⁶

An example of this polyphony occurs late in the piece: a passacaglia bass line is written exclusively with slap tongue in the saxophone’s lower register, while more florid melodic activity is in the upper register, and the performer must jump fluidly between them to achieve the effect of playing multiple lines simultaneously. In this way, Escaich has taken an initial duality—the opposition of the chant-like theme and the rhythmic theme at the start of the piece—and synthesized it into a sophisticated implied polyphony. While this sophistication of compositional technique makes for an efficient and compelling development of the piece’s generating motives, it also places high demands on the performer: absolute security of technique is needed to pull off the polyphonic section, and it takes great stamina to maintain the unrelenting intensity of the music throughout the six minutes of constant playing that the piece requires.

⁵⁶ Escaich, interview by the author, 58.

***Le Bal* (2003)**

Dedication: Quatuor Jean-Yves Fourmeau

Le Bal (“The Ball”) is a through-composed, single-movement piece for saxophone quartet (SATB) inspired by Ettore Scola’s 1983 film of the same name—a musical well-known to film critics and aficionados. The film depicts the changing political and social landscape of France from the 1920s to the 1980s through choreographed dance routines set in the ballroom of a Paris nightclub. Though the film is completely without dialogue, social and political transformations are discernible through changing costumes, music, and dances. Escaich organizes his saxophone quartet, *Le Bal*, and earlier string quartet, *Scènes de Bal* (2001), in a similar way: their forms are delineated by sections evoking stylized dances. The main types include waltz, tango, slow dance, and disco. The string quartet, *Scènes de Bal*, preceded the saxophone quartet, *Le Bal*, but was not as thoroughly conceived. Escaich explains:

Since [*Scènes de Bal*] was commissioned by Radio France, I had to do five little pieces, two minutes each [as Radio France stipulated]. And when I was able, I adapted these five pieces to [the saxophone quartet], which to me is more satisfying, because there is really an idea of form, a poetic unravelling that is absent in *Scènes de Bal*, because it is divided into separate scenes. . . what was interesting to me was being able to find progressive transitions, where a waltz changes shape and reappears as a tango, and then reappears again as a slow dance. These transformations between the periods of dance are what interest me.⁵⁷

In this way, the power of the piece comes not just from the musical depiction of each dance style, but from the way in which the germinating motives, presented in an introduction, are transformed throughout the piece. Sometimes these transformations are smooth and gradual, such as the introduction’s development into a waltz. Other times they are brutal, as when the slow dance is abruptly cut off by the sudden, bellowing, and insistent quarter notes of the baritone saxophone. The piece’s coda is a particularly clear illustration of Escaich’s ingenuity in shaping these transformations. Marked by rapidly shifting tempos and characters, the coda

⁵⁷ Escaich, interview by the author, 52.

recapitulates in miniature many of the dances and transitions of the piece, moving between them quickly by means of metric modulations and flurries of blindingly-fast sixteenth-note unison runs, before finally concluding in a headlong sprint to the end. The result of this conception is a piece, though only twelve minutes in length, that remains one of the most sophisticated, compelling, and demanding pieces in the saxophone quartet repertoire, and it exhibits Escaich's superior imagination and sensitivity for style in the way he establishes and transforms the dance music in unexpected ways.

Though *Scènes de Bal* and *Le Bal* were Escaich's first attempts at using popular dances as source material for composition, both have been successes in performance. Widely played among European saxophone quartets since its premiere, *Le Bal* has been steadily growing in popularity around the world, where it is slowly making its way into the standard quartet repertoire. Though certainly a success in chamber music circles, this music's exposure went well beyond that when Benjamin Millepied, a renowned French dancer and choreographer, commissioned Escaich to write a score based on the same music for the New York City Ballet in 2009. Escaich adapted this music for full orchestra, for which Millepied constructed original choreography. Escaich's score, *The Lost Dancer*, accompanied Millepied's ballet called *Why am I not where you are*, which was premiered by the New York City Ballet in 2010.⁵⁸ Escaich's imaginative use of this popular dance music, in each of its incarnations, shows clearly how the "sensual" half of his artistic personality reveals itself in his work.

Phantasia Antiqua (2009)

Dedication: Nicolas Prost

Escaich wrote this chamber piece for Trio Saxiana, a French group that comprises saxophonists Nicolas Prost and Anne Lecapelain and pianist, Laurent Wagschal. The spelling of

⁵⁸ Escaich, interview by the author, 53.

the first word of the title, “Phantasia,” is a nod to the German spelling of “Fantasy,” and to *Phantom of the Opera*, a film for which Escaich has often improvised accompaniments.⁵⁹

“Antiqua” refers to the rhythmic style of the first movement, entitled *Double Choeur*. Escaich explains:

Double-choir music makes me think of the Renaissance. And what I was looking for in this piece were measures with this old-fashioned rhythm (*rythmées à l’antique*). It’s a direct reference to Renaissance music that was written in a double choir. . . it’s like the rhythm of Claude Le Jeune. The rhythm is not regular . . . [it] is like verses of Greek poems.⁶⁰

Music scholars typically describe this form of rhythmic irregularity with the term *musique mesurée*, a style of French vocal music prevalent among some composers in the late sixteenth century. *Musique mesurée* is analogous to the contemporary movement in poetry called *vers mesurée*, in which poets sought to recreate in French the irregular metrical effect of ancient Greek and Latin poetry. In the musical style, stress accents from poetry were usually applied at a ratio of 2:1 so that a stressed syllable was given twice the length of the weak syllable. This ratio is evident from the outset of *Phantasia Antiqua* in the tenor saxophone part, which features this “long-short” rhythmic pattern in steady triple meter. The alto saxophone part, though also notated in triple meter, upsets the metric regularity of the tenor part with an unpredictable mix of duple and triple rhythms. This ambiguity, in addition to the 2:1 rhythmic ratio, is what most clearly evokes *musique mesurée*: influenced by the irregular meter of *vers mesurée*, *musique mesurée* often sounds like rapidly shifting meters to the modern listener.

The second movement, *Chaconne*, contains the emotional core of the piece, which finds expression in a ground bass that features prominently in different roles throughout the movement. The saxophone parts begin hesitantly before gradually becoming more active, combining to form a delicate polyphony above the bass line initially stated in the piano. The

⁵⁹ Escaich, interview by the author, 49.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 50-51.

activity of the parts increases and seems to culminate briefly, before dissipating and yielding to a section in which the baritone saxophonist sings and plays simultaneously. Escaich explains this technique as a way to increase the intensity of the polyphony written so far:

I especially needed an element to go even further with the idea of polyphony. I've always liked polyphonies that are created in the low parts of the instrument and rise up progressively. The act of adding one part of polyphony by having the saxophone sing gives it a presence that is a little more enigmatic, more polyphonic [when combined with] . . . the hypnotic aspect of the passacaglia.⁶¹

Following the eerie mood set by the simultaneous singing and playing, the intensity gradually rises as the movement's opening melodic motive is transformed in the saxophone parts in episodes of increasing tempo and intensity. Beneath the saxophones, the chaconne is also transformed in the piano, eventually turning into an insistent accompaniment figure as the intensity nears its peak. The movement culminates in an emotional climax where both saxophones emphatically state the chaconne theme in its original form, in unison at a *fortissimo* dynamic and *pesante* style, while the piano provides thundering embellishment. This climax is followed by a transition to the third movement in which the alto saxophone, with interjections of chaconne fragments in the piano, plays pieces of the first movement's opening motive. The characteristic features of each instrument's material gradually dissolve until the piano rests completely and the alto saxophone's theme turns into an eighth-note line that winds downward before it is passed to and continued by the tenor saxophone, a process that acts as a transition to the third movement, *Danserie*.

The shortest of the movements, *Danserie* is an abbreviated dash to the finish, featuring a return of the first movement's thematic material, but played with increased agitation. This culminates in a codetta that brings back the chaconne bass-line from the second movement, but

⁶¹ Escaich, interview by the author, 49.

this time played with maximum brutality in the piano, spurring on the saxophones to conclude the piece at a peak of intensity.

***Tango Virtuoso* (1991)**

Dedication: Jean-Pierre Baraglioli

Tango Virtuoso, a saxophone quartet of about five minutes' length, is an outlier in Escaich's catalogue: of his saxophone works, it has by far the lightest character and is the most widely played. The "virtuoso" in the title refers to a section late in the work in which the soprano saxophone virtuosically adorns the alto saxophone's statement of the primary theme with a cascade of thirty-second notes. This virtuosity, combined with a classical tango style, contrapuntal design, and short duration, gives this piece an element of fun that has made it a popular encore and entertainment piece. Though the piece is expertly constructed, it was born hastily and out of necessity. Escaich recounts the story of the piece's conception:

I remember, very clearly, the concert for which I wrote this. I was with Jean-Pierre Baraglioli, it was at the Grand Palais in Paris, and we had to do a concert of tangos for piano and alto saxophone. There were tangos by Piazzolla, by Carlos Gardel—there were all different kinds of tangos. And [the concert organizers] were missing some tangos; they were a little bit short on music as I recall. I remember I wrote [*Tango Virtuoso*] on the afternoon of the concert, before playing that night. I wrote out Jean-Pierre's part and I improvised on the piano. And afterwards, Jean-Pierre asked me to write down the piece, and rather than writing for piano and saxophone, he said to me, "could you instead write it for my saxophone quartet?" And so a few days later I wrote for him what we had done that afternoon, and then he played it all over the place. And that's the whole story. It was simple, really a kind of on-the-spot improvisation.⁶²

Escaich's ability to essentially improvise such a catchy piece in convincing tango style is a testament to the depth of his understanding and love of popular dance music. Honed over the years through his experience as an accordionist, Escaich's mastery of the classical tango style and fluency in improvisation serendipitously resulted in a unique and well-loved show piece for saxophone quartet.

