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Quasar Saxophone Quartet

Marie-Chantal Leclair soprano sax Mathieu Leclair alto sax
André Leroux tenor sax Jean-Marc Bouchard baritone sax



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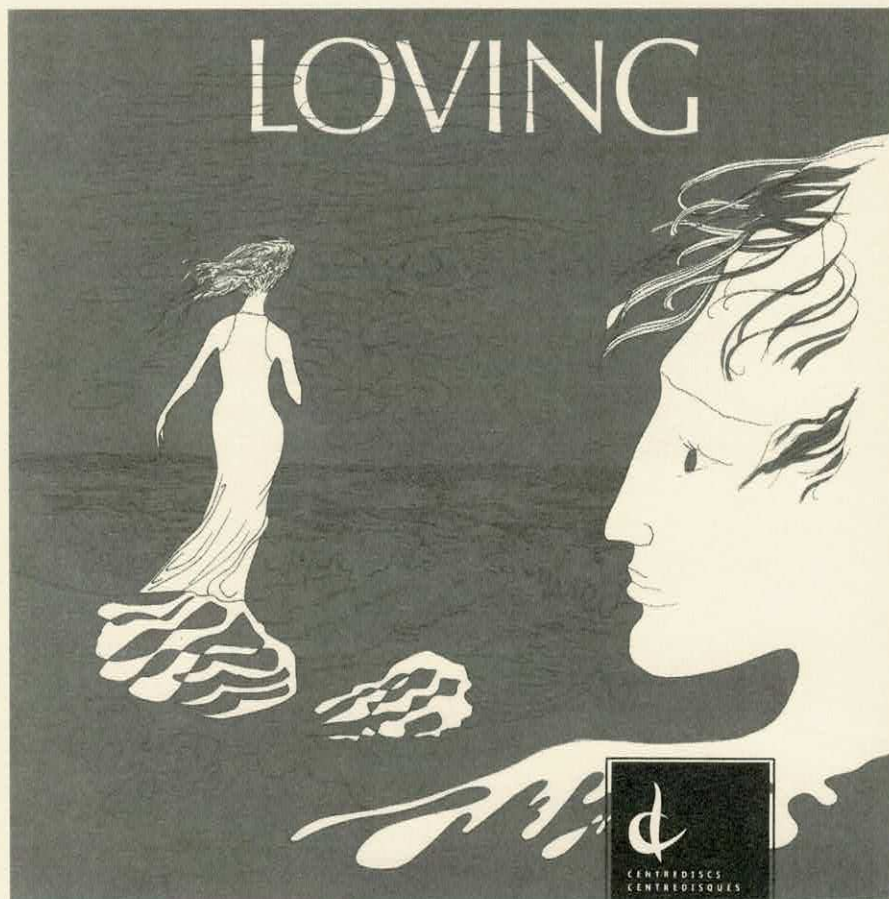


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Programme:

- Jean-François Laporte** (b1968) *Incantation* (15') (2011)
for four "trompe-sax"
- Jimmie Leblanc** (b1977) *Fil Rouge* (15') (2012)
for saxophone quartet
- Wolf Edwards** (b1972) *Predator Drone MQ-1* (12') (2013-14)
for saxophone quartet and electronics
- Intermission —
- André Hamel** (b1955) *Brumes matinales et textures urbaines* (18') (2007)
for saxophone quartet and live electronics
- Presentation of the 2015 Jules Léger Prize to Pierre Alexandre Tremblay by Aimé Dontigny —
- Pierre Alexandre Tremblay** (b1975) *Les pâleurs de la lune* (20') (2014)
for saxophone quartet and live electronics

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Founder and artistic director of Productions Totem Contemporain, composer and instrument inventor **Jean-François Laporte** is known today on the international scene for his original undertakings. From works for traditional, invented and modified instruments to sound installations, Laporte's work invariably stems from concrete experiments in sound matter that are based on active listening to each sound. Since the early days in 1993, Jean-François Laporte has written some sixty works that have been premiered and performed as much in Canada, Europe, Asia, and the United States. Alongside his activities as a composer, for the past seven years he has devoted himself partly to the development of new instruments (the tu-yo, bol, FlyingCan, trompe-sax, and orgue de sirènes) that he has used in his compositions and, since 2002, in his visual and sound installations. Laporte's new instruments have earned him several commissions in Canada and abroad, and have sparked interest in various sectors of the international artistic community, as much in dance as in contemporary music. Other composers are increasingly using his instruments in their own music both for solo works and within traditional ensembles.

