



Ensemble  
**MURMURS MUSORI**

Concerto a Montorfano  
English Booklet

# Ensemble Murmur Mori

The ensemble was born in 2015, from an idea by Mirko Volpe and Silvia Kuro, with the purpose of creating “**new early music**”. Taking inspiration from jester poetry of a popular nature, the project plunges its roots in the Middle Ages, when music was played for recreation, but was also a means of social criticism and had the fundamental role of knowledge propagator.

Among the woods of the Italian Alps grows Murmur Mori's folk music.





The church of San Giovanni stands on a plateau on Montorfano, in an elevated position on the Mergozzo Lake. Archaeological excavations have highlighted the first ecclesiastical complex dating between the end of the 5th and the beginning of the 6th cent. AD. This was composed of a single-nave church, flanked to the north by a baptistery with same plan and similar dimensions, and with an octagonal baptismal font inserted at the centre of the floor. Later on,

the church underwent a complete rebuilding. The excavations have in fact brought to light a new ecclesiastical building characterized by three apses, which can be dated between the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 9th cent. (Carolingian age). For unknown reasons, around the first half of the 12th century, the Carolingian church was abandoned and demolished, while the baptismal one was completely rebuilt, leading to the Romanesque church, which we can still admire today. The church of San Giovanni presents a Latin cross plan, unusual in Verbano area, an apse with a gallery of arches and finely decorated columns and a "Lombard band" along the upper part of the walls. The masonry of squared blocks of stone and the refined architectural elements suggest the presence of a highly specialized workforce. All the data collected so far allow us to date this building to the second half of the 12th century.

Elena Poletti Ecclesia, Coordinator of the Ecomuseum of Montorfano Granite



O Fortuna velut Luna (1) and Fortune plango vulnera (4) are poems drawn from the Codex Buranus, a 12th/13th century manuscript. Both touch on the topic of the 'Rota Fortunae', a symbolic representation of Fate as a wheel, which, by constantly spinning, brings our lives and fortunes up and down. The two sonnets of La Giullaressa (6), the female jester, are from the year 1507. This anonymous poetess defends her figure as a woman and musician, from the bench in a square, with pride, sarcasm and elegance. Dança de Mai (3) is a 13th century poem by a Mantuan troubadour, of uncertain attribution, and constitutes a unique example of poetry intended to accompany dance. The anonymous poet incites women to go outside and welcome the new-come spring by dancing and having fun. A la stagion che'l mondo foglia e fiora (2) is a poem by Compiuta Donzella, a 13th century Italian poetess and one of the first women, together with Nina Siciliana, to write in vernacular. In the lyrics of the poem she complains of being betrothed, against her will, to a man chosen by her father, thus she can't rejoice in springtime as other lovers do. Compiuta Donzella was one of the most prominent authors of the Tuscan school as was the poet Bonagiunta Orbicciani, whose poem Tutto lo mondo si mantien per fiore (5) we put to music. The Tuscan school was closer in style to troubadour poetry and the Sicilian school, in opposition to the Stil Novo. Dante included Bonagiunta Orbicciani in his Purgatorio as an opponent of his newer style of poetry. Libera Musa (7) wants to evoke spontaneous amusement and free expression as it questions the contemporary civilization's entertainment forms, which instead of stemming from sincere initiatives, are sold or restricted to specific places and contexts. La canzone della cicala (8) is a chant dedicated to those who live by their own passions without worrying about others' judgements, sometimes going through hardships, but without any regrets, being certain of not having wasted or sold their time. Danza bacchica (9) is an instrumental piece inspired by Bacchus and traditional folk dances. Il verde picchio (10) is a song born from the contemplation of a green woodpecker's deeds and its flight. At last, Norma contro Natura (11) is a song which through an allegory - a stylistic device widely used in Medieval literature - muses on the relationship between Society and Nature.