⁶² Escaich, interview by the author, 55.

CONCLUSION

In his most substantial works for saxophone, Thierry Escaich exhibits a learned compositional language that shows the influence of his education at the Paris Conservatory: he frequently uses Gregorian chant melodies, employs traditional variation forms such as the passacaglia, writes fluent counterpoint, uses varied and complex meters and rhythms, and creates a sense of grand formal architecture in which generating motives are developed and transformed. Additionally, Escaich's general musical fluency, also honed at the Paris Conservatory, allowed him to essentially improvise a lighter piece, *Tango Virtuoso*, when circumstances called for it. While always showing the sophistication of an educated composer, Escaich's music also always carries his personal artistic voice: the sense of opposition and angst in his frequent use of duality, the obsessive, unrelenting rhythmic force propelling his music forward, and the ways in which he incorporates the sensuality of popular styles all give authenticity and dynamism to his music. These historical and personal traits blend together in Escaich's works for saxophone in a way that make them unlike any other works in the repertoire. Armed with an appreciation and understanding of Escaich's musical world and compositional language, saxophonists can bring the energy and passion of his music to life with style and clarity.

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APPENDIX A:
TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH THIERRY ESCAICH:
HIS MUSIC FOR SAXOPHONE

Date: February 12, 2018

Location: Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse – Paris, France

Translators: Clément Van Calster (in person), Clare Nash (recording transcript)

Note: This interview has been edited for clarity.



John Cummins: What is the inspiration for *Le Chant des Ténèbres*? Is “*ténèbres*” a reference to the Catholic service, *Tenebrae*? Or is it a more generic reference to “darkness?”

Thierry Escaich: It’s actually an homage to a friend who had just passed away, so that’s why the theme of *Dies irae* is present through the whole piece. Yes, it really is a piece written for, in honor of, the memory of this friend. So hence the very dark, even somber aspect of the piece from start to finish. Definitely.

[La référence principale c’est en fait le . . . c’est un hommage à un ami qui venait de décéder, donc c’est pour ça que le thème de Dies irae est présent tout au long. C’est un petit peu comme si j’écrivais une pièce. . . oui c’est vraiment une pièce écrite à la mémoire de cet ami. Voilà. Alors après, d’ou le côté très même sombre de la pièce du début à la fin. C’est sûr.]

JC: I notice the *Dies irae* is in many of your pieces, especially from the early 1990s. Is that for the same reason or another reason?

TE: At that time, I wrote several pieces that used the *Dies irae* in one way or another, or in any case that were somber like *Chant des Ténèbres*. There was, for instance, another vocal piece called *Ad Ultimas Laudes*. That was in the same spirit, for twelve voices, and it was made practically at the same time. And then also one of my pieces for organ, which uses a similar outline of the *Dies irae*. My first one was *Ad Ultimas Laudes*. It’s a piece for twelve voices—my first piece for choir.

[À cette époque, j’ai écrit plusieurs pièces qui utilisaient le Dies irae d’une façon ou d’une autre, ou en tout cas qui étaient sombre comme le Chant des Ténèbres. Il y avait par exemple une autre pièce vocale qui s’appelle Ad Ultimas Laudes, qui est dans le même esprit, pour douze voix et qui était fait pratiquement en même temps. Et puis aussi, mon [unclear] pour orgue, qui utilise des contours proches du Dies irae. My first one Ad Ultimas Laudes. It’s a piece for twelve voices. My first piece for choir.]

JC: You also have a lot of pieces that use Gregorian plainchant. Do you think that's a result of your training as an organist, from improvising on plainchant melodies? Do you look up to any past figures, such as Maurice Duruflé, people who used a lot of chant as the basis of their compositions?

TE: There's actually a mix of several things. First, I have the job of church organist, following Duruflé [at St. Étienne-du-Mont], which means that I was in contact with the Gregorian plainchant very early on. The second thing is that what I like from Catholicism, what I mostly looked at, is the idea of ritual, everything that has to do with rites, processional rites for example. And that's very important in my music, including the piece from last night [Gala Concert of *Festival Présences 2018*], *La Piste des Chants*. The third thing is that often, even outside the text of Gregorian chant (Duruflé, as a believer, used it for the text), I use Gregorian chant as thematic material because I like how supple it is—rhythmically and melodically. And that's kind of representative of my own melodic style. The rhythm of Gregorian chant is very important for me.

[Je pense que chez moi, il y a un mixe entre plusieurs choses en fait. Il y a, la première chose c'est que j'ai le métier d'organiste, à la suite de Duruflé à fait que j'étais très tôt en contact du plein chant Grégorien. La seconde, c'est que j'aime de l'office Catholique ce que j'ai regardé surtout c'est l'idée du rituel, tout ce qui est rite, les rites processionnels par exemple, et ça c'est très important dans ma musique y compris d'ailleurs jusqu'à la pièce d'hier soir, La Piste des Chants. Et la troisième chose c'est que souvent, en dehors même du texte du Grégorien, que Duruflé utilisait comme croyant pour le texte. Moi, j'utilise souvent le Grégorien comme matériaux thématiques parce-que j'aime bien la souplesse rythmique et mélodique du Grégorien. Et que c'est constitutif un peu de mon style mélodique même. The rhythm of Gregorian is very important for me.]

JC: In *Le Chant des Ténèbres*, the solo part's rhythm is very unstable all the time, but it is placed over a highly stable passacaglia. Would you say that the instability in the solo part is meant to give a feeling of improvisation?

TE: For me, I'm always looking for a stable structure. In this case it's the idea of the passacaglia in three tempos, and at the same time I love the duality of zones that are completely unstable rhythmically. And it's that duality in all my pieces that interests me. In the solo saxophone part for example, when I go very far in this rhythmic destabilization, it's not really to give it an improvisational feel, it's to have that anxious, stressful, nervous side.

[En fait il y a, chez moi il y a vraiment une recherche de une structure stable. . . en l'occurrence l'idée du passacaille à trois temps, et en même temps, j'aime la dualité avec des zones

complètement instables rythmiquement. Et c'est cette dualité en fait, qui dans toutes mes pièces m'intéresse. Et je vais souvent dans la partie saxophone par exemple je vais très loin dans la destabilization rythmique plus que pour avoir. . . c'est pas tellement pour avoir un caractère improvisé, c'est pour avoir ce côté anxieux, angoissé en fait.]

JC: Ah, so it's more the character. And I notice that, in your program note, it says it develops so that each entrance of the soloist gets more complex. More and more complex until —

TE: Every time I go beyond in terms of ornamentation. I wanted the ornamentation to be intoxicating, almost ... abundant.

[Je vais à chaque fois au-delà dans l'ornementation. Je voulais que l'ornementation devienne étourdissant, presque. . . foisonnante.]

JC: And then, that section culminates in a *più mosso*. And then at the end of the piece, at the *molto adagio*, where you have the breath mark, do you like a long pause?

TE: No, it's not necessary. It's just brief, a little soft breath. It's not necessary to stop completely.

JC: And for each of the following breaths?

TE: They are not long breaths. It's just taking the time to put down the first tempo, but not beyond that.

[It's not a long breath. C'est juste prendre le temps de poser le premier temps, d'après, mais pas au-delà.]

JC: Do you have a preference of the version with strings or with saxophones?

TE: It's hard to say. The first version was for saxophone. I'd say that the string version allows us to dig deeper into instrumentation because the sound is shifting with the strings. And when I made the version for saxophone, I already had in mind what I wanted to do for strings. But on the other hand, I have heard the saxophone version a lot and I find that it also has a certain power that I've discovered little by little, an undeniable rhythmic force that makes me like it a lot too. At first I was afraid that the saxophone version would lack some expressivity. And I have to say, having heard it several times later in concerts in various venues, I find that the version for saxophone also has a kind of force of unity in the piece that I also like.

[C'est difficile à dire. La première version a été pour saxophone. . . Disons que la version pour cordes permet de fouiller plus l'instrumentation parce que. . . ou alors on peut faire des relais

dans les cordes, le son est plus mouvant dans les cordes. Et quand j'ai fait la version pour saxophone j'avais déjà dans la tête ce que je voulais faire pour cordes. Par contre, j'ai beaucoup entendu la version pour saxophone, et je trouve qu'elle a une certaine puissance aussi que j'ai découvert peu à peu, une force rythmique indéniable qui fait que je l'aime beaucoup aussi, donc. . . Oui, c'est ça. Au début j'avais peur que la version pour saxophone manque un peu d'expression. Et je dois dire que pour l'avoir entendu plusieurs fois après en concert dans divers lieux, je trouve que la version pour saxophone a aussi une force d'unité un peu dans la pièce qui me plaît aussi.]



JC: When did you first hear the saxophone as a concert instrument?

TE: That was actually through meeting people. When I was still a student at the conservatory here, studying composition, in the late-80s, early-90s, I very quickly met some saxophonist friends. Jean-Pierre Baraglioli, Claude Delangle of course....and we actually played together. They played in my first pieces that had saxophone, where there was one saxophone in the ensemble. And basically I discovered the saxophone by using it in an ensemble of twelve or thirteen musicians, and there was just one saxophone part, and I very quickly started using it in my music. But it was done often via encounters with saxophonist musicians.

[Ça ce sont des rencontres, en fait. J'ai très vite rencontré quand j'étais encore élève au conservatoire ici en composition, à la fin des années 80 au début des années 90, j'ai très vite rencontré des amis saxophonistes. Peut-être les connaissez-vous. . . Jean-Pierre Baraglioli, Claude Delangle évidemment. . . Et en fait on a joué ensemble. Ils ont joué dans mes premières oeuvres ou il y avait du saxophone, il y avait un saxophone dans un ensemble. Et tout simplement. . . j'ai découvert le saxophone en l'utilisant dans des ensembles de douze ou treize musiciens ou il y avait qu'une partie de saxophone, et je l'ai très rapidement intégré dans ma musique. Mais ça a été fait souvent avec des rencontres avec des musiciens saxophonistes.]

