

ODE TO EARTH: SCENES OF TRIBAL DANCES FOR PREPARED PIANO

CHRISTIAN GRIFA, composer

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| 01. Formazione della Materia | 02:50 | 14. La Terra narra la sua Creazione | 01:15 |
| 02. Movimento Primordiale | 02:13 | 15. Eruzione dei Vulcani sulla Terra | 00:46 |
| 03. Arrivo dei Vari Gruppi Etnici | 01:57 | 16. Interludio delle Montagne | 01:01 |
| 04. Introduzione alle Danze | 01:09 | 17. Adorazione delle Stelle | 01:23 |
| 05. Danze Tribali dei Fenomeni Atmosferici sulla Terra: I Gruppo | 01:48 | 18. Movimento Ondulatorio e Sussultorio della Terra | 00:47 |
| 06. Danze Tribali dei Fenomeni Atmosferici sulla Terra: II Gruppo | 01:51 | 19. Danza delle Mani | 01:53 |
| 07. Danze Tribali dei Fenomeni Atmosferici sulla Terra: I - II Gruppo Insieme | 00:54 | 20. Inno dei Popoli Uniti | 07:09 |
| 08. Danza dei Legni | 00:51 | 21. Il Principio | 01:05 |
| 09. Danza dei Fanciulli | 01:29 | 22. Solitudine della Materia | 00:57 |
| 10. Formazione di Nuovi Continenti | 03:46 | 23. Danza dei Meandri | 01:35 |
| 11. Danza Corale | 00:51 | 24. Conclusione e Congedo | 01:01 |
| 12. Suono degli Oceani | 00:57 | 25. Per Sora Nostra Morte: Corporale | 04:22 |
| 13. La Terra si mostra nella Forma | 01:20 | 26. Per Sora Nostra Morte: Dilatazione e Tempo | 03:51 |

Total Time:48:58



Music composed and performed by: **Christian Grifa** (Ode to Earth, May 2021, Düsseldorf)

Recording made at: Toto Sound Roma - **Toto Giornelli, Marco Maracci**

Recording "Per Sora Nostra Morte": **Mahir Köroglu**, made at the Deutsche Oper am Rhein, Düsseldorf

Mixing: Toto Sound (Rome) | Texts and revisions: **Francesca Papagni**

English translation of the text "Inno alla Terra": **Anna Rossolato**

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"Inno alla Terra" is a contemporary and experimental piece, with tribal yet slightly classical overtones. The sound is the most important element of the entire piece: the harmony on which the entire composition is based, together with the melody, is deliberately dissonant in order to respect the ancestral intentionality of the sounds and the modernity of the sounds emitted in a mechanical and obstinate manner through the use of a prepared piano, that is, modifying the internal strings of the instrument by adding wooden or metal objects, alternating the naturasound in a rudimentary manner. The foundations of this kind of technique were laid by two great theorists and musicians of the last century: Henry Cowell and John Cage; pianist Grifa, therefore, is inspired by their past studies on the sonorities of the modified instrument. The composer uses well-thought-out sonic devices to create in the listener's mind and ear a reminder of ancient tribal civilisations, which in the distant past used essential instruments for propitiatory rituals, aimed at celebrating the sacredness and attachment to the origins and to Mother Earth, from whom we have all been generated. The scenes of tribal dances set to music in sections that alternate silences with explosions of sound according to a scale of increasing emphasis, and the main themes, which are interwoven with obsessive and repetitive resonances, were inspired in the author by personal reflections on the material that makes up the Earth, and by the dynamism of its movements, incessant and vital. The musical metaphor between the depth of the sense of attachment to one's place of origin, between the unbridgeable feeling of emptiness compared to the greatness of the one who generated us, and the transience of human existence in the face of all Creation, was combined with the author's thoughts, and these reasons sparked in him the marriage of avant-garde and tradition, which can be heard throughout the piece. "Inno alla Terra" is thus a topical experiment that manages to unite primordial and modern art. It is worth listening to and reasoning with in a personal way in order to better appreciate not only the fusion between linear melodies and the experimental contemporaneity of the altered sounds that repeat, but also all those personal sensations that recall, in the listener, a series of simple images of archaic sequences, typical of cultures and populations very distant from us, and from which we should draw inspiration once again to rediscover the cult of the Earth, which has welcomed us since the beginning of time, and to re-evaluate respect for the sacred, from which everything derives.

