

PROGRAM

Sechs Trommeln **(six 're drumming), 2008.**
Arnold Marinissen
Canadian Premiere

Oneliner**, 2021.**
Edward Top

Σκουληκομυρμη- γκότρυπα **(*Skoulikomirmigotripa - worm - ant-hole*), 2013.**
Trevor Grahl
Canadian Premiere

Tripticon, voor Slagwerk**, 1965.**
Simeon Ten Holt (1923 - 2012)
Canadian Premiere

Intermission

Drawing Waves**, 2023.**
Celia Swart
Canadian Premiere

Redshift**, 2019.**
Sarah Neutkens
Canadian Premiere

Iron Velvet**, 2017.**
Arnold Marinissen
Canadian Premiere

INTRODUCTION

Résonances Néerlandaises
Sixtrum Ensemble offers a percussive journey through the contemporary scene of the Netherlands, with a program that brings together striking and contrasting voices of today's music: Simeon ten Holt, Arnold Marinissen, Sarah Neutkens, Celia Swart, Edward Top, as well as Trevor Grahl, a Canadian composer living in the Netherlands.

This program highlights the resonances of a country with a strong musical identity, where minimalism, sonic experimentation and an openness to the international meet. Through the works of young creators and established figures, Sixtrum Ensemble explores worlds where pulse sits alongside nuance, and where the instrumental gesture becomes an expressive material in its own right.

At the heart of this selection, the legendary Simeon ten Holt offers a hypnotic, intuitive writing that profoundly shaped European minimalism. In contrast, the works of Neutkens and Swart reveal a more introspective and textural approach to sound. Arnold Marinissen, composer and percussionist, offers a music in which rhythm becomes a physical and theatrical language.

The program also includes two singular voices spanning Canada and the Netherlands. Edward Top, trained in both countries, develops a music rich in tensions and colours. Trevor Grahl, for his part, embodies the transatlantic dialogue, blending formal rigour and North American expressivity.





Since 2007, the SIXTRUM Percussion Ensemble has been tirelessly exploring the world of contemporary percussion. With dozens of collaborations with composers and several hundred concerts to its credit, the ensemble has forged a reputation for itself both in Montreal and on the international scene.

SIXTRUM has performed at festivals such as Time:Spans (New York), Festival Musica (France), Orford Music Festival, 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). Present at numerous festivals in Canada and abroad, Sixtrum has been widely rewarded, including several Prix Opus: Prix Opus - Event of the Year for Rythmopolis (2018-19) and Les Espaces Physiques (2023), the Coup de cœur de l'Académie Charles-Cros (France) for the CD De la percussion and the ''Outstanding Contribution to Theatre'' award for the music of the play Angélique (Montreal English Theatre Awards). In 2023, Sixtrum Percussion was once again awarded an Opus Concert of the Year for its tribute program to Iannis Xenakis, Polytope XXI, confirming its central role in the contemporary music scene.

Sixtrum is in residence at the Faculty of Music of the Université de Montréal, and is supported by the Conseil des Arts de Montréal, the Conseil des Arts et des Lettres du Québec, and the Canada Council for the Arts.

SOCIAL MEDIA

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REPERTOIRE

Sechs Trommeln (six 're drumming), 2008.
Arnold Marinissen

Arnold Marinissen: *"sechs trommeln (six 're drumming) is a mobile piece for six percussionists, each of them playing one snare drum only, placed on a stand. All six snare drums sound quite different and are played in various ways, so that a wide variety of textures and colours is achieved.*
Musically speaking, the six players are individuals in the independent way they play their rhythms, time their actions and apply sound colours. However, they show clear group behaviour in the musical l anguage they use, the way they develop their material, and the interaction that occurs.

Initially the six players surround the audience in a wide circle, the music generously filling the space. Then, literally step by step, they come closer and closer, the music becoming more and more subtle and detailed. At the end of the piece the six players are positioned in the smallest possible circle, in the center of the auditorium, allowing the music to die out organically."

Oneliner, *2021.*
Edward Top

Oneliner (2021) is a composition by Dutch-born composer Edward Top, who has been based in Vancouver for about fifteen years. The work was commissioned by the Canadian Music Centre (CMC) in British Columbia and Redshift Music for a series of solo works launched during the pandemic in 2020 titled "Unaccompanied Concert Series." Written for the glockenspiel, an instrument rarely used in the context of a solo piece, Oneliner was recorded at the CMC's Murray Adaskin Hall in Vancouver by Canadian percussionist Vern Griffiths.

Σκουληκομυρμη- γκότρυπα (Skoulikomirmigotripa - worm - ant - hole), 2013.
Trevor Grahl

"This piece, with its clumsy name, explores the idea of long, worm-like material slithering its way gradually into a dark hole. In order to fit, the chordal material at the beginning has to ' lose weight' so to speak, and in its compression, becomes much longer. Dedicated to percussionists Xi Zang and Laurent Warnier, who gave the premiere in Luxembourg, 2014."

