

HONGKONG
NEW MUSIC
ENSEMBLE
香港創樂團
presents

an ecstasy in one act by Salvatore Sciarrino

INFINITO INFERNO

INFINITE
DARKNESS

08

05

osage

1700
FREE



PROGRAMME

Ai limiti della notte (1979) for solo viola (ASIA PREMIERE)

William Lane (viola)

Infinito nero (1998), estasi di una atto (ASIA PREMIERE)

Dominique Chan (mezzo-soprano)*

Vicky Shin (conductor)

Angus Lee (flute)

Bobby Cheng (oboe)*

Stephenie Ng (clarinet)^

Matthew Lau (percussion)

Linda Yim (piano)

Euna Kim (violin)

William Lane (viola)

Kai-hei Chor (cello)^

^ Associate musician

* Guest musician

Ken Ueno (curator)

Arnont Nongyao (video artist)

Amy Chan (light artist)

Sunny Chung, William Lane, Angus Lee (HKNME production)

Step Ip (sound technical support)

Wing Chan (video technical support)

Chris Chan, Natalie Cheung (lighting assistants)

Many thanks to: Osage production team

WARNING: this programme contains strong lighting effects

項目計劃資助 Project Grant :

藝能發展資助計劃

Arts Capacity Development Funding Scheme

HKSAR Government 香港特別行政區政府

Venue Partner



The content of this programme does not reflect the views of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region provides funding support to the Caravanserais - Music & Moving Image only, but does not otherwise take part in it. Any opinions, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in the materials/activities (or by members of the GRANTEE's team) are those of the organisers of Caravanserais - Music and Moving Image only and do not reflect the views of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

Salvatore Sciarrino: *Ai limiti della notte* (1979)

for solo viola

Ai limiti della notte (“at the limits of the night”) is a solitary exploration of the dialectic opposition between fragmented sounds on the verge of inaudibility, and the absolute void of total silence.

Salvatore Sciarrino: *Infinito Nero* (1998)

Ecstasy in one act, for mezzo soprano and flute, oboe, clarinet, piano, percussion, violin, viola, and cello

To the innocent ear, Sciarrino’s monodrama *Infinito Nero* might seem utterly fantastic; surely there could be no factual basis for its extraordinary sounds: evanescent flutterings, attenuated raindrops, spectral sighs. Yet the work—subtitled “ecstasy of an act,” or perhaps “ecstasy in one act”—is in fact one of Sciarrino’s most realistic in its mirroring of physical sound sources. Perhaps “imaginary realism” would be a better term to describe this composer’s recreation of the ecstasy of Maria Maddalena de’ Pazzi, the early-seventeenth-century mystic whose terrifying lapses into madness yielded texts awash in vivid and sometimes gruesome religious imagery.

Although Maria Maddalena was canonized by the Church, Sciarrino was intrigued by her not-necessarily-saintly demeanor. In an interview before the premiere at the Wittener Tage für Neue Kammermusik in Germany, the composer observed: “She was an unpleasant, a ‘devilish’ figure: with her you cannot really differentiate between God and the devil, her visions are all similarly frightening. Here you really experience the pathology of visions . . . Her story is unbelievable. She never wrote a single word. Maria Maddalena was attended by eight novices: four repeated what she said because she spoke much too fast to write it all down at once and the other four wrote everything down. She did not ‘speak’—words actually shot out of her like a machine gun and then she fell silent for a long period.” Thus the intensity of sudden sound amidst a lingering but never static silence links *Infinito Nero* both to its historical antecedent and to Sciarrino’s more general predilections.

