

Pour la Paix

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Abstract

Pour la Paix is one of the very few Xenakis' mixed (instrumental-electronic) pieces. Composed for four narrators, choir and UPIC sounds, it can be performed in four forms: only with the choirs; with the narrators and choir live, and the UPIC sounds on tape; with the narrators live and the other parts on tape; with all the parts on tape. Conceived as a radiophonic piece, i.e. while performed in the last version, *Pour la Paix* sounds much better, however, when it is performed live (version 2), probably because a live performance puts the emphasis on the very strong -and interesting- fragility, which dominates the relationships between the four components. This article begins with examining separately these four components (the text, taken by Xenakis in two Françoise Xenakis' books and read by the narrators, the UPIC sounds and the choir parts), and concludes with their interlocking.

Pour la Paix constitue l'une des rares pièces mixtes de Xenakis. Écrite pour quatre narrateurs, chœur et sons UPIC, elle peut être donnée sous quatre formes : avec seulement les parties de chœur ; avec les narrateurs et le chœur sur scène, les sons UPIC étant sur diffusés sur support ; avec seulement les narrateurs sur scène, le reste sur support ; avec tout sur support. Conçue comme une création radiophonique (un *Hörspiel*), c'est-à-dire par rapport à la dernière version, cette œuvre semble cependant mieux vivre en concert (version 2) : en fait, une exécution en direct met en valeur la grande - et fort intéressante - fragilité qui domine les relations entre les quatre composantes. Ce texte examine d'abord ces composantes une par une (le texte - pris par Xenakis dans deux livres de Françoise Xenakis, et découpé et monté par lui-même - lu par les narrateurs, les sons UPIC, les parties de chœur), pour conclure sur leur assemblage.

Introduction

- One of the rare Xenakis' instrumental/electronic pieces
- 1981 (CEMAMu + GRM)
- 4 narrators, choir, UPIC tape (the second, after *Mycènes alpha*) → 4 versions:
 - only choir
 - narrators+ choir live, tape UPIC
 - narrator live + tape: choir and UPIC
 - all tape
- Radio France, *Hörspiel* → premiere 23 April 1982 (with Schaeffer, Henry and Bayle)
- A particular work in Xenakis' production:
 - very xenakian: a) UPIC sounds b) choir sonorities
 - not xenakian: the narrative project, based on the text

- Particular also: the success (or failure) of the piece is a question of *assemblage* (of the 3 components: narrators, choir, sounds UPIC): locally and globally → a fragile *assemblage*

The project - genetics of the piece

- The project: *Hörspiel*
- Importance of the text (F. Xenakis)

- Xenakis first made the text → photocopy of Françoise's books, cutting of extracts, collage (Archives: Dossier œuvres 26/x4)
- Then: he notated some ideas about music
- Then: composition of the choirs and UPIC tape

The text - the narrators

- First component, the most important: texts from two Françoise Xenakis' books: *Écoute* (Seuil, 1972) *Et alors les morts pleureront* (1974)
 - Françoise Xenakis asked her husband why did he took books from here; he answered: « Because I love what you are writing »
- Xenakis made alone the montage
(interview with MS, April 2012)
- A very rare case in Xenakis' production with a comprehensible text (except of the tragedies) → Xenakis used to work more with phonemes
 - The program of the premiere explains the intrigue:



“Human beings are unconscious prisoners of the societies and states that use them, like pawns, blindly, in their machinery which destroys lives and destinies. The nostalgia of two childhood friends used as soldiers by two enemy camps is so fragile, it is nothing compared to the atrocities of the ceaseless wars. How many sufferings for nothing. These sighs of their memory do not prevent them from running to their premature death”.

