



Concert 5

Tuesday, 25 October 2016, at 8.00 pm

Preconcert talk at 7.00 pm

Guest of the talk: Francesco Dillon

Slovenian Philharmonic, Marjan Kozina Hall

Paroles y palabras

Ivan Fedele (b. 1953)

Paroles y palabras (2000)

four compositions for soprano and cello

- I. Allons
- II. Ça ira
- III. Querida presencia
- IV. ¡Hasta siempre!

Valentina Coladonato – soprano

Francesco Dillon – cello

Ivan Fedele

Palimpsest (2006/07)

fourth string quartet

- I Tropos – Sequentia
- II. Tropos secundus – Sequentia secunda
- III. Organum – Cauda prima – Cauda secunda
- IV Tropos tertius – Corale – Sequentia tertia
- V. Organum secundum – Sequentia quarta
– Corale secundus

Quartetto Prometeo

Aldo Campagnari – violin

Jacopo Bigi – violin

Massimo Piva – viola

Francesco Dillon – cello

intermission

György Ligeti (1923-2006)

String Quartet No. 2 (1968)

- I. Allegro nervoso
- II. Sostenuto, molto calmo
- III. Come un meccanismo di precisione
- IV. Presto furioso, brutale, tumultuoso
- V. Allegro con delicatezza

Quartetto Prometeo

Ivan Fedele

Morolòja Kè Erotikà (2010/11)

for soprano and string quartet

Valentina Coladonato – soprano

Quartetto Prometeo

Ivan Fedele (b. 1953)

Paroles y palabras (2000)

for soprano and cello

Paroles y palabras collects into a single cycle four short compositions written by Fedele for soprano and cello. In each case, the text coincides with the title of the piece: *Allons, Ça ira!*, *Querida presencia*, *¡Hasta siempre!*. The first two texts are in French (*Paroles...*) and the others are in Spanish (*...y palabras*).

Allons was written especially for a concert held at La Scala to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Resistance and of Italy's liberation from the Nazi fascists, for which many composers were invited to offer an original contribution. Rather than turning to any specific texts or themes, Fedele decided to express his personal intentions through the first word of the *Marseillaise*, the universal hymn to liberty. However, the sense of the piece is anything but hymn-like (and thus collective), as it is presented as an individual path of self-discovery and recognition. In the words of the composer, the piece focuses on "the solitude of man and his stupor in the face of tragedy, but at the same time his rebellion and desire to recompose the fragments of lost 'sense' by reconstructing his own identity. This is the basis for the content and form of this short work in which the song – at first broken up and at the limits of aphasia – gradually pieces together the initial phonemes until forming a single, simple and strong word (*allons*), which calls us to the ideals of liberty, equality and solidarity".

Just as in *Allons*, composed a few months before and also written for female voice and cello, *Ça ira* constitutes both the title and the text of the piece. A few syllables that, in both cases, belong to famous revolutionary songs. Only a few syllables, but nevertheless charged with historical and emotional connotations, so that, as the composer writes, "the sense expressed is not to be found in the 'storyline', but in the resonance that the iteration can create in the listener, a resonance that is musical, certainly, but also historical, emotional, psychological. The very syllables become significant, and out of these a song is formed that alternates between various figurative styles, all nonetheless aimed at reproducing – in the case of *Ça ira* in a particularly extrovert manner – the atmosphere of hope, trust and revolutionary courage of the songs from which they are taken".

Querida presencia and *¡Hasta siempre!*, written in the same period, share with the two previous pieces an inspiration, poetic and vaguely nostalgic, derived from revolutionary utopias. While the two French pieces relate to European revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries, the Spanish texts evoke those of South America in the 20th century and revolve around the image of Ernesto "Che" Guevara.

In *Querida presencia*, the figure of Guevara pervades, in an intimate dimension, the estranged meter of a metaphysical tango. At first, the voice and the instrument are far apart (the cello plays a rhythmic bass alone for 18 bars), and then they gradually draw closer, tighter, more entwined, until finally reaching an acrobatic canon that

marks the drunken climax of the dance, when the image of the two tangueri comes to life before sliding into the languid finale.

The legendary commander's famous salute, *¡Hasta siempre!*, is captured in a form that tries to express in music the "inflexible sweetness" that was, and still is, one of his most human traits. The agogic marking at the start of the piece reads *Come un vento andino* and as such the sound of the cello is "blown along" as the instrument is required to produce veritable gusts of rapid thirty-second notes, occasionally interrupted by the sounds of the strings being struck with the left hand. The voice is then caught up in this incessant turmoil and is forced into endless dynamic ups-and-downs (almost every note has a dynamic marking, often highly contrasting with the previous and subsequent indications) in a course where the interval of a minor second plays a major role, unmistakable signs of the "sweetness" that the composer is trying to evoke.

Claudio Proietti

Ivan Fedele

Palimpsest (2006/07)
fourth string quartet

Ivan Fedele considers his four string quartets to be very important steps in his evolution as a composer. However, he believes that the first and last, albeit for different reasons, occupy a preeminent place. The *Primo Quartetto* ("Per accordar") because it breaks the ice as far as the genre is concerned ("it took me two years to write a piece lasting ten minutes!"; he

wrote) and marks a definitive start to his catalogue of works; *Palimpsest* because it represents a clear turning point in his language, developed over the previous five years and essentially characterised by two factors. The first is a question of form and concerns the extreme economy of the material used in correspondence with a great variety in the elaborative options. The second, on the other hand, is of a linguistic nature: the definitive assumption of a microtonal language, equally inspired by a spectralist approach and a serialist framework, in a continuous dialectic of alternation between continuity-contiguity and discontinuity-differentiation. In the first case, the two matrices tend to unite, while, in the second, they offer frequent opportunities for semantic short-circuits, both on a syntactic and a lexical level.

