

newpolyphonies

a vocal performance by Myriam Van Imschoot and HYOID Voices



© Myriam Van Imschoot

Manyfold, meditative, monstrous, machinic, mimetic, mesmerizing, minuscule, mighty, methodical, momentary, mystical.

In *newpolyphonies* 4 singers of HYOID Voices join forces with 15 performers to create a curious high mass where small differences have big impact.

Inspired by insects, climate marches and airplane traffic coming to a halt, the leitmotif of this concert/performance is not the loud collective chant, but the experience that each individual - like a link in a chain - can set a vortex of sounds in motion.

Concept and direction: Myriam Van Imschoot **Co-creation and performance:** HYOID voices: Fabienne Seveillac, Andreas Halling, Els Mondelaers, Gunther Vandeven **Performance:** 15 local performers **Sound design and electronic concept:** Fabrice Moinet **Sound engineer:** Wannas Gonnissen **Electronics assistant:** Matthieu Virot **Light Design:** Lucas Van Haesbroeck **Advice lay-out and costume design:** Nadine Van Imschoot, Filip Eyckmans **Producer:** Hiros **Delegated producer:** La Muse en Circuit **Co-production:** Muziekcentrum De Bijloke, Kunstenwerkplaats, Kunstencentrum BUDA (Kortrijk) **In collaboration with:** Walpurgis **Supported by:** the Flemish Government, Vlaamse Gemeenschapscommissie **Internship:** Sophia Bauer **Thanks to:** Emmanuel Desmyter, Jean-Manuel Candenot, all participants who joined us during the rehearsals, Marcus Bergner, Björn Schmelzer's seminars, Ismail Fayed and the lab of radical polyphony with the support of Sarma, Myriam Pruvot, the performers of What Nature Says, Bahae Eddin Rouas

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A recording of the performance is available, taped during its premiere at De Bijloke on 17.10.2020 and not intended for promotional purposes.

