

CAIRO CONTEMPORARY MUSIC DAY

An EECMS Initiative in cooperation with the American University in Cairo, the Department of Performing and Visual Arts and the International Arts Center

With the friendly support of the Arts Center Bibliotheca Alexandrina

Under the auspices of the Egyptian Ministry of Culture / Foreign Culture Affairs

In cooperation with the Institut Ramon Llull

“Dedicated to our Martyrs of the 25th of January Revolution”

April 28th – May 3rd 2011

Spain – Mediterranean Guest Country

Catalan Contemporary Music – Guest of Honor

Saed Haddad, Arab Composer in Focus 2011–2012

José M. Sánchez-Verdú, Composer / Conductor in Residence



THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO

The American University in Cairo:

Professor Frank Bradley - Director of the Theatre Program, Department of Performing and Visual Arts

Professor John Baboukis – Director of the Music Program, Department of Performing and Visual Arts

Mariam EL Attar – Music Program Coordinator, Department of Performing and Visual Arts

Nahla EL Helbawi – Communications Officer, School of Humanities and Social Sciences

Professor Bruce Ferguson – Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences

Professor Stancil Campbell – Chair of the Department of Performing and Visual Arts

Professor Ashraf Fouad – Director of Music Series, Department of Performing and Visual Arts



International Arts Center:

Ramzi Yassa - Artistic Director

Dr. Tarek Sharara - Artistic Advisor

Niven El Kilani - General Coordinator



Cairo Contemporary Music Days Team:

Sherif el Razzaz – General Manager

Mohamed Ezz Aldin – Program Manager, Media Supervisor

Islam Mahmoud – Program Manager

Daniel Schmidt – Program Manager, Artistic Advisor

Tarek Krohn – Program Manager, Artistic Manager

Maha Reayd – Academic Activities Coordinator

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The EECMS is happy to present the first edition of the *Cairo Contemporary Music Days*!

Much has changed since the high-flying *Alexandrina Contemporary Music Biennale I* in 2009, and this issue of the *Cairo Contemporary Music Days* is in many ways its true heir. It was the spirit of cooperativeness among the participants of the Biennale and especially the commitment of the *Bibliotheca Alexandrina* that encouraged us to think about a wider range of projects in Egypt, and subsequently led to the creation of the EECMS.

Our association is dedicated to helping the contemporary music scene in Egypt to gain ground, and Egyptian artists to make a successful plunge into the international art music industry. Objectives as these, however, can only be achieved by focusing on clear interim goals and by long-term planning. Especially in order to support young Egyptian and Arab composers on a long-term basis, it is indispensable to be connected with capable partners and to build a strong network committed to the same cause.

Last year has already seen the first performance of the *Egyptian Contemporary Music Ensemble* in Cairo. To assemble some of the best Egyptian (and occasionally European) musicians to bring the finest in international contemporary music to an Egyptian audience was a milestone in the short history of the EECMS. The next obvious step, then, was to establish an event in Cairo, the cultural centre of Egypt.

The *Cairo Contemporary Music Days 2011* feature choice works by masters of our time performed by internationally recognized ensembles – but there will also be master classes, workshops with the ensembles, and roundtable discussions. Our endeavours have inspired cultural institutions to not only realize the *Cairo Contemporary Music*, but to complement the festival with their own ideas and make it the sweeping success it promises to be.

Geographically as well as culturally, Egypt links the Arab and the Mediterranean world. This is why we decided to appoint both an ‘Arab Composer in Focus’ and a Mediterranean guest country. We are happy to announce **Spain** as the first guest country this year with a multifaceted program including exceptional young composers as Mateu Malondra and Oliver Rappoport, but also

established masters such as Cristóbal Halffter and Benet Casablanca. With his chamber opera *Gamma*, **José M. Sánchez-Verdú**, our 'Composer / Conductor in Residence 2011–2012', will lead us into a labyrinth of old scriptures that sets out with the myth of the invention of letters in Egypt and then takes us to Greece, Algeria, and finally into the heart of Europe. Other exciting performances by Sánchez-Verdú will be announced soon. We are very thankful for the support and dedication of the *Institut Ramon Llull* which made this ambitious programming possible. We are also proud to announce that our 'Arab Composer in Focus', Jordanian composer **Saed Haddad**, has accepted our invitation to develop a cooperation that will last until 2012 and encompasses many performances of his unique music.

It goes without saying that such a broad variety of projects requires professional partners and cultural funding. Our successful partnership with the *American University in Cairo* in establishing the *Egyptian Contemporary Music Ensemble* and planning the festival was a great motivation and reassured us to keep pushing forward in this new direction. We would also like to thank all the other supporters of the *Cairo Contemporary Music Days* from Spain, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Germany, South Korea, and Japan – especially the *Music Center the Netherlands* and the *Goethe-Institut*, both of which have proven indispensable partners from the very beginning, and ones that we are very much looking forward to working with in the future.

On the long run, our activities require the backup of national institutions. In these times of change, we see a great potential for the increase of governmental funding in Egypt. To gain the support of the Foreign Cultural Affairs and the Culture Development Fund in the advancement of contemporary music in Egypt would be the most welcome reward for our efforts.

Sincerely,

Sherif el Razzaz

General Manager of the EECMS

Salutatory statements

The Mediterranean is a tree with infinite branches that introduces its roots in the deep and rich sand from Ancient Egypt, Greek and Roman legacies, among other cultures, and the influence and presence of all three religions of the Book.

The Bibliotheca Library in Alexandria draws light of knowledge, and leads the way into the forest in which humankind is living. The infinite branches of this rich tree humans a special shadow that lies in us and in the cultural space. Music, as a very special branch of this tree, allowing us the chance to imagine, to create and to be able to live together with other people: it gives us the possibility to hear and feel no-frontiers of a new world model.

José M. Sánchez-Verdú, Composer and Conductor in Residence 2011

In those hard but at the same time hopeful and really promising times for the Egyptian country and its people, that we follow with respect and admiration, I feel very pleased to send you some words of encouragement and support.

I love particularly the context of this big celebration, because I believe that artistic work –and music especially!– can do a very important contribution to the causes of peace and social progress, and to the improvement of communication and enrichment between different countries and people, opening up new horizons for the expression of new ideas, feelings and shared experiences. In this sense, as a citizen living near Barcelona, I consider all the mediterranean people truly as a community of brothers with common roots and strong historical and cultural links in the past, in the present, and, I hope –with renewed impulse – in the future!

I congratulate the European-Egyptian Contemporary Music Society and its promoters for making all this possible. I am sure that it will be successful in reinforcing this kind of exchange, creating and developing a great forum that will help to develop reciprocal knowledge between mediterranean people, as well as link Europe to the Middle East region. Spain, together with Catalunya, has certainly an important role in this point. I feel very grateful for giving me the opportunity to participate in such an exciting project. I wish you all the best.

Thank you....

Benet Casablancas Domingo, Visiting Composer 2011

Music Center the Netherlands compliments the Festival with its choice engaging the internationally renowned 'Percussion Group The Hague' in the Festival "Cairo Contemporary Music Days". The activities of this ensemble in Cairo will contribute to an inspiring cultural dialogue between Egypt and the Netherlands; a dialogue which Music Center the Netherlands considers to be very important. We look forward in continuing our cultural relation with Egypt in the coming years.

Michael Nieuwenhuizen, Music Center the Netherlands.

The European-Egyptian Contemporary Music Society is very grateful to:

Christine Fischer, Islam Mahmoud, Robin Majer,
José M. Sánchez-Verdú, Maria Lladó Ribot, Sarah Ludwig-Simkin, Lucianne Brady, John
Baboukes, Bruce Ferguson, Leah Saks, Cathy Costain, Andrew Burke, Daniel Stoevesandt, Anna
Maria Alonso, Peter Säuberlich, Ramzy Yassa, Hossam Nassar,
Gerhard Müller-Hornbach, Islam Abdullah, Anja Van de Put, Samira Abou Zaid,
Günther Hasenkamp.

The Society is grateful for the support provided by the American University in Cairo through the Department of Performing and Visual Arts for the Egyptian Contemporary Music Ensemble and the planning of the upcoming Cairo Contemporary Music Days 2011, and for its broader support of music in Egypt.



institut ramon llull

Catalan Language and Culture

The Institut Ramon Llull is a consortium formed by the governments of Catalonia and the Balearic Islands responsible for the international dissemination of the Catalan language and culture in all its forms and means of expression.

The institute promotes and supports Catalan artistic creation through its programming on the international scene, its support for travelling artists and works and its promotion of knowledge about contemporary arts and artistic heritage.

Participating in the Cairo Contemporary Music Days is a privilege for the Institut Ramon Llull, especially since contemporary Catalan music is the guest of honour, as this will give the music of Catalonia and the Balearic Islands a place in international ambits of prestige, promote the dissemination and interpretation of the Catalan repertoire and identify the Catalan culture's musical corpus of prestige.

www.llull.cat

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“Dedicated to our Martyrs of the 25th of January Revolution”

Thursday

Day 1, April 28, 2011 at 8:00 pm

Manial Palace, 9 Hod al Laban Street, Garden City

Àlex Garrobé, Guitar Recital

**Ernst Kreneck
Cristóbal Halffter
Malcolm Arnold
J. Guinjoan
Luis De Pablo
Salvador Brotons**

Suite
Codex I
Fantasy op.107
Phrase
Fábula
Dues Sugestions

Friday

Day 2, April 29, 2011 at 8:00 pm

Ewart Memorial Hall, AUC Downtown entrance via Shiekh Rihan Street

Ensemble Slagwerk Den Haag

**Steve Reich
Christopher Fox
Guo Wenjing
Mayke Nas & Wouter Snoei**

**Peter Adriaansz
Hugo Morales**

Drumming pt. I
Art of concealment
part of “Drama”
I Delayed People’s Flights By Walking

Slowly In Narrow Hallways
parts of “7 Dances for Percussion 4-tet”
Enclosure

Saturday

Day 3, April 30, 2011 at 8:00 pm

Oriental Hall, AUC Downtown

Neue Vocalsolisten Stuttgart

Giacinto Scelsi
Saed Haddad
Andreas Dohmen
José-María Sánchez-Verdú
Salvatore Sciarrino
Evdokja Danajloska

movements from "Tre canti popolari"
Love Requiem
infra
Madrigale
Four Madrigales from "12 madrigali"
Canto Civile

Sunday

Day 4, Mai 1, 2011 at 8:00 pm

Ewart Memorial Hall, AUC Downtown entrance via Shiekh Rihan St.

