

Andrea Molino

- there is no why here -

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the names of evil

(2008-2010, provisory title)



multimedia music theatre

Texts and dramaturgy: Giorgio Van Straten, Andrea Molino

Vocal and Instrumental Soloists
Performers
Symphony Orchestra
Live electronics
Live video

Duration: 1h45 ca.

(stand: June 4th, 2010)

Driven by thirst, I eyed a fine icicle outside the window, within hand's reach. I opened the window and broke off the icicle but at once a large, heavy guard prowling outside brutally snatched it away from me. - Warum? - I asked him in my poor German. - Hier ist kein warum, - (there is no why here), he replied, pushing me inside with a shove.

Primo Levi, *Se questo è un uomo*

"Why me?"

"That is a very earthling question to ask, Mr. Pilgrim. Why you? Why us for that matter? Why anything? Because this moment simply is. Have you ever seen bugs trapped in amber?"

"Yes." Billy, in fact, had a paperweight in his office which was a blob of polished amber with three ladybugs embedded in it.

"Well, here we are, Mr. Pilgrim, trapped in the amber of this moment. There is no why."

Kurt Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse 5*

"Stop, don't fight, I'm the fool! God does exist, God does not exist, what's the point? Stop! Did you ever ask yourself if man does exist?... "God created man in his own image... it's beautiful! Shlomo in God's image"... But who wrote this sentence in the Torah? Man, not God. Man! He wrote it without modesty, comparing himself with God. God maybe has created man, but man, man, the son of God, he created God only to become himself. Man has written the Bible out of fear of being forgotten, without caring about God. We don't love and we don't pray to God, but we implore Him, we implore Him to keep going. What do we care about God for what is He? We care only about ourselves. So the question is not only whether God exists, but also whether we exist."

Monologue of Shlomo the Fool, in the movie "Train de Vie" by Radu Mihaileanu

Can a man be good who is afraid? The pain, that makes him afraid, becomes immeasurable through the pain that he himself has created out of fear, and through which he again creates fear. Fear is what makes evil and evil is what makes fear. And so the circle closes between nothing and destruction and gives birth to itself eternally. Death is spread out of fear of death. Terror and horror are spread out of our own terror and horror.

Eugen Drewermann: *Strukturen des Bösen (Structures of Evil)*

There remains, however, one fundamental problem, which was implicitly present in all those postwar trials and which must be mentioned here because it touches upon one of the central moral questions of all time, namely upon the nature and function of human judgement. [...] Those few who were still able to tell right from wrong went really only by their own judgements, and they did so freely; there were no rules to be abided by, under which the particular cases with which they were confronted could be subsumed. They had to decide each instance as it arose, because no rules existed for the unprecedented.

Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: a report on the Banality of Evil*

- there is no why here -

is a multimedia music theatre project conceived and composed by Andrea Molino, in collaboration with Giorgio Van Straten for the text choice and the dramaturgy.

The provisory title is taken from "If This Is A Man" by Primo Levi: it is the answer he received from a guard in Auschwitz who snatched an icicle from him that he wanted to melt to quench his thirst. The basis of the project's dramaturgy is, following Hannah Arendt, „the fundamental problem of the nature and function of human judgement“: the critical point where the traditional ways of distinguishing between right and wrong, between good and evil, fail; the *solitude* of man in this condition, the ultimate necessity to assume *responsibility*. This failure takes place precisely in the situation where this ability to distinguish would be most useful: when the very definition of the essence of the human condition is at stake.

- **there is no why here** - is the final chapter of a trilogy which started with two previous multimedia projects by Andrea Molino: *CREDO*, 2003-2004, on ethnic and religious conflicts, and *WINNERS*, 2005-2006, on "winners and losers". Different important constituents of these two projects are also present in this one:

- the theme is non-literary and has strong social connotations;
- the choice of a non-narrative dramaturgy;
- the use of textual and audiovisual contributions from different sources, organically inserted into the texture of the musical and multimedia composition;
- the presence on stage of a symphony orchestra – a major theatrical character – together with the vocal and instrumental soloists;
- an integrated and dramaturgical use of new communication technologies.

