



Bio information: **PRESENT**

Title: ***THIS IS NOT THE END*** (Cuneiform Rune 517)

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FILE UNDER: **ROCK / AVANT-GARDE**

**Legendary Belgian Avant Garde / Post-Rock / Post-Classical /
RIO / Chamber Rock Ensemble**

– PRESENT –

Release the Album Their Composer/ Leader

ROGER TRIGAUX

(October 26, 1951–March 10, 2021)

Was Completing at the Time of His Death

Despite its title, *This is NOT the end*, is, indeed, the final release by the legendary Belgian **Rock In Opposition (RIO)** band **Present**, as founder and composer **Roger Trigaux** died during its recording. Present's music is a striking blend of heavy rock with classical and zeuhl influences. The compositions, all penned by Trigaux, utilize repetition, complex counterpoint, intricate interplay between the instruments, rapidly shifting time signatures, and a strong instrumental attack. The final result is blindingly precise works of syncopated instruments, all seemingly coming from different angles but ultimately working together as a cohesive whole.

Trigaux admits that "I use lengthy repetition and polyrhythmics to push not only the listener but myself to a paroxysm on the intensity." In this sense, Trigaux's music can be compared to that of the late Nigerian rock musician **Fela Kuti**, who gradually built his lengthy songs through repetition and rhythm to generate a visceral experience, and whose live performances were legendary. Also like Fela, Trigaux' music has an intellectual, thematic subtext, hidden beneath the music's physical sound.

Those hearing Trigaux's work now for the first time will find it a mesmerizing revelation; Present's music sounds startling, shocking, and alarmingly, cathartically NEW. But Present has been around for a long time – since 1979, when Trigaux left **Univers Zero**, a Belgian ensemble he'd co-founded, to create a new band whose classical-rock compositions embraced increasing rock ferocity. Over the decades, Present released 10 albums, toured globally, and played at specialty / avant garde music festivals to fiercely devoted international audiences. Today, 45 years after Trigaux founded Present, the band's genre-defiant post-classical / post-rock music is ripe for wider public recognition. Post-genre and other avant garde musical concepts have gradually infiltrated the mainstream. **Finally, it is PRESENT time.**

Present is widely acknowledged and celebrated as one of the leading lights of the **Rock In Opposition (R.I.O.)** / avant-progressive scene, a global music scene emerging from the **European** avant-garde, and notable for producing genre-transcendent, composition-intensive non-commercial music outside of ("**in opposition to**") the mainstream music industry. As part of this movement, during the last quarter of the 20th Century, **Francophone** bands like **Magma**, **Art Zoyd**, **Univers Zero** and **Present** created music that shattered the boundaries of classical, opera, rock and jazz, giving birth to new hybrids which followers called **Zeuhl** and **Chamber Rock**.

Since its founding 40 years ago, in 1984, Washington DC-based **Cuneiform Records** has been one of the leading international supporters of Rock in Opposition music and Chamber Rock, both global movements today. Cuneiform's third release, in 1985, was Present's 2nd album, ***Le Poison Qui Rend Fou***, and was soon followed by Cuneiform reissuing Present's debut, ***Triskaidékaphobie***, originally released on Belgium's **Atem**. Over subsequent years, Cuneiform released numerous Present albums and forged deep friendships with Trigaux and Present's members, who stayed at the Cuneiform founders' **Silver Spring** home when touring the USA.

Cuneiform is deeply honored to release Present's final album, and we remain heartbroken by Trigaux's death. Everyone who loved Trigaux thought he was eternal, a hybrid vampire / air plant who survived on music, caffeine and cigarette smoke. He never revealed or discussed the state of his health. A composer and superb guitarist, he defied confinement by illness, adopting new instruments as his physical dexterity decreased. Until the very end, Trigaux prolifically, relentlessly, and vehemently continued to compose. The great composer/musician resolutely refused to let illness prevent him from creating his music. But ultimately, he was unable to defy physical death, and died during the recording of this album.

