



Press Release

Robert Wilson. Mother

4th April 2025



Salone del Mobile.Milano

Robert Wilson. Mother

Robert Wilson will be opening Salone 2025 at the Museo della Pietà Rondanini – Castello Sforzesco, dialoguing with Michelangelo's masterpiece and with music by Arvo Pärt. A homage to light, to art, to the city, in the name of the "unfinished."

An art, light and sound project of rare intensity, **Robert Wilson. Mother**, with music by Arvo Pärt, at the **Museo della Pietà Rondanini – Castello Sforzesco** in collaboration with the **Municipality of Milan | Cultura**, will be the first Salone del Mobile.Milano 2025 installation to open to the public (**6th April**), in an ideal bridge with **Milano Art Week**, and closing on **18th May**, allowing residents to book their visits outside the Design Week of Milan.

In the year of **EuroLuce**, the famous American artist has designed a "total work" dedicated to **Michelangelo's masterpiece** recognised, along with Leonardo's Last Supper, as one of the most iconic works of art in Milan. In keeping with the installation designed in the Spanish Hospital by Michele De Lucchi in 2015, **Wilson, an absolute master of the creative use of light**, has created an installation that measures itself against the power of the "**unfinished**", an energy suspended between matter and thought, in a dramaturgical dialogue with the **Stabat Mater**, a medieval prayer in the vocal and instrumental version by the Estonian composer Arvo Pärt. It contains a **profound reflection on the dimension of time and space**. **Mother** is not a scenography, but a breathing space, an openness, an invitation to contemplation. It is a **dialogue between light, shadow and sound, an experience that doesn't narrate but welcomes**, allowing the spectator to find their own inner space, their **own emotional resonance**. Wilson has chosen the music of **Arvo Pärt** for this extraordinary coming together of light and music, with whom he **shares a vision of time and space made up of structured silences and vibrant expectations**. **Mother** thus becomes an immersive experience in which **art becomes breath, music becomes the architecture of silence and light reveals the very essence of form**.

Robert Wilson had this to say: *"Light is what gives shape to space. Without light, space does not exist. Albert Einstein said that light is the measure of all things. For me it is always the starting point. If I have to set up an exhibition, I start with light. If I create a play or an opera, I start with light. Because light is not just a technical element, it is a living presence, an actual protagonist. Light is not a detail to be added later, it is the beginning of everything. When I first saw Michelangelo's Rondanini Pietà I sat there in front of it for more than an hour. I can't say exactly how long it was, but it was as if the world had stopped. Then I got up and started walking round it. I felt a powerful energy, an almost mystical presence. Perhaps the very fact that it is unfinished is what makes it so extraordinary. It is like an open window, a space suspended between the visible and the invisible. She asked me to listen, to imagine, to lose myself in her. She allowed me to exist in a different time, a different space in which to think, to dream. The emotion I felt was powerful. The idea of staging her affected me deeply. But after all, the Pietà doesn't really need a setting. It just needs a space, a breath, silence, so that those who observe her can lose themselves in their own thoughts and emotions. So that made me think of the music of Arvo Pärt. There is something in common between his music and this sculpture: a sense of time that expands, a space that opens out and welcomes. Together, art and music do not narrate, do not explain: they simply allow us to feel."*

Mother will take the form of a 30-minute sequence of music, lights and images, open to the public with pre-booked admission slots (Castello Sforzesco ticket office). The Stabat Mater will be played live – from 6th to 13th April, at 4.15 pm and 5.00 pm – by the **Vox Clamantis** ensemble, conducted **Jaan-Eick Tulve**, and by **La Risonanza**, conducted by **Fabio Bonizzoni**.

