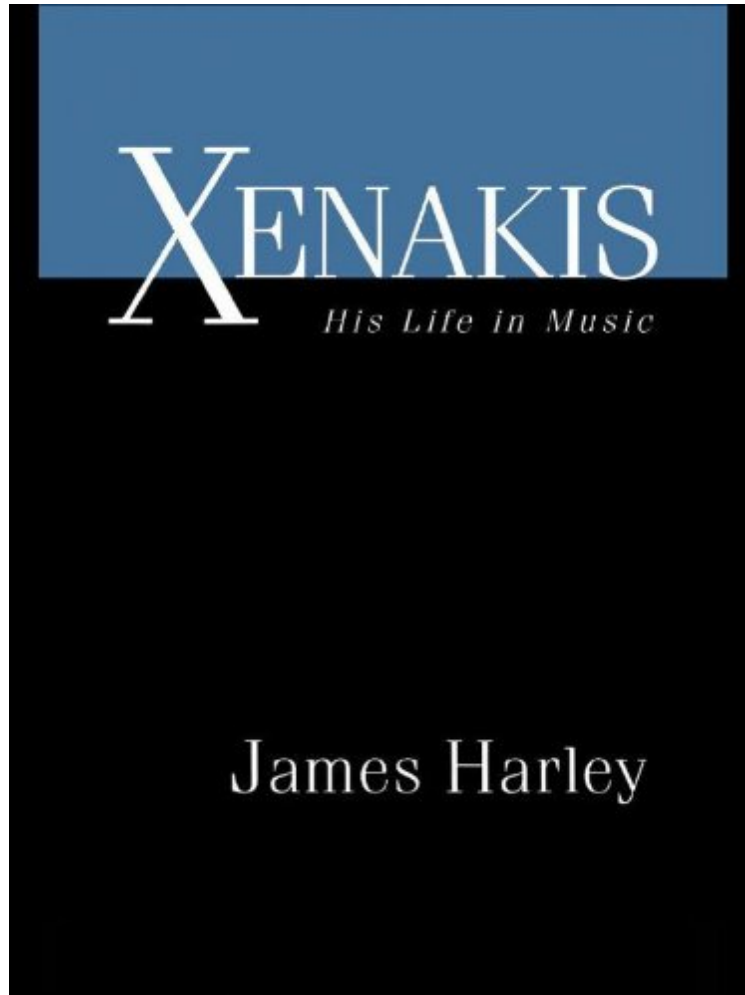


(Free read ebook) Xenakis: His Life in Music

Xenakis: His Life in Music

James Harley

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James Harley : Xenakis: His Life in Music before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Xenakis: His Life in Music:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. compendium totality of the Xenakis oeuvre By scarecrow James Harley knows perhaps more of Xenakis than most, He has been there at Seminars, and performances of Xenakis music, although here he does rely for reference numerous times on Matossian's excellent earlier book biography, (1981, translated, 1986); and the Interviews with Balent Andras Varga (1996); aside from that every work of Xenakis is written about herein; the compositional concepts surrounding each work, the context, performance, personnel and commissioning entity; All is organized in useful chapters in chronological means; Yet "flashpoints" that have animated Xenakis throughout his life; stochastic music, (the ST/ series of Works) use of early computer; symbolic music; architecture, and algorithm, the voice, Arborescences, Cosmic Conceptions; Polytopes, Sieves, Ensembles, Melody, Harmonic colour, Nonlinear Form, and the Late Works, Abstraction

