

XENAKIS REVOLUTIONS

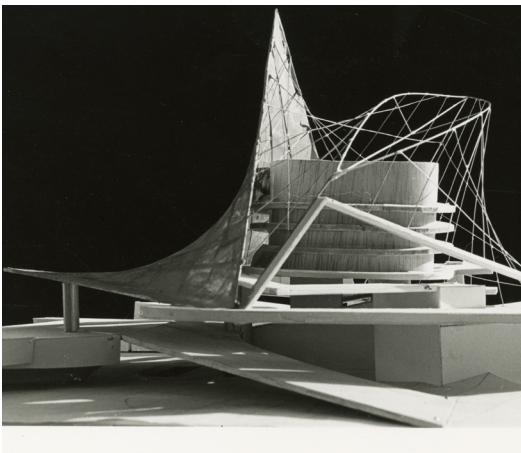
FEBRUARY 10th - JUNE 26th 2022

CONTEXT

The Iannis Xenakis exhibition falls squarely in line with the Musée de la Musique's editorial agenda: while the 'Electro' exhibition examined the heritage of an experimental and avant-garde branch of music, the Iannis Xenakis project follows the opening of the Pierre Henry Studio which, beyond presenting the composer's oeuvre, shows the continuity between contemporary music of then and the electronic music of today. If Pierre Henry is today considered, by the musicians of the Electro scene themselves, as the father of electronic music, then what of Iannis Xenakis?



A singular artist whose profuse work attests to the plurality of his talent, and a central figure in avant-garde music, architect, mathematician and engineer, etc. Xenakis in the 1950s broke the codes of contemporary music that had been dominated by serialist trends since the end of World War II. Instantly recognisable, yet in perpetual revolution, his radical writing is at once a reference to Antiquity, an ode to nature and the elements, and a tribute to modernism at its most extreme.



Proposal for the Cité de la musique concert hall 1984
© Iannis Xenakis Family.



Interior of the Beaubourg Diatope 1978
© Iannis Xenakis Family.

The exhibition, **addressed to a large public** and not only to contemporary music specialists, aims to put Xenakis' production into perspective, in his personal history as well as in his visual, literary and musical culture. She also wishes to place the composer in his time and to report on the political and cultural movements that have helped to define him.

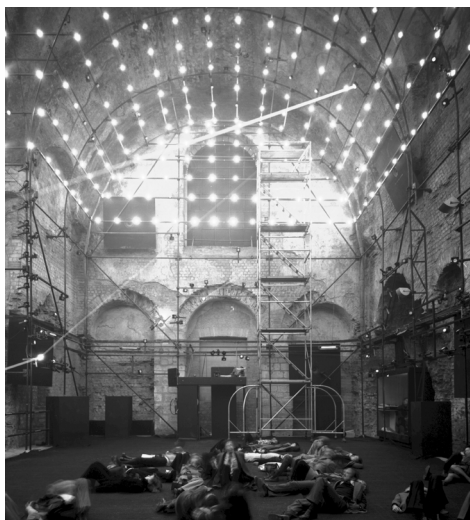


Xenakis at his UPIC sound drawing machine, 1980s © Iannis Xenakis Family.

SCENOGRAPHY

Architect, city planner and designer, **Jean-Michel Wilmotte** founded his own **architecture** agency in 1975. Renowned for the diversity of its output and the elegance and excellent finishing quality of its work, it is today established in 9 different cities in Paris, Nice, Londres, Venise, Milan and Seoul. Wilmotte never ceases to expand and diversify his knowledge.

His favorite subjects are the arrangement of cultural and museum spaces, as well as for rehabilitation and reconversion projects, such as the former royal hospital in Versailles into housing, cultural center and shops (2015), the Freyssinet hall into Station F, the largest start-up campus in the world (2017), the Collège des Bernardins (2008), the Lutetia hotel (2018), or the Artille-ry hotel into the **Sciences Po Paris** campus.



Cluny Polytope, 1972 © Iannis Xenakis Family.

