

*New Music Concerts presents*

## **Isabelle Panneton — a portrait**



*Photo: André Leduc*

The seventh event of **New Music Concerts'** 30th anniversary season, presented in association with **Two New Hours** on **CBC Radio Two**, features the **NMC ensemble** under the direction of **Robert Aitken** in a **Portrait Concert** devoted to three recent compositions of **Isabelle Panneton** along with works by Ms. Panneton's mentor, **Gilles Tremblay**, and her younger colleague **Marc Hyland**. The concert takes place on **Saturday, April 28, 2001** at **Glenn Gould Studio** in the Canadian Broadcasting Centre at 250 Front Street West. Tickets to the event are priced at **\$20/10** and may be reserved by calling the **Glenn Gould box office** at **416-205-5555**. The **concert at 8:00 pm** is preceded by an **Illuminating Introduction at 7:15** with Ms. Panneton, Marc Hyland and Gilles Tremblay. During this, her first appearance with New Music Concerts, Ms. Panneton will also deliver a **free public lecture** as part of the ongoing **Composition Forums** hosted by the **Glenn Gould Professional School** at the **Royal Conservatory of Music**, 273 Bloor Street West on **Friday, April 27 at 10:00 am**.

Born in Sherbrooke, Isabelle Panneton began her musical training through piano lessons with Irène Ducharme. After three years of scientific studies, she transferred to the Conservatoire de musique du Québec à Montréal where she was awarded first prizes in counterpoint (1977), harmony (1979) and fugue (1980) in Magdeleine Martin's classes, as well as first prizes in analysis (1981) and composition (1984) with Gilles Tremblay.

With the support of the Canada Council for the Arts and the Québec Government, the next three years (1984-1987) were spent in Belgium and devoted to composition under the supervision of Philippe Boesmans. Through composition seminars held at IRCAM during the first six months of 1986, she was also able to gain deeper insight into the thoughts and works of composers Tristan Murail, Wolfgang Rihm, Michael Lévinas and Marco Stroppa. In June 1994, with the help of the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec, she attended the "Technology and composition" seminars given by composers Jean-Claude Risset and Michaël Jarrell at IRCAM's Summer Academy.

Her catalogue numbers more than twenty works which have been heard in Québec as well as abroad, notably in Paris, Vienna, Geneva, London and in Brussels on the occasion of the Festival de Wallonie in 1985. That same year, she was awarded a prize in the chamber music category of a national contest organized by the Société des Droits d'Exécution, and her work *Voilage* was chosen to represent Canada at UNESCO's International Rostrum of Composers. Since then, the works of Isabelle Panneton have been performed by interpreters such as Lise Daoust, Louise Bessette, Julie-Anne Derome and Marc Couroux, as well as by the Ensemble Contemporain de Montréal, the Société de musique contemporaine du Québec, the Nouvel Ensemble Moderne, the Orchestre Métropolitain and The Continuum Ensemble of London.

She is actively involved in organizations such as the Canadian Music Centre and the Conseil québécois de la musique. From 1987 to 1995, she taught in the Department of Music at Concordia University and currently divides her time between composition and teaching at the Faculté de musique de l'Université de Montréal where she was named Associate Professor in 1995. Isabelle Panneton is currently at work on a commission from l'Orchestre Métropolitain de Montréal to be premiered in April 2001, and a children's opera based on an unpublished work of Anne Hébert which will be performed by the Nouvel Ensemble Moderne and the company "Les coups de Théâtre" in the spring of 2002.

The three movements of Ms. Panneton's *Travaux et jeux de gravité* for chamber orchestra have been described by musicologist François de Médicis as a metaphorical evocation of the dynamics of substances reacting to gravity: a structure of falling or raising gestures held in a fragile balance. "Such kinetic movements may involve effort and the seriousness, and at other times a more playful spirit, hence the title, 'travaux' (work) and 'jeux' (games). Musically, the images are represented by different parameters. For instance, the sustained perfect fifth (a consonant interval) at the beginning of the work suggests pushing and falling gestures. The successive phases of increasing and decreasing volume correspond to progressive transformations of the tone. In the followings bars, the concept of ascension is achieved by the accumulation of additional notes over the initial sustained perfect fifth. In addition, the association of melodic movements with physical trajectory is quite suggestive, and is thoroughly exploited. Intervals of seconds and thirds swaying frequently evoke an unstable balance. In the last movement, a rapid, five-note motif suggests sudden thrusts; the ascending notes pattern intensifies, stretches and reaches the upper register – much like a threshold that cannot be crossed – to signal the end of the work.

"Contrasts in the texture and the general character give each of the three movements their individuality. The middle movement's concept is chamber-music like. Its polyphonic writing is more ornate than the other movements, and it is written in a more symphonic style. The fabric of this work breaks with traditional syntax, which is founded on the effect of progression involving a succession of chords and specific motifs. Here, the allusive discourse evolves through a progressive transformation and the ramification of musical events, which rest on the foundation provided by the preceding gestures."