Incantation (2011)

for four "trompe-sax"

Incantation is in keeping with my work on *Procession* (2002) which was also a music in space creation to be adapted differently according to each performance location. This work uses the acoustic, scenic and theatrical possibilities of the place in order to emphasize and highlight them. *Incantation* offers the listener a different music experience by placing him in the middle of the sound continuum. — Jean-François Laporte

With *Incantation*, Quasar pursues a long and fruitful collaboration with Jean-François Laporte. Indeed, this partnership started in 2001 with *Le chant de l'inaudible*, the first quartet Laporte composed for Quasar. Since then, Quasar and Jean-François Laporte have collaborated in many projects such as *Tribal* (2002), *Procession* (2002), *Vortex* (2004), *La Plénitude du vide* (2005), *Dégonflement* (2006), and *Psukhô* (2008). Commissioned by Quasar with the assistance of the Canada Council for the arts, *Incantation* was premiered on February 19 2011 as part of Montreal Nouvelles Musiques Festival. — Marie-Chantal Leclair



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Jimmie LeBlanc was born in 1977 in urban Quebec, Canada. Influenced by pop and jazz, he was first trained as a guitarist, and

then completed his studies in classical guitar. He continued his education in composition and analysis at the Conservatoire de musique de Montréal, and is currently working on his doctorate at McGill University Schulich School of Music, honing his skills under the guidance of such composers as Brian Ferneyhough, Michaël Lévinas, and Philippe Leroux. His music has been played by Ensemble Contrechamps, Esprit Orchestra, Quatuor Bozzini, Pentaèdre, Trio Fibonacci, Les Enfants Terribles, Hwaum Chamber Ensemble, Kore Ensemble, Ensemble Contemporain de Montréal and Nouvel Ensemble Moderne (NEM). Jimmie LeBlanc has composed original music and sound design for theater in Montreal, including *Châteaux de la colère* (2005), *Blanc* (2008), *Judith* (2011) and *Genèse/O* (2012). He also produced various soundtracks for commercials, TV and films at Apollo Studios in 2006-2007. In 2003, he did short films music for David Mollet's *Le Silence gourmand*, and Gaudreault/Hizaji's *Continuum*. In addition to teaching guitar and composition, LeBlanc co-produced *Perdre Pied* (2006), a performance-opera realized with artist Olivia Boudreau and based on a text by Jean-Sébastien Lemieux. He ranked as a finalist in the 4th Seoul International Competition for Composers in 2007, and did a residency at the GRAME during the biennial Musiques en Scène of Lyon where he also participated in the NEM's 2008 Forum on Music for instruments and live electronics. His string quartet *The Breaking of the Circle* received 3rd prize in the International Composers' Competition (Lutoslawski Award), 2008. Jimmie LeBlanc is also the winner of the 2009 Jules Léger Prize for New Chamber Music for the work *L'Espace intérieur du monde*.

Fil Rouge (2012)

for saxophone quartet

In theatre, the term "red thread" means an invisible element, often implicit, which underlies the work, connecting all what is above (or below) the plot's narrative mechanisms. Acting in the sphere of the unnamed, this concept seems eminently musical: what, fundamentally, makes a work an indivisible whole? An idea, an essence, an emotion? Music leads us to this level of abstraction, and this is from this stance that I'm trying to design musical figures rooted into sensation, imagined from the body, the body that performs, who hears, and thinks. In the case of Red Thread, it is red as a colour-sensation that was the "poetic attractor" at the origin of musical ideas. As we can wonder what is "red" in the middle of all its possible gradients, we are at the same time astonished by the infinite variety of sensations it suggests!

The piece develops into a series of sequences featuring a musical action inspired by more or less paradoxical associations such as the *rouge-carré* [the "red square", a Québec political symbol - ed.], blood-red, red-oblivion, liminal-red... fragments of the world seen through red...

— Jimmie LeBlanc

Fil Rouge was premiered on April 24 2012 in Montreal as part of the *Méchants moineaux* concert. The composition of the work was made possible with the support of the Canada Council for the Arts.

