



## PERFORMANCE OPERA What It Is

Our urgency as artists is also to define with exact words the activity we do, deepening what each chosen word properly means.

### PERFORMANCE

- The term 'performance' derives from the verb *perform* (c. 1300), meaning: 'to carry into effect, fulfil, discharge,' via Anglo-French *performer*, altered (by influence of Old French *forme* 'form,' from Latin *forma*) from Old French *parfornir* 'to do, carry out, finish, accomplish,' from *par-* 'completely' (see *per-*) + *fornir* 'to provide' (see *furnish*).
- The Latin preposition *per-* indicates 'passing through a space and extending or spreading over and around.' As a prefix to a word it functions as a superlative, complement or continuation.
- The Latin noun *forma* originates from the Greek *phorēsis*, 'the act of carrying,' from *phorein* 'to carry, wear,' frequentative of *pherein* 'the action to bring,' in the same way that it means 'bearing,' 'posture' and seemingly 'aspect,' 'resemblance' and 'image.'
- The Latin *for-ma* also connects to the Sanskrit root DHAR, which has the meaning of 'holding, supporting, containing,' and desinence Sanskrit MA. DHAR-MA means 'stationary, fixed,' (in Hinduism meaning: the eternal law of the cosmos, inherent in the very nature of things). However *for-ma* is a term that responds to the Sanskrit term DHAR-I-MAN, meaning 'form, shape, figure and image,' and also 'the choice and the way to dispose of a matter, whatever it is, in the human labour.'

Therefore, according to the etymological derivations, the meaning of the word 'performance' can be said to be *acting in support of the image*.

### OPERA

- The Latin noun *opera* means 'labour, work.' It also implies the idea of *opus* in alchemy. In XVII century Italy, the term *opera* was used to define 'the labour that a person accomplishes in a day,' at first referring only to 'manual labour,' and later also to ethic and moral action, as well as intellectual, artistic, and scientific labour. *Io opero* (literally, 'I operate' or 'I work') is a more refined Italian expression than the simple *io lavoro*, 'I work.'

Eventually, according to the etymological definition of the two terms, 'performance opera' can be said to mean *I work/operate (or, 'a work') acting in support of the image*.

In fact, when we perform, we actually create a work – even though ephemeral – consisting of live images, which in turn produce meanings.

With the expression *performance opera* we don't intend to define performances, which are mainly choreographed or structured *a priori* in every part. Our stance is that a performance should always remain open to the unpredictability of process, even though methodologically well-reflected and organised.

As it was for the alchemists engaging in their philosophical quest, a *performance opera* is a vision and the result of a creative process, there in the space where it takes place, the laboratory to play out new challenges.