The pointillistic coloratura effusions required to impersonate the raving Maria Maddalena are unlike anything in the vocal repertory—modern music critic Paul Griffiths calls them “prestissimo flashes . . . on the edge of ululation” and they put any dramatic mezzo to the test. As stunning as these tiny fireworks are, however, their instrumental surroundings may be even more remarkable. Out of the mixed ensemble emerge what Griffiths calls “the sounds of breathing, of panting and of heartbeats.” He observes, “this is music right on the verge of being sound effect, but the gestures are so varied, so exactly conceived and so tightly played that while conveying natural sounds with exceptional accuracy, they mean more. One might imagine that they speak for Maria Maddalena’s body, waiting to be overtaken by her reeling mind, or that they stand for her attendants, watching her in expectation.

Infinito Nero is dedicated to the Ensemble Recherche and was written while keeping in mind the voice of mezzo-soprano Sonia Turchetta, Sciarrino’s long-time artistic collaborator.

Text of *Infinito Nero*

l'anima si trasformava nel sangue, tanto da non intendere poi altro che sangue, non vedere altro che sangue, non gustare altro che sangue, non sentire altro che sangue, non pensare altro che sangue, non potere pensare se non di sangue. E tutto ciò che operava la sommergeva e profondava in esso sangue influirsi influssi influiva rinfluiva e il sangue influiva rinfluiva influssi rinfluire rinfuisce rinfuisce influssi rinfluivono influssi rinfluivono superesaltando allora il Santo mi versò sul capo un vaso e il sangue mi coprse tutta. Anche la Santa versò. Il latte mescolandosi col sangue mi fa una bellissima veste.

Obumbrata la faccia

o, o, o, o, o, o

o se le piante potessino avere amore, non griderebbero altro

o, io non lo so

timui timore amoris. Timui timore amoris. Timui timore amoris

ma dillo, ma dillo

mors intravit per fenestras. Ma tu perché

figure immagini e facce, aspirazione, inspirazione e respirazione in te
vieni

sul corpo tuo aperture a noi incognite. Usci, finestre, buche, celle, forami di
cielo, caverne. Senza fondo stillanti. Sono le piaghe dentro cui mi perdo
vieni, vieni

con la corona: le sue spine, lunghe, trapassano il Padre Eterno in cielo
egli scrive su di me con il sangue. Tu con il latte della Vergine. Lo Spirito con
le lagrime
vieni

non si aprino le nuvole, si bene il virgineo ventre si ma
vieni, vieni, deh, vieni, o, vieni vieni

ohimé, vivendo muoio, o, o, o

orsù eccomi in terra non posso ir più giù io e si o savia pazzia
io non intendo è meglio il tuo, si, si, ohimé tu sei senza fine, ma
io vorrei veder in te qualche fine

(Translation)

The soul was transformed into blood, so much so that it meant nothing but blood, seeing nothing else but blood, tasting nothing but blood, feeling nothing but blood, thinking nothing but blood, only possible to think of blood. And everything submerged and deepened in blood ... influence influences influenced ebbing and blood influenced ebbing influences ebb ebbing influences reflecting influences reflecting... The Saint poured a vase on my head and the blood covered me all over. Milk mixing with blood makes me a beautiful dress.

The face is darkened

o, o, o, o, o, o

or if plants could have love, they would cry no more

or, I don't know

timui timore amoris. Timui timore amoris. Timui timore amoris

but say it, but say it

death came in through the windows. But why you?

figures, images and faces, aspiration, inhalation and breathing in you

Come

on your body openings to us unknowns. Exits, windows, holes, cells, holes of

sky, caves. Bottomless dripping. They are the wounds in which I lose myself

come come

with the crown: her thorns, long, pierce the Eternal Father in Heaven

he writes on me with blood. You with the Virgin's milk. The Spirit with

the tears

Come

do not open the clouds. Yes, the virgin belly.

come, come, deh, come, or, come, come

alas, while living I die, o, o, o

come while I am on earth. I can't go on, savage madness

I don't mean yours is better, yes, yes, o dear, you are endless, but

I would like to see some endings in you

SALVATORE SCIARRINO (Palermo, 1947) boasts of being born free and not in a music school. He started composing when he was twelve as a self-taught person and held his first public concert in 1962. But Sciarrino considers all the works before 1966 as an developing apprenticeship because that is when his personal style began to reveal itself. There is something really particular that characterizes this music: it leads to a different way of listening, a global emotional realization, of reality as well as of one's self. And after forty years, the extensive catalogue of Sciarrino's compositions is still in a phase of surprising creative development. After his classical studies and a few years of university in his home city, the Sicilian composer moved to Rome in 1969 and in 1977 to Milan. Since 1983, he has lived in Città di Castello, in Umbria.