**Robert Wilson. Mother**

8th April– 18th May

Museo della Pietà Rondanini – Castello Sforzesco

Project curated by Franco Laera. Production Change Performing Arts

A Salone del Mobile.Milano event in collaboration with the Municipality of Milan | Culture

Admittance by reservation only at scheduled time

Tickets and reservations www.museicivicimilano.vivaticket.it

Free entry on 6th April to mark Milano Art Week

10 am – 5.30 pm (last entrance 5 pm). Mondays closed

Biographies



Salone del Mobile.Milano

Robert Wilson

Artist

Born in Waco, Texas, Wilson is one of the world's leading theatre and visual artists. His works unconventionally integrate a wide variety of artistic media, including dance, movement, light, sculpture, music and text. His images are aesthetically striking and emotionally charged, and his productions have earned worldwide public and critical acclaim. After studying at the University of Texas and the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, Wilson set up The Byrd Hoffman School of Byrds community in New York in the mid-1960s with which he produced his early works, including *Deafman Glance* (1970) and *A Letter for Queen Victoria* (1974-1975). He co-created the opera *Einstein on the Beach* (1976) with Philip Glass. Wilson's artistic collaborators include many writers and musicians such as Heiner Müller, Tom Waits, Susan Sontag, Laurie Anderson, William Burroughs, Lou Reed, Jessye Norman and Anna Calvi. He has also left his mark on masterpieces such as Beckett's Krapp's *Last Tape*, Brecht/Weil's *Threepenny Opera*, Debussy's *Pelléas et Melisande*, Goethe's *Faust*, Homer's *Odyssey*, Jean de la Fontaine's *Fables*, Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, Verdi's *La Traviata* and Sophocles' *Oedipus*. Wilson's drawings, paintings and sculptures have been exhibited all over the world in hundreds of solo and group shows, and his work is held in private collections and museums the world over. He has also been the recipient of numerous awards for excellence, including a Pulitzer Prize nomination, two Ubu Awards, the Venice Biennale Golden Lion award, and the Olivier Award. Wilson has been made a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, as well as the German Academy of Arts, and has been awarded eight honorary degrees. France named him a Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters (2003) and an Officer of the Legion of Honour (2014); Germany awarded him the Cross of the Order of Merit (2014).

Arvo Pärt

Composer

Arvo Pärt born on 11th September 1935 in Paide, Estonia, is one of the world's composers whose creative oeuvre has significantly changed the way we understand the nature of music. In 1976 Pärt came up with a new and highly original musical language that he called tintinnabuli (tintinnabulum is Latin for 'little bell'), which reached a wide audience of different listeners and has defined his work to this day. There is no school of composition that follows Pärt, nor does he teach; however, much of contemporary music has been influenced by his tintinnabuli compositions. After studying in Heino Eller's composition class at the Tallinn State Conservatory, he worked as a sound engineer for Estonian Radio. Since the late 1960s, Pärt has been an independent composer. Both the avant-garde spirit of Pärt's early works and the sacred aspect of the music he composed in the 1970s sparked controversial reviews and clashes with Soviet officials. Arvo Pärt and his family were forced to emigrate in 1980, first to Vienna and then to Berlin, where they remained for almost 30 years. Since then, his music has been performed and recorded by the top orchestras and performers of our time. Pärt returned to Estonia in 2010, where he now lives. The search for his own musical voice triggered a creative crisis that endured for eight years. During this period, he joined the Orthodox Church and studied Gregorian chant, the School of Notre Dame and classical vocal polyphony. His first tintinnabuli piece, *Für Alina*, for piano (1976), was soon followed by works such as *Cantus in Memory Benjamin Britten* (1977), *Fratres* (1977), *Tabula Rasa* (1977) and *Spiegel im Spiegel* (1978). Robert Wilson and Arvo Pärt collaborated on the opera *Adam's Passion* performed in Tallinn in 2015, in Berlin in 2018 and at the Teatro dell'Opera in Rome in 2023.

