



IT IS NOT THE VOICE
THAT COMMANDS THE STORY:

*IT IS THE
EAR.*

Listen to Chris Cerrone's *Invisible Cities* on headphones, preferably in the dark.

Your mind's eye will fill with sonic phantoms, darting shapes, tolling bells, snarling brass, plangent voices and the rhythms of alien rituals. This music, alternately seductive and unsettling, shares a similar evocative power with Stravinsky's "Rossignol," a power to trick one's perceptions and to project an interior landscape that is equal parts violence, seduction and enchantment. It inhabits its own special kind of strangeness: like sharing an opium dream with some gnarled and wizened Tang Dynasty storyteller.

John Adams



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SCENE

Prologue

Kublai Khan's imperial garden, while opulent, seems affected by a decay of excess. Khan ruminates that his empire, "which seemed the sum of all wonders, is a vast and formless ruin." He looks to the Italian explorer Marco Polo for the pattern, the reason behind his empire's decline, and the key to its future.

Greetings from



C I T I E S + D E S I R E

Isidora

Marco Polo tells the Great Khan of the city of Isidora, a city designed like a spiral seashell. Seductive and mysterious, the city seems a dream to the traveler — until he realizes that the city of his desire contains him as a young man, and he can only approach the city as an elder.



THIS SPACE FOR ADDRESS ONLY

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arrow

la freccia

ok

箭頭



ostrich egg

uovo di struzzo

devekuşu yumurta

駝鳥蛋



hourglass

clessidra

kum saati

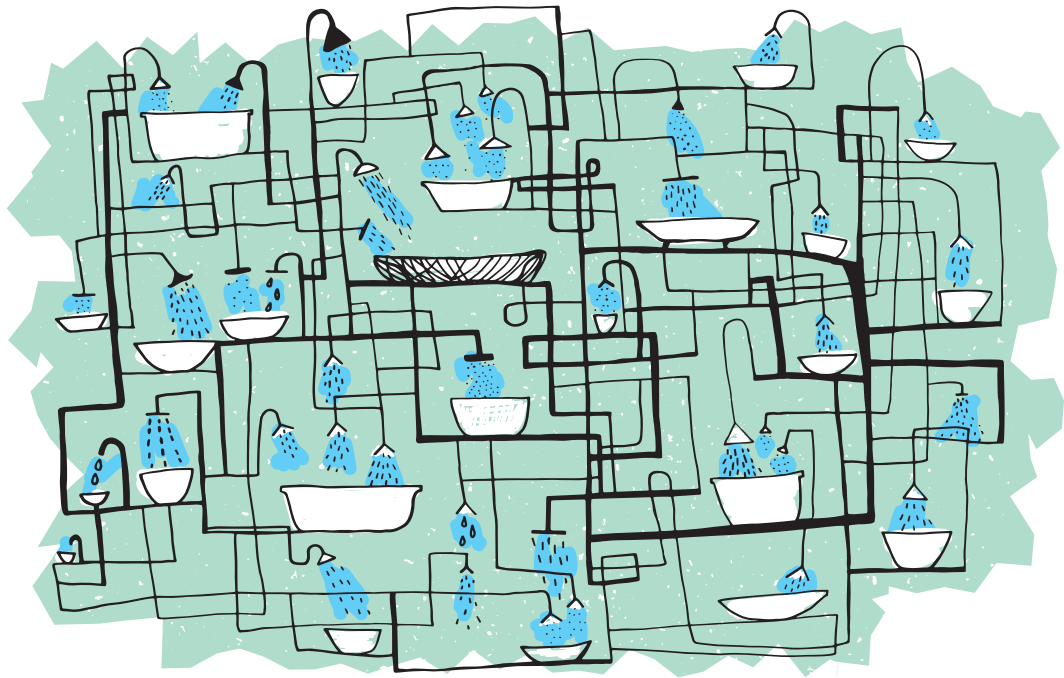
滴漏

3

Language

Upon Marco Polo's arrival at court, he did not speak the same language as Kublai Khan. He could only express himself by presenting the objects he collected: an arrow, an ostrich egg, an hourglass, a skull. The Great Khan was left to interpret the significance of these totems.

Over time, Polo learned the Emperor's language, but Khan found this method of communication less satisfying. Eventually, they reverted back to grunts and fragments, and then to silence and stillness.



Scene 4

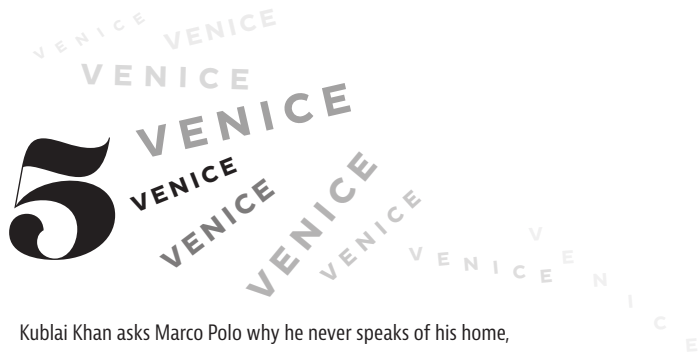
Armilla



Polo describes the city of Armilla, a city that contains no walls or ceilings or doors, only a system of water pipes that cross vertically and horizontally where buildings would be. It is unknown whether the city was destroyed or never finished. Polo tells of the water nymphs who inhabit the city, and whose song can be heard in the mornings.







