

XENAKIS: *Kraanerg*

Alpha Centauri Ensemble/ Roger Woodward
Etcetera 1075 (Qualiton) 71 minutes

Kraanerg (1968-9) is huge. Iannis Xenakis (b. 1922) writes that it is an attempt to represent the struggles between the various factions present when the world population passes 24 billion, "in barely three generations." The composer argues that 80% of the people there will be 25 or under, so that the youth movement of the late 60s was but the beginning of the hegemony of youth.

This is a terrifying work. Not only is it long, but violent, with great, daring pauses which are only pauses; the violence returns undiminished for almost 71 minutes. Xenakis is unremitting, constantly pitting instruments or groups of instruments against each other, and using the electronic tape to create a primordial atmosphere, as if the population explosion he portrays is another sort of big bang.

Kraanerg seems to exist without Xenakis, as if, instead of making a statement, he has unmade one, created something which has a separate existence. That is perhaps the most frightening aspect of *Kraanerg*: by not allowing himself in the work, Xenakis places himself with the rest of us to face the impending "biological turmoil".

After listening to *Kraanerg* and writing the above, it seems somehow pointless to discuss the performance. I was not aware of a *composer* in this work, much less performers — which is probably the best thing I could say about Roger Woodward's and Alpha Centauri's performance.

Recommended, but not for the fainthearted.

■ TAYLOR

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