He has composed for: Teatro alla Scala, RAI, Teatro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Biennale di Venezia, Teatro La Fenice di Venezia, Teatro Carlo Felice di Genova, Fondazione Arena di Verona, Stuttgart Opera Theatre, Brussels La Monnaie, Frankfurt Opera Theatre, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, London Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo Suntory Hall. He has also composed for the following festivals: Schwetzingen Festspiele, Donaueschinger Musiktage, Witten, Salzburg, New York, Wien Modern, Wiener Festwochen, Berliner Festspiele Musik, Holland Festival, Alborough, Festival d'Automne (Paris), Ultima (Oslo).

He was published by Ricordi from 1969 to 2004. Since 2005, Rai Trade has had exclusive rights for Sciarrino's works. Sciarrino's discography is pretty extensive and counts over 100 CDs, published by the best international record labels and very often awarded and noted.

Apart from being author of most of his theatre opera's librettos, Sciarrino wrote a rich production of articles, essays and texts of various genres some of which have been chosen and collected in *Carte da suono*, CIDIM – Novecento, 2001. Particularly important is his interdisciplinary book about musical form: *Le figure della musica, da Beethoven a oggi*, Ricordi 1998.

Sciarrino taught at the Music Academies of Milan (1974–83), Perugia (1983–87) and Florence (1987–96). He also worked as a teacher in various specialization courses and masterclasses among which are those held in Città di Castello from 1979 to 2000 and the Lectures at Boston University. He currently teaches in the summer masterclasses at the Accademia Chigiana in Siena.

From 1978 to 1980, he was Artistic Director of Teatro Comunale di Bologna, Academic of Santa Cecilia (Roma), Academic of Fine Arts of Bavaria and Academic of the Arts (Berlin). Sciarrino has won many awards, among the most recent are: the Prince Pierre de Monaco (2003), the prestigious Feltrinelli International Award (Premio Internazionale Feltrinelli) (2003), the Salzburg Music Prize (2006), an International Composition Prize established by the Salzburg Land, the Frontiers of Knowledge Prize from the Spanish BBVA Foundation (2011), the A Life in Music Prize from the Teatro La Fenice – Associazione Rubinstein in Venice (2014), the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement from the Venice Biennale (2016).
<http://www.salvatoresciarrino.eu>

KEN UENO (USA) is a composer/vocalist/sound artist who is currently a Professor at UC Berkeley, where he holds the Jerry and Evelyn Hemmings Chambers Distinguished Professor Chair in Music. Recipient of the Rome Prize and the Berlin Prize, he has performed as soloist in his vocal concerto with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project in New York and Boston, the Warsaw Philharmonic, the Lithuanian National Symphony, the Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra, and with orchestras in North Carolina, Pittsburgh, and California. Ken holds a Ph.D. from Harvard University. A monograph CD of three orchestral concertos was released on the Bmop/sound label. kenueno.com

ARNONT NONGYAO (Thailand) works with various kinds of media, including sound, video, installation, site specific, public art etc. Arnont's work engages with his interest in vibration, and he works on diverse art experimental projects, vibration-related. Arnont has been interested in research into sound with concentration on vibration, so most of his works are differently experimental and relative to vibration in order to search for the value of vibration derived from connected things, such as human beings, objects and society. His works are involved in a specific space and audience's participation. They are also connected with the mode of listening/hearing in a social situation, and with how people interact with and participate in sound. arnontnongyao.com

