

EMPAC



THE MUSIC
OF
SALVATORE
SCIARRINO

THU / APR 14

7:30 PM



PROGRAM

Infinito Nero (1998) —

flute, oboe, clarinet, percussion, piano, violin, cello, voice

Lo Spazio Inverso (1985) —

flute, clarinet, celesta, violin, cello

— INTERVAL —

L'Altro Giardino (2009) —

flute, english horn, clarinet, percussion, piano, violin, viola, cello, voice

Nicholas DeMaison, conductor

Amanda DeBoer Bartlett, voice

Laura Cocks, flutes

Andy Nogal, oboe + english horn

Eileen Mack, clarinets

Julia Den Boer, piano + celesta

Matthew Gold, percussion

Pala Garcia, violin

Hannah Levinson, viola

John Popham, cello

INFINITO NERO

—

estasi di un atto
di Salvatore Sciarrino (da Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi)

l'anima si trasformava nel sangue, tanto da non intendere poi altro che sangue, non vedere altro che sangue, non gustare altro che sangue, non sentire altro che sangue, non pensare altro che di sangue, non potere pensare se non di sangue. E tutto ciò che operava la sommergeva e profondava in esso sangue

influirsi influssi influiva rinfluiva e il sangue influiva rinfluiva influssi
rinfluire rinfuisce rinfuisce influssi rinfuivono influssi rinfuivono
superesaltando

allora il Santo mi versò sul capo un vaso e il sangue mi coprì tutta.
Anche la Santa versò. Il latte mescolandosi col sangue mi fa una bellissima
veste. Obumbrata la faccio

o, o (*silenzio*) o, o, o (*sil.*)

o se le piante potessero avere amore, non griderebbero altro

o, io non lo so (*sil.*)

timui timore amoris. Timui timore amoris. Timui timore amoris (*sil.*)

ma dillo, ma dillo

mors intravit per fenestras. Ma tu perché

INFINITE BLACK

—

ecstasy in one act
by Salvatore Sciarrino (based on the writings of Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi)

the soul was transforming into blood, understanding nothing but blood,
seeing nothing but blood, tasting nothing but blood, feeling nothing but
blood, thinking nothing but blood, unable to think anything but blood.
And everything it did, submerged and sunk it into that very blood

flowing in in-flowing influx flowing out and the blood flowed in flowed
out flows out flows out out-flowing influx outflowing overexalting

then the Saint poured his cup over my head and the blood covered all of
me. And so did the woman Saint. The milk mixed with blood makes a
beautiful habit for me. Covering my face

oh, oh, oh (*silence*) oh, oh, oh (*silence*)

oh if the plants could have love, they would shout of nothing else

oh, I do not know (*silence*)

I have feared my love's fear. I have feared my love's fear. I have feared my
love's fear (*silence*)

but say it, but say it

death enters through windows. But because

figure immagini e facce, aspirazione, ispirazione e respirazione in te (*sil.*)

vieni

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

vieni, vieni

con la corona : le sue spine, lunghe, trapassano il Padre Eterno in cielo

egli scrive su di me con il sangue. Tu con il latte della Vergine. Lo Spirito con le lagrime

vieni

non si aprino le nuvole, si bene il vergineo ventre (*sil.*) si ma

vieni, vieni, deh, vieni, o, vieni vieni (*sil.*)

ohimé, vivendo muoio (*sil.*) o, o, o (*sil.*)

orsù eccomi in terra (*sil.*) non posso ir più giù io (*sil.*) et sì (*sil.*) o savia pazzia (*sil.*)

io non intendo (*sil.*) è meglio il tuo, sì, sì (*sil.*) ohimé (*sil.*) tu sei senza fine, ma io vorrei veder in te qualche fine

figures, images and faces, aspiration, inspiration and respiration in you (*silence*)

you come

openings on your body unknown to us. Doorways, windows, holes, cells, apertures in the sky, caverns. Bottomless trickling. They are the wounds in which I lose myself

come, come

with the crown: its long thorns pierce the Eternal Father in heaven

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

come

the clouds do not open, but the virginal womb does (*silence*) yes but

come, come, ye, come, oh, come come (*silence*)

alas, I die living (*silence*) oh, oh, oh (*silence*)

now here I am on earth (*silence*) I can no longer go further down (*silence*) and yes (*silence*) oh wise madness (*silence*)

I don't understand (*silence*) yours is better, yes, yes (*silence*) alas (*silence*) you are endless, but I would like to see an end in you

CURATORS NOTE

From the first moment that I walked into the Concert Hall at EMPAC, I knew that it was the best venue in the world for the music of Italian composer Salvatore Sciarrino (b. 1947). The incredible quietness the room offers is the ideal canvas for listening to the faintest of sounds, placing the otherwise inaudible on full display. I struggled for years to find the right ensemble to present this work and in the end conductor and Rensselaer faculty member Nicholas DeMaison and I decided to make our own. The musicians tonight have been in residence at EMPAC all week, rehearsing the music, but also understanding the space.

