



The work of music-as-math composer Iannis Xenakis inspired the SoundaXis festival.

# City of sound

**MUSIC**  
Carl Wilson

Goethe famously called architecture "frozen music," but in the upcoming SoundaXis festival, the two forms melt one into the other and go shimmying out into the life of the city. The festival, June 1-11, is the brainchild of a coalition of new-music groups, with an ear to Toronto's cultural megabuild.

The boom is not just a change to the visual cityscape, they suggest; those new museums and galleries and halls will also be filled with sound — not only music, but a community palaver about what it could be.

The timing is ideal for a city that's become newly eager to explore its own utopian potential, whether in salons and books, "psycho-geographic" rambles through unexpected alleyways, illegal rock shows in abandoned warehouses or guerrilla games of tag between the bank towers.

SoundaXis has taken as its patron saint the notoriously knotty Greek composer Iannis Xenakis, who died in 2001. Xenakis, when not busy being maimed fighting in the Greek resistance to the Nazis, was trained as an architect and engineer, who collaborated with that great-and-terrible-Oz of modernism, Le Corbusier, on building projects in post-war European reconstruction.

Acclaimed Xenakis biographer Nouritza Matossian plays a prominent role in the festival, which coincides with a three-day symposium on his legacy at the University of

Guelph. (Other related scholarly events include the Subtle Technologies conference on "Responsive Architecture" at Innis College and an Architecture/Music/Acoustics conference at Ryerson.)

While Xenakis's music was put together with daunting math, in another way his perspective makes uncommon sense: Taking his cue from architecture, he looked at notes and rhythms as unimportant in themselves, merely bricks and mortar that ought to vanish into larger, macroscopic shapes and patterns. This was a reversal of many of the serialist games modernists had been playing for decades, and Xenakis probed the implications to their explosive hilt.

By the late sixties he'd achieved no small vogue in hip culture — his oracular obscurity made him a bit of a Marshall McLuhan-like guru — and lately he seems to be undergoing a revival. Not only do his ideas rhyme with new thinking such as chaos theory, the old charges that his music was "inhuman" because many of its processes were calculated by computer (IBM gave him special access) seem laughably quaint: A composer now is no more bound to manuscript paper than an architect who designs on AutoCAD.

And so, along with guests such as renowned French harpsichordist Elisabeth Chojnacka (who will play music Xenakis composed for her), the festival will host the likes of Jaron Lanier, a musician better known as the man who coined the phrase "virtual reality."

For every analytic bull session or high-toned event (such as June 11's concert for four string quartets plus light show), SoundaXis also offers direct encounters between listener and locale, from opening fanfares in the atrium of the CBC to a "Sonic



Lynn Kuo performs at Hart House as part of Les Amis de Xenakis, a free concert next weekend.

Boardwalk" on Ward's Island, Sarah Peebles's surprisingly poignant found-sound compositions from a walk through Tokyo, spontaneous "X Marks the Spot" performances in public places or a weekend that treats the Ontario College of Art and Design's new table-in-the-sky addition as an acoustic playground.

In June 8's "Four Lines," local improvising musicians (Peebles, Rob Clutton, Nilan Perera and the band Barnyard Drama) will lead listeners on a sonic chase across the city by foot, bike, TTC, laneway, shopping cart and any other transport they please, converging on that evening's featured concert. It's a usefully gritty event amid proceedings that might hover too much in rarefied air to get the city's full musical measure.

But that's a small caveat about a multifaceted festival that could make some significant renovations in how you hear your world.

For complete schedules see [www.soundaxis.ca](http://www.soundaxis.ca).

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# Going rational on passion

SoundaXis festival  
a homage to European  
original thinker who  
blended principles of  
science, music

JOHN TERAUDS  
CLASSICAL MUSIC WRITER

When it comes to culture in the west, we are still like the children who have inherited a vast, diversified and extremely rich estate. We know we have something of value, but we can't quite figure out what to do with it.

Our ideas, arts, politics and even social mores are a leftover stew of 19th-century Romanticism mixed with 20th-century rationality. We experience a daily clash of reason and passion, morality and free expression, spirituality and scientific proof.

These conflicts, arguably, are at the core of the SoundaXis festival, presented by New Music Arts Project.

SoundaXis stirs together music, architecture, art and the sciences in a great pot to give us a fresh perspective on new music and the spaces in which it is created. At the festival's centre is the legacy of Iannis Xenakis, the cutting-edge French composer and architect who was born to Greek parents in Romania in 1922, and died in Paris in 2001.