"Per Sora Nostra Morte" is a piece which, when listened to, is clearly divided into two parts, and presents a final closure with dissonant chords which nevertheless intersect each other, respecting the patterns of tonality and atonality.

The first part of the piece begins with an experiment in notes and arpeggios assembled according to compatible melodic patterns, almost as if to recall Pythagorean sequences: the number, which here symbolizes the form of human existence, derives "from the agreement of limiting elements and unlimited elements"; such a metaphor is intended to reconstruct life and its events, which follow one another in two dimensions, sacred and tangible, and in an alternation of time and space. It all stems from the accidental breaking of the piano's right pedal (used to stretch the sounds together) and symbolizes the race of human and earthly life towards the metaphysical next step, the afterlife. At the same time, if the line of life expands and proceeds towards the end, that of time, and therefore of the soul, takes on a supernatural dimension and shortens in parallel. In the second part, the tempo of the piece slows down, it is static, we are catapulted into a sort of limbo. Having reached the end of our earthly existence, we look back over the path



Photographer Victor van Keuren

we have been given during our material existence, and are therefore catapulted into a transcendental dimension, in which space and time dilate, until we reach the last chords, which are dissonant but correspond to the last moments of our concrete life, symbolizing the soul's detachment from the body. The soul is ready to abandon the corporal dimension (and the Earth) and ascend to heaven, to rejoin the empirical dimension of creation, from which everything began, as in the primordial biblical creation.

Pianist **Christian Grifa** was born in San Giovanni Rotondo, and from an early age he showed a clear interest in art and music in all their facets: he therefore approached the study of piano, first starting a course at the Umberto Giordano Conservatory in Foggia, and in the following years, driven by great passion and curiosity towards compositional and harmonic musical analysis, he decided to move to the "Niccolò Piccinni" Conservatory in Bari, until he obtained, with vibrant satisfaction, his diploma in piano, under the guidance of maestro Emanuele Arciuli. During his piano studies he attended master classes with world-famous masters, such as: Marcello Abbado, Vincenzo Balzani, Roberto Corliano, Franco Scala, Michele Marvulli, François-Joël Thiollier. He is a pianist of great technical ability and remarkable sound colors and volumes, animated by a great sense of belonging to his origins and at the same time by a particular personal predilection for the most classical sonorities, as opposed to the as yet unexplored sounds of the modern world, the spectacularity and the melodic and polyphonic sacredness of classical and virtuoso pianist with polystylistic, atonal, polyrhythmic and aleatoric modernity, even managing to make use of the technique of the prepared piano, in which the use of artificial objects is allowed to alter or modify the original sound of the instrument itself. It is no coincidence that he has worked for many seasons at the "Staatstheater" in Mainz, and has been the composer and reviser of the musical "Interludes" of some very well-known ballets, among which "La Cenerentola" by Sergej Prokofiev (adapted and directed by the dancer and choreographer Pascal Touzeau), performed at the theater of Mainz, and at the municipal theater "L. Pavarotti" in Modena; he performed the music of Peteris Vasks for piano solo in the show "Voices" by Pascal Touzeau, at the "Staatstheater" in Mainz; he also performed, as first pianist, "The Green Table" by Kurt Joss, at the "Deutsch Oper am Rhein" theater in Düsseldorf, and as soloist, together with the Düsseldorf Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Jean-Michel Lavoie, the "Concerto Grosso no.1" by Alfred Schnittke. He has also created music of a more contemporary and pop nature, as well as soundtracks and adaptations for theatrical productions, some of which are very famous and topical, such as: "Gift" for the Mainz Theatre, "Schmetterlinge sind frei", "Frühstück bei Tiffany", and "Jenny Hübner greift ein", for the "Burghofbühne Dinslaken", under the artistic direction of director and playwright Nadja Blank.

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