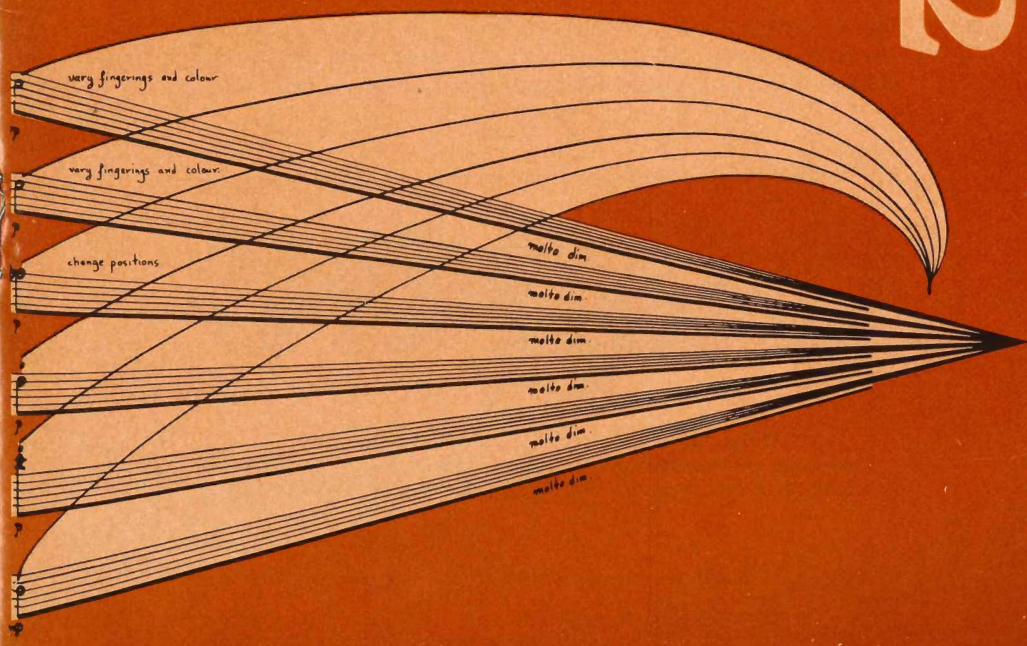


# NEW MUSIC CONCERTS

1981-82



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# **NEW MUSIC CONCERTS**

**Robert Aitken**  
**Artistic Director**  
presents compositions by:

**IANNIS XENAKIS**  
**AND**  
**YVES DAOUST**

November 28, 1981  
8:30 p.m.

Walter Hall Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto

P R O G R A M

VALSE (1981)

YVES DAOUST

Anthony Antonacci, flute  
James Campbell, clarinet  
David Tanner, saxophone  
Donald Englert, saxophone  
James Spragg, trumpet  
Paul Meyer, violin  
Marc Widner, electric piano & organ  
Elizabeth Keenan, harpsichord  
Kathleen Solose, piano

THERAPS (1976)

IANNIS XENAKIS

Joel Quarrington, double bass

I N T E R M I S S I O N

PLEIADES (1979)

IANNIS XENAKIS

- I. Melanges (Blends)
- II. Claviers (Keyboards)
- III. Metaux (Sixxen)
- IV. Peaux (Skins)

PERCUSSIONISTS

Robert Becker  
John Brownell  
David Campion  
Robin Engelman  
Russell Hartenberger  
Beverley Johnston

YVES DAOUST

Born in 1946 he started his musical studies at the Conservatoire de Montreal. He later worked in Europe for an extended period of time, notably at the "Groupe de Musique Experimentale de Bourges". Returning to Quebec in 1976, he was hired by the NFB in Montreal to supervise their electronic sound studio facility. In 1979 he became director of Electro-acoustic studios at the Conservatoire of Montreal and Quebec City. Mr. Daoust is also very active in the ACREQ, a Montreal-based group promoting the creation and performances of electro-acoustic music.

VALSE (1980) - Programme notes by Daoust

Danse à trois temps, où chaque couple tourne sur lui-même tout au se déplaçant. Air, musique qui accompagne cette danse.

Au figuré: Mouvement de personnel à des postes politiques ou administratifs que les titulaires ont l'air d'échanger entre eux.

(Definition du dictionnaire francais "Le petit Robert")

This work was commissioned by the Societe De Musique Contemporaine Du Quebec, with a grant from the Canada Council. It was premiered in Montreal on the 9th of April 1981 and is dedicated to Maurice Blackburn.

## IANNIS XENAKIS

Iannis Xenakis was born in Braïla, Roumania in 1922 of Greek parents. He received his basic education in Greece where he lived until 1947. Due to political pressures, he was forced at this point to flee Greece, and en route to the U.S.A., he stopped in Paris, where he has resided ever since.

Engineer, architect, mathematician, political activist but foremost, musician, Xenakis has distinguished himself as perhaps the foremost exponent of the use of modern technology in humanistic endeavour. With few exceptions - most notably the architect Le Corbusier (with whom Xenakis collaborated for thirteen years) - such attempts have suffered from naivete on either the artistic or technical side, or both; for as Xenakis states, it is sufficiently difficult to maintain competence in one field, much less two or more. It is the recognition of this fact which is largely responsible for the success of his efforts. Xenakis has a basic competence in both science and music having studied engineering in Athens, and music with such notable composers as Honegger, Milhaud and Messiaen. Furthermore, he is a musician, who recognized quite early the value of active collaboration between artist and technologist. His collaboration with scientists has manifested itself in the formation of various groups dedicated to research into science and music, most recently, the Centre for Mathematical and Automated Music, in Paris; however, what is of most interest is his notion of music which makes such union even desirable.