Mirko Volpe, Silvia Kuro  
MURMUR MORI

# 1 • O Fortuna velut Luna

(lyrics: Codex Buranus 12th/13th century - music: Mirko Volpe)

# 2 • A la stagion che'l mondo foglia e fiora

(lyrics: Compiuta Donzella 13th century - music: Mirko Volpe)

# 3 • Dança de Mai

(lyrics: Anon. from Mantua 13th century - music: Mirko Volpe)

# 4 • Fortune Plango Vulnera

(lyrics: Codex Buranus 12th/13th century - music: Silvia Kuro, Mirko Volpe)

# 5 • Tutto lo mondo si mantien per fiore

(lyrics: Bonagiunta Orbicciani 13th century - music: Mirko Volpe)

# 6 • La Giullaressa

(lyrics: Anon. female jester 16th century - music: Silvia Kuro, Mirko Volpe)

# 7 • Libera Musa

(lyrics: Silvia Kuro - music: Mirko Volpe)

# 8 • La canzone della Cicala

(lyrics, music: Mirko Volpe)

# 9 • Danza Bacchica

(music: Mirko Volpe)

# 10 • Il verde picchio

(lyrics: Silvia Kuro - music: Mirko Volpe)

# 11 • Norma contro natura

(lyrics, music: Mirko Volpe)

Lyrics

# 1 • O Fortuna velut Luna

(lyrics: Codex Buranus 12th/13th century - music: Mirko Volpe)

Original:

O Fortuna velut luna statu variabilis, semper crescis aut decrescis, vita detestabilis; nunc obdurat et tunc curat ludo mentis aciem, egestatem potestatem dissolvit ut glaciem. Sors inmanis et inanis rota tu volubilis, status malus vana salus semper dissolubilis, obumbratam et velatam mihi quoque niteris, nunc per ludum dorsum nudum fero tui sceleris. Sors salutis et virtutis mihi nunc contraria, est affectus et defectus semper in angaria, hac in hora sine mora corde pulsum tangite, quod per sortem sternit fortē, mecum omnes plangite.

English:

O Fortune, like the moon you are changeable, ever waxing ever waning; hateful life first oppresses and then soothes playing with mental clarity; poverty and power it melts them like ice. Fate, cruel and empty, you are a turning wheel, your position is uncertain, your favour is idle and always likely to disappear; covered in shadows and veiled you bear upon me too; now my back is naked through the sport of your wickedness. Fate is against me in health and virtue, driven on and weighted down, always enslaved. So at this hour without delay pluck the vibrating strings; since Fate strikes down the strong, everyone weep with me!

## 2 • A la stagion che'l mondo foglia e fiora

(lyrics: Compiuta Donzella 13th century - music: Mirko Volpe)

Original:

A la stagion che'l mondo foglia e fiora acrese gioia a tuti fin'amanti: vanno insieme a li giardini alora che gli auscelletti fanno dolzi canti; la franca gente tutta s'inamora, e di servir ciascun frages inanti, ed ogni damigella in gioia dimora; e me, n'abondan marimenti e pianti. Ca lo mio padre m'ha messa 'n erore, e tenemi sovente in forte doglia: donar mi vole a mia forza signore, ed io di ciò non ho disio né voglia, e 'n gran tormento vivo a tutte l'ore; però non mi ralegra fior né foglia.

English:

In the season when the world grows leaves and flourishes, joy increases for all true lovers: they go together to the gardens then for birds are singing sweet chants; all honest people fall in love, and they step forward to serve each other, and every damsel dwells in joy; but me, I abound in pain and tears. Because my father did me wrong, he keeps me in great sorrow: he wants to betroth me to a lord against my will, and I of that I'm not desirous nor yearning, and in deep torment I live each hour; thus no flower or leaf makes me rejoice.