TE: This piece, the name of this piece is *Antiennes Oubliées*.

JC: Right—it is for seven or eight instruments.

TE: Yes, exactly seven. And just one saxophone, with flute, viola, I don't remember exactly. And Jean-Pierre Baraglioli played this piece. It was in, perhaps '89 I think. I won a composition competition with this piece, and afterwards progressively I played concerts with Jean-Pierre: piano-saxophone, organ-saxophone. And progressively, I arrive at this piece.

JC: Do you remember the name of the competition?

TE: The competition was André Jolivet. It was in 1989; I won this competition with this piece. I think it was my first contact with the saxophone.

TE: Yes, just one thing with [*Le Chant des Ténèbres*]: it's very important to say also that there's the duality between the stable passacaglia and the instability of the melody, as we were saying earlier, and there's also the idea of ritual dance. It's a sort of a ritual dance of the dead, a little like Camille Saint-Saëns did a little bit earlier. The idea of dance was always very close to my music, and I really experimented with it in this piece, for the first time, I think. And then there's the duality, which is also important. The tonal duality between colors, between the modes, between a universe of harmonic modes going up and here (ca. m. 242) it's the superimposing of polyrhythm which has always preoccupied me. And I have to say this is the first appearance of this duality between two rhythms. The creation of this polyrhythm in the central part, for example, between the saxophone part and the orchestra.

[Yes, just one thing with this piece, *c'est important de dire aussi que l'aspect ... donc il y a la dualité entre l'idée de la passacaille stable et l'instabilité de la mélodie, comme on disait tout à l'heure, et il y a aussi l'idée de la danse rituelle. Et là la danse effectivement. C'est une sorte de danse rituelle des morts, un peu comme Camille Saint Saëns, avait fait un peu avant. L'idée de la danse a toujours été très proche de ma musique et là j'avais vraiment expérimenté dans cette pièce pour la première fois je pense. Et puis la dualité aussi qui est importante entre, par exemple la dualité même tonale entre les couleurs entre des modes, entre un univers des modes harmoniques qui montent, et là c'est une superposition de poly-rythmie qui m'a toujours préoccupé, et je dois dire la première apparition de cette dualité entre deux rythmes. La création de poly-rythmie dans la partie centrale par exemple, entre la partie saxophone et la partie de l'orchestre.]*

JC: Yes, and the middle section, the slower section, also had the duality of the two different...

TE: Two different worlds!

JC: Right.

TE: We have the modal world and we have some memories of the [singing]. We have a few leftovers of the ornamentation, the declamation that stays, even in a modal universe that's completely different.

[We have the modal world and we have some memories of the [singing]. *On a quelques bribes de l'ornemenation, de la déclamation qui restent sous un univers modal de choses complètement différentes.*]



JC: Was *Trois Intermezzi* written for a specific saxophonist? For Jean-Pierre Baraglioli?

TE: Yes. I don't know if it was a commission actually, since I don't remember who commissioned it, but, in any case, it was a request from Jean-Pierre Baraglioli, who created it with Rémi Lerner who was a clarinet player and a flutist, Emmanuelle Ophèle, who was at the Ensemble Intercontemporain. So they're the ones who initiated the *Trois Intermezzi*. They were a trio that had that formation.

[*Ah, oui. Ça c'est une commande de. . . je sais pas si c'est une commande, je sais plus qui l'a commandé mais en tout cas c'était une demande de Jean-Pierre Baraglioli, qui l'a créée avec Rémi Lerner qui était un clarinetiste et un flûtiste, Emmanuelle Ophèle qui était à l'Ensemble Intercontemporain. Et voilà donc c'est eux qui ont suscité ces Trois Intermezzi pour avoir du. . . ils faisaient un trio, qu'ils avaient constitué avec cette formation. Emmanuelle Ophèle qui était à l'Ensemble Intercontemporain. Voilà. Et ils formaient un trio à cette époque- là, dans cette formation-là.*]

JC: Did they specifically request the baritone and alto saxophone?

TE: Yeah. I wanted to have as much color as possible used in all its forms, in the trio. I wanted this trio to have a sense. . . that there would be, even though it was just three instruments I wanted there to be a sense of ensemble, chamber music. Not just a trio but an ensemble.

[*Ouais. Je voulais en fait avoir le plus de couleur exploité sous toutes ses formes, le trio. Je voulais que ce trio ait un caractère. . . qu'il y ait, bien que ça soit que juste trois instruments je voulais que ça ait un caractère un peu de d'ensemble, musique de chambre. Pas seulement un trio mais un ensemble.*]

JC: Did anything specifically inspire the music?

TE: There isn't a theme taken, like that *Dies irae* or other themes in *Le Chant des Ténébres*. There are little motifs that I really invented for the occasion. But we do recognize some Gregorian phrasing. These are Gregorian lines, but chromaticized [Rehearsal 7, baritone saxophone part]. And we also see again here the idea of duality. Particularly in my work there's the idea of characters who appear and disappear, kind of in a Romanesque way. For example, we see in the beginning when the baritone saxophone, he's got a position and progressively he emerges to make a statement which ends up being an important motif for the piece. He comes from nowhere and progressively he takes the place of others. He carries the piece to its climax.

[*Il y a pas de thème pris, comme le Dies irae ou d'autres thèmes dans la première. Il y a des petits motifs que j'ai inventé vraiment pour l'occasion. Mais on reconnaît, on reconnaît par*

exemple des tournures Grégoriennes. On reconnaît, oui, des tournures Grégoriennes. [Singing] Ce sont des lignes Grégoriennes mais chromatisées. Et là aussi on retrouve l'idée de la dualité, notamment le fait que ce sont. . . il y a, notamment chez moi l'idée de personnages qui apparaissent et qui disparaissent, un peu un côté un peu Romanesque. Par exemple, on voit dans le début quand le saxophone baryton il a une tenue et progressivement il émerge pour faire une phrase [singing] qui fera un motif important pour la pièce, il vient de nulle part et progressivement il prend la place des autres. Il amène, il conduit la pièce jusqu'au sommet.]

JC: In the second movement you again use the *Dies irae*.

TE: Yes, it's pretty close. That's why I say that it chromatically revolves around existing Gregorian motifs. While the third movement, that one revolves around a different Gregorian theme, the *Victimae Paschali Laudes*.

[Oui, c'est assez proche. C'est pour ça que je dis que ça tourne autour de, chromatiquement, de thèmes Grégoriens existants. Alors que le troisième mouvement, lui, tourne autour d'un autre thème Grégorien, qui est le Victimae Paschali Laudes.]

TE: And here [beginning of second movement], too, we have the idea that's in *Chant des Ténèbres*. Something where there's a kind of stopped time, and on the contrary a declamation that has nothing to do with it, which is the most expressive and the most anxious on something with a very stopped time, very smooth. And there's the duality there and also. . . at the same time it's also successive since there are interruptions of quick movements, which practically cut off the others to superimpose themselves progressively. So it's even a successive duality like that.

[Et là on a, là aussi on a l'idée qui est dans le Chant des Ténèbres, quelque chose où il y a une sorte de temps arrêté, et au contraire une déclamation qui n'a rien à voir, qui est le plus expressif possible le plus anxieux possible sur quelque chose avec un temps très arrêté, lisse. Et la dualité là elle est aussi. . . c'est en même temps mais c'est aussi successivement puisqu'on a les interruptions des mouvements rapides, qui viennent pratiquement couper la parole pour s'imposer progressivement. C'est une dualité même successive comme ça.]

JC: So the idea of duality—different worlds—is that something that is present in all of your works, or just those from a certain time period?

TE: Yes, I think that it's present, well it's very present in the pieces from that time period, of all those young time periods. It was something internal that I wanted to translate. Maybe now. . . already I had gone beyond duality. In certain orchestral pieces, like *Le Vertige de la Croix* for example, there's three or four superimposed zones, like in a painting. *Le Vertige de la Croix* is a

orchestra piece I composed in 2004. Yeah, four different. . . it's based on the culture of painting, the painting of Rubens' *La descente de Croix*. And this piece it's. . . it's really superimposing different musical worlds, like in a painting, a sort of stained glass really, church windows. And so the third movement, it starts out like an organ piece that's called *Cinq Versées sur la Victimae Paschali*. This piece is very often played by organists. It starts out the same, but it develops differently afterwards. And I kind of do what Baroque composers did, that is, I like to use one idea from one piece in multiple different pieces with different instruments. There's Handel, for example, who has a concerto for organ which becomes a sonata for flute and bass etc., or a cantata, for example. And for me, it's kind of the same thing, I need to pick up again the idea from one piece, and here I had written verses before this piece, and I picked up again the idea of doing verses, but this time I went in different directions than verses after. I really exploited the idea of the first verse, which was very brief, one minute, and I kind of developed it. And I needed to develop it differently.

