



Intonarumori, ArtBasel Miami Beach, 2011, photo by Javier Sanchez

THE ORCHESTRA OF FUTURIST NOISE INTONERS

Luciano Chessa, Director

A Performa 09 Commission

These eccentric hurdy-gurdy instruments first created in 1913 still sounded musically radical after all these years.

Roberta Smith for The New York Times

The Orchestra of Futurist Noise Intoners is the only complete replica of futurist composer/sound artist Luigi Russolo's legendary intonarumori orchestra. The orchestra tours worldwide, presenting concerts that feature historical and new works commissioned from an all-star cast of experimental composers, some performing live alongside this orchestra of raucous mechanical synthesizers.

The orchestra's composers include Sonic Youth's founding guitarist Lee Ranaldo, seminal composer/vocalist Joan La Barbara, Einstürzende Neubauten frontman and Nick Cave collaborator Blixa Bargeld, avant-garde saxophonist John Butcher, Deep Listening pioneer Pauline Oliveros, Faith No More and Mr. Bungle vocalist Mike Patton, avant-garde musician Elliott Sharp, and composer/vocalist Jennifer Walshe collaborating with late composer and film/video artist Tony Conrad, among others.

For further details and touring information contact Esa Nickle at Performa on +1 212 366 5700, or email esa@performa-arts.org

HISTORY

As part of its celebration of the 100th anniversary of Italian Futurism, the Performa 09 biennial, in collaboration with the Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center (EMPAC) and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA), invited Luciano Chessa to reconstruct Russolo's intonarumori. Supervising Bay Area craftsman Keith Carey, Chessa succeeded in recreating for the first time Russolo's earliest intonarumori orchestra, originally unveiled in Milan in the Summer of 1913 (16 instruments—8 noise families of 1-3 instruments each, in various registers). As the first instruments capable of controlling noises through entirely mechanical interfaces, the intonarumori can be considered the forefather of today's synthesizer. Leading curators, sound artists and electronic/noise musicians in the world have been interested in the orchestra for this very reason.



Intonarumori, ArtBasel Miami Beach, 2011, photo by Javier Sanchez

Chessa's Orchestra of Futurist Noise Intoners debuted with *Music For 16 Futurist Noise Intoners*, an evening-length concert of original scores and newly commissioned compositions written specifically for this orchestra, curated by Chessa with Performa's Producing Director Esa Nickle. *Music For 16 Futurist Noise Intoners* previewed in October 2009 at San Francisco's YBCA's Main Theater and premiered in NYC's Town Hall the following November for Performa 09—both events were co-produced by Performa and SFMOMA, and featuring players from Minna Choi's Magik*Magik Orchestra. This production presented an impressive array of world premieres scored by such composers and ensembles as Blixa Bargeld, John Butcher, Tony Conrad, James Fei, Ellen Fullman, Ghostdigital with Finboggi Petusson and Caspar Electronics, Nick Hallett, Carla Kihlstedt + Matthias Bossi, Ulrich Krieger, Joan La Barbara, Pauline Oliveros, Pablo Ortiz, Mike Patton, Anat Pick, Elliott Sharp, Jennifer Walshe, Theresa Wong, and Text of Light. The production, also featuring Chessa's *L'acoustique ivresse* and the modern premiere of Russolo's *Risveglio di una città* in a new edition by Chessa, was hailed as one of the best events of 2009 by Roberta Smith in The New York Times' The Year in Arts.

In September 2010, Chessa presented OFNI's first Italian concert at the world's leading Futurist Museum MART, as part of the festival Transart. MART's concert featured performances by Nicholas Isherwood and included Sylvano Bussotti's *VARIAZIONE RUSSOLO-Slancio d'angoli*, and two new commissioned pieces by Margareth Kammerer and Teho Teardo. In March 2011 Chessa conducted the orchestra in a sold out concert for Berliner Festspiele Maerzmusik Festival, which included *Gramophone Saraswati*, a new piece by Amelia Cuni and Werner Durand. In December 2011, Chessa conducted with the New World Symphony in their new Frank Gehry-designed New World Center's Concert Hall packed to capacity as part of the Performa-curated special event to celebrate the tenth anniversary of Art Basel | Miami Beach. The performance included Joan La Barbara's *Striations* and the premiere of Lee Ranaldo's *It All Begins Now (Whose Streets? Our Streets!)*. Both pieces featured their respective composers performing alongside Chessa and the New World Symphony. A double LP dedicated to the Orchestra of Futurist Noise Intoners and documenting the first phase of this project has been released on the label Sub Rosa in November 2013. In December 2013, Chessa conducted the orchestra to a sold-out and energetic crowd at the RedCat in Los Angeles. Subsequent performances include standing ovation shows at the Berkeley Art Museum in 2013 and at the Cleveland Museum of Art, and two sold out shows at the ArtScience Museum in Singapore in 2015.



