

LAND OF THE TRIBES

World music records



Jean-Pierre Labrèche biography

Jean-Pierre Labrèche is an explorer by nature. Whether it be music, travelling or spirituality, the Montreal-born composer, arranger and musician is always looking for new boundaries to break. “I’m an explorer in my soul and my greatest pleasure it to discover new things.”

As a professional keyboardist, Labrèche has played every conceivable genre of music – R&B, funk, disco, Latin, reggae, rock, blues, jazz and classical. His musical journey has taken him from dance cover bands to avant-garde jazz ensembles to rhythmic world-beat groups. Yet it is his exploration of electronic music that placed him on the musical map.

In the 1980s, Labrèche found himself at the forefront of a new musical genre – organic ambient music – or what was commonly termed “new age” in those days. What started out as a request for music for a friend’s tai-chi class, turned Labrèche into a pioneer of ambient sound and composition in Canada. “My only guideline was to create something spacey and relaxing.”

In 1983, Labrèche released an album called **Yi-King**, a collection of three instrumental compositions inspired by the I-Ching, the ancient Chinese book of change. Released as an audio cassette, the album found a responsive audience and sold over 50,000 copies primarily in Quebec – earning this independent release the equivalency of gold status in the Canadian music market.

In light of this success, Labrèche released a follow-up, **Yi-King II**, in 1985. Boasting higher production values, the second album placed the audio emphasis on the latest generation of synthesizers and samplers. Woodwind instruments and female vocalists were added to the mix to transform the **Yi-King** venture into optimal bliss.

In 1987, Labrèche composed the soundtrack for **Sadhana: Back to the Source**, a documentary about a young westerner following the call of his soul and discovering India directed by Quebec filmmaker Jean-Pierre Piché.

Two years later, in 1989, Labrèche added a third part to his **Yi-King series** with **Yi-King III**. Using state-of-the-art keyboard and computer technology, Labrèche's relaxation pieces were more sophisticated than previous ones and featured the Japanese shakuhachi flute. The two **Yi-King** follow-ups were also commercially successful, each selling around 50,000 copies.

Oreade Music, the Dutch record label that specializes in music that, according to its early motto, is “effectively relaxing, delightful and inspiring”, released Labrèche's **Yi-King series** on CD in the early 1990s for Europe's burgeoning new age music market.

Now available here for the first time as legal digital MP3 downloads, the whole **Yi-King series** and **Sadhana** movie soundtrack were remastered in 2018. Labrèche's music can be enjoyed as it was originally intended.

What music journalists have written...

- “Labrèche is indisputably, the forerunner of the new wave of New Age music in Quebec. Released in 1983, **Yi-King I** is the first New Age music cassette to have met with a great success in Quebec. With more than 30,000 copies sold, and in the absence of any form of publicity or promotion, it emerges as a classic of New Age music in Quebec. With limited means, Labrèche has proved that talent always comes through.”

Gilles Bédard, president of the Association Nouvel Age du Québec, *Le Bulletin de l' ANAQ*, winter 1989

- “**Yi-King I** by Jean-Pierre Labrèche is a little masterpiece of relaxation music”

Yves Ducharme, responsible for the musical section of the bookstore L'Ésotérique Nouvel Age and New Age distributor. *Le Guide Ressources*, winter 1988

- “Labrèche proves that New Age music made in Quebec can have an international dimension. Without sliding into the stereotypes associated to New Age music, **Yi-King II** rapidly charms the listener, addressing his emotions, and allowing him to discover an unknown aspect of this music. **Yi-King II** tends towards the universal and transcends all styles.”

Gilles Bédard, columnist for the magazine Le Guide Ressources, *Le Guide Ressources*, summer 1986

- “Jean-Pierre Labrèche is the pioneer of Canadian New Age music. He produced **Yi-King series** with his pocket money. The work, which he sold to his acquaintances and in the clinics of alternative medicine, gave birth to a trilogy that has sold over 150,000 copies in the Canadian alternative market! Jean-Pierre lived as a hippie in his youth. He crossed the Andes hitchhiking and was introduced to oriental philosophies very young. He drew from it his vision of the universe and of music, which he applied to his way of composing. Thus his work **Yi-King** is inspired by the Chinese book of transformations. Labrèche is resolutely focused on the global village of the Aquarian Age. In fact, he feels privileged to live at a time when musical experiences are commonplace. He draws on all cultures, incorporates sounds of nature and transcends all styles to forge a vibrant and dynamic music at the same time. His work is unavoidable for anyone who is learning new age music.”

Stéphane Desjardins, journalist, *SOCAN (Society of Canadian Composers) magazine*, 1994

- “[**Aloha Bahia – Yi-KingII**]... is a lush gorgeously exotic piece capturing the ancient magnetic beauty and romance of the tropics of the West.”

