

1. Live recording of February 1, 1997
2. Live recording of July 12, 2015
3. Live recording of February 2, 2011
4. Recording and montage 2022
5. Live recording of January 13, 2010

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An expanded version,
a 100-page disc book
accompanied by this same
CD, has been produced.
Details on the website

Iannis Xenakis

1922–2001

- | | |
|--|--------|
| 1. I. Xenakis — <i>Eonta</i> (1963) | 17'38" |
| Ensemble intercontemporain, dir. Pascal Rophé
Dimitri Vassilakis, piano | |
| 2. I. Xenakis — <i>Linaia-Agon</i> (1972) | 12'33" |
| Solistes XXI, dir. Rachif Safir | |
| 3. I. Xenakis — <i>N'Shima</i> (1975) | 16'54" |
| Solistes XXI, dir. Rachif Safir | |
| 4. I. Xenakis — <i>Keren</i> (1986) | 07'36" |
| Benny Sluchin, trombone | |
| 5. I. Xenakis — <i>Zyθος</i> (1996) | 07'51" |
| red fish blue fish, dir. Steven Schick
Benny Sluchin, trombone | |



1§. ELEMENTS OF BIOGRAPHY

With the kind permission of the Iannis Xenakis Center, Rouen.

Iannis Xenakis was born in 1922 in Braila (Romania), into a Greek family. He spent his student years in Athens where he completed his studies in civil engineering at the Polytechnic School. He first fought against the German occupation during the Second World War, then against the British occupation (civil war). In 1947, after a terrible facial injury and a period of clandestinity, he fled Greece and arrived in France as a stateless person.

He worked for twelve years with Le Corbusier (1947-1959), first as an engineer, then as an architect (La Tourette convent, Philips pavilion at the 1958 World's Fair in Brussels, famous for its self-supporting hyperbolic paraboloids and where Edgard Varèse's *Poème électronique* was premiered).

In music, he followed the teaching of Olivier Messiaen. Then he decided to break with this path and to take a more "abstract" compositional path that combined two elements: on the one hand, references to physics and mathematics; on the other hand, an art of sound plasticity. The scandals of his *Metastaseis* (1953-1954) and *Pithoprakta* (1955-1956), which completely renewed the world of orchestral music, raised him to the level of a possible alternative to serial composition, thanks to the introduction of the notions of sound masses and probability, as well as sonorities made of sliding, held or punctuated sounds. It was also the time of his first experiments in musique concrète where, among other things, he opened the way to granular synthesis (*Concret PH*, 1958).

His first book, *Formalized Music* (1963), reveals his scientific and mathematical applications to music - ranging from probability (*Pithoprakta*, *Achorripsis*, 1956-1957) to group theory (*Herma*, 1960-1961) via game theory (*Duel*, 1959; *Stratégie*, 1962); *Linaia-Agon*, 1972) - as well as algorithms and his first uses of the computer (program and works ST, 1956-1962).

During the sixties, the formalization takes more and more the appearance of an attempt to refound music (in the sense of the crisis of the foundations in mathematics), in particular with the use of Group theory (*Nomos Alpha*, 1965-1966). On the other hand, with *Eonta* (1963), it is the model of the sound which is completed. The following decade is marked by the utopian flight of Polytopes (*Polytope of Montreal*, 1967; *Polytope of Persepolis*, 1971; *Polytope of Cluny*, 1972-1974; *Diatope*, 1977-1978; *Polytope of Mycènes*, 1978), beginnings of a technological multimedia art characterized by experiences of immersion for the public.

With “arborescences” (*Erikhthon*, 1974) and Brownian movements (*Mikka*, 1971), Xenakis returns to the graphic method that had allowed him to imagine the glissandi of *Metastaseis*, a method he also uses with the UPIC, the first graphic synthesizer with which he composed *Mycènes Alpha* (1978).

During the 1980s, Xenakis’s compositional processes became progressively more intuitive. Still marked by energetic outbursts (*Shaar*, 1982; *Rebonds*, 1987-1988) or formal research (sieves - or non-octave scales - in almost all the works, cellular automata in *Horos*, 1986), his music also became increasingly dark (*Kyania*, 1990).