MAIN PRINCIPLES

A chrono-thematic itinerary

Xenakis, as a man, is at the heart of the structure. Drawing on the private Xenakis archives in particular, the way around the exhibition has been designed as 6 scenes, around twenty or so opuses, both musical and architectural. This narrative thread, which is both thematic and chronological, invites the visitor to absorb Xenakis' unique world through what they see and hear.

The central space of sound and digital arts

A true obsession for Xenakis, from the first orchestral compositions, the visitor is immersed in sound masses unfurled in space. Live sound broadcasts will transform the exhibition space into a true auditorium, along with a digital art installation created for the occasion, and the presentation of a composition by Xenakis in its original spatialised version. As such the audience is invited to take its place at the centre of the instrumental arrangement.

Immersive scenography

Xenakis is an insatiable experimenter, a man responsible for a multidimensional universe that the exhibition's scenography aims to recognise. In parallel to Xenakis' great architectural productions, the space setting of the exhibition places Xenakis' music at its centre, with various audio and multimedia displays placing the visitor at the heart of the experience and allowing them to comprehend the artist's profuse catalogue.

CURATORS

Mâkhi Xenakis

Artist, sculptor and french author, Mâkhi Xenakis is Iannis Xenakis's daughter. Her works are in public collections: Pompidou Centre, Manufacture de Sèvres, Manufacture des Gobelins, Domaine de Chaumont sur Loire, FNAC. After studied architecture with Paul Virilio and created theater decors and costumes, she moved to New York, to paint until 1989.

She has been presenting her works and publishing with Editions Actes Sud on a regular basis since her return in Paris. She has been overseen the diffusion and digitalization of her father's work since 2013 and devoted a book to him published in 2015: *Iannis Xenakis, un père bouleversant*.



Xenakis in his studio, 1980s, 1990s, 1980 © Iannis Xenakis Family.

Thierry Maniguet

After studying scientific music and musical acoustics, Thierry Maniguet taught the piano at the conservatoire for ten years. He was then the instrumental heritage general advisor to the Region and DRAC Burgundy. Curator at Musée de la musique since 2000, he has been the scientific head of the curatorial department. He designed among other things the presentation of the XIX^e and XX^e century spaces and oversee the scientific supervision of the new permanent exhibition space devoted to Pierre Henry studio. He also teaches at the Conservatoire de Paris and is a lecturer at Paris School of Mines.



Kinanerg Ballet at the Ottawa National Arts Centre, 1969 © rights reserved.

SCIENTIFIC BOARD



Xenakis in his studio, 1980s, 1990s © Famille Iannis Xenakis.

- **Makis Solomos**

Born in Athens, Makis Solomos is a musicologist specialising in contemporary music and particularly in the work of Iannis Xenakis of whom he is one of the most important specialists. He is currently lecturer at the University of Paris VIII and junior member of the Academic Institute of France.

- **Anne-Sylvie Barthel-Calvet**

Iannis Xenakis specialist, Anne-Sylvie Barthel-Calvet devotes more broadly her works to the XX^e and XXI^e centuries musical avant-gardes which are approached as much through the musical languages as their historical and aesthetic aspects. Methodologically, she developed approaches otogenetic criticism and historiographical criticism of discourse on the musical avant-garde.

- **Elsa Kiourtsoglou**

Architect, Iannis Xenakis specialist in the architectural field, Elsa Kiourtsoglou is also a teacher at ENSA Paris-Malaquais.

- **Pierre Carré**

Musicologist and writer, Pierre Carré is also the author of a mathematical thesis applied to the sound synthesis at IRCAM. Passionate about Iannis Xenakis, he has been working since 2015 with Mâhki Xenakis for the promotion of the composer's archive collection.

- **Benoît Gibson**

Musicologist and specialist of Iannis Xenakis music, Benoît Gibson is head of the musical department at the University of Evora in Portugal where he teaches musical analysis.