AMY CHAN (HK) is a light artist, theatre practitioner, artistic director of Drama COLLABoratory and pathologist. Interest in expanding the notion of light in postdramatic theatre through the exploration of musicality, performativity and theatricality of light in performance and installation, and the in-betweens of light-music, performance-installation and arts-medicine. Lightscape (light and space) is the co-performer, protagonist and antagonist in her works. A Master of Fine Arts (with distinction) graduate of Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, major in lighting design with core research on light in postdramatic theatre, her artistic research has been presented in various international conferences such as The Congress of the Society for Theatre Studies of Germany and Performance Studies International annual conferences, and is published in peer-reviewed journal Critical Stages. She was an invited speaker of the Postdramatic Theatre Worldwide Symposium (2019) in Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Germany, discussing the resonance and perspectives of postdramatic theatre in Hong Kong and on her own light-theatre works 20 years after the first publication of internationally renowned theatre scholar Hans-Thies Lehmann's groundbreaking book. amychan-light.com

VICKY SHIN (HK/ Canada) graduated from Eastman School of Music with a Master in Conducting and Schulich School of music at McGill University. His principle conducting teachers include Brad Lubman and Peter Eotvos. Shin focuses on performing works by living composers, and enjoys the enlightening creative process that results from interaction between performer(s) and composer(s). Shin is currently associate conductor of the Hong Kong New Music Ensemble, and also music / artistic director of Ensemble Traversee, an ensemble aiming to bridge different genres and eras of music

WILLIAM LANE (Australia) performs as a soloist, orchestral and chamber musician in Australia, Asia, Europe and North America. He studied under Jan Sedivka, Bruno Giuranna and Garth Knox, as well as in Germany at the International Ensemble Modern Academy, and in Switzerland at the Lucerne Festival Academy under Pierre Boulez. He was a prizewinner of Valentino Bucchi Competition in Rome in 2005. Lane was Principal Viola of Ensemble Resonanz and a member of the Hong Kong Philharmonic; and has appeared as guest violist of Ensemble Modern and the Lucerne Festival Strings. Based in Hong Kong since 2008, he is Founder, Artistic Director and Violist of Hong Kong New Music Ensemble, Asia's most active professional chamber ensemble dedicated to new music. In 2013 he was awarded the Award for Young Artist (Music) from the Hong Kong Arts Development Council.

Mezzo-soprano **DOMINIQUE CHAN** (HK) received her Postgraduate Diploma in Performance (Voice) from Leeds College of Music. During her stay in the UK, Dominique won numerous awards including the Huddersfield Operatic Society Trophy from Mrs. Sunderland Music Festival; The Rothwell in Bloom Trophy and the Kirkwood Rosebowl from Rothwell Music Festival. Recent performances included *This Victoria Has No Secrets...For Now* with Yat Po Singers; *Requiem HK* with CCDC and Yat Po Singers; *Gute Nacht Mondlicht, Hercules at the Crossroads and Walking Back to School* with SingFest. Dominique will be performing Mercédès in Bizet's *Carmen* with Opera Hong Kong in May 2021.

Established in 2010, **SIGMA** is an extension of Osage Group's activities. The name comes from the Greek letter, Σ. Just as the symbol is used in mathematics to indicate the sum of all operations, Sigma is a project based in addition and continually provides supplementary programs and services to the Osage Group. Sigma is an experimental platform, allowing it to expand and include artistic and cultural ideas and projects that fall outside the purview of Osage Gallery and Osage Art Foundation.

Founded in 2008 by William Lane, the **HONG KONG NEW MUSIC ENSEMBLE** (HKNME) is hailed as "one of Hong Kong's most progressive groups of musicians" (CNN). Widely praised for its innovative programming, the Ensemble's productions include concerts, educational outreach events, and interdisciplinary collaborations and research projects with artists from different artistic fields. hongkongnewmusic.org