Dedicated to the Arditti String Quartet, who have reserved a special place for the music of Fedele in their repertoire, the work is divided into five macro-movements, each of which is made up of various sections. The first movement consists of the diptych *Tropos - Sequentia*, the latter employing just the viola and the cello. The second movement, *Tropos secundus*, which features the same nervous and strongly vertical writing as the previous *Tropos*, is followed by *Sequentia secunda*, characterised by a more linear course, much like the first movement. When the play is exhausted, fading into a series of barely perceptible tremolos of harmonics, we reach the evocative opening of the third movement (*Organum*), which offers a sonic and harmonic space of extraordinary and fascinating charm. Even though the four instruments are perfectly isochronous, the writing is such that we

perceive dephasings, blurs, reverberations and refractions; in other words, an approach to instrumental writing that seems to imitate electronic effects. *Cauda prima* and *Cauda secunda* conclude the third movement. The fourth movement is made up of *Tropos tertius*, in which fleeting elements occasionally assail the granitic solidity of the structure, *Corale*, a solemn chant based on highly expressive intervals, and *Sequentia tertia*, in which the cadenza-like elements finally get the upper hand. The last movement consists of *Organum secundum*, *Sequentia quarta* and *Corale secundus*.

Claudio Proietti

György Ligeti (1923-2006) String Quartet No. 2 (1968)

An anecdote about the small size of the music world:

In 2014, Slowind invited Ivan Fedele to take on the artistic direction of the 18th Slowind Festival 2016. He immediately placed on the programme a concert by the string quartet Quartetto Prometeo, an ensemble with which we were not familiar, but that Ivan assured us was excellent. Almost a year later, the superb Italian pianist Emanuele Torquati, who was a guest of Slowind Festival 2012, invited us to appear in Florence, where, in a marathon concert, we performed works by Slovenian composers Nina Šenk, Vito Žuraj and Vinko Globokar, as well as the extraordinarily demanding *Ten Pieces for Wind Quintet* by György Ligeti. When we arrived back home from the concert,

our bassoonist Paolo told us that he had met an excellent cellist at the concert – the artistic director of the concert series in which we had performed – and that this cellist had said that his quartet would be appearing in Ljubljana in 2016. Brief inquiries confirmed our assumption that the cellist was in fact Francesco Dillon, who today performs at our festival as a founding member of Quartetto Prometeo. To add to the coincidences, today Quartetto Prometeo perform Ligeti's *String Quartet No. 2* from 1968, the same year that the composer wrote *Ten Pieces for Wind Quintet*, which Francesco heard our quintet play last year in Florence.

Given that we performed *Ten Pieces for Wind Quintet* in Ljubljana just a few months ago, I will allow myself a few comparisons between the two compositions, as they were written in the same year:

Both works were written quite some time after left his native Hungary, where Ligeti had mainly composed in the style of Béla Bartók. He was by then up to date with the currents of the Western avant-garde, and had already created his own compositional style. As Ligeti himself once said, in his *String Quartet No. 2*, he engaged with the compositions for string quartet that served as his model: Beethoven's *String Quartets Op. 130* and *Op. 132*, Mozart's *String Quartet KV 465*, Bartók's *Quartets No. 4* and *No. 5*, and Berg's *Lyric Suite*. In Ligeti's second quartet, it is not possible to find tonal material from these compositions; we can, however, detect some typical extreme "psychological" or "dramaturgical"

situations, such as the very high-speed motoric pizzicati, the descent of textures to the lowest point of the overall events (a low, quiet, long unison note), the frenetic chaos, the veiled shimmering of minor thirds alongside which, from afar, emerges a long, hushed note, as well as other features. Similar situations, achieved with similar sonic material, albeit in a different formal structure, can also be found in *Ten Pieces for Wind Quintet*, and, of course, in some other compositions that Ligeti created in the 1960s, such as *Apparitions*, *Requiem*, *Atmosphères*, *Aventures*, *Nouvelles Aventures* and *Lux aeterna*.

The composer once said that the five movements of *String Quartet No. 2* are only seemingly unrelated and so very contrasting, and that in fact “underground, each of them is strongly related to the others, with secret correspondences even flowing between them, almost rhymes ... all five movements are actually present at the same time” (Ligeti).

Ligeti’s *String Quartet No. 2* is dedicated to the LaSalle Quartet, who premiered the work in Baden Baden in 1969.

Matej Šarc

Ivan Fedele

Morolòja Kè Erotikà (2010/11)

based on an excerpt from the collection

“Canti di pianto e d’amore dall’antico Salento”

(collected and edited by Brizio Montinaro)
for female voice and string quartet

Canti di pianto e d’amore dall’antico Salento (Poems about Tears and Love of Ancient Salento, Bompiani, Milan, 1994)

is one of the most important literary monuments in the language of Corigliano d’Otranto, the dialect “Griko”, which is unfortunately dying out. The author, Brizio Montinaro, collected records of these poems, which had been preserved from 1870 onwards, and added his own poems. He lovingly translated and annotated the original poems as someone who feels the vibrations of these sounds and memories in his own blood. The rare emotion of words from prehistoric times radiates from the originals, celebrating eternal human emotions with the freshness of the ancient Hellenistic ancestors, emotions that were so beautifully poured into poetry. I share with Brizio a love for our land and for ancient language, but also a love of culture in the broadest sense of the word and the emotions that it expresses. I have (again) set to music some of the most poignant verses of the collection. Life and love, death and pain. Themes addressed with all of the simplicity of everyday feelings, but with all of the depth of the millennial collective unconscious, which spreads ancient sound around itself, and yet is so very current in its words, words that do not want to die, do not want to be extinguished forever.

Ivan Fedele