And thus, the title of this album – ***This is NOT the end*** - is brutally accurate, on multiple levels. Roger Trigaux, the brilliant, iconoclastic Belgian composer and musician, leader of PRESENT, will live forever through his music. And as for his music – its time for discovery by wider audiences and for performances by ensembles worldwide has just begun. Dark and tempestuous, the music of Roger Trigaux and Present is THE classical music for our brooding and turbulent 21st Century, our dark New Millenium, the New Dark Age. This album marks a new beginning for Trigaux's compositions.

**Michel Besset, Trigaux's long-time friend and manager and
Director of the Rock In Opposition (RIO) Festival–France,
recalls the making of this release:**

Summer 2018. During the summer, my wife **Rosine** and I decided to head north to visit **Jean-Pierre Soares** (trumpeter for **Art Zoyd**) and the **Trigaux** family in **Brussels, Belgium**. Indeed, with **PRESENT** not being scheduled to perform at the **11th Rock in Opposition Festival** (which I headed), and having no recent news from **Roger Trigaux**, I wanted to find out what he envisioned for the continuation of the group, which seemed to have dissolved. If that was the case, it would obviously need to be relaunched. I couldn't bring myself to allow **PRESENT** to no longer exist, as much because of the long history that linked me to the musicians as because of my close friendship with Roger.

In Brussels, we stayed with **Martine de Bruyn** (Roger's ex-partner and primary support), because with Roger's ill health, his little apartment could not accommodate us. I have always loved this city, where I had many memories, forged over numerous visits, in contact with the musicians of **Univers Zéro** [co-founded by Roger with **Daniel Denis**] and attending the group's numerous rehearsals in the cellar (which gave its name to "**Ceux d'en bas**") of Roger's house at the time. Brussels...where I was able to discover and absorb this city's very special atmosphere. Taste the solar darkness of a Belgian sky, inseparable from the raw and sensitive humanity of this music which is both organic and spiritual. And those harsh, dark and endless nights that never seemed to want to end, because the friendship, the humor and the beer kept us screwed to the seat..

Roger wasn't expecting us. It was impossible to contact him. He was ignoring email and the phone. He lived almost as a recluse and his only activity was composing the music for what would be **PRESENT**'s last album. He was overjoyed to find us in front of his door. And immediately told us that we absolutely had to listen to his latest work. **LOUDLY**. **PRESENT**'s music should be listened to very loudly.

My first sensation was it reminded me of the atmosphere of the first **Univers Zéro** albums [recorded with Roger prior to **Present**]. This very distinctive spirit of dark, slow and complex music, so réaliste that listening requires an effort and is sometimes difficult - because that is this music's price. The idea of recording this music immediately came to my mind.

Then it was lunch in this district of Brussels, under a gray and humid sky... Roger was happy in front of his American fries which he wolfed down greedily (which was rare, he ate very little). The humor (Belgian?) was there, the joy of dear friendship found again, the feeling of being in tune with someone with whom one shares the same kind of lucid and disillusioned humanity but also and above all precisely the same humor.

Out of the blue, I asked Roger if he wanted to record this music.

He hadn't thought about it. But also, the musicians were separated and no projects were planned for the future. Without it having been formally said, **PRESENT** had ceased to exist.

I insisted. For me **this music had to come out of the walls of his room, it was not "the end yet"**.

Roger ended up saying OK if the musicians wanted to do it.

This project took 5 years. Roger died in the middle of its gestation, the finalization of which was taken care of by **Pierre Chevalier** and **Udi Koomran**. But the work is done, accomplished, complete.

All of Roger's friends have not finished talking about Roger the Magnificent, about the Heroic Deeds of the rebellious and die-hard anti-hero that he rightfully was.

Of course, this was the price you paid, Roger, to achieve such a Work. To the point of sacrificing your life. We always knew – and we know more since you left us – that you will remain in the hearts (and brains) of all those who love Music. Rest in peace?, Roger.

– Michel Besset / November 20, 2023