



Festival
Classica

l'heptade intégrale
50^e anniversaire



HARMONIUM

L'HEPTADE INTÉGRALE D'HARMONIUM

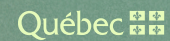
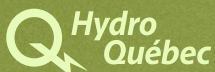
16th edition

23 May 2026 – 8 p.m.
24 May 2026 – 3 p.m.

Théâtre Saint-Denis

Montréal

In collaboration with



L'Heptade intégrale d'Harmonium

Program

(115 mins with intermission)

L'heptade. Harmonium (1976)

<i>Prologue</i>	Neil Chotem
<i>Comme un fou</i>	Serge Fiori, Michel Normandeau
<i>Sommeil sans rêves</i>	Neil Chotem
<i>Chanson noire</i>	
Le bien, le mal	Serge Fiori
Pour une blanche cérémonie	Serge Fiori, Michel Normandeau/Serge Fiori, Serge Locat
<i>L'appel</i>	Neil Chotem
<i>Le premier ciel</i>	Serge Fiori, Michel Normandeau/Serge Fiori
<i>Sur une corde raide</i>	Neil Chotem
<i>L'exil</i>	Serge Fiori

INTERMISSION

<i>Le corridor</i>	Serge Fiori, Michel Normandeau/Serge Fiori
<i>Les premières lumières</i>	Neil Chotem
<i>Lumières de vie</i>	
Lumière de nuit	Serge Fiori, Michel Normandeau/Serge Fiori
Éclipse	Neil Chotem
Lumière de jour	Serge Locat
Lumière de vie	Serge Fiori, Serge Locat, Louis Valois
<i>Prélude d'amour</i>	Neil Chotem
<i>Comme un sage</i>	Serge Fiori
<i>Épilogue</i>	Neil Chotem

L'heptade intégrale d'Harmonium

Artists

Rock band

Hamonium members:

Monique Fauteux, vocals, keyboards,
Fender Rhodes, choir direction

Louis Valois, bass, vocals

Serge Locat, piano, keyboards

Libert Subirana, clarinet, flute, saxophone

Alexandre Désilets, lead singer

Maude Locat, piano, keyboards, vocals,
musical direction

Julie Valois, piano, Fender Rhodes,
keyboards, vocals

Tony Chotem, classical guitar

Vincent Duhaime Perreault, acoustic
guitar, electric guitar

Raphaël D'Amours, acoustic guitar,
electric guitar

Robert Saint-Laurent, drums, vocals

Nancy Fortin, chorus

Martin Lacasse, chorus

Mathieu Lavoie, chorus

Orchestre du Festival Classica

Conductor: **Simon Fournier**

General director: **Marie-Anne Rozankovic**

Original concept: **Marc Boucher**

Stage direction: **Isabeau Proulx-Lemire**,
Denis Bouchard

Artistic direction: **Louis Valois**

Production direction: **Isabeau Proulx-Lemire**

Stage management: **Gabriel Vasiliu**,
Marie-Christine Lance

Technical direction: **Alexandre Robichaud**,
FX Productions

Lighting design: **Danny Harvey**

Sound engineering: **Stéphane Grimm**

Monitor engineering: **Serge Rodrigue**

Backline technician: **Carl Turgeon**

About

Witness a historic moment when Harmonium's masterpiece, *L'heptade*, is performed on stage in its entirety for the first time. Neil Chotem's arrangements give this cult opus new life in a riveting new version for symphony orchestra, rock band, singers, and chorus. On stage, four members of Harmonium join forces with artists from a younger generation, forging a vibrant bridge between past and present. A dazzling rendezvous where poetry, symphonic rock, and powerful sound fuse to create an unforgettable emotional high.

A word from Marc Boucher

General and Artistic Director of Festival Classica

Harmonium's symphonic rock odyssey *L'heptade* is anchored in Québec's collective memory. Producing the complete work on stage, with an orchestra and with original members of the group and their children, is not only an act of deep patrimonial and artistic meaning but also a celebration of intergenerational transmission. It makes me profoundly happy to realize that, after fifty years, this unique musical work will at last bloom in its full dazzling symphonic splendour, as imagined by the composer Neil Chotem and the members of Harmonium.