— François de Médicis (translation by Francine Labelle)

*Travaux et jeux de gravité* was commissioned by the Nouvel Ensemble Moderne (NEM), with the support of the Canada Council. The work is dedicated to Lorraine Vaillancourt, who conducted its premiere in January 1999, during the Festival Présences in Paris.

Ms. Panneton describes the universe explored in the two part *Versants* for chamber ensemble as "similar to the one explored in *Travaux et jeux de gravité*. Indeed, the music is strongly characterized by gestures of oscillation, curved melodies that go back and forth, and rapid strokes moving from the upper register to the low register and back up. This results in a kinetic energy that sometimes evokes a swirling waltz, or a breathless race between the steep hills of a valley.

"This type of music writing brings a challenge: in addition to the gestures themselves, one must organize the pitches in such a way that they create the feeling of falling or rising. The writing has to be dynamic enough to shape the discourse and give it substance. It is also important to create two acoustical poles which keep recurring throughout the two movements, thus providing the structure. As in all of my scores, the harmonic fabric plays an essential role in the work's coherence."

— Isabelle Panneton (translation by Francine Labelle)

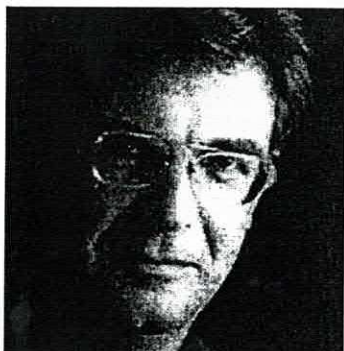
*Versants* was commissioned by Ensemble Musica Nova, with the support of the Canada Council, and is dedicated to Marc David, who conducted the world premiere on May 20, 1996 at Salle Claude Champagne in Montréal.

*Sur ces décombres et floraisons nouvelles* for violin and piano was originally commissioned for Duo Olga (Olga Ranzenhofer, violin, Olga Gross, piano) with the support of the Canada Council. The title is taken from first verse of a poem by Daniel Guénette from the collection *Empiècements*, published by Éditions Triptyque en 1985. It will receive its Toronto premiere in a performance by Marie Bérard and pianist David Swan.

The composer notes that "By definition, the terms 'décombe' (ruins or rubble) and 'floraison' (blossoming) are opposites, but their juxtaposition here evokes a movement — an intimate movement, a secret, underground, narrow passage through which will emerge (after a secret toil) the unexpected, the unforeseen, maybe spring... Disconcerting yet exciting, the very action of writing music resembles this difficult passage: with every composition comes an element of unknown, as the issue is unpredictable. Nevertheless, what counts is that the musical score stands as a reflection of a certain period in time, a page of history.

"*Sur ces décombres et floraisons nouvelles* is comprised of three movements, linked together by a common thread: a repeated, single note which keeps reappearing in various forms, creating different textures and a throbbing beat. But more importantly, this repeated note acts as a unifying reference point throughout the work. It produces a web of common tones connecting chords, and creates a hierarchy between the twelve tones of the scale (weak tones, strong tones). The melodic lines, just like the middle movement of the work, evolve within a tightly knit atmosphere of tension/relaxation."

—Isabelle Panneton (translation by Francine Labelle)



The concert will also include the music of Ms. Panneton's teacher **Gilles Tremblay**, who was professor of analysis and composition at the Conservatoire de musique du Québec in Montreal for more than 30 years. Born on September 6, 1932 in Arvida, Québec, his first studies were private lessons, principally with Jocelyne Binet, Edmond Trudel and Gabriel Cusson. From 1949 to 1954, he studied piano at the Montréal Conservatory with Germaine Malépart, winning first prize for piano in 1953. During the same period he was taking private composition lessons with Claude Champagne. He then took the famous analysis course of Messiaen in Paris, winning a first prize there in 1957. During that period he studied piano and composition with Yvonne Loriod. The following year he was awarded the Première Médaille in ondes Martenot at the Conservatory as well a licentiate in counterpoint from the École Normale Supérieure de

Musique. During his time in Europe, he made the acquaintance of Stockhausen in Darmstadt. In 1959 he spent a period at the ORTF in Paris with the Groupe de Recherches Musicales under the direction of Pierre Schaeffer and there met Amy, Boucourechliev, Ferrari, Mâche and Xenakis. In 1960, a scholarship enabled him to take summer courses, once again in Darmstadt, with Pierre Boulez and Henri Pousseur. Subsequently his works have been heard all over the world and he has received several important distinctions and awards, including the Prix Denise-Pelletier in 1991. He was made Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Minister of Culture in 1993.