Intonarumori, installation view at The Cleveland Museum of Art, January 2015

PRESS REVIEWS

Mervin Beng for *The Straits Times*, Singapore (2015)

“Even compared with other new music performances this was a colorful affair, with 16 music teachers, students, musicologists and enthusiasts cranking wooden boxes and pulling levers that would vary their pitch and sound. Producing noises that ranged from drones to whirrs, clicks, rattles and some rather rude sounds, and complemented by the spoken voice and a megaphone, this was as much performance art as a musical recital. Chessa was a star. Even though the sound poems he performed were in Italian, rhythm and musicality totally captivated the sizeable audience. In Filippo Tommaso Marinetti’s *Bombardamento Di Adrianopoli*, the sounds of war that he reproduced evoked as much excitement as any war movie soundtrack.”



Intonarumori, performance view at The Cleveland Museum of Art, Gartner Auditorium, January 2015

Benjamin Lord for *X-Tra Contemporary Art Quarterly* (2014)

“Luciano Chessa, a musician and musicologist, has studied this photograph intensively for several years. He is probably the world expert on this picture on its close cousin, an alternate exposure of the same scene with a slightly different arrangement. Ever since he began looking at the photos while writing his dissertation on Russolo (published in 2004), he hasn’t been able to leave them alone, mining them for their every minute detail as a documentary record of the instruments. When RoseLee Goldberg, impresario of the Performa Festival in New York, invited him to recreate the instruments for concert performance I 2009, he began an extended project of reconstruction. At once scholarly and creative, Chessa’s project recreates a technique of the historic avant-garde bringing it into the present in a necessarily altered form. Given its massive scope, it also raises historically complex aesthetic, political, and musicological concerns that have so far escaped serious critical review. This essay attempts to situate and evaluate Chessa’s remobilization of the intonarumori within each of these realms.”

Sarah Dragovich for Art-Nerd San Francisco (2013)

“As the authority on Italian Futurist musicology, Chessa found a way to have futurist sound machines built, as they no longer existed from the early twentieth century. Chessa conducts and performs modern compositions of the futurists noise machines, which are each cranked by a musician. If you’ve missed out on these performances in the past I advise you to secure your tickets for Friday night, now! You are not going to want to miss the evening of pure creative energy Chessa brings to his audience, and the rare experience you will get by witnessing these noise machines in action. It will truly be a once in a lifetime experience.”

Graham T. Beck for Freize Magazine (2009)

“PERFORMA 09 marked the 100th anniversary of Futurism, and a number of events strove to move forward, while looking back at a few Italian forebears, though nothing that I saw accomplished this as marvelously as Music for 16 Futurist Noise Intoners at Town Hall. Luciano Chessa, who conducted the lion’s share of the programme, oversaw the reconstruction of 16 crate-encased, crank-and-lever-operated intonarumori (noise intoners) designed by Luigi Russolo in 1913. Chessa assembled an impressive batch of composers and performers to play the instruments, including Joan La Barbara, Mike Patton, Tony Conrad and the gayageum artist RaMi Seo, among many others. The mechanical twangs, metallic aches, and spring-loaded groans that partnered with silence, song, spoken word, and what sounded like a field of tin-legged crickets were as musical as they were mysterious. ‘What’s making those boxes tick?’ was never far from my mind, and the night’s sounds haven’t been since.”

Roberta Smith for The New York Times (2009)

“Performa 09, the Visual Art Performance Biennial, outdid its two previous incarnations, unleashing three weeks of more events than any person could possibly attend. The most memorable included the resurrection, at Town Hall, of the Futurist Intonarumori, or Noise Intoners; 16 of these eccentric hurdy-gurdy instruments first created in 1913 still sounded musically radical after all these years.”

