



# RANDOM FUTURE MEMORIES

*"There's no heaven nor life after death for obsolete computers, that's a fairy tale for people afraid of darkness" Stephen Hawking*

At the dawn of the third millennium, media technology was seen as having a significant aesthetic and poetic dimension. Each innovation seemed like real leaps forward, and artists were fascinated by the possibilities that these technologies offered to project different views on reality.

The *cyberspace* was seen as a separate dimension from the physical world we lived in, and the aesthetic of the machine pervaded many fields of human creativity. However, today the internet and media technology -such as *AI*- are much more embedded in our daily life, and that epic dimension of *cyberspace* seems to have dissolved into it. Media technology doesn't seem as mysterious as it used to be, but instead it has become a reflection of the world we already know.

Nevertheless, far from being circumscribed to streaming or digital formats, today's listening practices, show a renewed interest in outdated physical formats and listening devices. This form of *technostalgia* is more than longing for an ideal past. These formats and devices function like time machines that connect the past with the present, and even project the future.

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# PROGRAM

## **Fernando Manassero (IT/CH) \***

*String drive (2023)*

*for string quartet, floppy disk drive quartet and electronics*

## **Fausto Romitelli (IT)**

*Natura morta con fiamme (1991)*

*string quartet and electronics*

## **Alessandro Ratoci (IT/CH)\***

*Hardcore (2023)*

*string quartet and electronics*

## **Quarteto Maurice**

Violin - **Georgia Privitera**

Violin - **Laura Bertolino**

Viola - **Francesco Venero**

Violoncello - **Aline Privitera**

Electronics and sound - **Fernando Manassero, Alessandro Ratoci**

**RANDOM FUTURE MEMORIES** *imagined by Quartetto Maurice, Fernando Manassero and Alessandro Ratoci consists of three images that reflect on the subjects of collective memory and technology. The pieces of this program -two of them specially written for the quartet- propose different dialogs between the string quartet, physical devices and listening practices from other*

*String drive* by Fernando Manassero, informed by the concept of **technostalgia**, reflects on memory practices and the modern relation with outdated and current technology. By turning a group of floppy disk drives into musical devices that play along with the string quartet, these obsolete devices become different entities, with their own voices.

*Hardcore* by Alessandro Ratoci is an attempt to blend the elements of music with those of the more extreme radical dance genres, such as new music and IDM -electronic dance music-. A piece where the clichés of each of them can interact creating a rich expression, signs of the complexity of the nowadays musical stylistic hybridisation. Another way to address memory through music and technology.

The third component of the program, *Natura morta con fiamme* by Fausto Romitelli -a pioneer of cross-genre aesthetic in contemporary music- proposes a mimetic relation between the string quartet and the electronics. By suspending spectrums and translating gestures from the string into the

# STRING DRIVE (working title)

for string quartet, floppy disk drive quartet (\*) and electronics

**Fernando Manassero (CH/IT)**

This piece is a reflection on the current obsession to access the past via internet, to reenact listening practices from other times. Even if they weren't really lived by ourselves, it is possible to reconstruct or even reinvent them, endlessly... The piece is informed by the concept of technostalgia: the reminiscence of past media technologies in contemporary memory practices according to Van der Heijden, 2015.

The project traces a relation with three devices from different areas of culture, conceived as memory systems. On the one hand, the string quartet is arguably the most representative chamber music instrumental device of western music. Its repertoire is in itself a system of memory through which it is possible to navigate through the different music periods and trace a timeline with the approaches the composers gave to it. On the other hand, the floppy disks were the standard device to save and transport data for nearly forty years, from the 1960s' until they became obsolete by the end of 1990s. The third pillar of the piece, Artificial Intelligence, represents the state of the arts system of memory. In this context, the floppy drives become a bridge between the two worlds. These devices, stripped of their original role becoming musical instruments and mediate between the past and the present.

The three instrumental forces become characters that unfold their idiosyncratic behaviours through their interaction: the floppy drives first function as a prosthesis of the individual instruments of the string quartet. They are extension that listens and captures the gestures, rhythms and articulations of the strings as an attempt to register, the essence of the strings' language, to translate it and reproduce it in their own language. A sort of synthesis or decantation that preserves only the root components. They are machines with the task of preserving the essence of things, as if they were guided by the obsession to write everything. As the piece unfolds, this electro-mechanic emancipates from the string quartet and essays a possible new language of itself. Ai the most efficient system of memory plays the role of the villain in this piece: it doesn't own a voice and it's obsessed in following and mimicking the voices of the other two, or even an intruder that clashes against the physical realm.

