

December 5 & 6, 2019

***Notti Sylvane: Two evenings of music and film by composer Sylvano Bussotti***

organized by Luciano Chessa and Nick Hallett

co-produced by the Italian Cultural Institute and Darmstadt: Essential Repertoire

Controversial and formidable, the Italian composer Sylvano Bussotti (1931–) is recognized in American academic circles for his intricate and poetic graphic scores, but is often overlooked as a trailblazing total-artist, whose 70-year career spans visual art, grand opera, theater, film, dance, and queer activism, and whose tenure in New York during the early 1960s formed strong alignments among John Cage's circle. His successes have been in Europe, as a protean creator and mise-en-scène of spectacular experiments in music, art, and performance.

The composer and pianist, Luciano Chessa, a longtime Bussotti associate, has teamed up with musician and co-director of Brooklyn's mercurial Darmstadt series, Nick Hallett, to present *Notti Sylvane*, a two-evening mini festival tracing Bussotti's oeuvre.

**December 5th at the Italian Cultural Institute**

A lecture and screening of *Rara* (New York Premiere)

After an introduction by Luciano Chessa, Bussotti's silent film *Rara* (1967-69) is screened in a restored print. Experimental and without deliberate narrative, the work gathers 'filmed portraits' of the 1960s Italian avant-garde, including the circle around Pier Paolo Pasolini, famed comedian Franca Valeri, actress Daria Nicolodi (best known for her work in Dario Argento's thrillers), writers Dario Bellezza and Dacia Maraini, singer Cathy Berberian, and actors from New York's The Living Theater. A selection from Bussotti's collection of musical miniatures, *Fogli d'album* (1970-84) performed by Frances-Marie Uitti (cello), Nicholas Isherwood (Bass), and Luciano Chessa (Piano) concludes the event, and offers a preview of the following night's concert.

December 5th

Italian Cultural Institute - 686 Park Avenue, New York

Time 6:30 pm

Admission: Free

[https://iicnewyork.esteri.it/iic\\_newyork/en/](https://iicnewyork.esteri.it/iic_newyork/en/)

**December 6th at Roulette**

**Darmstadt Essential Repertoire: The Music of Sylvano Bussotti**

An incantatory evening of Bussotti's music, curated and performed by Luciano Chessa, with two fellow longtime Bussotti collaborators, cellist Frances-Marie Uitti and bass-baritone Nicholas Isherwood. The night features realizations of some of Bussotti's finest graphic scores, including work written for and premiered by the performing artists. The program includes:

*Sensitivo per arco solo* (from *Sette fogli*, 1959)  
*Isherwood Isherwood* (2007) for bass and piano  
*Posto in capo* from *Tieste* (1989/1993) for bass  
*Foglio grigio* from *Silvano Silvano* (2002-2004) for bass  
*Centoundici tocchi a Stefano. Impromptous Cloirec* (1999) for piano  
and the New York premiere of *Variazioni Chessa* (2010) for piano and percussion  
The night also features a selection of pages from *AUTOTONO* (1978) performed in ensemble with Darmstadt co-directors Nick Hallett (vocals) and Zach Layton (guitar)

Friday, December 6th 2019  
8:00 pm (doors 7:00 pm)  
Roulette - 509 Atlantic Avenue, Brooklyn  
Tickets \$18/online advance \$25/doors  
<http://bit.ly/FA191206>

#### Bios:

The oeuvre of composer **Silvano Bussotti** (1931-) encompasses music, visual art, film, opera, theater, design, and the written word. His highly skilled graphic scores are noted for carrying out a conviction that “eroticism will enliven the sterility of contemporary music.” Emerging from the post-war European avant-garde of the 1950s, Bussotti quickly ingratiated himself within the circles of Pierre Boulez and John Cage, and struck up fertile collaborations with other prominent musical figures of the era, including David Tudor and Cathy Berberian. His compositions from this period openly express queer sexuality, in unprecedented fashion. In the early 1960s, sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation, Bussotti moved to New York, where he found associations with Fluxus, and taught at the University at Buffalo. During this time, he wrote his sensational *La Passion selon Sade*, a synthesis of contemporary aleatoric practice within historical cultural models of music and image making, ‘blasphemous’ text, and elaborate staging, amounting to ‘total theatre.’ The work premiered in 1965 at Palermo, and solidified the composer’s reputation as a modern-day Renaissance artist. From this point on, Bussotti has continued to thrive across disciplines, including film and television, as a director, choreographer, author, actor, and set/costume designer. He directed and designed at La Scala, and was artistic director of La Fenice in Venice from 1975 to 1983. In 1984, he founded BUSSOTTIOPERABALLET, to produce his own works of music, theater, and art. In the late 1980s, Bussotti was appointed music director of the Venice Biennale, but—in protest to a demand for him to portray a more conventional, heterosexual image—resigned by inviting a high-profile porno actress to give the keynote speech. Throughout all of Bussotti’s life and work, one identifies an unapologetic flamboyance and rebellious spirit.