Wolf Edwards (b. Montreal, 1972) began formal musical training at the Victoria Conservatory of Music (1994-1996) before transferring to the University of Victoria (1996-2000) where he completed an undergraduate degree in music composition and theory, with Prof. Christopher Butterfield, Dr. John Celona, Prof. Michael Longton, Dr. Harold Krebs, and classical guitar with Dr. Alexander Dunn. To further his education, Edwards relocated to Montreal, Quebec (2000-2002), where he attended private lessons in composition, theory, and analysis, with Gilles Tremblay. In 2002 Wolf was granted a two year University of Victoria Fellowship enabling him to complete the degree of Master of Music in 2004. Further studies include Acanthes Festival and Summer Academy in Metz, France, 2005 with composers Pascal Dusapin (France), Wolfgang Rihm (Germany), and Hilda Peredes (Mexico) and the Schloss Solitude Summer Academy in Stuttgart, Germany in 2007 with composers Chaya Czernowin (Israel), Stephen Kazuo Takasugi (U.S.A) and Ole Lutzow Holm (Norway/Sweden). Edwards has been the recipient of many awards and prizes including the Community Council Composition Competition 2006 (First Prize), Canada Council for the Arts/Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's Jules Leger Competition for New Chamber Music 2005 (Third Prize), Molinari Quartet International 2002-2003 (Third Prize), Strings of the Future International Composition Competition 2001 (First Prize), the Vancouver Sonic Boom Prize (1998) and the Murray Adaskin Prize in Composition in 1997. Edwards has participated, lectured, and had his music performed in many international festivals, and events, throughout North America and Continental Europe. His works have been performed and/or commissioned by the Siemens Art Foundation of Germany, Newspeak Ensemble (U.S.A.), Productions Totem Contemporain (Quebec), the SMCQ (Quebec), the Arte Saxophone Quartet (Switzerland), Sixxtrum Percussion Ensemble (Quebec), the Esprit Orchestra (Ontario), Ensemble Surplus (Germany), Arditti String Quartet (England), Molinari String Quartet (Quebec), Victoria Symphony (British Columbia), Aventa Ensemble

(British Columbia), Sofia Soloists (Bulgaria), Quasar Quatuor de Saxophones (Quebec), Ensemble Contemporain de Montreal (Quebec), Ensemble Chorum (Quebec), Quatuor Bozzini (Quebec), the Tsilumos Ensemble (British Columbia) and the Western Front (British Columbia).

Predator Drone MQ-1 (2013, rev. 2014)
for saxophone quartet and electronics

An unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) developed by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the United States Airforce, and General Atomics in the early 1990s. Equipped with Hellfire missiles, the Predator Drone has been used to kill people in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bosnia, Serbia, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, and Somalia.

Despite claims from the administration that drone strikes have killed very few civilians, multiple independent reports (including the Columbia Law School's Human Rights Institutions and The Bureau of Investigative Journalism) have proven that in fact 98% of drone strike casualties are civilians. That is 50 for every one "suspected terrorist."

Predator Drone MQ-1 is dedicated to the Quasar Quatuor de Saxophones. — *Wolf Edwards*

Predator Drone MQ-1 was commissioned for Quasar by The Western Front with the assistance of the Canada Council for the Arts. The piece was premiered by Quasar on November 16, 2013 at The Western Front in Vancouver.

André Hamel has extensive experience in both composition and concert production, and in 1985 formed the Société des Concerts Alternatif du Québec (Codes d'accès), which he served as president (1987-90), and as a member of the board of directors (1985-91; 1994-96). As project director for Codes D'accès, Hamel also laid the groundwork and helped realize Musiques-échange Québec-Belgique 1996. In 1992 he joined forces with two other composers to found Espaces sonores illimités, a group that focuses on the spatial aspects of concert presentation. He has been a member of the artistic committee of the Société de musique contemporaine du Québec (SMCQ) since September 2000. As a composer, André Hamel's works have been performed regularly over the past two decades in Quebec, Canada and Europe, with pieces commissioned by a number of Québécois and international

music organizations including the SMCQ, the Ensemble Nahandove (Brussels), the Polyrythmia percussion ensemble (Bulgaria), Société Radio-Canada, the Pointe-à-Callière Museum, the Canadian Music Centre, Théâtre La Chapelle in Montreal, the Morel-Nemish piano duo, and the French cellist Benjamin Carat. He was also one of 18 Quebec composers involved in creating the *Millennium Symphony* (June 2000). Hamel's awards include a special mention for his orchestral work *L'absurde travail* at the Goffredo Petrassi International Competition for Composers (Italy, 1997), the Conseil québécois de la musique's 1998 Prix Opus in the "Premiere of the Year" category, and the 2000 Joseph S. Stauffer Award given by the Canada Council for the Arts. A former artist-in-residence at Le Studio du Québec in New York City (2003), Hamel's current projects include the music for a collaborative, multi-disciplinary work entitled *Urnos*, realized with Bernard Arcand, Martine Beaulne, Claire Gignac et Guy Laramée.

Brumes matinales et textures urbaines (2007)
for saxophone quartet and live electronics

After a night of pleasures and sensual delight, they were forced from their morning languor. They proceeded to shower, dress, take a cup of coffee, eat and then without saying a word, rush into the daily whirlwind of human activity.