### 3 • Dança de Mai

(lyrics: Anon. from Mantua 13th century - music: Mirko Volpe)

Original:

Doni, donçelli gardati cche ven l'alegra stason: venite, la dansa balati; far lo devit per rason. Li doni che so'inamorati non deça guardar cason; poy che lo tempo se pon de darve solaç e deport, bene serïa gran tort se stesev in casa reclosa. Dansa de grande valore, van'a quel'alta donçella: salu a la flor de li flori, che vegn'a la dansa novela. E be' lo dé far per so onore, quella resplandente stella. Poy ch'el'è flor d'ogna bella, per De', non se'n faça prigari: vegn'a la ro'a balari...

English:

Ladies and maidens, take a look, the merry season is coming: come, whirl into the dance; you must do it 'cause it's fair. The women who are in love must not look for excuses; because it's time now to give you joy and delight, it would be great wrong if you stay at home as a recluse. Dance of great value, go to that noble maiden: greet the best flower of flowers, so that she comes to the new dance. And she has to do it cause it's worthy her honour, that shining star. Since she's the flower of all beauty, for God's sake, don't let me beg: come to the round dance...

## 4 • Fortune plango vulnera

(lyrics: Codex Buranus 12th/13th century - music: Silvia Kuro, Mirko Volpe)

Original:

Fortune plango vulnera stillantibus ocellis, quod sua michi munera subtrahit rebellis. Verum est, quod legitur fronte capillata, sed plerumque sequitur occasio calvata. In Fortuna solio sederam elatus, prosperitatis vario flore coronatus; quicquid enim florui felix et beatus, nunc a summo corruji gloria privatus. Fortune rota volvitur: descendo minoratus; alter in altum tollitur; nimis exaltatus, rex sedet in vertice, caveat ruinam, nam sub axe legimus: Hecubam reginam.

English:

I bemoan the wounds of Fortune with weeping eyes, the gifts she made me are taken away. It is read in truth that a fine head of hair usually follows with baldness. On Fortunes Throne sitting raised up, prosperous and crowned with flowers I may have flourished successful and happy, now I fall from the peak deprived of glory. Fortunes wheel turns; I fall in disgrace; from the deep another rises; far too high the new king sits in turn - let him fear ruin! For beneath the axle is written: Queen Hecuba.

## 5 • Tutto lo mondo si mantien per fiore

(lyrics: Bonagiunta Orbiccianni 13th century - music: Mirko Volpe)

Original:

Tutto lo mondo si mantien per fiore, se fior non fosse frutto non serìa, e per lo fiore si mantene amore, gioie e allegrezze ch'è gran signoria. E de la fior son fatto servidore si de bon cor che più non poria: in fiore ho messo tutto'l meo valore se fior mi fallisse ben morìa. Eo son fiorito e vado più fiorendo in fiore ho posto tutto il mi' diporto: per fiore aggio la vita certamente. Com più fiorisco più in fior m'intendo: se fior mi falla ben serìa morto, vostra mercé (madonna), fior aulente.

English:

The whole world is maintained by flowers: if flower was not, fruit it wouldn't be; the flower maintains love, joys and delights that are great lordship. And I myself am servant of flower, so good heartedly that I couldn't be it more; I put all my value for flower; if it fails, I'm going to die. I'm in flower and I'm flowering even more, I put all my amusement for flower, my life surely comes from the flower. The more I flourish the more I'm into the flower if I lack flower, I'll surely die; at your mercy, lady, fragrant flower.

## 6 • La Giullaressa

(lyrics: Anon. poetess 16th century - music: Silvia Kuro, Mirko Volpe)

Original:

Vorria e non vorria darvi piacere, il dir pur stringe, il pudor mi raffrena, il star me noia, il partir mi dà pena, ma non farò però contro il dovere. Il star in banca alfin m'è dispiacere, perché veggio la gente che m'accena, tal piglia piacer de la mia vena, che non vorrei che mi fusse scudiere. O Febo, l'arte tua ridotta a tale, che chi ti segue è mostro infra la gente a dito con le lingue use a dir male. Non vi meravigliate de niente, s'a cantare una donna in banca sale: virtù fa l'omo al tutto onnipotente. Benché una forza mia timida voce suspinga a dire, il pudor la molesta, cussi fra doppia fiamma avvolto resta mio faretrato cor che sempre coce. Ma spinta dall'audacia che mai noce, dirò con quel favor che il ciel mi prestà e sforzerommi dar piacere e festa a ciscadun che mi darà la croce. Ma non sia alcun che pigli admirazione s'io son montata in banca per cantare, ch'arte non è però già da poltrone. Febo si dilettava del sonare col canto Tebe edificò Anfione: donde questa virtù divina pare. Lassate il murmurare o vulgo, o plebe, perché alfin s'è visto che sol col canto in ciel si placa Cristo.

English:

I would like and I would not to delight you, I'm forced to say, but modesty restrains me. It bothers me to stay, it struggles me to leave, but I won't do against my duty. To stay on the bench gives me sorrow, because I see the people staring at me. who is pleased for my flair, I wouldn't want it to be my squire. Oh Phoebus your art is such reduced that who follows you it's seen as a monster among the people held up with the usual slanders. Don't be surprised if a woman gets on the bench to sing: virtue makes a man almighty to the whole. Although a force pushes my shy voice to say, modesty disturbs it, thus wrapped up in two flames remains my quivered heart that always burns. But led by the courage which is never harmful, I will say something thanks to heaven's granted favor and I will try my best to celebrate and to please each one who'll give me the cross (of a quatrinol). But don't feel admired, you all for I mounted on the bench to sing because art is not for idlers. Phoebus delighted in playing Amphion built Thebes with chant: whence this virtue seems divine. Ignore the rumors! Oh folks, plebs, in the end it's clear that only chant placates Christ in heaven!

## 7 • Libera Musa

(lyrics: Silvia Kuro - music: Mirko Volpe)

Original:

Danza spontanea sorge e si mostra, dove non è attesa sovverte, ribalta l'ordine a volontà scoperte. Gaia come un fiore non colto, che l'erba e il terreno son del fior la bellezza. Non la danza venduta che è stata richiesta, ma la danza che improvvisa si manifesta. Il gesto istintivo del bramare ciò che palpita, il suo passo rivolge ed un canto essa porge. Danza iniziatica imperitura, che sempre rinnova il suo moto di un suono che a nessuno è noto. Eppure mai mente, è sempre costante. Tutto contiene e nulla possiede, una danza che esprime e non rappresenta.

English:

Spontaneous dance, it arises and it shows. Where it's not expected it subverts. It overturns the order with revealed will. Cheery as a flower ungathered, for grass and soil make the beauty of a flower. It is not the sold dance which was demanded, but the dance that suddenly manifests. The instinctive gesture of craving for that which beats. Its step directs and offers a chant. Perpetual initiation dance, which always renovates its motion of an unknown sound. Yet it never lies, it is constant. It contains everything and it owns nothing. A dance that express and doesn't represent.

## 8 • La canzone della Cicala

(lyrics, music: Mirko Volpe)

Original:

Son cicala e canterò, sotto al Sole mi scalderò. Tu formica nasconderai quello che troverai. Quando il vento cambierà e il mio canto finirà, dell'Inverno il bianco velo vi ricoprirà di gelo, fin che germoglierà, chi con me canterà! Della vita son padrona, son poesia e son cialtrona. Libera di sollazzar e per Amor cantar! Tutti si dovrà morire lascio dunque a voi l'ardire di gioir di questo tempo, mentre io canterò fino a che morirò.

English:

I'm cicada and I'll sing, I'll warm up under the sun. You, ant, will hide everything that you will find until you'll die. When the wind will change and my song will end, winter's white veil will cover you with frost, until it will sprout who is going to sing with me. I'm owner of life, I'm poetry and buffoon. I freely amuse and of love I sing! Everybody shall die so I leave to you the daring to enjoy this time while I will sing 'till I die.