The project, initiated by Festival Classica and directed by Louis Valois, was ten years in the making. It required patience: time to set every element in place, create the arrangements, reopen the channels of transcendence, and set the table for this musical communion. We were embarked on a journey both mysterious and sublime. Nothing could be rushed; everything had to emerge gently, respectfully, in its own time. And now here we are at long last. I can't wait to take my seat in Théâtre Saint-Denis and be carried away by the music of *L'heptade*.

A word from Louis Valois

Member of Harmonium, bassist and composer

Ten years ago, Marc Boucher, the director of Festival Classica, came to Serge Fiori and me with an ambitious dream: to bring Harmonium's *L'heptade* onto the stage, in its entirety, as recorded in 1976.

Today this dream becomes reality.

Thank you, Marc: your vision and your deep love of music have made all this possible.

Neil Chotem said: "Harmonium's music is like the northern lights."

It continues to light up our lives 50 years later.

Like so many others of my generation, I got hooked on *L'heptade*.

Thanks to you, the odyssey goes on, and lives on.

L'heptade turns me inside out.

It will be with me to the end of my life!

Neil, Serge, Denis, and Robert... this tribute is for you.

You are loved... and you will be loved!

Program notes

Benjamin Goron, musicologist

Bringing *L'heptade* back to life, complete and in all its grandeur, is both an artistic initiative and an act of memory. This outstanding project brings original members of Harmonium together with a new generation of musicians in an ambitious reinterpretation by a rock ensemble, featuring the voice of Alexandre Désilets backed by eight chorus singers and a symphony orchestra. This meeting of epochs and sensitivities gives new life to a monumental opus, here staged in its entirety for the first time, immersing the audience in one of the pinnacles of Québec music. With Neil Chotem's arrangements and a modern musical approach, *L'heptade* is reborn in all its sonic richness, amplified by the power of the orchestra and the collective fervour of the performers on stage.

Released on November 15, 1976, the day of the historic election of René Lévesque and the Parti Québécois, *L'heptade* was born in a Québec that was in the throes of redefining its identity in the wake of the Quiet Revolution. This was a time of cultural effervescence in which the French language, artistic creation, and national conscience played central roles, with landmark works such as poet Gaston Miron's *L'homme rapaillé* and Michel Tremblay's socially engaged theatre. Emerging from this vibrant local context—shaped by the ideals of May 1968, the turmoil of the post-Vietnam war era, and the spiritual and artistic quest characteristic of the 1970s—*L'heptade* was both strongly rooted in Québec and open to the world, expressing in music the aspirations of a generation searching for meaning, freedom, and inner transformation. The band that coalesced around Serge Fiori had established itself with a brand of acoustic folk strongly rooted in Québec language and identity. With this, its third album, Harmonium took a decisive turn, creating an ambitious concept album inspired by spiritual and existential exploration, built around the number 7. The word “heptade” comes from ancient Greek, meaning “group of seven,” and it was at this time that the band expanded from five to seven members, with an album that contained seven songs and explored the seven levels of consciousness.

Its release was met with surprise and fascination. A dense, groundbreaking work, almost mystical in its narrative structure, *L'heptade* created shockwaves in the musical landscape of the time. And yet its audacity and artistic cohesion quickly established the album as a landmark work. While its influence spread far beyond Québec's borders, often being compared with major creations of international progressive rock, it remained deeply anchored in a unique francophone aesthetic.

L'heptade begins like a lucid dream, guided by an inner voice. In the Prologue, a door starts to open, and then “Comme un fou” takes us on the first stage of the journey, fragile and luminous, our hearts urging us forward despite the uncertainty. Then come the areas of darkness: “Sommeil sans rêves” and “Chanson noire” bring tension, soon traversed by “Le bien, le mal,” where the duality of human nature seems to cast a spell. But then “Pour une blanche cérémonie” raises the mood with a promise of reconciliation. “L'appel” marks a tipping point: a voice calls us to move forward. “Le premier ciel” creates a suspended space of calm, before “L'exil” provides a reminder of the solitude of the path—“*je suis parti loin de moi*.” In “Le corridor,” a narrow, almost initiatory passage, time seems to expand, leading up to the emergence of “Premières lumières.” The cycle of light—nighttime, daytime, lifetime—acts as a gradual transfiguration, darkness dissolving into new clarity. Finally, “Comme un sage” looks back serenely at the pathway that has been traversed. “Épilogue” brings the journey to a gentle end.