*[Oui, je pense que c'est présent, c'est énormément présent dans les pièces de cette époque-là, de toutes ces jeunes époques. C'est quelque chose d'intérieure que je voulais traduire. Peut-être maintenant. . . déjà j'étais plus loin que la dualité. Dans certaines pièces d'orchestre comme le Vertige de la Croix par exemple, là il y a carrément trois ou quatre zones superposées, comme une peinture. Vertige de la Croix is an orchestra piece I composed in 2004. It's based on the picture of painting, the painting of Rubens *La descente de Croix*. And this piece it's. . . C'est vraiment la superposition de mondes sonores différents, comme dans une peinture une sorte de vitrail en fait. Church windows, church windows. Et là et donc le troisième mouvement c'est un. . . ça reprend ça commence comme une pièce d'orgue qui s'appelle Cinq Versées sur la Victimae Paschali. . . this piece is very often played, with organists, Mais, elle commence pareil mais par contre elle se développe différemment après. Et j'aime bien. . . je fais un petit peu comme les compositeurs Baroques, c'est à dire que j'aime bien exploiter une idée d'une pièce sur plusieurs pièces différentes avec des instruments différents. On a, chez Handel par exemple, un concerto pour orgue ce qui devient une sonate pour flute et basse continue, et cetera, ou un air de cantate par exemple. Et moi c'est un peu pareil j'ai besoin de reprendre une idée d'une pièce, et là j'avais écrit des versées avant cette pièce, et j'ai repris l'idée des versées, et par contre je suis allé dans d'autres directions après que les versées. J'ai exploité vraiment l'idée du premier versée qui est très court, une minute, que j'ai développé un peu. Et j'avais besoin de le développer différemment.]*



JC: *Phantasia Antiqua*. The title—“ph,” *phantasia*—does that refer to a ghost?

TE: Yes, I did it, obviously, on purpose. It’s also a reference to German, since in German it’s spelled with “ph.” It is, yes, a little bit of a reference. I’ve often accompanied the film “Phantom of the Opera,” and so I think there’s that too. And then at the same time the reference to German.

[Oui, je pense que. . . oui j’ai fait, évidemment exprès. C’est aussi une référence à l’Allemand, puisqu’en Allemand c’est avec “ph.” C’est effectivement oui une référence un peu ... j’ai souvent accompagné le film “le fantôme de l’opéra” ... et je pense qu’il y a ça. Et puis en même temps la référence à l’Allemand, voilà.]

JC: In the second movement, you call for simultaneous singing and playing in the baritone saxophone part. How did you get that idea?

TE: I especially needed an element to go even further with the idea of polyphony. I’ve always liked these polyphonies that are created in the low parts of the instrument and that rise up progressively. The act of adding one part of polyphony by having the saxophone sing, giving it a presence that is a little more enigmatic, more polyphonic. And again, we find in this the idea of the passacaglia, but this time, in this movement it’s pretty different since the theme is rather. . . it’s. . . how can I say this? We no longer have the completely stable theme like in *Chant des Ténèbres*, it’s a progression of chords with slight rhythmic variations. The aspect that is, this is the word I was looking for, the hypnotic aspect of the passacaglia, the hypnotic aspect around which the different elements of the saxophone are born and then disappear.

[Ben là je, oui j’avais besoin de... j’avais besoin surtout d’un élément, d’aller plus loin dans l’idée polyphonique. J’ai toujours aimé ces polyphonies qui se créent dans le grave de l’instrument et qui montent progressivement. Le fait de rajouter effectivement une part de polyphonie en faisant chanter le saxophone, donner une présence un petit peu plus. . . un peu plus énigmatique, et polyphonique, tout simplement. Et encore on retrouve dans cette. . . donc l’idée de la passacaille, mais cette fois-ci, dans ce mouvement ce qui est assez différent c’est que le thème est assez... c’est un thème. . . comment dire? On a plus le thème complètement stable comme on avait dans le Chant des Ténèbres, c’est une succession d’accords avec des petites variations rythmiques. Le côté un peu, je cherchais le terme, le côté un peu hypnotique du thème de passacaille ce côté un peu hypnotique autour duquel naissent et disparaissent des éléments différents au saxophone.]

JC: For the singing and playing, is it okay if a female player sings the part an octave higher?

TE: Oh, yes. It's a little problematic. I do prefer when it's a man because it is more appropriate obviously for the range. And I think that at its origin it was for boys and it's just simpler. And I must admit that I didn't really think about the fact that the piece would surely be played by people who were not necessarily men. And so I haven't yet heard the result with a woman's voice. When I wrote this piece it was for Nicolas Prost's ensemble (where Prost played the baritone saxophone part).

[*Ah, oui. It's a little problematic. Oui, je préfère effectivement quand c'est un homme parce que ça convient mieux évidemment à la tessiture. Et je trouve qu'à la création c'était des garçons et c'est plus simple. Et je dois dire que j'avais pas, franchement j'avais pas pensé au fait que, que après la pièce serait certainement joué par des gens qui seraient pas forcément des hommes. Et donc j'ai jamais entendu le résultat, pour l'instant, avec une voix féminine. Quand j'ai fait cette pièce c'était pour l'ensemble de Nicolas Prost.*]

JC: The first movement you titled "Double Choir." Is that a reference to the genre, "Double Choir?"

TE: Yes, it's sort of a reference to the idea, even a little of the Venetian songs that call back and forth to each other from one rostrum to another. In Venice, at Saint Mark's for example, there are responses like that from one choir to another, and I quite like that idea also. Different choirs of the church. And when you play the organ, in particular. For example, I've played some organs. . . maybe you know the church at Passau, on the Austrian border? Between Germany and Austria, Passau. And there, the organist can set off six organs that are in different parts of the church. And so it's fascinating because you can set off sounds that come from the back, from above, from below. . . and so sometimes I think about that kinds of spatial positioning and the organist in the center, he can set off all these. . . by putting different registers he can set off that organ, that organ, that organ, etc. Passau—it's at the Austrian border. And so the second reference is also that this double-choir music makes me think about the music of the Renaissance. And what I was looking for also in this piece were measures with this old-fashioned rhythm (*rythmées à l'antique*). And if you're familiar with the music of Claude Le Jeune for example. It's a direct reference to Renaissance music that was written, often, in a double choir, for example. So it is also rhythmically very close to the music of the Renaissance, of this way of singing in the Renaissance, which is called *rythmée à l'antique*. Yes, *à l'antique* yeah. The rhythm like, do you know Claude Le Jeune? A little bit?

[*Oui, c'est une référence un peu à l'idée de, même un peu des chants Vénitiens qui se répondent d'une tribune à l'autre. À Venise, à Saint Marc de Venise par exemple, il y a comme ça des*

effets de réponses d'un coeur à l'autre, et ça j'aime bien aussi cette idée-là. Different choirs of the church. Et quand vous jouez de l'orgue notamment, par exemple j'ai joué certains orgues. . . peut-être connaissez-vous l'église de Passau à la frontière Autrichienne? Entre l'Allemagne et l'Autriche, Passau. Et il y a. . . l'organiste peut déclencher six orgues qui sont dans différentes parties de l'église. Et donc c'est passionnant parce que vous pouvez déclencher des sons qui viennent du fond, au dessus, en dessous, et voilà quelque fois je pense à ce genre de disposition spatiale et l'organiste au milieu il peut déclencher tous ces. . . en mettant différents registres il déclenche tel orgue, tel orgue, tel orgue, et cetera. Passau c'est la frontière Autrichienne. Alors, la seconde référence aussi c'est que cette musique de la double coeur me fait penser à la musique de la Renaissance. Et ce que je cherchais aussi dans cette pièce c'est les mesures rythmées à l'antique: [singing]. Et si vous connaissez la musique de Claude Le Jeune par exemple [singing], c'est une référence direct à la musique de la Renaissance qui était souvent écrite en double coeur par exemple, donc c'est rythmiquement aussi très proche de l'idée de la Renaissance, de cette façon de chanter à la Renaissance, ce qu'on appelle la musique rythmée à l'antique. Oui, à l'antique ouais. The rhythm like, do you know Claude Le Jeune? A little bit?]

JC: Yes.

TE: Well, the rhythm is not regular. The rhythm is like verses of Greek poems.

[Well, the rhythm is not regularly, it just [singing]. *C'est rythmé comme des vers de poèmes Grecs.*]

JC: Like the meter of the poems?

TE: Yes, yes, exactly. It's one reference of this piece.

[*Oui oui, voilà, c'est vraiment* [singing]. It's *voilà*, it's one reference of this piece.]

JC: Oh, very good. And in the alto part at the beginning?

TE: That could be a Renaissance melody.

[*Ça pourrait être une mélodie de la Renaissance.*]

JC: Do you like it played like a dance?

TE: Yes, it's really prosody, it's prosody with a rhythm. It's kind of the ancestor of rap.

[*Oui, en fait c'est de la prosodie c'est une prosodie rythmée. C'est un peu l'ancêtre du rap.*]



JC: You have written that *Le Bal* is influenced by the distant memory of the film by the same name. Is the piece only loosely influenced by the film, or does the film hold special significance for you?

TE: Yes, the film is not very well-known in France, but it's a film that is well-known in the world of cinema. And it's true, the idea when I see this empty ball scene, and then the dancers entering and exiting according to historic events. . . so I had the idea to do a piece where the different dances aligned with different musical parts, pathways for the transitions so that there was less going on. Yes, according to events in history. And I had already written, just before, a string quartet that was called *Scènes de Bal*, which was just five scenes. But I actually preferred—since it was commissioned by Radio France, I had to do five little pieces, two minutes each. And when I was able, I adapted these five pieces to this format, which to me was more satisfying because there's really the idea of form, there's really a poetic unravelling that was absent in *Scènes de Bal* because it was separate scenes. And then in this piece, what's important too is that it. . . it's the first time that I was using dances—not only ritual dances this time like in *Chant des Ténèbres*--but popular dances. And that I was stylizing them to make music, like Stravinsky. And here too, what was interesting to me was being able to find progressive transitions, where a waltz changes shape and reappears as a tango, and then reappears again as a slow dance. What interests me in this piece are these transformations between these periods of dance.

