

# FEMMES AU BASSIN

2006



*The voices of nymphs come to haunt the peaceful lower pond covered of lenses*

FEMMES AU BASSIN (=Women at the Pond) is a musical work inspired by the famous painting entitled "The Sacred Wood Cherished by the Arts and the Muses" by Pierre Puvis de Chavannes. This installation was presented during the exhibition «Imprévu au Jardin», St-Gervais-sur-Mare, France. In this work, I offer visitors the pleasure of taming ethereal voices that seem to float in the surrounding air.

The pond which was chosen for this piece is covered on the surface by water lilies, and is apparently calm. Three fictive ladies (Leonce, Augustine, and Alexandrine, old-fashioned names which I had seen written on commemorative plaques in the nearby cemetery) are haunting the surrounding foliage with their songs. Intermingling with the rush of the wind or the sounds of the dragonflies, flights of lyricism and melancholy delicately settle in the air. Nymph-like, these ladies sing melodious airs inspired by poetry and art. As that of the muses, their sounds invite us to dive along with them into an imaginary world made of daydreams, of nostalgia and of contemplation.



*The loudspeakers are hidden in the leafy trees and canopy surrounding the pond*

The voices slide, float, intermingle, superimpose each other, grow distant and fade away only to reappear a bit later when they choose to do so. At times an avalanche of extravagant laughter is heard. As the ivy which slowly overruns its surrounding canopy, these ghostly presences take a hold of this leafy, strange and charming setting in an isolated area of the Domain.

Six loudspeakers are hidden within the trees and shrubs that surround the pond, while the cables which connect them to a powerful amplifier concealed in an isolating box are carefully buried underground. The three distinct voices move from speaker to speaker according to a pre-arranged choreography of auditory movements.

The composition was born out of improvisational sessions held in Studio Silo in Renens by Beatrice Buma, Beatrice Deslarzes, and Genevieve Favre. The audio equipment and the spatial adjustments were set-up thanks to Antoine Petroff. The entire installation functions on rechargeable batteries.