

25 February 2008

UK PREMIERE OF LUIGI NONO'S *PROMETEO* AT SOUTHBANK CENTRE

'A tragedy of listening'

Climax to the *Luigi Nono: Fragments of Venice Festival*

Royal Festival Hall, 9 & 10 May 2008, 7.30pm

Festival Patron: His Excellency Giancarlo Aragona, Ambassador of Italy

The final masterpiece of composer Luigi Nono, *Prometeo*, receives its **UK premiere** at the Royal Festival Hall on 9 and 10 May. This most extraordinary work involves multiple orchestras, two conductors, narrators and groups of instrumental and vocal soloists placed around the Royal Festival Hall auditorium, whilst a live electronic studio, at the heart of the performing space, distributes the music as islands of sound in real time. The performers for this special event are Southbank Centre Resident Orchestra, the **London Sinfonietta**, and **Royal Academy of Music Manson Ensemble** conducted by **Diego Masson** and **Patrick Bailey**, actors **Caroline Chaniolleau** and **Mathias Jung**, **Synergy Vocals**, and **Experimental Studio for Acoustic Arts Freiburg** with sound designer **André Richard**. This UK premiere is the climax to Southbank Centre's festival *Luigi Nono: Fragments of Venice*, celebrating the work of Luigi Nono and the music and composers that influenced and inspired him.

The startling originality of *Prometeo* created a sensation at its world premiere at the Venice Biennale in 1984. During the composition of the work, conventional narrative, scenic and visual elements were eliminated. The premiere was performed within a gigantic wooden structure, created by architect Renzo Piano within San Lorenzo church, Venice, which acted as an enormous resonating case. For this performance, the Royal Festival Hall becomes one of the instruments of the piece as André Richard curates the sound within the Hall. Nono defined *Prometeo* as a 'tragedy of listening', referring in one respect to Greek tragedy with its stasimons (choral odes) and choruses, and on the other to a drama which unfolds within sound itself. The libretto draws on texts from ancient Greece and modern Europe and

is the work of Italian philosopher **Massimo Cacciari**, Mayor of Venice. The text forms a meditation on the Promethean myth of Creation. The sound production is directed by André Richard, who collaborated with Nono and Cacciari at the original performances, and is the undoubted world expert on this remarkable piece.

Marshall Marcus, Head of Music at Southbank Centre, said: '*Prometeo* is undoubtedly the culmination of Nono's work, a masterpiece that sensuously returns audiences to a pure state of listening, dismantling the barriers and distractions that accompany so many western music performances today. Coming to hear this work the audience will be surrounded by a unique sound world in the auditorium as live electronics will project and enhance live performance from every side and every level of the Royal Festival Hall.'

A few days prior to the premiere, on 4 May, Southbank Centre hosts a day entitled *Understanding Nono: Understanding the World*, which will, through a panel of commentators and experts on the composer, lead attendees through the music of Nono and look at the meaning of a piece such as *Prometeo*.

Supported by:
Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation
Italian Cultural Institute

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Sunday 4 May 2008, 11am, Purcell Room
Understanding Nono: Understanding the World Study Day

Nuria Schoenberg Nono	Marshall Marcus
André Richard	Christopher Cook
Stefan Litwin	

Tickets: £12

Friday 9 & Saturday 10 May 2008, 7.30pm
Luigi Nono: *Prometeo*
London Sinfonietta
Royal Academy of Music Manson Ensemble
Diego Masson *conductor*
Patrick Bailey *conductor*
André Richard *sound design*
Caroline Chaniolleau / Mathias Jung *actors*
Experimental Studio for Acoustic Arts Freiburg
Synergy Vocals

Tickets: £25 (unreserved seating)

Royal Festival Hall at 6.15pm: *Listening to Prometeo*.
Marshall Marcus and a number of this evening's performers give an introduction to experiencing this extraordinary work. Admission free with concert ticket.