Dave Mandl for Wire Magazine (2009)

“The 2009 edition of the Performa festival, the New York based performance art biennial, was dedicated to Futurism on the 100th anniversary of the movement’s foundation. The musical portion of this year’s festival was, appropriately, inspired by Futurist Luigi Russolo’s manifesto *The Art of Noises*, as well as his famous intonarumori, a set of mechanical instruments that represented one of the earliest attempts to compose with non-musical sounds. Music for 16 Futurist Noise Intoners at Town Hall was a concert performed entirely on new reconstructions of Russolo’s instruments—lovingly researched and built—by Luciano Chessa. Enclosed in a variety of wooden crates bearing manual cranks and metal sound horns and arranged across the full width of Town Hall’s large stage, the instruments were stunning to look at – perfect reproductions of the originals as seen in their few surviving photos. Concealed within their boxes, the actual components and workings of the intonarumori were a mystery, but the sounds made by the instruments were fairly limited. Not surprisingly, these were not pitched notes but the kinds of mechanical noises romanticised by the Futurists: grinding gears, buzzing strings, the crescendo/decrescendo of airplanes taking off and landing, the tick-tock of small woodblocks, and the plucking of what sounded like tiny toy guitars or ukeleles. Given this narrow range of unamplified and unprocessed sounds, there was little sonic variety in the pieces presented, despite the fact that the concert featured contributions from more than a dozen composers including Pauline Oliveros, Mike Patton, Joan LaBarbara, John Butcher and Blixa Bargeld. This leveling of the playing field was a virtue on a night highlighting the sounds of the intonarumori rather than the talents of the individuals composing for it. Nevertheless, several presenters managed to either push the limits of Russolo’s instruments or toss other elements into the mix. Nick Hallett added a pair of male vocalists singing deep, extended notes in harmony. The Icelandic outfit Ghostdigital brought in a toy trumpet and a hilarious shtick by frontman Orn Benediksson, who did a crazed soliloquy and capped it by chasing an imaginary person through the audience. Joan LaBarbara’s performance involved subtler theatrics, her voice mimicking the grinding gear sounds of the intonarumori while doing an exaggerated feline walk around the stage. Her piece also played with the physical space.

As the conductor swept his arms in slow broad movements across the stage, the players in the corresponding positions followed by dropping in and out along with his gestures. Several participants broke out of Russolo's tight mould by playing the crates themselves as percussion instruments: Mike Patton's piece in particular, used the percussive qualities of the wooded boxes well, with the entire ensemble at one point taking a detour into a Native-American style drum groove. Anat Pick's piece involved the most extreme misuse of Russolo's instrument, with one of the musicians playing it while rolling around on the floor."

Kurt Gottschalk for NY Press (2009)

"But the most exciting of the many events is Music for 16 Futurist Noise Intoners, a Town Hall concert of original scores and new commissions for the intonarumori, a sort of din-producing hurdy-gurdy invented by Luigi Russolo in 1913. Einstuezende Neubauten frontman Blixa Bargeld, minimalist saxophonist John Butcher, drone pioneer Pauline Oliveros, avant rock vocalist Mike Patton, downtown guitarist Elliott Sharp and violin experimenter Tony Conrad take the stage Nov. 12 to respond to the replicas of these early sound machines, constructed by composer and musicologist Luciano Chessa. This is the very first reconstruction of Russolo's first intonarumori ensemble of 16 instruments," Chessa said. "A great deal of the instruments included have never been reconstructed before, among them the scoppiatori, the gorgogliatori and the sibilatore. When Performa commissioned me to reconstruct these instruments, I immediately pictured the intonarumori orchestra on a stage, in performance mode. Never in this process did I divorce the historical reconstruction project, with its obvious need for historical accuracy, from the performance project."



Intonarumori, performance view at The ArtScience Museum, Singapore, February 2015

TOURING INFORMATION

Performance Program

Working with the presenter, Luciano Chessa will curate a well-balanced program from the repertoire below, also taking into consideration the presenter's budget and performers' availability.

OFNI's repertoire includes:

- 1. Compositions that do not require the presence of the composer or a specific performer, and only need a group of 16 musicians to be recruited by the presenter in loco:**

Among these are three surviving historical pieces:

Luigi Russolo: *Fragment from Risveglio di una città* (1913). Score performed in a diplomatic edition by Luciano Chessa (2009)

Paolo Buzzi: *Pioggia nel pineto antidannunziana* (1916). Score realized by Luciano Chessa (2009)

Paolo Buzzi: *Un attimo della mia giornata a palazzo Monforte* (1916) Score realized by Luciano Chessa (2009)

and the following newly-commissioned pieces:

Blixa Bargeld: *The Mantovani Machine Part I: Motor* (2009)

Christopher Auerbach-Brown: *Money is the Devil* (2016)

