

Luca Lombardi (born 1945)

Of few composers can it be said that their creative life mirrors the evolution of such a complex and articulated period as the 20th century, with its confusion of diverse styles and techniques in all the arts, including music. Luca Lombardi (Rome, 1945) is one of those few, his musical language being strongly characteristic of and entirely immersed in our contemporary culture.

From the very beginning, Lombardi had a passion for Stravinskij and Bartók. He studied composition in Rome, Vienna and Florence with Armando Renzi, Karl Schiske, Roberto Lupi and Boris Porena (under the latter he graduated from the Conservatoire of Pesaro in 1970). Between 1968 and 1972 Lombardi made his first contact with the avant-garde movement, especially through Karlheinz Stockhausen, Bernd-Alois Zimmermann, Henri Pousseur, Mauricio Kagel, Frederic Rzewski, Dieter Schnebel and Vinko Globokar, all of whom he studied with in Cologne. During these years, Lombardi's strong interest in politically committed music brought him into contact with Hanns Eisler and Paul Dessau. He wrote his degree thesis on Eisler (University of Rome, 1975, tutors: Paolo Chiarini and Fedele d'Amico) and studied with Dessau in Berlin, where he had moved to prepare his thesis. Both Eisler and Dessau had worked with Bertolt Brecht and represented alternative and complementary models for the composer to the already existing avant-garde movement. Years later (in 1982) Lombardi explained this coexistence of different styles in his works through the concepts of "ex-clusive" (the possibility of creating complex forms from very reduced materials) and "in-clusive" (the willingness to include multiple musical "behaviours"). In 1973 Lombardi began teaching composition at the Conservatoire of Pesaro. From 1978 until 1993 he taught at the Conservatory of Music of Milan, after which he decided to become a full-time composer.

Lombardi's frequent travels for conferences and seminars have taken him throughout Europe, to the United States and Canada, to Latin America and to Japan. He has written numerous compositions commissioned by important Italian and foreign institutions, amongst which are Ircam (Paris), WDR (Cologne), Rikskonserten (Stockholm), Radio-Sinfonie-Orchester (Berlin), Musikbiennale (Berlin), Rai (Rome and Turin), Radio della Svizzera Italiana (Lugano), Basler Theater (Basel), KölnMusik (Cologne), Saarländischer Rundfunk (Saarbrücken), Hindemith-Institut (Frankfurt/Main), Frankfurt Feste (Frankfurt/Main), Wiener Festwochen (Vienna), Oper Leipzig (Leipzig), ORT-Orchestra della Toscana (Florence), Essener Philharmonie (Essen), Rudolf-Steiner-Archiv (Dornach, Switzerland), Staatstheater Nürnberg (Nuremberg), the Rome Opera House and the Scala in Milan. In 1988-89 he was a fellow of the Institute for Advanced Study in Berlin and in 1998-99 and 2003-04 at Delmenhorst. He has received many prizes and awards amongst which are the "Goffredo Petrassi" Prize in 2006. He is a member of the "Akademie der Künste" in Berlin. His works have been published by Schirmer, Moeck Suvini-Zerboni and Ricordi, and currently by Rai Trade. Many of his writings are brought together in the volume *Construction of Freedom and Other Writings*, edited by Jürgen Thym (Baden-Baden, Valentin Koerner Verlag, 2006). He is

coauthor, together with Walter Gieseler and Rolf-Dieter Weyer, of the book on orchestration *Instrumentation in der Musik des 20. Jahrhunderts. Akustik. Instrumente. Zusammenwirken* (Celle, Moeck Verlag, 1985).

Although his works include a vast list of solo, chamber and orchestral music, Lombardi has become increasingly drawn towards opera, beginning in the mid-1980s. In 1986-1990 he wrote *Faust. Un travestimento*, which reflects the many stylistic peculiarities inherent in his works together with a now effortless mastery of expressive means and a remarkable theatrical instinct. In this opera, with the contribution of Edoardo Sanguineti's libretto, we find a continuous alternating of serious and comical elements, unconventional quotation and drama. He went on to write three more operas: *Dmitri oder der Künstler und die Macht* (1994-99), *Prospero* (2005-2006) and *Il re nudo* (2007-2008), the first true comic opera of Luca Lombardi. Over the years, Lombardi has progressively synthesized his many different musical experiences, yet with a pronounced reference to the great tradition of music: from Beethoven (for Lombardi the most "human" of the great composers of the past) to Stravinskij, Bartók and Šostakovič and, as far as the opera is concerned, to Rossini, Verdi and Puccini – however, never from a nostalgic or retrospective point of view but firmly rooted in contemporary culture.

At the end of 2008 Lombardi was granted Israeli citizenship (without losing his Italian citizenship) and currently lives at both Lago Albano (near Rome) and Giaffa (Tel Aviv).

Gabriele Becheri