

JOSE EVANGELISTA'S WORLD



Marie Décary and Élisabeth Eudes-Pascal

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Commissioned by the Société de musique contemporaine du Québec (SMCQ) as part of its Homage Series to composer José Evangelista.

José Evangelista's World

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**“Today’s music, as in almost all the domains
of human activity, exists on a global level.”**

José Evangelista, 1991*

* EVANGELISTA, José (1991). *Pourquoi composer de la musique monodique ?*, Circuit, vol. 1, n° 2, p. 55-70.

Note: words attributed to José Evangelista are based mostly on interviews or on his own writings.

Spain

José Evangelista was born in 1943 in Valencia. "My mother played music. Like my sister and older brothers, I would sit next to her at the piano listening to her play Debussy, Schubert, Scarlatti, etc. When I was 6 years old I began to study piano. I would read composers' biographies, saying to myself that I would very much like to do the same thing."

At age 16, José Evangelista begins studies in harmony and orchestration with Vicente Asencio (1908-1979), a composer who teaches at the Valencia Conservatory. Between ages 17 and 20, José writes his first compositions and receives advice from Ernesto Halffter (1905-1989), a pupil of Manuel de Falla. In parallel, the young José will follow scientific studies in physics and computing.

With a Bachelor's degree in physics he obtains a grant from CERN (European Organization for Nuclear Research) in Geneva, Switzerland. He also obtains a diploma in composition from the Valencia Conservatory and marries Matilde Asencio, his professor's daughter. Their son Gabriel is born in 1982 and David in 1988. "Gabriel is an arranger and keyboard player in a Latin music group, while David is interested in heavy metal," he notes with a smile and a touch of pride.

Discovery of World Musics

It is during his studies in sciences in Madrid that Evangelista discovers Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992) with "Three Small Liturgies" during a concert directed by Cristobal Halffter. In 1965, he discovers the music of Bali which will profoundly affect his own music. "Even if I remain highly sensitive to the music of the 20th century classical tradition (Ravel, Prokofiev, Stravinsky, Debussy, etc.), the music of Indonesia set me thinking. It was a determining factor, because I always had a curiosity for other references, and it is this that developed my interest in world musics."

In 1976, he deepens his intrigue with this music during his first trip to Java and Bali with his friend, composer John Rea. Adding Burma (Myanmar) to his itinerary, in 1980, 1992 and 2001, he will go on several trips to study the Javanese gamelan and Western music composition. Other equally inspirational trips will be added in 2006 and 2009 to

France, New Zealand and Shanghai for creations, conferences or university tutorials.

Canada

Equipped with his diplomas in composition, physics and computing, he immigrates to Canada in 1969. "The mathematical approach of my job, my childhood memories and my very close links with universities little by little led me to resume my music studies."

A few months later, he left his post in Ottawa and settled down with his family in Montreal to resume in-depth music composition studies with André Prévost at the Université de Montréal. There he completed his Master's degree. In 1984, studying with Bruce Mather at McGill University, he attains his Phd. This progress results in his working with other emergent artists in contemporary music such as Claude Vivier, Lorraine Vaillancourt, Walter Boudreau, Michel Gonneville and Jean Laurendeau.

Between 1974 and 2009 he is a professor at the Université de Montréal, and is appointed emeritus professor in 2010. Among his pupils, we find Simon Bertrand, Analía Llugdar, Samy Moussa, Alejandra Ogders and Ana Sokolović. He is also a founding member of several concert societies including Événements du Neuf with Claude Vivier, John Rea and Lorraine Vaillancourt, Traditions du Monde with Ramon Pelinski, John Rea and his wife, Matilde Asencio. Finally, in 1987 he creates "l'Atelier de gamelan balinais" (Balinese gamelan workshop) at the Université de Montréal, thanks to a gift of two gamelan ensembles from the Government of Indonesia!

José Evangelista won several prizes and received numerous commissions, in particular from L'itinéraire (Paris), the Kronos Quartet (San Francisco), Groupe vocal de France, the SMCQ, Radio-Canada and Radio-Canada and Chants Libres. From 1987 until 1994 he was a member of the SMCQ Artistic Committee and composer-in-residence at the Montreal Symphony Orchestra between 1993 and 1995. His works have been played in Canada, the United States, Europe, Asia and Australia by ensembles such as the Ensemble Modern (Frankfurt), Nieuw Ensemble (Amsterdam), Music Projects (London), the Orchestre philharmonique de Radio-France, the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, I Musici de Montréal and the Nouvel Ensemble Moderne.



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DEDICATED TO THE
COMPOSER
JOSÉ EVANGELISTA.



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JOSÉ EVANGELISTA
WAS BORN NEAR THE
SEA, IN VALENCIA.



AND HIS CHILDHOOD WAS SOAKED IN MUSIC.



EVERY EVENING, AFTER DINNER HIS
MOTHER SAT DOWN AT THE PIANO.