It is almost impossible to experience the music of Salvatore Sciarrino passively. Its delicacy demands that the audience actively listen and participate through their attention. If your ears are open, you will find something almost impossible to hear.

NOTES

Infinito Nero – Infinite Black

The story of sixteenth-century Saint Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi is so incredible that it can only be described as mythic. Born of a wealthy Florentine family, she took a vow of chastity at the age of ten and became obsessed with what would become a lifetime of self-torture in the name of the Lord - including self-flagellation, starvation, and solitude. Soon after entering a convent at the age of sixteen, Maria began to experience severe ecstasies (or raptures) that would take hold of her, sometimes for days at a time. During these ecstasies, Maria would remain in a silent, disassociated trance—on occasion completely paralyzed, but more often she would just continue her regular chores. After long periods of muteness, Maria would then rapidly spew torrents of words, both frightening and profound. The church believed her to be a prophet and clairvoyant, but one cursed with receiving messages from both God and Satan simultaneously. A team of nuns was assigned to follow her at all times to record her words, which filled 5 volumes over six years. At the time of her death, at age 41, Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi was a veritable celebrity—drawing crowds from far and wide seeking miracles. She was canonized in 1669.

After discovering a newly published edition of her “writings” in the late 1980s, Italian composer Salvatore Sciarrino immediately became fascinated. He recognized an embodiment of his artistic aesthetic—silences pregnant with potential, punctuated by shards of transformative sound. The resulting work, *Infinito Nero*, exists on the edge of hearing, in a world that is far removed from our industrial, noise driven world. The ominous breaths and heartbeats, imitated by the instrumental ensemble, frame the vocalist's volatile outbursts as exhaustive moments of relief from the tense pressure of silence.

*Lo Spazio Inverso –
The Inverse Space*

gentle/piercing
stoic/unruly
rhythmic/floating
sustained/abrupt
islands of sounds viewed both intimately and from afar

*L'Altro Giardino –
The Other Garden*

A reworking of Sciarrino's 2008 *Il giardino di Sara*, *L'Altro Giardino* presents a different perspective to Sciarrino's approach to vocal music. Inspired by his love for all things Sicilian—the un-translated program note waxes poetically and at length about the beauty of Sicily—Sciarrino uses a folk song assembled by Sicilian poet Lionardo Vigo Calanna that tells the tale of Sara and her lover lost in a fantastic garden.

Sara, Saridda, susiti matinu
Senti lu cantu di lu risignolu
Sutta la finestra c'è un jardu
'Mpedi di aranciu cu li rami d'oru
Passa n'aceddu e si cunsa lu nidu
Poi si lu cunsa cu tri pinni d'oru
Pasa l'amanti e si 'nni pigghia unu
Poi si lu menti 'ntra 'na gaggia d'oru
La gaggia siti vui, donna d'amuri
L'aceddu sugnu iu ca c'haju a stari

*(canto di Aci, raccolto da Lionardo Vigo, Catania 1857, citato in
Lizio-Bruno, Messini 1867)*

Salvatore Sciarrino (Palermo, 1947) boasts of being born free and not in a music school.

He started composing when he was twelve as a self-taught person and held his first public concert in 1962.

But Sciarrino considers all the works before 1966 as an developing apprenticeship because that is when his personal style began to reveal itself. There is something really particular that characterizes this music: it leads to a different way of listening, a global emotional realization, of reality as well as of one's self. And after forty years, the extensive catalogue of Sciarrino's compositions is still in a phase of surprising creative development. After his classical studies and a few years of university in his home city, the Sicilian composer moved to Rome in 1969 and in 1977 to Milan. Since 1983, he has lived in Città di Castello, in Umbria.

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

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

Sciarrino taught at the Music Academies of Milan (1974–83), Perugia (1983–87) and Florence (1987–96). He also worked as a teacher in various specialization courses and master classes among which are those held in Città di Castello from 1979 to 2000.

