

# AxisModula



Nouvelles Incantations



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With :

Nina Maghsoodloo, piano  
Sarah Brabo-Durand, soprano  
Rowan Hamwood, flute

Andrea Baglione, scenography

## PRESENTATION

p.5

## PROJECT PROPOSAL

p.6

## SCENOGRAPHER'S NOTE

p.7

## PROGRAMME NOTES

p.8

## PEDAGOGIC PROGRAMME

p.10

## BIOGRAPHIES

p.12

## TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

p.14

## CONTACT

p.14



# PRESENTATION

## Nouvelles incantations

Nouvelles Incantations represents a call to the light, to heavenly and earthly forces. Through the works of Cage, Ligeti, Wajnberg and Messaien, three musical magicians invite the audience on a journey exploring the music of the 20th and 21st centuries.

These three mysterious characters partake in a dreamlike ritual, filled with games of light and shadow. Moving through their musical temple, represented by five golden altars and a piano, they give life to a fantastic imaginary universe of intimate ceremonies and veiled illusions.

## AxisModula

AxisModula is a chamber music ensemble of flexible instrumentation based around the Franco-Iranian duo represented by Nina Maghsoodloo and Sarah Brabo Durand that is enriched by different guest artists invited for each project. The ensemble promotes an active and committed approach to the introducing the public to the repertoire of the 20th and 21st centuries, supported by a strong scenographic element.

## Programme

**John Cage** *The wonderful widow of eithteen springs*  
Piano, voice

**Narcis Bonet** *He mirat aquesta terra*  
Piano, flute, voice

**György Ligeti** *Három Weöres Dal, Three Songs on poems by Sandor Weöres*  
Piano, voice

**Beat Furrer** *Invocation III*  
Flute, voice

**André Jolivet** *Chant de Linos*  
Piano, flute

**Olivier Messiaen** *L'amour de Piroutcha*  
Piano, voice

**Charles-David Wajnberg** *I keep light*  
Piano, flute, voice

*Music, I believe has the function of searching for a sonic harmony with the universe. This is the old magical role it has always had, which has not fundamentally changed since we have begun to play in concert halls, because successful music creates a profound connection with the world. It is a work of magic.*

F-B. Mâche

At the heart of Nouvelles Incantations, there is the meeting of our different universes and, a desire: to be able to transmit to the public the force that we have felt in the works of this programme. In this sense, the above citation of the French composer musicologist and mythologist François-Bernard Mâche has greatly inspired us. He evokes here what is for him one of the most important aspects of the music of the 20th century, that is to say the resurgence of the sacred and the renewed need to interrogate the world and the universe through music.

There are common elements in each piece of the programme that have profoundly touched us and that each of these composers have expressed using different methods: Cage with a lancing melody inspired by the hypnotic *Finnegans Wake* by James Joyce, Ligeti by the return to traditional rhythms anchored in the deep culture of eastern countries, Bonet by the evocation of the force of the earth in Catalonian culture, Furrer by the persistence of his *Invocation*, Jolivet by the hypnotic call of the musician Linos and Messaien by the cry of love both stellar and translucent to *Pitrouitcha* finally joined by Wajnberg whose « *I keep light* » is a true profession faith in the relentlessness of research in searching for the light.

Different techniques, but a common, universal purpose drove us towards the creating the second aspect of these Incantations: the pedagogic element, which is equally important to its performance aspect. Apart from its message, the strength of this programme is to cover the entirety of the 20th century as well as the beginning of the 21st, in presenting an evolution of musical writing techniques. The programme presents both harmonic and playing techniques, all through an accessible and easily appreciated repertoire. This provides a perfect occasion to introduce a young public to contemporary music and beyond that, to the insights presented by the contemporary arts.

## SCENOGRAPHER'S NOTE

The challenge was to find an aesthetic and symbolic continuity in a recital fragmented by greatly varying repertoire. In *Nouvelles incantations*, I searched for a balance between the visible and the invisible, between contemplative and more spectacular moments. It is through games of lights, reflections, shadows and gold that I arrived at the scenography of this piece.

The setting consists of a scene marked by five small bronze altars around which the stories will unfold. The performers are covered in gold, which gives their shadows the allure of watchful statues, mages or sorcerers. However, these magical and mysterious figures are not so much monsters as storytellers, diffusers of dreams in an imaginary auditorium. For this reason the movement evolves around and very close to the public, with the possibility of placing the spectators in a semi-circle around the performers.



**John Cage** *The wonderful widow of eighteen springs*

« *Night, by silent sailing night...* »

Composed in 1942, this piece marks Cage's first use of *Finnegans Wake* by James Joyce, which he would later employ on numerous occasions. The American composer was particularly attracted to the spell-like hypnotic writing of Joyce, often obscured in its meaning. The *Wonderful Widow* is a reflection of the impressions felt by Cage upon reading a passage of the book. The feeling of hypnosis is transmitted by the repetition of three notes in the voice accompanied by the piano, utilised here as a percussion instrument, with the pianist knocking on the wood of the instrument without ever using the keys.