Xenakis devoted his life to forging a new way of understanding, creating, performing and experiencing music, using scientific means.

As Xenakis wrote in his treatise *Musiques Formelles* (Formalized Music), published in 1963 by *La Revue musicale* in Paris, his aim was to create art while applying mathematical and geometric principles, "giving it a rational foundation that is less fleeting than the momentary impulse, therefore being more serious, more deserving of the higher struggle that human intelligence is waging in other fields." (My own translation.)

To Xenakis, as with many people in the 1950s and '60s, there was no stopping the forward march of science. For better or worse, the last four decades have proven that we are no more enlightened about how music has the ability to penetrate our souls.

And making music with computer-generated sounds is common now in all genres, from pop to classical.

But there is no denying the originality of Xenakis' ideas, which could give even a committed mathematician a headache. In page after page, *Musiques Formelles* lays out elaborate logical and mathematical formulae as a new theoretical foundation for creating music.

Xenakis portrayed himself as a free-thinking pioneer yet, unwittingly, he was following predictions laid out 150



Iannis Xenakis, who died in 2001, led an unusual life, including suffering facial wounds from shrapnel as a Greek partisan in World War II.

years earlier by German writer and composer E.T.A. Hoffmann (1776-1822), whose tales inspired *The Nutcracker* ballet and Jacques Offenbach's famous opera.

Hoffmann was like an Edgar Allen Poe or a Jules Verne. As has always been the case with science fiction, truth is often a few decades behind, such as in Hoffmann's short story "Automata." The plot sees two characters discuss a "higher mechanics of music" after witnessing the work of mechanical musicians. "The object at which it aims," says Lewis, one of the story's characters, "is the discovery of the most absolutely perfect kind of musical sound; and according to my theory, musical sound would be nearer to perfection

**There is no denying the originality of Xenakis' ideas, which could give even a committed mathematician a headache**

the more closely it approximated such of the mysterious tones of nature as are not wholly dissociated from this earth."

Lewis continues "there is still a wide field open to thoughtful inventors in this direction, and I quite believe that the impulse recently given to natural science in general will ... bring into practical existence much which is, as yet, nothing but speculation."

Enter Xenakis's theorems. The "practical existence" of Xenakis's music is as abstract as his theories. He experimented with a wide variety of objects and computer effects to generate sound. But little of it would classify as "music" to a general audience.

SoundaXis offers many chances to hear the works of Xenakis performed by the city's new-music interpreters.

The final day of the festival, Sunday, June 11, includes a key event at the Ontario College of Art and Design at 7 p.m. Titled "Quadrphonics," it will conclude with a look at Xenakis's *Diatope*.

In the fall of 1977, in front of Paris's Centre Georges-Pompidou, Xenakis and a large team of helpers fused architecture, sound and light into *Diatope*, a groundbreaking multimedia experience. The multi-arched red structure contained 1,680 lights and four lasers aimed at 400 mirrors. For three months, audiences experienced the 46-minute *La légende d'Eer*, which combined music and visual effects inside

the structure. The music is presented with 350 photos on a DVD that will be screened at the OCAD evening.

Xenakis writes in *Musiques Formelles*

how the musical scale is "a convention that restricts the field of possibilities." He tossed out scales — both the 19th century's eight-note version and the 20th century's 12-note alternative — to create his own world of sounds.

This creation is hardly homogeneous, changing substantially from the 1950s to the 1990s, and is still obscure.

Today's musical audiences remain anchored in 19th-century melody, harmony and counterpoint, whether in classical, pop or jazz. SoundaXis lets us peek into alternative ways of experiencing music.

It can only deepen our appreciation of what we already know.

# notations

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## ON MUSIC AND ARCHITECTURE FOUR PERSPECTIVES

by Jason van Eyk

In June 2006 the inaugural *soundaXis* festival will treat Toronto as a laboratory of sound and space exploration. For two weeks, the city will be alive with concerts, interdisciplinary installations, symposia, screenings and site-specific musical events. *soundaXis* will offer a new way to look, listen and experience Toronto. We invited four participants to give us their perspectives.