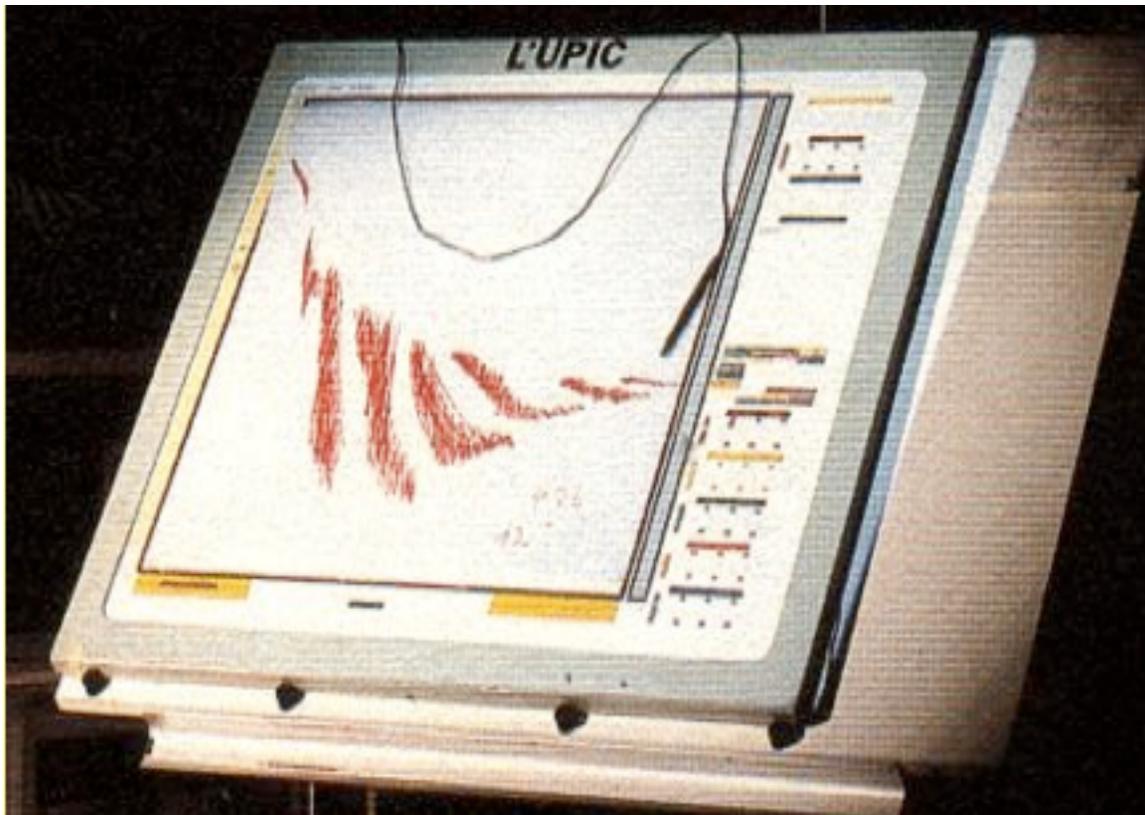
The UPIC sounds

- Let's listen to the beginning of the piece
→ *Pour la Paix: 0'-2'25"*
- Xenakis made alone the UPIC sounds → Daniel Teruggi:
“I made him several proposals, he didn't wanted any of them. He wanted that all sounds were UPIC, he didn't wanted even UPIC sounds transformed in the GRM” (interview with MS, April 2012)
- Harshness of these sounds (compared to the choirs) → difficulty of the assemblage
- The few sketches give some informations about these sounds → but the Archives do not contain the original UPIC drawings

- UPIC:

- microtime: drawing of: a) sound wave b) envelop

- macrotime: “page”: pitch/time



- 30 sequences with UPIC sounds of unequal length (from 0,5'' to 5'37'') → total duration: 18'24''
- Two kind of sounds: "red" and "blue"
- Names:

- Morphology of these sounds:
 - very varied, from quasi harmonic sounds to noises (difference with *Mycènes alpha*)
 - sometimes: “sound objects”
 - use of samples
- Examples of the variety:
 - sample of cembalo:
 - **sequence 5**
 - noise almost like GENDY’s noises:
 - **sequence 6**
- Example of “sounds objects” (exceptional in Xenakis):
 - in the construction:
 - **sequence 12**
 - **sequence 28**
 - because they can be repeated
- Use of classical *musique concrète* transformations: ex.:

→ sequence 14

→ sequence 18

- Relationship with the text: Xenakis: “sound comment” (expression also used for the music for the tragedies)

- Sometimes very figurative: examples:

- sequence 2 (text: “A war. In broken phrases, in images, in couplets, this in its horror is the war. Atrocities, massacres, tortures, infinite suffering of men and women. We are anywhere. Where they hang, shoot, massacre”)

- sequence 29 (text: “Look look the bubbles it’s the bottom of the lake yawning open/You’re sure? / But I’m telling you”)



- Sometimes abstract

- Genetics of these sounds: it seemed that Xenakis use some existing UPIC sounds: Daniel Teruggi: “Xenakis had two or three reels of sounds that he had prepared before, we spent a lot of time listening, premixing them and constructing the continuity of the work. But it missed a lot of sounds and it is why he left every evening, early, to go to CEMAMu, to produce new sounds, these time with precise function in relationship with the narrativity of the text” (interview with MS, April 2012)

The choir

- Importance of the choirs in Xenakis' production around this period: *Cendrées* (1973), *A Hélène* and *A Colonne* (1977), *Serment-Orkos*, *Nekuia* (1981)
- Some affinities with *Nekuia*
- 10 sequences; total length: 7'
- A global analysis of these interventions:

Séq.	Durée	Voix	Texte	Tempo (noire)	Nuance	Crible	Sonorité
1	23''	S, A : unisson	« Écoute le vent dans le haut des arbres. Le vent qui décoiffe les morts, casques roulés au loin. Le vent qui caresse les visages et décoiffe les cheveux »	92	mf	4corde de 4tes imbriquées	Mélodie, croches
2	50''	S, A : 2 vx	idem	72	mf	S : 4corde de 4tes imbriquées A : 4corde avec 3M	S : mélodie, doubles croches A : mélodie, doubles croches ou plus lent
3	17''	S, A, T, B : 8vx	« Chacal »	92	fff	crible 1	Alternance : -accords répétées sur croche double pointée-triple -gammes descend.-asc. avec décalage
4	33''	S, A, T, B : 8vx	phonèmes A, OU, É	92	cresc., fff	crible 1	Alternance : -accords -gammes + croche double pointée-triple
5	15''	S, A : 4 vx	phonèmes O, A, OU, É	92	mf / fff	crible 1 (avec note aiguë)	Alternance : -accords -gliss.
6	35''	S, A, T, B : 8vx	-phonèmes A, OU, O -« cris horribles non rythmés » -phonèmes A, OU, O -Ha	92	fff, f	crible 1	Accords-gliss. jubilatoires, puis « cris horribles non rythmés », puis gliss. puis HA-HA
7	38''	S, A : 2 vx	« Écoute... »	92	mf	S : 4corde de 4tes imbriquées A : chormatisme sur 3 notes	S : mélodie, rythme irrégulier A : statique
8	32''	S, A : 4 vx	-« Mourir » -phonèmes A, O	92	fff	crible 2	accords sur rythme croche double pointée-triple
9	1'46''	S, A, T, B : 8vx	« KO-OU-A »	72	mf-fff-pp	crible 2	accords sur rythme croche double pointée-triple, puis décalage rythmique
10	1'02''	S, A, T, B : 8vx	« Pleureront » + phonèmes A, O, É, OU, I	46	ff/mf	S : tétracorde sur 4te autres : crible 3	S : demi-tons sur « pleureront » (ff) -autres : montées-desc. hachées avec décalage (phonèmes, mf)

•The two last interventions are the more important (in length)

•Great variety:

a) from understandable text to phonemes

b) textures: melodies, ascending-descending lines (on sieves) with rhythmical gaps, sonorities/gestures

•5 kinds of sequences:

1. Sequences 1, 2, 7:

-melodies on: “Listen the wind in the top of the trees.