— *André Hamel*

Commissioned by Quasar with the financial assistance of the Canada Council for the Arts, *Brumes matinales et textures urbaines* was premiered on March 28 2007 as part of their *Ondes de chocs* concert.

Pierre Alexandre Tremblay is a composer and a performer on bass guitar and sound processing devices, in solo and within the groups ars circa musicæ (Paris, France), de type inconnu (Montréal, Québec), and Splice (London, England, UK). He is a member of the London-based collective Loop. His music is released by Empreintes DIGITALes and Ora. He formally studied composition with Michel Tétéault, Marcelle Deschênes, and Jonty Harrison, bass guitar with Jean-Guy Larin, Sylvain Bolduc, and Michel Donato, analysis with Michel Longtin and Stéphane Roy, studio technique with Francis Dhomont, Robert Normandeau, and Jean Piché. Pierre Alexandre Tremblay is Professor in Composition and Improvisation at the University of Huddersfield (England, UK) where he also is Director of the Electronic Music Studios. He previously worked in popular music as producer and bassist, and is interested in video music and coding. He likes spending time with his family, drinking oolong tea,

gazing at dictionaries, reading prose, and taking long walks. As a founding member of the no-tv collective, he does not own a working television set.

Les pâleurs de la lune (2014)

for saxophone quartet and live electronics

« Et je me demandais si je veillais ou si je dormais, - si c'étaient les pâleurs de la lune ou de Lucifer, - si c'était minuit ou le point du jour ! »

« Mais bientôt mon oreille n'interrogea plus qu'un silence profond. »

— extraits du troisième livre des *Fantaisies de Gaspard de la Nuit*,
Aloÿsius Bertrand [1824]

So much beauty surrounds us, when we give it time! Often it emerges from a simple meeting, easily ignored. At a second glance, it will yield its deep nature, full of beauty and richness. So many nuances emerge when we allow ourselves to contemplate the moon! — *Pierre Alexandre Tremblay*

Les pâleurs de la lune was commissioned by Quasar with the assistance of the Canada Council for the Arts.

Awarded annually, the **Jules Léger Prize for New Chamber Music** is a competition for Canadian composers that is designed to encourage the creation of new chamber music and to foster its performance by Canadian chamber groups. The \$7,500 prize was established in 1978 by the Right Honourable Jules Léger, then Governor General of Canada.

The competition for the prize is administered by the Canada Council for the Arts. The Canada Council also funds the award, selects and manages the peer assessment committee and promotes the winner. CBC/Radio-Canada broadcasts the winning composition.

The Jules Léger Prize has the distinction of being the only Canadian award available to classical composers at any stage of their careers. Since its inception in 1978 with the awarding of the prize to R. Murray Schafer, winners have included such notables as Bruce Mather, Serge Garant, John Rea, Brian Cherney, Linda Catlin Smith, James Rolfe, Alexina Louie, Nicole Lizée, André Ristic, Zosha di Castri and Thierry Tidrow. We are proud to note that two New Music Concerts commissions have been honoured with the award - *Zwei Lieder nach Rilke* by Omar Daniel and Chris Paul Harman's *Amerika* - and that we also gave the premiere performance of Christos Hatzis' winning work *Erotikos Logos*.

Known for their energy and bold innovation, the four members of the **Quasar Saxophone Quartet** — Marie-Chantal Leclair, Mathieu Leclair, André Leroux, Jean-Marc Bouchard — have been exploring the innumerable facets of musical creation since the group's founding in 1994. Their repertoire is vast in range, including chamber music, improvisation, musical theatre, and most particularly over the past ten years mixed music featuring live electronics, an area in which they are now recognized as leaders.

Five-time winners of the Québec Music Council's distinguished OPUS awards, Quasar presents an annual concert series in Montréal while performing extensively across Canada, the United States and Europe. The quartet reserves pride of place for a group of esteemed Canadian and International composers with whom it has formed lasting partnerships. It aims to contribute to the enrichment of our musical heritage and to provide a platform for new music experimentation, exploration and production.

Quasar has proudly commissioned over one hundred works over the course of its twenty years of activity. During that time it has performed as a solo group with, among others, the Montreal Symphony Orchestra and the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra. Member of Le Vivier and of the Canadian New Music Network, Quasar is supported by the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec, the Canada Council for the Arts, the Conseil des arts de Montréal, the Socan Foundation and Vandoren.

