

PAOLO COGNETTI





Prelude

“When I was six years old, my mother took me to visit one of her friends: bored, I wandered around the house until something caught my eye. It was an upright piano. I distinctly remember how my face only came up to the height of the keys, which seemed huge compared to the size of my hands at the time, and how I stretched up my arms to reach them, and then my amazement at the sound they made.

Thanks to my mother's fateful intuition, I began taking piano lessons shortly afterwards and, as soon as my hands became familiar with the instrument, my first compositional “experiments” began.

A lot has changed since then but not my love for music, which has grown to become my deepest reason for living.”

The piano and beyond

Paolo's music comes from the piano, the instrument that has accompanied him since the outset of his journey into sound, and on which he wrote his first compositions, like a diary, a continuous and fruitful dialogue in the notes, characterised by an instinctive and direct expressiveness.

The piano soon became a basis for increasingly wide-ranging explorations: he furthered his knowledge of harmony, counterpoint and orchestration, absorbing techniques and languages in a vast range of genres and styles.

From his experiments with the sequencer of his first electronic keyboard onwards, he began putting what he learned through studying and listening into practice, familiarising with technology applied to music and developing a particular sensitivity to production values.





Awareness. Authenticity. Peace.

Overwhelmed by social media notifications, newspaper headlines, political crises, a climate gone mad and a constant sense of impending doom, even before it materialised in the form of a global pandemic, the temptation to escape from our lives has never been greater.

The growing popularity of floating therapy experiences, and the increasing success of musical compositions that encourage isolation from external stimuli are both clear proofs of this phenomenon.

Paolo asks the listener to stay awake, to go beyond their comfort zone, to take responsibility for changing their lives rather than running away from them, and to take the risk of being happy.

Together

“Music is either with others or it is not.”

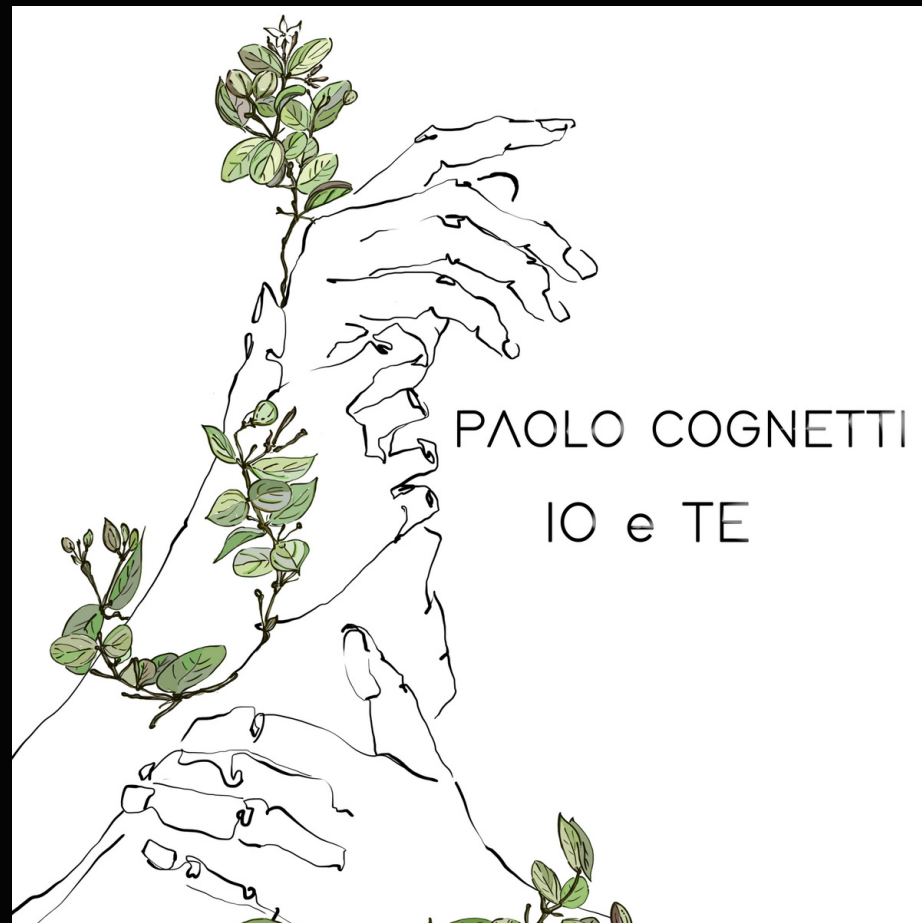
Our culture still tends to see man essentially as an individual, a separate ego, free to relate to others or not.