The wind which ruffles the hair of the dead, helmets

far away. The wind which caresses the faces and ruffles of the hair”

-on a tetrachord with interlocked fourths

Example:

Sequence 2

The musical score consists of six systems, each with a Soprano (S) and Alto (A) part. The lyrics are in French. The first system includes a dynamic marking of *mf*. The music is written in a single melodic line for each voice part, with lyrics placed below the notes. The lyrics are: "E - cou - te le vent Dans le haut des a - rbres le vent", "qui dé - coi - ffe les morts ca - sques rou - lés au loin le", "vent qui ca - res-se qui ca - re-", "sse les vi - sa - ges et dé - coi", "dé - coi - ffe les che - veux", and "dé - coi - ffe les che - veux."

S *mf* E - cou - te le vent Dans le haut des a - rbres le vent
A *mf* E - cou - te le vent Dans le haut des a - rbres le vent

S qui dé - coi - ffe les morts ca - sques rou - lés au loin le
A qui dé - coi - ffe les morts ca - sques rou - lés au loin le

S vent qui ca - res-se qui ca - re -
A vent qui ca - res-se qui ca - re -

S sse les vi - sa - ges et dé - coi
A sse les vi - sa - ges et dé - coi

S dé - coi - ffe les che - veux
A dé - coi - ffe les che - veux.

2) Sequences 3, 8: on a single word

Example:

Sequence 3

The musical score for Sequence 3 is written for four vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked as $\text{♩} = 92 \text{ MM}$. The score is in 4/4 time and features a key signature of one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The vocal parts are marked with fff (fortissimo) and the piano accompaniment is marked with ff (fortissimo). The lyrics for all parts are "cha cha-cal cha-cal cha-cal cha-cal". The score is divided into two measures. The first measure contains the vocal entries and accompaniment. The second measure features a staccato section for the vocal parts, indicated by a bracket and the word "stacc.". The piano accompaniment continues throughout. The score is written on a grand staff with two staves for each part. The vocal parts are written in treble clef, and the piano accompaniment is written in bass clef. The score is marked with a circled 'a' at the beginning and a circled 'b' above the second measure.

3) Sequences 4, 5, 6: alternation of chords, ascending-descending lines, glissandi

Example:

Sequence 4

CHOEUR 4

♩ = 92 MM

→ = transformation continue d'un phonème à l'autre par la modification continue de la cavité bucale.

The musical score is for a choir piece titled "CHOEUR 4". It features four vocal parts: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). The tempo is marked as $\text{♩} = 92 \text{ MM}$. The score is written in a key with one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The vocal lines consist of melodic phrases with dynamic markings such as *p*, *fff*, *pp*, and *mp*. The lyrics "A" and "ou" are interspersed throughout the vocal lines. A legend at the bottom explains the symbol "→" as a continuous transformation of a phoneme through the modification of the oral cavity. Handwritten annotations include circled letters "a", "b", "c", and "d" above the score.

4) Sequence 9, with “KO-OU-A”:

The image displays a musical score for a sequence, likely from a vocal ensemble or choir. The score is written for four vocal parts: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). The music is in a key with one flat (B-flat) and a 3/4 time signature. The tempo is marked *Ralenti* and the dynamics are *fff* (fortissimo). The lyrics are "KO-OU-A".

The score is divided into two systems. The first system is marked *Ralenti* and the second system is marked *fff*. The lyrics are "KO-OU-A" repeated across the measures. The Soprano part (S) has lyrics: "OU-A KO- OU-A KO- OU-A KO OU-A". The Alto part (A) has lyrics: "KO- OU-A KO- OU-A KO- OU-A KO". The Tenor part (T) has lyrics: "A KO- OU-A KO- OU-A KO- OU-A KO". The Bass part (B) has lyrics: "KO- OU-A KO- OU-A KO- OU-A KO- OU-A KO".

There are also some markings like "longs" in a box and "CA" at the end of some staves.