Christopher Burns: *Three Standard Stoppages* (2015)

Joshua Carro: *Her Slow Gasp* (2013)

Luciano Chessa: *Recreation of Russolo's 1913 "On dine à la terrasse du Casino" AKA "Si pranza sulla terrazza del Kursaal"* (2010)

Luciano Chessa: *Vathek on the Edge of the Chasm* (2013)

James Fei: *New Acoustical Pleasures (A Furious Meow)* (2009)

Ellen Fullman: *Sunday Industrial (Post Futurist Reverie)* (2009)

Raffaele Guadagnin: *Anti-Academical Electric Pasquinade* (2011)

Ulrich Krieger: *Back to the Future, California* (2009)

Gregory Moore: *Eight Moments* (2013)

Phill Niblock: *Disseminate* (1998). Score realized by Luciano Chessa

Tim O'Dwyer: *Si o no!* (2015)

Pauline Oliveros: *Waking the Noise Intoners* (2009)

Pablo Ortiz: *Tango Futurista* (2009)

Mike Patton: << KOSTNICE >> (2009)

Teho Teardo: *Oh!* (2010)

- 2. Additionally, any of the following newly-commissioned pieces can be performed by hiring a performer in loco:**

Luciano Chessa: *L'acoustique ivresse (Les bruits de la Paix)* (2009) [requires a bass singer]

Luciano Chessa: *Vathek's Aria on the Edge of the Chasm* (2013) [requires a tenor]

Daniele Lombardi: *Caro Russolo* (1983) [requires a pianist]

Nick Hallett: *Falcon Heene, Ascending* (2009) [requires a bass and baritone singer]

Elliott Sharp: *Then Go* (2009) [requires singer (a p'ansori singer, ideally)]

- 3. The following commissioned compositions can only be performed if the composer is present:**

Blixa Bargeld: *The Mantovani Machine Part II: Cucina (Gamberetti Eroica sul campo di battaglia)* (2010) featuring Blixa Bargeld, voice

Blixa Bargeld: *The Mantovani Machine Part III: Gas* (2011), featuring Blixa Bargeld, voice

Joan La Barbara: *Striations* (2009) featuring Joan La Barbara, voice

Sylvano Bussotti: *VARIAZIONE RUSSOLO - slancio d'angoli* (2007), featuring Sylvano Bussotti, piano and Nicholas Isherwood, voice

Margareth Kammerer: *Blues or Woman in the Mind at Night* (2010), featuring Margareth Kammerer, voice

Carla Kihlstedt + Matthias Bossi: *Dosso Casina* (2009), featuring Carla Kihlstedt, Matthias Bossi and Moe Staiano

Annie Lewandowski: *Do You Burn?* (2013), featuring Annie Lewandowski, voice, santur

Anat Pick: *Tongues and Levers* (2009), featuring Anat Pick, voice

Lee Ranaldo: *It all begins now (Whose Streets? Our Streets!)* (2011), featuring Lee Ranaldo, electric guitar

Theresa Wong: *Meet Me at the Future Garden* (2009), featuring Theresa Wong, voice [requires a second vocalist]

4. Additional commissions:

Amelia Cuni and Werner Durand: *Gramophone Saraswati*, (2011) featuring Amelia Cuni, voice, and Werner Durand, woodwinds

Jennifer Walshe + Tony Conrad: *Fancy Palaces* (2009), featuring Jennifer Walshe and Tony Conrad

5. Improvised performances

Text of Light: Decoding Text of Future Light

SfSoundGroup: let us return to the old masters...

Ghostigital with Finboggi Petursson and Casper Electronics Óhljóðahljóðfæri (Mu Mu)

6. Other intonarumori performances

Text of Light (Lee Renaldo, Christian Marclay, Ulrich Kreiger and Alan Licht) live music for early 20th Century films. The quartet performed a live score for “Berlin: Symphony of a Great City (1927)”

7. Futurist Banquet

The Orchestra of Futurist Noise Intoners is also available as an evening of noise compositions + a futurist banquet, which can be produced either with NYC's chef Matthew Weingarten, or with a local chef. In case this is of interest, additional information can be provided.

8. Additional Futurist performances

Francesco Cangiullo: *Piedigrotta* (1913): A futurist sound poem performed by Luciano Chessa

Also available is a staged version of *Piedigrotta* accompanied by five additional performers to be recruited in loco, and playing Neapolitan noisemakers built by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum under Chessa's supervision. The staged version premiered at the Guggenheim's Peter B. Lewis Theater in 2014.