Asian traditions and the recent acquisitions of twentieth-century physics and cultural anthropology suggest otherwise: there is an original constitutive network of relationships in which the so-called “individual” is a link in the chain, in a perspective of differentiated totality.

And it is the same with music: it doesn't exist in its own right, independently of everything and everyone; if anything, it becomes, it is made thanks to those who play it, listen to it, talk about it, love it, in short, thanks to all those for whom it holds importance. Music exists always and exclusively as a relationship and process.



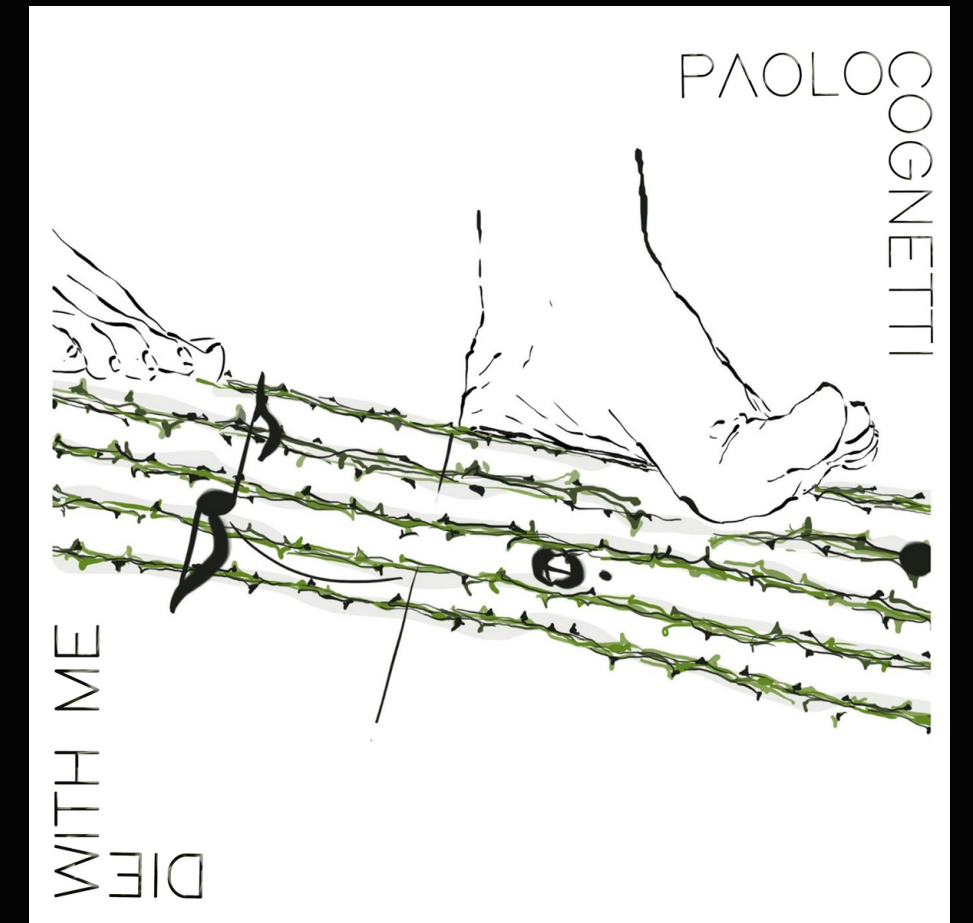
PIANO SOLO



IO E TE



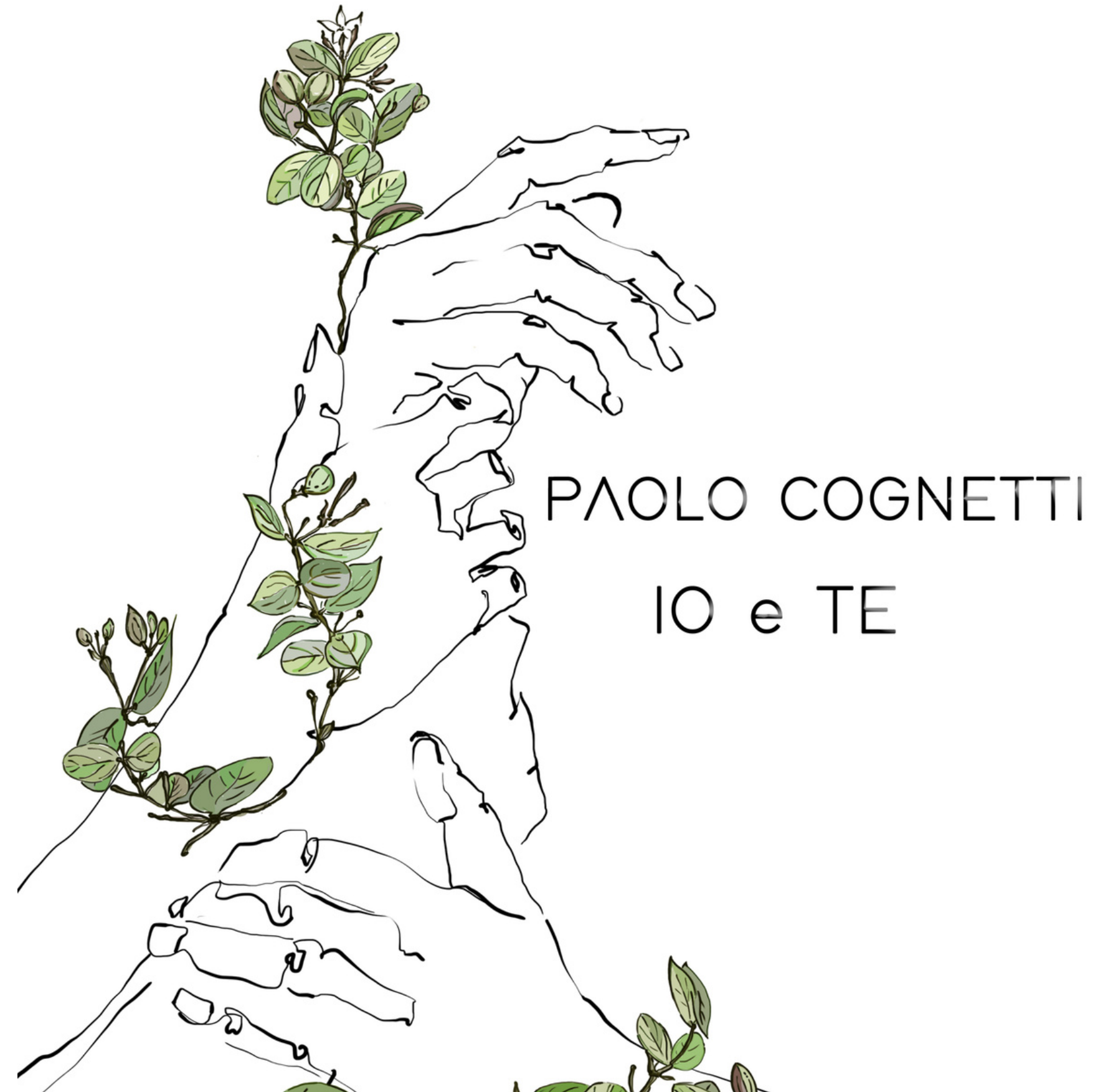
