

**DANIELE LOMBARDI: WORKS FOR PERCUSSION**

**JONATHAN FARALLI**

ATOPOS



foto copertina: Marco Grillo foto controcopertina: Roberto Masotti



When it comes to personal encounters, there are events for which the definition "mysterious" would be a huge understatement, and this is true of my meeting with Daniele Lombardi. I got to know the artist well (but the man far less so), witnessing a number of his musical performances both as a composer and a performer. These performances could occupy enormous spaces, especially when the famous 21 pianos were involved; I appreciated his dual talent for graphics and music, a sort of double-edged poetics, as we shall see; I admired his ceaseless efforts to disseminate the musical repertoire of the second half of the 20th century, especially Italian repertoire. Never would I have imagined that I would be dealing with his artistic legacy, after his sudden death in 2018, in my dual role as director of the Conservatorio Mascagni in Livorno, where part of his music library ended up, and as scientific head of the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, where his most treasured works will be preserved.

Daniele Lombardi was one of the most consistent and original figures on the Italian music scene at the turn of the last century and in the current one. The first distinguishing feature was his pictorial approach to music (*Ascoltare con gli occhi* - Listening with the Eyes - was the subtitle of a wonderful book dedicated to him shortly before his death). Yes, because image and sound were inextricable constants of his entire output, to the extent we would be hard pressed to use the word "score" to define them, given that they resemble, or actually are, highly elaborate graphic journeys. Everything composed by Daniele Lombardi could be defined as "sound graphics", or even "sound of the image", since no score conceived by him is devoid of a visual element that provides a line of inspiration for the performer ("visual notation" he himself called it when talking about *Glitch*, a piece dedicated to the memory of Luciano Berio). Not to mention those scores that are in fact gigantic paintings (starting with *Notazioni di fatti sonori* of 1972, and at least up to *Polychromia*, of 2014) where the performer is responsible for assigning pitch, intensity, rhythm and timbre by drawing inspiration from the pictorial markings. On the other hand, those who have had the good fortune of consulting Lombardi's scores know that many of them also include detailed captions in his very personal calligraphy, made up of capital letters reminiscent of the Renaissance writing invented by Poggio Bracciolini and his followers. On the other hand, the specific performance venue, often predetermined at the same time as the score was written, had an almost idolatrous importance for Lombardi, to the extent that works such as *Divina.com* inspired by Dante's tombstones in Florence, or *Non finito* for piano and video realised in the Tribuna of Michelangelo's David in the Galleria dell'Accademia, are conspicuous examples of his "poetics of place", an active part of the proposed soundscape. It made little or no difference whether the music was being performed indoors, or whether it was inspired by an outdoor environment. In this regard, I cherish a rare memory that also says something about his compositional method: *Capalbio, passeggiata per un musicista* (1981), is a piece dedicated to violinist Massimo Coen. Its musical lines are directly inspired by the contours of the Tuscan town's medieval walls. And speaking of a score intended for outdoor performances, something should be said about the "sound door" created for the Villa di Celle near Pistoia, Italy's largest environmental art gallery. The score of a violin piece inspired by Dante's Paradiso was reproduced there in bronze on the entire outer wall of the door of a private church.

At a time when the composers of the so-called avant-garde were working on more and more complex sound languages, often removed from any relationship with their audiences and cryptic even for insiders, Lombardi was working in the opposite direction, convinced "that the communication process for the author-performer-recipient could not be separated from this interactive mode", he said in an interview. And in this regard, the great events held not only in his native Florence, but also in Milan (*Atalanta fugiens*), Rome (*Concerto per Nam June Paik*), Siena, Paris, Berlin, and all the places where his monumental *Symphonies for 21 pianos* were performed, have lingered in the memory of the participants. In addition to his travelling companion, the piano, in Lombardi's world of sound, there are a number of instruments that are almost obsessively present, the flute, of every possible size, and a favourite flautist such as Roberto Fabbriciani, and percussion in all its guises, with the favourite performer, Jonathan Faralli.

