

CEAIT FESTIVAL 2011

(CENTER FOR EXPERIMENTS IN ART, INFORMATION, AND TECHNOLOGY)

IANNIS XENAKIS: NOW AND TOMORROW

JANUARY 30, 2011 | 7:00 PM

presented by

REDCAT

Roy and Edna Disney/CalArts Theater

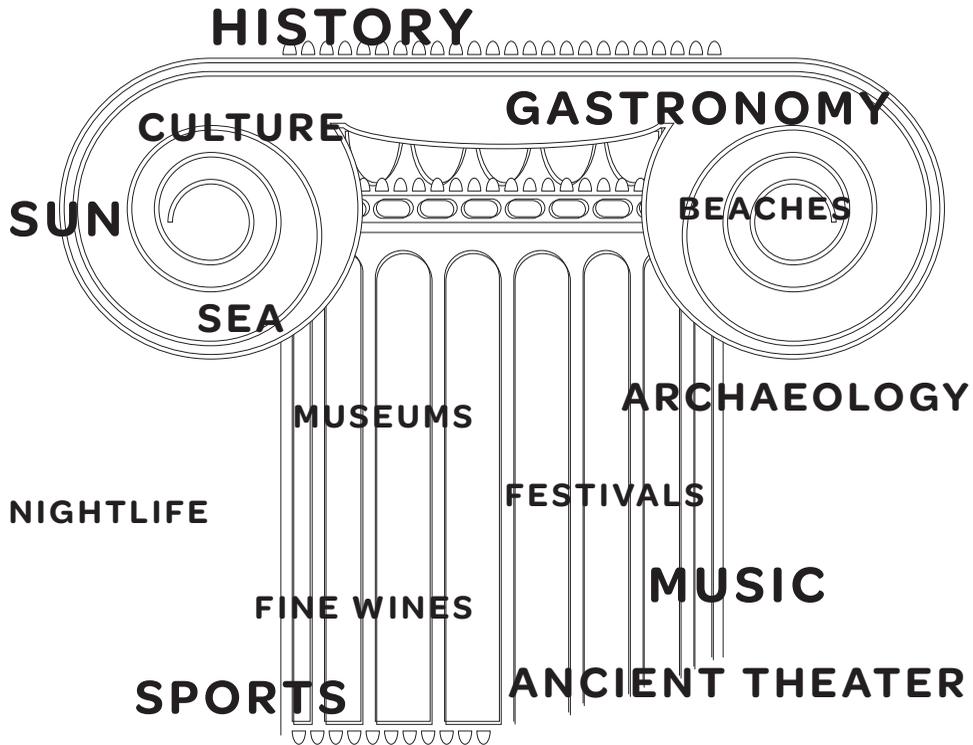
California Institute of the Arts

CALARTS



The Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
through the Consulate General of Greece in Los Angeles, is proud to be a
supporter of the Iannis Xenakis concert series.

Even more Greek experiences await you. Simply **visitgreece.gr**



www.visitgreece.gr

CEAIT FESTIVAL 2011

(CENTER FOR EXPERIMENTS IN ART, INFORMATION, AND TECHNOLOGY)

IANNIS XENAKIS: NOW AND TOMORROW

Sunday, January 30, 2011, 7:00pm

PROGRAM

All works by Iannis Xenakis, except where noted.

FLICKER TONE PULSE (2000–2010)

Curtis Roads with Brian O'Reilly, visuals

1. *Touche pas* (2009) in two parts. Video world premiere
2. *Eleventh vortex* (2001)
3. *Sculptor* (2001)
4. *Never* (2010) in three parts. Video world premiere
5. *Tenth vortex* (2000)
6. *Fluxon* (2003)
7. *Epicurus* (2010) Music and video world premiere

Dikhthas (1979)

Mark Menzies, violin; Dzovig Markarian, piano

Epicycles (1989)

Erika Duke-Kirkpatrick, cello; Marley Eder, flute; Travis Kane, oboe; Ryan Glass, clarinet; Archie Carey, bassoon; Ryan Bäncroft, trumpet; Zara Teicher, horn; Tony Rinaldi, trombone; Tyler Jordan, tuba; Bianca McClure, Nic Salas, violin; Kristín Haraldsdóttir, viola; Carter Wallace, bass; Mark Menzies, conductor

Intermission

Akanthos (1977)

Maurita Thornburgh, soprano; Rachel Rudich, flute; Charles du Preez, clarinet; Emi Tamura, piano; Lorenz Gamma, Mona Tian, violin; Alessandra Barrett, viola; Betsy Rettig, cello; Carter Wallace, bass; Mark Menzies, conductor

Polytope de Cluny (1972)

Curtis Roads, diffuser

Funded in part with generous support by the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the Consulate General of Greece in Los Angeles.