CIRCUIT OF THE EXHIBITION

A SIX SCENES JOURNEY

1. INTIMATE PANTHEON

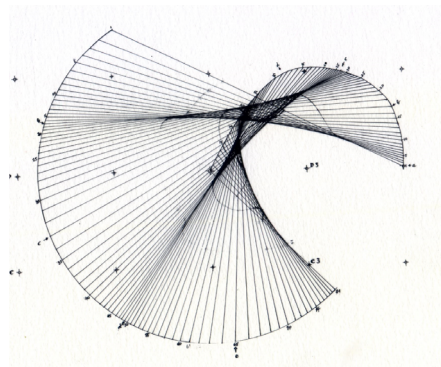
4. POLYTOPES

2. PHILIPS PAVILION

5. SPACE-TIME

3. COMBINATIONS

6. MACHINE AND DRAWING

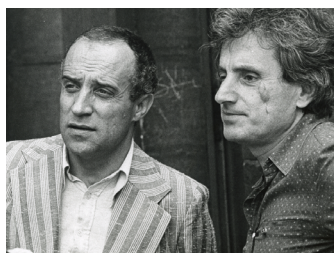


Preparatory sketches for the Montreal Polytope 1966
© Iannis Xenakis Family.

FACT SHEET OF THE EXHIBITION

- Designed for a **370m²** space – it is modular and adaptable according to exhibition spaces.
- **20 musical and architectural opuses.**
- **220 original and archive documents:** photos, models, scores and personal documents...
- **3 sound installations** constituting the **highlights of this journey**, a tribute to Xenakis' flagship productions: the Cluny Polytope, *La légende d'Eer* and *Persephassa*.

1/ INTIMATE PANTHEON



Above, from left to right: Bombing of Athens, 1944 © Imperial War Museum / Maurice Fleuret and Iannis Xenakis at La Rochelle festival, 1975 and Corsican storm, 1964 © Iannis Xenakis Family.



Fotini, the absent mother, 1912
© Iannis Xenakis Family.

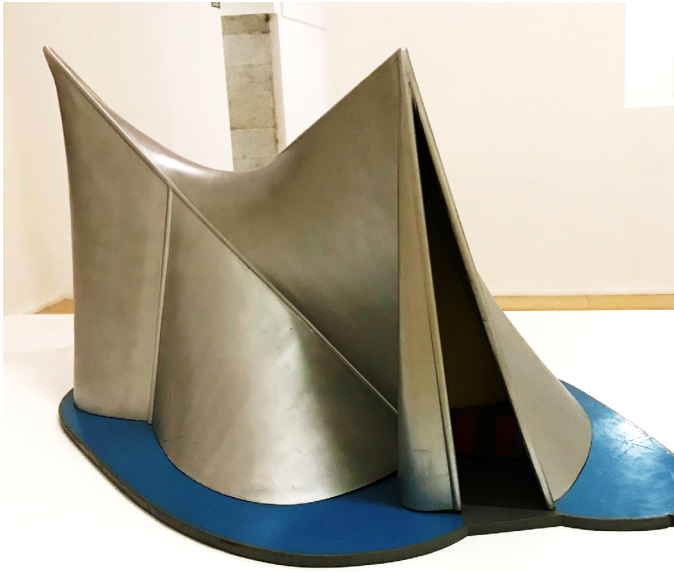
In discovering Xenakis' significant collection of personal objects, the exhibition presents the composer at work and summarises his musical, literary and visual culture. While his taste for ancient Greek culture is shown, as well as that of Pre-Columbian, African or Asian culture as well, another major source of inspiration is seen in nature, which is present in the form of scores, artworks or personal photographs. Several of Xenakis musical pieces, including *Aïs*, a painful echo of the premature death of Fotini, his mother, or *O-Mega*, his last opus, are shown alongside works borrowed from museum collections, like *Isle of the Dead* by A. Böcklin or *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* by Hokusai, the images of which accompanied him throughout his life.

These objects also tell the story of his birth and childhood in Romania, his school years spent at the Island of Spetses boarding school, the resistance during the Second World War, up to the wound that would mark him for life, followed by his exile and death sentence that he received in absentia. They are all events contributing to the Xenakian language, which this section will show through documents from the time as well as documentaries, rarely alluded to until now.



Composer's studio © Iannis Xenakis Family.

2 / PHILIPS PAVILION



Above, Model Coll Philips international BV, 1957 © Rijksmuseum.

