

ORFEO

By Silvia COLASANTI



A melologue for narrator and instrumental ensemble
after Books X and XI from Ovide's *Metamorphoses*

Simultaneous projection of **Axel Arno's film *Orfeo***
(Commissioned by the Paris Mozart Orchestra and the Philharmonie de Paris)

Claire GIBAULT
PARIS MOZART ORCHESTRA

Recent concerts in venues such as

Philharmonie de Paris
Théâtre Le Liberté, Toulon, France
Teatro Lauro Rossi, Macerata, Italy

Presentation by Silvia Colasanti

The story of Orpheus moves us because it is the story of a failure: the failure to reconcile two great mysterious and primordial forces of human existence, love and death. The myth also explores themes as familiar to mankind today as they have always been - the brevity of life and the immortality of art; the power of music to help us live with pain; the power of poetry; art as an expression of reality; the conflict between reality and the imagination; and finally the extraordinary bond between man and nature. Orpheus is a modern hero, human and fragile, who does not know how to control his feelings; turning back to look at Euridice, he breaks the spell through his disobedience. A hero then, but irrational and far from perfect, who suffers the two-fold torture of not being allowed to turn and look at his beloved, and the fears engendered by his overpowering passion. Although distracted by the madness of love, Orpheus is immediately aware that he has lost Euridice for ever, and will never be able to free her from the Realm of Shadows. No longer able to delight, his love song becomes a dirge.

Orfeo (2009) is a kind of concerto for narrator and ensemble, alternating between words and music. The music plays an intensely dramatic role, expressing a primordial state of mind ruled only by feelings. At certain moments the music heightens the meaning of the words, emphasising particular details; at other times the sounds express all the things that have not been said. That's why text and music are sometimes heard together, sometimes one or the other is heard alone. When Orpheus is leading Euridice back from the Underworld there is a section of instrumental music to express his moment of doubt, of desperate indecision between the passionate impulse to look and know, and the rational check or brake of the taboo. This is followed by another musical section to express the joy and pain felt by Euridice on seeing Orpheus' face; it's a reinterpretation of the aria Monteverdi wrote for this very moment in his opera *L'Orfeo*, here scored for a horn placed behind the audience. Music alone, far off, represents the arias sung by Orpheus after his return from the Infernal regions, and in the finale it evokes his violent death at the hands of the Bacchantes, his suffering, his desire to regain his loss and his final descent into Hades. Ovid leaves us with a wonderful image: the severed head of Orpheus carried along by the stream, continually singing, while nature responds to his songs with the sound of the waves lapping upon the shore.

Instrumentation

10 musicians Available in French with narrator Eric
narrator Genovese *Comédie-Française*
conductor

Performed on tour in local language with
local actor



With Silvia Colasanti's dramatic music and Axel Arno's powerful film, *Orfeo* is an intense evening of mythology, poetry, evocative music and soul-searching sun-soaked Mediterranean landscapes.

Silvia Colasanti *composer*

Silvia Colasanti studied at the Conservatory of Santa Cecilia in Rome before going on to perfect her craft with Fabio Vacchi, Wolfgang Rihm, Pascal Dusapin and Azio Corghi. Winner of many major competitions, among them Forum des jeunes compositeurs Tactus (Brussels), Composer Competition Zeitklang, International Composers Competition Musik Fabrik No (Vienna), Lopez Graça Competition (Lisbon), she was awarded the prestigious Goffredo Petrassi Prize by the President of the Republic in Italy. In August 2007 she was composer in residence at the Civitella Ranieri Foundation in New York, and in 2010 was awarded the Nino Carloni Prize for young composers. In July 2013 she won the European Composer Award for her work *Responsorium*. Her compositions have been performed by many major orchestras including the Orchestra della Toscana Florence, Orchestre National de Belgique, Orchestra Verdi Milan, Orquestra Metropolitana Lisbon and Orchestra Nazionale RAI Turin. The Orchestra Maggio Musicale Florence commissioned her opera *Il sole, di chi è to to* a libretto by Roberto Piumini. Other works have been heard in some of the world's most prestigious concert halls and festivals, among them the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia Rome, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées Paris, Konzerthaus Berlin, Festival Pablo Casals Prades, Biennale Musica Venice, Settembre Musica Turin, Kuhmon Chamber Music Festival Finland, Milano Musica Festival and Accademia Musicale Chigiana Siena.



« A heartbreaking story, a most kinetic music with a luminous orchestration » Zibeline



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