(\*) It consist of sixteen floppy disk drives arranged in four arrays placed next to each string instruments. Each array consist of four disk drives representing the four strings of the instruments

# HARDCORE

for string quartet and electronics

**Alessandro Ratoci (CH/IT)**

*[Hardcore (also known as hardcore techno or hardcore house) is a genre of electronic dance music that originated in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany in the early 1990s. It is distinguished by faster tempos and a distorted sawtooth kick, the rhythm and the atmosphere of the themes (sometimes violent), the usage of saturation and experimentation close to that of industrial dance music...]*  
*Jon Savage. "Machine soul - A History Of Techno"*

The project draw inspiration by a famous quarrel appeared in the 1995 issue of The Wire magazine "Stockhausen and the Technocrats" where a somewhat real or staged argument was built up between the chief composer of the Darmstadt generation (and guru of the experimental electronic music) Karlheinz Stockhausen and four of the young, most promising, electronic dance music producers of the time: Richard D. James (Aphex Twin), Richie Hawtin (Plastikman), Robin Rimbaud (Scanner) and Daniel Pemberton.

The result is a funny, oversimplified manifesto of the reciprocal aesthetics and compositional practices, as each of the participants consider his own stylistic elements as absolute musical values and interpret their absence in the opponent's work as a sign of weakness.

Stockhausen, in a lapidary way: - I wish those musicians would not allow themselves [...] those post-African repetitions, and would look for changing tempi and changing rhythms, [...] not allowing to repeat any rhythm if it were varied to some extent and if it did not have a direction in its sequence of variations [...] - While Aphex Twin replies: - I thought he should listen to a couple of tracks of mine: "Didgeridoo", then he'd stop making abstract, random patterns you can't dance to [...] -

Beyond this misunderstanding about musical genres, where different practices are criticized using non pertinent elements of the other, where the figure of the avant-garde composer is de-sacralized ("do you reckon he [Stockhausen] can dance?") while the dance music producers are entitled to a role in the evolution of electronic music as a culture, a more interesting concept can be perceived: the electronic music is an unifying medium that can go way beyond the unification of sound and noise, it can unify "high" and "low" cultures, historical and underground popular practices. Hence a written composition scored for one of the most quintessential ensembles of the classical period, the string quartet, in a dialogue with electronics on fixed and live media. The work is an attempt to hybridize the stylistic elements of contemporary music with those of the more extreme radical dance genres; it's a kind of homage, an humble act of faith in music as a space of freedom, where different "clichés" can interact creating richness of expression and are just a signs of a complex present time and not anymore symbols of cultural self-segregation.

## QUARTETTO MAURICE

Since its formation in 2002, a constant and tireless research on sound has been the trait that has best distinguished the Quartetto Maurice. After an in-depth investigation of the traditional classical repertoire, which has guaranteed a meticulous approach to the score and an extreme attention to the performance's details, the Quartet showed the need to place the music of 20th and 21st centuries at the heart of its repertoire, exploring a great variety of contemporary languages.

The Quartet won the 35th Italian Music Critics Award «Franco Abbiati» dedicated to the memory of Piero Farulli in 2015 and the Kranichsteiner Stipendium Preis at the 48th Ferienkurse für Neue Musik in Darmstadt in 2016.

Over the years, Quartetto Maurice carried out an intensive training in the contemporary music repertoire, together with the greatest performers and composers of the international scene like Márta and György Kurtág, Helmut Lachenmann, Philippe Manoury, Marco Stroppa, Beat Furrer, Mauro Lanza, Chaya Czernowin, Simon Steen-Andersen, Clara Iannotta, Arditti Quartet Quatuor Diotima, Klangforum Wien, Geneviève Strosser, etc.

Regularly invited to perform at the most important festivals and concert seasons across Europe, North and South America, the Quartet has performed through Italy and abroad, in venues including the Venice Biennale, November Music Festival in 's-Hertogenbosch (Holland), the Biennale Zagreb, the Festival Mixtur in Barcelona (Spain), the Bludener Tage zeitgemäßer Musik 2017, the Italian Academy of Columbia University in New York (USA), the Italian Istitut of Culture and for ProQuartet in Paris, the Festival Tzllil Meudcan in Tel Aviv (Israel), the Distat Terra festival in Argentina, the New Music Festival in Macerata (Italy), the International Fajr Music Festival in Tehran (Iran), Open Music in Graz (Austria) and New Music Festival in Vancouver (Canada).