RINASCITA



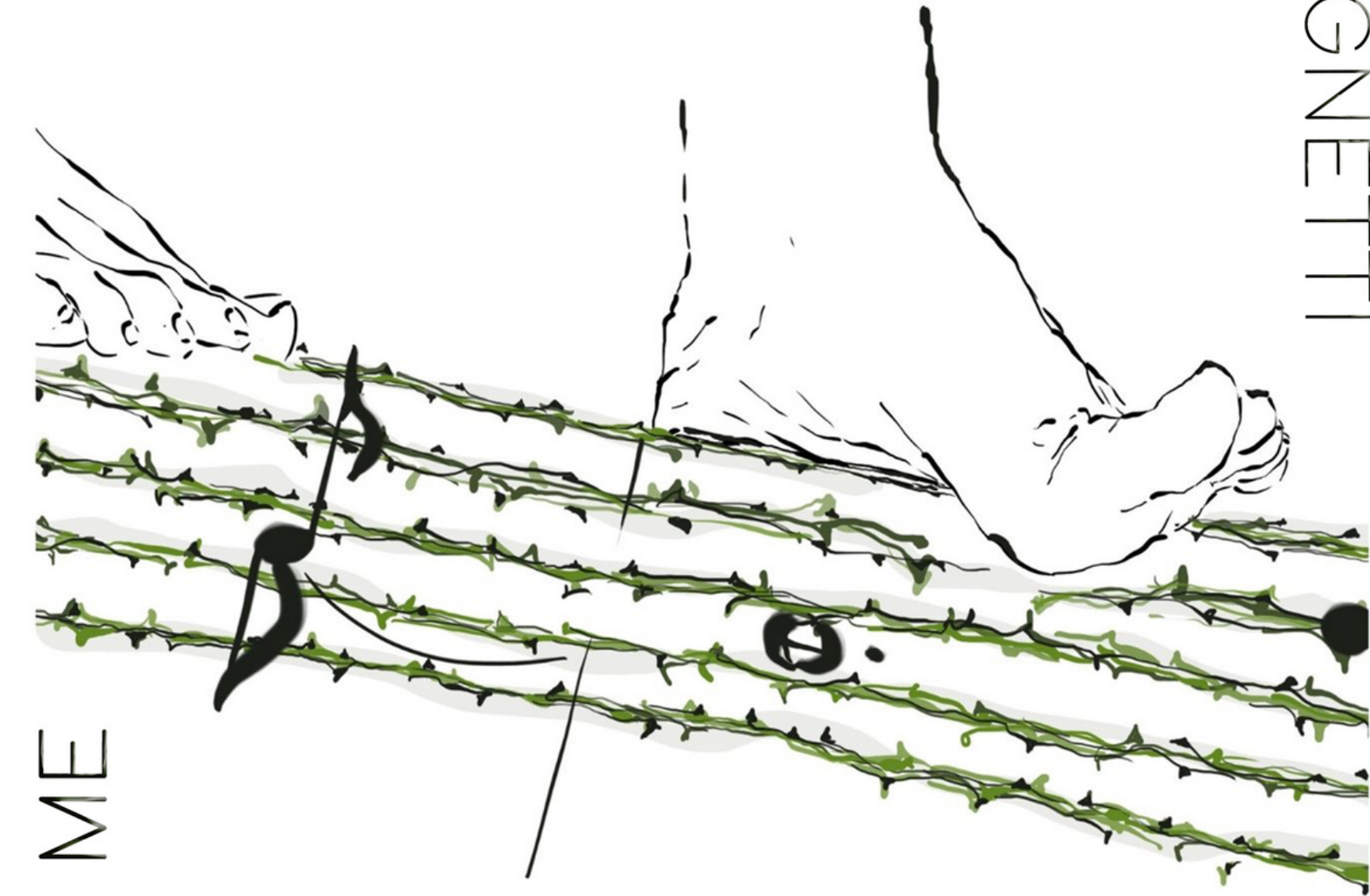
DIE WITH ME

Commissioned by the Florentine association "La Stanza Accanto", which since 2009 has been offering support to parents who have prematurely lost a child, "Io e Te" ("You and I") is a piece about sentiment par excellence, love, in all its extraordinary, and sometimes underestimated, complexity.