[Oui, le film effectivement, c'est pas un film qui est très connu en France, mais c'est un film qui est connu dans le monde du cinéma. Et c'est vrai que l'idée quand je voyais cette scène de bal vide, et puis les danseurs rentrer, sortir, en fonction des événements historiques. . . j'ai eu l'idée comme ça de faire une pièce où s'enchaînaient les diverses danses avec des parties, des conduits en fait de transition où il se passait moins de choses. Oui, en fonction des événements historiques. Et j'avais déjà écrit juste avant donc un quatuor à cordes qui s'appelait Scènes de Bal, qui était juste cinq scènes. Mais je préférais justement—là j'ai, comme c'est une commande de Radio France, j'étais obligé de faire cinq petites pièces de deux minutes, et quand j'ai pu effectivement j'ai adapté ces cinq pièces dans cette forme qui, moi, me satisfait plus puisqu'il y a vraiment l'idée d'une forme, il y a vraiment tout un déroulement poétique qu'il n'y avait pas dans les Scènes de Bal puisque c'était des scènes séparées. Et puis dans cette pièce, ce qui est important c'est que c'est aussi. . . c'est la première fois que j'utilisais des danses. Alors, pas seulement, pas cette fois-ci rituelles comme Chant des Ténèbres, mais des danses populaires. Et que je les stylisais pour faire de la musique, like Stravinsky. Et justement, là aussi ce qui m'intéressait c'est d'arriver à trouver des transitions progressives où une valse se déformait pour réapparaître en tango, pour réapparaître en slow. Ce qui m'intéresse dans cette pièce ce sont les transformations justement entre ces périodes de danse.]

TE: And also, just one last thing, later on when Benjamin Millepied asked me to write a ballet for New York, the New York City Ballet in 2009, I remember that he wanted me to start from the idea of that piece [*Le Bal* or *Scènes de Bal*], and that I augmented it for an orchestra, to make it really a ballet around which he could organize his choreography. So I started with some ideas from that piece and it became an orchestral piece, “The Lost Dancer,” and he made his choreography for that. So I created “The Lost Dancer,” and it was played in 2010, I think in New York, at the New York City Ballet.

[*Et d’ailleurs, une dernière chose, et d’ailleurs après quand Benjamin Millepied m’a demandé de faire un ballet pour New York, le New York City Ballet, en 2009, je me souviens qu’il avait demandé, il avait dit qu’il souhaitait que je reparte de l’idée de cette pièce, et que je l’augmente pour orchestre, pour en faire vraiment un ballet sur lequel il allait organiser sa chorégraphie. Donc j’ai été reparti sur certaines idées de cette pièce et c’est devenu une pièce d’orchestre “The Lost Dancer” et là il a créé une chorégraphie là-dessus. And I created “The Lost Dancer” and it was played in 2010, I think in New York, New York City Ballet.*]

JC: The first dance of the piece, where does it first occur? Is it this [m. 36]?

TE: Yes. It’s the rhythm of the waltz. Here we have the end of the introduction and we have the rhythm appear, progressively. It’s very important progressively with some motifs. And over here [mm. 45-114], we see the progressive build-up of the different motifs of the waltz.

[*Oui. It’s the rhythm of the waltz, here. Là we have the end of the introduction et we have the rhythm appear, progressively it’s very important [singing] progressively with the [singing] some motifs. . . [singing]. Et par là on assiste à la construction progressive des diverses motifs de la valse.*]

JC: Right. And then—

TE: And I wanted there to be sometimes these whirlwinds of waltz, almost. The reference was basically Strauss’s waltz.

[*Et je voulais qu’on aye quelquefois des tourbillons de valse, presque. . . la référence c’était pratiquement la valse de Strauss.*]

JC: Strauss?

TE: It’s less calm than Strauss’s music, but that was the reference.

[*C’est moins serein que la musique de Strauss, mais c’était la référence.*]

JC: Johann Strauss, the waltz composer? Not Richard?

TE: It's a reference for me to Richard Strauss's waltz music. We can have the spirit of Richard in the music: Romantic, these pieces are, especially the waltz.

JC: Right, OK. And then, the slower part [m. 239], is there any tango influence?

TE: It's the tango, but as always with me there's the... I have a structure and I break it. So I sometimes break the rhythm of the tango. You can recognize the rhythm, but it's still a little bit broken, it's never exact.

[C'est le tango mais avec, toujours chez moi un côté. . . j'ai une structure et je la casse. Donc je casse quelquefois le rythme du tango. On reconnaît le rythme mais il est quand même un petit peu cassé il est jamais exact.]

JC: Right.

TE: Definitely people would not be able to dance this tango.

[C'est sur que les gens peuvent pas danser sur ce tango.]

JC: Right, of course. And this section [m. 322]?

TE: This was the idea of the slow dance. Ideally, it's the idea of being able to swing a little, there's this rhythmic rocking. It's at the same time the idea of rocking the slow, so a little bit of swing, which is the slow swing, and at the same time the idea of a tempo that is completely stopped, completely poetic, stopped. It's a double idea. And this is where there's a transformation [m. 333], as if an event had occurred. There's the brutal transformation into something very intense which happens suddenly, and then it falls back down. Yes, it's a rather brutal piece, since we're in this slow dance and all of a sudden we stop and we go into something that is very, very lyrical and almost obsessive. Right here [m. 333]. It tips into a more dramatic world.

[Là c'était l'idée du slow, le slow, la danse le slow. L'idéal, c'est de [singing] d'arriver à swinguer un peu, il y a ce balancement rythmique [singing]. C'est à la fois l'idée du balancement du slow, donc le swing un peu, qui est le swing lent, et à la fois l'idée d'un temps et complètement arrêté, complètement poétique, arrêté. C'est une double idée. Et on a. . . c'est là qu'on a une transformation (m. 333), comme si un événement été arrivé. On a la transformation brutale en quelque chose de très intense [singing] qui vient tout à coup, et ça retombe. Donc là on est vraiment dans la structure qui se. . . Oui, c'est une pièce assez brutale, d'ailleurs, parce qu'on est dans ce slow, et tout à coup on s'arrête et on passe à quelque chose qui est très très

lyrique et presque obsessionnel [singing]. Right here (m. 333). *Il bascule dans un monde plus dramatique.*]

JC: And then that moves into the disco [at m. 357]?

TE: Yeah.

[*Ouais.*]

JC: That one I understood! Disco. How did you come up with this [sixteenth-note flurry at m. 400]?

TE: Ah—it isn't specifically a dance. Once we've got these four dances: waltz, tango, slow dance, and disco, in a certain way afterwards it's a sort of coda, recapitulating everything that has happened in the piece. And here [m.400], it's a kind of a signal. It makes us tip over from a waltz, to a tango, to reminiscences. All of this has to swirl together and get mixed up in the end.

[*Ah—c'est pas précisément une danse. C'est en fait, une fois qu'on a ces quatre danses: la valse, le tango, le slow, et le disco, d'une certaine manière après c'est une sorte de, comment dire, de coda, ce mouvement, récapitulatif de tout ce qui a pu se passer dans la pièce. Et là on passe d'un. . . ça c'est une sorte de signal qu'on peut déchaîner* [singing] *et qui nous fait basculer d'une valse, à un tango, à des reminiscences, tout ça doit se tournoyer et se mélanger en fait à la fin.*]



JC: Did a particular style of tango inspire or influence your piece, *Tango Virtuoso*?

TE: I think that it's a mix of everything. That is to say, when I was young, I played the accordion, and it was my very first instrument. And so I played a lot of popular music, tangos, waltzes, and others. And I remember, very clearly, the concert for which I wrote this. I was with Jean-Pierre Baraglioli, it was at the Grand Palais in Paris, and we had to do a concert of tangos for piano and alto saxophone. There were tangos by Piazzolla, by Carlos Gardel—there were all different kinds of tangos. And they were missing some tangos; they were a little bit short on music as I recall. And I remember I wrote this [*Tango Virtuoso*] on the afternoon of the concert, before playing that night. I wrote out Jean-Pierre's part and I improvised on the piano. And afterwards, Jean-Pierre asked me to write down the piece, and rather than writing for piano and saxophone, he said to me “could you instead write it for my saxophone quartet?” And so a few days later I wrote for him what we had done that afternoon, and then he played it all over the place. And that's the whole story. It was simple, really a kind of on-the-spot improvisation.

[Je pense que c'est un mélange de tout. C'est à dire que quand j'étais jeune je pratiquais l'accordéon, et c'était mon premier instrument. Et donc j'ai fait beaucoup de musique populaire, des tangos, des valse, et autres. Et je me souviens très bien que pour le concert pour lequel j'avais fait ça, on avait fait avec Jean-Pierre Baraglioli, c'était au Grand Palais à Paris, on devait faire un concert piano et saxophone alto, ou il y avait que des tangos. Un concert de tango. Oui, I played the piano. Oui, avec des tangos, il y avait du Piazzolla, il y avait du Carlos Gardel, il y avait, voilà, divers tangos. Et il manquait un peu de tango, il manquait un peu de musique je crois, si je me souviens bien. Et je me souviens avoir écrit ça dans l'après-midi du concert, avant de jouer le soir j'ai écrit la partie de Jean-Pierre, et moi j'ai improvisé au piano. Et après, Jean-Pierre m'a demandé d'écrire le tango, et plutôt que d'écrire piano-saxophone, il m'a dit "est-ce que tu pourrais l'écrire pour mon quatuor de saxophone?" Et là après je le lui ai écrit ce qu'on avait fait pour une après-midi quelques jours après je le lui ai écrit et puis il l'a joué un peu partout. Et voilà comme ça l'histoire. C'est simple en fait, c'est pratiquement une sorte d'improvisation sur le moment.]

JC: Do you have a preferred tempo for this piece?