So, it is no coincidence that the main pieces dedicated to percussion by the Florentine maestro are collected here and presented together by Faralli. And in this regard I'm thinking in particular, a bit like a synthesis of what was described above, of *Sator arepo tenet opera rotas*, the famous palindrome that in *Studio* (1994) is represented solely by a polychrome painting enclosed in a circle, while the actual score (1995) follows "to the letter" the individual characters that

compose the title as a palindrome, each represented by a page of music, and therefore by 25 pages in total, intended not only for percussion but also for live electronic accompaniment. An example of the extent to which painting and music were connected in Lombardi's imagination and compositional method, as a sort of "inseparable dual approach".

Renato Meucci

**Miroir 3** is part of a series of works with the same title but different numberings, dedicated to compositions in which the performance is accompanied by videos and/or tapes with sounds and ambient sound of specific locations. In fact, the work's subtitle is: Sassi nel pozzo del castello di Sermoneta [Stones in the well at Sermoneta Castle]. I performed the premiere of this piece at the Palagio di parte Guelfa on 15 April 2004 in Florence. The dialogue between performer and tape on this occasion takes place between the sounds of the stones falling into the well and the percussionist performing a set that includes not only more traditional instruments but also various ways of striking water. There are all sorts of faint, phantasmagorical sounds in the background made by instrumentalists and singers involved in the music courses held on the day of the recording in Sermoneta.

**Assolo** was first performed in Rome in 1981 by Giorgio Battistelli at the Rai auditorium of the Foro Italico during the XVII Nuova Consonanza festival. The composition is an ironic play on the role of the solo percussionist, who is engaged in quickly switching from one instrument to another, accompanied by a tape made entirely from the sounds of Russolo's intonarumori, a tribute to Futurism and percussion, both of which were much loved by the composer.

**Dal colore al segno** was inspired by a painted work that Lombardi gave me in one of our many meetings in his studio in Santa Croce in Florence, an abstract piece that served as a stimulus for ideas that later materialised in a new piece for percussion and tape. As often happens, intuitions are then left unfinished, or waiting for an event to regenerate them, even though the general idea of the piece was sketched out. By going back over the notes and sorting through the memories, I was able to reconstruct the piece and perform it at the Livorno Music Festival in 2019. As in the *Miroir* pieces, the work involves a well-defined tape, with a roaring thunderstorm. From this come sounds, atmospheres, and transmutations, from the white noise of falling rain, to the signs that transform the signifier into the signified.

**Montparnasse** was originally commissioned in 2006 by Mart di Rovereto for the exhibition "Luigi Russolo, vita e opere di un futurista [Luigi Russolo, Life and Works of a Futurist]". The music composed by the Maestro in collaboration with Simone Conforti was the soundtrack of the silent film by Eugene Deslaw, screened for the occasion. Afterwards, I reworked the track myself by adding more percussion instruments, in addition to those on the original tape that I had already recorded, turning it into a piece for percussion and tape. In its first version, the piece accompanied the vision of this famous Parisian street filled with culture and bustling with the earliest cars. However, this new version offers a more psychological description, a reflection on modernity, a sequence of instruments moving and chasing each other in the acoustic space of listening. Of course, the sound of the intonarumori also had to be included on the tape.

**Sator Arepo Tenet Opera Rotas** for percussion, tape and live electronics, had its first performance on 24 August 1995 at the Accademia Musicale Chigiana, at the Certosa di Pontignano. The piece I performed on that occasion, that is to say, in its first version, was monumental in size, far exceeding 60 minutes in duration. The work then spawned a number of other works, such as *Satomep* for viola, percussion and tape, and the piece presented on this CD, which is a shortened version of the original work, but respecting its nature as a palindrome. We can read how Daniele Lombardi described it: "this work refers to the well-known magic square, which in turn was cited by Anton Webern as an example of his own compositional approach. Each letter corresponds to a page of music written for a percussion set. During the performance, this live sound source is supplemented by another set of live electronics, natural sounds and sampled percussion that contribute to creating labyrinthine atmospheres".