Conjunt Instrumental BCN 216

Catalan Contemporary Music Guest of Honor

Ahmed Madkour
Agustí Charles
Benet Casablancas
Mateu Malondra
Oliver Rappoport
Luis Codera

White Shroud
... di un soffio di aura, Concert per guitarra
Epigrames
Capsule - Chamber Concert (2011world premier)
Reflejos del silencio
El timbre es un esclavo del tiempo

Àlex Garrobé : Solo Guitar

Conductor: J. M. Sánchez Verdú

Monday & Tuesday

Day 5, May 2, 2011 at 8:00 pm

Day 6, May 3, 2011 at 6:00 pm

Ewart Memorial Hall, AUC Downtown entrance via Shiekh Rihan St.

GRAMMA – Gardens of Writing

Composer & Conductor: José M. Sánchez-Verdú (Composer / Conductor in Residence)

Concept: Mirella Weingarten & Sabrina Hölzer

Commissioned by the Munich Biennale and the Lucerne Opera

José M. Sánchez-Verdú, Composer & Conductor in Residence 2011



JOSÉ M. SÁNCHEZ-VERDÚ

José M. Sánchez-Verdú was born in Algeciras (Spain) in 1968. He graduated in Orchestra Conducting, Musicology and Composition at the Real Conservatorio Superior de Música of Madrid and has a degree in Law (Universidad Complutense). He studied composition in 1992 under F. Donatoni in Siena. He finished his postgraduate studies under H. Zender at the Frankfurt University of Music and Performing Arts from 1996 to 1999 and gained first experiences as composer in residence at the Spanish Academy in Rome in 1997 and during the DAAD / la Caixa scholarship from 1997 to 1999. As a conductor, he has worked with different ensembles for contemporary music in Spain, Italy, and Germany. Today, he lives in Berlin. His versatile career has led to numerous commissions including the Hannover Biennial for new music, the Expo 2000 German pavilion, the Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, the Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival, the Orquesta Nacional de España, the Orquesta Sinfónica de Madrid, the Spanish Ministry of Culture, the Festival Internacional de Música y Danza of Granada, the Berlin State Opera (chamber opera, 2005), the Munich Biennial (chamber opera, 2006), the Teatro Real de Madrid (opera, 2007), the Beethoven-Festspiele 2008, and others. His works have been performed at festivals such as the Tage für Neue Musik (Stuttgart), the Venice Biennial, the Saarbrücken-Festspiele, but also at the Alte Oper (Frankfurt), the Berlin and Cologne Philharmonics, the Konzerthaus Berlin, the Gewandhaus (Leipzig), Progetto-Musica (Rome), the Spring Festival (Prague), Ultraschall Berlin, Ars Musica Brussels, the Concertgebouw (Amsterdam), the Lincoln Center (New York), and the Festival de Música de Canarias. The Orquesta Nacional de España, the Orquesta de RTVE, the Nürnberger Symphoniker, the Junge Deutsche Philharmonie, the Radiophilharmonie Hannover (NDR), the Radio-Sinfonieorchester Frankfurt, the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, the Lucerne Symphony Orchestra, the Ensemble Modern, the ensemble recherche, musikFabrik, the Ensemble Oriol Berlin, the SWR-Vokalensemble Stuttgart, the Neuw Sinfonietta Amsterdam and many other ensembles have performed Sánchez-Verdú's works.

His composition awards include the Cristóbal Halffter (1995), three awards from the Sociedad General de Autores y Editores (SGAE, 1996 and 1997), the Ciutat d'Alcoi (1997), the Prize of the

Spanish Ministry of Culture / Colegio de España in Paris (1998), the First Composition Prize of the Junge Deutsche Philharmonie (1999), Finalist at the Irino Composition Prize in Tokyo (1999), Composers Grant of the Ernst von Siemens Foundation for Music in Munich (2001), the Composition Prize of the Bergische Biennale in Wuppertal (2001), Spain's National Music Award (2003), and the Antara Award (Lima International Festival of Contemporary Music, 2007). Between 1991 and 1995, he has taught Counterpoint and Fugue at the Real Conservatorio Madrid. Since October 2001, he lectures on Composition at the Robert Schumann University of Music in Düsseldorf. His works are published by Breitkopf & Härtel.

Saed Haddad, Arab Composer in focus 2011 - 2012



The European-Egyptian Contemporary Music Society e.V. wishes to encourage the recognition of works by composers from the southern and eastern Mediterranean region. The Cairo Contemporary Music Days will introduce an Arab composer whose works shall subsequently be performed by many of the participating ensembles all over the year.

The Arab Composer in Focus for 2011 is Dr. Saed Haddad.

Haddad's music is rooted in his double "otherness" (strangeness) towards both the Western and the Arab culture (where contemporary music does not exist). Irrealism, contradiction and cultural imperialism are further stimuli of Haddad's work.

Haddad believes that "progress" must depend solely on the force of music resulting from balancing the physical (beauty, magic, energy, tension and virtuosity) and the metaphysical (existentialism, transcendentalism and intellectualism).

Born in Jordan in 1972, Haddad studied philosophy in Belgium, then music in Amman and composition in Jerusalem and London (PhD with George Benjamin). He attended master classes with Louis Andriessen, Helmut Lachenmann and Pascal Dusapin among many others. He resides in Germany.

His music has been performed and commissioned by Europe's most prestigious ensembles, orchestras and festivals. Many honors rewarded his work, including the "Prix de Rome" (La Villa Médici) 2008–10.

Ahmad Madkour, Winner of the EECMS Composition Commission

with the friendly support of BCN 216 and Ramon Llull Institut



Further performances: November 2011 in Germany; March 2012 in Cairo, Summer 2012 in France.

Ahmed joined the Cairo Conservatoire at the age of 15 to study Oboe and Composition with several Egyptian and Western professors. He graduated in 1990, earned his postgraduate studies' Diploma in 1992, and his M.A. in 1995.

He has received many awards from the Egyptian Ministry of Culture, including awards for his orchestral work "The Valley of the Kings" in 1994 and for his choir works based on folk-like tunes in 1997.

In 1996, he received a Fulbright grant for research and study in the United States. In 2002, he earned his Ph.D. degree in Music Theory and Composition at the University of Pittsburgh where he studied with Prof. Matthew Rosenblum, Prof. Eric Moe, and Prof. Akin Euba.

Between 2003 and 2009, Ahmed joined the Faculty of Wheaton College, Norton, Massachusetts as an assistant professor of music theory and composition.

Dr. Madkour's compositions have been premiered by outstanding ensembles and performers in Europe and the United States, such as the Parnassus Music ensemble, the New York New Music Ensemble, the Luna Nova New Music ensemble, bassoonist Eberhard Buschmann, pianist Eric Moe, cellist Felix Wong and others. His concerts have been sponsored, among others, by the French Cultural Center, The British Council, The Swiss Pro Helvetia Organization and the National Institute for Technology in Liberal Education (NITLE). Ahmed has participated in many international festivals such as Schwarzer Kontinent – Weisser Fleck (Germany) and the Festival International de Chant/Chorale (France).

Dr. Madkour participated in many conferences where he presented his work and research in the field of interactive composition, for instance at the NITL in 2006 and the Colgate University in 2007.

Benet Casablanclas, Visiting Composer 2011



Born in Sabadell (Barcelona), Benet Casablanclas studied music in Barcelona and Vienna, where he worked with, among others, Friedrich Cerha and Karl-Heinz Füssl. He also has a degree in philosophy and a PhD in musicology, both from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. His works, distinguished with numerous commissions and awards (Ciutat de Barcelona, Musician's Accord of New York, Spanish National Recording Prize, Composer's Arena of Amsterdam, Juventuts Musicals de Barcelona, Òscar Esplà, Ferran Sors, finalist at the Prince Pierre of Monaco Foundation Musical Competition, etc.), are performed regularly in Europe, Canada, the USA, Japan and Latin America by prestigious ensembles, soloists and conductors (London Sinfonietta, Ensemble Contemporain de Montréal, Ensemble 13 de Baden-Baden, Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne, Leipziger Streichquartett, Ensemble Modern Akademie, Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, Orchestre National de Belgique, NJO of The Netherlands, Malmö Symfoni Orkester, Orquesta Nacional de España, London Philharmonic Orchestra, etc.).

