

ERWARTUNG

one-act monodrama in four scenes, Op. 17

libretto by Marie Pappenheim
music by **Arnold Schönberg**

premiere: Prague, Neues Deutsches Theater, 6 June 1924
Universal Edition Wien
Casa Ricordi, Milano

Synopsis

The «Expectation» of the title refers to a woman who has arranged a rendez-vous with her lover in the woods. The work is defined as a «monodrama» because there is only one character. Scene I: In the deathly calm which overhangs the woods, a woman feels something threatening in the air, and is filled with dismay,

Scene II: The hint of menace grows and becomes increasingly oppressive. The woman believes she can hear the sound of weeping, and a sinister rustling noise. The shape of a tree-trunk, which she mistakes for a dead body, seems to be a foreboding of the discovery yet to come.

Scene III: Fear has turned to panic. The woman is convinced that eyes are staring out at her from the shadows, and a hundred hands are trying to clutch at her.

Scene IV: At the home of her rival, the woman discovers her lover's corpse, still bleeding. She kisses him passionately and frenziedly clasps him in her arms. But dawn, which has so often interrupted their trysts, rises once again to separate the couple for the last time.

LA FABBRICA ILLUMINATA

for voice and 4-channel surround sound

libretto by Giuliano Scabia and Cesare Pavese
(from *Due poesie a T for the Finale*)

music by **Luigi Nono**

premiere: Venice, La Fenice Opera House, 15 September 1964
critica edition by Luca Cossettini
Casa Ricordi, Milano

One of Luigi Nono's main objectives was always that of a new musical theatre, one that was antinaturalistic and anti-mimetic. An exemplary case, in this sense, is *Intolleranza 1960*, an opera that debuted at La Fenice, on 13 April 1961, consecrating him as a composer in Italy and in the world. However, even before this his research had concentrated



on the stage in an attempt to create a new type of musical theatre that was connected to the avant-garde of Mejer 'hold and Piscator and moved away from the production logic that prevailed in those years.

It was his meeting with Giuliano Scabia, a young poet who was very interested in the potential of the stage that gave rise to a project aimed at the proletariat and the dramatic conditions in which the masses of workers found themselves, *Un diario italiano*, the structure of which was already defined in April 1964. This work, which was supposed to be divided into six scenes, came to a halt after negotiations with La Scala fell through, but in the meantime the rai asked Nono for a piece for the Prix Italia, which was to be held in Genoa that year. For the Nono-Scabia partnership this was an opportunity to enter the steel mills of Cornigliano also thanks to Eugenio Carmi, artist, painter and image manager of Italsider. This marked the birth of what would later become *La fabbrica illuminata*, which was at the time still understood as one of the parts of *Un diario italiano*. It was in that symbolic place that the acoustic material of the factory and the workers' voices were recorded, combined with the massive collection of paper materials related to the working conditions the employees were subjected to.

Meanwhile, Nono involved the mezzo-soprano Carla Henius, already protagonist of *Intolerance* 1960. However, in May of the same year, Henius himself was surprised to see the premises of the project change: *Un diario italiano* was set aside once and for all and *La fabbrica illuminata* came to life independently, requiring just one female voice and four loudspeakers. The compositional process, experienced here for the first time but then becoming characteristic of Nono's music, starts with the singer herself, to which verbal tracks are subjected accompanied by stylistic indications to make the words as expressive as possible. This work became a combination of the live performance and the tracks recorded on tape, thanks to the fundamental contribution of rai's Milan Studio of Musical Phonology and the collaboration of Marino Zuccheri.

La fabbrica illuminata developed gradually and the contours of the 'text' were defined more clearly, while at the same time Nono perfected the sound and music. The result was a relatively short piece for the stage (just over fifteen minutes), divided into four parts: "Esposizione operaia", "Giro del letto", "Tutta la città" and "Finale". It was no longer based on the verbal plot from the oneiric-hallucinated texture prepared by Scabia, but on four verses of *Due poesia a T* by Cesare Pavese, which threw a glimmer of hope towards the future.

In the end, the rai rejected the composition, contesting its markedly political aspect, and the première in Genoa, scheduled for September 12, fell through. As a result *La fabbrica illuminata* premiered three days later, on 15 September, at the Teatro La Fenice as part of the Biennale's International Festival of Contemporary Music, directed at the time by Mario Labroca. The consensus was unanimous, and any perplexities that had been voiced regarding *Intolerance* 1960 also disappeared. A turning point in Nono's artistic career, this work became the manifesto of his art, and the model – also with regard to the use of electroacoustic materials – of the composer's subsequent production.

