

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 insight 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 is disrupted by sculpture created by visual artist Alexander Polzin. These moveable objects serve to both challenge and integrate the artforms and performers and 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 premiere at the Boulez Saal, Berlin in March 2023.