**Narcis Bonet** *He mirat aquesta terra*

« *When the light emerging from the ocean begins to shimmer in the east, I watched this earth, I watched this earth.* »

Narcis Bonet composed *He mirat aquesta terra* in 1994, based on a poem by Salvador Espriu often set to music. Bonet was born in Barcelona and is a staunch supporter of Catalan culture and language. In this composition he delivers a luminous vision of the strength and tenderness of his homeland, carried by a gentle music made up of phantasmagoric colours.

**György Ligeti** *Három Weöres Dal, Three songs on poems by Sandor Weöres*

« *The moon dances behind a white veil, all is bathed in soft blue light* »

The writing of Hungarian poet Sandor Weores possesses such a rhythmic musicality that it could not but be elevated by the musical setting of his friend, composer Georgy Ligeti. The songs are based on three traditional stories, brimming with magical images and superstition underpinned by melodies varying from languorous and melancholic to lively and hypnotic.

« *A Merchant has come with giant birds, the princess must not see them! Protect the princess!* »

**Beat Furrer** *Invocation III*

« *Cela ne m'émeut pas, le ciel que tu m'as promis, ni ne m'émeut l'enfer tant redouté, Car même s'il n'y avait pas de ciel, je t'aimerais, et même s'il n'y avait pas d'enfer, je te craindrais* »

This duo is taken from the opera *Invocation*, of which it is the central piece. Composed in the early 2000's, Beat Furrer deploys here the characteristic elements of his writing, using nested superposition of complex material to create either very dense or dissolute textures. Here he explores, through a reference to Marguerite Dumas's *Moderato cantabile*, the loss of language and the impossibility of expressing oneself that he had already visited in his previous opera *Begehren*.

**André Jolivet** *Chant de Linos*

The Chant de Linos was composed in 1944 for the entry examination of the Paris Conservatoire. André Jolivet, student of Varèse, shares with his teacher his iconoclastic character, demonstrating simultaneously the independence of his writing and his fascination with ancient music, expressed here by the use of Greek modes. Here the composer projects us into the threnody of Linos, musician of Greek mythology, son of a muse and Apollo, musical mentor of Hercules (who would later kill Linos for having dared to reprimand him), with which the flute charms and envelops the listener.

**Olivier Messiaen** *L'amour de Piroutcha*

*« Toungou ahi toungou, cradle, you  
My cinder of lights  
Cradle your child in your green arms  
Piroutcha, your little cinder,  
For you »*

L'amour de Piroutcha is an extract of Messiaen's Harawi. Inspired by the Peruvian Harawi, a love song which finishes by the death of the two lovers. Messiaen himself said of this work that it is "a grand cry of love". Beyond the habitual interplay of colour and light characteristic of Messiaen, this song of two voices, which follows an imaginary dialogue between two young lovers, portrays a great tenderness.

**Charles-David Wajnberg** *I keep light*

*« I keep the subject of my inquiry constantly before me, and wait till the first dawning opens gradually, by little and little, into a full and clear light. »*

It is upon the above quotation of Newton that Charles-David Wajnberg based his trio for flute, voice and piano, composed between 2008 and 2009. The work could be viewed as a profession of modern faith, when music as well as science are questioning the approach to research. The young composer says this of the work: all artistic paths must be refreshed and renewed, again and again, examined from all angles until a comprehension of the object is achieved which gives it its coherence. Thus in *I keep light*, the same phrase is retaken 12 times, from different angles, until finally arriving at clarity, evidently some form of... incantation?

### Introduction to contemporary music

The pedagogic version of the concert has been edited with the view to provide direct interaction with the public. The players will play partial versions of the pieces to support a musical discussion with the public about the magic in each piece and the techniques used by the composer to convey these ideas. We will also discuss the overarching ideas of the performance and the role that each musician plays within it with a presentation of each of the instruments and instrumental techniques as well as a discussion regarding the scenography.

**Audiences: Students in primary schools, high schools**

**Duration : 1 hour**

#### Objectives

- Introduction to contemporary music
- Introduction to aural analysis and the musical imagination
- Presentation of the evolution of writing techniques from the early 20th century until today
- Introducing key composers of the 20th century in connection with the history of the arts





### Nina Maghsoodloo, piano

Nina Magsoodloo began her musical journey with Farimah Ghavamsadri in Piano and Alireza Mashayekhi in Musical Culture. In 2005 she won the 3rd prize in the competition «Biennale for the interpretation of modern music» in Tehran. In 2006 she moved to Paris where she entered the class of Ani Petrossian at the Conservatoire de Cachan. She was later accepted into the class of Laurent Cabasso, then Michel Gaechter at the Academie Supérieure de Strasbourg (HEAR), where she obtained her Masters of Performance in 2015.

