

E. Varèse and his utopian idealism

: the detail of unfinished *Espace*

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From the 1930's through 1940's, Varèse occupied himself with mapping out compositional plans for *Espace*, a large-scale work for orchestra and chorus. Some previous studies have revealed its futuristic plan; for example the chorus parts were to be sung in multiple languages and to be broadcast simultaneously from many countries using special electronic equipment. As for the text of the work, it has been only known that Varèse had discussions with Andre Malraux and then with Henry Miller. However, a close examination of sketches for *Espace* (now housed at the Paul Sacher Stiftung in Basel) reveals hitherto-unknown aspects of the creative process. Varèse himself actually wrote sketches for the text, probably around 1940, which essentially consisted of a collage of writings with explicit leftwing motivation, by Archibald MacLeish, Edgar Parks Snow, Kenneth Fearing, Muriel Rukeyser, Genevieve Taggard and Carl Sandburg. The text surprisingly contained the episode of Mao Tse-tung, the slogan of IWW(Industrial Workers of the World), a scene from the revolution and so on. Although *Espace* remained unfinished, some of its fragments were reconstructed and performed in 1947 as *Etude pour Espace* for two pianos, percussion, and choir. Interestingly, there was no electronic device in the instrumentation, and the leftist tinge was completely erased from the text by then, though the barbarous and meaningless syllables were left. This paper discusses the details of the compositional plans for *Espace* and places it within the context of the American left-wing movement at that time. Finally, we face the facts that the piece was characterized by two utopian aspects—namely, the socialist and technological aspect— and therefore it could not help being abandoned in the 1940s.