

The Art of Becoming Human

Visual concept: Alexander Polzin

Choreographer: Sommer Ulrickson

Director Phantasm: Laurence Dreyfus

What makes us human, what is the art of becoming human? How does art make us human?

This project is conceived so that musicians and dancers can share space together; a space envisioned by visual artist Alexander Polzin, who creates elements that shape the space and engage the performers. The artists set off together to better learn and imagine how each of their art forms reflects and shapes (their) humanity.

Five dancers and viol consort *Phantasm* explore a programme of English consort music devised by choreographer Sommer Ulrickson and *Phantasm* founder Laurence Dreyfus. Unlike a lot of later music, there is no hierarchy among the instruments, the form allows dancers to respond to the gestures and patterns in the music, also to the individual musicians themselves. With its dynamic and strict equality of parts, consort music from the 16th and 17th centuries makes a strikingly contemporary impression. Its constant variations and repetitions allow the performers to play with subtle differences and the effects they can evoke. With dancers both dancing and singing folk songs relating to the 'art music' played by the musicians, and musicians also called upon to gesture and 'dance', this enables an exploration of an extended set of possibilities marking how the musicians and dancers interact with each other and the space, and how these interactions serve to model the role of art in understanding and crafting our common humanity – in 'becoming human'.

The Art of Becoming Human looks into the process of becoming human through discovery, struggle, challenge, and instruction. Through being pulled towards the ugly we learn to live between harmony and dissonance. This is something we do individually but also as part of a group, a culture, a society, an ensemble. We adapt. We want music and movement to inform and question each other, and in this way to challenge the audience in our inquiry. What common denominators determine our humanness? What does humanity require of us? These issues are located in the body and its gestures, they are moulded by the sounds and effects of music and are inspired by the images that engulf us.

There is an Art to Becoming Human and our focus targets the cultivation of that Art.

Performers:

5 Musicians (who will also 'dance')/ 5 Dancers (who will also sing)

Technical:

The visual concept includes a selection of translucent hanging silks (5-7tba). These will be suspended from a lightweight adjustable aluminum frame.

4 ceiling hanging points required

Lighting rig - Lighting cues will be provided.