

Fausto Romitelli

One of the most promising of the young generation of Italian composers, Fausto Romitelli, born in Gorizia in 1963, died prematurely in 2004 after a long illness. He first studied under Franco Donatoni at the Accademia Chigiana in Siena, and later at the Scuola Civica in Milan. Besides Donatoni, his early inspirations were György Ligeti and Giacinto Scelsi, followed by Karlheinz Stockhausen, Pierre Boulez and Gérard Grisey. His 1980s output already testified to his interest in sound as, in his own words, a “material to be forged”: *Ganimede* (1986), for alto, and *Kû* (1989), for 14 musicians. In the 1990s, he continued his investigations of sound at Ircam in Paris, and with the musicians of L’Itinéraire—Tristan Murail, Gérard Grisey, Michael Lévinas and Hugues Dufourt. He studied at Ircam’s Coursus de composition and, from 1993 to 1995, collaborated with the Représentations musicales team in the capacity of “compositeur en recherche.” Romitelli’s experiments in sound synthesis and spectral analysis informed his compositions during this period: *Sabbia del Tempo* (1991), for six performers, and *Natura morta con fiamme* (1991), for string quartet and electronics.

Anything but a formalist composer, Romitelli did not shy away from hybridization, breaking down the barrier between art music and popular music. Distortion, saturation, psychedelic rock—inspired compositions and “dirty” harmonies were part of his musical universe, evident in *Acid Dreams & Spanish Queens* (1994), for amplified ensemble, *EnTrance* (1995), and *Cupio Dissolvi* (1996). The *Professor Bad Trip* cycle (I, II and III, 1998—2000), blending distorted colorations of acoustic and electric instruments as well as accessories like the mirliton and harmonica, was inspired by Henri Michaux’s writings under the influence of psychedelic drugs, and recreates a hallucinatory atmosphere. *An Index of Metals* (2003), a video-opera for soprano and ensemble, with video by Paulo Pachini, is Fausto Romitelli’s final work, the synthesis and summit of his musical language.