5) Sequence 10: lamentation

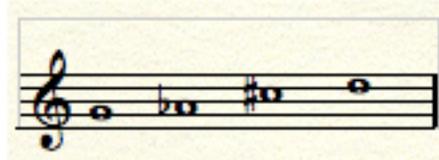
CHOEUR 10

♩ = 46 NM

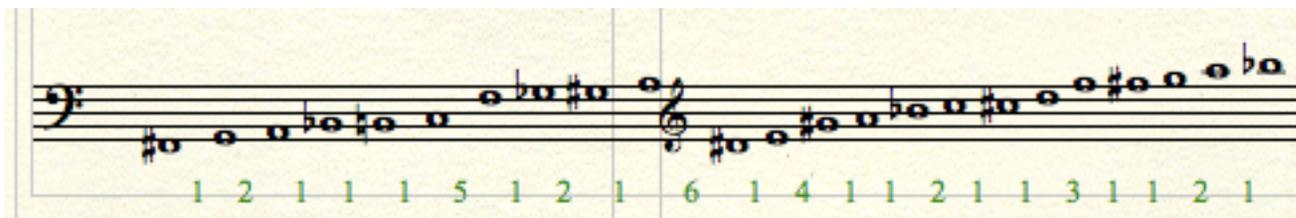
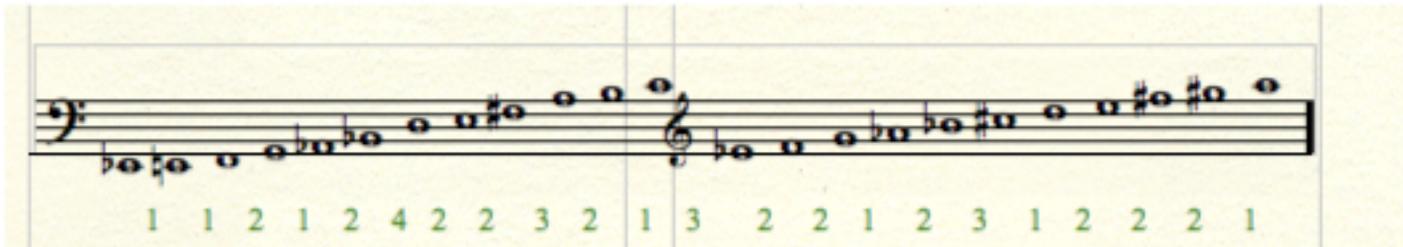
The musical score is arranged in four systems, one for each voice part: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). Each system consists of two staves. The Soprano part has lyrics: PLEU- (first measure), RE (second measure), and PLEU- (third measure). The Alto, Tenor, and Bass parts have lyrics: A O A OU (first measure), A É O O OU (second measure), and A É O O OU (third measure). The score includes dynamic markings such as *sf* and *mf*, and various musical notations including notes, rests, and accidentals. A tempo marking of **♩ = 46 NM** is located at the top left.

- Pitches:

-the tetrachord with the interlocked fourths (“pelog”):



- Three sieves:



- Importance of two “motivic” elements:

- semitone

- rhythm



- Role of the choir:

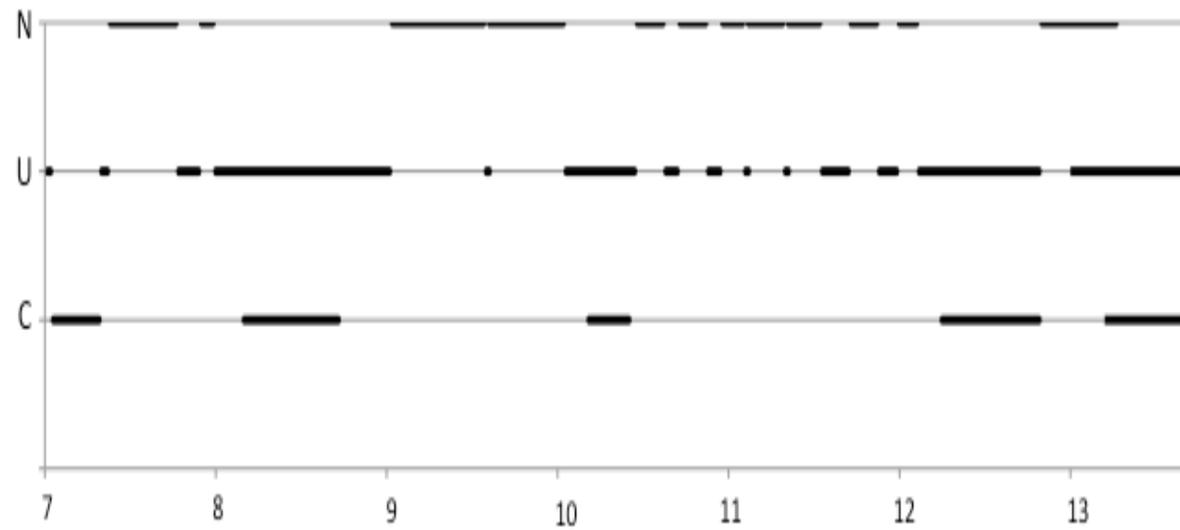
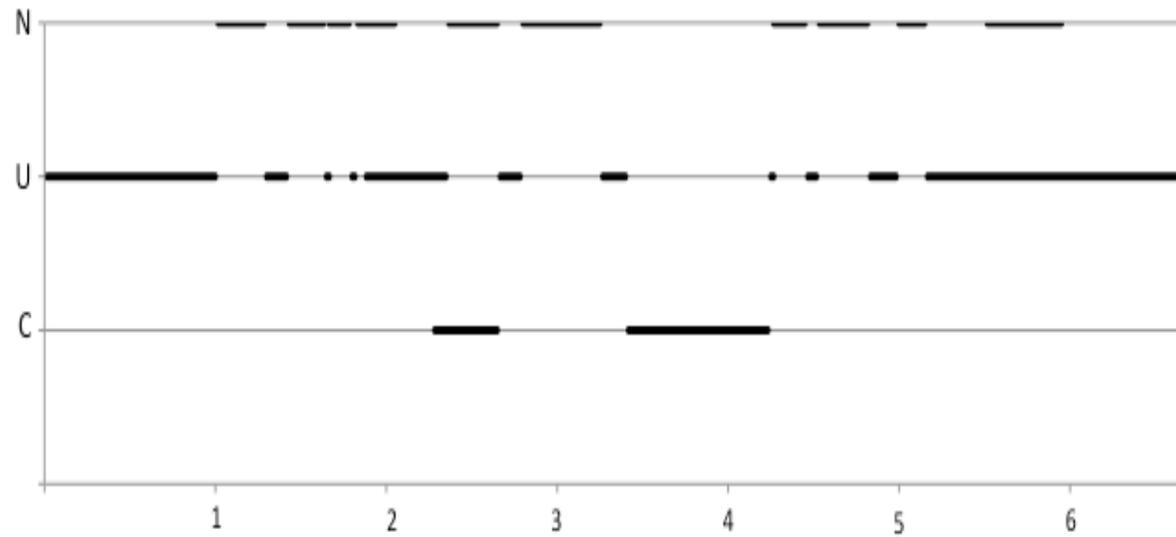
- antique choir towards the narrators

