

SIXTRUM
PERCUSSION

**POLYTOPE
XXI**

TRIBUTE TO IANNIS XENAKIS

PRESS KIT

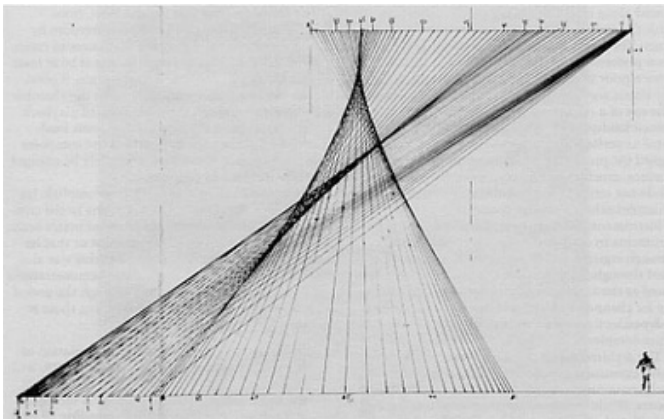
INTRODUCTION

Sixtrum has the drive, the complicity and the expertise.

Christophe Huss, Le Devoir

Sixtrum is pleased to present an exceptional concert in tribute to the composer Iannis Xenakis whose 100th birthday is being celebrated. *Polytope XXI* is a tribute concert to this architect, engineer and composer, who wrote some of the most significant works for percussion of the 21st century. It is also the name that composers Myriam Boucher and Dominic Thibault have given to their project of a monumental instrument, a sort of giant audio-luminous harp augmented by electroacoustics.

This project was inspired by the first polytope of composer Iannis Xenakis, "an electronic sculpture that combines light, music and structure", which was presented inside the French Pavilion during Expo '67. The installation took the form of a giant spider's web made up of a set of cables installed in the void in the central space of the pavilion, with a multitude of luminous points that appeared and disappeared according to a sound track. The project stemmed from a scientific vision, accompanied by an architectural and musical vision: a union of science and art.



This re-imagined polytope is made of large self-supporting structures with light cables running through them, much like a giant harp around which percussionists will move to strike, rub and pluck the cable strings. Integrated microphones that pick up the vibrations amplify the sound of the instrument and contribute to the control of the digital audio effects and the audio-reactive light system.

The second part of the concert is dedicated to the monumental *Pleiades*, which was on the program of Sixtrum's very first concert and which will close the fifteenth season of our ensemble. *Pléiades* was composed in 1978 and 1979 for the Percussions de Strasbourg and was originally a stage work for the Ballets du Rhin. The work has four movements, the order of which is determined by the performers. Three movements are dedicated to specific instrumental categories such as "Peaux", "Claviers" and "Métaux", while "Mélanges" brings together all these instrumental categories as well as combining musical elements from the other three movements. The movement "Métaux" calls for a new type of instrument, the sixxens, invented for the occasion and which consist of large metallophones which must be, according to the indications of the composer, tuned out of equal temperament while being also slightly detuned between them.

Sketch for the polytope, Montréal, 1967

ABOUT

Iannis Xenakis

*Even if Iannis Xenakis (1922-2001) lived only thirty-five days in the XXIst century, his impact has lasted and even flourished throughout the XXth century. Iannis Xenakis, by proposing a veritable tabula rasa, as early as 1955 in his article "Crisis of serial music", provoked several revolutions in the way of writing, presenting and listening to music in the 20th century. While writing a piece for orchestra of 61 soloists, *Metastaseis* (1953-4) he began to redefine the act of composing.*

Who would have thought that more than half a century after Xenakis' first polytope, the Montreal Polytope, realized in the French Pavilion at the Montreal Exposition (1967), two Quebec artist-composers and the Sixtrum ensemble would make a new one, but this time in the form of a new giant audio-luminous musical instrument!