TE: It depends. There are many possibilities. Not too fast I think. When it's too fast, it's no longer the tango. When you play *Libertango*, when you play Piazzolla, other tangos, classical tangos of Gardel, you need to have a certain density, a certain forcefulness, you can't go too fast with the tango, I think. It's a sensual dance, and at the same time it's not a very quick dance. The force of sensuality is most important.

[It depends. There are many possibilities. Not too fast I think. When it's too fast, it's no more the tango. When you play Libertango, when you play Piazzolla, some other tango, classical tangos of Gardel, you play [singing]. Pour avoir une certaine densité, une certaine force, il faut pas le prendre trop vite le tango, je pense. C'est une danse sensuelle et en même temps voilà c'est pas une danse très rapide, c'est une danse plutôt dans la sensualité, la force de la sensualité.]

JC: I don't know if you're aware that this is probably your most popular work in the saxophone community. Does its popularity surprise you?

TE: No. It's normal because it's a piece that is very classical in style. It's a piece of genre music that really makes a direct reference to tango music, and at the same time, it's written in a contrapuntal-enough way so that every voice can speak. All the saxophones can express themselves within this tango. It's pretty rare to have a tango written in such a contrapuntal way, so I think that's why the piece is played so much. When I first wrote the piece, I never imagined that it would be played so much around the world. I just did it. I did it for Jean-Pierre

Baraglioli, so that he could play it, since he liked it. But I thought it was a piece that would not be played again after that. I did not foresee that all the saxophone quartets would play this piece. It was just one afternoon at the Grand Palais in Paris, just a little improvisation. But, I understand why it might be interesting, for the reasons we said, for saxophone quartets to perform.

[No. . . *c'est normale parce que c'est une pièce très classique de style et c'est vrai que c'est une pièce un peu. . . comment dire, c'est une pièce de musique de genre, dans ma production, qui fait vraiment une référence directe, donc la musique tango, et d'un autre côté c'est une pièce écrite de façon assez contrapuntique et donc tout le monde parle, et c'est vrai que pour les saxophonistes, tout le monde peut s'exprimer à l'intérieur du tango, tous les saxophones. Donc c'est assez rare d'avoir un tango écrit de manière aussi contrapuntique. . . voilà donc c'est pour ça que la pièce est beaucoup jouée, je pense. Non, quand j'ai fait la pièce, j'imaginai pas du tout que ça serait une pièce très jouée dans le monde. J'ai juste fait ça. . . j'avais fait ça pour Jean-Pierre Baraglioli, pour qu'il puisse le jouer, ça lui plaisait, mais je pense que c'est une pièce qui serait jamais jouée après. . . je pensais que c'était juste Jean-Pierre Baraglioli qui la jouerait. Mais j'avais pas prévu que tous les quatuors de saxophone jouerait cette pièce en fait. C'était une après-midi au Grand Palais à Paris, une sorte de petite improvisation. Mais, je comprends effectivement que ça puisse intéresser, pour les raisons qu'on a dit, je comprends après que ça puisse intéresser pas mal de quatuor, pour ce qu'on a dit avant.]*



JC: The opening melody of *Lutte* sounds like a reference to plainchant. Did you intend this?

TE: It resembles the incantations of some Gregorian psalms, yes. It resembles them. But it's not specifically one Gregorian theme. But it is really a very violent declamation, it's actually a rather violent piece really. It has a matching piece for the organ, and I think I actually wrote the organ piece afterwards. It's *Lutte* that came first, and the corresponding piece for organ called *Le Cri des Abîmes*. It's a piece that is notoriously difficult for the organ. *Le Cri des Abîmes* is my fourth *Esquisse*. *Esquisse* is the name of a series of pieces... *Esquisse 1*, *Esquisse 2*, *Esquisse 3*, *Esquisse 4*. And the fourth is *Le Cri des Abîmes*. Both *Lutte* and *Le Cri des Abîmes* have the same theme [that acts as the basis of each piece].

[Ça ressemble à des incantations de certains psaumes Grégoriens, oui. Ça ressemble. Mais c'est pas spécifiquement un thème Grégorien. Mais c'est une déclamation très violente en fait, c'est une pièce assez violente en fait, qui fait. . . Alors, elle a son pendant à l'orgue, et je crois d'ailleurs que j'ai fait la pièce pour orgue après. C'est la pièce *Lutte* qui était avant, et elle a son pendant pour orgue, et pour orgue elle s'appelle *Le Cri des Abîmes*. Et c'est une pièce qui est redoutablement difficile pour l'orgue. Et c'est *Le Cri des Abîmes*, mon quatrième *Esquisse*

en fait. Il y a quatre Esquisses pour orgue, et c'est la quatrième Esquisse. "Esquisses" c'est le nom d'une série de pièces, Esquisse 1, Esquisse 2, Esquisse 3, Esquisse 4. Et the fourth is Le Cri des Abîmes and it is the basis of this piece. Both Lutte et Le Cri des Abîmes have the same theme.]

JC: Why did you decide to use the slap tongue so prominently?

TE: In the part where there's slap, I really needed layers, up to three superimposed layers. And what really interested me was differentiating at the level of melodic motifs, but also at the level of manner of playing. So I really needed a different manner of playing for the bass part, a different manner of playing for the middle part, and a different manner of playing for the top part.

[Dans la partie ou il y a du slap, j'avais besoin d'avoir vraiment des plans, jusqu'à trois plans superposés, et ce qui m'intéresse justement c'est d'avoir, de différencier au niveau des motifs mélodiques mais aussi au niveau des modes de jeu. Donc j'avais vraiment besoin d'un mode de jeu différent pour la partie grave, [singing] d'un mode de jeu différent pour la partie médiane et d'un mode de jeu différent pour la partie au-dessus.]

JC: And so the title, *Lutte*, meaning "fight," is a description these different voices, different levels?

TE: Yes, it's interesting because it is really a reference to the music of Johann Sebastian Bach for a single instrument, precisely because it's a melodic music but it's also harmonic. When you play a solo cello sonata by Bach, you have the harmony, which is magnificently made, but it's only implied [in a single melodic line]. So here it's the same thing: in a way, it's polyphony, but with a single instrument.

[Oui, c'est intéressant parce que la référence en fait, moi j'aime beaucoup la musique de Jean Sebastian Bach pour instrument seul, parce que justement c'est une musique mélodique mais qui est musique harmonique. . . quand vous jouez une sonate pour violoncelle seul de Bach, vous avez l'harmonie qui est magnifiquement faite, elle est sous-entendu. Et ben là c'est pareil: d'une certaine manière, c'est une pièce polyphonique à un instrument.]



JC: In general, your music has this obsession with rhythm, a driving rhythm. How did you come to your approach to rhythm and meter?

TE: Difficult to say that. I think it comes from many composers and it also comes from the music. My music is fairly organic, like a lot of music by Mahler or Franck. There's a sort of

pulse that's trying to get through. That's the first baseline of my music, something organic. There are almost psychological pulses that play out in the music, like in the symphonies of Mahler, for example. And to give off these pulses, these advances in music, I need a fairly strong rhythmic force. Because, for me, dance—the expression of the body—is part of musical expression. It's the first musical expression, I think, in the world, since the dawn of time. It's true that there are composers who influenced me too, who had that approach to rhythm. It's very important to me, and it's that rhythmic force in Bartok's music which really intrigued me, more than Messiaen, I think. Messiaen is more an influence in terms of modes and colors, but not directly on rhythm; Messiaen's rhythm is a bit different.

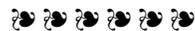
[Difficult to say that. *Je pense que c'est, l'approche qui est, ça vient de plusieurs compositeurs ça vient aussi bien de la musique. . . ma musique est assez organique, comme beaucoup de musique par exemple de Mahler ou de Franck, c'est une musique très organique. Il y a une sorte de pulsion qui essaye de passer. Ça c'est la première base de ma musique, organique. C'est des pulsions presque psychologiques qui se mettent en oeuvre dans la musique comme les symphonies de Mahler par exemple. Pour donner ses pulsions, ses avancées en musique, j'ai besoin d'une puissance rythmique assez forte. Parce que pour moi la danse, l'expression du corps fait parti de la, de l'expression musicale c'est la première expression musicale je pense, dans le monde, depuis la nuit des temps. Alors après c'est vrai qu'il y a des compositeurs qui m'ont marqué aussi, qui ont eu cette approche du rythme. It's very important to me, et justement c'est la force rythmique, certainement Bartok qui m'avait passionné plus que Messiaen je pense. Messiaen c'est plus une influence des modes, éventuellement des couleurs, mais pas directement du rythme, c'est une autre gestion chez Messiaen.*]



JC: There are a lot of different influences in your work, including sacred music, dance music, popular music. How do you see these influences in your work?

TE: For me, there are many influences. There's sacred music, Gregorian chant, there's pop music, there are various styles. My experience as an accordionist, my experience as an organist, my love of romantic music, my own interest in popular music, like traditional music from Africa or elsewhere—all of them are in my music. The composer really is a fusion of these heterogeneous materials. This is what Messiaen really did well. This fusion is really what makes up the style of the composer. Pop music, folk music, international music, romantic music, baroque music—we're working with a fusion of these materials. So, the sacred aspect of my music, it's one part of this, but it's not everything. But I can definitely say that people who talk about my music, they say that there's a sort of battle between a mystical aspect and a more sensual aspect, and the two are in battle. Whereas the music of Duruflé is maybe more exclusively mystical, mine is not. I'm Duruflé but more sensual.