In 2008, he made his debut with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and his New Epigrams representing Spain at the SIMC World Music Days held in Vilnius. His works have been programmed in such emblematic concert halls as the Musikverein of Vienna, the London Barbican Hall, the Palais des Beaux-Arts of Bruxelles and the Miller Theatre at the Columbia University, New York. In 2007, he had already been awarded the National Music Prize granted by the Generalitat de Catalunya. Early on in his career, he has begun to combine composition with teaching and research. Advisor for different institutions and patron of several foundations, he has published numerous historical and analytical articles (in The New Grove, Arietta, Quodlibet, and the book *El humor en la música: broma, parodia e ironía*). He was head of Theory at several Spanish conservatories, educational director of the Catalan National Youth Orchestra and associate professor at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra de Barcelona. He has frequently been invited as juror for several European composing and performing competitions, and has kept up a busy agenda as guest professor at several international schools, with particular frequency at the Courses of Musical Specialization at the Universidad de Alcalá de Henares (Spain). In 2002, he became

director of the Conservatori Superior de Música del Liceu (Barcelona). His wide-ranging oeuvre, covering the most diverse genres and formats, is marked by a quest for radical personal and aesthetic independence. His critics have highlighted Casablanca's concern for balancing constructional rigour and expressive strength, dramatic character and whimsical register, in the framework of a discourse in which a progressively luminous harmonic language, rhythmic spirit, a growing timbral differentiation and instrumental virtuosity coexist. His works have been recorded by Naxos, Stradivarius, Anemos and Tritó. His most recent assignments include commissions from the Miller Theatre at the Columbia University, New York (Composer Portraits series), the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, the Ensemble 88 Maastricht, the Ensemble Cantus Croatia (Zagreb Biennale), and the Tokyo Sinfonietta.

Alex Garrobé

Guitar Recital

Day 1, April 28, 2011 at 8:00 pm

Manial Palace 9, Hod al Laban Street, Garden City

Alex Garrobé, Guitar

Ernst Kreneck

Allegro moderato
Andante sostenuto
Allegretto
Larghetto
Allegro

Suite

Cristóbal Halffter

Codex I

Malcolm Arnold

Prelude
Scherzo
Arietta
Fughetta
Arietta
March
Postlude

Fantasy op.107

J. Guinjoan

Phrase

Luís De Pablo

I-“...el caracol, hermano de la nube...”
II-“...a puro arpeggio de oro venerable...”
III-“...te expondré el caso de la mandolina...”
IV-“... y sobre el piao olvida el color verde...”

Fábula

Salvador Brotons

Dues Sugestions

Ballada &Toccatta



Àlex Garrobé

Born in Barcelona into a family of musical tradition, Àlex Garrobé graduated with First Class Honours from Alicante Conservatory in 1988. In 1990 he was awarded the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation Scholarship to broaden his studies at the Musikhochschule in Cologne with Hubert Käppel. Among the most important influences for him were his teachers José Tomás, David Russell, William Watters and Josep Pons.

He was the winner of the 1988 National Spanish JJMM (Young Musicians) Competition and the 1989 Infanta Cristina International Guitar Competition and was also prize-winner at the Andrés Segovia International Competitions of Almuñecar (1989) and Palma de Mallorca (1987).

He performs regularly in more than thirty countries in Europe, Asia, Africa, South America and the USA. Among the prestigious international halls in which he has performed are the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Radio France Auditorium in Paris, the Auditorio Nacional (Madrid), the Palau de la Música Catalana (Barcelona), the Lutoslasky Auditorium (Warsaw), and the XXI Century Auditorium (Beijing).

Many composers have dedicated pieces and commissioned premieres to him (S. Brotons, M. Smaili, S. Iannarelli, M. García Morante, A. Charles, G. Drozd, S. Eide and others).

Àlex Garrobé was professor at the Centro Superior de Música del País Vasco (MUSIKENE), the Escola de Música de Barcelona-Universitat Autònoma, the Escola D'Arts Musicals Luthier and the Sabadell Conservatory. Currently, he teaches at the Catalan Music College (ESMUC). He has presented master classes in Spain, Portugal, Germany, Italy, Poland, Russia, Slovenia, Norway

(National Conservatory), Sweden (Stockholm Royal Conservatory), Denmark, Finland (Sibelius Academy), China (National Conservatory), Japan, Philippines, the Netherlands, the United States, Chile, Colombia (Eafit), Brasil, Bolivia (National Conservatory) and the United Kingdom (London Guildhall School).

Ernst Krenek

Even during his lifetime, Ernst Krenek, who left behind an oeuvre of more than 240 operas when he died at the age of 91, held quite an extreme position in music history. Because of his great versatility, critics in Europe often spoke of him as constantly changing his “style of composing,” tacitly implying that a creative life must be stylistically uniform. In the United States, however, he was deemed the “one-man history of twentieth-century music,” a unique and nearly unbelievable fact Krenek lived up to through his creation of work that spans more than seven decades of the twentieth century, from the end of the 1910s until the end of the 1980s. When taken seriously, this *bon mot* does not refer to the temporal concordance of his works or his participation in the latest developments in music throughout his life; it rather points to his role as a twentieth-century contemporary.

In the early 1920s, when Krenek’s chamber music first became well known through his participation in the avant-garde music festivals in Donaueschingen and Salzburg, he was seen as a representative of “new” music – a form of music that responded to the reshaping of society after 1918 and to the accelerated developments in technology by counteracting the high expectations of art with humour and timeliness. A typical example of this attitude is the genre of the *Zeitoper* or contemporary opera, which Krenek also worked with. Yet, even then Krenek did not follow a specific pattern in working on his compositions: shortly before his contemporary opera *Jonny spielt auf* became a smash-hit, his expressionistic opera *Orpheus und Eurydike*, based on a play by Kokoschka, premiered, and even prior to this (many years before Brecht’s attempt), Krenek had already written an “epic” music-theater piece, *Zwingburg* (1922).

Because Krenek was not one of Schönberg’s Viennese students and was almost an entire generation younger than Berg and Webern, it was not until 1930 that he first approached dodecaphony out of compositional necessity, but also out of an aesthetic understanding. The agreement of his musical ideas with intellectual analysis became one of the trademarks of Krenek’s work. (This agreement also had a political component in his first work using the twelve-tone technique, the “musical drama” *Karl V*, which had already been banned in Austria in 1934; it was the reason its premiere at the Vienna State Opera was prevented, and eventually also led to Krenek’s exile to the USA in 1938.) In the 1950s, Krenek’s contacts to the younger European avant-garde music scene encouraged him to begin composing electronic music, the serial arrangement of musical material and its counterpart, random operations. It was not simply his fascination with certain works of this kind that utilized these techniques that sparked his interest,

but again, because he wanted to fundamentally explore these new possibilities both intellectually and artistically.

Sir Malcolm Arnold

Born in Northampton in 1921, Malcolm Arnold is one of the towering figures of the 20th century, with a remarkable catalogue of major concert works to his credit, including nine symphonies, seven ballets, two operas, one musical, over twenty concertos, two string quartets, and music for brass-band and wind-band. He also wrote 132 film scores, among these are some of the finest works ever composed for the medium including *Bridge on the River Kwai* (for which, in 1958, he was one of the first British composers ever to win an Oscar), *Inn of the Sixth Happiness* (for which he received an Ivor Novello Award in 1958), *Hobson's Choice* and *Whistle Down the Wind*.

Arnold began his professional musical life in July 1941 as second trumpet with the London Philharmonic Orchestra. Acknowledged as one of the finest players of the day, he eventually became the orchestra's Principal Trumpet. By the end of the 1940s he was concentrating entirely on composition. The long and close relationship established between Malcolm Arnold and the LPO continues unabated, with the orchestra performing and recording the composer's music widely.

In 1969 he was made a Bard of the Cornish Gorseth and was awarded the CBE in 1970. He holds Honorary Doctorates of Music from the Universities of Exeter, Durham and Leicester – and in America from the Miami University, Oxford, Ohio; he was made a Fellow of the Royal College of Music in 1983 and is an Hon. R.A.M. and an Hon. F.T.C.L. In 1985 Malcolm Arnold received an Ivor Novello Award for "Outstanding Services to British Music", the Wavendon Award in 1985, and a knighthood in the 1993 New Years Honours List for his services to music. In 1994 the Victoria College of Music appointed Malcolm Arnold as their President. In 2001 he was made a Fellow of the British Academy of Composers and Songwriters. In 2004 he was also honored with the Incorporated Society of Musician's Distinguished Musician Award "for his lifetime's achievements as one of the greatest composers of the 20th century." In 1989 he received the Freedom of Northampton. In 2003 he was awarded an honorary degree by the University of Winchester. On 29th June, 2006, the University of Northampton conferred on Malcolm Arnold an Honorary Doctorate.

Throughout his life Malcolm Arnold has maintained a strongly held social conscience. In May 1957, as a guest of the Union of Czechoslovak Composers, he represented the British Musicians Union at the Prague Spring Festival. It was at this time that Arnold first met Shostakovich. To mark the Centenary of the Trades Union Congress, he was commissioned to write the *Peterloo Overture*; a work premiered by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra at the Festival Hall on 7 June 1968.

His most popular works have a global audience and his finest body of music, the nine symphonies, are available in numerous recordings including two complete cycles on the Chandos and Naxos labels. Sir Malcolm Arnold died on 23 September 2006.

Salvador Brotons

Dr. Salvador Brotons was born in Barcelona into a family of musicians. He studied flute with his father and continued his studies at the Barcelona Conservatory of Music, obtaining superior titles in flute, composition and orchestra conducting.

From 1977 to 1985 he was principal flute in the Orchestra of the Liceu in Barcelona, and also a member of the Orquestra Citutat de Barcelona (1981-1985). Brotons has been invited to guest-conduct many orchestras around the world. He has had guest-conducting assignments with the Radio Prague Orchestra, the National Symphony Orchestra of South Africa, the Moscou Virtuosi, the Blue Lake Festival Orchestra, the Columbia Symphony, the York Symphony Orchestra in Pennsylvania, the Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra, the RTVE Orchestra in Spain, the Barcelona Symphony Orchestra, with Simon Bolivar in Venezuela, the Filharmónica de Montevideo in Uruguay, I Pomeriggi Musicale in Milan (Italy), the Orchestre des Guides in Belgium, and with the most prestigious Spanish orchestras.

