

Jean-Claude Eloy

Yo-In

Hors Territoires 4xCD+Pbk

Anahata

Hors Territoires 3xCD

Hard on the heels of the expanded reissues of *Shanti* and *Gaku-No-Michi*, here are two more mighty clouds of Eloy, 1980's *Yo-In (Reverberations)*, a 210-minute piece of 'sound theatre' in four acts for tape and over 200 oriental percussion instruments played by former Harry Partch assistant Michael W Ranta, and *Anahata* (1984-86), a three-hour 'sound ceremony of contemplative nature' for two Buddhist monks - one Tendai, one Shingon - three gagaku instrumentalists, percussion and tape. Both come complete with exhaustive documentation, in the form of books (160 pages long for *Yo-In*, 80 for *Anahata*) containing extensive interviews with the composer, reproductions of his studio notebooks and scores and literally hundreds of photographs of performances of the pieces, not to mention the gear he used to create them in studios in Utrecht, Amsterdam, Paris, Geneva and Berlin.

The scope of *Yo-In* is positively Wagnerian and events unsurprisingly unfold at a stately pace throughout, which is not to say the work lacks drama, from the opening tentative foghorn toots and Ranta's kashiwade (a traditional Shinto prayer clap as preparation for worship) to the screams of pain and torture in act four's ritual of exorcism - a bit de trop out of context but genuinely harrowing after three hours. Eloy's spacious, glowing electroacoustic soundscapes belie the complexity behind their creation - if you want tech specs and circuit diagrams, this is your lucky day - and complement the harmonic spectra of Ranta's gongs and cymbals to perfection.

Anahata is more ruminative and intimate, but often ravishingly beautiful, and it's hard to believe the timing and inflections of the chanting and the sensational ryuteki and hichiriki playing

from Sukeyasu Shiba and Satoru Yaotani are all precisely notated. As Sae-Jung Kim wrote in her PhD thesis on Eloy, "his work is neither an imitation of oriental music nor a refusal of Western music. It is the connection between oriental and Western music."

Dan Warburton

The Wire magazine, London, issue 336, February 2012.