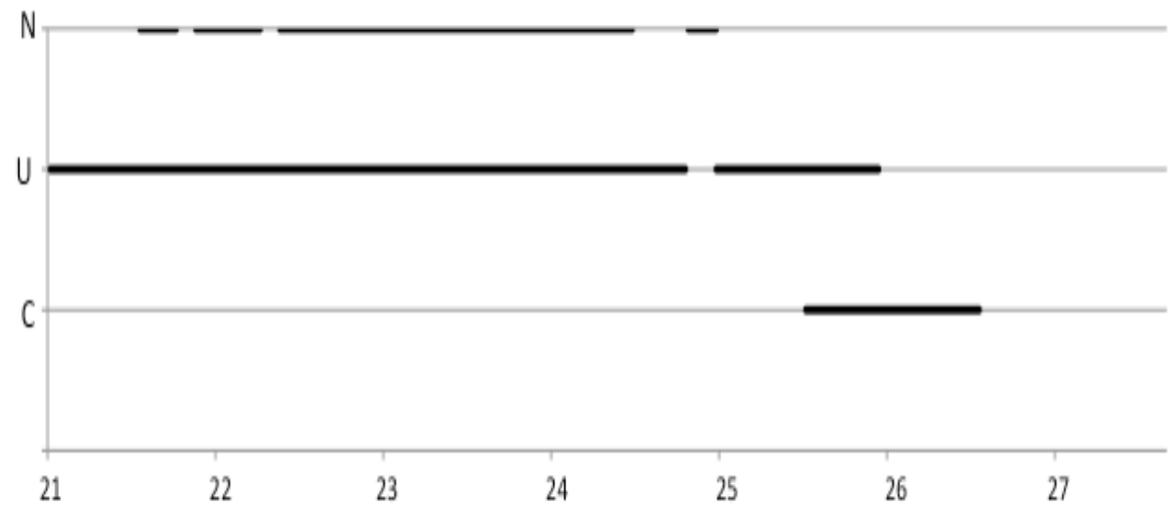
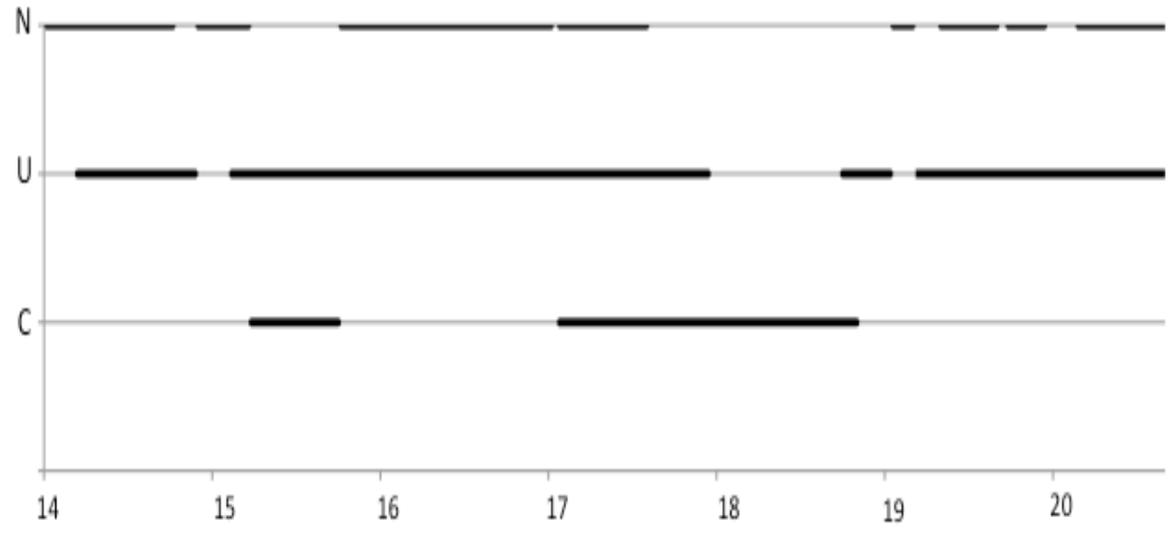
- no direct relationship with UPIC sounds

Assemblage

- The balance between the narrators, the choir and the UPIC sound is fragile
- Xenakis uses all the possibilities:
 - 1) in the mutual relationship:
 - “comment” (text-UPIC)
 - mutual enrichment
 - independent juxtaposition
 - 2) in the possible combinations
- The general evolution:

N: narrators
U: UPIC
C: choir





- 
- From 14' and on, the interventions are more and more longer → from fragmentation to unity

The explosion of the grenade

- The peak of the piece, before the end, where the two children are together and laugh. Then we listen to static UPIC sounds, and then there is the explosion. The narrator concludes: “The grenade exploded just above them. And they had time to think he that it was good this way and he that no”.
- This explosion is not convincing: it is deafened
- Two interpretations:
 - Daniel Teruggi: “We had a lot of difficulties to produce a convincing explosion”
 - Françoise Xenakis: “He made a soft death”. “The children are relieved”.

Conclusion

- A xenakian and not-xenakian piece
- Interesting piece because of this assemblage and its fragility
- Problems of interpretation because of this fragility

Iannis
XENAKIS

POUR LA PAIX

pour récitants, chœurs et bande

texte de Françoise Xenakis