"Love is the feeling that more than any other puts us face to face with the relational nature of our existence, highlighting the theme of the Other, a path in which we must always find new points of equilibrium. Think of a tightrope walker: every muscle of his body is continuously and in coordination contracting or relaxing. Equilibrium is not a static fact, but a dynamic one: one is not in equilibrium, but rather at equilibrium."



PAOLO
COGNETTI



DIE
WITH
ME

Cover of the song of the same name by the New York gothic metal band Type O Negative from their 1996 album October Rust, "Die With Me" is a tribute to their frontman Peter Steele, who died before his time in 2010.

Type O Negative had a great influence on Paolo's music: their theatricality, their love for sudden conclusions or changes or even their "musical jokes", some chord progressions and melodic contours, became part of who he is today.

The Florentine composer and pianist makes the piece his own, but in doing so, he reveals how much he absorbed some characteristics of Type O Negative's language and shows, in this tribute to Peter Steele's memory, his deepest gratitude to the band.

RINASCITA

“Rinascita” (“Rebirth”) is a musical diary best listened to with closed eyes so that one can fully reflect on the thoughts, memories and emotions being conveyed. The album is a collection of ten pieces, composed and played by Paolo Cognetti. Each piece corresponds to a particular life event or private reflection, told with immediacy and depth through the notes.

Thus, Paolo generously shares his secrets to those with sensitive ears, who wish to have their hearts opened by the black and white keys.

As if by magic, what was originally conceived as an intimate and personal journey transforms itself into something capable of speaking to everyone, resembling anyone’s experience: the desire to realise the magic of sharing with other human beings through music is the energy that gives life to “Rinascita”.