The visitor is invited to (re)discover the Philips Pavilion, as well as the progenitor work *Metastasis*, two creations that mark the start of Xenakis' artistic recognition, while archive pieces show the founding meeting with Le Corbusier, Varèse or Messiaen. Supporting the pavilion's model, an **immersive display** alludes to the 1958 show, designed around images of Le Corbusier and the music of Varèse, alternating with **Xenakis' *Concret Ph* electronic work.**



Academy ceremony with Olivier Messiaen, 1983 © Iannis Xenakis Family.

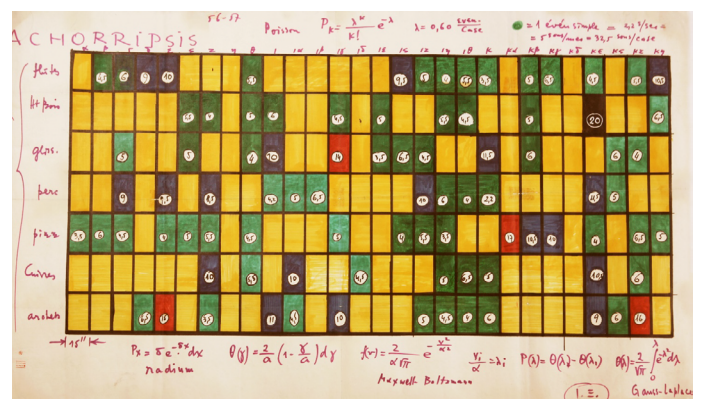
3/ COMBINATIONS

Engineer, architect, composer, mathematician, computer specialist, Xenakis was neither one after the other, nor one without the other. Advocating for **alliances between arts and sciences**, as he called them, his musical and architectural work is the reflection of these different disciplines, buoyed by complementary dynamics.

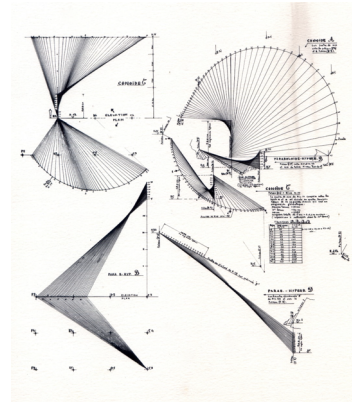
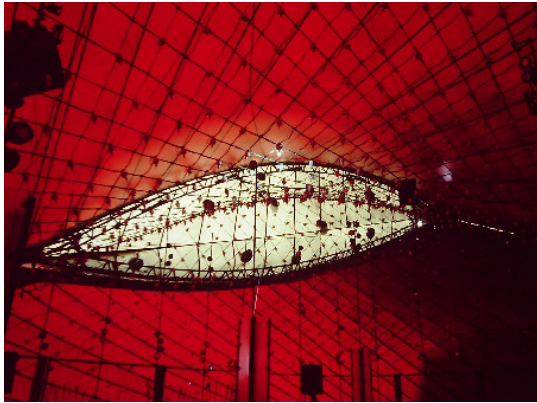
About his friend Hermann Scherchen, the conductor who contributed to his public recognition, this theme compares the great architectural projects and stochastic music compositions, the **undulating glass panels of the Couvent de la Tourette** echoing the musical matrices of *Achorripsis* or *Pithoprakta*.



Iannis Xenakis under the lightedly, convent de la Tourette 1990, rights reserved.



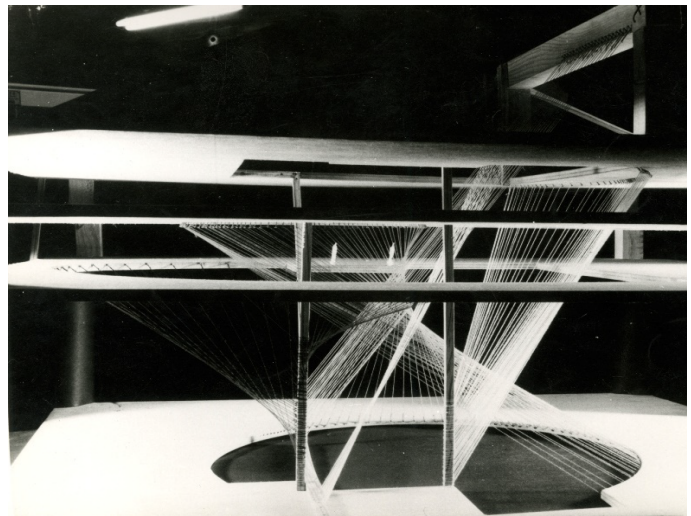
Above, Achorripsis graphic score, 1956 © Iannis Xenakis Family.