### DANIEL COOPER, BOARD MEMBER, NEW MUSIC ARTS PROJECTS

"The *soundaXis* Festival of Architecture, Music and Acoustics is very much an initiative of the Toronto Coalition of New Music Presenters for which I have been playing the dual role of midwife and bottle washer. As president of the board of the Music Gallery for the past few years, I have been attending meetings of the Coalition. In 2004, with the Massey Hall New Music festival (or NuMuFest) long gone, I was struck by a renewed, shared desire to create a new music festival for Toronto. While Coalition members were unanimous in this desire, issues relating to curatorial leadership, access to participation, overarching theme, and festival governance were not so easily agreed upon.

I made the bold suggestion of focussing the festival on the work of then recently deceased Iannis Xenakis. Perhaps this focus could achieve the thematic unity we were searching for. I informally canvassed some of the new music organizations and all were keen to join in a series of concerts in homage to Xenakis, whose work reaches across music to architecture, mathematics and physics – a thematic range rich with possibilities. In fact, New Music Concerts Artistic Director Robert Aitken suggested that the core theme be articulated as 'music and architecture' and that organizations working in other disciplines should be invited to participate. I volunteered to try to develop this thread further. It was quite extraordinary to discover how much interest this theme generated among other communities. There are many architects, designers, mathematicians and physicists who know about Xenakis and are familiar with his work. Furthermore, the 'architecture and music' theme was fortuitously timely, given that several cultural buildings throughout Toronto are undergoing major redevelopment, dubbed the "Cultural Renaissance."

The model for managing the festival developed into something somewhat democratic, with a steering committee being created by the Coalition, including representatives from the worlds of new music, sound & acoustics, architecture, and education. The 'festival' has evolved into a framework for collaboration, bringing together a range of concerts, exhibitions, installations, site-specific events, conferences, and lectures that propose to transform Toronto into a playground of sound and space exploration. The festival is now hosted by a new not-for-profit corporation, New Music Arts



PHOTO: YVONNE BAMBRICK

**CMC**  
CANADIAN MUSIC CENTRE  
ONTARIO REGION



DANIEL COOPER



JIM HARLEY



IANNIS XENAKIS & ROBERT AITKEN



JEREMY BELL

Projects (or NMAP), with a board of directors drawn from members of the Coalition. NMAP's role is to provide the organizational and management framework for the festival, as well as to develop its outreach and promotional activities.

Ultimately, *soundaXis* is an historic event, which will connect many of Toronto's new music presenters to each other and to other cultural organizations. It has unique potential to improve the profile and "market conditions" for all participating Coalition members. While the long term results are still yet to be seen, the creation New Music Arts Projects is the first of many sustainable benefits, establishing the hub through which other festivals can be created in the future."

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#### JIM HARLEY COMPOSER & PROFESSOR

"I first heard about plans for *soundaXis* in the summer of 2004 as I was making my move to Guelph from Minnesota, where I had been teaching for five years. Coincidentally, my book, *Xenakis: His Life in Music*, was just coming out. I was very interested to learn that *soundaXis* organizer Daniel Cooper was a big Xenakis fan and wanted his music as a central focus of a larger interdisciplinary festival.

My first involvement with *soundaXis* was as an informal advisor, someone who knew Xenakis's music well and many of the people within the Xenakis orbit. It then occurred to me that a useful complement to the festival would be a symposium on the music and influences of this extraordinary figure. The idea expanded to include researchers from outside the domain of music. We were able to bring onboard Tom Salisbury from the Fields Institute for Research in Mathematical Sciences, and Ray Laflamme and Michael Duschenes from the Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics. As happens so often with Xenakis, Ray (a highly accomplished quantum physicist) had heard a concert of this wild, powerful music as a boy growing up in Quebec and, together with his brother Claude (now a mathematician associated with the Fields Institute), had remained a fan. He was especially keen to see some Xenakis music performed at the Perimeter Institute, where he holds an affiliation. The pieces were starting to fall into place! I

was able to announce *soundaXis* and the symposium—"The Creative and Scientific Legacies of Iannis Xenakis"—at the International Symposium "Iannis Xenakis" in Athens in May 2005, and to extend an invitation to Madame Xenakis, who was very interested.

