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Temporal multiplicity in the work of Ahmed Essyad

We treat tradition as a principle category in the artistic approach taken by the Moroccan composer, Ahmed Essyad, who played an active role in 20th-century musical modernism. His work is dynamically linked to tradition through its use of traditional processes—melody, intervals, the forming of musical phrases and rhythms—in a temporally abstract manner. Juxtapositions of this sort contribute to an aesthetic of the infinite and the *informal*. We recognize that this element of formal plasticity in Essyad's work stems from temporalities which have their roots in the Arab musical tradition. This is especially true in the cyclical time of *Le cycle de l'eau* and in the free improvisation that figures in his electro-acoustic work *Taqṣīm*. *Voix interdites* and *Identité* present an interaction between music and literature: here, instead of directly reproducing the literary text in terms of structure, Essyad produces poetic resonances by incorporating the melodic phrases, intentions and compositional tensions of the written text as a means of creating his own personal structure. In so doing, he allows the stratification of the music to emerge as an entity in its own right, inspired by the gist of the text. This brings into being an autonomous musical process between the element and the whole.