

This LIBRETTO accompanies **Cronaca del Tempo Ripetuto** (A chronicle of histories repeating, 2021) in **These Conditions**, an exhibition at the **Brooklyn Army Terminal**, presented by the **Vera List Center for Art and Politics**, February 8 through April 8, 2022.

Adelita Husni Bey in collaboration with Orchestra da Camera di Radicondoli (OCRA), with the participation of Rabèl Theatrical Association.

Workshop structure and editing: Adelita Husni Bey Production manager: Martina Marolda Mixdown: Giulio Iozzil
Instrumental improvisation: Simone Dei, Asia Guarguaglini, Gabriele Gazzei, Alessandro Garaffi, Alessio Torriti, Caterina Guarguaglini,
Gabriele Signorini, Francesco Rosetti and Carla D'Autilia (OCRA, Orchestra da Camera di Radicondoli) Voiced by: Rosella Pristerà,
Francesca Delogu, Moreno Montomoli, Rosalba Calò, Samira Patrizia Formisano (Associazione Culturale Teatrale Rabèl)

Courtesy the artist and Galleria Laveronica. **Cronaca del Tempo Ripetuto** (A chronicle of histories repeating, 2021) was produced in the village of Radicondoli in Tuscany on the occasion of **Una Boccata d'Arte 2021**, a project created by the **Elpis Foundation** in collaboration with **Galleria Continua**.

These Conditions is supported by the Italian Council, Directorate-General for Contemporary Creativity, Italian Ministry of Culture.

LIBRETTO

Cronaca del Tempo Ripetuto

Sound Work in FIVE movements

9:40 min

Vocal and instrumental improvisation based on bodily sounds accentuated by the silence of the pandemic. **Respiro** (2021) is based on **Teach Yourself to Fly**, a sound exercise by **Pauline Oliveros** in **Sonic Meditations, XX—XXV**.

After having moderated one's breath so that the whole group breathes together, play an improvised note for the duration of each exhalation.

Asia (violin) Can I add something? Can you hear me? I have a weak connection. In villages like Radicondoli and Belforte, silence, at least as far as I perceived it, was indeed alienating, as Gabri and Alessandro mentioned; but it also made us listen to things we tend not to perceive in the frenzy of everyday life. For example, in the streets where Asia and I live, I had never noticed that swallows tend to make their nests next to our windows.

Alessio (violin) ... it was a "still" sound, because I was doing nothing! I was on the sofa, accompanied by a sudden sound, because you're laying still and then when you move it begins to creak, it goes "nje-nje-nje."

Adelita Tell us a little about this sofa.

Alessio I didn't even want to sit down at my desk. I laid down with my books. I was studying on the sofa, watching movies on the sofa. Everything happened on and around the sofa. I was saddened by the fact that I could only play my instrument alone. At a certain point, the desire to play dissipated.

Gabriele (viola) Two words came to mind to describe this moment: "silent roar," something oxymoronic. A roar indicates something definite and indefinite at the same time. We

become aware of this roar over time during the pandemic, an awareness of what we are experiencing.

Alessandro (violin) The sound that represents this moment for me is actually made up of several sounds. It is a very chaotic and sudden sound. You expect it in some respects when it presents itself. It is a very chaotic metallic, artificial tone: it's the crackling of weak phone connections, of zoom calls and technology.

Gabriele (violin) I didn't choose a sound at all, but like Gabriele, I was thinking precisely of the sound of 'nothing' as representative of this moment. Apart from university, everything has ceased.

[...]

Adelita Should I tell you when to come in (with your instrument)?

All Yes, yes!

Alessia Ok, so rooftop, I'm the birds, you're the wind, bells, you're the children!

5:10 min

Improvisation based on an image taken from **Domenico Della Rocca's** archival accounts of the plague between 1631–1633 as narrated by **Constantino Antichi**.

Young people had to stay shut in their homes and this was an enormous sacrifice for them. They were accustomed to walking the streets and squares, meeting in groups and playing. They left the city walls behind, spread through the countryside, and met along the riverbank. But now these activities were forbidden. Had they been caught, their parents would have had to

pay a fine of fifteen Scudi.

Yet if the freedom to run the streets, squares and to roam the countryside had been taken from children, one could not forbid them from playing on the terraces and rooftops. The chronicler recounts that they had discovered a unique way of communicating. They took long rods to which they attached sheets and towels and then,

waving them in the wind like flags, they called each other loudly, howled and joked. For long, interminable days in Poggibonsi—while the plague gave no hint of fading—white cloths waved in the wind and the bright call of children's voices could be heard. It was the only sign of life in a city where people languished in terror.

(Taken from C. Antichi, *Bandiera Gialla a Poggibonsi*, published by the Circolo I' Gabbione of Poggibonsi, 1975).