vimeo.com/497975405

Password: NP

28.07.2020
Darmstädter Ferienkurse
Darmstadt
POSTPONED

17.10.2020
De Bijloke
Gent
PREMIERE

21 - 22.11.2020
Kaaithater
Brussels
POSTPONED

08.05.2021
BUDA
Wilde Westen
Night Air Festival
Kortrijk
INSTALLATION

03 - 04.07.2021
Kaaithater
Brussels

09.08.2021
Darmstädter Ferienkurse
Darmstadt

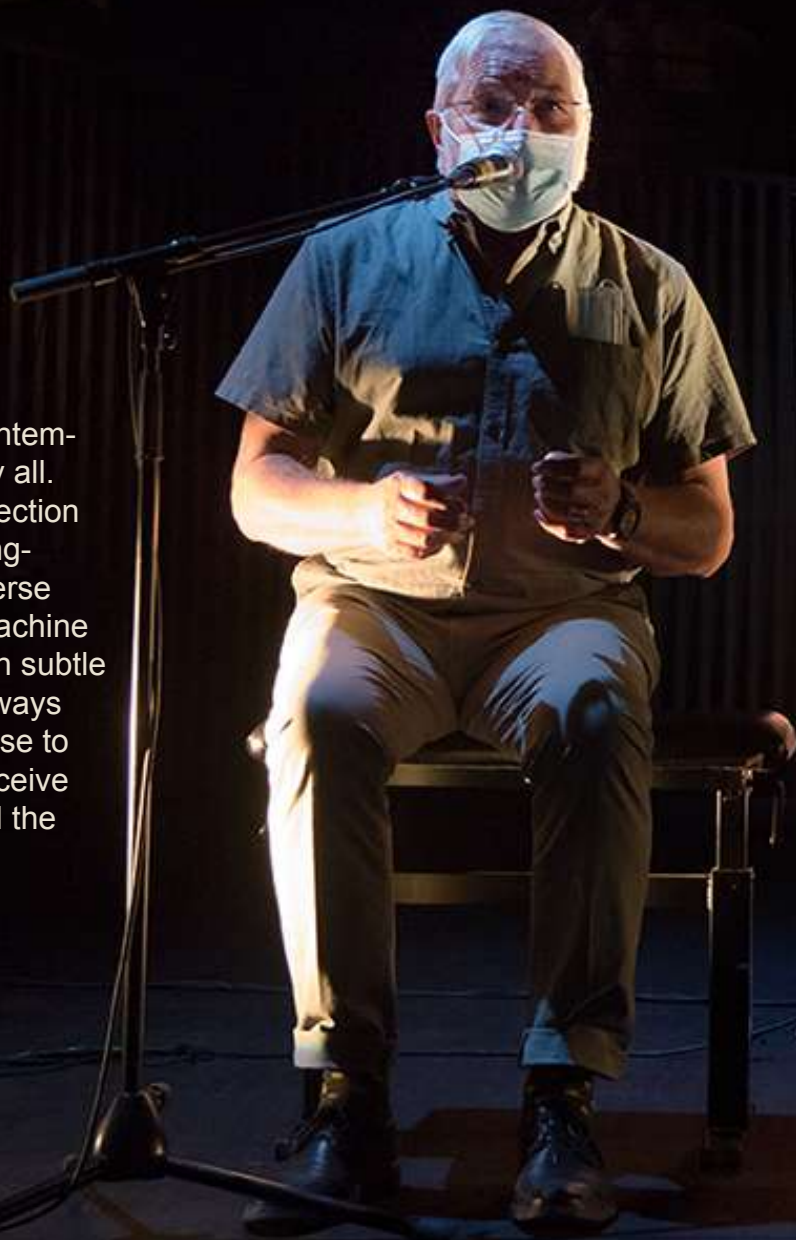
Documentation



POLYPHONY REVISITED

Myriam Van Imschoot and HYOID Voices revisit polyphony: the art of weaving independent voices into a whole. Since the late Middle Ages, this musical tradition conditioned audiences of all ages to listen to the surprising variations of an intricate sound machine, pulsating with vocal drives and harmonic alliances. *newpolyphonies* transfers this Western musical legacy from the cathedrals to the theater in tune with a world in transition. The piece is performed by 4 singers and 15 to 20 local performers, who make tides of sound wash from all sides of the space to create a mass, where each individual can be a motor and have impact.

newpolyphonies is contemporary music made by all. It invites to hear connection where there is seemingly none. In this multiverse human, nature and machine sounds interbreed with subtle and swelling force, always holding a question close to heart. How do we perceive the 'togetherness' and the 'many' of polyphony?



A COMMUNITY OF VOICES

Myriam Van Imschoot on the composition

Multiplicity in/with/through voices has held my attention from the exorcist reenactments of sound archives in my early work and the collaborations with vocalists who embody different voice techniques to the 'chorus' in both nature and society. Throughout I have been fascinated by how sound reveals and diagnoses the social fabric with potential for healing connection.

In *newpolyphonies* the singers and me have created 'sound cells' and sound relations that optimize correspondances between seemingly very different worlds as if creating a system of communicating vessels. Many of these sounds are uncommon and require extended techniques, like growing extra muscles and organs in the performer's body.

Our inspiration came from the stridulation and drum of insects, the buzzing and humming of swarms, the turbulence of air-planes, the sounding of the tissues of bones and flesh or the adornments with which singers color notes in classical music, like the trillo, vibrato, tremolo's.

The composition constructs with the 'cells' a 'vibration habitat'. Space is altered, not in the least through listening. We play the spectrum of noise, cacophony, homophony, heterophony, and in the midst of the sound mass polyphony appears (or disappears again) as an event for the listener with and beyond recognition.





COLLABORATION AND PARTICIPATION

Workshops & outreach

An important aspect of the project *newpolyphonies* is to create and involve a wider community of performers who are trained in workshops. The workshops hold experience central. Time to develop an array of sounds, awareness & listening give a common ground.