**Frances-Marie Uitti**, composer and cellist is known for her performances of contemporary classical music. She is the dedicatee of close to 100 composers including Louis Andriessen, Giacinto Scelsi, and György Kurtág; and has collaborated closely and recorded with Scelsi, Nono, Xenakis, Cage. The Guardian recently wrote “Uitti is the world’s most influential avant-garde cellist.” Uitti has invented a radically extended technique using two bows simultaneously in one hand—being the first to transform the cello into a four-part chordal instrument. She has invented resonators, and designed electric instruments including her stringless 12-string double bridged cello at CNMAT, University of California, Berkeley. She is published by

Contemporary Music Review, Cambridge University Press, Granta, and Arcana, among others. She has given master classes worldwide for composers and string players at Yale, Stanford, Juilliard, and Harvard among many others and teaches advanced students.

Bass **Nicholas Isherwood** has an extensive repertory, ranging from the Middle Ages to world premieres. He has worked with composers Sylvano Bussotti, Elliott Carter, George Crumb, Hans Werner Henze, Mauricio Kagel, György Kurtág, Olivier Messiaen, Giacinto Scelsi, Karlheinz Stockhausen and Iannis Xenakis in prestigious venues around the world (La Scala, Covent Garden, the Théâtre des Champs Élysées, Salzburg Festival, Concertgebouw, Berlin Staatsoper, Vienna Konzerthaus, Tanglewood). Operatic roles include Bussotti's *Tieste*, Mauricio Kagel's *Der Tribun*, Paul Hindemith's *Lehrstück*, Cage's *Song Books* at the Berlin Staatsoper, the Hotel Manager in Thomas Adès' *Powder her Face* at the Teatro Comunale in Bologna and La Fenice, and Lucifer in the world premieres of Stockhausen's *Montag, Dienstag, and Freitag* from *Licht* at La Scala and the Leipzig Opera and in *Donnerstag aus Licht* at Covent Garden. He has improvised with Steve Lacy, Joelle Léandre, Sainkho Namtchilak, and David Moss, recorded 60 albums for companies such as Naxos, Erato and Harmonia Mundi and appeared in three films. He is currently an adjunct professor at the Universität der Künste in Berlin.

**Luciano Chessa** is a composer, conductor, audiovisual and performance artist. His compositions include *Cromlech*, a large organ piece he premiered in Melbourne's Town Hall in May 2018, the opera *Cena oltranzista nel castelletto al lago*—a work merging experimental theater with reality TV, which required from the cast over 55 hours of fasting—and *A Heavenly Act*, an opera commissioned by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, with original video by Kalup Linzy. Chessa has been commissioned multiple times by the Performa Biennial, and in 2014 he presented three events at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum as part of the exhibition *Italian Futurism, 1909-1944: Reconstructing the Universe*. Chessa is also a music historian specializing in 20th-century Italian and 21st-century American repertoire. He is the author of *Luigi Russolo Futurist. Noise, Visual Arts, and the Occult* (2012), the first book dedicated to Russolo and his "Art of Noise." In 2009, his Orchestra of Futurist Noise Intoners (OFNI) was hailed by the New York Times as one of the best events of the year; Chessa has conducted this project across the USA and internationally to sold-out houses. Chessa's music has been published by Rai Trade and Carrara, and has released by Sub Rosa and Stradivarius. His record, *Canti felice* was August 2018 Record of the Month for one of Italy's leading music magazines, *Rumore*. His most recent record, *The Noise of Art*, produced by Prague's OPO, came out in March 2019. He recently conducted Julius Eastman's *Symphony No. II*, the world premiere of which he conducted at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall with Mannes Orchestra. The New York Times has described Chessa's rendition as a work that "radiates Cosmic Grandeur".

**Darmstadt** is the presenting series led by composers **Nick Hallett** and **Zach Layton**, known for staging radical re-interpretations of works from the experimental music canon, including John Cage, Morton Feldman, Pauline Oliveros, Meredith Monk, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Alvin Lucier, and Anthony Braxton. Originally conceived in 2004 as a casual listening event of avant-garde recordings, Darmstadt quickly began hosting informal, modern-classical music concerts in nightclubs, and within a few years had evolved into a presenter of festivals and large-scale performances. A partnership with ISSUE Project Room resulted in its Essential Repertoire initiative. Currently operating on a project-by-project basis, Darmstadt continues to present a celebrated, annual concert of Terry Riley's *In C*.

Founded in 1961, the **Italian Cultural Institute of New York** is an office of the Italian government devoted to the promotion of Italian language and culture in the United States. As part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' global policy, the Institute is committed to the organization of cultural events, the teaching of Italian language, and the development of relationships with American institutions. Not only an ideal meeting point for intellectual and artistic dialogue, the Institute has become a unique "open window" on the cultural and social aspects of past and contemporary Italy.

Founded in 1978 at the height of the NYC Downtown experimental arts revolution, **Roulette** is now a state-of-the-art performing arts venue, presenter, and producer of new and experimental music, dance, and intermedia. Its mission is to support artists creating new and adventurous art in all disciplines by providing them with a venue and resources to realize their creative visions, and to build an audience interested in the evolution of experimental art. In 2011, Roulette left its 75-seat Manhattan storefront and moved into its current 400-seat, renovated 1927 art deco theater in Downtown Brooklyn. In 2019–20, Roulette will present 120 performances and special events and will also host 125 organizations through its Community Services Program, featuring partnerships with over 70 diverse Brooklyn institutions.