ABOUT THE MUSIC

FLICKER TONE PULSE (2000–2010)

Curtis Roads with Brian O'Reilly, visuals

Beneath the level of the note lies the realm of microsound, of sound grains. First predicted in the acoustical theories of the physicist Dennis Gabor and the polymath Iannis Xenakis, the microsonic realm remained invisible for centuries. Recent technological advances let us probe and explore the beauties of this formerly unseen world. These pioneers proposed a radical perspective on the essential nature of sound: as a flow of sound grains. Microsonic techniques dissolve the rigid bricks of music architecture—the notes—into a more fluid and supple medium. Sounds may coalesce, evaporate, or mutate into other sounds. The sensations of point, pulse (regular series of points), line (tone), and surface (texture) appear as the density of grains increases. Sparse emissions leave rhythmic traces. When the grains line up in rapid succession, they induce the illusion of tone continuity that we call pitch. As the grains meander, they flow into streams and rivulets. Dense agglomerations of grains form swirling sound clouds whose shapes evolve over time. *FLICKER TONE PULSE* is a collection of new electronic music pieces composed since 2009. I am currently working on several more pieces to add to this set. In the meantime, to round out this REDCAT performance, I have selected four pieces from my previous set *POINT LINE CLOUD* (2005).

– Curtis Roads

Presented here, constituting the 2011 CEAIT festival at REDCAT, are three programs focusing on music of Iannis Xenakis. These concerts tie into and conclude a series of events in Los Angeles focused on Xenakis' output as both an internationally recognized architect and composer, arranged around a large exhibit at MOCA at the Pacific Design Center: this all parallels a similar enterprise presented in New York earlier in 2010. CalArts was particularly proud to present the U.S. premiere of the complete opera *Oresteia* at the outset (last November) of the Los Angeles component of this look at Xenakis.

Our programs over these three days at the end of January look backwards and forwards: looking backwards not just in interpreting older scores, but also in connecting with some of the Xenakis performance history via our esteemed guests and soloists, who have interacted with Xenakis and/or his repertoire in variously profound ways; having access to this heritage is the way CalArts goes about informing the performance practice of recent and contemporary music for its community of aspiring professional musicians whom we reckon will become the leading advocates of evolving practice in their heyday forthcoming.

Another forward-looking aspect of our programming is the creative tendrils some of the multi-media offerings present that draw out responses to Xenakis' music and ideas. This seems particularly appropriate in this context of celebrating a creative soul that was *always* exploring the possibilities of his ideas, even in so-called finished compositions: when performing electroacoustic (tape) pieces, he routinely, and creatively, adapted the spatialization and acoustic "mappings" of the compositions in relation to the given acoustic space; a significant number of his compositions are rewrites of earlier manifestations of an idea, such as the opera *Oresteia* previously mentioned (that piece went through several rewrites, with extra sections added from the '60s through the late '80s): performers who worked with Xenakis tell me repeatedly that interpreting the (sometimes overflowing/overgrown) score was an exploration into what the score aspires to, rather than a dry review of explicit instructions. Both these instances, of course, mean that his extraordinarily visceral, bold and sometimes frighteningly overwhelming compositions and their gestures rarely sound exactly the same from one performer/performance to another—he was thereby an obvious and charismatic participant in the notion of the unique performer and performance that has been the grist for the mill of performers' careers since the epic singers of his beloved ancient Greece, and one of the reasons for his works' assured survival in active repertoire for a very long time from now.

I could be wrong—and I've done no official study of this—but my sense is that in the last few decades, a great number of performances of Xenakis' music have been of his late pieces, from the mid-'80s onwards. There have been hardly any performances (in concert halls) of his tape pieces, since that format was unpopular at concerts even in its heyday.

So, I think our programming over these three evenings is quite unusual in presenting a number of earlier pieces intermingled with a substantial swath of his tape-music production.

