

HARRIMAN JEWELL S E R I E S

with assistance from
MRS. GRETCHEN JACOBSON
presents

NoGravity

FROM HELL TO PARADISE (Divina Commedia)

This evening marks NoGravity Dance Company's
American Debut performance.

The Muriel McBrien Kauffman Family Foundation
is the sponsor of our 59th Season.

7:00 P.M., WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31, 2024
FOLLY THEATER
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

NoGravity

FROM HELL TO PARADISE (Divina Commedia)

A creation by Emiliano Pellisari

CHOREOGRAPHY	Emiliano Pellisari & Mariana/P
DANCERS	Mariana/P (principal dancer), Eva Campanaro, Francesco Saverio Cifaldi, Giada Inserra, Leila Ghiabbi, Giovanni Bellucci
SCENOGRAPHY	Emiliano Pellisari
MUSIC	classic & electronic contemporary
MUSIC DESIGN	Mariana/P
LIGHT DESIGN	Emiliano Pellisari & Enrico Cieccarelli
TECH DIRECTOR	Emiliano Pellisari
LIGHT TECHNICIAN AND ASSISTANT OF TECH DIRECTOR	Enrico Cieccarelli
STAGE TECHNICIAN	Luca Tienforti

NoGravity is a brand by Compagnia Danza Emiliano Pellisari Studio a.c.

*Please join us after the concert for an informal conversation with the artists.
We invite you to move to open seats closer to the stage at that time.*



NoGravity is a performing arts company founded and directed by Emiliano Pellisari. The NoGravity artistic work crosses the boundaries between different performing arts in order to create multidisciplinary performances and theatrical shows. NoGravity's style is inspired by the extraordinary mechanics of Renaissance and Baroque theatre of Marvel with a focus on the Man-Machine relationship. Beauty, dream, marvel, illusion, fun are the keys of the poetic of the director Emiliano Pellisari. Symbols, evocations, suggestions, and *tableaux vivant* are created to express the 'jagged coastline' of collective imagination. NoGravity presents its shows in world tours every year and has appeared in Russia, China, Colombia, Uruguay, Switzerland, Germany, France, Spain, Poland, and Italy. In 2018, NoGravity toured to Spain, Italy, the Canary Islands, South America, Poland, Russia, and Azerbaijan with the shows *Divina Commedia*, *Aria*, *Comix*, and *Leonardo*. www.nogravitytheatre.com

NoGravity appears by arrangement with
FAS Arts Management, Brooklyn, NY
www.fasartsmanagement.com

PROGRAM NOTES

by Emiliano Pellisari

INTRODUCTION

The Divine Comedy narrates Dante's journey through the three Christian realms: Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise. It is a symbolic journey, not of a single man but of the soul of all mankind. For Dante, the spiritual soul is represented by a woman, Beatrice. Mariana/P is the protagonist and stands at the center of the stage: her face is painted white and marked with the cross because she represents the Christian soul. An off-stage voice recites Dante's famous verses that introduce Hell.

HELL GATE

"Through me the way to the suffering city. Through me the way to eternal pain. Through me the way that runs among the lost. Justice urged on my high artificer. My maker was divine authority, the highest wisdom, and the primal love. Before me, nothing but eternal things were made, and I endure eternally. Abandon every hope, who enter here."

(The Hell, Canto III, 1-9)

The first scene represents the infernal gate: a living architecture constituted by six dancers, a human circle that transforms into a square, a star with four or five points that changes constantly. Bodies create geometric patterns like triangles, squares, hexagons. The choreography develops along arabesque geometries, baroque architectures.

THE DAMNED

"As the autumn leaves fall, one after another, spoilage on the ground, so, one by one, the evil seed of Adam, threw themselves down from the bank when signaled, like falcon at its call."

(The Hell, Canto III, 112-117)

In the second scene, the damned appear on the edge of Hell. They are suspended in the void, like tightrope walkers, awaiting their gruesome fate.

They are furious, desperate, and terrified, turning against each other. Charon will carry them into the Inferno's Bolge, each of them getting the punishment they deserve based on the medieval rule of *contrappasso*.

THE SEVEN SINS

"What master of the brush or of style - could ever reproduce the shades and lines - that there a subtle intellect would make visible? - The dead seemed alive, and the living seemed dead."

(Purgatorio, Canto XII, 64-72)

The purgatorial mountain is divided into seven circles representing the 7 deadly sins.

Six dancers, inspired by dantean *exempla* and by *tableaux vivants* grounded in ancient history, mythology, and the Bible, construct and melt with their bodies seven giant figures seven times to represent the 7 deadly sins.

The rock on the shoulders of Sisyphus represents the proud: the bodies dissolve their figures and recombine to form the A of Avarizia (greed), then turn into a great eye to symbolize envy. The following scenes formed by the bodies of the dancers represent the tree of the gluttons, the penalty in the air of the slothful, tied for punishment, the triggering of a rabid irascible person trapped between the bodies of the dancers, and finally the birth of the flame of the lustful.

PAOLO AND FRANCESCA

"As doves, claimed by desire, fly steadily, with raised wings, through the air, to their sweet nest, carried by the will."