Jonathan Faralli

## Jonathan Faralli

### Biography

Jonathan Faralli completed his musical studies in percussion and composition at the "L. Cherubini" State Conservatory of Music in Florence, graduating with honours.

He also completed a degree in the Sociology of Education at the University of Florence with a thesis on the profession of the musician.

He graduated in music education at the Conservatory of Fermo.

He pursued further studies at the Sweelinck Conservatorium in Amsterdam and then in Strasbourg.

In 1988, he won the international percussion competition cat. C at the Vibiensis Academy in Bovino. In 1994, in Dresden, with Les Percussion de Strasbourg, he won the "Blaue Brücke" award as the best performer for contemporary music in Germany.

He has been working as a tympanist and percussionist with the Orchestra della Toscana on an ongoing basis since its foundation in 1981 and with the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino orchestra since 1980.

He has been and still is called to work with the most renowned Italian orchestras playing in the most prestigious auditoriums and theatres in the world (Teatro alla Scala in Milan, Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, Carnegie Hall in New York, Concert Hall Opera City in Tokyo, Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires, Konzerthaus in Vienna, Wiener saal at the Mozarteum in Salzburg etc.) under the direction of the greatest conductors (Giuseppe Sinopoli, Zubin Mehta, Sergiu Celibidache, Yuri Temirkanov, Carlos Kleiber, Georges Prêtre, Riccardo Muti, Daniel Barenboim, Carlo Maria Giulini, Daniele Gatti, Claudio Abbado, etc.).

He performs solo and chamber music, holding masterclasses and concerts on all continents, and has worked with the most famous composers, including Daniele Lombardi, Luciano Berio, Salvatore Sciarrino, Franco Donatoni, John Cage and others, many of whom have dedicated their works to him. He has performed as a soloist at the world's most important festivals including the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Edinburgh International Festival and the Salzburger Festspiele.

He was a member of the group "Les Percussions des Strasbourg" from 1993 to 1996, playing in major European cities. He works with numerous other ensembles, including Richard Galliano, the Moscow Virtuosi, the European Music Project, Modern Times, and Musicateuze, among others. He plays in a duo with flautist Roberto Fabriciani.

He collaborates with the Music Research Institute "Tempo Reale" (musical computing and computer music) founded by Luciano Berio.

He has made many recordings as a soloist and with chamber groups, with leading record companies, including Arts, Stradivarius, Agorà, Zig zag, Brilliant, and Tactus. He has published many texts and essays in specialised journals and magazines and written several books for various publishing houses.

He has taught at the "Luigi Cherubini" Conservatory of Music in Florence, the "A. Buzzolla" Conservatory in Adria, and the "Achille Peri" Higher Cultural Institute in Reggio Emilia. He currently teaches at the "Pietro Mascagni" Conservatory in Livorno where he teaches the class in percussion instruments. From 1987 to 2017 he was a tutor for the percussion section of the Italian Youth Orchestra at the School of Music in Fiesole.



foto: Alessandro Botticelli



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LC-00129

### JONATHAN FARALLI

*Percussioni*

|   |  |         |       |
|---|--|---------|-------|
| 1 | Miroir 3 - Sassi nel pozzo del castello di Sermoneta<br>(per percussioni e tape)           | 2004    | 11:54 |
| 2 | Assolo<br>(per percussioni e tape)   | 1981    | 07:56 |
| 3 | Dal colore al segno<br>(per percussioni e tape)  | 2008/19 | 10:09 |
| 4 | Montparnasse<br>(per percussioni e tape)   | 2006    | 11:53 |
| 5 | Sator Arepo Tenet Opera Rotas<br>versione breve (per percussioni, tape e live electronics) | 1995    | 16:38 |
|   |  | TOTALE  | 58:30 |

*In memoria di Daniele, che ci manca*