Luís de Pablo

Prolific in every musical genre, and arguably more active on the international contemporary music scene than any other Spanish musician, Luís de Pablo (born Bilbao, 1930) is a multi-linguist of extraordinary culture. He has pursued interest in the most diverse subjects outside music and his artistic and literary influences range widely. An Anglophile with a special affection for English literature, de Pablo's music has been featured at London's Almeida Festivals and recently at the 1998 Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival and at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London. His is however by no means a household name in UK, partly perhaps because he is published in Italy (Suvini Zerboni, Milan) and is not given to self-promotion.

Luís de Pablo and Cristobal Halffter were the key members of the group of composers often known as the "Generation of '51". These young musicians finished their studies and began their professional careers around 1951, with a mission after the Civil War to help Spain catch up with European musical developments. De Pablo's own explorations helped to accelerate that process of development. He quickly assimilated atonalism and serialism, aleatory forms, graphic experiments and electronic techniques. He was one of the founders of Grupo Nueva Musica in 1958, and founded Tiempo y Musica the following year. He has held university teaching appointments in USA and Canada and taught many of Spain's younger composers.

Tomas Marco considers Luís de Pablo to be "the moving spirit of an entire era of Spain's musical history". He has traversed most of the dominating trends, decade by decade, but always putting a personal stamp upon them. He turned swiftly from serialism to aleatorics. He investigated timbre, and as early as 1961 in *Libro para el pianista* was exploring "new possibilities for an old instrument". He developed "modules", units to be combined in fixed or mobile structures. He integrated quotations from works by earlier composers into complex).

Luís de Pablo is a delightful raconteur and assiduous correspondent, whose long letters from all over the world, written on the backs of carefully chosen picture postcards are treasurable. At sixty-

nine, living on “borrowed time” since a heart attack, he is a happy workaholic who cannot stop composing, touring and teaching, whatever his doctors may have advised. Although based in Madrid, he enjoys regular summer working holidays at his retreat in the Basque country, “I need a quiet spot to put my order and disorder into sounds”. It is to be hoped that de Pablo’s 70th birthday, in January 2000, will not be overlooked in this country.

Cristóbal Halffter

Halffter is among the more important Spanish composers of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and easily among the Iberian Peninsula’s most adventurous as well. He evolved quickly from the conservative Falla-tinged style of his youth to the post-Webern modernism of his middle- and late-years. He delved into neo-Classicism early on, then dabbled in serial music, aleatoric, and electronic techniques, and finally fused multiple styles together, often calling upon styles from the distant past. Arguably, Halffter was the leading avant-garde Spanish composer of the mid-twentieth century, and probably must be regarded as one of the most influential as well. His orchestral work *Microformas* (1959–1960) helped usher in a new era in Spanish music, both shocking audiences and critics and stimulating his fellow composers to look toward the future.

Cristobal Halffter was born on March 24, 1930, in Madrid, Spain. His uncles, Ernesto Halffter and Rodolfo Halffter, were also well-known Spanish composers. Of the three Halffters, Ernesto is probably the more popular, while Cristobal is considered the more influential.

Cristobal’s family fled the Spanish revolution and lived in Germany until 1939. He studied at Madrid’s Real Conservatorio de Música, where his most important composition teacher was Conrado del Campo. Halffter graduated in 1951 and two years later attracted critical attention with his Piano Concerto, which was awarded the National Music Prize in 1954.

Halffter was appointed conductor of the Cadiz-based Manuel de Falla Orchestra in 1955, holding the post until 1963. In 1964 he became director of the Madrid Real Conservatorio, where he had served as professor of composition since 1960. Halffter’s compositional style remained in the vanguard of modernism in the 1960s and 1970s. During this time he also composed several works relating to human rights, such as the massive 1968 choral work “Yes, speak out, yes”.

By the 1980s Halffter had settled into a less aggressive compositional manner, employing styles out of the past, as in the 1981 *Fantasia para una sonoridad de G.F. Haendel*, for string orchestra.

In 1989 Halffter took on the post of principal guest conductor of the National Orchestra, Madrid. He remained active as a composer and conductor. Among his works are the opera *Don Quixote* (2000) and *Attendite*, for cello octet (2003).

The concerts by Percussion Group The Hague are realized with generous support by Music Center the Netherlands in the context of the project Mediterranean Crossings and with the friendly support of the Dutch Embassy In Cairo



Project "Mediterranean Crossings"



Kingdom of the Netherlands

slagwerk den haag

Day 2, April 29, 2011 at 8:00 pm

Ewart Memorial Hall, AUC Downtown entrance via Shiekh Rihan Street

Steve Reich	Drumming pt. I
Christopher Fox	Art of concealment
Guo Wenjing	part of "Drama"
Mayke Nas & Wouter Snoei	I Delayed People's Flights By Walking Slowly In Narrow Hallways
Peter Adriaansz	parts of "7 Dances for Percussion 4-tet"
Hugo Morales	Enclosure

Slagwerk Den Haag:

Fedor Teunisse

Niels Meliefste

Pepe Garcia

Juan Martinez



Percussion The Hague is the leading music ensemble in contemporary percussion music from The Netherlands. In this field, this famous sextet has built up a worldwide reputation. Last year the ensemble not only performed in the Netherlands, Germany, Spain and England, but also in USA, Korea and Argentina.

Especially for the Cairo Contemporary Music Days 2011, Percussion The Hague arranged a very diverse program from their repertoire, by living composers. From big names out of the world of contemporary music, including the American Steve Reich and the Chinese Guo Wenjing, to the most successful recently commissioned works by the new generation of Dutch composers such as Peter Adriaansz (also artistic programmer of the ensemble), Mayke Nas & Wouter Snoei, or Hugo Morales (a Mexican living in the Netherlands). In their compositions they used very diverse and sometimes even surprising instruments.

In this program Percussion The Hague combines a self-evident high quality with a high degree of accessibility in the appealing presentation of the selected works.

Slagwerk Den Haag

Since its founding in 1977 the musicians of The Hague Percussion have focused on performing and developing contemporary percussion music in its most diverse forms: from existing repertoire, via a large number of new commissions and ongoing collaborations with composers, to researching the furthest limits of organized sound. As a specialized ensemble The Hague Percussion has built up and maintained a leading position, both nationally as well as

internationally; a position, which over the years has brought them to virtually all European countries, the United States, the Middle East, Japan and Korea.

In its use of instrumentation and sound sources The Hague Percussion is noticeable for an enormous diversity. Equally broad is its programming: from specialized research projects to accessible programs for a general public and from programs for the youngest generations to large-scale (inter-) national co productions. The Hague Percussion actively pursues collaborations with other ensembles and disciplines as well - such as dance, theatre and the visual arts.

Due to the regular rejuvenation of its line-up, The Hague Percussion has not only maintained its' vast experience, but also an openness of character. A characteristic, which is also apparent in the way the musicians present their concerts and manage to communicate with large and diverse audiences.

Repertoire and renewal

The repertoire of The Hague Percussion stretches from the earliest composed works for percussion ensemble to the large percussion sextets of Iannis Xenakis and can be characterized by an unremitting curiosity into the nature of sound. During the course of its 30 year existence the group has actively contributed to the creation of new repertoire, working together with several of new music's most prominent pioneers, among whom composers such as Mauricio Kagel, John Cage, Karl-Heinz Stockhausen and Steve Reich.

The Hague Percussion currently premieres up to eight new works a year, by both established names on the new music front, such as Michael Gordon, James Wood or Guo WenJing, as well as younger composers with whom the group seeks to establish ongoing relationships, such as Peter Adriaansz, Yannis Kyriakides, Seung-Ah Oh, Christopher Fox, Donnacha Dennehy or Michael Maierhof. To this purpose, the group also keeps a close eye on the youngest generation of composers, involving them actively in the development of their repertoire.

Due to the nature of many new works, the group is frequently involved in the design and construction of entirely new instruments, built especially for or by the group itself. In recent years, working with electronics, live electro-acoustic media and other media, as well as an ongoing search for new forms of musicianship have also become an increasing source of inspiration.

Collaboration with other musicians and disciplines

The group regularly works together with other ensembles and musicians. This lead, among other projects, to three editions of the series Slag & Sax with saxophones, the unusual combination of percussion and church organ (100% Organic, 2001) and Prana by Peter Adriaansz (2007) for an entirely amplified ensemble of percussion, female voices and electric guitars.

The Hague Percussion collaborates on a regular basis with Belgian colleague ensemble Champ d'Action, a collaboration that lead to a provisional pinnacle with the large-scale, semi-staged co production of James Wood's Hildegard (2005/2006). The Hague Percussion also works extensively

with theater, dance and visual arts. Noteworthy examples were *Access all Areas*, with the National Ballet (2000), the Japanese premiere of Maki Ishii's opera *Tojirarete Fune*, the integration of new compositions and contemporary dance (*Bows & Bruises*), with choreographer Marie-Cécile de Bont (2004), a visual program revolving around miniature instruments (*Underground*, together with Rosemary Joy, 2007) and *Words and Beyond: Hwang JinYi* (2008) by Seung-Ah Oh, with Korean singing, solo dancer and site-specific installation by Korean artist JiYoung Chae.

In the future new projects will be realized around dance (*Pinball & Grace*, 2009, with Michael Gordon and Club Guy and Roni) and theater (*Les poissons ne toussent pas*, 2011, with Jan van de Putte and director Jos van Kan).