Kublai Khan asks Marco Polo why he never speaks of his home, Venice. Polo says that in fact, every time he describes a city, he is commenting on Venice. Khan insists that Polo tell him everything about Venice, but Polo refuses.

"Memory's images, once they are said in words, are erased," Polo says. Perhaps he is afraid of losing Venice if he speaks of it — or perhaps, speaking of other cities, he has already lost it.



Adelma

Marco Polo describes the city of Adelma, where all the citizens have the faces of people the traveler knew but are now dead. He describes the various characters that take on the appearance of his lost love ones: his grandmother, his father. In horror, he realizes that this must mean he, too, is dead. Khan hears the tale and fears that "this means the end is not happy."





Scene 7

epilogue

Kublai Khan and Marco Polo take leave of one another. Khan laments that life is meaningless if our final resting place will only be "the infernal city." Polo moves forward and says that the inferno already exists all around us. In living day to day, he says, we have two options: to become part of the inferno, or to diligently seek and find who and what is not part of the inferno, then "make them endure, give them space."





THE INDUSTRY

A black silhouette of a city skyline, featuring various building shapes of different heights, positioned below the main title.

About The Industry

The Industry is an independent, artist-driven company creating experimental productions that expand the definition of opera. Mark Swed of *The Los Angeles Times* has noted how The Industry “is quickly and dramatically making itself an essential component in American opera.”

We believe that new opera opens space for imagination, active engagement, dialogue, and connection. By merging media and through interdisciplinary collaborations, The Industry produces works that inspire new audiences for the art form. The Industry serves as an incubator for new talent and for artists predominantly based in Los Angeles.

Founded in 2010 by director Yuval Sharon, The Industry has produced two large-scale new works to date — Anne LeBaron’s *Crescent City* and Christopher Cerrone’s *Invisible Cities* — and publicly workshopped new pieces by composers such as Pauline Oliveros, Mohammed Fairouz, and David Brynjar Franzson.

www.TheIndustryLA.org

Yuval Sharon, Founder and Artistic Director

Elizabeth Cline, Executive Director

Marc Lowenstein, Music Director

Daniel Anderson, Creative Director

Rachel Scandling, Associate Producer

The Industry Records is an independent label presenting high-quality recordings based on The Industry’s world premiere productions. Record sales and music licensing revenue support The Industry’s artistic mission and programming. All the artists involved in the recording receive a royalty from the very first album sale.



Christopher Cerrone Composer's Note

The music of *Invisible Cities* is the result of my first collision with Calvino's extraordinary novel. For years I had been unable to bridge categories of music, thinking that a work could be either lyrical or conceptually rigorous, but not both. Calvino's novel, however, is both a tightly structured mathematical work, yet also opens with the gorgeous line:

"In the lives of emperors there is a moment which follows pride in the boundless extension of the territories we have conquered, and the melancholy and relief of knowing we shall soon give up any thought of knowing and understanding them."

After reading that sentence—so pregnant with meaning, lyricism, mood—I immediately began composing. I imagined the sound of an unearthly resonant and gong-like prepared piano, the ringing of bells, and wind players gently blowing air through their instruments. All of this would support a lyrical and deep voiced Kublai Khan who is slow moving and sings with gravitas. I imagined there would be two women, two high sopranos, who always sing together in harmony: they would be the musical personification of the cities that pervade the novel. And of course, our Italian explorer would be a tenor, light and quick moving, melismatic, and deft.

As with Calvino, there are many formally derived components to my opera. The orchestra is split into two (left and right) halves which alternate melodies to create the whole. The left part is associated with Marco Polo, the right is associated with Kublai Khan. And the opera is structured as formally as the novel, always alternating Polo and the Khan's conversations with Polo's stories of *le città*.

Staging the opera in a public space was in and of itself a magical experience. But the most powerful aspect of Yuval Sharon's production was that it helped us to observe our everyday environment with a renewed zeal. While wandering through Los Angeles's Union Station during a performance of *Invisible Cities* last year, a thought took hold of me.

It dawned on me that the experience of *Invisible Cities* could be taken anywhere: armed with a pair of headphones, any place you visit can be Marco Polo's Venice. I believe that this is what Calvino was trying to do in all of his works. He was exhorting his readers to look beyond the everyday—the honking of horns, the delayed trains, the screaming babies—to see the underlying beauty of human beings communing.



Christopher Cerrone Biography

Hailed as "a rising star" by *The New Yorker* and noted by *Wired* for his work at "the leading edge of operatic innovation," Christopher Cerrone (b. 1984, Huntington, NY) is a Brooklyn-based composer of a wide range of orchestral, operatic, chamber and multimedia works.