The workshop is built up out of 3 sessions of around 4 hours. The participants take part in all sessions. The third and final workshop takes place in the performance space.

In the performance every one involved engages in an interplay of relations, rhythms, nuances.

It is important for me to stay close to that way of working and relating to the world. I'm deeply grateful for that experience. More than ever in this moment of crisis/changing, gathering in a group and make magic is needed for me.

Participant Lucia Palladino, an artist, researcher and performer recently based in Brussels



REACTIONS

Audience & performers

It is about time.

It is about time that we meet.

It is about time that you speak in voices.

It is about time that they are in concert.

It is about time that I listen:

insects, birds, humans, stars.

Igor Dobricic

What surprised me the most was how naturally newpolyphonies united abstraction and technology with deep human cooperation and being together. And how minimal and at the same time grand the design is. These are terms that I used to see as opposites and tended to associate with very different artistic languages and biotopes. Not any more. The ingredients of the performance are present from the beginning. Impressive how a shifting soundscape, only with the presence of the group of sound makers, without extra visual adornment, could hold the attention the whole time.

Delphine Hesters

There could not have been a better piece than this one to celebrate my return to the theatre. I am taken on a journey where the delicacy with which each choice is made, and sound is produced invites me to really open up my ears and sensitivity. (...) The performance leaves me with a longing for more. My body feels different than it did before the performance started.

Benjamin Vandewalle

First and foremost: what a pleasure to dwell amongst the human crickets! I could have stayed with that sound for a longer time. It was touching to experience the special human-animal exchange that was brought to the stage. Humbling: no need for big words or busy talk to make a point. Hopeful: voices and sounds make us feel part of something larger, a fantastic eco-system. The singers conveyed this insight with an incredible 'natural' attitude and without much ado. A contemplative space was created for the spirit to rest, and the soul sighed with contentment.

Eva De Groote

Ingenious but not pretentious.

Ann Weckx

I remember the semi-darkness and the sonic landscape that unfolded. The improbable sounds and movements. The transformations in perception and consciousness. For me as an audience member: to dissolve in the collective, a state between passive and active, without having to do something. A kind of dreamtime, surreal and yet very concrete.

Ruben Nachtergaele

For more reactions, visit our [website](#).

A soundscape that reveals over time an acoustic space rich in relief and variations of timbre. Personal experiences and collective memories emerge through subtle spatialization games of the performers, lights, and innovative electro-acoustic processes where each ingredient is rigorously measured, making this musical adventure a work rich in poetry. Sylvain Cadars, sound engineer at IRCAM



BIOGRAPHY MYRIAM VAN IMSCHOOT

Myriam Van Imschoot makes vocal performances, installations and film. She holds a unique position in the art field, moving in and between media and institutional fields with a keen interest to experiment with contexts. Her work was supported and presented by International Sculptural Rotterdam, Binaural Sound arts Center, ExtraCity, Kaaitheater, MaerzMusik, Campo, Actoral, etc.

After working with sound archives as her main medium, she has been exploring the live voice in long-distance communication, resulting in a cycle of deconstructive yodel duets (HOLA HU, 2012) and an ensemble of women creating vocal performances on the basis of a trill that is occurring in Africa, the Middle East and the diaspora. YOUYOUYOU (2014), a stunning whirlwind that is composed as a prolonged 'collective' cry in crescendo, became a seminal repertory piece. Le Cadeau (2018, collection Argos) is the film in which the group conveys the power of tender revolt and solidarity.

What Nature Says (2015) is a vocal performance based on imitations by humans of their 'natural surroundings'. In this 'eco-fair' tale Myriam further pursues her desire to stage 'forms' that speak of the attempt by humans and animals alike to communicate with a sense of urgency in the face of impossibility. The work was awarded in the category of best performance pieces by the Finnish critics.