Three lines of activity

The Hague Percussion divides its activities along three basic programming lines:

SDH-Laboratory, which is process-related and mostly revolves around the research of new sounds and concepts in close collaboration with composers;

SDH-Productions, which is product-related and revolves around new and existing repertoire and musical or interdisciplinary collaboration programs;

SDH-Educational, which is public-related and revolves around accessible programs for a broad audience (such as *Karbonkel*, *Global Warming*) and which includes the successful youth programs (*And now quiet... about the world of John Cage*, or *Bring in da Noize* about electro-acoustic music and live-samples), and the giving of workshops.

Dispersion and audience scope

With its varied programming The Hague Percussion reaches a very broad audience, as diverse as the performance spaces the group plays in. In this way the group not only attends to the larger concert halls or to smaller, specialized venues, but also plays on location and manages to reach the smallest villages with its youth programs. SDH contributes regularly to many national Festivals, such as *Dag in de Branding*, *Gaudeamus*, *Musica Sacra* and the *Output Festival* and has recently performed at international festivals such as the *Festival van Vlaanderen*, *Music@venture* and *Transit (B)*, *Avignon (Fr)*, *Schleswig-Holstein (D)*, *Huddersfield (GB)* and *TIMF (South-Korea)*.

Nearly all programs are recorded for the radio. In 2008 The Hague Percussion played 60 concerts, in five countries, reaching an audience of well over 10.000 visitors.

CDs

The first three CDs to be issued by the group revolved around specific instrumental families: wooden instruments on *The Wooden Branch*, skin instruments on *Skin Hits* and metal instruments on *Irony*. On the occasion of its 25th anniversary in 2002 the group issued a special cd-single of the work *Music of Mercy pt. 3* by composer and artistic director Peter Adriaansz and in 2003 *New Works for Percussion* was released, with a selection of recent commissioned works by Osvaldo

Budón, Ivo van Emmerik, Claudio Baroni, Seung-Ah Oh and Donnacha Dennehy. In 2009 The Hague Percussion released its first dvd, *Parade*, with specifically filmed recordings of recent, starkly visual, percussion works by Mayke Nas & Wouter Snoei, Guo Wenjing, Anthony Pateras and Peter Adriaansz.

Steve Reich

Steve Reich can be considered one of the pioneers of minimalist music. His innovations include using tape loops to create phasing patterns and the use of simple, audible processes to explore musical concepts. These compositions, marked by their use of repetitive figures, slow harmonic rhythm, and canons, have significantly influenced contemporary music, especially in the USA. In later years, Reich's work took on a different character with the introduction of historical themes as well as themes from his personal background.

Reich's style of composition influenced many other composers and musical groups. Reich has been described as one of "a handful of living composers who can legitimately claim to have altered the direction of musical history" and "may... be considered, by general acclamation, America's greatest living composer."

Reich received his M.A. in Music from Mills College in 1963, where he worked with Luciano Berio and Darius Milhaud. After that, he studied drumming at the Institute for African Studies at the University of Ghana in Accra and Balinese Gamelan Sema Pegulingan and Gamelan Gambang at the American Society for Eastern Arts in Seattle and Berkeley, California.

The works of Reich have been received many awards and are played on a regular basis by orchestras and ensembles all over the world.

"Drumming" Pt. I (1970-71)

For this occasion, Slagwerk Den Haag will perform the first of the four parts of his monumental piece ***Drumming***. Reich wrote this piece in 1970–71, on the eve of his well-known work *Clapping Music* (which he co-performed with Slagwerk Den Haag in 2008 in Rotterdam). This first part is a work for four percussionists that play two tuned bongo drums each. During the entire piece, Reich uses a pattern that undergoes changes of phase position, pitch, and timbre, and all the performers play this pattern, or some part of it, throughout the entire piece.

Christopher Fox

Christopher Fox (1955) is an English composer, teacher and writer on new music.

Fox's work usually exceeds the bounds of conventional concert resources. He has written works for radio and has worked with video artists, typographers, and poets. Together with the Belgian Champ d'Action, he made a 24-hour event ,celebrating Bruges as Cultural Capital of Europe 2002.

CDs of his music are very well received by the press. Besides music, he also writes for music magazines and contributes to books about music.

“Art of concealment” (1988)

The English percussion quartet Ensemble Bash started to commission a repertoire of pieces employing only instruments that would all fit in a carrier-bag. For that occasion Christopher Fox wrote ***The Art of Concealment*** by using non-instruments, taken out of a raincoat and played by four percussionists. During the eight minutes of *The Art of Concealment*, the instruments will be hidden until they are needed. Fox views this piece as a theatrical, almost narrative work with a sequel of scenes, each with a story to tell. But don't worry, he does not require the audience to retell a story made out of sounds only.

Guo Wenjing

Guo Wenjing was born in 1956 in the mountainous Sichuan province of southwest China, where he played the violin in orchestral as well as in folk music. In 1983, he completed his studies at the Central Conservatory in Beijing, where he is now a professor.

Guo wrote a variety of works, including four operas and three Peking operas, five concertos, six symphonies and symphonic works, three grand works for traditional Chinese instruments, four string quartets, and over twenty works for chamber music and a cappella. He has also composed music for more than forty TV series and films directed, for instance, by Zhang Yimou.

Guo's music is often mysterious and ominous, drenched in witchery and the folk music of his place of birth.

“Drama” (1995)

In Guo Wenjing's ***Drama***, three virtuoso percussionists explore thirty ways to play small Chinese cymbals. *Drama* is among his most frequently performed chamber works. The work is connected to his later work *Parade* (commissioned by Slagwerk Den Haag in 2004) which is also written for three percussionists on Chinese cymbals (and beautifully captured on video by Jellie Dekker, which is available on DVD). His goal was to use these traditional instruments in a different way than they were used in the hundreds of years before.

In this program, Slagwerk Den Haag will perform a part of *Drama*.

Mayke Nas

Mayke Nas (Netherlands, 1972) studied piano and composition at the conservatories of Amsterdam, Tilburg, The Hague and Melbourne. She wrote commissions for many Dutch ensembles. Theater, video, text and choreography are often an integral part of her compositions. A Dutch music journalist wrote about her: “Her music navigates on the border between sound and noise, but can also rock mercilessly from time to time; often there is something to laugh about.

Mayke Nas doesn't like the blood serious, but prefers playfulness and relativity. She explores the boundaries of music with the same unrelenting energy and imagination that also characterize her personality".

Wouter Snoei

Wouter Snoei completed his studies at the Institute for Sonology in The Hague in 2000. As specialist in electronic music, he worked in both the capacities of performer and composer in various disciplines. In this manner, he provided the sound design for pieces by Luigi Nono, John Cage and Gérard Grisey as well as performing with various (jazz) musicians. His own dance project x(eptional performs in the club circuit, but also makes remixes of 20th century classical repertoire.

As a composer, Wouter Snoei is characteristic for his generation in ignoring any of the so-called boundaries between serious and light music.

"I Delayed People's Flights By Walking Slowly In Narrow Hallways" (2005)

This work, for 4 percussionists, 4 amplified blackboards and 4 chairs, is performed in a straight 'choreography' through which the four percussionists move. Their writing on the blackboards is processed electronically and the sound of their writing is the heart of the composition. But meanwhile, the text develops before the eyes of the audience in all its layers, meanings and interpretations. The text is based on the famous theatrical text *Self-incrimination* (1966) by Peter Handke in which the main character incriminates himself. In a long list of mistakes and misdemeanours, human morality is decomposed and calmly exposed. The narrator is a modern multiple personality split into four, and he writes his lines through a maze until they transform into new meanings.

The work met great enthusiasm, specifically because of the new form and the strong visual aspects (also captured for DVD by Jellie Dekker).

Peter Adriaansz

Peter Adriaansz (Seattle, 1966) completed his study of composition at the Conservatory of The Hague and Rotterdam with distinction, having had teachers as Louis Andriessen and Brian Ferneyhough.

Adriaansz's music is characterized by a strong tendency towards formalism and directness, in which structure, 'observable mathematics', and rhythmic sound are the main building blocks. The credibility and inevitability of the (art) work are essential components of his musical credo. In the last year one also observes a growing tendency toward musical 'truth', flexibility and balance.

Adriaansz's works are regularly performed all over the world, from the Holland Festival to Huddersfield and from Toronto to St. Petersburg.

“7 Dances for Percussion 4-tet” (2005)

The **7 Dances for Percussion 4-tet** were written for a dance production between Slagwerk Den Haag and Dutch choreographer Marie-Cécile de Bont. Though they are not intended to be danced to, they nevertheless are “dances”, but more in the sense of a “Tanz ohne Schritte” (a “dance without steps”), as there are “Lieder ohne Worte” (“songs without words”).

The seven movements are based on personal interpretations of what the phenomenon ‘dance’ reminds Adriaansz of: pacing, the sound of feet on a floor, interactions between groups and soloists, movements in space, historical dance-terminologies and stylized forms. The instrumentation is mainly dominated by wood and skin sounds, which function as a sort of imaginary cross-pollination between the stately aspects of ancient Korean Court Music and a more secular – quasi South American – rasping ensemble... both linked to each other through a shared aesthetic of “composite sounds” (i.e. one action resulting in multiple sounds), but both probably quite surprised to find themselves grouped together like this. The 7 Dances, however, are not an attempt at cross-cultural World Music, but rather find their topic in the areas of rhythmic patterning and quasi-random number sequencing.

Slagwerk Den Haag performs two or three Dances of their choice.

Hugo Morales

Hugo Morales is a Mexican composer and sound artist based in the Netherlands. After concluding his studies at the Center of Research and Musical Studies in Mexico City, he moved to the Netherlands to continue his postgraduate studies at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague and the Institute of Sonology, graduating with honors in 2009.