[Je pense que quand on est compositeur, ce qui est intéressant c'est d'avoir différentes bases c'est. . . on a des matériaux hétérogènes. Et il y a chez moi il y a le sacré, il y a le Grégorien, il y a la pop music, il y a diverses. . . mon expérience comme accordéoniste, mon expérience comme organiste, les musiques romantiques, la musique romantique est très importante pour moi, aussi mes intérêts dans les musiques populaires comme les musiques traditionnelle africaine ou autre. Et le compositeur en fait, il fait une sorte de fusion de tout ces matériaux hétérogènes. Et ce ce que faisait Messiaen aussi très bien. Et c'est cette fusion qui fait le compositeur en fait, le style du compositeur. Pop music, folk music, international music, Romantic music, Baroque music, et on opère une fusion entre ces matériaux et le style du compositeur c'est justement cette fusion qui fait son style donc, le côté sacré chez moi, c'est une des parts de cette chose mais c'est pas tout. Mail y a, on peut dire effectivement, on peut dire beaucoup de gens qui parlent de ma musique le disent, ils disent que chez moi il y a une sorte de lutte entre un aspect mystique et un aspect plus sensuel, ils sont tous les deux en lutte et sensual. Alors que la musique de Duruflé est peut-être plus exclusivement mystique. En fait je suis Duruflé plus le sensuel.]



JC: Your last name, Escaich, what ethnicity is that?

TE: It's French, but it's from the south of France. It's an unusual name, so people have a hard time pronouncing it, even on the radio or on TV. It's actually a name that comes from Gascogne, which is the southwest of France, near the Pyrénées mountains.

[C'est Français. Français, mais c'est du sud de la France. C'est un nom qui est inhabituel, un nom qui est pas du tout habituel en France, donc les gens on du mal à le prononcer même sur les radios ou à la télévision parce que on sait pas. Et en fait c'est un nom qui vient de la Gascogne, c'est le sud-ouest de la France, les Pyrénées, les montagnes Pyrénées.]

JC: Do you come from a musical family?

TE: No, completely not. The accordion was my first instrument, and I quickly started improvising on the organ at the nearby church, the church next to where I lived. My parents brought me and I improvised on the organ, but it was self-taught.

[No, completely not. J'ai commencé par l'accordéon, et après j'ai improvisé rapidement à l'orgue d'église à côté, l'église à côté de la ou j'habitais, rapidement. Mes parents m'ont amené, j'ai improvisé à l'orgue aussi de l'église et voilà, de façon autodidacte.]

JC: This was in Nogent-Sur-Marne?

TE: I was born in Nogent-Sur-Marne, but I was already living at Rosny-sous-Bois, where I still live today.

[Je suis né à Nogent-Sur-Marne, mais j'habitais déjà à Rosny-sous-Bois ou j'habite toujours aujourd'hui.]

JC: What church was it?

TE: Sainte Genevieve at Rosny-sous-Bois. A little church when I was a child. And after that, of course, I came to the Paris Conservatory, here actually. I did my studies: harmony, counterpoint, fugue, organ, improvisation, composition. . . [etc.]



JC: You sometimes accompany silent films with improvisations. Do you have a specific approach to improvisation for film?

TE: No, it's not a specific approach. It's just that it so happens that I like cinema, and I like being in dialogue with the filmmakers: Hitchcock, Scorsese, and others. There's something operatic, really, when you're improvising for a film. Something close to opera, to the dramaturgy of opera. And I try to get as close as possible to the dramaturgy of an opera when I accompany a silent film. I think that my profession as a composer helps me a lot to improvise for films, because I try to reinforce the structure of the film by using big, formal movements, which I would be able to include in a composed piece. It's not just putting a pretty harmony underneath an image. It's a thought-out dramatic construction. I like doing it.

[Non, c'est pas une approche spécifique. C'est juste que il se trouve que j'aime le cinéma, et j'aime dialoguer avec les cinéastes: Hitchcock, Scorsese, et d'autres, et donc j'essaye de mettre ce. . . il y a quelque-chose de l'opéra en fait, quand on improvise sur un film. Quelque-chose proche de l'opéra, de la dramaturgie de l'opéra. Et j'essaye de me rapprocher au plus possible d'une dramaturgie d'opéra quand j'accompagne un film muet. Je crois que mon métier de compositeur m'aide beaucoup à improviser pour le film, parce que j'essaye de renforcer la forme du film par des grands mouvements formels que je pourrais faire dans une oeuvre de compositeur. C'est pas juste de mettre une jolie harmonie sous une image. C'est une construction dramatique, pensée. J'aime faire ça.]

APPENDIX B: COMPLETE LIST OF ESCAICH'S COMPOSITIONS FOR SAXOPHONE

Table B.1. Primary Works for Saxophone

Composition Title	Instrumentation	Year
<i>Antiennes Oubliées</i>	Violin, cello, flute, alto saxophone, trumpet, trombone, percussion	1989
<i>Le Chant des Ténèbres</i>	Solo soprano saxophone and saxophone ensemble (or strings)	1992
<i>Le Bal</i>	Saxophone quartet	2003
<i>Lutte</i>	Solo alto saxophone	1994
<i>Phantasia Antiqua</i>	Two saxophones and piano	2009
<i>Trois Intermezzi</i>	Saxophone (alto, baritone), flute, clarinet (B-flat, bass)	1990

Table B.2. Pedagogical Works for Saxophone

Composition Title	Instrumentation	Year
<i>Amelie's Dream</i>	Alto saxophone and piano	1997
<i>Sax Trip</i>	Solo alto saxophone and string orchestra	2006
<i>Suite en forme de choral varié</i>	Orchestra and children's chorus (includes saxophone quartet)	1990
<i>Tango Virtuoso</i>	Saxophone quartet	1991
<i>8 Pièces</i>	Alto saxophone and piano	1992

APPENDIX C: COMPLETE LIST OF ESCAICH'S COMPOSITIONS

Table C.1. Works for Solo Organ

Composition Title	Year
<i>Agnus Dei</i>	2003
<i>Chorals-Études</i>	2010
<i>Deux Évocations</i>	1996
<i>Évocation III</i>	2008
<i>Évocation IV</i>	2014
<i>Five Verses on the "Victimae paschali"</i>	1991
<i>Poems for organ</i>	2002
<i>Quatrième Esquisse ("Le Cri des Abîmes")</i>	1993
<i>Récit</i>	1995
<i>Tanz-Paraphrase</i>	2015
<i>Trois Esquisses</i>	1990

Table C.2. Instrumental Solos

Composition Title	Instrumentation	Year
<i>Aria</i>	Piano	2002
<i>Cantus I</i>	Cello	2005
<i>Cantus II</i>	Harp	2011
<i>Étude jazz</i>	Piano	2016
<i>Jeux de doubles</i>	Piano	2001
<i>Les Litanies de l'ombre</i>	Piano	1991
<i>Lutte</i>	Alto Saxophone	1994
<i>Nun komm</i>	Violin	2001
<i>Trois Études Baroques</i>	Piano	2009/11
<i>Trois Études Impressionnistes</i>	Piano	2010/12

Table C.3. Chamber Music

Composition Title	Instrumentation	Year
<i>Antiennes Oubliées</i>	Violin, cello, flute, alto saxophone, trumpet, trombone, percussion	1989
<i>Après l'Aurore</i>	String quartet	2005
<i>Choral's Dream</i>	Piano and organ	2001
<i>Chorus</i>	Clarinet, string quartet, and piano	1998
<i>Comme l'écho d'une fantaisie</i>	Two cornets and organ	1992
<i>Ground I</i>	Accordion and euphonium	1997
<i>Ground II</i>	Organ and percussion	2007
<i>Ground III</i>	Four cellos	2008
<i>Ground IV</i>	Four clarinets	2011
<i>Ground V</i>	Organ and horn	2011
<i>Ground VI</i>	Two clarinets	2012
<i>Introït à l'Office des Ténèbres</i>	Flute and harpe bleue or piano	1992
<i>La Ronde</i>	String quartet and piano	2000
<i>Le Bal</i>	Saxophone quartet	2003
<i>Lettres Mêlées</i>	Violin, cello, piano	2003
<i>Magic Circus</i>	Wind octet	2004
<i>Phantasia Antiqua</i>	Two saxophones and piano	2011
<i>Psalmodie à l'Office des ténèbres</i>	Flute, harpe bleue, percussion	1992
<i>Rhapsodie</i>	Clarinet, bassoon, cornet, trombone, violin, double bass, percussion	1989
<i>Scènes de Bal</i>	String quartet	2001
<i>Scènes d'enfant au crépuscule</i>	Flute, cello, piano	1993
<i>Sopra la Folia</i>	Cello and tap/body percussion	2014
<i>Spring's Dance</i>	Two pianos and two percussionists	2003
<i>Tanz-Fantasie</i>	Trumpet and organ	2000
<i>Tanz-Fantasie</i>	Trumpet and piano	2003
<i>Trio Américain ("Suppliques")</i>	Clarinet, viola, piano	1994
<i>Trois Intermezzi</i>	Flute, clarinet, saxophone	1990
<i>Una Storia</i>	Violin, viola, cello, clarinet, percussion, piano	2005
<i>Variations Gothiques</i>	Flute and string trio	1996

Table C.4. Concertos

Composition Title	Instrumentation	Year
<i>Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra</i>	Clarinet and orchestra	2012
<i>Concerto for Organ No. 1</i>	Solo organ and orchestra	1995
<i>Concerto for Organ No. 2</i>	Solo organ and orchestra	2006
<i>Concerto for Organ No. 3, “Quatre Visages du Temps”</i>	Solo organ and orchestra	2018
<i>Concerto for Violin and Orchestra</i>	Violin and orchestra	2009
<i>Concerto for Violin, Oboe and Orchestra</i>	Violin, oboe, and orchestra	2014
<i>Concerto for Cello and Orchestra</i>	Cello and orchestra	2014
<i>Le Chant des Ténèbres</i>	Solo saxophone and saxophone ensemble (or strings)	1992
<i>Le Chant des Ténèbres</i>	Solo clarinet and strings (arrangement)	2008
<i>Élégie</i>	Trumpet and instrumental ensemble	1996
<i>Fantaisie Concertante</i>	Piano and orchestra	1995
<i>La Nuit des Chants</i>	Concerto for viola and orchestra	2018
<i>Miroir d’ombres</i>	Violin, cello, and orchestra	2006
<i>Résurgences</i>	Solo trumpet and orchestra	2002
<i>Scherzo Fantasque</i>	Two pianos and orchestra	2011