The different elements of the musical, theatrical and multimedial vocabulary (music, texts, multimedia, interactivity, sound, stage, light) are conceived together and converge into an organic language, through the instrumental use of technology.

As in the above mentioned past works, the project chooses to follow a non-narrative and non-metaphoric path. The Austrian philosopher Jean Améry, a survivor of Auschwitz, writes:

"It would be totally senseless to try and describe here the pain that was inflicted on me. Was it 'like a red-hot iron in my shoulders', and was another 'like a dull wooden stake that had been driven into the back of my head'? One comparison would only stand for the other, and in the end we would be hoaxed by the hopeless merry-go-round of figurative speech. The pain was what it was. Beyond that there is nothing to say. If someone wanted to impart his physical pain, he would be forced to inflict it and thereby become a torturer himself."

Also in this case the metaphoric language fails exactly where it would be most useful: in those situations which ultimately define the very essence of the human condition.

The flow of the performance is thus created through a continuous sequence of musical-theatrical *moments*, each one approaching one or more aspects of the theme, connected through a non-narrative but linear dramaturgy. Different materials – texts from different sources, audiovisuals contributions, live connections with other locations - closely linked to the main theme, will be worked out in the dramaturgy and inserted into the theatrical language.

A specific and innovative approach to the possibilities of multimedia is a particularly important element. Different synchronized video sources, projecting for example the live images from video cameras on stage and external webcams, will create an organic counterpoint to the music, the text and the theatrical performance.

Particularly important will be the theatrical characterization of external locations, chosen according to their relevance to the main theme of the project. (Wim Wenders: “*The sense of the place*”). Audiovisual contributions of different types, live and pre-recorded, will reach the venue from those locations, and will be inserted into the musical and theatrical composition.

The video contributions will be physically *played* by the performers. A specifically developed multimedia software (MeRit) will allow the musicians to *musically* interact with the audiovisual material: the video becomes an *instrument*.

– ***there is no why here*** - is an international project led by the Teatro La Fenice in Venice, in co-production with Opera Australia, Sydney, and in collaboration with the Fondazione Claudio Buziol in Venice and “Action and Passion for Peace”, the independent non-profit association supporting Nobel Peace Laureates activities. Further international contacts are in development.

The world premiere is currently planned in Venice in 2012; further performances will follow in Australia in 2013.



opera
australia



Independent non-profit Association
supporting Nobel Peace Laureates activities



Andrea Molino

www.andreamolino.net

Andrea Molino, composer and conductor, was born in Turin and studied in Turin, Milan, Venice, Paris and Freiburg. He lives in Zurich.

From 1996 to 2007 he was Musical Director of the *Pocket Opera Company* in Nuremberg. His own projects *the smiling carcass* (1999), based on the subject of advertising, and *Those Who Speak In A Faint Voice* (2001), about the death penalty (both in collaboration with Oliviero Toscani), are examples of his commitment to innovative, multimedia-oriented music theatre. He conducted the death penalty project, featuring the American vocalist David Moss, in Basel and Nuremberg with the *Phoenix Ensemble Basel* and in New York and Milan with the *Klangforum Wien* with the support of the European Community.

From 2000 to 2006 Andrea Molino was Artistic Director of *Fabrica Musica*, the music department of the Italian communication research centre *Fabrica*. His multimedia music theatre piece **CREDO**, on ethnic and religious conflicts, was premiered under his musical direction in April 2004 at the *Staatstheater Karlsruhe* (DVD *Naïve*, Paris, 2006) and then performed at the Stazione Termini in Rome with the *Orchestra del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino*, at the *World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates*. In July 2005 it opened the *Queensland Music Festival* in Brisbane, Australia. His last project with *Fabrica*, **WINNERS**, on "winners and losers", was premiered in July 2006 at the *Brisbane Festival*; the European Premiere followed in October 2006 at the Grande Salle of the *Centre Pompidou* in Paris.

The multimedia staged concert **un Temps vécu, ou qui pourrait l'être** had its world premiere on June 6th, 2008 at *Le Fresnoy*, in Lille, where Molino was "Invited Artist" for the season 2007-2008. Since 2008 he is Music Curator at the *Fondazione Claudio Buziol* in Venice.