His current work focuses on the development of alternative instruments for the generation of sound, whether extensions of traditional instruments or instrumental implementations of rudimentary objects; technique, notation, physical modification and various uses of technology are frequently elements defining his music composition and performance. His works encompass a variety of musical media such as virtuosic solo instrumental pieces, ensemble pieces, live electronics and fixed media music.

“Enclosure” (2008)

In **Enclosure**, a solo percussionist is sitting and performing on an amplified wooden box (cajon). The work is based on issues related to instrumental technique in combination with technology, attempting to extract and expand the possibilities and conceptions of a rather rudimentary but fascinating instrument of the Latin folklore. Sounds that sometimes intend to create a spatial metaphor by turning the performance space into a resonant wooden box through the use of amplification and sound diffusion of normally unperceivable micro elements, and at other times creating an interactive digital machine that expands instrumental technique to a quasi-choreographical performance. “Enclosure” was commissioned by the percussionist performing it: Pepe Garcia.

In cooperation with the Goethe Institute and the German Embassy in Cairo



Embassy
of the Federal Republic of Germany
Cairo



Auswärtiges Amt

neue vocal solisten

Day 3, April 30, 2011 at 8:00 pm

Oriental Hall, AUC Downtown entrance via Shiekh Rihan Street

Giacinto Scelsi	movements from "Tre canti popolari"
Saed Haddad	Love Requiem
Andreas Dohmen	infra
José-María Sánchez-Verdú	Madrigale
Salvatore Sciarrino	Four Madrigales from 12 madrigali
Evdokja Danajloska	Canto Civile

Saed Haddad: "Love Requiem explores the themes of love, death, exile, gender, alienation, nostalgia and fatalism treated in Arabic love poetry of pre-Islamic and modern eras"



They are researchers, discoverers, adventurers and idealists.

Their partners are specialist ensembles and radio orchestras, opera houses and the free theater scene, electronic studios and countless organizers of contemporary music festivals and concert series in the world.

The Neue Vocalsolisten were established as an ensemble specializing in the interpretation of contemporary vocal music in 1984. Founded under the artistic management of “Musik der Jahrhunderte”, the vocal chamber ensemble has been artistically independent since the year 2000. Each of the seven concert and opera soloists, with a collective range reaching from coloratura soprano over countertenor to “basso profondo”, shapes the work on chamber music and the co-operation with the composers and other interpreters through his/ her distinguished artistic creativity. According to the musical requirements a pool of specialist singers complements the basic team.

The ensemble’s chief interest lies on research: exploring new sounds, new vocal techniques and new forms of articulation, whereby great emphasis is placed on establishing a dialogue with composers. Each year, the ensemble premieres about twenty new works. Central to the group’s artistic concept are the areas of music theater and the interdisciplinary work with electronics, video, visual arts and literature, as well as the juxtaposition of contrasting elements found in ancient and contemporary music.

Giacinto Scelsi

The aristocrat, poet and composer Giacinto Scelsi was one of the twentieth century's more unusual musicians.

Born in 1905, he grew up in the Scelsi family's ancestral castle at Valva, near Naples, where his studies concentrated – according to the composer's own testimony – on the noble pursuits of fencing, Latin and chess.

His youthful enthusiasms also included the piano, an instrument for which he formed a lifelong affection and at which he developed the habit of improvising for hours at a time – a strange anticipation of his later composing method.

Although Scelsi never received any formal musical training, as a young man he frequented the house of Respighi in Rome, became an enthusiast for the Futurist music of Luigi Russolo, and later studied briefly in Vienna with a pupil of Schoenberg, writing the first 12-note music to be composed by an Italian. He subsequently lived in London, where he married a cousin of the queen, and Paris, where he published three volumes of Surrealist poetry in French and established a minor reputation as a maverick composer whose influences ranged from Futurism to Berg and Scriabin. During these years he also travelled in Asia, in particular to India and Tibet, journeys which would later prove of great significance in his artistic development.

The full facts of Scelsi's life are imperfectly known. It appears he suffered an extended nervous breakdown following World War II, during which, as he would later proudly announce, "I forgot everything I ever knew about music".

During his recovery, Scelsi fell into the habit of calming his mind by playing single notes over and over on the piano, a form of musical auto-therapy, which was, improbably, to form the basis of his mature compositional style.

He also became an adept of Buddhism, meditating three times daily, adding a Zen symbol to his signature and refusing to allow his photograph to be taken.

In 1959, out of his one-note improvisations came the seminal *Quattro pezzi ciascuno su una nota sola* ("Four pieces, each one on a single note"), the first unequivocal demonstration of Scelsi's concern with what he called the "three-dimensional" quality of sound.

Each piece takes as its starting (and ending) point a single note – a radical paring-down of musical subject matter which focuses attention inward, making the listener concentrate on what musical sound is, rather than what it does.

The obvious comparison is with the Eastern musics Scelsi admired – whether the Indian raga or the Tibetan tantra, with their hypnotic concentration on a single elemental sonority – yet Scelsi's strange genius lifts this and all his later work far above the level of mere musical tourism, creating a unique soundworld which is unplaceable in any tradition except its own.

Though none of Scelsi's subsequent works shows quite the pyrrhic simplicity of the *Quattro pezzi*, all are based on what is essentially material of extreme spareness. It's music which is totally lacking in theme, melody, rhythm and (often) harmony, but which instead confronts the listener with the phenomenon of pure sound in seemingly natural and spontaneous evolution – the paradox is

that (in his finest works at least) Scelsi manages to conjure such luminous musical effects from even the simplest of combination of notes.

Always an extremely prolific composer, Scelsi's later music features many pieces for strings especially, including a number of string quartets and the wonderful "violin concerto" Anahit, and also for wind instruments, such as the haunting Kya for clarinet and ensemble – though he gave up writing for his once favoured instrument, the piano, finding its fixed tuning and uniform sound colour too inflexible for his musical needs.

Scelsi also became famous not only for his unique musical style, but also for his unusual working methods, whereby pieces were first improvised – either by the composer himself at the keyboard or in collaboration with sympathetic performers – and then written down by amanuenses (in a strange twist, one of Scelsi's assistants, the Italian composer Vieru Tosatti, later claimed that he rather than Scelsi was the true author of the works).

Scelsi stopped composing around 1975, but enjoyed belated fame as musicians from all over the world discovered his work.

He ceased all communication with the outside world on 8/8/88 (August 8, 1988), and died the following morning.

Andreas Dohmen

Born in Viersen (Germany) 1962, Andreas Dohmen studied contrabass at Folkwang University in Essen (Germany) with Rolf Heister and composition with Dieter Torkewitz. In 1987, 1988, 1989 and 1990 he was a member of the composition master class guided by Franco Donatoni at the Accademia Musicale Chigiana in Siena (Italy). From 1988 to 1990, he was fellow of the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD). Composition studies with Franco Donatoni in Mailand and Biella (Italy). He has taught at the universities of Essen, Duisburg and Dortmund, and is teaching Analysis of Contemporary Music and Instrumentation at the University of Arts in Bremen (Germany) since 2002.

Prizes and awards (selection): award of the international composition competition of the German broadcast station WDR; Forum junger Komponisten, Cologne; certificate of honour of the Accademia Musicale Chigiana Siena; Folkwang prize for composition; first prize at the international composition competition of the city of Rome, Premio Valentino Bucchi; first prize at the composition competition of the city of Stuttgart.

Commissions (selection) for Donaueschinger Musiktage (SWR), Wittener Tage für Neue Kammermusik (WDR), Festival ECLAT Stuttgart (SWR), festival Musik im 20. Jahrhundert“ (SR), Musik der Zeit Köln (WDR), and Musica Viva München (BR).

Salvatore Sciarrino

Salvatore Sciarrino was born in Palermo, Sicily, in 1947. A self-taught musician, he began composing at the age of twelve, under the guidance of Antonio Titone. The first public performance

of his work took place in 1962 during the 4th International New Music Week in Palermo. Sciarrino, however, considers the music written between 1959 and 1965 as belonging to an immature period of apprenticeship.

In later years, he studied with Turi Belfiore and benefited from his contact with Franco Evangelisti. Having completed his musical studies, he moved to Rome, and then to Milan.

He has won numerous awards at international composers' competitions. He also taught composition at the Conservatories of Milan, Perugia and Florence (1976-1996). Between 1978 and 1980, he was Artistic Director of the Bologna Opera House.

Recent works: *Soffio e forma* for orchestra, *I fuochi oltre la ragione* for orchestra, *Recitativo Oscuro* for piano and orchestra, *Il Clima dopo Harry Partch* for piano and orchestra; music theatre: *Luci mie traditrici*; *Infinito nero*; *Terribile e spaventosa storia del Principe di Venosa e della Bella Maria*; chamber music: *Muro d'orizzonte*, *Cantare con Silenzio*, *Un fruscio lungo trent'anni*, *Due risvegli e il vento*, *Quartetto No. 7*; for piano: *Sonata No. 5*, *Quattro notturni*; for flute: *L'orologio di Bergson*, *Morte Tamburo*; for accordion: *Vagabonde blu*.