However, none of this had much to do with me as a composer. Along the way, NUMUS Artistic Director Jeremy Bell approached me to compose a new work for his concert at the Perimeter (to be repeated at OCAD the following night). I have always been fascinated with the possibilities of spatialized music, so I was more than happy to embark on a piece for two string quartets where the performance space acoustics would play an important part. I was taken quite by surprise when I was later approached by New Music Concerts to write an ensemble piece for their concert, scheduled at the Glenn Gould Studio. After I had determined that I didn't really need to sleep much for a year or so, we were all set! No spatialization this time, but a great opportunity to pay tribute to Xenakis and to compose a work for an ensemble of very fine musicians. After spending those years out in the hinterlands, I'm back, and glad to be here!"

#### DAVID OLDS, GENERAL MANAGER, NEW MUSIC CONCERTS

"With 20 performances of his works since 1973, Iannis Xenakis qualifies as one of the most prominent composers on the New Music Concerts series. Xenakis visited Toronto at the invitation of NMC in 1976 and 1981, and only illness prevented a return in 1988 when NMC brought his revolutionary computer-graphic composition system "Les Ateliers UPIC" with which invited young Canadian composers created electroacoustic works. Two years later, NMC's first compact disc recording, "NMC '90", included Xenakis' *Waarg*. Artistic Director Robert Aitken has conducted Xenakis' music on a number of occasions in a variety of contexts, most recently *Phlegna*, in Ljubljana in 2003, a work first performed in Toronto by NMC in 1976.

When Daniel Cooper first proposed the idea for a "Xenakis Festival" two years ago, naturally NMC was interested. Since the death of Xenakis in 2001 NMC Artistic Director Robert Aitken had been thinking about a suitable tribute to acknowledge this composer's immense contribution to 20th-century music and culture. At the suggestion of Daniel Cooper, NMC's June 9 concert at Glenn Gould Studio will feature Elisabeth Chojnacka, the woman for whom Xenakis wrote all of his harpsichord music, performing the solo work *Khoai* and the concerto *À l'île de Gorée*.

When Lori Freedman suggested including the bass-clarinete concerto *Échange*, which she has performed numerous times, but never in Toronto, NMC was happy to invite her for the concert. The program also includes the aforementioned *Phlegna*, and James Harley's new work *aXis*, in memory of Xenakis."

**JEREMY BELL, NUMUS ARTISTIC DIRECTOR  
AND VIOLINIST WITH THE PENDERECKI QUARTET**

When Daniel Cooper called NUMUS about the idea of contributing to a new music festival inspired by Xenakian notions I became really excited. I have been a big Xenakis fan since my undergrad days, and in grad school managed to pass a history course entirely dedicated to Xenakis and Ligeti. (One of my assignments was to explain Poisson's law to the class...possibly my most embarrassing moment!)

I have always loved the way Xenakis makes the completely irrational seem perfectly rational. So for *soundaXis*, I wanted to try to put together a concert that somehow had a "Terretektorh" feel and that somehow related to the architectural achievements of the performance spaces in mind, namely the Corbusier-styled Perimeter Institute in Waterloo and the unstable pop-art look of the new Ontario College of Art and Design. Speaking of tough assignments, this has been a wonderful challenge for NUMUS!

What we've decided to do is a concert of "subtracting" string quartets titled *Quadrphonics*, beginning with my arrangement of 4 displaced quartets performing Mozart's Adagio from the

'Dissonance', this done somewhat as an interrogation of "dissonance" in a contemporary context – where phase techniques, micro polyphony, and a wide range of acoustic manipulation devices have become familiar musical concepts. The Mozart is followed by the Steve Reich's triple quartet, followed by a new work for two spatialized quartets by James Harley, and finishing with Xenakis' riveting *Tétris* for string quartet. When all the quartets are subtracted from the performing space, the floor is left to Xenakis' multi-channel tape masterwork, *La légende d'Er*."

As part of *soundaXis*, the Canadian Music Centre will contribute an exhibition showcasing an architectural proposal for a future home for Canadian Music. Entitled RE:SOUNDING, the project was developed by the combined work of Paul Raff Studio and Colin Ripley Architects. The public is invited to a reception on June 1st, from 2 - 4 PM at Chalmers House to launch the exhibition, including presentations by architects Paul Raff and Colin Ripley, CMC Executive Director Elisabeth Bihl and other special guests.

For full festival details, visit [www.soundaxis.ca](http://www.soundaxis.ca).

# SOME THING New

by Jason van Eyk

## soundaXis - a timely coming-of-age

THIS MONTH'S BIG EXCITEMENT is the inaugural *soundaXis* festival of architecture, music and acoustics. And big is indeed the word for it! *soundaXis* is a tightly packed, ten-day affair which will feature 30 events ranging from concerts to exhibitions, conferences, screenings, installations and educational workshops. Altogether, *soundaXis* proposes to transform Toronto into a playground of sound and space exploration.