In understanding Xenakis' compositional ambitions, particularly early in his musical career when he was working on forging a musical language that utilized what resources he had (his work and reputation as an architect and his involvement with mathematics was largely concluded by the time he decided to pursue a compositional career, around 1959), one of the red herrings is precisely his expertise as a sophisticated, avant-garde architect and mathematician. In the distant past of European religious music—think anything from late Medieval to the High Renaissance masters and even J. S. Bach—much of the music is constructed with complex numero/symbolic systems that engender a (parallel) set of meanings into the fabric of the composition; as beautiful as this style of music often is to listen to, one would have little clue about the existence of these layers of meaning unless you studied the style and probed into the possible constructive elements.

Because Xenakis also employs, in a number of pieces, somewhat sophisticated mathematical principles—and he certainly wrote prolifically on this subject at the time (such “scientific” commentary on art was very much in vogue then!)—the impression has been that he was in the tradition of the afore-mentioned European church style. This is really not the case. What the mathematics did (simple(r) examples are found in **Analogique A+B** (1958–59) and **Achorripsis** (1956–7, both 1/29)) was give rise to acoustic, gestural and “sonically architected” (my term) phenomena that became the very fertile field for pretty much an entire career of composing; this stage of his writing had created a pinnacle in the orchestral work *Metastaseis* (1954): as an architectural design, the form—how the gestures and their metastasizing are laid out—couldn't be simpler, so as not to distract from the *extraordinary* things that are being done to the sonic fabric, its texture and the rhetorical implications of what it might be saying.

That the music was saying something is always a factor in Xenakis' output, but what that might be precisely is up to the listener to construct. Even titles that are made of relatively observational words, such as “analogy” (*Analogique*) or “metastasize” (think cancer), have the potential to carry an emotional connection: in the case of *Analogique*, the almost banal Webernesque pointillism of the string writing (not to belittle the timbral transformations that take the composition in unexpected directions) finds its analogy in an almost hysterical tape part, as if we are listening in to the frantic brain-waves of the string players as they are trying to grab all the notes correctly in their given time-stream...

Akanthos (1979, 1/30) suggests a tangle of meanings—one being ‘thorn-bush’, another a kind of Corinthian column, such as at Delphi, and so on: here, the soprano helps, without one word of text, to suggest a world of “meanings” (rhetorical statements, I suppose), intertwined with the supporting ensemble in a catalogue of human gestures, the narrative of which you, the audience, find a way to construct for yourselves.

In each evening is a duo, and in each the relationship between the instruments becomes a source for its ‘meaning’, and the trajectory of its unfolding. In **Dmaathen** (1976) for oboe and percussion (1/28) a small commonality between the instruments is created by incorporating pitched percussion, a somewhat rare usage for Xenakis; in **Charisma** (1971, 1/29) the greater sonic commonalities of the clarinet and cello are exploited to a very different expressive idea of peace or conclusion; “a duality of two natures”; **Dikhthas** (1979, 1/30), for the historic duo of violin and piano, overflows into a sequence of virtuosic seizures that was a feature of Xenakis' writing in the '70s in particular: “arborescences” is the word often used to describe a crazy, often barely playable, proliferation of ideas and polyphonic possibility of the musical germ—in other words a complex tangle of branching.

Super-virtuosic writing is at the heart of the two solo cello works, **Kottos** (1977) and **Nomos alpha** (1965–66, 1/29), where the challenge is yet further exaggerated by the stress under which the cello itself undergoes via the to-ing and fro-ing in and out of the outrageous scordatura that crops up at points during the piece.

The epic struggle of **Epicycles** (1989, 1/30) brushes aside the perennial relationship trouble the solo cello has always had with an accompanying ensemble or orchestra: here, the sound of soloist must, at times, bravely attempt to

project beyond the significant sonic resources given to the ensemble though, of course, the sense of gesture does register what the ear may not perfectly hear.

The game scenario that inspired *Linaia-Agon* (1972, 1/28) is not necessarily completely playful—the theory behind it addresses trajectories of economic and/or political conflict; an enthusiastic participation in the Greek political situation around the Second World War—he was severely wounded and, for a time, utterly dispirited—Xenakis later did occasionally vent intense political points of view through his music. *Pour la Paix* (1981, 1/29), a radio play, is one such piece, composed with a libretto by François Xenakis, his wife.

