

JEAN-MICHEL JARRE

Jean-Michel Jarre is without doubt one of the world's most significant musicians of both the Seventies and the Eighties. He is the seminal influence of most synth-based bands today as it was his use of creative interaction between machines and moods which gave birth to modern music. It was his highly innovative album 'Oxygene' (hailed by innumerable critics as "revolutionary") which not only rocketed to the top of the charts worldwide in 1976, but set the scene for today's attitude to music. The total sales of Jean-Michel's records to date are something in the region of a staggering 29 million and yet he has remained human. He is virtually unaffected by the wealth created by his music - apart from the indulgence of one or two very rare '50's American cars, a collection of early juke boxes, various paintings and sculptures by up-and-coming artists, and the only motorcycle (and sidecar) ever to be exported by the Chinese Government.

Jean-Michel Jarre was born in Lyon, France, on 24 August 1948 to musical parents. By the age of five he had begun piano lessons and even by secondary school he was taking classes in harmony, counter-point and fugue with Jeauine Rueff at the Paris Conservatory. Heavily influenced by British '60's music, he also played electric guitar in a number of short-lived pop and rock groups.

After receiving his Bachelor of Arts degree, Jean-Michel joined the Musical Research Group in Paris. Never having followed a strictly classical course of study nor adhered to a system of musical experiment devoid of all sentiment, it is not surprising that he created an entirely new realm of acoustic sounds which could legitimately be utilised within music.

In 1970 Jean-Michel Jarre recorded 'The Cage', a piece of pure electronic music. Ignoring warnings of the imminent end to his career by introducing electronic music to the Paris Opera, in 1972 he saw his confidence rewarded by the public's acclaim for his use of it in "AOR".

This encouraged him to change direction from writing experimental music aimed at the university professors to writing that which nevertheless fulfilled his desire to create a novel sound; he began to experiment with music for films, TV, other performers, ballet, theatre and so on.

Jean-Michel recorded his first piece of work intended for public release in 1976. 'Oxygene' became an international success quite unprecedented in the history of the French recording industry. In the USA Jarre was chosen Personality of the Year by People magazine, while in the UK the Daily Mirror declared 'a French revolution to the rock world'.