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Anthony Tan (Canada 1978) - *On the Sensations of Tone II* (2016)*

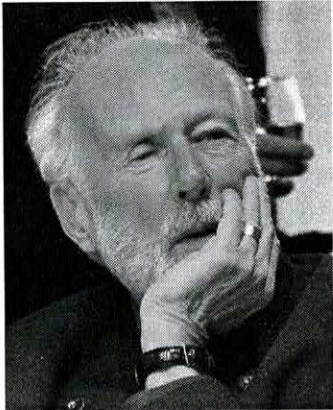
Keith Hamel (Canada 1956) - *Dreamer* (2016)*

So Jeong Ahn (S.Korea/Canada 1956) - *LOL* (2012/2015)

Thomas Kessler (Switzerland 1937) - *Is It M?* (2016) premiere

Paul Steenhuisen (Canada 1965) - *Vajrayana Tantra Shift* (2016)*

* World premiere, NMC commission



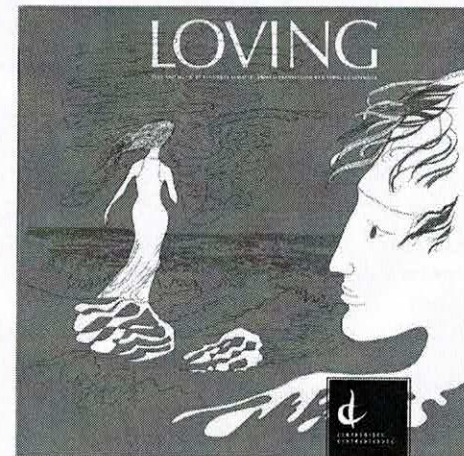
R. Murray Schafer (born Sarnia, Ontario, 1933) has won national and international acclaim not only for his achievement as a composer, but also as an educator, environmentalist, literary scholar, journalist, visual artist, and provocateur. He has written more than 70 compositions, ranging from orchestral and vocal pieces to musical theatre and multimedia rituals. In his music and in his writings he repeatedly challenges and transcends orthodox approaches to

the relationships among music, performer, audience and setting. He has expanded the potential and appreciation of music and its place in the arts and culture of our time. Among his myriad honours are two prizes from the Fromm Foundation, the Canadian Music Council Medal, a Guggenheim Fellowship, the William Harold Moon Award, Composer of the Year Award from the Canadian Music Council, the first Jules Léger Prize for New Chamber Music, the Prix Honegger, the first Glenn Gould Prize for Music and Its Communication, the Molson Prize from the Canada Council for the Arts, the Louis Applebaum Composer's Award, the Walter Carsen Prize for Excellence in the Performing Arts, the Governor General's Performing Arts Award for Lifetime Artistic Achievement and the title of Companion of the Order of Canada.

Loving (Toi) is an opera with music and text by R. Murray Schafer scored for small ensemble (including six percussion players) and lasting about 70 minutes. It was completed in 1965. One of its four major arias (*Geography of Eros*), however, was completed in 1963 and premiered in Toronto by Mary Morrison. The work was commissioned by Radio Canada and performed first (in part) as *Toi* on the TV series *L'Heure du concert* in February 1966, produced by Pierre Mercure with music direction by Serge Garant. It was rebroadcast on the CBC English network as *Loving* later the same year 1966. *Loving* received semi-staged performances of the complete score in 1978 in Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Halifax by a cast that included Mary Lou Fallis, Jean McPhail, Susan Gudgeon and Kathy Terrell and a chamber orchestra conducted by Robert Aitken. It was recorded that year by the same performers and released by Melbourne Records.

In Schafer's words *Loving* is a "synaesthetic work" in which "several arts are employed in extremely close, frequently interpenetrating relationships." There is no plot in the sense of unfolding action; rather there is a series of comments on and suggestions about love between man and woman. The female psyche is portrayed by the four singers — Modesty (soprano), Ishtar, Vanity, and Eros (all mezzos) — and by an actress, Elle. The male psyche is represented by an actor, Lui, and a voice on tape, Le Poète. Dancers and other extras are optional. The libretto employs both English and French, the French portions of the score being translated by Gabriel Charpentier from Schafer's English text. The work was published by Berandol in 1979 under the single title *Loving*.

Centrediscs is delighted to partner with New Music Concerts to make this historic performance available to new generations on compact disc.



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Thursday March 31, 2016

8:00pm Concert | 7:15pm Pre-Concert Chat | Koerner Hall

Darius Milhaud *La création du monde*
Hussein Janmohamed *Nur: Reflections on Light* for choir
Douglas Schmidt *Sirens**
Alex Pauk *Soul and Psyche*** for choir and orchestra

Alex Pauk – conductor
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