Site-specific creations expand her work in theaters, galleries and concert halls to the public space of mountain ranges, railway station areas, rooftops, squares, parks and pools. The participatory aspect of her work gained further prominence in collaborations inspired by practices or places that hold democratic potential, like the universe of the choir IN KOOR! (2017, a musical theater piece directed with Willem De Wolf and 25 laymen singers), and the routines of a swimming pool in SPLASH! (2018, directed with Christine Desmedt with 55 local participants).

Currently, she is exploring 'new polyphonies' and their social and political implications. Besides the performance newpolyphonies with HYOID (2020) this involves in 2021 the community-based sound poetry project with Marcus Bergner (Le Brass), the publication residence with Cairography Collective in Kunsthal Gent and a version that remixes newpolyphonies in an autonomous installation with an orchestra of 20 small speakers.

For more info: [Digital Portfolio](#)

BIOGRAPHY HYOID

HYOID is a Brussels-based group of classically trained vocal soloists specialized in new music and transdisciplinary performance. The group strives to challenge and expand traditional concert formats, while cultivating close partnerships with composers, performers and artists of its generation. They perform a cappella as well as with instruments, tape or electronics, and adapt their line-up to each production. HYOID (/ˈhaɪɔɪd/) gets its name from the U-shaped hyoid-bone, a bone helping with diction and tongue movement, the only free-floating bone in the human body.

Recent performances include venues and festivals such as De Bijloke (Gent), November Music (Den Bosch, NL), HCMF (Huddersfield, UK) and Performatik festival at WIELS (Brussels). HYOID received critical acclaim for 'A History of the Voice' by Irish composer Jennifer Walshe, premiered at Transit (Festival 20·21, Leuven, BE) in 2017 and to be performed again in 2020 at GAIDA Festival (Vilnius, LT) and at De Bijloke. The following year, HYOID performed in theatre group Ontroerend Goed's 'Loopstation' at Vooruit (Gent) and at KVS/Klara Festival (Brussels).

In 2020, HYOID was invited by Opera Vlaanderen for 'A Symphony of Expectation', a performance directed by Krystian Lada with Luciano Berio's 'Sinfonia'. HYOID also premiered 'newpolyphonies', a collaboration with Myriam Van Imschoot, in de Bijloke (Ghent), as well as 'GAME 245: The Mirror Stage' by Bernhard Lang, in partnership with IRCAM, at the Transit festival (Leuven). In 2021 HYOID will tour its collaborations with Jennifer Walshe, Myriam Van Imschoot and Bernhard Lang and will premiere 'Journal d'un usager de l'espace' with choreographer Benjamin Vandewalle, the Centre Henri Pousseur and composer Maija Hynninen in a production based on Perec. Amongst other projects for 2022-2023, HYOID will sing Berio's 'Sinfonia' again with the Antwerp Symphony orchestra, give a new program built around Berio's 'A-Ronne' with Filip Rathé and the Spectra ensemble, collaborate with Eleanor Bauer and Chris Peck and give two new cycles by Mauro Lanza, again with Spectra.

HYOID has received grants and support from IMPULS Neue Musik, Ernst von Siemens Musikstiftung and the Flemish government. From the season 20/21 for 3 years on, the ensemble is artist-in-residence at De Bijloke, Gent.

ON THE COLLABORATION WITH MYRIAM VAN IMSCHOOT

It was with 'What Nature Says' that I first experimented with a creation by Myriam Van Imschoot. We, the audience, had no idea of what to expect, and this disorientation created an incomparable listening experience: total, without prejudices, beyond any style. Myriam comes from a different scene than mine (that of contemporary classical music) and that is what fascinates me: she manages to create rich, surprising and challenging soundscapes via a totally different creative process. Hence my desire to involve HYOID as soon as possible in this sound research, and in the opening and enrichment (including later as performers in other more traditional projects) that she would bring us well beyond the show itself.

Fabienne Seveillac



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