From left to right: *Interior of the Beaubourg Diatope, 1978* and *Preparatory sketches for the Montreal Polytope, 1966* © Iannis Xenakis Family.

4 /POLYTOPES

Productions of maturity, “tangent[s] of music and architecture” to use the words of Le Corbusier in *Modulor 2*, polytopes are a synthesis of Xenakian thought. From the French pavilion at the Montreal Exhibition, in 1967, to the Mycenae Polytope or the Beaubourg Diatope, both produced in 1978, these architectural gems enabled Xenakis to reach a wider audience, who had come to watch these spatialised shows, mixing electronic or instrumental sound with light installations. About the display created by Thomas Bouaziz as **a tribute to the *Légende d’Eer***, the **original model of the Beaubourg Diatope, restored specially for the exhibition**, as well as Xenakis’ architectural drawings, archive pieces and photographs from the time look back at this era, the mark of which is found in New Media Art or digital art today.



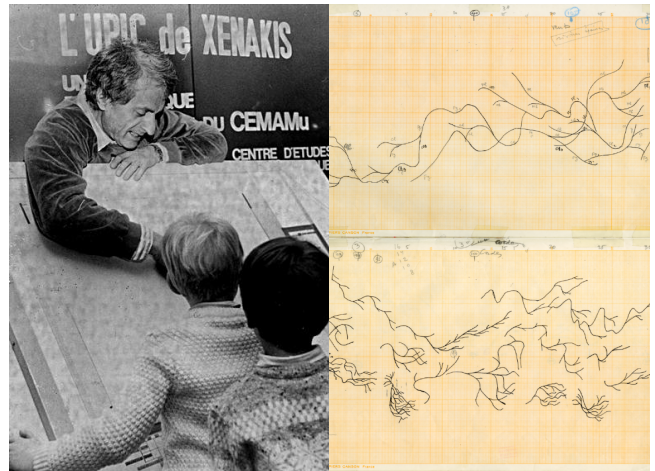
From left to right : *Montreal Polytope, photograph and model plan, 1967* © Iannis Xenakis Family.

5/ SPACE - TIME

From these first works, **Xenakis provides unprecedented control of space and time.** If in-time / outside-time classification refers to Xenakis' understanding of musical time in the form of a succession of sound events or autonomous time-related segments, this notion combines with a spatial vision of the time-related sequence. Likewise, several works presented in this section radically question sound spatialisation, whether by placing the person listening within the orchestra itself, like *Terretektorh* for example, created in 1966 at the Royan International Contemporary Art Festival, or by using a complex system of speakers, such as *Hibiki Hana Ma*, composed in 1970 for the Osaka Universal Exhibition. The presentation of these works, using highly aesthetic graphic material, is combined with the spatialised broadcast of the piece for 6 percussionists, *Persephassa*.



UPIC, Musée de la musique.



From left to right : Xenakis presenting the UPIC to children, 1983 © rights reserved and Erikhton, Piano Helffer tree elements, 1974 © Iannis Xenakis Family.

6/ MACHINE AND DRAWING

The final scene of the exhibition presents the **continual and novel relationship of Xenakis with machines**, in his eternal quest for the perfect tool that can both make complex calculations and grasp the graphic representation of sound phenomena. The presentation of the impressive UPIC machine, created at the CEMAMu, the research institute founded by Xenakis, recalls the composer's decisive contribution to sound synthesis. Finally the visit ends with an aspect of Xenakis' work that has barely been considered, when the function underpinning the graphic score, architecture drawing, fades to let the visual artwork, the pure drawing, come through.

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