Concerning his work, *AUBES - ou Initial* (1991) for bass flute, contrabass and percussion, the composer has written, "The gathering of the instruments in this trio is a challenge in itself. This uniqueness brings forth a newness of unexpected relationships as fresh and marvellous as all that is born: the beginning, the daybreak. This exploration, discovery and marvel – because of their respective times of action and reaction – create the musical form through blooming and efflorescence arising from radiant states. Here a large Turkish cymbal, with an extraordinary spectrum of sound (blooming state), triggers emergences: so many treasures, each time different, the most elaborate of these being an infinite melody with inserts and foolish comments recalling the astonishment of morning: dawn-laudes.

"The final part is a sort of hymn of long periods, convergences of wild unisons decomposing continually, then to recompose in a long ascent, toppling over at its summit in a silence that is not cessation but pursuit of music, in accordance with the following beautiful ideo-utopia from the Spiritual Canticle of John of the Cross, '...the silent concert, the sonorous solitude...' quoted as an epigraph to this silence. This work is, in fact, the third epigraph to John of the Cross with '...*le sifflement des vents porteurs de l'amour...*' and *Fleuves* ('...rivers of mighty sound...')."

—Gilles Tremblay (translation by Solange Fortin)

*AUBES* will be performed by flutist **Robert Aitken**, percussionist **Trevor Tureski** and bassist **Roberto Occhipinti**.

To represent the future generation of composers Ms. Panneton has chosen the music of **Marc Hyland**. Mr. Hyland is a composer and self-described "apprentice-writer." Born in 1960, he discovered music in his early teens, studied classical guitar and completed his musical education at the Conservatoire de musique du Québec à Montréal, where he studied under the noted composers Gilles Tremblay (composition and analysis), Clermont Pépin (counterpoint, orchestration) and Yves Daoust (electroacoustic music) from 1981 to 1988.

He has been commissioned by such ensembles as the Quatuor Molinari, the Société de musique contemporaine du Québec, the Ensemble contemporain de Montréal, and the Orchestre symphonique du Saguenay Lac-St-Jean. He was awarded several prizes at SOCAN composition contests, and his catalogue comprises works for voice and for small

chamber ensembles which have received performances and broadcasts both here and abroad. He is the author-composer of a 90-minute play, written in English, a yet unproduced comic-tragedy with incidental pre-recorded musical accompaniment entitled *The King's Fools* (1998-2000), for 5 male actors-singers. He is also a translator and lives in Montréal.

"*Afterdreamingly* was composed in the fall of 1995 and given its first performance in February of 1996 in Montréal, by singer Yolande Parent and the Société de musique contemporaine du Québec, which commissioned it with the help of the Canada Council. The work, incorporating 13 brief tableaux, is written for soprano and seven (rather soft-spoken) instruments, on fragments of music and text where, as if after a dream, the soprano/character naïvely celebrates remembrances of life and love, along with the subdued (and rather consonant) ringing sounds of her past... Inner workings and longings of a joyful mind, still singing, rhymeriverly, to summon the object of her loss and to find new meaning in the world, in the name of ... Life? Love? (or is it God ?)."

—Marc Hyland

Soprano **Mehgan Atchison** joins the instrumental septet in this performance conducted by **Robert Aitken**. The concert will be recorded by *Two New Hours* for broadcast on Sunday, May 20, at 10:05 pm on **CBC Radio Two**, 94.1 on the FM dial.

New Music Concerts thanks the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the Bureau du Québec à Toronto and the SOCAN Foundation through its Composer Residency Program for their support in the presentation of **Isabelle Panneton – a portrait**.



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### AFTERDREAMINGLY text (Marc Hyland)

(...)

The looking-glass, it gleams still  
joybellsringing, dancing  
new whims  
new rivers  
rhymeriverly

I drink an eyeful of you  
to tower all dreams  
to remember  
(...)

In diesem Wetter, in diesem Saus,  
in diesem Braus, sie ruh'n  
o love, o Gott.

That night the waves carried music  
and you, most ravishing inferno,  
lightly turning missing particles  
into nightly prayers,  
Wordswhite pondflowing  
hymnsongs,  
wondrouslyherebeingthere.

Bearing lightly above the meadows,  
eversleepinglywithin  
hymnbirdlysinging  
still (*la surdité hurle, aigue*)

I try to remember...  
It was about Angels... Beauty...  
Darkness...  
Springtime... Stars... Lovers...  
Voices...  
It was about Being here...  
about a Legend...  
where Nothingness... became...  
a Legend?

Following this concert, on **Sunday April 29, 2001 at 2:00 pm**, please join **Robert Aitken** at the **Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art** for another in our **Music Speaks** series, in which outstanding performers demonstrate and discuss the contemporary repertoire for their instruments. This event is **free with admission** (\$10/6) to the Museum. Please call **(416) 586-8080** to reserve your seats.

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