His last works (*Ergma*, 1994; *Sea-Change*, 1997) evolve in a very purified and stripped sound universe. The last one, composed in 1997, is entitled *O-Mega*.

Xenakis died on February 4, 2001 in Paris.

2§. INTRODUCTION

Benny Sluchin, April 2022

The centenary of Xenakis’s birth caught me by surprise. We just marked ten years since his passing in 2011 and I had no plans for this year 2022. Could it be the preoccupation caused by Covid and repeated states of confinement? I have many works about Xenakis, archived for more than forty years already, and it is a matter of course for me to bring them to light through this particular discographic tribute. It contains previously unreleased studio and live recordings accompanied by various texts, many of which are also previously unpublished.

Iannis Xenakis has a privileged place in my career. I arrived in France in 1976, and I found my place in the world of musical creation. Very quickly, I played Xenakis. The Ensemble intercontemporain (EIC), created in 1976 by Pierre Boulez, a central figure in French musical life, which I joined at its inception, often played his music. A lot of ink has been spilled on these two characters and on their tumultuous relationship. But in spite of their personal

relationship, one finds many works by Xenakis in the programs of the first decades of the EIC.

Phlegra and *ST 10* appear in the inaugural concerts at the TNP of Villeurbanne in December 1976. January and February 1977 see *Phlegra* played, again, in Paris, Bordeaux, Angoulême, Rennes and Châteauroux. The great hall of the Centre Pompidou did not deprive itself of Xenakis, and *N'Shima* was given at the Théâtre de la Ville on March 31 of the same year alongside works by Messiaen, Carter and Boesmans. *Phlegra* was performed at the Festival de La Rochelle in July and *N'Shima* was given again in Paris during the Passage du xx^e siècle, an event organized by Ircam. In December 1979, Giuseppe Sinopoli included *Phlegra* in a French tour with works by Varèse, Grisey, Schönberg and Berio. Peter Eötvös, then musical director of the EIC, programmed *Psappha* in March 1980 at the Centre Pompidou, as well as at the Théâtre de la Ville. School events in January 1981 included works by Xenakis; *Eonta* was performed at the Théâtre de la Ville with Eötvös on February 2 and *N'Shima* at the Centre Pompidou on June 4. In July, at the Chartreuse de Villeneuve-lès-Avignon church, *Eonta* was again performed four nights in a row.

These cases, not isolated, testify to a continuous presence of Xenakis in the programming of the EIC. We should not be surprised to find a commission to Xenakis for the 10th anniversary of the Ensemble. Thus *Jalons* was premiered on January 26, 1987 at the Théâtre de la Ville on the occasion of a concert conducted jointly by Boulez and Eötvös which also included works by Stockhausen, Berio and Messiaen.

Eonta (1963) is a particularly interesting case. This work was commissioned and premiered by Pierre Boulez and the Domaine musical in 1964. As mentioned above, we were playing it in turn, as the second generation of its performers.

Having completed a master's degree in mathematics before arriving in France, I am always looking to learn and deepen my knowledge of the sciences. I took the courses given by Xenakis at the University of Paris I rue Saint-Charles, met other musicians with the same interests, and became acquainted with *Formalized Music*, the legendary book by Xenakis. In 1982, I went back to university and was awarded my Doctorat in algebra (Paris VI).

My activities then developed in a scientific institute: research in acoustics associated with the interpretation of works in creation. In 1984, I encouraged Xenakis to compose a piece for unaccompanied trombone. I shared with him my work on instrumental technique (my CTE, *Contemporary Trombone Excerpts*, appeared in 1983 with Editions Musicales Européennes). *Keren* was born in 1986 and premiered on September 19 of the same year at Musica, the famous festival in Strasbourg. *Keren* was commissioned by the ITA (International Trombone Association) thanks to the connections I was able to create there and to a combination of circumstances: a person who wanted to remain anonymous became a patron for this work. *Keren's* American premiere took place in Nashville in the summer of 1987, during the International Trombone Workshop, the association's annual meeting. Following his request, in order to elaborate a title for this work, I proposed to Xenakis the results of a biblical research. Thus the Hebrew word *Keren* was chosen. *Keren* is the horn of the ram that