In madrigals one and seven, the incongruence of the mirror images is evident even externally in the enigmatic tempo descriptions: "Tempo d'altro spazio" ("Tempo of the other space") and "Tempo d'altro mare" ("Tempo of the other sea"); incidentally, this also calls associations with Luigi Nono's utopian "altri spazi" to mind. Similar asymmetry can also be found in the other pairs of madrigals. The second madrigal ("Ecco mormorar l'onde"), for example, begins with soft murmuring fully focused on the text, while the eighth begins with the compact, repeated cry of all voices: "Ecco!". Or madrigals five and eleven, whose theme is the song of the lark: the first time, the text is dissolved into vocalises, the second time it is chanted in widely separated staccato chords. Madrigals six and twelve are linked by the same ostinato rhythms. In the twelfth, which closes the cycle, we also hear a change of identity: the "sea of crickets" voicing itself in endless semiquaver *ostinati* solidifies into a rock-like structure, while at the end, the soprano takes to the heights with a tender melodic line to the words "bevono le rocce" ("the rocks drink"). The distinction between the organic and inorganic blurs.

Evdokija Danajloska

Born in 1973, Macedonia, Evdokija Danajloska was featured at the Macedonian Music Days as part of the Young Composer's Forum aged only fifteen. In Macedonia, she studied piano, composition, harmony, counterpoint, orchestration, and conducting at the Music Academy in Skopje, where she received her diploma in composition in 1997. She then moved to Paris to continue her studies at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris with Gérard Grisey, Marco Stroppa, Philippe Leroux, Marc-André Dalbavie, Alain Louvier, Rainer Bosch and Alain Savouret. She obtained the diplomas of composition, orchestration and improvisation (voice). Master classes and workshops include those at the Foundation Royaumont (with Brian

Ferneyhough, Stefano Gervasoni and Brice Pauset) and at the International Bartok Festival in Szombathely (with Marco Stroppa).

As a performer, she sung her *Dédoublement* at the University for Music Hans Eisler in Berlin, at the University of Stuttgart and of Keele. She also improvised with Frédéric Stochl, double bassist of the Ensemble Intercontemporain (for France Musique), with Marlon Schumacher -Electronic Data-Glove (Elektronische Nacht, Stuttgart), with Cécile Daroux (IRCAM), and alone during the festivals *L'itinéraire de Nuit* and *Nuit blanche* in Paris.

Her music is performed by ensembles such as *Itinéraire*, *Jeunes Solistes*, *Le jeune chœur de Paris*, *Mikrokosmos*, *L'Instant donné* and by Donatienne Michel-Dansac. In 2003, her work *Song Without Words* was premiered at the YO! International Youth Opera Festival in Utrecht, Holland. Her piece for two violins *Yes we must go on*, inspired by Luigi Nono's *Hay que caminar, soñando*, was commissioned by the Staatsoper Stuttgart for the concert series *Dialogue*. In June 2007, her work *Chansons*, commissioned by *Le jeune chœur de Paris*, was premiered at the 3e Biennale d'art vocal (*Tenso days*), Cité de la Musique. She is currently working on a commission of the New London Chamber Choir.

Catalan Contemporary Music Guest of Honour



An approach to contemporary Catalan music

Contemporary music in Catalonia and the Balearic Islands are experiencing a time of great creative intensity. Despite the difficulties inherent in its endemic separation from the public, a wide array of composers are using various languages, styles and trends to sketch out a stimulating sound map that is gaining an increasing presence in international festivals and auditoriums, while provocative new voices are emerging to enrich this active and lively scene, a direct descendant of an approach to artistic modernity that began to take shape in the early decades of the 20th century.

Indeed. Catalonia, a borderland with its sights always set beyond the Pyrenees, began to receive the influence of the European musical avant-garde very quickly. In the first third of the 20th century, before the Spanish Civil War (1936-39) would break Spain in two and usher in a long and dark hiatus of cultural isolation for the entire country, Barcelona underwent a period of great artistic impetus. This special climate of effervescence made it possible for Catalonia's largest city to become the world centre for new music in 1936 when it hosted the 14th International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM) Festival, which witnessed the first-ever (and posthumous) debut of Alban Berg's Violin Concerto. This cultural euphoria attracted the greatest artists of the time, and by the hand of Robert Gerhard and Pau Casals, Arnold Schönberg even resided for several months in the city, where he found the right climate and space to complete the second act of his opera *Moses und Aron*. Therefore, it should not surprise us that its principles, as well as those of the Vienna School by extension, would have a renowned influence on the Catalan artists of subsequent generations.

Like then, artistic dialogue with the rest of Europe today forms an inescapable part of the state of music in the country, even if we cannot speak of schools or trends among the large group of composers who make up the current Catalan music scene; musicians who do not hesitate to use all the tools at their disposal, including those based on new technologies, to create a repertoire open to all trends and that, in several instances, does not shun dialogue with popular music. Some composers' work with genres like flamenco, traditional Catalan music and Mediterranean music gives their scores a distinctive, personal stamp.

A full list of these musicians would never fit here. Nevertheless, we can safely say that Guinjoan, Benguerel, Balada, Soler, Cervelló, Amargós, Casablanças, Brotons, Charles, A. Guinovart, Humet and Parra are leading names in this eclectic scene, which can also be extended to include the rich musical activity of the Balearic Islands, home to figures such as Antoni Caimari, Antoni Parera Fons, Tomeu Artigues, Joan Valent and the young and upcoming Mallorcan artist Mateu Malondra, who appears in this Biennale's programme.

Unfortunately, this happy situation is still hampered by the difficulties that composers continue to face for their works to be able to enter the internal concert circuit in a normal way. Particularly prominent in this regard is the work developed by certain interpreters and groups that support dissemination of the new scores. In this sense, the orchestra Barcelona 216 is one of those that have carried out the most commendable activity to date, premiering and performing work by Catalan artists in a regular and stable way since 1985.

ANA MARIA DAVILA

Music Journalist

Supported by Institut Ramon Llull, the Spanish Embassy in Cairo and the Institut d'Indústries Culturals -
Generalitat de Catalunya



Day 4, Mai 1, 2011 at 8:00 pm

Ewart Memorial Hall, AUC Downtown entrance via Shiekh Rihan St.

Ahmed Madkour	White Shroud
Agustí Charles	...un soffio di aura. Concert per guitarra
Benet Casablanca	Epigrames
Oliver Rappoport	Reflejos del silencio
Mateu Malondra	Capsule - Chamber Concerto (2011world premier)
Luis Codera	El timbre es un esclavo del tiempo

Àlex Garrobé: Guitar

Conductor: J. M. Sánchez Verdú



This year, we celebrate the 25th anniversary of BCN216. In the course of these years, the ensemble has become a reference group in the Spanish contemporary music scene.

The group was formed in 1985 as the fruit of the common initiative of the conductor and composer Ernest Martínez Izquierdo and David Albet, the present artistic director. From its beginnings, it has been open to all kinds of proposals and innovations, always attracting top quality performers and composers. BCN216 has been driven to push the wider diffusion and acceptance of contemporary music. The ensemble has not limited itself to the music of espain/catalunya, believing instead that its obligation lies in propagating the best that's around! Young composers have been joined with the most classical figures and the experience has always been enriching.

Closely following the changing reality of the contemporary music scene, the Conjunt Instrumental BCN216 is presently a flexible and multifunctional chamber music group which is capable of representing a wide range of works from solo pieces to forty instrument compositions.

Aside from pursuing their policy of recordings and maintaining their international presence as a resident group at the l'Auditori de Barcelona, their present objective is to come closer to an ever widening public, with an exciting program that is always open to exchanges with other artistic forms like dance, theater, or cinema.

Conductors: Ernest Martínez-Izquierdo, George-Elie Octors, Lars Horntveth, Nacho de Paz, Diego Masson, Franck Ollu, Virgínia Martínez, Alvaro Albiach, Manel Valdivieso, Miquel Ortega, Joan Albert Amargós; Francesc Prat; Martin Matalon

Agustí Charles

Born in Manresa, he began his music studies at an early age.

His first musical compositions emerged in the 80s and were influenced by his composition teachers Miquel Roger, Albert Sardà and Josep Soler. Later on, he studied with Franco Donatoni, Luigi Nono and Samuel Adler.

He has also worked with other composers and conductors such as Joan Guinjoan, Cristóbal Halffter, J.R. Encinar and Ros Marbà. Their works have received close to fifty awards, among which were some of the most important national and international composition prizes.

He has also received commissions from great institutions, to the effect that his music has found recognition all over the world. The work *Seven Looks* was awarded with the Prize of the Association of Symphonic Spanish Orchestras (AEOS). His first opera, *La Cuzzoni, esperpent d'una veu*, was premiered in October 2007 at the Darmstadt Staatstheater with great success.

He is also the author of diverse texts and books related to musical composition and analysis: *Análisis de la música española del siglo XX* (2002), *Dodecafonismo y serialismo en España* (2005), *Instrumentación y orquestación clásica y contemporánea* (2005).

Charles now teaches composition at the Conservatorio Superior de Música de Aragón and the Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya.

“...di un soffio d'aura.” Concert per guitarra

With the suggestive title *...di un soffio d'aura*, composer Agustín Charles presents his new concerto for guitar and ensemble. It explores the possibilities of subjectivity within the listener with the apparent fragility of the guitar sound, which Charles likens to “a drop of water in a stream, soft and quiet, that becomes a swell at the edge”. Through this delicate sound, which requires special attention from the audience, Charles expects the listener to hear sounds that apparently do not exist. They will be different for each of us, “but they are there, as the absolute silence in which sometimes appears a murmur of aura.”