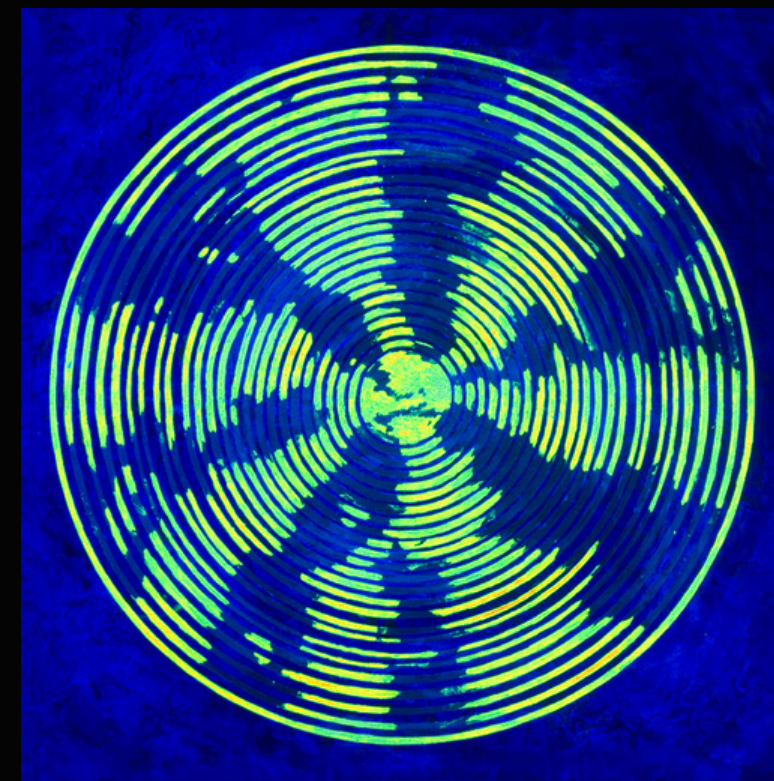
CHAMBER AND ORCHESTRAL MUSIC



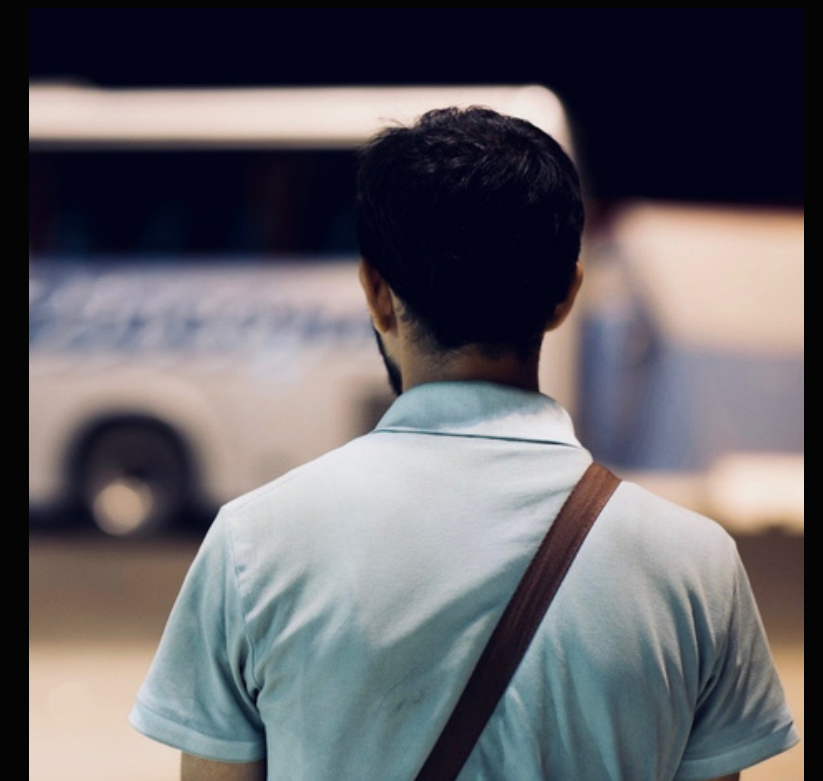
AURORA



GEISTERVARIATION VI



C(Y|IR)CLES



MARE MONSTRUM

Recorded in the fascinating Chapel of the Holy Grail in Valencia, “Aurora” is a seven-piece suite for voice, piano, recorder and contrabass: it comprises four versions of El Rey de Francia, an old Sephardic song, and three compositions based on its first melodic element, attempting to metaphorically depict the process of re-connection with the inner-self and to encourage attentive and patient listening.

The music accompanies “L’età oscura” (“The age of darkness”) by Giuseppe Cognetti, professor at the University of Siena, a book about René Guénon on intercultural dialogue and diversity, published by Mimesis Publishing in Italy.

“A creative act can resist against degeneration, to reveal fertile ground on which to undertake a journey of transformation.”



PAOLO COGNETTI

AURORA



GEISTERVARIATION VI

“Geistervariation VI, Clara Wieck gewidmet” for string quartet, composed for the Fonè Quartet, is a tribute to the memory of Robert Schumann and his wife Clara Wieck, and has many connections with the most typical aspects of the German composer's poetics, despite departing from them completely on a superficial level.