Tripticon, voor Slagwerk, 1965.
Simeon Ten Holt (1923-2012)

In the early 1950s, the Dutch composer Simeon Ten Holt traveled to Paris to study composition with Arthur Honegger and Darius Milhaud, developing his "diagonal thinking," a form of polytonality in which the modes are related to one another by a tritone. In the 1960s, he turned to serialism, a period during which he composed Tripticon (1965), before evolving in the 1970s toward a minimalist style that would lead, in particular, to the creation of his seminal work Canto Ostinato (1976).

Dedicated to the Dutch poet H.C. Ten Berge, Tripticon is typical of 1960s percussion composition and is notable for combining parts that progress at different speeds, synchronized in groups of two or three, and which converge at a common tempo at regular intervals. The three movements of this triptych flow seamlessly into one another, with the third movement drawing on elements introduced in the first movement. The work was recorded by the renowned Slakwerggroep den Haag (The Hague Percussion Group), founded in 1977 and now known as HIIIT.

Drawing Waves, 2023.
Celia Swart

"Yield to the tide and let it move you somewhere unimagined.
A sea wave comes in many shapes and scales. In this piece I wanted to experience what it would be like to be surrounded and taken over by water, sea waves and the ocean. The piece starts out familiar. Sea noises seem to extend to us from a beach.

As we near the sea, it is audible in more detail. The composition takes us in a linear motion towards the center of the ocean. Once in the middle, encircled by all sorts of surges and swells, a big wave lifts us all the way up, then draws us deep down.

As we sink deeper and deeper the sounds of the sea are of a different kind and appear to be increasingly remote. The work is a metaphor of letting go of control, yielding to chaos and in result being rewarded by a new reality."

Redshift, 2019.
Sarah Neutkens

Redshift (2019) is a quartet for two vibraphones and two marimbas that falls within the minimalist tradition. This calm piece is underpinned by subtle polyrhythms that give it a constant energy, interrupted only by a central passage that highlights the marimba's resonances through a very slow melody that stretches out over time.

Iron Velvet, 2017.
Arnold Marinissen

"Iron Velvet for percussion sextet was written in memory of Jan Pustjens, who passed away on 7 January 2011. The work was commissioned by the Jan Pustjens Foundation, which continues J an Pustjens' legacy by supporting talented percussionists. Jan Putsjens was one of the most i nfluencial percussionists in the Netherlands, as an interpret (Royal Concert Gebouw), teacher (Amsterdam Conservatory), and businessman (Pustjens percussion). "

COMPOSERS

Arnold Marinissen

"For me, creating music is all about immersing. Warmth and pulse are words that come to mind when I try to describe my music."

Arnold Marinissen (b. 1966) is a Dutch composer, percussionist, educator, and arts leader whose career spans performance, composition, and musical curation. He studied classical percussion at the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague, graduating with distinction in 1991 a nd receiving the prize for the institution's best examination of the year. Since 2008, he has taught as a principal subject instructor at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam and has presented masterclasses across Europe, Asia, Australia, and New Zealand.

As a performer, Marinissen has appeared as a soloist with leading orchestras and ensembles, i ncluding the WDR Symphony Orchestra, Amsterdam Sinfonietta, Holland Symfonia, and the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra. His acclaimed solo recordings on the BVHaast label have further established his international reputation. Beyond performance, he has served as Artistic Director of Slagwerk Den Haag, co-founded the ensemble Lunapark/Lunatree, programmed seasons and festivals for the Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ, and advised the TROMP International Percussion Competition.

Marinissen's compositions have been performed by prominent ensembles and at major international festivals and venues, including the Holland Festival, Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, Venice Biennale, and Amsterdam's Concertgebouw. His work reflects a d istinctive artistic voice that continues to shape contemporary music and percussion performance worldwide.

Edward Top

Edward Top (b. 1972) is a Dutch-Canadian composer, educator, and violinist whose music is recognized for its distinctive fusion of expressionism, postminimalism, film noir, post-rock, and extreme metal influences. Born in Ommen, the Netherlands, he studied composition and violin at the Rotterdam Conservatoire, working with notable composers including Peter-Jan Wagemans, Klaas de Vries, Pierre Boulez, Luciano Berio, and Peter Eötvös. He later earned a Master's degree in Musicology from King's College London, where he studied with George Benjamin.

Top gained international recognition through commissions and performances by ensembles and orchestras such as the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Holland Symfonia, Calefax Reed Quintet, and the Taiwan Little Giant Chinese Chamber Orchestra. He served as Composer-in-Residence with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra from 2011 to 2014, during which ten of his works were performed. His recent compositions reflect collaborations with Chinese musicians, expanding his orchestral palette while maintaining recurring themes of the grotesque, the primal, and the sublime.