Benet Casablanca

“Epigrams”

The brief, inspired **Epigrams** (1990) is the first of Casablanca's incursions into the dense, richly contrasted universe of epigrammatic composition, with all its tonal subtleties. It has since been followed by *New Epigrams* (1997) for chamber orchestra, the symphonic *Tres Epigramas* (2001) and, by way of a corollary, the piano suite *Siete Epigramas* (2000–03). All of these are marked by what critics have referred to as “an extreme density and sophisticated timbral elaboration that constantly plays with contrast”, “his rhythmical refinements and colouristic surprises”, “his resolutely complex and luxuriant writing”, “a sound idiom with a surprising musculature that verges on the orchestral”. So condensed does the music become that its many potential trajectories are

no sooner sketched out than they become transformed, creating a fertile whirlwind of sensations, references and surprises. Some of the procedures employed here, as well as aligning themselves stylistically with the Vienna of Wittgenstein so beloved of the composer, anticipate a personal idiom: melodic lines that explore an instrument's entire register and emphasise particular notes over and over again, a tendency to build maximum variety and virtuosity into the individual discourse, perpetuum mobile-like episodes and the inclusion of ecstatic passages. The three-part structure is classical in design, two lively outer movements flanking a slow central movement.

Oliver Rappoport

Born in Málaga in 1980, Rappoport began studying music in San Marcos Sierras, Argentina and at the Universidad de Chile. In 2000 he returned to Spain and continued composition studies in the ESMuC (Barcelona), CNSMDP (Paris) with Agustín Charles, Helmut Lachenmann, Gabriel Brncic, Luín Naón and Emmanuel Nunes. In addition he has attended master classes with Jonathan Harvey, José Manuel López and Mauricio Sotelo among others.

He continued his studies at IRCAM Paris (Cursus), the Technische Universität Berlin and the Kings College London.

He has received grants, awards and commissions for a variety of instrumental and electroacoustic works.

In 2006 he was awarded the first prize from the SGAE/Fundación Autor in the International Composers Competition. In the same year, he was selected for the 5th Forum for young creation in Paris by SIMC (Société Internationale pour la Musique Contemporaine). He won the first prize from INAEM/Colegio de España Composers Competition in 2007, the Compositors Novells competition in 2009 and the Franz Liszt-Stipendiat in Weimar, Germany, in 2010.

Rappoport has been composer in residence at the Centro para la Difusión de la Música Contemporánea (CDMC), Jovenes Interpretes de Catalunya (JIC), the Joven Orquesta Nacional de España (JONDE), and the Fundación Antonio Gala.

He has been commissioned by BCN216, the PHONOS Foundation, the Catedral de Barcelona, the Auditorio Nacional (Young Orchestra of France), the CDMC and the Festival Nous Sons...

"Reflejos del Silencio"

Commissioned by BCN216

Reflejos del silencio is divided into two continuous movements, which in turn are further divided into seven sub-sections. Following the tone of his last works, in this case you can see a contrast of materials that are chained by little, transformed or simply disappear after producing their function. On the other hand (as in several of his previous works), the silence and the instrumental arrangement are fundamental in his compositional discourse.

Mateu Malondra Flaquer

Mateu Malondra Flaquer was born in 1977 in Palma de Mallorca, Spain.

In 1999, he moved to Barcelona where he received guitar lessons as student of Sadahiro Otani. In Barcelona, Christian de Jong and David Padros introduced him to composition studies. He started his Bachelor in Composition at Maastricht Conservatory with Robert HP Platz in 2004. In 2010, he graduated from Maastricht Conservatory as a Master in Music Composition with Distinction (Cum Laude). He also holds a Bachelor's degree in guitar performing from the Den Haag Royal Conservatoire, where he studied as soloist and chamber music with E. Voorhorst.

Malondra's research on "Extended Vocal Techniques" included interviews with NVocaalLab, Sharon Paul, Nicholas Isherwood and Wolfgang Saus. As a part of the composition curriculum, Malondra Flaquer did an electronic music course at Centre Henri Pousseur (Liège) with Patrick Delges.

He has been the recipient of several grants, like MusicaSacra Maastricht, Cultural Council of East Iceland, Encontres de compositors-Illes Balears-2007 and Intro-insitu. He has also been a participant of The Next Generation at the Donaueschinger Musiktage.

Malondra's first string quartet was recorded by Arditti String Quartet in Coombehurst Studio as part of the Kingston University International Call For New Works 2010. The workshop was broadcasted by BBC-3.

Recent projects include a piece for ensemble and electronics based on the book *Roads to Santiago* by the Dutch writer Cees Nooteboom.

In 2010, Malondra was resident at the Centre Henri Pousseur with Jean-Marc Sullon.

"Capsule" - Chamber Concerto

Capsule has been conceived as a prelude of a bigger work for ensemble, one actor and live-electronics. The idea of equilibrium and collapse between opposite and diverse structures can be understood as the seed of the piece.

The symmetry in Mudéjar style did influence the formal concept of the piece.

Luis Codera Puzo

Luis Codera has studied composition in Barcelona (Spain) with Agustí Charles Soler and in Karlsruhe (Germany) with Wolfgang Rihm. In addition, he has attended various seminars and courses, highlighting the teachers David Horne, Kaija Saariaho, Luis Naón, Lasse Thoresen, Olga Neuwirth, J. M. Sánchez Verdú, and Enno Poppe. His music has been played in Spain, Germany and France by the Minguet Quartett, the BCN216, the CrossingLines, Bogdan Zvoristeanu, Andriy Viytovych, the soloists from the Badische Staatskapelle and others.

"El timbre es un esclavo del tiempo"

El timbre es un esclavo del tiempo is based on one hand on the idea of organizing all the musical elements around the concept of temporal necessity and order, and on the other hand on

the search for a richness which avoids confusion, developed from the exactitude of the musical functions and the clarity of the musical ideas.

Day 5, May 2, 2011 at 8:00 pm

Day 6, May 3, 2011 at 6:00 pm

Ewart Memorial Hall, AUC Downtown entrance via Shiekh Rihan St.

GRAMMA
Gardens of Writing
Chamber opera

Composed and conducted by José M. Sánchez-Verdú

Texts after Platon, Homer, Augustinus, Ovid, Hugo von St. Viktor, Dante, and John's
epiphany

Commissioned by Landeshauptstadt München for the Münchener Biennale, the Lucerne Theater
and El Palau de les Arts Reina Sofía, Valencia

A cooperation of the **Neue Vokalsolisten Stuttgart** and **BCN216**



José M. Sánchez-Verdú's chamber opera ***Gramma – Gardens of Writing*** is dedicated to the written word and reflects on its capacity to both preserve and destroy that which it purports to help remember. "Gramma" is Greek for "letter", and its second title also echoes the exhortations of a famous Greek philosopher concerning the use of letters, at least according to Plato's dialogue *Phaedrus*: Socrates suggests to approach writing as one approaches the "gardens of Adonis", to sow and plant in the "gardens of writing" only for the sake of recreation and amusement, and possibly against the forgetfulness of old age. The opera also refers to texts by Homer, Augustine, Ovid, Hugh of Saint Victor, from the Gospel of John, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, and some more recent sources, all of which are concerned with the interplay of memory and abstract codification. Its six scenes, or "gardens", might merge into something of a genealogy of the written word – but its loose ends are still pointing in your direction.

Sánchez-Verdú's labyrinthine gardens (gardens represent a point of intersection between nature and culture) sometimes resemble the characters of an ancient scripture: still on the verge of leading a life of their own, they might signify something entirely different from their outward appearance. They do not simply feature different narratives, but also different systems of signs, and thus entangle you in the process of interpretation and re-codification. Ultimately, it is you who "interprets" ***Gramma***.

After an introduction consisting of sounds at the border line of your hearing range that seem yet to grope for a definite form, the opera leads you on to the first scene, **Thamos and Thoth**, which reenacts the myth of the invention of letters as recounted by Socrates in *Phaedrus*: while the Egyptian god Thoth, inventor of letters, argued that writing would expand the mnemonic capacities of mankind, Thamus held that reliance on ‘outward’ signs would further the degeneration of memory itself. In *Gramma*, Thamus proposes using hand signs for musical notation, while Thoth seemingly tries to disqualify this approach by singing in musical lines so elaborate that they require a more complex system of notation – one that would have to be in writing.

The second scene, **The Lotus Flower**, is based on Ulysses’ encounter with the lotus-eaters. Ulysses’ men partake of their food and, just like them, lose their memory, and with it any inclination to indulge in cultural activities, let alone continue their journey home. Accordingly, this scene does not employ any words.

In the third ‘scene’, you explore with Augustine of Hippo the intricate **Architectures of Memory**. In his *Confessiones*, Augustine discovers that instances of recollection not only do not coincide temporally with that which is remembered, but also drastically deflect the thing remembered so that paradoxically, even oblivion can be recalled. On the other hand, when he ponders he might have to surpass the anfractuous windings of memory in order to reach God, his “dulce lumen” (“sweet light”), he is confronted with the possibility of forgetting God in the very process.

In **Gardens of Adonis**, the fourth scene, Venus laments the death of her lover Adonis, and has anemones grow in the places where he has shed his blood in order to preserve the memory of her grief in their annual bloom (and, of course, in the rituals henceforth accompanying it). Small series of variations and the repetition of the respective lines of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* reflect on the transformation of an ‘actual’ instant into a sign by way of ritualization.

All of a sudden, you hear Hugh of Saint Victor, prior at the Augustinian Abbaye Saint-Victor de Paris (1132–1141), hushedly dictate passages from his *Didascalion* as well as the famous beginning of the *Gospel According to John*: “In the beginning was the Word...” This fifth scene, titled **Silence of Writing**, suggests a medieval scriptorium.

The sixth and last piece, **Book of the Gardens of Writing**, revisits some memories from the former scenes and interweaves them with newer fragments from Dante and other writers.

Gramma premiered at the Münchener Biennale in 2006. At the Cairo Contemporary Music Days 2011, the opera will be performed by *bcn216* (Barcelona 216 Ensemble) and the *Neue Vocalsolisten* from Stuttgart, both of which are internationally renowned for their achievements in the field of contemporary music.

(Daniel Schmidt)