
Maurice Ohana is what the Americans would call a ‘maverick’, an exceptionally original composer, writing music like no one before him and in fact very few after him. His instrumental and vocal works are simultaneously powerful and beautifully evocative. Built on the cultural traditions of his Northern African and Spanish ancestry, mixed with multi-layered melodic and harmonic soundscapes, they are sometimes extremely complex but never sound constructed.

Swan Song for twelve voices is not Ohana’s own ‘swan song’ - before his death, he composed another nine scores. However, the music can be considered to be on the one hand a homage to Schubert’s Schwanengesang and on the other, an epitaph and lament on life fading away. Most remarkable in Ohana’s music is the rich quality and versatility of his harmonic language.

The texts of Drone and Mambo are fully onomatopoeic, though with a certain African flavour. For the two inner movements, Eleis (from the Eleison of the Mass) and Epitaphe, Ohana has used English texts. The words for Eleis are a mixture of gospel and negro spiritual. For Epitaphe Ohana freely translated Pierre de Ronsard’s poem À son âme into a memorial for himself: “O Soulie, my wee Ohanie”.

Swan Song is dedicated to Roland Hayrabedian.

Zad Moultaka (1967) – *Callara II* (2012)

The Libanese composer Zad Moultaka is probably one of the best known Arab composers of Western contemporary music. Trained as pianist and composer in Beirut and Paris, he was captivated by the possibilities and impossibilities of combining two worlds, the Western world of written scores and the Arab world with a mainly oral tradition. His music often balances on the brink of the audible and inaudible, between Arab melismas and Western polyphony, with Arab and Western instruments combined.

His latest composition for choir is Callara II for sixteen vocalists, two piano’s, two harps and two percussionists. Here, Moultaka uses Spanish translations (partly by Mercedes de Toro) of pre-Colombian Maya texts which were also set by Alberto Ginastera in his Cantata para América Mágica. The title translates as ‘he or she will be silent’, referring to the prophecy by the Mayas about the end of the world when all will be silent. Moultaka has set the text of the prophecy in a mysterious ritual of adoration and fear. The turmoil of the instrumental ensemble seems to finally crush the singers: they become inaudible. They will be silent...

*programme notes ● Leo Samama*
**Musicatreize**

Roland Hayrabedian founded Musicatreize in 1987, to create an instrument to investigate a wide spectrum of musical potential. The group of soloists with time evolved into an ensemble whose cohesion and very specific, recognizable sonority make it uniquely adapted to the creation of new music. Linking past and present, classics and new discoveries, oratorios, recitals or operas: Musicatreize adapts itself with grand subtlety to the demands put by the score and the interpretation.

In recent years, Musicatreize has initiated more than sixty commissions. Thematic seasons and cycles (Les 7 contes, Odysée dans l’espace, Les cris...) shed light on the creation of new music, its time frame, the space, modernity, and the interaction between works. Taking the activities in Marseille as starting point, the ensemble produces many events elsewhere in France and in the rest of the world, for which it receives public acclaim and awards, such as the Victoire Classique - Ensemble of the year 2007.

www.musicatreize.org

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**Roland Hayrabedian**

Since the founding of the Choeur Contemporain in 1978, followed by Musicatreize in 1987, Roland Hayrabedian has tirelessly worked on creating new repertoire. In his concerts, he programmes contemporary repertoire mixed with key works from the 20th century or classical works. Educated in orchestra conducting, he has dedicated a large part of his energy to vocal music. Hayrabedian has conducted many orchestras and vocal ensembles (Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Orchestre d’Avignon, Nederlands Kamerkoor...) and collaborated with specialized ensembles like Percussions de Strasbourg, Musique Vivante, Musique Oblique. He regularly works with soloists such as Jay Gottlieb, Marie-Josèphe Jude, Alain Planès. From 2002 to 2005, he participated in the Académie vocale contemporaine du Festival d’Aix-en-Provence. More than 30 cd’s have been released under his artistic direction, many of which were awarded prizes and distinctions. He teaches conducting at the CRR de Marseille, with continuously renewed pedagogical inventiveness and pleasure.
Wednesday 18 September
21h00 - first half
Villa Mediterranée
amphithéâtre

Musicatreize
Roland Hayrabedian, conductor

Maurice Ohana (1913-1992)
- Swan Song
- Drone
- Eleis
- Epitaphe
- Mambo

Zad Moultaqa (1967)
- Callara II

sopranos
Kaoli Isshiki
Elise Deuve
Claire Gouton

tenors
Xavier de Lignerolles
J.Cottenceau
Gilles Schneider

altos
Mareïke Schellenberger
Estelle Corre
Laura Gordiani

basses
Patrice Balter
Grégoire Fohet-Duminil
Jean-Manuel Candenot

piano
Victoria Harmandjieva
Jay Gottlieb

harp
Célia Perrard
Annabelle Jarre

percussion
Christian Hamouy
Claudio Bettinelli