



**Iannis Xenakis**  
**Persepolis + Remixes Edition 1**  
**2xCD**  
**ASP2005**

In 1971, former Iranian dictator Muhammad Reza Shah hosted a lavish and highly choreographed event amidst the ruins of the ancient Persian capital of Persepolis in order to celebrate the 2500th anniversary of Iran's founding by Cyrus The Great. This commemoration of modern Iran's beginnings was part of the Shah's own struggle with the country's increasingly politicized Shi'ite Muslim clerics, led by the late Ayatollah Khomeini, to secularize Iran. Declaring himself to be heir to Cyrus' legacy, the Shah presided over a cast of 6,200 vintage Persian costume wearing vassals in an outlandish ceremony affirming the Shah's own interpretation of Iranian history, one which paid little deference to Islam.

The third annual Shiraz arts festival was held that same year at Persepolis. In keeping with the 2500th national anniversary celebrations, the Shah commissioned Greek composer and computer music pioneer Iannis Xenakis (1922-2001) to write a piece of music exalting ancient Persia's aristocratic pre-Islamic religious culture. Selecting Xenakis to author such a work could not have been more symbolically appropriate. A central figure in the development of computer composition, this half-blind former architect, WWII resistance fighter and associate of Le Corbusier evolved a new approach to music, most notably one that employed mathematical probability functions as a compositional methodology.

Titled Persepolis, in honor of the location in which it was to be performed, Xenakis composed a fifty-six minute, eight-track tape piece of musique concrète for the occasion. A noisy, apocalyptic-sounding work distinguished by rising waves of intensity, Persepolis' debut must have been quite an experience for those lucky enough to be in attendance. Persepolis takes on an even greater significance when listened to as a musical work whose purpose was to serve a failed secularist ideology overtaken less than a decade later by a fundamentalist Islamic revolution.

In light of the events that have consumed the world since September 11th 2001, the notion that a radical composer would align himself with a political figure like the Shah shows how very few places such a brilliant artist could go to receive support for their work. Creative modernism is left with choosing between authoritarianism and religion. Hence the inclusion of a second disc of remixes in this edition of Persepolis. Disc 2 of this recording contains ten remixes of Persepolis by an international cast of avant-garde musicians, transforming Xenakis' original work in entirely distinct contexts, imbuing it with compellingly new meanings.

Otomo Yoshihide, Merzbow, Ryoji Ikeda, and Construction Kit contribute Japanese readings, while Spanish artist Francisco Lopez, Polish musician Zbigniew Karkowski and German Ulf Langheinrich bring the so-called noise from Europe. Americans Antimatter and Laminar round the global aspect of this collection out by providing their own compelling takes on the original. Despite their distinctiveness, what unites all of these remixes is a shared sense that all great works of art can transcend the contexts in which they were first conceived in order to explore, and perhaps fulfill their greater purpose.

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