In October 2009 he was Artistic Director of the *World Venice Forum*, the international event in support of the initiative by H.H. the Dalai Lama and Nobel Peace Laureate Adolfo Perez Esquivel to create in Venice the International Environmental Criminal Court. In the Gala Concert, at the *Basilica dei Frari*, he conducted the *Orchestra del Teatro la Fenice* in the world premiere of his **Of Flowers And Flames**, a multimedia concert in occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Bhopal gas tragedy, in India.

As a conductor, he opened the 2010 concert season of the *Teatro La Fenice* in Venice with the world premiere of Bruno Maderna's **Requiem**. At the *Teatro La Fenice* he had already opened the 2005 edition of the *Venice Music Biennale* with Heiner Goebbels' **Surrogate Cities** and in 2007 he conducted the world premiere production of Luca Mosca's opera **Signor Goldoni**. After his debuts at the *Edinburgh International Festival* with the *BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra* and at the *Wiener Konzerthaus* with the *Klangforum Wien*, he conducted a.o. *The Queensland Orchestra* at the *Queensland Music Festival* and the *Brisbane Festival*, the *Orchestra del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino*, the *Bochumer Symphoniker*, the *Badische Staatskapelle Karlsruhe*, the *Dresdner Sinfoniker*, the *Norddeutsche Philharmonie*, the *Klangforum Wien*, the *Phoenix Ensemble Basel*, the *Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana*, at the *Teatro Comunale* in Bologna, *Teatro dell'Opera* in Rome, *Staatstheater Darmstadt*, *Teatro Lirico* in Spoleto, *RomaEuropa Festival*, *Settembre Musica* in Turin, *Musik der Jahrhunderte* in Stuttgart, *Zagreb Biennale*, *European Centre for the Arts* in Dresden.

His recordings are published in CD and DVD by *Stradivarius*, Milan (since 1992), and *Naïve*, Paris. His performances and recordings have been broadcast, among others, by BBC (UK), RAI (Italy), ABC (Australia), Radio France, WDR and BR (Germany), RTSI and RTSR (Switzerland), RTBF (Belgium) and RNE (Spain). His compositions are published by *RAI Trade*, *Nuova Stradivarius* and *Ricordi*.

Giorgio Van Straten

Giorgio van Straten was born in 1955 in Florence. He is married and has one daughter. He is a writer and novelist and works in the field of cultural administration.

He is currently member of board of directors of *RAI*, the Italian national broadcasting company.

In the '80 he was Director of the *Istituto Gramsci Toscano*; a member of the City Council in Florence from 1990 to 1995; President of the *Orchestra Regionale Toscana* from 1985 to 2003. For five years (1997-2002) he was a member of the Administrative Board of the *Venice Biennale* and, at the same time, (1998-2002), president of *Associazione Generale Italiana dello Spettacolo* (AGIS). Between 2002 and 2005 he was General Manager of Florence Opera House *Teatro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino* and from 2005 to 2008 he was president of the *Azienda Speciale Palaexpo* (which coordinates in Rome *Scuderie del Quirinale* museum, *Palazzo delle Esposizioni*, *Casa del Cinema* and *Casa del Jazz*).

His first novel, **Generazione**, was published in 1987 by Garzanti; was followed by **Hai sbagliato foresta** (1989, Garzanti), **Ritmi per il nostro ballo** (1992, Marsilio), **Corruzione** (1995, Giunti), **Il mio nome a memoria (My Name, A Living Memory)** (Mondadori, 2000, premio Viareggio) and **La verità non serve a niente** (Mondadori, 2008).

In 2002 he published **L'impegno spaesato** (Editori Riuniti), a collection of non-fiction writings. He curated **Ebraismo e antiebraismo: immagine e pregiudizio** (Giuntina, 1989), **Autobiografia di un giornale: "Il Nuovo Corriere" di Firenze, 1947-1956** (Editori Riuniti, 1989) and **La ghisia delle Cure e altri scritti di Romano Bilenchi** (Cadmò, 1997). He translated works by Hodgson Burnett, London, Stevenson and Kipling.

He is one of the directors of the literary magazine *Nuovi Argomenti*.