



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Publication

Telbec: Codes 11 and 12

RAYMOND GERVAIS, TRAVAUX RÉCENTS, DISQUES ET TOURNE-DISQUES
An Exhibition by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

Montréal, October 23, 1990. As part of the Broken Music travelling exhibition organized by Berlin's daadgalerie and gelbe MUSIK, the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal will present an exhibition-event entirely devoted to Raymond Gervais, from November 4, 1990 to February 10, 1991.

Raymond Gervais, a prominent figure in the field of performance and installation in Québec for some 15 years, has taken part in a host of different artistic activities. He was a musician in the "Trio Anonyme" group from 1973 to 1977, then exhibited his work in Canada and abroad, taking part in such events as Okanada in Berlin in 1983 and Aurora Borealis, held in connection with the Cent jours d'art contemporain event in 1985.

Gervais started working with records and record players in 1975. Since that time, his performances and installations have constantly questioned the relationship between image and sound, art history and music, past and present. In his view, the record player is a key object of our modern age, just like the camera. It is a kind of small, portable theatre, which we all have at home, for bringing musical works back to life, for hearing the voices of the whole world -- a digest of modern sensibility, a fixed point in the contemporary collective imagination.

For his exhibition at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Raymond Gervais has put together 15 or so new pieces. These works are smaller and more stripped-down than his usual installations. The basic materials include a wide range of devices (from Edison's cylinder phonograph to the familiar turntables) and records of all kinds (from the 78 to the compact disc).

Raymond Gervais sets out his materials to create a kind of silent, motionless garden of installations, a world apart from sound and movement. His previous installations conjured up the universe and time through music, a very real music that was often spell-like. This time, everything is on the floor, and everything operates in silence. The objects command attention for themselves. Records, jackets and record players are used in their natural form, without undergoing any change. What the artist alters, instead, is the meaning of these objects. He transforms the function of the components. Finally, it is the unexpected arrangement, the surprise articulation that suggests a new significance. The works "perform" among themselves, and the viewers have to imagine and reinvent the words, people and things referred to.

The evocation of influential artists and other figures is a constant in the work of Raymond Gervais, who has previously paid tribute to Ives, Rousseau, Debussy and Beckett. This time, the metaphor suggests unforgettable figures from music history. The exhibition opens with Music for the Theatre, alluding to a piece by American composer Aaron Copland, recorded on 78. Nature morte au pavillon pays homage to Emile Berliner, the inventor of the phonograph disc, who lived in Montréal around the turn of the century. L'oiseau en cage is dedicated to Charlie Parker, the famous "Bird." Caruso recalls the first superstar of the early record industry. Ring comprises 13 mini-busts of Richard Wagner, and refers to his celebrated Tetralogy.

Other works offer reminders of Billie Holiday, Thelonious Monk, the Delaunays and Man Ray. All of them call into question time as it passes and obliterates everything -- our modern era, our 20th century, one of consumption, destruction and oblivion. With remarkable restraint, Raymond Gervais summons up a world of perpetual innovations and technologies. Nostalgically, he recalls the time, already past, when the gramophone seemed ultimate perfection, when the vinyl record spat out tunes, imperfectly reproduced. Once again, the artist becomes the spokesman of the time, space, music and feeling.

These references are especially significant since the Raymond Gervais, travaux récents, disques et tourne-disques exhibition is directly associated with the 11th edition of New Music America, the largest contemporary music event in North America. After appearing in several cities in the United States, including New York, Los Angeles and Washington, this festival will be held in Montréal for the first time, from November 1 to 11, 1990.

By linking Raymond Gervais with this event and with the international exhibition Broken Music, the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal is once again filling its mandate of bringing together works and artists from here and other parts of the world.

This exhibition is organized by Suzanne Lemire, coordinator of multimedia events at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal.

STCUM bus service, via line 168, is now available throughout museum hours, from Tuesday to Sunday between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m.

- 30 -

Source: Stéphane Baillargeon
(514) 873-4382

Information: Claude Guérin
Public Relations Coordinator
(514) 873-4382