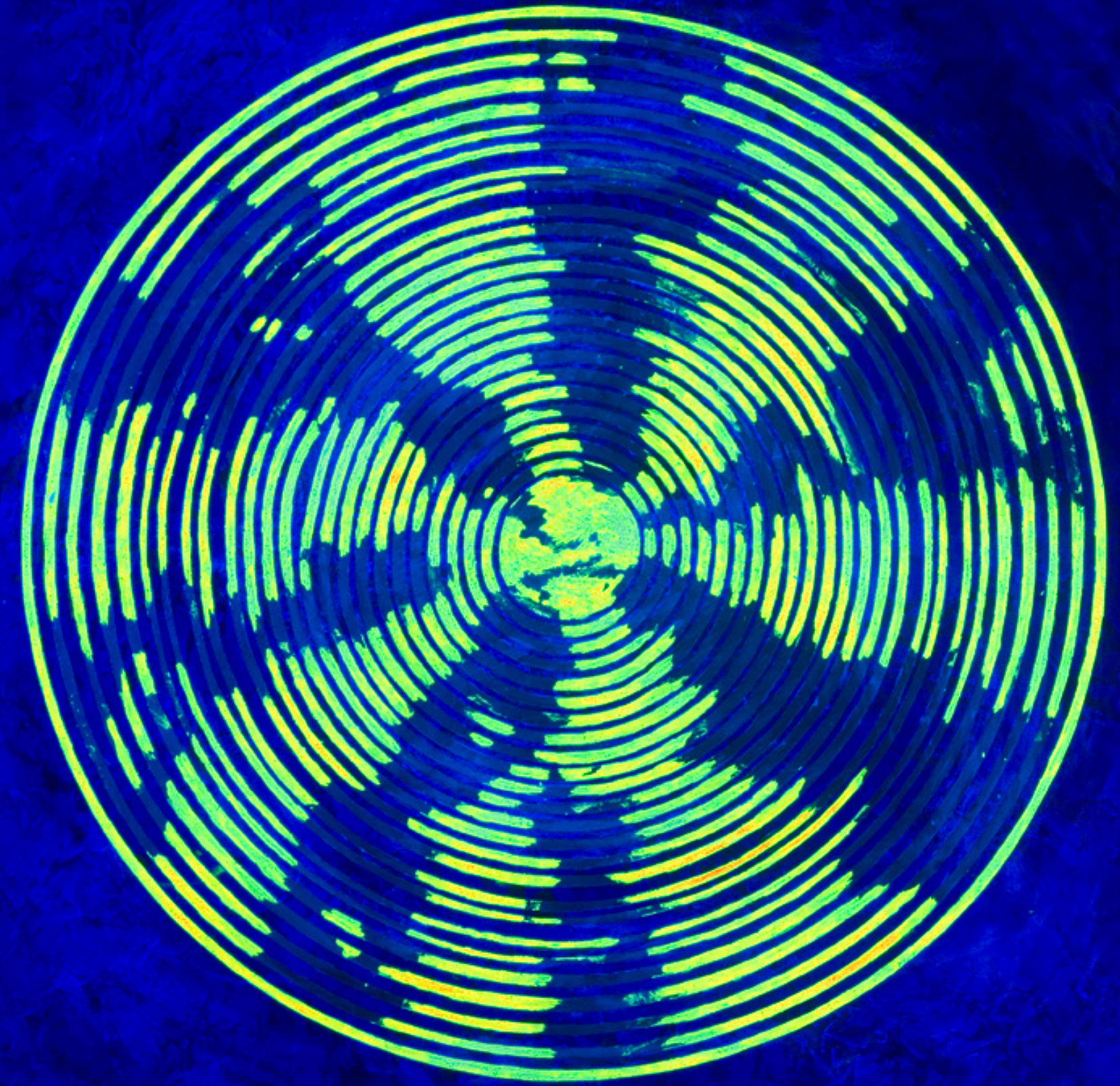
It is also a meta-variation of the Geistervariationen, Schumann's last composition – written during the days of his attempted suicide, after which he was interned in the mental asylum in Eendenich, and dedicated to his wife – from which it draws, in addition to the title, all its main musical characteristics.

About halfway through, the viola is entrusted with a citation of the theme of Clara Wieck's Romance variée op. 3, on which the composer based his Improvvisi op. 5.


C(Y|IR)CLES

Paolo describes “C(y|ir)cles, in cerca della a-dualità” (“C(y|ir)cles, in search of a-duality”) for accordion and orchestra - second prize in the 2017 edition of the “2 Agosto” International Composition Competition - as his “prayer, a search of the heart, a journey into eternity”.

The composition, a reflection on the Lord's Prayer, read in the Latin version of the pertinent Gregorian chant together with Simone Weil's interpretation of it in her “Concerning the Our Father” and Roberto Becheri's suggestions in “In attesa dell'alba” (“Waiting for Dawn”), develops a complex network of symbols that continues the path begun with “Aurora” to define a space between Heaven (Nomen, Regnum, Voluntas) and Earth (Life, Death, Faith), the Horizon, which becomes possible only in the dimension of the Heart, from which everything starts and to which everything arrives.