and Intensity;Harley much of the time writes in program notes-like narrative, play by play, line by line;which can get tedious I found, but you feel his analytical voice is one of commitment to his subject;He makes an excellent teacher in this respect, wanting a greater audience to know his subject;And his subject is the discourse of modernity itself, and its development in music;Xenakis has been an enduring subject altering and giving alternative means in the construction,the paradigm of the "science" of music, always trying to find ancient universals,timeless means for how sound, timbre, density,complexity engages the present of lovevity; the very face of music itself.There are interesting anecdotal information you may find inspiring; I did; surrounding a work, like for example if Xenakis had traveled to wherever to witness the premiere,and we know he always spent his summers by the Mediterranean;He built a home in Corsica;Also revealed is who he had worked with closely on particular pieces;Irving Arditti, Robert Black, Arturo Tamayo, Yuji Takahashi,Roham de Sarem;Rascher Quartet,and Festivals that commissioned him numerously;To make high meaning of the work here you do need some acquaintance with basic concepts engaged through Xenakis life;And Harley explains it all to you;To read Xenakis is difficult aside from introductory notes to his works, his one seminal text/treatise is the "Formalized Music"(1971and the republished,reissued). A few chapters there are necessary; but Harley here gives good breakdown explications into all these theories of timbral transformations, how "clouds" of sounds come to be organized;even formative agendas as for example: 1)Initial conception,2)Definition of sonic entities,3)Definitions of transformations, 4)Microcomposition (choice detail),5)Sequential programming, 6)Implementation of calculations, 7)Final symbolic result,8)Sonic realization, many of these means remained with Xenakis although altered in some ways;as he developed from out of in application;Also there are flashpoints within this discussion that elicit/encourages self-education and understanding; for example if you studied the Cello Solo "Nomos Alpha",(1966)you find the concept of sieve theory, appraising the 196 events there(a point Matossian made), you have a comprehension of early Xenakis, that along with the first piano solo "Herma", followed by "Akrata", Later the works surrounding "Evryali", the piano solo from the early Seventies,began an emanation of means, a "rhizomatic" thread of works;as then the piano concerto;"Synaphaii"; All of Xenakis work are inter-related,like a patrilinear context of meanings and associations, references that sparked creativity in his life; where works come from each other, also related backwards to architectural projects he did, as the Les {Polytopes}Sieve theory was a means of duplicating different events,as in "Nomos Alpha" quarter tones are the focus in the cello, much like parenthetical,held in abeyance spaces, "black holes" in some respects, in that Xenakis never preferred the internal dimensions of Western music how things get duplicated and structured, as through harmonic progressions and counterpoint; preferring instead the external means of sound,from Byzantine era of musical discourse;(this is explained and given a richness of context in Xenakis various interviews to gain his "Doctorat of State of France", See "Arts:Sciences/Alloys"). This has been reissued, Sharon Kanach editor.In his latter music we find transformations engaged the concept "arborescence";events emanating from a root,a vein of movement in time and space;somewhat like Deleuze's "rhizome";Also density is a fascinating concept to appraise, and what Xenakis does/transforms it; how it is projected in space and transformed; as the earlier symbolic music and stochastic methods cloud formations,gave way to new approaches and electronic means;For many premiere or on-going performances of Xenakis music Harley has been there himself as well as witness,and taking seminars in composition with Xenakis round the globe;In the end you come away with an incredible understanding of a composer,and a neglect for many of the works you will read about here are for the first time;You also will find/discover how he engaged unpretentiously ideas,universals,modernity, concepts, paradigms in creating single works of music;0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Like X? You need this.By Bran EnglanderHarley used to write for me when I was Classical Director at All Music Guide. He's good. Real good. This is a very important book about arguably the most under-rated and under-valued composer of the last century. (Where does the time go?) Like X? You need this.5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Encyclopedic treatment of Xenakis's worksBy AutomeusFor any Xenakis scholar, musicologist or composer, this is a 5-star work, without a doubt. The only reason I give 4 is to alert the Xenakis listener that this is a reference work that does not lend itself to reading straight through. Harley is a composer who studied with Xenakis, and while he writes in understandable English, avoiding mathematics, it does not make for gripping reading to analyze each and every Xenakis composition in chronological order.There is minimal context -- bare bones information on commissions, first performers and performances, and some biographical information at the beginning and scattered throughout -- but for the most part Harley's achievement is not one likely to be appreciated by the non-specialist.I found Chapter 3 to be the most compelling: "From Architecture to Algorithm." The outline is:"Metastaseis""Pithoprakta"The Philips PavilionMusique ConcreteStochastic MusicGame TheorySymbolic MusicThe ST AlgorithmIt was in these years, from 1954 to 1961, that Xenakis made his name and made his great initial theoretical breakthroughs. My interest dropped off precipitously after that, with five more chapters to go, despite the fact that the bulk of Xenakis's best works were composed in the 1960s and 1970s.In the later chapters I found most interesting the descriptions of his 1969 electro-acoustic masterpiece KRAANERG (commissioned as a ballet!), "Tetras" (1983), the best of his string quartets, and the polytopes -- installations for light and electro-acoustic sound. Harley quotes Xenakis from Matossian in reference to these works: "I want to bring the stars down and move them around. Don't you have this kind of dream?" (114)It seems to me that the best way for a Xenakis listener to use Harley's book would be to read the description of a work before listening to

it. Reading the entire 254 pages in one sitting is not recommended. For an understanding of Xenakis's stochastic theory, his own *FORMALIZED MUSIC: Thought and Mathematics in Composition* is indispensable. While largely mathematical, there are great sections in the beginning and at the end that present some of the key ideas in the composer's own words. *Conversations With Iannis Xenakis*, the composer interviewed by Balint Andras Varga in 1980 and 1989, is much more readable and engaging. And Matossian's 1986 biography is perhaps the single best English-language book on Xenakis. Both of these are out-of-print. For anyone seriously interested in Xenakis, though, Harley's book is a treasure trove. I consider Iannis Xenakis to be one of the three best composers of the late 20th Century, along with Elliott Carter and Gyorgy Ligeti. See my *XENAKIS: A LISTENER'S GUIDE* list for recordings and reviews. (verified library loan)

Xenakis: His Life in Music is a full-length study of the influential contemporary composer Iannis Xenakis. Following the trajectory of Xenakis's compositional development, James Harley, who studied with Xenakis, presents the works together with clear explanations of the technical and conceptual innovations that shaped them. Harley examines the relationship between the composer and two early influences: Messiaen and Le Corbusier. Particular attention is paid to analyzing works which were vital to the composer's creative development, from early, unpublished works to the breakthrough pieces *Metastasis* and *Pithoprakta*, through the oft-discussed decade of formalization and the evolving styles of the succeeding three decades.

About the Author James Harley, Canadian composer, writer, and educator, has written widely on contemporary music. His articles and reviews have also appeared in *The Musical Times*, *Musicworks*, *Muzyka*, *Sonances*, *Leonardo*, and *TEMPO*. He studied under Xenakis at the Université de Paris and carried out an extended residency at Centre d'Etudes Mathématiques et Automatique Musicales (CEMAMu), where he completed two compositions using the UPIC, Xenakis's computer music system based on a graphic-design approach to synthesis.