



SYNERGY
PERCUSSION

PLEIADES

BY IANNIS XENAKIS

SYNERGY PERFORMS THE
COMPLETE MAGNUM OPUS
BY THE WORLD'S GREATEST
COMPOSER FOR PERCUSSION

WEDNESDAY 8 JUNE, 2011 8PM
CITY RECITAL HALL ANGEL PLACE

PROGRAM

Psappha (1975) Iannis Xenakis (1921/2- 2001) 15'

Pleiades (1978) Iannis Xenakis 46'

"Metaux" : "Claviers" : "Melanges" : "Peaux"

CAST

Synergy Percussion

Timothy Constable (AD)

Joshua Hill

Alison Pratt

Bree van Reyk

Special guests

Eugene Ughetti

Matthias Schack-Arnott

Instruments Tim Moore

Movement direction Zsuzsanna Soboslay

PSAPPHA

My tongue freezes. Fire,

Delicate fire, in the flesh.

Blind, stunned, the sound

Of thunder, in my ears.

Shivering with sweat, cold

Tremors over the skin,

I turn the colour of dead grass,

And I'm an inch from dying.

Sappho, Greek 6th C BC

The Sapphic reference is not so much because of the emotional content of her work, but because of her innovative use of syllabic rhythm. The intensity of the score gives this work a sense of battle, as very clearly defined groups of instruments musically collide and manipulate each other. Xenakis' first percussion solo, this quartet reading aims at a more symphonic sound than one desperate soloist can achieve.

This performance will be recorded by ABC Classic FM. Any taking of photographs, or other audio and video recording are strictly prohibited.

PLEIADES

The Pleiades star cluster has been the source of inspiration and legend in almost every culture on earth. Visible in both hemispheres, it tracks an annual course through the night skies, eclipsed regularly by the moon and planets. It is first mentioned in Chinese literature 4300 years ago, then later by Homer, and in numerous passages of the Bible.

The Greek myth of the seven sisters – pursued ruthlessly before being turned into a flock of doves - echoes the themes of feminine grief, loss and abandonment found in Australian Aboriginal, North American Indian, and Nordic (to name a few) ancestral lore about the Pleiades. The youngest, Merope (or Electra), also abandoned her siblings, and (depending on which story you follow) became a mortal, a comet, or simply faded away. Science explains the congruence of the stories by asserting that a highly visible star of the cluster became extinct and no longer visible about 3500 BC.

Today's six visible stars are the brightest of some 400 in the cluster, wreathed in a complex nebulae of dust and gas. Xenakis' work draws its most overt inspiration from this contemporary appreciation of the Pleiades' complexity. The six percussionists are linked by an inexorable network of rhythmic layers, structures and relationships. At times they pound out deliberate, even cruel unison passages, at others they are so disparate that appreciation of their relationship to one another is itself the stuff of science, if not legend.

The work is in four movements, each having a very special colour and magic. Xenakis groups the instruments by elemental family – metal, skin, mallets, mix. He was extremely thorough in his approach to chance: in his earlier work *Persephassa*, clouds of sound are given basic densities and colours, and the performers interpret them as they will; in *Pleiades*, every single note is precisely calculated and notated.

Timothy Constable
Artistic Director
Synergy Percussion

hit:stick:flip

14 - 15 July

Sydney Conservatorium of Music

A two day workshop for students and percussion enthusiasts presented by Synergy Percussion and the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. Open to high school and tertiary percussion students and experienced percussion enthusiasts.



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Presented by



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