During her time at the Academie Supérieure, Nina Magsoodloo participated numerous times in the Contemporary Ensemble of the Conservatoire de Strasbourg, under the direction of Luigi Gaggiero and Armand Angster. With this ensemble she has notably participated in several premieres as a part of the Musica festival in the concert «young talents» in 2014 and the opera «Mririda» by Ahmed Essyad in 2016 under the direction of Léo Warynski. Her collaboration with Armand Angster allowed her the opportunity to join the ensemble Accroche Note for a series of concerts in Italy.

After her finishing her Masters she has been invited to perform with the Ensemble de L'Ille and also with the ensemble Sons et Sens in collaboration with Iradj Sahbai, with whom she has played in Krakow. She is a founding member of the variable ensemble AxisModula. Nina Maghsoodloo is also regularly invited as a soloist to the festival «from classical to contemporary» in Tehran.



### Sarah Brabo-Durand, soprano

Sarah Brabo-Durand received her initial musical education at the Conservatoire de Brest, first with Cécile Le Meayer, then Geneviève Page. After receive her DEM in voice with a unanimous decision of the jury, she continued her studies with Françoise Kubler specializing in contemporary voice, obtaining her diploma in 2014 with a mark «très bien with felicitations from a unanimous jury». In 2014, she was selected to participate in the Summer Academy of ensemble Linea with Donatienne Michel-Dansac. In 2016, she was awarded the Best

Performer Price in the San Marino New Music Academy Competition. She has also had the opportunity to receive courses from Mélanie Moussay, Yves Sotin, Isabelle Poulénard, Irène Jarksy, Alvin Curran, Rohan de Saram, John Kenny and Nicholas Isherwood.

Passionate advocate of many different styles of singing, she has also performed in numerous Operas with the Brest based ensemble «entre sable et ciel» as cast member and soloist, and in classical and contemporary recitals, always with a particular emphasis on scenography. She has also been invited to perform with ensembles such as the Contemporary Ensemble of the Conservatoire de Strasbourg (conducted by Armand Angster) or the Phoenix ensemble in Nantes. She is the cofounder of the duo Atomos and the ensemble AxisModula.

Her contemporary focus has lead her to work with many composers such as Lucien Guérinel, Matthieu Prual and the Phoenix ensemble (with whom she performed at the Avignon festival.) Arthur Aharonian, Paul Mefano, Sanae Ishida, Roberto Victorio, Clara Olivares, Claudio Vitale, Charles-David Waynberg and Aurélien Marion-Gallois. She was invited to perform Marion-Gallois's «13M3m2 ou la fille étoile» as a soloist in the 2014 Musica festival in Strasbourg.



### **Rowan Hamwood, flûte**

Rowan Hamwood began his musical training in Brisbane where he received his Bachelor's degree in Jazz Flute (Advanced Performance). A former student at the Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM) from 2011 to 2013, he received a mark of «Outstanding» (the highest award) for each of his solo recitals. In 2015, he completed the Cycle de Spécialisation in the class of Mario Caroli at the Strasbourg Conservatoire with a mark of «très bien».

Invited to several festivals including soundscape and BIFEM he has won scholarships Ian Potter Scholarship and ANAM John and Rosemary Macleod Travelling Fellowship. He has also played as a soloist with the Queensland Youth Orchestra, at the Musica festival, and with the contemporary ensemble of the Strasbourg Conservatoire under the direction of Luigi Gaggero. He has also had the opportunity to play chamber music at ANAM or in other groups with well known musicians such as Dale Barlow, Pascal Rogé, Paul Grabowsky and Eighth Blackbird and many others. He is also founding member of the trio Petrichor with whom he has performed in Australia, France, Germany and Canada.



### **Andrea Baglione, scenography**

After a preparatory year in Nice, she joined Haute Ecole des Arts du Rhin (HEAR) in Strasbourg where at first she studied illustration then design. After spending a brief period studying in the Faculty of Philosophy before joining the scenography class, from which she graduated in 2015.

She has participated as a scenographer, intern, actress and assistant in the staging of numerous productions. These different projects have led her across France (with the troupe

Robert aime Jocelyne and the company La chair du monde), England (in conjunction with the scenographer Janet Bird in the Royal theatre of Edimburg and Plymouth) and Germany (in conjunction with the scenographer Elissa Bier).

With her collective Scenopolis she created «Sténopé Parade» (Hall des Chars -Strasbourg 2015) a piece visible in the enclosure of a pin.

## TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

**Duration** : 1 hour  
**Space Required** : 7m x 5m  
**Installation** : 3 hours  
**Dress rehearsal time** : 1 hour  
(reducible to 30 min)  
**Audience size** : 50 to 500  
according to room and stage size  
**Material** : availability of a Piano  
5 extension cords with double female connections

**Teaser available at**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=87b0J-kMbTQ>

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