(The Hell, Canto V, 82-84)

The scene is very sweet: the story of the courteous troubadour's love is told in an historical key. A love story in a medieval perspective, where sensuality is intertwined with metaphysics. Paolo and Francesca, born from the infernal whirlwind, reunite in the sky, love each other in the air, and sensually embrace. Finally, they part, born from the infernal whirlwind.

KANDINSKY

In Dante's *Paradiso*, the entire universe is illuminated by God, and the physical light comes from the stars and planets. The colorful fabrics dominating this scene represent rays of divine light enveloping the world, appearing and disappearing magically, trapping or supporting the dancers, and creating a magical reality in which humanity lives on Earth. The scene is composed of shapes and colors, reminiscent of a painting by Kandinsky.

THE GOOD

For Dante, medieval society is not merely representative of the human community but the result of a divine plan in which man is the ethical instrument. The more one ascends the social hierarchy, the more personal actions have social value and determine history. Ethical good coincides with the ball: depending on how it is used, accepted, rejected, offered, or stolen, we have a representation of human dispositions towards others.

THE PLANETS

The architecture in the background of Dante's *Paradiso* is modeled after the celestial spheres from classical astronomical tradition. In the medieval universe, there are intelligences that give life to nature and serve as models for the creation of the living. The motion of the planets affects matter, which is represented today by atoms and molecules.

THE SPRING

Dante, in the forest of Eden along the banks of the Lethe river, encounters a mysterious girl: Matelda, the incarnation of Nature. This scene may have inspired Botticelli's *Primavera*. The arms and hands of the dancers, multiplied by mirrors, transform into flowers from which living human heads blossom. Nature appears and walks among the flowers. The human heads are closed again, and the flowers fade. A living tree is formed with the dancers' bodies, and Nature plays with it, causing it to transform into a flock of birds flying away.

ESCHER

The circles in Purgatory are circular routes Dante quickly passes through, but the repentant take much longer. This linear road has a beginning and an end while encompassing the dawn of time and a repetitive, circular rhythm. It is represented by a famous image by Escher: four scales intersect in the air before us, and dancers traverse the stairs in all directions, both ascending and descending, defying gravity. The distinction between top and bottom has been abolished. The music is that of Bach, in perfect, circular geometry.

DAMNED ANGELS

"They are mixed in with the despised choir of angels, those not rebellious, not faithful to God, but for themselves. Heaven drove them out, to maintain its beauty, and deep Hell does not accept them, lest the evil have glory over them."

(The Hell, Canto III, 37-42)

The choreography depicts the fall of Lucifer and the rebellious angels, a topos of fantastic imagery and medieval theological knowledge. Two angels with large white wings fly in the air, and as they descend to the ground, they transform into damned beings.

THE DEVIL

"The emperor of the sorrowful realm – half emerged from the ice – had more in common with a giant than giants do with their limbs: now you can see how massive that whole must be that corresponds to a part so fashioned..."

(The Hell, Canto XXXIV, 28-33)

Hell is not a physical place but a symbolic and dark space constructed by the dancers. The bodies are living bricks that move on top of each other, constructing bridges, towers, monsters, and giants. The dancers are living machines in which bodies serve as architectural elements to create the imaginary topography of Hell. The final figure represents Lucifer in the last grand scene of the Inferno of the *Divine Comedy*.

EMILIANO PELLISARI

Founder/Choreographer/Director

■ Emiliano Pellisari's style derives from studies which goes from Hellenistic theatre to the extraordinary theatre of the Renaissance and the mechanic inventions of the seventeenth century. It readopts the grand Baroque Italian tradition of the theatre of marvels: a time when the artist's studios, which emerged in Italian cities such as Florence, Rome or Milan designed and built extraordinary apparatuses that were masterfully applied by the great Italian artist-artisans in their mise-en-scenes to enchant the courts of whole Europe.

When his putative father, the journalist and writer Nanni Filippini, died, the young Emiliano was obliged to stop his studies in Philosophy and to start working as a carpenter, plumber, electrician...all in all as a real theatre artisan.

By that time, Emiliano Pellisari devoted himself to his own theatre creations and started working as theatre director. He conceived and created the NoGravity technique and began his new artistic path with the show "Daimon Project" which was presented at International Art Center in Moscow at 2005.

In 2008 he met the young talented dancer Mariana Porceddu, now co-choreographer of the company and his partner in life.

MARIANA/P

Co-Choreographer & Principal Dancer

■ In 1987, at the age of 6, she began her dance studies and, at the age of 18, she crossed the sea to pass the entrance exam to the National Academy of Dance in Rome, Italy.

In 2003 she graduated and became a professional dancer; then she obtained the Internship at the École supérieure de danse de Cannes by Rosella Hightower, France.

In 2005 she joined the company "Danza Prospettiva" by Vittorio Biagi, a fundamental artistic experience.

In 2006 she work at international level in "Jazz dance world congress" at Harris Theater in Chicago and worked as dancer in the TV Shows "Mattino in Famiglia" and "Domenica in Famiglia", RAI 2.

In 2007 she became a teacher of classical and modern at the new training courses of F.I.D.S. In the same year, during the "Grand Premio Danza" held in Santa Marinella (Rome), she joined the jury together with Alberto Testa, Oriella Dorella, and Vilma Battafarano.

In 2008 she met Emiliano Pellisari and began as choreographer assistant 2 years later. Since 2012, she has served as NoGravity's principal dancer and co-choreographer.

