

= Laborintus II (2012 recording) =

Laborintus II is a 2012 album by Belgian orchestra Ictus Ensemble , vocal group Nederlands Kamerkoor and American vocalist Mike Patton . It is a recording of the 1965 work of the same name by Italian composer Luciano Berio , which featured lyrics taken from fellow Italian Edoardo Sanguineti 's 1956 poem Laborintus . The performance was recorded live at the 2010 Holland Festival .

Berio 's composition employs elements of jazz and electronic music , and Sanguineti 's libretto borrows ideas from the works of Dante Alighieri , T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound as well as using his own original work . Berio named " memory , death and usury " as the work 's main concerns , believing these themes to be present in Dante 's work .

Released on July 10 , 2012 , the album debuted at number 23 on the American Billboard Classic Albums chart . It has received mixed reviews from critics , most of whom highlighted its challenging and free @-@ form composition .

= = Production = =

Laborintus II is a recording of the 1965 composition of the same name by Luciano Berio , who wrote it for the 700th anniversary of Dante Alighieri 's birth . The libretto was provided by Edoardo Sanguineti , who included elements of his 1956 poem Laborintus in it . AllMusic 's Thom Jurek described the original poem as speaking of " the timelessness of love and mourning , while acting as a critique of the commoditization of all things " . In addition to Sanguineti 's own poetry ? itself based on themes found in Dante 's Divina Commedia , Convivio and La Vita Nuova ? the work uses excerpts from the Bible and the writings of poets T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound . Musically , Laborintus II incorporates elements of jazz and electronic music while sometimes evoking the style of Italian composer Claudio Monteverdi .

Berio described the main structure of Laborintus II as a " catalogue , in its medieval meaning " (exemplified by the Etymologies of Isidore of Seville) , using Dante 's themes of " memory , death and usury " . Members of the Dutch choir Nederlands Kamerkoor , which performed in the recording , have also cited usury as a key theme in the work , describing the composition as " an indictment against the practice " . Of the form , Berio wrote : " Individual words and sentences are sometimes to be regarded as autonomous entities , and sometimes to be perceived as part of the sound structure as a whole . " The instrumentation of Laborintus II was written as an " extension " of the vocal material ; its electronic section is likewise an extension of the instrumental music . Berio used car tyres and a blow @-@ up doll on stage in a performance of the work at the Holland Festival in 1973 .

The album was recorded live at the Holland Festival on June 18 , 2010 , in the Muziekgebouw aan ' t IJ . The work was performed by Mike Patton and the Belgian Ictus Ensemble conducted by Georges @-@ Elie Octors . Solos were performed by Ictus Ensemble clarinetist Dirk Descheemaeker , trumpeter Loïc Dumoulin , trombonist Michel Massot , double bass player Géry Cambier , and percussionists Michael Weilacher and Gerrit Nulens . Nederlands Kamerkoor provided the choral accompaniments . The album marks only the third recording of the composition to have been released since it was first broadcast on French radio by Office de Radiodiffusion Télévision Française . Patton has said of the work , " I can listen to Berio and Nono as easily as I can to Morricone but like all modern music of Italy , it is unfortunately marginalized ... Maybe because of the language barrier , maybe because it ? s not easily understood . Berio , who was teaching in California when he wrote this piece , was listening to jazz , pop and folk music and incorporated all of it in his works without prejudice . "

= = Composition = =

Laborintus II combines orchestral , choral and spoken elements throughout its three parts . Patton 's spoken narration is delivered in Italian , although taped samples feature Sanguineti speaking in

English . From a whisper to a shout , the words carry a variety of emotional tones as the work progresses . The choral parts respond to the narration both with unified chanting and with disjointed arguing , the latter serving to increase the tension . They are accompanied by three female vocalists whose voices range from soprano singing to " cooing " and " howling " .

The music incorporates elements of jazz and 20th @-@ century avant @-@ garde . The instruments in the orchestra frequently interrupt both each other and the female voices , and some sections of the composition seem as though they are improvised . Laborintus II makes use of both traditional percussion instruments and electronic sounds , and their interplay serves to " erect musical and textural architectures , then disassemble them quickly " . Max Feldman has compared the style to that of Raymond Scott .

The first part of the composition features the three female voices creating a " mournful " tone while the orchestra plays recurring musical passages . The second part is a discordant crescendo , as Patton 's narration becomes increasingly shouted and the orchestral accompaniment more " hyperactive " . The third and final part returns to a calmer tone , focussing on drums and jazz woodwind instruments .

= = Track listing = =

All lyrics written by Edoardo Sanguineti , all music composed by Luciano Berio .

= = Personnel = =

= = Release and reception = =

Laborintus II was released on July 10 , 2012 , through Patton 's record label Ipecac Recordings . In the United States , the album debuted on the Billboard Classic Albums chart at number 23 ; it spent one week on the chart .

The album received mixed reviews from critics . Review aggregation website Metacritic awarded it an average score of 58 out of 100 , based on eight reviews . Writing for The A.V. Club , Chris Mincher rated the album B ? , calling it " challenging , uncompromising , and bordering on inaccessible " . Mincher felt that the album was abstract and difficult but contained " hidden payoffs " to reward repeated hearings . He called Patton 's arrangements " haunting " and " wraithlike " . AllRovi 's Thom Jurek rated the album 3 @.@ 5 stars out of 5 , describing the recording as " a very nearly dazzling endeavor that rewards patience mightily " . Jurek felt that , as an album , Laborintus II was difficult to grasp at first , by virtue of being a recording of theatrical music , but he praised the performance of Ictus Ensemble , writing of their " bracing freshness and mischievous glee " . Eli Kleman of Sputnikmusic rated it 3 @.@ 5 out of 5 , finding it " fascinating if not unwieldy " . He felt that Laborintus II was perhaps Patton 's most ambitious album to date , but noted that the musician has previously produced similarly avant @-@ garde records in the past . Kleman described the composition as " somber , beautiful , and ominous , but always affecting " .

Max Feldman of PopMatters awarded Laborintus II a rating of seven out of ten , finding Berio 's composition " challenging " and " exhausting " . He noted the work 's free jazz elements , comparing it to the 1970 Miles Davis album Bitches Brew . Feldman felt that the music " constantly emphasises its own unpredictability " . Consequence of Sound 's Carson O 'Shoney rated the album three stars out of five , calling it " unlike anything else you 've ever heard " . O 'Shoney felt that the music might need more than one hearing to appreciate it , adding that it " runs the gauntlet from quiet , jazzy atmospherics to brazen , unsettling primal noise " . A review for Q magazine described Laborintus II as " tedious " , finding the album disorienting . Spin 's Christopher R. Weingarten rated it 7 out of 10 , calling it an " orchestra / tape collision crisper " .