L'heptade's aesthetics are one of its most striking aspects. The opus unfolds like an inner voyage, marked out by sonic tableaux that blend, rock, folk, symphonic music, and experimental explorations. Neil Chotem's orchestral arrangements play a central role in this architecture: luscious strings, majestic brass, and orchestral textures that set up a dialogue with rock instruments all create a soundscape of rare breadth. Serge Locat's keyboards, Louis Valois's bass lines and the contributions of woodwinds bring distinctive colours that add to the rich, nuanced musical writing.

Today, almost fifty years after its creation, this work is being reborn and passed on. The presence on stage of original members of Harmonium—Monique Fauteux, Louis Valois, Serge Locat, and Libert Subirana—imbues the project with unique authenticity and emotional payload. Alongside them, a new generation of artists breathes new vitality into this heritage, including the children of Harmonium members: Maude Locat (daughter of Serge Locat), Julie Valois (daughter of Louis Valois and Monique Fauteux) and Tony Chotem (son of Neil Chotem), who took part in the original recording. This intergenerational dialogue is more than the passing on of a torch: it testifies to the work's ability to resonate today, to move new audiences, and be part of a living continuity. This new staging thus becomes a meeting of past and present, memory and creation. Hearing *L'heptade* in its entirety, delivered with the power of a symphony orchestra and the energy of a rock band, we rediscover this landmark creation's evocative power. More than a tribute, this project is a reaffirmation of the essential place *L'heptade* holds in Québec's musical heritage, and its capacity to travel through time with its poetic force, its political and spiritual impact fully intact.

Artists

Monique Fauteux
Vocals, keyboards,
Fender Rhodes,
choir direction



Louis Valois
Bass, vocals



Serge Locat
Piano, keyboards



Libert Subirana
Clarinet, flute,
saxophone



Alexandre Désilets
Lead singer



Maude Locat
Piano, keyboards,
vocals, musical
direction



Julie Valois
Piano, Fender-
Rhodes, keyboards,
vocals



Tony Chotem
Classical guitar



Simon Fournier
Conductor



**Marie-Anne
Rozankovic**
General director,
OFC



Orchestra

First violins

Johanne Morin, concertmaster
Olga Semionova, associate concertmaster
Marie-Anne Rozankovic
Veronica Ungureanu
Anastasia Virlan
Pavlo Khmara

Second violins

Helga Dathe, principal
Zoé Dumais, associate
Catherine Beaudry
Fiona Marchetto

Violas

Julie Dupras, principal
Samuel Hogue, associate
Chung Han Hsiao
Sofia Morao

Cellos

Loredana Zanca, principal
Aidan Fleet, associate
Amos Friesen

Double bass

Emilou Johnson, principal

Flute

Mathilde Vaillancourt, principal

Oboe

Dylan Pinette, principal

Clarinet

Julien Deguire, principal

Horns

Simon Bourget, principal
Mathilde Lepage

Trumpets

Nicolas Gagnon, principal
Loïc Lapatrie
André Thouin

Trombones

Yori Lang, principal
Madeleine Doyon-Robitaille
Eli Turmel, bass trombone principal

Percussion

David Therrien-Brongo, principal
Catherine Varvaro

Harp

Antoine Malette-Chénier, principal

Celesta, organ, and keyboards

Karl A. Rozankovic

Festival Classica team

General and Artistic Director: **Marc Boucher**

Associate Director: **Julie Valois**

Director of Communications and Social Media Manager: **Catherine Loiselle**

Administrative Director and Box Office Manager: **Nathalie Houde**

Production Director, Indoor Performances: **Gabriel Vasiliu**

Production Director, Lyric Opera Productions (NOM): **Isabeau Proulx Lemire**

Production Director, Outdoor Concerts: **Dominique Arcand**

Content Coordinator, Website and Programs: **Marie-Christine Lance**

Contracts Manager and Volunteer Coordinator: **Martine Bergeron**

Box Office Assistant: **Carmelle Gauvin**

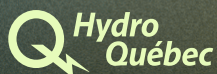
16th edition

May 22 to June 14, 2026

festivalclassica.com

CONCERTS THAT HIT THE RIGHT NOTE!

In collaboration with



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