From 1978 to 1980, he was Artistic Director of Teatro Comunale di Bologna, Academic of Santa Cecilia (Roma), Academic of Fine Arts of Bavaria and Academic of the Arts (Berlin), Sciarrino has won many awards, among the most recent are: Prince Pierre de Monaco (2003) and the prestigious Feltrinelli International Award (Premio Internazionale Feltrinelli) (2003). He is also the first prize winner of the newly created Salzburg Music Prize (2006), an International Composition Prize established by the Salzburg Land.

In 2006 his new opera *Da gelo a gelo*, co-produced by Schwetzingen Festspiele, Opéra National de Paris and Grand Théâtre de Genève, was performed to great acclaim. In 2008 La Scala Philharmonic Orchestra performed his *4 Adagi* and *12 Madrigali* which were premiered in the summer of the same year in a portrait series dedicated to him by the Salzburg Festival.

Amanda DeBoer Bartlett, soprano, is a contemporary music specialist based in Omaha, NE. She performs with Ensemble Dal Niente, Quince Contemporary Vocal Ensemble, Hasco Duo, and ECCE Ensemble. She is also the founder and director of *Omaha Under the Radar*, a contemporary dance, music, and theatre festival in Omaha, Nebraska.

Ms. DeBoer has appeared on festivals and concert series throughout the country, including the Ecstatic Music Festival, Resonant Bodies Festival, Fast Forward Austin, Opera Omaha Summer Concert Series, Holland Stages Festival, Oscillation Series and others. Recently, she participated in the US premiere of Karlheinz Stockhausen's *KLANG* cycle at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and premiered the role of Ann in John Aylward's new opera *Switch* at Le Laboratoire in Cambridge.

She has also been particularly inspired by collaborations with composers Holly Herndon, Christopher Cerrone, Erin Gee, Marcos Balter, Ray Evanoff, Morgan Krauss, Aaron Einbond, Eliza Brown, Max Grafe, and Jonn Sokol.

Born and raised in Omaha, NE, Ms. DeBoer moved to Chicago to study at DePaul University where she received a Bachelor of Music. She received a Masters degree from the University at Buffalo, where she studied with acclaimed contemporary interpreter Tony Arnold, and a Doctorate of Musical Arts from Bowling Green State University.

Nicholas DeMaison is a New York-based conductor and composer whose performances, including dozens of premieres of new operatic, instrumental, and choral works which have been described as “consistently invigorating” (*The New York Times*), “spine tingling” (*Feast of Music*), and “enchanted” (*Seen and Heard International*). Currently the music director of the Rensselaer Orchestra and Concert Choir at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, NY, his recent and upcoming conducting engagements have included appearances at the Beijing Modern Music Festival (NCPA, Beijing), Handan Grand Theater (Handan, China), Monday Evening Concert Series (Zipper Hall, Los Angeles), The Stone (New York City), Brooklyn Academy of Music (Brooklyn, NY), and Troy Savings Bank Music Hall (Troy, NY), with such groups as ICE, American Opera Projects, Encompass New Opera Theatre, Anagram Ensemble, Tribeca New Music, and Ensemble sans Maître (somewhat ironically). He has worked on the music staff for broadcast productions with *Live from Lincoln Center*, Carnegie Hall, PBS, the New York Philharmonic, Gerard Schwarz's All Star Orchestra project, and as a music supervisor for critically acclaimed production company Giants Are Small. Nicholas is the director of choral activities at the Walden School Creative Musicians Retreat in Dublin, NH.

Laura Cocks is a New York based flutist who has worked in a wide array of creative environments as a performer and promoter of contemporary music. Her work aims to highlight emerging composers; she has premiered over 150 works in the last five years. Laura is flutist and executive director of TAK ensemble, a founding member of the Louis Moreau Institute in New Orleans; and a full time member of the Nouveau Classical Project. She has performed across North and Latin America and Europe as a soloist and chamber musician in ensembles such as The London Sinfonietta, ICE, Wet Ink Ensemble, Ensemble Pamplemousse, and Ensemble Bonne Action in venues that range from Queen Elizabeth Hall in London's Southbank Centre, Orchestra Hall in Chicago, and The Guggenheim Museum in New York City to artist squats, diners, and highway medians. Laura can be heard with Wet Ink Ensemble on Carrier Records and ICE on ECM.

French-American pianist **Julia Den Boer** is a strong advocate of contemporary music. Based in New York City, she performs internationally and has commissioned and premiered numerous works. Julia is a recipient of the Solti Foundation award, was awarded the Prix Mention Speciale Maurice Ohana at the 2012 International Orleans Competition, and won the ninth annual Mikhashoff Trust Fund for New Music Pianist/Composer Commissioning Project with composer Zosha Di Castri. Her performances have been broadcasted on Q2, CBC Radio 2, the SWR, and France Musique.