Although this new festival is very fresh news for most Torontonians, in many ways it has been long in the making. For the new music community, *soundaXis* is a much-anticipated response to the five-year absence of a new music festival in Toronto.

Back in 1996, the TSO launched the *Made in Canada* festival, with the goal of anchoring this city as a hub of Canadian contemporary music. By 1998, *Made in Canada* had evolved into the *Massey Hall New Music Festival*, which not only featured the TSO but several other prominent Toronto-based new music presenters. By 2001, slickly redubbed *NuMuFest*, the festival had grown in size and scope, with many more participating ensembles and larger audiences for new music overall.

Over seven years, this festival evolved into a success story for the new music community, providing a much-needed environment for shared exposure and interaction. But then, faced with significant other challenges and difficult "market conditions", the TSO had to abandon its flagship role. On November 24th, 2001, after the final concert, *NuMuFest* fell silent.

THE WRITING WAS ON THE WALL before then. By September 2000, the new music community had already begun to meet collectively, in an attempt to tackle the same market conditions that closed down *NuMuFest*. By May 2001 the community officially formed the Toronto Coalition of New Music Presenters. By 2004, with increased confidence in its abilities, the coalition was beginning to give voice to a shared desire to create a new music festival with a thematic focus. The idea surfaced early on to focus on the work of recently deceased, internationally renowned composer Iannis Xenakis, whose work reached across music to archi-

ecture, mathematics and physics. The idea was widely received as a platform rich with potential, and came to be more broadly expressed as "music, architecture and acoustics", in an effort to include contributions from other disciplines. With a planned launch for June 2006, the festival's inspiration was amazingly timely, given the hype surrounding Toronto's architectural "Cultural Renaissance" and the launch of the city's "TO Live with Culture" campaign.

IN KEEPING WITH the Coalition's collective nature, the festival has been built up on a framework of collaboration. This structure has allowed for the collection of a huge range of events, all of which seek to take a fresh look at the relationship between sound, music, architecture and the city.

In practical terms, Torontonians and international visitors alike should be prepared to unexpectedly encounter interesting musical events and installations in unpredictable places. These could include a crescendo of sound from the **Stockholm Chamber Brass** in the CBC's Barbara Frum Atrium, any number of spontaneous performances in high-traffic spaces by the irreverent **Toca Loca** ensemble, a series of human-triggered sound installations on Ward's Island, or the mobile prelude to **Continuum's Touch Space** concert, where four inventive performers will choose their individual paths and means of travel to converge on a final central performance space.

ONCE THE FESTIVAL'S THEME has grabbed your interest, you can plan ahead for a host of other ticketed concerts. On June 2nd, local experimentalists **Arraymusic** will take over Hart House's Great Hall with spatially intriguing works incorporating interactive and interdisciplinary elements. **Continuum's Touch Space** concert on June 8th offers a spatially-conceived event for the University of Toronto's new Donnelly Centre for Cellular and Biomolecular Research, featuring works that share a fascination with space and architectural structure. The following evening, **Earshot! Concerts** take over the Fields Institute with a fully improvised creation rooted in Xenakis' war-inspired writings, illuminating the impact this world event had on the composer's work,



Phoebe Tsang, pictured here at the *soundaXis* MaRS launch, also performs June 3<sup>rd</sup> with Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Orchestra at Maureen Forrester Recital Hall and June 18<sup>th</sup> with Alicier Arts Chamber Music at St. George's on-the-Hill.

life and soul. On June 10th, **CONTACT Contemporary Music** teams up with **New Adventures in Sound Art** to bring a mixed acoustic / electronic concert that sonically references a variety of important architectural artifacts - from the walls of Jericho to ancient temple sites of Malta - all of which will meet within the walls of the controversial "stilted tissue box" known as the Ontario College of Art and Design. For the festival's closing night, **NUMUS** brings together four talented string quartets at OCAD to execute its *Quadraphonics* concert, including works for displaced quartets, Steve Reich's *Triple Quartet*, and a new work by Canadian composer Jim Harley.

If you're planning on attending more than one event, be sure to pick up a festival passport, which will entitle you to \$5 off regular ticket prices.