La Risonanza

Orchestra

La Risonanza is one of the most internationally successful Italian orchestras performing on period instruments. In its extensive discography, one of the most important achievements has been the first complete recording of Handel's Italian cantatas with period instruments. For this project, it received various awards and numerous mentions, including a Gramophone Award. This complete edition is now

followed by a new project involving the recording of some of the most significant instrumental works by Johann Sebastian Bach. Regularly invited to perform at the most important concert seasons and major festivals in Italy and abroad, La Risonanza and its conductor Fabio Bonizzoni are in permanent artistic residency at the Festival de Saint-Michel en Thiérache in France. Since 2016, the ensemble has organized its own concert season in Milan, La Risonanza per Milano, the only Milanese series entirely dedicated to Baroque repertoire, presented at the Museo Nazionale Scienza e Tecnologia Leonardo da Vinci and other venues in Milan. Alongside its ongoing research into 17th- and 18th-century repertoire, La Risonanza regularly explores both contemporary repertoire and performances that intersect various forms of art. Examples include *Voglio la luna* and *Didone e Enea* (Baroque music and contemporary dance), and *Stabat Mater*, a program that paired the homonymous compositions by Alessandro Scarlatti, Vivaldi, and Arvo Pärt.

Vox Clamantis

Ensemble

Founded in 1996 and directed by Jaan-Eick Tulve, the ensemble Vox Clamantis includes a variety of musicians, singers, composers, instrumentalists, and conductors, all sharing a common interest in Gregorian chant, considered the foundation of all European music. Vox Clamantis also performs ancient polyphony and contemporary music. Many Estonian composers, including Arvo Pärt, Helena Tulve, Erkki-Sven Tüür, Tõnis Kaumann, and Sven Grünberg, have written compositions for Vox Clamantis. Vox Clamantis has recorded for ECM Records and Mirare. The CD *Liszt - Via crucis* won the Diapason d'Or award in 2013, while the CD *Arvo Pärt - Adam's Lament* (conducted by Tõnu Kaljuste) won the GRAMMY Award for Best Choral Performance in 2014. Recently, the famous medieval composition *Beata Viscera* by Perrotin was included in the soundtrack of the film *La Grande Bellezza*, which won the Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film in 2014. The CD *Arvo Pärt. The Deer's Cry* (ECM) won the Diapason d'Or Award, the Chock Award from the French magazine *Classica*, the Album of the Year award in Estonia, and was nominated for the BBC Music Magazine Award and the Denmark Classical Radio Award in 2018. Their latest CD, *The Suspended Harp of Babel* (ECM), won the award for Best Choral Album in Estonia and was chosen by BBC Music Magazine as one of the best classical albums released in 2020. In 2017, Vox Clamantis received the National Culture Prize of the Republic of Estonia.

Eesti Kontsert

Estonian Concert Institution

Eesti Kontsert, a state concert institution, is the leading concert and festival organizer in Estonia, presenting annually about 1300 various musical events in Estonia and abroad. The musical scope of Eesti Kontsert encompasses symphonic and chamber music, jazz, choral music, contemporary music incl commissions of new works, and concerts in schools and for children. Among the ranks of Eesti Kontsert there are two internationally renowned groups: Estonian National Male Choir and the early music consort Hortus Musicus. Every year Eesti Kontsert organizes many international music festivals such as Pianists Festival KLAVER, Saaremaa Opera Festival, Pärnu Opera Days, MustonenFest, Music of Seven Cities, Haapsalu White Nights Festival, Festival O/Pa-dise, Jõhvi Ballet Festival, In Horto Regis, Tallinn A Cappella, Festival TUBIN. Eesti Kontsert manages the principal modern concert halls in Estonia – in Tallinn, Tartu, Pärnu and Jõhvi. Additionally, Eesti Kontsert holds concerts all over Estonia - in chamber halls, churches, schools, outdoors, offering concert series for rural municipalities, local institutions and concert arrangers across the country.



Salone del Mobile.Milano International Press Office

For more information or interview requests, please get in touch with the Press Office.
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