9. Lectures/Demonstrations

Conductor/composer Luciano Chessa can give presentation lectures on the following topics: History and reconstruction of Russolo's intonarumori orchestra, composing for the intonarumori, or his volume *Luigi Russolo, Futurist. Noise, Visual Arts and the Occult* (University of California Press. 2012)

NEW COMMISSIONS

Presenters are also encouraged to add to Performa's repertoire of compositions in consultation with Luciano Chessa and Performa. The commissions must be funded by the presenter and will carry a commissioning credit in all future performances.

Composers that have been in discussion for future commissions:

Totomi Adachi, Japan/Germany

Ari Benjamin Meyers, Germany/USA

Jonathan Bepler, Germany/USA

Steve Beresford, UK

Alvin Curran, Italy

Fred Frith, USA

Michael Maierhof, Germany

Christian Marclay, USA/UK

Ikue Mori, USA

Phil Niblock, New York/Belgium

Jim O'Rourke, Japan

Frank Oteri, USA

Charlemagne Palestine, Belgium

Zeena Parkins, USA

Terry Riley, USA

Marina Rosenfeld, USA

Frances Marie Uitti, Netherlands

Otomo Yoshihide, Japan

THE ORCHESTRA OF THE FUTURIST NOISE INTONERS LP

A double LP that captures the first ever reconstruction of Luigi Russolo's Intonarumori, conducted by Luciano Chessa.

Published by Sub-Rosa



TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Traveling Company

Luciano Chessa: Conductor

Company Manager

Ensemble Manager

Technical Manager

Residency/Ensemble

Performa offers the opportunity for presenters to assemble new ensembles for the live presentation of the orchestra program. A residency and ensemble training would require Luciano Chessa, and the instruments to be in residence for about 5 working days before a concert performance at the presenters' expenses.

Freight

The 16 intonarumori are packed in 17 crates:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. $37 \times 19 \frac{1}{2} \times 14 \frac{1}{2}$ – 33 pounds | 10. $39 \times 23 \frac{1}{2} \times 14 \frac{1}{2}$ – 43 pounds |
| 2. $36 \frac{1}{2} \times 18 \frac{1}{2} \times 13$ – 40 pounds | 11. $40 \times 23 \frac{1}{2} \times 14 \frac{1}{2}$ – 45 pounds |
| 3. $69 \times 23 \times 31 \frac{1}{2}$ – 109 pounds | 12. $56 \times 33 \frac{1}{2} \times 21 \frac{1}{2}$ – 93 pounds |
| 4. $36 \frac{3}{4} \times 19 \frac{1}{4} \times 14 \frac{1}{2}$ – 32 pounds | 13. $52 \frac{3}{4} \times 34 \frac{1}{2} \times 28$ – 97 pounds |
| 5. $44 \times 23 \frac{1}{4} \times 14 \frac{1}{2}$ – 40 pounds | 14. $52 \frac{1}{2} \times 34 \frac{1}{2} \times 28$ – 97 pounds |
| 6. $61 \frac{1}{2} \times 31 \times 20 \frac{1}{2}$ – 68 pounds | 15. $52 \frac{3}{4} \times 34 \frac{1}{2} \times 28$ – 97 pounds |
| 7. $36 \frac{3}{4} \times 19 \frac{1}{4} \times 31 \frac{1}{2}$ – 31 pounds | 16. $56 \times 37 \frac{1}{2} \times 33 \frac{1}{2}$ – 97 pounds |
| 8. $45 \frac{1}{2} \times 23 \times 14 \frac{1}{2}$ – 47 pounds | 17. $49 \frac{1}{2} \times 30 \times 22 \frac{3}{4}$ – 56 pounds |
| 9. $36 \frac{3}{4} \times 19 \frac{1}{4} \times 14 \frac{1}{2}$ – 31 pounds | |

The packing crates doubles as instrument stands for the performance.

Fees

Due to the flexible nature of this project fees need to be estimated for each presentation. There will be a base fee for use of the instruments, the conductor and fees for the composers.

Presenter will supply

Music stands with lights

Rehearsal coordinator (responsible for preparation of the scores, small instrument repairs)

Stage manager

Stage hands

The orchestra can be presented as an acoustic or amplified concert.

In case of an amplified concert, the preferred microphones are the DPA 4099:

<http://www.dpamicrophones.com/en/products.aspx?c=Item&category=118&item=2437>