ON THE OTHER HAND, if you're feeling a bit intimidated by the theme of *soundaXis*, there's no need to be. The festival collaborators have also compiled a series of panel discussions, conferences and exhibitions that will help open dialogue and understanding. These include an "Exploring New Places for New Music" panel discussion at the ROM on June 3rd, a Xenakis retrospective lecture on June 10th at the new MaRS Centre, and a full academic conference exploring all facets of music, architecture and acoustics at Ryerson University's Department of Architectural Science. A portion of the Ryerson conference will include an intriguing keynote speaker series featuring top level thinkers in the field, such as Canadian composer and acoustic ecologist R. Murray Schafer, Finnish architect Juhani Pallasmaa, German sound artist Ber-

hard Leitner, and acoustician Robert Essert (who is already known in Toronto for his work on Roy Thomson Hall and, most recently, the new Opera House.)

ULTIMATELY, *soundaXis* is a timely and historic event for new music in Toronto. It has evolved into a unique opportunity to directly connect this living art form to the built fabric of the city, to other communities and disciplines, but also to the lives of Torontonians in unique and interesting ways. Full festival details are available online at [www.soundaxis.ca](http://www.soundaxis.ca), and in a special four page supplement at the centre of this issue of Wholenote.

So venture out into unexplored spaces, find your place for something new.

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Canada

# "In sum, a true audience": report on the soundaXis festival

by David Olds

Thanks to Daniel Cooper's idea, almost five years ago, of centering a festival on the multi-disciplinary vision of the late Iannis Xenakis, the *soundaXis* festival of music, architecture and acoustics was born in Toronto this June. More than two years of planning and development culminated in eleven days of intense activity - concerts, symposia, installations, street performances and the like - involving some 30 organizations from contemporary music presenters to architecture faculties, galleries, museums and educational institutions.

Perhaps the best tribute to the success of *soundaXis* is a letter Cooper received from distinguished international guest, Françoise Xenakis, widow of the celebrated composer.

## To see, hear a bouquet

"I was able to see, hear a bouquet of flowers that gathered together all the stems of Xenakis' thinking and its ramifications that intermingle into a new composition. His music, his architecture, his mathematical thinking, his philosophy... Thanks to your festival, where any/all snobbishness was excluded not to say forbidden, you were able to call upon young individual talents and groups not yet spoiled by success and who, therefore, still know how to and love to work. Never have I heard a *Tetras* as I heard in Toronto [performed by the Penderecki String Quartet]; *Dikthas* - that young couple [Duo Diorama] who played it is worthy of any formally recognized group here. The same goes for *Échange* [soloist Lori Freedman and the New Music Concerts Ensemble under Robert Aitken's direction]... I was also amazed by the audiences, which also showed talent. No comparison with the stillborn halls full of ghosts, more often than not deaf - who occupy the best seats in Parisian concert halls. In your festival, I met artists, university professors, students, people of all ages who had never before heard (of) Xenakis. And youth. Lots of young people. In sum, a true audience. I hope [...] that you will have the courage to re-ignite the flames of such a festival, by honoring at every opportunity the thinking and music of Xenakis, because, to [be] entirely honest, you have realized one of his most cherished dreams."

Françoise Xenakis



(From left) Xenakis biographer Nouritza Matossian, Françoise Xenakis and Échange bass-clarinete soloist Lori Freedman in the lobby of Glenn Gould Studio following New Music Concerts' June 9 *soundaXis* performance.

On June 21 twenty-five members of the Toronto Coalition of New Music Presenters (the umbrella organization out of which the festival had grown), met to begin to assess the success of *soundaXis* and make preliminary plans for the future. Daniel Cooper noted that while it's difficult to say by what criteria one might judge such an event, it was clear that presenters had drawn substantially larger and more diversified audiences. Significant segments of the audience were spotted attending multiple events and there was a notable international presence.

Although among government agencies only the Toronto Arts Council had offered official support to this initial venture, significant private funding was obtained - more than \$50,000 in donations from private sources - and only a very modest deficit resulted from the undertaking. Each of the organizations contributed substantially by including the events in their regular concert seasons and absorbing the costs into their operating budgets as no additional funding was granted for these "extraordinary" activities.