Table C.5. String Orchestra

Composition Title	Year
<i>Émergence</i>	1988
<i>Erinnerung</i>	2009
<i>Prélude symphonique</i>	2013

Table C.6. Orchestra

Composition Title	Year
<i>Baroque Song</i>	2007
<i>Chaconne</i>	2000
<i>Concerto for Orchestra</i>	2015
<i>Intrada</i>	2003
<i>La Barque Solaire</i>	2008
<i>First Symphony, “Kyrie d’une messe imaginaire”</i>	1992
<i>Psalmos</i>	2016
<i>Orchestral Suite from the opera “Claude”</i>	2014
<i>Vertiges de la Croix</i>	2004

Table C.7. Vocal Music

Composition Title	Instrumentation	Year
<i>D'une douleur muette</i>	Soprano, organ or piano, cello	2001
<i>Enluminures</i>	Soprano, cello, organ	2015
<i>Guernesey</i>	Tenor and piano	2010
<i>Les Lamentations</i>	Four mixed solo voices	1998
<i>Les Miroirs de la ville</i>	Voice and piano	2013
<i>Les Nuits hallucinées</i>	Mezzo-soprano and orchestra	2008
<i>Madre</i>	Soprano and piano	2009
<i>Terra desolata</i>	Four solo male voices and baroque ensemble	2001
<i>Une journée particulière</i>	Tenor, speaker, and piano	2013
<i>Valse désarticulée</i>	Soprano voice, alto saxophone	2007
<i>Visions nocturnes</i>	Mezzo-soprano, clarinet, string quartet, piano	2004

Table C.8. Unaccompanied Chorus

Composition Title	Year
<i>Ad Ultimas Laudes</i>	1993
<i>Alléluia</i>	2001
<i>Dixit Dominus</i>	2002
<i>Sanctus</i>	2007
<i>Vocus Caelestis</i>	2009

Table C.9. Chorus and Instruments

Composition Title	Instrumentation	Year
<i>Alléluias pro omni tempore</i>	Mixed chorus and chamber orchestra	2010
<i>Cris (Oratorio)</i>	Narrator, chamber choir, eight cellos, percussion, accordion	2016
<i>Exultet</i>	12 voices, organ, piano, percussion	2005
<i>Feu vert</i>	Children's chorus and instrumental ensemble	2005
<i>In Memoriam</i>	Mixed chorus and organ	2002
<i>La Piste des Chants</i>	Children's choir and orchestra	2018
<i>Le Dernier Évangile</i>	Double mixed choir, orchestra, organ	1999
<i>Litanies pour un jubilé</i>	4-part chorus, 2-part chorus, two organs, brass, percussion	2015
<i>Messe romane</i>	Mixed chorus and organ	2014
<i>Night's Birds</i>	Vocal ensemble and cello	2016
<i>Questions de vie...</i>	12 mixed voices, accordion	2011
<i>Three Motets</i>	12 mixed voices and organ	1998

Table C.10. Stage

Title	Type of Production/Instrumentation	Year
<i>The Lost Dancer</i>	Ballet/Orchestra	2010
<i>Claude</i>	Opera	2013

Table C.11. Film

Title	Type of Production	Year
<i>Seventh Heaven</i>	Musical Accompaniment to Silent Film	1999

Table C.12. Songs

Title	Instrumentation	Year
<i>Elle disait</i>	Voice, string trio, clarinet, piano	2008
<i>Maintenant, j'ai grandi</i>	Voice, string trio, clarinet, piano	2008

Table C.13. Arrangements

Title	Instrumentation	Year
<i>Entre le boeuf et l'âne gris</i> (French carol)	Mixed chorus	2010

Table C.14. Pedagogical Works

Composition Title	Instrumentation	Year
<i>Amélie's Dream</i>	Alto saxophone and piano	1997
<i>Choral varié</i>	Junior orchestra	1984
<i>Énigme</i>	Double bass and piano	1992
<i>Étude-Passacaille</i>	Piano	2009
<i>Sax Trip</i>	Solo alto saxophone and junior orchestra	2006
<i>Suite en forme choral varié</i>	Junior orchestra and children's chorus	1990
<i>Tango Virtuoso</i>	Saxophone quartet	1991
<i>Tango Virtuoso</i>	Clarinet quartet (arrangement)	2005
<i>Variations-Études</i>	Piano	2002
<i>8 Pièces</i>	Alto saxophone and piano	1992

APPENDIX D: DISCOGRAPHY OF ESCAICH'S PRIMARY WORKS FOR SAXOPHONE

Table D.1. Discography of Escaich's Primary Works for Saxophone

<i>Le Bal</i>
Ellipsos Saxophone Quartet. <i>Bolero</i> . Genuin 14543, 2014.
Escaich, Thierry. <i>Magic Circus</i> . Axone Saxophone Quartet. Indesens INDE060, 2014.
Quatuor Jean-Yves Fourmeau. <i>Le Bal</i> . Airopionic 5411499 80062, 2005.
Oasis Saxophone Quartet. <i>Chamber Music—Glass, Gotkovsky, Escaich</i> . INNOVA 744, 2011.
<i>Le Chant des Ténèbres</i>
Escaich, Thierry. <i>Le Chant des Ténèbres</i> . Claude Delangle, saxophone. Chamade 5638, 1996. Out of print.
Prost, Nicolas, saxophone. <i>The Art of the Saxophone</i> . Indesens INDE063, 2013.
<i>Lutte</i>
Baraglioli, Jean-Pierre. <i>In Fine Solu</i> . Dapheneo A210, 2002.
<i>Phantasia Antiqua</i>
Prost, Nicolas, saxophone. <i>The Art of the Saxophone</i> . Indesens INDE063, 2013.
<i>Tango Virtuoso</i>
Ellipsos Saxophone Quartet. <i>Bolero</i> . Genuin 14543, 2014.
H2 Quartet. <i>Groove Machine</i> . Blue Griffin Recordings 245, 2012.
Signum Saxophone Quartet. <i>Saxophone Quartets</i> . Ars Produktion ARS38094, 2011.
ZZYZX Quartet. <i>ZZYZX RD</i> . Teal Creek Music 636362202228, 2010.
<i>Trois Intermezzi</i>
Escaich, Thierry. <i>Le Chant des Ténèbres</i> . Claude Delangle, saxophone. Chamade 5638, 1996. Out of print.

APPENDIX E: RECORDING PERSONNEL AND TECHNICAL INFORMATION

LOCATION: All of the music listed below was recorded in Voxman Concert Hall at the University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA.

RECORDING, EDITING, MIXING, MASTERING: James Edel and staff, UI Recording Studios, Iowa City, IA

RECORDING SESSIONS

SESSION I: April 15, 2017

Repertoire: *Lutte* (solo alto saxophone)

Duration: ca. 6.5 minutes

SESSION II: April 23, 2017

Repertoire: *Trois Intermezzi* (flute, clarinet, saxophone)

Duration: ca. 9 minutes

Personnel: John Cummins, saxophone

Jeiran Hasan, flute

Lisa Wissenberg, clarinet

SESSION III: May 6, 2017

Repertoire: *Le Bal* (saxophone quartet)

Duration: ca. 12 minutes

Personnel: John Cummins, soprano saxophone

Elissa Kana, alto saxophone

Matthew Kobberstad, tenor saxophone

Dennis Kwok, baritone saxophone

SESSION IV: May 7, 2017

Repertoire: *Le Chant des Ténèbres* (solo soprano saxophone and 12 saxophones)

Duration: ca. 15 minutes

Personnel: Iowa Saxophonists' Workshop, Kenneth Tse, conductor

John Cummins, solo soprano saxophone

Elissa Kana, sopranino saxophone

Yi Chen, soprano saxophone I

Matthew Mahaffey, soprano saxophone II

José Barrientos, alto saxophone I

Elizabeth King, alto saxophone II

Jacob Nishimura, alto saxophone III

Matthew Kobberstad, tenor saxophone I

Eric Rierson, tenor saxophone II

Miranda Henry, tenor saxophone III

Hantao Li, baritone saxophone I

Dennis Kwok, baritone saxophone II

David Nicholson, bass saxophone

SESSION V: September 5, 2017

Repertoire: *Phantasia Antiqua* (two saxophones and piano)

Duration: ca. 9 minutes

Personnel: John Cummins, alto saxophone

Elissa Kana, tenor and baritone saxophones

Casey Dierlam, piano

Session VI: November 2, 2017

Repertoire: *Tango Virtuoso* (saxophone quartet)

Duration: ca. 5 minutes

Personnel: John Cummins, soprano saxophone

Elissa Kana, alto saxophone

Greg Rife, tenor saxophone

Dennis Kwok, baritone saxophone

APPENDIX F: TRACK LISTING

THIERRY ESCAICH (b. 1965)

Trois Intermezzi (1990)

1. Prestissimo con fuoco

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25820/rqh6-6m11>

2. Adagio

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25820/hj31-xb66>

3. Allegro

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25820/mms2-7n52>

4. Le Chant des Ténèbres (1992)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25820/e8fh-8s64>

5. Lutte (1994)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25820/grp7-g802>

6. Le Bal (2003)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25820/ytnr-n860>

7. Phantasia Antiqua (2009)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25820/fr67-5x28>

8. Tango Virtuoso (1991)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25820/8zvp-ak54>