



# ■ SMARTVOX

**Smartvox of Jonathan Bell, concert - performance**  
**French pieces of the Notre-Dame School of Paris (XII<sup>th</sup> et XIII<sup>rd</sup> centuries)**

**A melting pot where get involved sacred texts from the Bible, contemporary music, new technology and early music. In a hyper connected world, Jonathan Bell takes an artistic look by putting the alive, the sensitive at the heart of the human-machine relation.**

For five female singers, amateur chorus and electronic soundtrack

Duration : 1h20

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# SMARTVOX

Between archaism and science-fiction, an out-of-theordinary experience representing a unique encounter between ritual and machine.

## INNOVATION: A NETWORKED POLYPHONY

A cutting-edge technology for musical creation. Jonathan Bell invented a transmission tool allowing for the orchestration of numerous human and electronic sources. The performers, five vocal soloists and an amateur choir, use their smartphones and headphones all connected through wifi, in order to participate together to the elaboration of the same piece. He thus conceives a human-machine dialogue, as well as a machine-mediated dialogue between humans, both a technical and poetic achievement. Each performer is provided with auditory cues: pitches, rhythm and text. The composer therefore finds an affinity with the musical practice of Middle Ages, in which hearing was of greater importance than sight.

## A MUSICAL SCORE

In his musical writing, Jonathan Bell carries the influence of the French spectral school. The harmony is generated from the analysis of sound spectra, and uses a mixture of natural voices and synthesised sounds. The choir rehearses the piece with the De Caelis ensemble, and can therefore fully join the performance during the concert .

## ANCIENT PART

An ancient part fulfills the program: pieces of the 12th and 13th Century, monodies and polyphonies of the Ars Antigua. This innovative art of unprecedented beauty found imitations throughout Europe, and so was later called École de Notre-Dame de Paris, with anonymous masters as well as Pérotin and Léonin.

## A PROJECT OPENED TO AMATEUR CHOIRS

The Smartvox project allows unexperimented music readers to participate to musical materials hitherto reserved to experts. Our ambition is to discover this music from the inside, through experimentation. Smartphones give here autonomy to each singer, and allows them to tune and keep in time with each other, even in complex microtonal or polyrhythmic passages. The setup allows here professional singers to convey their knowledge and passion through a direct interaction with singers of all levels, immersed in an unknown soundworld.

## SPATIALIZATION, THEATRE

This process also permits new forms of concerts and music making. The listener is immersed in a mobile sonic architecture. A choreography of slow movements, also guided by the smartphones' screens, will evoke at times forms of rituals. Some light projections will also underline the movements of the choir, thus adding to the visual dimension of the concert.

## TEXT

The text, extracts from the genesis book of the bible, was re-composed by Fabien Zocco, net-artist in residence at Le Fresnoy - Studio National des Arts Contemporains. Fabien Zocco imagined algorithms re-configuring the biblical text, in order to address questions relative to language and technology

# L'ENSEMBLE DE CAELIS



Five a cappella women's voices

Formed in 1998 by its artistic director Laurence Brisset, the De Caelis Ensemble specialises in the performance of unaccompanied vocal works of the Middle Ages. The Ensemble's passion for this little-known repertoire has resulted in a body of work that is based upon knowledge of original sources, of systems of notation and of the context of the works concerned.

The Ensemble likes to spur unlikely encounters between the masters of the past and those of today. It places early music in a living and creative process, shedding new light on our heritage.

Ground of experimentation and research into timbre, ornamentation and improvisation, De Caelis invites every season composers to discover the specificities of its directory. The Ensemble is committed to the creation and performance of contemporary works and presents them in programmes intended to create resonances between two periods of great creative innovation: the Middle Ages and the present day.

De Caelis explores spaces: the art of the singing a cappella offers a singular experience which takes shape as well in old places as in current rooms. The desire to transmit these past and present writings by the naked voice, at the same time fragile and powerful, remains the ambition of the Ensemble.

*The De Caelis Ensemble enjoys the support of the DRAC Normandie, and the Normandy Region and receives the aid of ADAMI, SPEDIDAM, the Musique Nouvelle en Liberté and the Institut Français. It was awarded the Prix Liliane Bettencourt for choral singing (2016), and that Foundation will be supporting the Ensemble in the years to come. The Ensemble's primary sponsor is Mécénat Musical Société Générale. De Caelis is a member of Profedim, the Federation of Specialized Vocal and Instrumental Ensembles (FEVIS) and the Futurs composés network.*

# JONATHAN BELL



Jonathan Bell (1982) is a composer. His music is influenced by Franco-Flemish polyphonists, American minimalism (Morton Feldman), and spectral music. He graduated from the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris (4 prizes), and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama (Doctorate in Musical Composition). Since 2007, he collaborates intensely with the vocal ensemble De Caelis, who performs his music in various festivals (Île-de-France, European church music festival...), France Musique, and in collaboration with other ensembles (Links ensemble, choirs of several cathedrals). In Germany, he receives commissions from the Zafraan ensemble (Berlin) and the SKAM collective (Stuttgart). In 2014-16, he followed a two-years IRCAM residency, where he developed the SmartVox web-application, dedicated to the interpretation of computer-assisted polyphony. Since September 2017 he has been a professor and researcher in musicology at Aix-Marseille University.

Compositions available online:

<https://jonathanbell.eu/>

<https://www.babelscores.com/JonathanBell>

<http://www.smartvox.eu>

## TECNICAL CONDITIONS

### SCREW

De Caelis, 5 people

Jonathan Bell

Amateur choir recruited on the place of the concert

### MATERIAL

Personal smartphones and earphones of the singers

4 ou 6 loudspeakers

2 pico projectors

### CONDITIONS REQUIRED

Provision of a workplace with the choir

The place of the concert should be available the day before from noon.