The notion of music, as conceived by Xenakis, evolved during the period dominated by the strict rules of serial technique. His hypothesis was that the polyphony of serial music was perceptually non-existent, strangled as it was by its own complexity. Rather, he proposed that such complex structures were perceived as sonic 'masses' or conglomerates, and in composition should be conceived as such. But the conceiving of music as mass brings forth the suggestion of music as three-dimensional: groups of sounds as clouds, whose size, shape, density, color, weight, speed, etc., and all transitions therein, become the source materials in the process of musical 'design'. that is, composition.

If one acknowledges the value of conceptualizing music in these terms, as did Xenakis, then it becomes not only desirable, but necessary to evolve a descriptive language for music which reflects this notion. Herein lies the chief role of mathematics and logic in the music of Xenakis: to derive a formalization which reflects how he believes music is perceived. While the nature of the calculus which he employs is extremely complex, as we see, the motivation is not, and the musicality of the results are clear to all.

THERAPS (1976) - Programme note by Barry Guy

"Theraps oscillates between two contrasting areas: 1 ) where the music is in a constant state of flux (glissandi); 2 ) pairs of static natural harmonics that often exploit the upper partials of the series related to each open string. Two particularly interesting points arise from the work. The first is the use of an Italian technique of fingering

(now almost defunct) where the string is pulled to the side rather than pressed onto the fingerboard thereby creating the possibility of a constant glissando up into the highest registers beyond the fingerboard. The second point is that pushing to the ultimate limit of Xenakis' demand for savageness and fineness provokes a serious and interesting physical problem concerning muscular readjustment -- such extremes are rarely encountered.

I have found that this piece draws one into the very depths of the instrument in both mental and physical commitment--more so than any other solo work that I have performed. Withdrawal to the ethereal harmonics is in many ways a painful process, but ultimately rewarding. Here lies a possible paradox, for the physical limitations of the human frame can all but cope with the intensity of the music leaving an area of instability in the ongoing music. Is this the intention? If so, how does the performer equate this with the thoroughness in the compositional workings, for on paper it is all possible, but when overbalanced in favor of the final result, a new philosophy has to be reckoned with. To enter fully into Theraps the performer must take the plunge, for Xenakis takes the player to the edge ... and beyond."

PLEIADES (1979) Programme notes by Xenakis

Pleiades (pluralities, several) hence six percussionists, four sequences. The rhythm here is primordial, that is, the temporal ordering of events, the combinatorics of durations, of intensities, of timbres. It is built on several parallel fields but with cross circulations, that is that patterns are at occasions simul-



taneously deformed or not. Certain fields are made by accents which superpose rhythms to normal beats. The timbres of the drums are also functional, assigned to specific rhythmic fields.

The one and only source of this polyrhythm is the idea of periodicity, repetition, duplication, recurrence, copy--faithful, pseudo-faithful, not faithful. As example: a beat repeated untiringly with the same cadence represents the faithful copy of a rhythmic atom (but an ancient meter is already a repeating rhythmic molecule). Now, minute variations in the cadence produce an internal rhythmic vividness without invalidating the fundamental period. Moreover, large and complex variation in the initial period create a disfiguration, a negation of the fundamental period which can lead to its not immediate recognition. In addition, strong variations, even more complex, or which amounts to the same thing, variations due to the randomness of a particular stochastic distribution lead to total arrhythmia, to a global knowledge of the event, to notions of clouds, nebulae, dust-particle galaxies of strokes organized by the rhythm. Moreover, the speeds of these transformations create new disfigurations, superposed to the preceding ones, from the tiny continuous accelerations until the rapid transformations (still continuous) even exponential, sweeping the listener into its whirlpool, driving him, like towards an inevitable catastrophe or towards a warped universe. Or else, infinitely fast speeds which correspond to brutal ruptures of the transformations, in which ruptures one goes instantly from one kind of evolution to an evolution of an essentially different kind.

An axiomatization accompanied by a formalization represented by sieve theory delimits one part of such problems of transformations in all domains, spaces, or ordered sets.

In Pleiades. this fundamental idea of the temporal duplication (recurrence) of an event or of a being into which our physical universe but also our human universe is immersed, is taken up again as well in another "dimension" of the music, that of pitches. In this dimension, European (Occidental) music has not budged since Greek antiquity. The system, the diatonic scale still reigns, even and above all, especially in music (like serial music) where the chromaticism is the base into which is plunged the choice of notes. Besides, its extension to a scale (gamut) where the unit would be the comma would not change the "climate", the field of force of melodic lines or clouds of pitches.

This is why here in Pleiades I have made a double attempt. The first, already in Jonchaies for orchestra, being to build decisively a scale, an extra-Occidental scale, sufficiently strong and characterized, but playable on diatonic keyboard instruments such as the marimbaphone, xylophone, and vibraphone. The second being to construct a new metallic instrument, baptized the SIXXEN, with 19 unequally distributed pitches with steps of the order of a quarter tone or third tone and their multiples. Moreover, it is necessary that the 6 different SIXXENS taken together never form a unison. In the first case, after many attempts, I constructed a sieve (scale) which--surprise--came close to the scales of ancient Greece, of the Middle East,

of Indonesia. But this scale, contrary to traditional ones, is not octave-repeating, possesses internal symmetries, and manages to cover the whole chromatic range in three conjuncted copies (periods), which makes it possible to create for this scale only, with no transposition, additional harmonic fields when polyphonic superpositions occur.

JOEL QUARRINGTON

Joel Quarrington was born in Toronto in 1955 and is a graduate of the University of Toronto where he was awarded the Eaton Graduating Scholarship in 1975. Other awards Mr. Quarrington has received include the top awards in the CBC Talent Festival in 1976 and in the Geneva International Competition, 1978. Mr. Quarrington has performed frequently with New Music Concerts since 1975.



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