MARE MONSTRUM



“Mare Monstrum, Verso Luce” (“Mare Monstrum, Towards Light”) for narrator, orchestra and electronics - second prize in the 2015 edition of the “2 Agosto” International Composition Competition - was written on the emotional wave of a tragic shipwreck in the Mediterranean Sea on the 18th of April 2015: over 800 people lost their lives in an attempt to escape war and extreme poverty.

The first half of the ten-minute piece is dedicated to the dramatic testimony of a Syrian migrant, taken from MSF's Milioni di Passi (Millions of Steps) campaign; then, after listening to a recording of a traditional Sicilian song, the music presents a relaxed melody that grows in intensity and culminates in the reading of a text by María Zambrano which evokes the ideal of a “life in peace”, “tuned to a lost harmony”.

COLLABORATIONS



WEST OF
BABYLONIA

ODISSEA

WINTER DAYS

ANYWAY

FLYCATCHER

WEST OF BABYLONIA

Slab City is located in the desert, on the edge of a military base where explosive devices are tested. There is no running water or electricity in Slab City, and the roads are made of dirt.

Slabbers are young and old, hippies and neo-Nazis, outlaws and artists who share a desire to be free of the rules of American society. They see everything outside Slab City as “Babylonia”.

Paolo writes the music for the film with a non-neutral approach that is reflected in the search for a largely dirty and imperfect sound, in the preferential use of analogue synthesizers, in the irony with which certain artificial forms of religion are addressed, but also in the unconventional use of a typical American instrument such as the guitar.

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WEST OF BABYLONIA

H O M E O F T H E W I L D S O U L S



An *Odyssey* without Odysseus: Penelope, Athena, Nausicaa, Circe, Anticlea, the protagonists of this journey between sea and land, between fears and desires, monsters and beauty, violence and love, life and death, tell the adventures of Homer's hero on stage.

Paolo Cognetti's music is inspired by the so-called Baltic hypothesis, which shifts the setting of the story to the seas of northern Europe, and brings together, in an intercultural perspective, elements of Scandinavian musical tradition - e.g., Lille Lasse or the Kulning -, of the Mediterranean tradition - e.g., the frame drum, the tarantella - not forgetting contemporaneity, with cinematographic sounds, some references to EDM and the importance assigned to timbre as an expressive factor.

WINTER DAYS

Arranging an electropop “vocoder” song with an adventurous spirit, putting together a classical ensemble made up of a string quintet and piano is the idea developed by Paolo for Winter Days, the tenth track on the debut album of Mouth Water, a project that revolves around producer, author and friend Lawrence Fancelli, the Officina Sonora del Bigallo studio and the Through The Void label.

The album, which incorporates elements of lounge, rock and funk, was released on the 25th of October 2019 and boasts prestigious participations by Sabina Sciubba, lead singer of New York band Brazilian Girls, French producers Head On Television and Italian dance music legend Gianni Bini.





ANYWAY

Writer Amanda Denver arrived in Florence full of enthusiasm and with the hope of leaving her various personal problems behind.

Pushed by her fragility and the need to follow a man who is merely a projection of her desire, she walks through the city in an inner journey, freeing her of ghosts and fears, enabling her to write again.

The sound component, which explores the protagonist's complex psychology for the entire duration of the short film, is composed entirely by Paolo Cognetti, assisted by sound engineer Jonathan Mazzeo, and is the result of work in which sound design and production play an important role in addition to music in the purest sense.

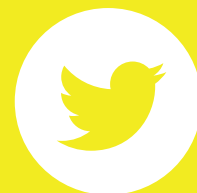
FLYCATCHER

Flycatcher is a darkly humorous thriller in which none of the four main characters - Madelaine, Mae, Bing and Olive - are what they seem.

Their lives intersect, but when Bing sets his sights on Olive, nothing and no one will stop Madelaine from luring unsuspecting victims into her psychological traps.

The incidental music, using a predominantly timbral approach, in which layers of sound alternate according to different dynamic curves, and in an attempt to find a musical equivalent of the Freudian category of the uncanny, investigates the darker sides of the characters, drawing attention to the progressive deterioration of their psychological stability, and highlights the protagonist's solitude but also her relentless and clear-minded determination.





CONTATTI

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