

THE KITCHEN

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Music: Minimalism of Eliane Radigue

By JOHN ROCKWELL

Minimalist music in its most meditatively austere form has become slightly less fashionable in recent years than it was in the early 1970's. But Tuesday night at the Kitchen, a French electronic composer named Eliane Radigue offered a 75-minute piece entitled "Adnos II" that positively reveled in quiescence.

Miss Radigue's credentials are about as solid as a French electronic composer's can be, at least in the years before Pierre Boulez returned to Paris and started spawning disciples. Miss Radigue studied with Pierre Schaeffer and Pierre Henri, the two fathers of modern-day French electronic music, and also worked in New York, Iowa and California. Her music in the early '70's attracted considerable attention in minimalist circles for its sensitive, dappled purity. But then she more or less disappeared, and Tuesday marked

her return to New York's concert scene.

It turns out that Miss Radigue spent several years in a Zen Buddhist retreat, which seems entirely appropriate, given her music. And now that she has returned, "Adnos II" doesn't sound very different from what she did before. If anything, it's a little busier.

The overall mood is still quiet, rapt and distant, however — so much so that most music lovers would find it impossibly noneventful. But although a rhetorical climax for Miss Radigue rarely rises above a mezzo-piano, her work is full of incident. "Adnos II," which emerged from speakers placed around the audience in the nearly dark Kitchen, is full of little motoric rhythmic figures, tones intersecting to produce dissonant beats, and even sudden attacks and cessations of sound.

Yet the result is still most assuredly

meditative, and perhaps even specifically religious in a pantheistic sort of way. Her new piece is but one further example of the manner in which composers have taken modern technology and used it to evoke the most primordial of experiences.

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