A photograph of four musicians in a historical setting. In the foreground, a woman on the left holds a large white tambourine, and a man on the right plays a large white tambourine. Behind them, another man sits at a harpsichord. A fourth person is partially visible in the background. They are all dressed in period clothing. The setting appears to be a room with stone walls and some furniture.

## 9 • Danza Bacchica

(music: Mirko Volpe)

Instrumental

## 10 • Il verde picchio

(lyrics: Silvia Kuro - music: Mirko Volpe)

Original:

Il verde picchio s'alza in volo, di rubino ha il capo ornato. Se l'ali apre per fuggir pericolo, se senta il giorno che gli è dato. Che sia della morte il timore ad animar nell'aria sue piume? O che sia invece della vita l'ardore? Par come il fiume: Che scorre incessante, eterno inizio ed ignota fin.

English:

The green woodpecker rises in flight, of ruby red its head's adorned. It might spread its wings to flee risk or it may feel its own given time. Is it the fear of death that animates its feathers in the air? Or is it instead life's passion? It seems the same as the river: a constant flow, eternal beginning and unknown end.

## 11 • Norma contro Natura

(lyrics, music: Mirko Volpe)

Original:

Io me ne infischio di questa società, serva di Norma e di Falsità, ma canto con gioia dell'inciviltà: regina bella per Natura! Norma severa ci vuole abituar ad una vita di miseria, solo tenzoni senza gloria che non fan pianger la società. Norma comanda con le comodità, donando falsa serenità, ma se Natura gli occhi ci aprirà farem crollare ogni città. Sopra l'asfalto non c'è vita, ma sol la terra può generar ciò che ci occorre per poter respirar lo dà Natura e non Norma. Viver schermati lontan dalla realtà è ormai per tutti normalità, ma il nostro cuore trova serenità se non c'è Norma ma Natura. Forza ballate e cantate insieme a me, che sol così si fa male al re, lui ha scambiato la nostra libertà, contro Natura, con Norma.

English:

I don't care of this society which is slave of Norm and Falsehood, but I sing with joy about incivility: a beautiful queen by Nature! Strict Norm wants us getting used to a miserable life, just inglorious tensons for avoiding society's complaints. Norm commands by supplying us conveniences, by offering false serenity, but if Nature will open our eyes we will destroy every city. On the asphalt surface no life exists, only earth can give birth, what we need for breathing it is given by Nature and not by Norm. Living screened and distant from reality it's everyone's normality by now, but our heart finds peacefulness if there is Nature instead of Norm. Come on, dance and sing with me, for it's the only way to hurt the king, he exchanged our freedom, against Nature, with Norm.



## Murmur Mori:

Mirko Volpe: Guterne, Hurdy Gurdy, Chant, Frame Drums

Silvia Kuro: Chant, Rope Drum, Bell Stick, Riqq (song 9)

Alessandra Lazzarini: Piccolo Flute, Chant (Song 8)

Matteo Brusa: Bells, Finger Cymbals, Drum

Stefano Barcellari: Riqq, Tbilat, Darbouka, Headless Tambourine, Chant (Song 8)



Recorded on 28.03.2021 in the church of San Giovanni in Montorfano (VB) Piedmont, Italy

The entire concert was filmed and it's available for free on:  
MURMURMORI.COM

Edizioni Stramonium: audio recordings, concept audio/video  
Silvia Kuro: video editing, english translations

Thomas Foresti: camera operator

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Somariamente Association



O Fortuna velut Luna, Fortune plango vulnera, La giullaressa, Danza bacchica, Il verde picchio, Norma contro Natura

from: Sorte (Edizioni Stramonium 2020)

Dança de Mai, Tutto lo mondo si mantien per fiore, La canzone della cicala

from: Joy, Solatz e Dolor (Edizioni Stramonium 2019)

A la stagion che'l mondo foglia e fiora

from: La morte dell'Unicorno (Edizioni Stramonium 2018)



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ecomuseo  
del GRANITO  
di Montorfano

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