Pala Garcia is a critically acclaimed violinist, balancing a full performance schedule with her work as an educator and advocate of community engagement. As the co-founder of Longleash, an “expert young trio” (*Strad Magazine*) specializing in contemporary music, she also leads the Loretto Project, the trio’s graduate-level composition seminar and concert series in Louisville, KY. Ms. Garcia has performed as a guest on numerous occasions in some of the world’s finest ensembles, including the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Orchestra of St. Luke’s, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, and Ensemble Modern. Ms. Garcia has been active in community engagement projects led by Carnegie Hall and the Weill Music Institute since 2010, and is on the faculty of the Juilliard School’s Music Advancement Program.

Matthew Gold is a percussionist in the Talea Ensemble and a member of the Talujon percussion group. As a soloist and chamber musician he appears frequently on festivals and programs across the U.S. and internationally presenting concert programs, master classes, and lectures. Mr. Gold is an instructor of percussion at Williams College where he directs the Williams Percussion Ensemble, the I/O New Music Ensemble, and the annual *I/O Festival of New Music*. He serves on the artistic staff of the Wellesley Composers Conference and the faculty of the Institute and Festival for Contemporary Performance at Mannes College. Mr. Gold has performed with the New York Philharmonic on its *Philharmonic 360* program at the Park Avenue Armory, and performs regularly with the Mark Morris Dance Group and the New York City Ballet. He is the drummer and percussionist in Paul de Jong’s new band, IF.

Violist **Hannah Levinson** is an active performer in New York City, devoted to performing music of the past 50 years. She is a founding member of the violin/viola duo andPlay, an ensemble that works to commission new works and perform lesser-known works for their instrumentation. She has worked with contemporary music groups such as ACME, ensemble mise-en, Talea Ensemble, North/South Consonance, and The Rhythm Method Quartet. Hannah also performs traditional classical repertoire regularly and is a member of the Albany Symphony Orchestra. Based in New York City, Hannah is an active teacher, and is on faculty at Western Connecticut State University. She completed her MM in contemporary performance at the Manhattan School of Music, and graduated from Oberlin College and Conservatory with degrees in both Russian and East European studies and viola performance. Hannah is currently pursuing a PhD in performance at NYU Steinhardt, studying with artist faculty member Karen Ritscher.

Clarinetist **Eileen Mack** grew up in Australia and is now based in New York City. She is a member of post-minimalist band Victoire and amplified ensemble Newspeak (which she also co-directs), and has performed with many other NYC new music groups including Wet Ink, Alarm Will Sound, Signal Ensemble, the Bang on a Can All Stars, and the Wordless Music Orchestra. She has performed in venues around the world including Zankel Hall, the Sydney Opera House, the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, and London’s Royal Albert Hall; with conductors including Pierre Boulez, Oliver Knussen, Brad Lubman, and Alan Pierson; and has appeared as soloist at the Canberra International Chamber Music Festival and the Bang on a Can Marathon. Her discography ranges from work on the *Crocodile Hunter* TV and movie soundtracks to releases on New Amsterdam Records, Tzadik, Innova, and Warp Records. Eileen holds degrees from Stony Brook University, the Manhattan School of Music, and the Queensland Conservatorium.

Andrew Nogal lives in Chicago, where he is a member of Ensemble Dal Niente, the CSO MusicNOW Ensemble, Contempo, and the Elmhurst Symphony Orchestra. He has also performed with Nunc, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and the Oregon Symphony. His festival appearances include the Ojai, Astoria, and Great Lakes Festivals, and he studied for three summers under the direction of Pierre Boulez at the Lucerne Festival. Awarded first prize at the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition 2011, he made his Asian recital debut at the International Double Reed Society 2015 conference in Tokyo.

John Popham is a cellist based in Brooklyn, New York. His playing has been described as “brilliant” and “virtuosic” (*Kronen Zeitung*), “warm but variegated”, and “finely polished” (*The New York Times*). He was recently praised by Fanfare Magazine for his “velvet tone” and “remarkable technique”. Currently a member of Either/Or Ensemble and Longleash, Mr. Popham has also performed internationally with groups including Klangforum Wien, Talea Ensemble, and the Argento Chamber Ensemble. He has recorded for Tzadik, Carrier, New Focus, Albany, and New World records, and is the recipient of numerous awards including a Fulbright Research Grant and the Manhattan School of Music Full Scholarship.

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