An active educator, Top is Associate Professor and Division Chair of Composition at the Vancouver Academy of Music and teaches composition and orchestration at the University of British Columbia. He lives in Vancouver with his family.

Trevor Grahl

Trevor Grahl (b. 1984, Rankin, Ontario) is a Canadian-Dutch composer whose innovative works celebrate the re-imagined and re-created, giving birth to music that critics have praised for its "joyful wonder" and "daring invention." Often, the sound of other musics becomes an integral part of his compositions.

After studies at McGill University and the University of California, San Diego, he continued his training at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam with composer Richard Ayres. Based in Amsterdam, Grahl teaches composition, orchestration, and instrumentation at the Koninklijk Conservatorium in The Hague and serves as artistic assistant at the Orgelpark, where he has become a leading advocate for the creative possibilities of the hyperorgan.

In 2025, Grahl received the prestigious Matthijs Vermeulen Prize for Śpiewnik, a work for organ, bass drum, and electronics. His music has been performed internationally by ensembles and orchestras including Klangforum Wien, AskolSchönberg, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and the Greek National Opera. Notable projects include the award-winning Music for Malmö, the hyperorgan album Of Ancient Days, the double cello concerto Lightweight, and the children's opera Voyage to the Land of the Uglies. Grahl's works are heard throughout Europe, North America, and Asia, establishing him as a distinctive voice in contemporary music.

Simeon Ten Holt

Composer and pianist Simeon ten Holt (1923-2012) was born in Bergen, the Netherlands, in 1923. He studied piano and theory with Jakob van Domselaer, whose influence is considerable, as shown from his first compositions. In 1968 Ten Holt founded the Werkgroep Bergen Hedendaagse Muziek (Working Group Contemporary Music Bergen), organizing concerts solely devoted to contemporary music.

Ten Holt's considerable oeuvre can be divided into three periods. During the first period, he developed his own method to come to terms with the concepts of tonality and atonality in reaction to the tonal influence of Van Domselaer. This method, the diagonal idea, resulted in the compositions Diagonaalsuite (1957), Diagonaalsonate (1959) and Diagonaalmuziek (1956-1958). In his second period, from 1961 to 1970, he became influenced by serialism, and he also eventually writes several electronic works. In the third period, which began in the seventies, Ten Holt returned to the piano, the instrument with which his career as a composer started. The major composition of this period, Canto Ostinato, became a great success. He subsequently wrote more piano pieces that are based on the same ideas of repetition and tonality, such as Lemniscaat (1983), Horizon (1985) and Méandres (1999).

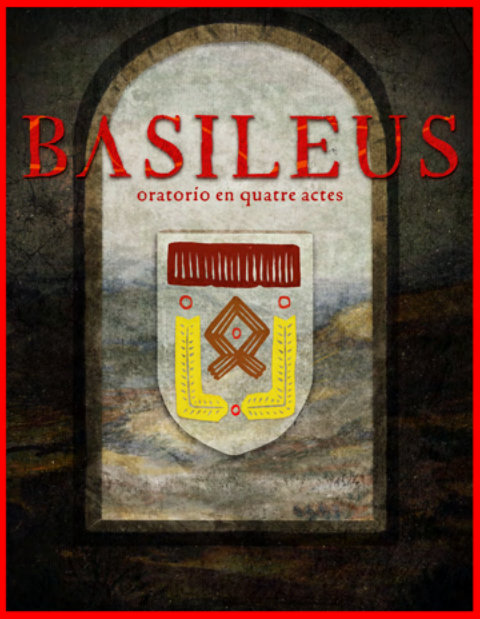
Celia Swart

Celia Swart (1994, NL) is a contemporary composer and multimedia artist. Her compositions can be described as 'New Simplicity'; creating a whole world out of a few elements, placing significant focus on their sound world. She has a conceptual approach in her works, and although her music is non-narrative, a narrative structure is incorporated within the concept driven by personal themes such as isolation, fears and dreams. Celia Swart has been commioned by orchestra's and ensembles including the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Kluster5 (NL), Nieuw Ensemble (NL), Resonances XXI (FR), and the Bang on a Can Summer Festival Ensemble (USA).

Sarah Neutkens

Sarah Neutkens (Eindhoven, 1998) is a composer, writer, visual artist and musician.
She has released eight albums, both solo, with ensembles and with her band. Her works have been performed on BBC3, at the Royal Concertgebouw Amsterdam, New Sounds and at various other places an non-places.

UPCOMING SHOW



Sunday, February, 21st, at 16h.
Théâtre Outremont

Inspired by Ancient Greece, Basileus tells the story of a matriarch and head of state who declares war on the known world.

This wildly ambitious work brings some fifty Québec artists together on stage, uniting an ensemble of guitars, percussion, brass, and metal vocalists. Basileus delivers a truly unique musical experience that pushes the boundaries of symphonic music.
Basileus was awarded the Opus Prize for the "Musical Event of the Year" from the Conseil québécois de la musique in 2025.

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