Cerrone's first opera, *Invisible Cities*, based on Italo Calvino's novel, was a 2014 Pulitzer Prize finalist after its wildly popular world premiere production by The Industry in Fall 2013. Other notable projects include a new work for soprano Hila Plitmann and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, to be premiered in 2015; a new work for eighth blackbird; live original scores for installations at the New Museum and the Time Warner Center by artist and filmmaker Marco Brambilla; a staged production of a chamber opera, *All Wounds Bleed*, by the Tulsa Opera; a violin concerto, commissioned by the New York Youth Symphony for Amadeus Leopold; a Carnegie Hall commission for Ensemble ACJW; and *Memory Palace*, a solo work for custom-built percussion instruments and live electronics, commissioned by the American Composers Forum's JFund.

Cerrone has received awards and grants from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Chamber Music America, the Civitella Ranieri Foundation, OPERA America, the Jerome Foundation, the Yvar Mikhashoff Trust for New Music, ASCAP, and New Music USA. He has served as composer-in-residence at the Carlsbad Music Festival and the Brooklyn Youth Chorus Academy.

A co-founder of Red Light New Music, Christopher Cerrone is one-sixth of the Sleeping Giant composer collective, with whom he serves as co-composer-in-residence at the Albany Symphony from 2014-2017, thanks to a Music Alive grant from New Music USA. He holds degrees from the Yale School of Music (M.M., D.M.A.) and the Manhattan School of Music (B.M.). His works are published by Schott NY and Project Schott New York.



“Cities, like dreams, are made of desires and fears, even if the thread of their discourse is secret, their rules are absurd, their perspectives deceitful, and everything conceals something else.”

“I have neither desires nor fears,” the Khan declared, “and my dreams are composed either by my mind or by chance.”

“Cities also believe they are the work of the mind or of chance, but neither the one nor the other suffices to hold up their walls. You take delight not in a city’s seven or seventy wonders, but in the answer it gives to a question of yours.”

— Italo Calvino

PostCARD

POSTAGE

TO

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SOUTHERN PACIFIC COMPANY
PACIFIC SYSTEM

INDUSTRY MAP OF LOS ANGELES

SCALE: 1" = 800'

0 800 1600 2400 3200 FT

J.F.M.
JULY, 1925

M.W.D.
DRAWING 50
SHEET NO 1

DRAWER 20

PRODUCED, ENGINEERED, MIXED
AND MASTERED BY NICK TIPP

ORCHESTRA

MATT BARBIER **Trombone**
ERIC KM CLARK **Violin**
ANDREW MCINTOSH **Viola**
JODIE LANDAU **Percussion**
CLARE LONGENDYKE **Piano II**
JILLIAN RISIGARI-GAI **Harp**
DEREK STEIN **Cello**
RICHARD VALITUTTO **Piano I**
BRIAN WALSH **Clarinet**
SARAH WASS **Flute**
JACOB WILDER **Horn**

PRODUCTION

YUVAL SHARON **Executive Producer**
DAVID MACK **Production Manager**
RACHEL SCANDLING **Associate Producer**
TRACI LARSON **Package Design and Illustration**
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DANIEL ANDERSON **Creative Manager,**
The Industry and The Industry Records
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DANA ROSS **Production Photography**

Recorded September 10 & 12, 2014 at Citrus College, Glendora, CA

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Based on the novel *Invisible Cities* by Italo Calvino. © 1972 by Italo Calvino.
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The Pursuit of Perfect Sound

This recording of *Invisible Cities* was made possible with grants from the Copland Recording Fund and New Music USA. Additional support was generously provided by Elizabeth and Justus Schlichting.

The Industry wishes to thank Sennheiser for making the full production of *Invisible Cities* a reality, as well as lending microphones for this studio recording.

Invisible Cities was commissioned by Raulee Marcus and Stephen A. Block.

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In memoriam Ariel Sharon.

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About The Production

Invisible Cities premiered on October 19, 2013 at Union Station in Los Angeles in Yuval Sharon's production, produced by The Industry and LA Dance Project.

An innovative collaboration with Sennheiser, *Invisible Cities* gave audience members wireless headphones and invited them to discover the singers and dancers among the daily life of the station. In Sharon's concept, Marco Polo's narrated cities never materialized: they remained provocations and evocations from the world of the Everyday, residing in the minds and imaginations of each individual listener. With the live orchestra in a former restaurant and singers scattered throughout the historic building, the opera invited the audience to move freely and create their own experience.

The production was a runaway success: the run was extended three times after the first 13 performances sold out prior to opening night. The production was named in the Top 10 lists for both Music and Architecture in *The Los Angeles Times* and was covered in international outlets such as *Vogue Magazine*, *The New York Times*, *Wired Magazine*, *Forbes Magazine*, *Gizmodo*, *La Repubblica* (Italy), *ZDF Heute Journal* (Germany), and much more. Christopher Cerrone's score was a finalist for the 2014 Pulitzer Prize in Music, and KCET's hour-long behind-the-scenes documentary won an Emmy Award for Entertainment Programming. Cerrone, Sharon, and choreographer Danielle Agami were nominated for Ovation Awards from LA's theater community.

www.InvisibleCitiesOpera.com