Members of the Coalition at the June 21 meeting offered unanimously positive comments regarding the festival and several noted the beneficial effect the festival had in bringing the Toronto new music community together to an unprecedented degree. While there was a concentrated theme to the festival, minimal curatorial strictures enabled a wide ranging interpretation of the guidelines. Performances at a variety of previously unutilized venues and street level improvisations proved particularly striking to several observers. Architect David Lieberman's only regret was the low level of participation from the local architectural community; however it

was clear that the interdisciplinary aspect of the festival had drawn a more diverse audience to new music. There was a consensus among the participants to work together to insure that the momentum generated by the activities would lead to future collaborations, but all agreed that to try to mount a festival in the coming season would be premature.

WholeNote editor David Perlman pointed out that in discussions with Berislav Šipuš, the director of the Zagreb Biennale festival who had attended *soundaXis* at the invitation of Les Amis director Michael Pepa, Šipuš had said that al-

though the Zagreb festival is a bi-annual affair, it uses the in-between year as a period of gestation and promotion. The local Zagreb organizations involved in the festival - chamber groups, symphony orchestras and even the National Theatre - program music in the "fallow" year that relates to the theme of the upcoming Biennale. Les Amis has been invited to present a concert of Canadian music on the final day of the 2007 festival, with the intention that Canada will be a "Partner Country" with a number of Canadian groups featured in the 25th Biennale in 2009. Šipuš told WholeNote that his Cantus Ensemble - a large chamber group devoted exclusively to contemporary music that has performed more than 100 new works since its founding in 2001 - and other groups through the Croatian Composers Society, will perform Canadian works during 2007 and 2008 to build toward the April 2009 festival. Perlman suggested that Coalition members could easily use this as a model to keep the momentum building between Toronto festivals.

The Toronto Coalition of New Music Presenters has blossomed from an ad hoc roundtable discussion group founded just six years ago, to a vibrant and viable partnership that has successfully "gone public" in a big way with the *soundaXis* festival which captivated the city's imagination in early June. May this be the first of many such joint ventures.

David Olds, general manager of New Music Concerts, has served as the convenor of the Toronto Coalition of New Music Presenters since its beginnings in September



## INAUGURAL SOUNDAXIS FESTIVAL A SUCCESS

The inaugural soundaXis festival, which turned Toronto into a playground for space and sound exploration, also turned out to be a huge success! For the first two weeks of June, 26 different arts & cultural organizations collaborated in presenting a range of events, including 20 concerts and numerous screenings, lectures, exhibitions, conferences, symposia and installations centered around the theme of architecture, music and acoustics. All were presented for the pleasure of capacity crowds, given critical kudos, and received high-level praise from overseas attendees.

As profiled in the Summer 2006 issue of *Ontario Notations*, soundaXis was borne out of the initiative of the Toronto Coalition of New Music Presenters, who wanted to see a new music festival return to Toronto. The festival was presented by a newly launched corporation, New Music Arts Projects (NMAP), led by Daniel Cooper, and guided by a board of directors comprised of Coalition members. The strength of the festival's success was clearly built on the shoulders of NMAP's leadership, but even moreso on the festival's unique collaborative management model advanced by the Coalition.

Starting as a celebration of the highly influential composer, mathematician and architect Iannis Xenakis, soundaXis expanded its focus to include an exploration of the intersections between architecture, music and acoustics, inspiring at least two conferences, attracting high profile international guests, and literally taking over the city of Toronto as a canvass for musical creativity. Concerts took to the streets, subways, and numerous unusual venues, drawing record crowds for new music. On the programme was a healthy dose of Xenakis's music, which international visitors credited as being the best performances they have ever heard. These were offered alongside skilled interpretations of Canadian works by composers Jim Harley, Paul Steenhuisen, Daniel Foley, Wende Bartley, R. Murray Shafer, Alexina Louie, Harry Freedman, Abigail Richardson and many others.

CMC was honoured to be directly involved in the success of soundaXis via its Re:Sounding exhibition, which attracted a high profile crowd, including special guest Ms. Francoise Xenakis herself. Re:Sounding showcased CMC's well-received proposal for a redeveloped Chalmers House as cleverly created by Paul Raff Studios and Colin Ripley Architects. CMC-Ontario was also pleased to participate in soundaXis through the 'Exploring New Places for New Music' experts panel held at the ROM on June 3rd. Here, Regional Director Jason van Eyk spoke to the success of the CMC's New Music in New Places series.

The buzz around soundaXis through the June Toronto air was electrifying. And the energy this festival created has certainly stimulated talk about its future. Keep you eyes and ears open for future announcements!