

LA MAITRESSE ET SON MARTEAU (PROVISIONAL TITLE)

Commission by Les Percussions de Strasbourg to Ève Risser

2027–2028 Season

Composer: Ève Risser

Performers: Ève Risser, prepared piano; 5 percussionists from Les Percussions de Strasbourg

Commission and delegate production: Les Percussions de Strasbourg



The Evidence of a Choice

From the very first sketches of my commissioning plan for this new artistic direction, one name emerged with an undeniable sense of évidence: Ève Risser.

Having followed her work for many years, and witnessed her remarkable trajectory from solo improvisation to leading large ensembles, I became convinced that she was the ideal architect for this project. Entrusting her with a carte blanche for our ensemble is an opportunity to bring the **telluric power of Les Percussions de Strasbourg** into dialogue with the rich, rhythmically vibrant world of her prepared piano.

The Project: Blurring the Boundaries, Merging Our Worlds

The aim is to create a dreamlike sonic world in which boundaries dissolve. We want to erase the dividing line between contemporary written music and orally transmitted music.

- The challenge: how can a prepared piano sound like a percussion ensemble, and conversely, how can percussion instruments sing like a harmonic instrument? We want to explore this delicate balance between our instruments and perhaps discover a new, expanded instrument somewhere in between.
- A free gesture: a sonic improvisation in which the score becomes a compass rather than a predetermined path. We want the audience to keep guessing: Is it written? Is it improvised? Is it jazz, trance, or contemporary music? The answer will be all of these at once.

Why Ève Risser?

Ève Risser's artistic journey is a living proof that these worlds can converge with an irrepressible energy.

- With her Red Desert Orchestra (album *Eurythmia*), she has already created a rich and complex musical language that delicately brings together West African music, trance, techno and contemporary composition. She knows how to lead heterogeneous ensembles and draw from them a powerful, precise groove. Through the percussive approach to the piano she develops in her solo work and with her "ensemble ensemble", she transforms the piano into an orchestra of pitched percussion. Bowed strings, objects inserted into the instrument, explorations of its mechanisms: she turns the piano into an instrument of total percussion, naturally resonating with the DNA of Les Percussions de Strasbourg.
- **Then there is oral transmission.** Her work with Malian singers (with Naïny Diabaté), as well as her engagement with traditional music demonstrates her understanding of oral transmission and her ability to incorporate popular musical languages into a written, formal framework.

Working Process: A First Residency as a Laboratory for Gesture

- The percussionists will appropriate the codes of free improvisation.
- The composer will test and confront her writing with the physical and performative reality of our ensemble.
- We will explore cross-preparations: how can objects placed on percussion skins respond to preparations applied to the piano strings? The idea is to create a timbral continuum in which the origin of the sound becomes elusive.
- Ève Risser will then have dedicated time for composition, followed by a second working residency of before the premiere.

With this carte blanche, Les Percussions de Strasbourg affirm their desire to take risks and celebrate living music. By collaborating with Ève Risser, we activate a process of transmission, exchange and collective joy. It is an invitation to leave technique at the door and instead privilege gesture, listening, and that magical space where written and oral traditions become one.

Ève Risser's Biography

Ève Risser (1982, France) is a pianist, composer and improviser, and a distinctive figure on the European jazz, free improvisation and experimental music scenes. Trained at the Coiservatoires de Colmar and Strasbourg, and later at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris, she developed an early personal language in which contemporary composition, free improvisation, jazz and traditional music intersect.

Active internationally, she has developed numerous projects as a solo artist and within ensembles ranging from duos to large formations, notably with the **Red Desert Orchestra**, where she explores intersections between contemporary music, trance and West African musical traditions. Her work is driven by a constant exploration of sound, rhythm and the physicality of musical gesture.

As a pianist deeply engaged with gesture and transformation, she has developed an expanded and approach to prepared piano, which she treats as a percussive and orchestral instrument. Her writing, often open to improvisation, seeks to dissolve the boundaries between composition and performance, between written structures and oral transmission, within a dynamic of collective energy and formal freedom.

Ève Risser live :

Extract of *Eurythmia* with Red Desert Orchestra live at La Soufflerie (Rezé) 2022

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XE4ewFYZ6ps>



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