It has always struck me that Xenakis' tape pieces, for example, *Orient-Occident* (1960), *Diamorphoses* (1957–8, both 1/28), and the substantial *Polytope de Cluny* (1972, 1/30), are the fulfillment of the aesthetic that Edgard Varèse offered to the notion of manipulated tape sounds—revealing “unknown worlds” perhaps ... Mentioning Varèse is not an idle connection of course, given that one of Xenakis' architectural projects, the Philips Pavilion at Expo '58 in Brussels, was the structure for which Varèse's tape piece *Poème électronique* was assembled. We can only imagine how the aesthetic of this new way of working with sound must have inspired Xenakis, not least in ways that remained part of an intuitive yearning for a certain way of revealing how sound may transform itself, the perception of the space in which it resonates, and the way its extraordinarily visceral, bold and sometimes frighteningly overwhelming resources pour out meaning to a world well beyond the imagination of the concert hall and its attendant listeners.

Mark Menzies, 2011

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS

Armenian-American pianist **Dzovig Markarian** is a soloist, collaborative artist and teacher, who is currently enjoying a versatile career in the Los Angeles music scene. After earning a BFA and an MFA in Multi-Focus Keyboard Performance from California Institute of the Arts, and working with CalArts based ensembles and orchestras, Dzovig has gone on to collaborate with various composers, and chamber music ensembles. Most recent engagements include performances with the Dilijan Chamber Music Series, the Felici Trio, the Formalist Quartet, Ensemble Green, and the Xtet. Dzovig has also been a guest at Elliott Carter's Centenary Festival Concert at REDCAT, and with the Women's Committee at the LA Philharmonic Orchestra. Dzovig's fascination with the evolution of new music has led to ongoing partnerships with composers such as Artur Avanesov, Vatche Sharafyan, Jeffrey Holmes and Victoria Bond, in premiering their works, and extraordinary musicians such as Mark Menzies (violin/viola/piano), Tom Peters (double bass), and Jacqui Bobak (mezzo-soprano) in exploring and programming repertoire by experimentalists, new complexity composers, as well as women composers. As a teacher, Dzovig keeps a private studio where she coaches vocalists and instrumentalists, and teaches piano technique and performance. Dzovig is a former student of Roubina Artinian, Arpie Tcheroyan, Theodora Primes, Patricia Mabee, Liam Viney and Vicki Ray. Residing in the United States since 1991, **Mark Menzies** has established an important, world-wide reputation as a new music violist and violinist. He has been described in a *Los Angeles Times* review, as an “extraordinary musician” and a “riveting violinist.” At 38 years, his career as a viola and violin virtuoso, chamber musician and advocate of contemporary music, has seen performances in Great Britain, Germany, France, Austria, Brazil, Mexico, Italy, Japan, New Zealand and across the United States, including a series of appearances at New York's Carnegie Hall. Mark Menzies is renowned for performing some of the most complex scores so far written and he has been personally recommended by composers such as Brian Ferneyhough, Roger Reynolds, Michael Finnissy, Vinko Globokar, Philippe Manoury, Jim Gardner, Elliott Carter, Liza Lim, Christian Wolff, Richard Barrett and Sofia Gubaidulina for performances he has given of their music. An early success was performing at the Lutoslawski Festival in London (1989) and subsequent highlights have included appearances at the Ojai Festival 2000, at the June in Buffalo 1996/9 and 2000 festivals, the Mirror of the New Festival in Hawai'i 1997, and as featured guest soloist in the 09/03 International Festival (of new music) in Auckland, New Zealand, 2003. There has been considerable international critical applause for Mark Menzies' leadership in ensembles formed to perform contemporary and twentieth century, such as the Bloomington-based New Vienna Ensemble, Los Angeles's Southwest Chamber Music, San Diego's Sirius Ensemble and the New York-based Ensemble Sospeso. It was with Ensemble Sospeso that he organized a joint venture with the California Institute of the Arts to present the first professional concerts in the US dedicated to Brian Ferneyhough's music in December 2002. Mark Menzies is featured on a large number of CD recordings. This includes “Process and Passion”, a Pogus label release of chamber

music by Roger Reynolds, as well as the world premiere recording of "...above earth's shadow" by Michael Finnissy to be released shortly. Mark Menzies is a National Recording Artist of Radio New Zealand for which he has made numerous studio recordings. Mark Menzies is currently viola and violin professor at the California Institute of the Arts where he also coordinates their chamber orchestra, new music ensembles and conducting studies. Drawing from his innovative professionalism and artistic leadership, he initiated a successful collaborative series called Chamber Music Wednesdays that has contributed to the programming content of concerts presented by CalArts at REDCAT. He currently curates a series called Classics at CalArts, a chamber music series presented annually at the Valencia campus.