The Quartet has been tutor and quartet in residence at the 2021 Impuls Academy (Graz), at Distat Terra Festival in Argentina, at Fondazione I Teatri Reggio Emilia - Casa del Quartetto with string quartet students and at 2021 Bludener Tage zeitgemäßer Musik and it holds a workshop since 2017 at the conservatory of Turin G. Verdi with the classes of electronics and composition.

In 2016 the quartet founded the Association "Metamorfosi Notturme" the Association organizes "Musica in Prossimità", a festival of contemporary music, based in Pinerolo (Italy).



# FERNANDO MANASSERO

(CH/IT) 1984

Composer, performer, and audiovisual artist based in Basel, Switzerland. In his works he explores the boundaries of genres, creating unexpected crossovers with reminiscences of electronic music and pop. His works are characterised for its iridescent textures, populated by communities of sound organisms.

In this music the listener dives into a dramaturgy of ephemeral gestures of great vitality, organised in translucent layers. He works with a wide range of materials from prepared instruments, processed voices, objects, synthesisers, to theatrical elements, and video.

He studied at the Master in Multimedia Composition at HEM Genève. He was part of Ircam Cursus class 2019-20 and he has a degree in music composition from National University of Córdoba, Argentina. Further studies in composition with Chaya Czernowin and Steven Takasugi at Harvard University, as well as Juan Carlos Tolosa and Gerardo Gandini.

He is a Fulbright - FNA fellow since 2017, and a Nicati fellow in 2021/22.

Recently, his work *Amoeba*, in collaboration with reConvert, has been published in vinyl by *Total Silence - Cologne*.

He was a professor at the Bachelor in Music in Music at Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero and he curated its ensemble music season. He was also part of the contemporary music collectives conDit and CDMCC (arg).

He works in close collaboration with international musicians and his music is regularly played in Europe, South America and the US, and he has been commissioned and programmed by Manifeste Festival, Klang Basel, Archipel Festival, Attaca Festival and Colon Theatre Experimentation Center CETC, Cervantes Theatre, Contemporary Music Festival of Buenos Aires, and Harvard Group for New Music concert season. He works closely with soloists such as Rei Nakamura and Roberto Maqueda, and ensembles such as Ensemble Vortex, Ensemble Phoenix, Ensemble Latenz, Concept Store quartet, Ensemble Adapter, duo reConvert, Suono Mobile, Ensemble Tropi, among others.



# ALESSANDRO RATOCI

(CH/IT) 1980

Alessandro Ratoci, born in Mugello, in the Tuscan countryside, graduated in piano, composition, and electronic music at the conservatory of Bologna, and later studied composition with a focus on live electronics at the Haute École in Geneva with Michael Jarrel, Luis Naon, and Eric Daubresse. In 2014, he has been selected for the composition program at IRCAM in Paris under the guidance of Hector Parra and Mikhail Malt.

He works as a composer, sound designer, and music teacher, exploring the sonic connections between the tradition of avant-garde music and the techno and IDM-influenced underground music scene in mainly mixed music (acoustic and electronic) contexts based on writing and improvisation.

He has collaborated with notable soloists such as Antonio Politano, Stefano Malferrari, Paolo Ravaglia, Florentino Calvo, and Enzo Filippetti, and with ensembles such as ICTUS Trio, Alarm Will Sound, the Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne led by Baldur Bronniman, and the Orchestra of Radio France led by Pierre André Valade.

His works have been performed at the ManiFeste festival in Paris, Milano Musica, the Missouri Composers Festival, the SMC Lausanne season and the Nuova Consonanza festival in Rome. He received a special mention in the 2015 edition of the Luigi Russolo prize for acousmatic music, the Luigi Nono prize in 2019 and Premio Evangelisti in 2022 for electronic and instrumental composition. His recorded works are published by Miraloop® and by EMA Vinci in the "SIAE i Classici di Oggi" series. He also composed music for the stage productions of Omar Porras "L'éveil de Printemps" and "Roméo et Juliette" presented at the SPAC festival in Shizuoka, Japan.

Always interested in research and teaching, from 2007 to 2015 he was a member of the faculty of the Haute École de Musique in Lausanne, teaching interpretation and improvisation with live electronics. Currently, he is a professor of Electronic Composition at the Conservatory of Fermo.



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