

## The Art of Being Human

**Visual concept: Alexander Polzin**

**Choreographer: Sommer Ulrickson**

**Director Phantasm: Laurence Dreyfus**

**Performers: Phantasm (5 Musicians) / 5 Dancers**

What is the art of being human?

Among living species only humankind has developed the unique activity called Art, tasked with conveying truth and beauty. To live fully as a human being means not only engaging with Art but also realising that Art offers a heightened and sensitised method to living one's life – the art of being human.

In our performance we expose how a confrontation between three aesthetic forms – music, dance and visual art – combine.

Our musical repertoire – polyphonic 'early music' played by Phantasm, Laurence Dreyfus's consort of five viols, seems at first to be dedicated to waves of endless beauty but there are cracks in this beauty. The dancers look through these cracks at the complex emotional reality beneath the soothing surface. They discover and react to the 'dirt under the fingernails', the dissonance of human pain, suffering and transcendence, and draw the musicians in with them.

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, this consort music from the 16th and 17th centuries makes a strikingly contemporary impression.

The performance space can be seen as the peeled off layers of a painting created by visual artist Alexander Polzin. These layers are made of translucent silk so that they, depending on light, mask or unveil the action.

Throughout the performance the audience is taken on a musical and choreographic journey inviting them to share in an ever closer encounter with the humanity lurking behind music's gestures and dancers' bodies.

*The Art of Being Human will be premiered at the Boulez Saal, Berlin on the 20<sup>th</sup> of March 2020.*