Brian O'Reilly works in the fields of painting, drawing, collage, moving images/live cinema, and electronic/noise music. He is also a contrabassist focusing on uncovering inaudible textures and acoustic microgestures through the integration of electronic treatments and extended playing techniques. He attended the School of the Art Institute of Chicago on a scholarship for sculpture, where he studied sound composition with Bob Snyder and video focusing on image generation and manipulation using the analog video synthesizer the Sandin Image Processor with Edward Rankus. During this period he also participated in improvisation with members of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Music (AACM). Following his time in Chicago, he relocated to Paris to research the composition methods and techniques of the Greek composer and architect Iannis Xenakis. There he worked extensively with Xenakis's UPIC system for graphical composition and was appointed as Musical Assistant at Les Ateliers UPIC/CCMIX. He worked with many composers including Luc Ferrari on his audio and video installation *Cycle des Souvenirs*, and Eliane Radigue on her work *L'île Résonante*. Also during this time he followed lectures in electroacoustic music, synthesis and composition with Horacio Vaggione, Jean-Claude Risset and Julio Estrada. He pursued graduate studies in Electronic Music at the Media Arts and Technology program, University of California, Santa Barbara. It was during this time his collaborations with Curtis Roads began, their work coalescing into the project *POINT LINE CLOUD*, which has been performed at venues as diverse as the Paris Planetarium, All Tomorrow's Parties UK (curated by Autechre), the El Rey Theater in Los Angeles, Istanbul Technical University, the Sonic Arts Research Centre in Belfast, and Recombinant Media Labs in San Francisco. Following his studies at UCSB, he was Operations Manager of Recombinant Media Labs in San Francisco. There he contributed to many projects for the Asphodel label and took part in performances utilizing the Sound Traffic Control spatial sound system with multiple projection screens at the alternative performance space: The Compound. Receiving a commission from the Zentrum fuer Kunst und Medientechnologie (ZKM) he relocated to Germany to work on developing the audiovisual performance *Spectral Strands: for Visuals and Viola* in collaboration with the violist Garth Knox. This featured elements of electroacoustic improvisation as well as works for viola and electronics by Scelsi, Sciarrino, Saariaho, Edwards and Grisey. It was also during this period his collaboration with the Vasulkas began. Focusing around the exhibition *MINDFRAMES* doing audio restoration for the films of Paul Sharits and working visual materials Woody had generated in the 1970, utilizing the Rutt-Etra Scan Processor into a new three screen version of his work, *Grazing*, and an installation of *Scan Processor Studies*. Currently he is a lecturer at LASALLE College of the Arts, School of Contemporary Music in Singapore and regularly performs solo, and with the electro-acoustic improvising groups Iron Egg & Black Zenith. He has worked on projects with Eliane Radigue, Luc Ferrari, Curtis Roads, Zbigniew Karkowski, Matmos, Maryanne Amacher, William Basinski, Fe-Mail, Otomo Yoshihide, Stefanie L. Ku, Zeitkratzer, Christian Marclay, Yasunao Tone, Stephen T. Pope, Nicholas Isherwood, Darren Moore, Tim O'Dwyer, Francisco Lopez, sinebag, Vladimir Todorovic, Andreas Schlegel, Chandrasekhar Ramakrishnan, Kasper T. Toeplitz, Garth Knox, and Steina and Woody Vasulka among others.

Curtis Roads holds a joint appointment as Professor and Chair of Media Arts and Technology (MAT) and Music at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB), where he is also Associate Director of the Center for Research in Electronic Art Technology (CREATE). He studied music composition and computer programming at California Institute of the Arts, the University of California, San Diego (BA Summa Cum Laude with Highest Departmental Honors), and the University of Paris 8 (PhD Très honorable avec félicitations). From 1980 to 1986 he was a researcher in computer music at the MIT Media Laboratory. He then taught at the Federico II University of Naples, Harvard University, Oberlin Conservatory, CCMIX (Paris), and the University of Paris 8. He has led masterclasses at the Australian National Conservatory (Melbourne), Prometeo Laboratorio (Parma), Ionian University (Corfu), Goethe Institute (Rome), Kunitachi College of Music (Tokyo), Royal Conservatory (Aarhus), Catholic University (Porto), and

