



SPECTRA



Mauro LANZA & Claudio PANARIELLO

RELICS

two new cycles for voices & ensemble

CREATIVE TEAM

Mauro Lanza, musical composition

Claudio Panariello, co-composition (*new cycle for voices & ensemble*)

HYOID

Elise Chauvin, soprano 1

Naomi Beeldens, soprano 2

Fabienne Seveillac, mezzo-soprano

Andreas Halling, tenor

Tiemo Wang, baritone

Pieter Stas, bass

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Tille Van Gastel, flute

saxophone TBC

Pieter Jansen, violin or Bram Bossier, viola (tbc)

cello TBC

Frank Van Eycken, percussion

Hampus Lindwall (guest): positive organ

Filip Rathé, conductor

Antonella Fenech, art historian: consultant & 'co-librettist'

lights & scenography TBD

Planned premiere: fall 2023

Confirmed coproducer: Muziekcentrum De Bijloke, Ghent.

Intention note

What do the *Testamentum Porcelli*, a parodic middle-age text, describing the last wills of Grunnius Cocotta, an imaginary pig, the mysterious 'Shroud of Turin' and artificial intelligence have in common?

In '*Disiecta Membra*', composer Mauro Lanza sets to music a selected inventory of twelve body parts that the pig — right before being slaughtered — bequeaths to twelve categories of will beneficiaries. One can draw a comparison between this parodic list and the amass of dismembered bodies of saints that (still) populate catholic churches all around Europe. This reference to relics is suggested by the use of several musical quotations issued from '*Membra Jesu Nostris*', the famous set of seven cantatas by Dietrich Buxtehude, appearing as faded remnants.

Curiously enough, what is considered to be the first Lutheran oratorio has the form of a massive immaterial reliquary for a body that left no material remains. The contrast between this longing for the absent flesh and the almost gruesomely and carnivalesque exuberance of the pig's testament was the basic source of inspiration for this song cycle.

Some relics however aren't tangible leftovers but icons which are said to have come into existence miraculously. These *acheiropoieta* (literally "made without hands") are images that are supposed to be created directly from some form of divine intervention, as is the face of Christ on the Shroud of Turin. These images carry the aura of holiness not by virtue of being a mortal remains of a Saint, but by virtue of being literally an imprint of the Divine.

The new cycle *~amazing-title~*¹ reaches back to this arcane mediaeval realm, relevant to contemporary art, some of which, as witnessed by the recent developments of AI creativity, is indeed created "without human hands", from concept to execution. The piece is based on the collaboration between composers Mauro Lanza and Claudio Panariello, and the computer in an asymptotic process which culminates in the meeting point represented by the work of art itself.

The excitement surrounding the development of Non-Fungible Tokens² seems also to share a lot of common points with the aura and the symbolic power that relics and sacred images had in the mediaeval world.

Like digital files, relics can be easily counterfeited or reproduced endlessly. An act of faith, a miracle, or a form of blockchain technology, grant uniqueness to objects otherwise devoid of any aura, creating artificial scarcity and thus value.

~amazing-title~ boils down *acheiropoieta*, AI-creativity and NFTs concepts in a cycle of "relics" formed by images, texts and music: each number of the cycle will have a correspondent AI generated relic-image that will become the NFT accompanying a relative explaining text (like a sort of hagiography, but AI-generated as well), counting on the historical consulting of Antonella Fenech who will provide academic expertise in relics historical sources.

The ideas of computational creativity and of co-creativity play a crucial role in *~amazing-title~*: if the first concept refers to the aim to model, simulate and replicate creativity using a computer, the second relates to the possibility that artists and computers can collaborate integrating their specializations and ultimately co-acting in the creation of the final musical work.

¹ working title

² NFTs are units of data stored on a digital ledger, called a blockchain, that certifies a digital asset to be unique and therefore not interchangeable.