Renée Gelpi, journalist, *Dimensions, Toronto's New Age Monthly*, January 1987

- “**Sadhana** is a marvellous philosophical tale, a wonderful journey to the inner world, but also a cinematographic success: quality of the photography by Larue, of the musical soundtrack by Jean-Pierre Labrèche, excellent directing and material gathered. Can it be viewed as an inspired docudrama? Yes, without a doubt.”

France Lafuste, journalist, newspaper *Le Devoir*, Saturday February 13, 1988

- “[**Sadhana**]... The music blends in well with the movie and follows the emotional states of the character... it demonstrates the versatility of Jean-Pierre Labrèche. One of the pieces, **The Source**, remains a little jewel.”

Gilles Bédard, president of l’ ANAQ, *le Bulletin de l’ ANAQ*, winter 1989

- “The talent of Jean-Pierre Labrèche, creator of the **Yi-King series** (one of the great names of Québécois New Age music) arises again in the soundtrack of the movie **Sadhana**... The style of the work is moreover, surprising... especially if one thinks that the author is a Westerner, whose musical and philosophical background has nothing in common with that of India. The performance is flawless and Labrèche’s incursion in these new areas expands his means of expression.”

Stéphane Desjardins, journalist, *Le Guide Ressources*, May-June 1988

- “[**Yi-King III**] ... A music that paves the way to an inner journey.”

Raoul Duguay, D.J. *Emission Nouvel Air*, Radio-Cité FM-107

- “[**Yi-King III**]... A music of very high quality... subtly ... **Les Ponts Vers Tenryu-Ji** shows an innovating Labrèche, rich in surprises. This new high quality album should surely allow him to reach a wider audience.”

Gilles Bédard, president of l’ ANAQ

- “[**Yi-King III**] It is out of a feeling of continuity that evolves the last part of the triptych and Québécois best-seller **Yi-King** by composer and musician Jean-Pierre Labrèche, one of the founders of Québécois New Age music. Undeniably more delicate and more refined than the two first **Yi-Kings**, this production highlights the new sounds (more electroacoustic) that Labrèche has developed in the past few years. The result is a very meticulous sound, among the leading international experiments in the field (I am thinking here of Steve Roach and even Vangelis...) If the composer continues in this approach, his next album should bring him international recognition.”

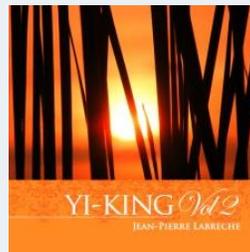
Stéphane Desjardins, columnist for the musical section of *Le Guide Ressources*

The New Age albums



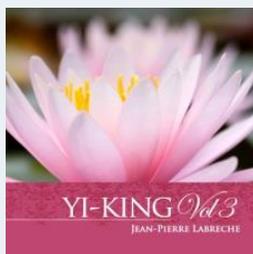
Yi-King I:

This ground breaking release of organic ambient music placed Jean-Pierre Labrèche at the forefront of ambient sound and composition in Canada. A collection of three instrumental compositions – inspired by the I-Ching, the ancient Chinese book of change – **Yi-King** was released in 1983 and sold over 50,000 copies. With the talents of Ben Segal (guitar), Guy Delisle (flute), Orest (percussion) and Jean-François Touchette (natural sound effects), Labreche highlight the captivating power of nature on this beautiful example of relaxation music.



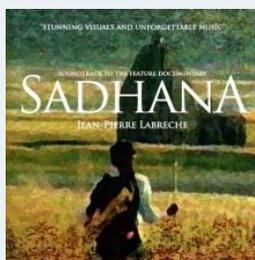
Yi King II:

In light of the success of **Yi-King I**, Labrèche released **Yi-King II** in 1985. Boasting more refined production values, this follow-up placed the audio emphasis on the latest generation of synthesizers and samplers. Woodwind instruments and female vocalists were added to the mix to transform the **Yi-King** venture into an extraordinary aural journey. Featuring Michel Dubeau (saxophone, flutes), Linda Benoy and Agnes Sohier (vocals), and Jean-François Touchette (natural sound effects), Labreche incorporated influences gleaned from an inspiring Latin American voyage that changed him as a young man.



Yi King III:

Labrèche released the third album in his **Yi-King series** in 1989. Using state-of-the-art keyboard and computer technology, Labrèche's serene compositions are more sophisticated than his earlier ones. Along with Erika Labbé (saxophone), Yoshio Masumoto (shakuhachi flute) and Jean-François Touchette (natural sound effects), Labrèche achieves a more accomplished level of production on **Yi-King III** in his consummate search for his musical epicentre.



Sadhana - Back to the Source:

In 1987, Labrèche composed the soundtrack for the film, **Sadhana: Back to the Source**. Directed by Quebec filmmaker Jean-Pierre Piché, this documentary focusses on the spiritual journey of a young westerner who follows the call of his soul and discovers India. Working with Michel Dubeau (flutes, saxophone), Guy Thouin (tabla, percussion), Rony Prentice (vocals), Amrita Choudhury (tambura) and Jean-François Touchette (natural sound effects), Labrèche masterfully blends elements of traditional Indian music with a contemporary ambiance.