the Zürich University of the Arts, among others. He is co-organizer of international workshops on musical signal processing in Sorrento, Capri, and Santa Barbara (1988, 1991, 1997, 2000). He served on the composition juries of the Ars Electronica (Linz) and the International Electroacoustic Music Competition (Bourges, France). Certain of his compositions feature granular and pulsar synthesis, methods he developed for generating sound from acoustical particles. A cofounder of the International Computer Music Association in 1979, he was Editor of *Computer Music Journal* (MIT Press) from 1978 to 1989, and Associate Editor 1990–2000. His books include *Foundations of Computer Music* (1985, MIT Press), *Composers and the Computer* (1985, AR Editions), *The Music Machine* (1989, MIT Press), *Representations of Musical Signals* (1991, MIT Press), *The Computer Music Tutorial* (1996, The MIT Press), *Musical Signal Processing* (co-editor, 1997, Routledge), *L'audionumerique* (1998, Dunod), *The Computer Music Tutorial–Japanese edition* (2000, Denki Daigaku Shuppan) and *Microsound* (2002, MIT Press), which explores the aesthetics and techniques of composition with sound particles. A revised edition of *L'audionumerique* was published in 2007. A Chinese version of *The Computer Music Tutorial* is scheduled for publication in 2011 as a national textbook. His music is available on compact discs produced by Asphodel, MODE, OR, the MIT Media Laboratory, and Wergo. His composition *Clang-Tint* (1994) was commissioned by the Japan Ministry of Culture (Bunka-cho). His electronic music collection *POINT LINE CLOUD* won the Award of Distinction at the 2002 Ars Electronica and was released as a CD + DVD on the Asphodel label (San Francisco) in 2005. In 2007 he received a National Science Foundation grant for research in algorithms for sound analysis. He is currently completing a new book *Composing Electronic Music: A New Aesthetic* for Oxford University Press, a revised edition of *The Computer Music Tutorial* for MIT Press, and a new set of electronic music.

Maurita (Bunny) Phillips Thornburgh, internationally known soprano soloist, resides in Southern California, where she conducts Cantori Domino and serves as minister of music at the St. Augustine by-the-Sea Episcopal Church in Santa Monica. Thornburgh has performed extensively as a recitalist throughout the U.S. and in Europe, the Middle East, and the Caribbean. She is known for her exquisite musicianship and artistry and has an extensive repertoire, ranging from fourteenth century works to more recent writings. She particularly enjoys music from the Baroque era, especially that of Johann Sebastian Bach. Thornburgh has sung as a soloist in major choral works with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Seattle Symphony, and the Roger Wagner Chorale, and performed under the direction of noted conductors Eric Leinsdorf, Zubin Mehta, Eugene Ormandy, George Solti, Herbert Blomstedt, Esa Pekka Salonen, and Gerard Schwarz. Besides her work as a sought-after soloist, she has also conducted choral groups, including the Chamber Singers at La Sierra University for a year, and served as an artistic director for several programs. Her choral group, Cantori Domino, has performed extensively, participating in choral workshops and touring in Eastern Europe. She began conducting choral groups at age 16 and has led numerous church choirs in the intervening years. She currently conducts the choirs at the Vallejo Drive SDA church and the Episcopal church in Santa Monica. She has recorded several albums with major recording companies and has sung in numerous sound tracks for television and film, including *Beauty and the Beast*, *Amistad*, *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, *Hook*, *Aladdin*, *Jurassic Park*, *Anastasia*, *Matrix Reloaded*, *Matrix Revolution*, and others. Thornburgh attended Union College, La Sierra University, and the California Institute of Music. She graduated from CalArts, where she has also served as a faculty member. Andrews University awarded her an honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree in August 2000, in recognition of her achievements as a soloist, teacher and conductor.

Iannis Xenakis: Composer, Architect, Visionary (through Feb. 4) explores the fundamental role of drawing in the work of avant-garde composer Iannis Xenakis (1922–2001). One of the most important figures in twentieth-century music, Xenakis originally trained as an engineer and was also known as an architect, developing iconic designs while working with Le Corbusier in the 1950s. This exhibition of Xenakis' visual work comprises samples of his pioneering graphic musings, architectural plans, compelling preparatory mathematical renderings, and pre-compositional sketches—in all, nearly 100 documents created between 1953 and 1984. Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA)-Pacific Design Center, 8687 Melrose Ave., West Hollywood 90069-5712. www.moca.org.

CURATORIAL COMMITTEE

Mark Menzies, Mark Trayle, and David Rosenboom