

# META-XENAKIS

NEW PERSPECTIVES ON IANNIS XENAKIS'S LIFE, WORK,  
AND LEGACIES

EDITED BY SHARON KANACH AND PETER NELSON





<https://www.openbookpublishers.com>  
©2024 Sharon Kanach and Peter Nelson.

Copyright of individual chapters is maintained by the chapter's authors



This work is licensed under the the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0). This license allows you to share, copy, distribute and transmit the text; to adapt the text for non-commercial purposes of the text providing attribution is made to the authors (but not in any way that suggests that they endorse you or your use of the work). Attribution should include the following information:

Sharon Kanach and Peter Nelson (eds), *Meta-Xenakis: New Perspectives on Iannis Xenakis's Life, Work, and Legacies*. Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0390>

Copyright and permissions for the reuse of many of the images included in this publication differ from the above. This information is provided in the captions and in the list of illustrations. Every effort has been made to identify and contact copyright holders and any omission or error will be corrected if notification is made to the publisher.

Further details about CC BY-NC licenses are available at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

All external links were active at the time of publication unless otherwise stated and have been archived via the Internet Archive Wayback Machine at <https://archive.org/web>

Digital material and resources associated with this volume are available at <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0390#resources>

ISBN Paperback: 978-1-80511-224-2

ISBN Hardback: 978-1-80511-225-9

ISBN Digital (PDF): 978-1-80511-226-6

ISBN Digital ebook (epub): 978-1-80511-227-3

ISBN HTML: 978-1-80511-229-7

DOI: 10.11647/OBP.0390

Cover image: Iannis Xenakis at the C.R. MacIntosh Museum, Glasgow, Scotland, 1987. Photo by Henning Lohner, courtesy of CIX Archives, Lohner collection.

Cover design: Jeevanjot Kaur Nagpal

With generous support from: Centre Iannis Xenakis, Xenakis Project of the Americas/The Brook Center, Université de Rouen: BQRI, IRIHS, GRHis, CÉRÉdI.



# 48. *Polytope XXI*: A Tribute to Iannis Xenakis

*Fabrice Marandola, Myriam Boucher,  
and Dominic Thibault*

---

The Montreal-based Sixtrum percussion sextet presented this *Polytope XXI* concert-tribute on 25 May 2022, at the Salle Claude-Champagne at the Université de Montréal with works by Myriam Boucher, Dominic Thibault, and Iannis Xenakis.

Below is an excerpt of the program notes for this event.

## Program

Myriam Boucher and Dominic Thibault | *Polytope XXI* (world premiere).

## Presentation

Sixtrum Percussion is pleased to present an exceptional concert in tribute to the composer Iannis Xenakis, whose one hundredth birthday is being celebrated. *Polytope XXI* celebrates this architect, engineer, and composer, who wrote some of the most significant works for percussion of the twentieth 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 by Xenakis, “an electronic sculpture that combines light, music and structure,” which was presented inside the French Pavilion during the Expo '67 World's Fair. The installation took the form of a giant spider 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 in accordance with the soundtrack. The project stemmed from a scientific perspective,

accompanied by an architectural and musical vision: a union of science and art.<sup>1</sup> This re-imagined polytope is made up of large self-supporting structures with luminous cables running through them, a bit like a giant harp around which the percussionists will move to strike, rub, and pluck the cable strings. Integrated microphones that pick up vibrations amplify the sound of the instrument and help control the digital audio effects and the audio-reactive light system.

The second part of the concert will be dedicated to Xenakis's monumental *Pléiades* for six percussionists, which was on the program of Sixtrum's very first concert and which will close the fifteenth season of the Montreal-based ensemble.<sup>2</sup>

### Performers

João Catalão

Julien Grégoire

Philip Hornsey

Kristie Ibrahim

Fabrice Marandola

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, Massachusetts), PASIC'15 for the opening concert of the Percussive Arts Society International Convention (San Antonio, Texas), and created the *Rythmopolis* event (Montreal), for which it received an Opus Award for the Event of the Year (2018–19). Other awards include the Coup de Coeur 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).

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 of Canada.

This concert event was part of the international program of the Meta-Xenakis Consortium, celebrating the centenary of the composer Xenakis.

<sup>1</sup> Xenakis, 2008, p. 203–16.

<sup>2</sup> The Xenakis work is not included in this film.



Media 48.1 *Polytope XXI: Hommage à Iannis Xenakis* (2022). Composition: Myriam Boucher and Dominic Thibault. Performers: Sixtrum Percussion. Reproduced with permission.  
<https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12434/30ba3261>

*Sixtrum wishes to thank its partners:*

Université de Montréal–CAC–CALQ–CAM–CIRMMT–META–XENAKIS



Montréal



## References

XENAKIS, Iannis (2008), *Music and Architecture: Architectural Projects, Texts, and Realizations*, compilation, translation, and commentary by Sharon Kanach, Hillsdale, New York, Pendragon.