8:20 min

III *Improvisation based on experimental scores created through a “sound walk” (based on an exercise by the sound art collective **Ultra-red**). Walking blindfolded through the village, the musicians drew “sound maps” translating their steps onto paper as marks, using only their sense of hearing. These marks, a visual map of what the musicians heard, were subsequently played and recorded live.*

Suspension of educational services for children, pertaining to all grades, as well as the obligation to attend school activities including higher education and university, apart from educational activities that can be performed remotely;
Suspension of the opening of museums and all other cultural institutions as defined in article 101 of the Cultural Heritage and Landscape code, pertaining to legislative decree 22

January 2004, n. 42, as well as new regulatory dispositions on the free access to such institutions and places;
Application of quarantine measures with active surveillance of individuals that have had close contact with confirmed cases of infectious disease;
Local authorities may also adopt other measures of containment and management of the

emergency with the aim of preventing the spreading of the epidemic outside the measures expressed in article 1, comma 1; Unless the fact constitutes a more serious crime, failure to comply with the containment measures referred to in this decree is punishable under Article 650 of the Criminal Code.

(Extracts from Emergency Decree n. 6, issued by the President of the Italian Republic Sergio Mattarella on February 23, 2020).

If the sick belonging to these houses live far enough from the lazzaretti so that they could not be easily led to them, the rule must be abided by that no one should leave the house or manor under any circumstances, as above, them being farmhands.

If the said sick are renters or live in houses without a lord, the rule is, with the declared penalty, to all inhabitants, not to leave home. Since the said sick need to be subsidized with food, if they are peasants, the lords of the manors should be obliged to provide them with said food, holding

them in bondage in order for them to make up their debt.

If they are tenants or inhabitants of houses without a manor or if they are poor, the order to the chamberlain is to arrange for the necessary food to be provided by a nearby innkeeper or shopkeeper, at a rate of eight Scudi a day per person.

If the lord of the manor wherein said sick belong, does not belong to the same jurisdiction, meaning that said rule cannot be enforced, then said expenses of food and said money

should be administered by the chamberlain daily for each vassal as ordered above. And they will order that the food is brought to these precepts not in coins but instead in bread and edible things by the nearest innkeepers and shopkeepers or by other people who they will see fit, and that such things are to be delivered from the windows or in some other way, that whoever carries them shall not approach and shall not converse with people suspected and isolated, and this debt will have to be reinstated by the lords.

(Instructions issued by the Florentine magistrates between 1630–1633 to contain the plague epidemic, reported in the appendix by C. Cipolla, *Chi ruppe i rastelli a Monte Lupo?*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 2013).

Adelita *Listening to last week's recording I was struck by the fact that Simone and Asia were separated for several months during the first wave. I wanted to ask you to direct the others while reflecting on that moment.*

Simone (cello) *I drew five squares, 5 “cages.” I put a different effect inside each one, a flat note, a strong note, a very high note and so on. Each cage is going to be pointed to and played as we direct the group, only I use Asia's cages...and she uses mine. I wouldn't rehearse it.*

Adelita *Ok, we'll record it now, no rehearsals.*

5:20 min

IV *Simone (double bass) and Asia (violin) create an experimental improvisational system to conduct the rest of the orchestra in a “musical action” that relays their experience of isolation, when they were forced to live apart.*

Alessandro *Not really seeing anyone anymore, finding myself alone from one day to the next, no longer playing with the orchestra, that is, alone with my instrument and the teacher on the other side of the screen. When things reopened I started going out again. I got my driver's license, I started driving aimlessly because I couldn't stand it anymore...being confined to the house.*

Adelita *It seems to me we're still in denial. We will likely go through a moment in which we will have to come to terms with the hundreds of thousands of people who are no longer here, the individual suffering of isolation, coupled with egregious social suffering. We could use this part of the workshop to begin a collective mourning process.*

Alessio *I would like to say something related to music, to do with mourning—music objectifies emotions. This makes them common and therefore collective. I don't know if it helps overcome grief, but it concretizes emotions. It makes external what is internal. For example a requiem, is something explicitly written for a deceased person, and you feel this air of death or otherwise heaviness—so it is as if you saw it or pulled it out of you. Perhaps that's why music helps or at least is so powerful. It is often said that in music the pauses between the notes, the silence between the notes, are more important than the notes themselves.*

9:19 min

V *Improvisation on the question of collective mourning.*

The plague hastened religious ceremonies and public funerals were suppressed. The dead were buried in a hurry, and buried at night, when the air tended to cool and everyone disappeared into their homes. The sound of the plague cart rolling on the paving stones of the city streets caused a great deal of

concern among the inhabitants. This sound became so familiar that even if the gravediggers were only carrying one corpse, rumor spread that the dead were being buried by the cartloads. The gravediggers wanted to eliminate the sound caused by the cart rolling on the paving stones, believing that by eliminating

the sound they would have dispelled the fear of the citizenry. A stretcher was built, with two leather straps fastened at each end, which the gravediggers wore like an ox's harnesses. They thus fulfilled their mournful task.

(Taken from C. Antichi, *ibid*, 1975).