We know about Xenakis' other polytopes - those realized in Persepolis, Iran (1971), in the Thermes de Cluny in Paris (1972-73), in Mycenae in Greece (1978), or itinerant, like his Diatope (1978), or even those that remained in his boxes (like the one that was to take place in Mexico or the one in Athens) because they were too utopian and visionary at the time. But today, thanks to this new challenge, we will be able to live a unique experience, immersive and full of emotion that only such an alliance between art and science, key concept for Xenakis, can provide.

Sharon Kanach, musician, collaborator and editor of Iannis Xenakis

This concert is part of the international program of the META-XENAKIS Consortium, celebrating the centenary of the composer Iannis Xenakis. This collective organization, spanning five countries and three continents, was founded by former students, collaborators and admirers of Iannis Xenakis to celebrate not only the man and his work, but also his artistic and philosophical legacy that has left an indelible mark on the arts of the 21st century.

With the support of CIRMMT - Agile Seed Funding and the Faculty of Music of the Université de Montréal, and the participation of students from the École de Technologie Supérieure (ETS) in Montreal.



MYRIAM BOUCHER

Composer

Inspired by natural phenomena, Myriam Boucher fuses the organic and the synthetic in her mesmerizing video-music installations, immersive projects and audiovisual performances. Trained as a keyboardist, Boucher first turned to classical piano, jazz and post-rock before embarking on the study of electroacoustics.

She has since become a visual artist, working on the real-time dialogue between music and images. Boucher approaches video in the same way as music composition, through a visual interface that allows her to elaborate digital chronologies.

His varied and distinguished list of commissions includes sponsors such as the Montreal Symphony Orchestra (MSO), Ensemble contemporain de Montréal (ECM+), Ars Nova, Nouvel ensemble moderne (NEM), Duo D'Entre-Deux, Magnitude6, collectif9 and Architek Percussion.

His works have been placed in several official selections and have been awarded prizes in various electroacoustic composition competitions here and abroad.



DOMINIC THIBAULT

Composer

Dominic Thibault is an electronic musician, composer, improviser and teacher. As a solo artist, he composes post-acousmatic music. On stage and live, he improvises using digital instruments that he has built himself.

His music is at the crossroads of musique concrète, noise, minimal techno and soundscape. He is involved in the noise duo Tout Croche, runs the intimate label The Silent Howl and enjoys composing with his musician friends Sylvain Poutu, Ryoko Akama and Girilal Baars among others. He describes himself as a studio geek, a modular synthesizer performer, a code musician and an improviser interested in all the possibilities offered by technology in performance, in the studio and on stage.

MUSICIANS

João Catalão
Julien Grégoire
Philip Hornsey
Kristie Ibrahim
Fabrice Marandola
Olivier Tremblay-Noël
Huizi Wang



SIXTRUM

PERCUSSION

Since 2007, the Sixtrum Percussion Ensemble has been relentlessly exploring the world of contemporary percussion. With dozens of collaborations with composers and hundreds of concerts, the ensemble has forged a signature in Montreal and on the international scene.

Sixtrum has performed at festivals such as Le Printemps des Arts (Monte Carlo), Présences/Radio France (Paris and Montpellier), Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival (Becket, MA), PASIC'15 for the opening concert of the Percussive Arts Society International Convention (San Antonio, TX), and created the *Rythmopolis* event (Montreal, QC). Recent honors include an Opus Award - Event of the Year for *Rythmopolis* (2018-19), the Coup de Coeur de l'Académie Charles-Cros (France) for the CD *De la percussion*, the "Outstanding Contribution to Theatre" award for the music of the play *Angélique* (Montreal English Theatre Awards) and in 2023 an Opus Award - Concert of the year for *Les Espaces Physiques*.

Sixtrum is in residence at the Faculty of Music of the Université de Montréal and is supported by the Arts Councils of Montreal, Quebec and Canada.





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Fabrice Marandola

associate artistic director

fabrice.marandola@sixtrum.com

Aurélie Suberchicot

communication and music promotion

info@sixtrum.com

Université de Montréal, Faculté de Musique

CP 6128, succ. Centre Ville

Montréal (QC) H3C 3J7

438-364-0978

info@sixtrum.com

