

NOTES ON *CARAVAGGIO*

Towards the end of the sixteenth century, Caravaggio, then in his twenties, arrived in Rome. The city was teeming with an extraordinarily diverse humanity: Monsignors and noblemen, soldiers and street performers, pilgrims and idlers, gypsies and prostitutes. Upon this infinite variety of bodies, gazes, wealth and misery, odors and perfumes, he fixed his attention, studying their characters, absorbing them, and eventually allowing them to burst forth in the works that would become the foundation of a true artistic revolution.

From what is now Piazza Navona to the Corso, from Via della Scrofa to Campo de' Fiori, Caravaggio roamed the streets of Rome with an insatiable appetite for life, feeding upon the reality that surrounded him. The expressive power of his works springs from a reality lived openly and intensely; his art becomes a snapshot of Roman life itself. His art becomes inseparably intertwined with his life.

Three of the four artists whose names appear on the poster for this ballet were born in Rome and spent their formative adolescent years there.

To walk along those same streets, narrow corridors between rows of buildings where light cuts sharply through the corners; to wander through alleyways that suddenly open onto sunlit piazzas, creating that alternation of light and shadow characteristic of true theatricality, is to have breathed the same visions as Merisi. It is to feel intimately connected to those places. To enter one of Rome's countless churches and discover, upon an altar, the traces of his passage fixed in a work of scandalous sacredness – still capable

today of inspiring an awe that itself feels sacred – is inevitably to receive a profound imprint upon an aesthetic sensibility in the making.

This is the essence of the ballet on Caravaggio: to convey the sense of an aesthetic and artistic culture shaped by walking the same streets he walked and breathing the same air he breathed.

The synthesis of all its elements – music, dance, and visual imagery – without any temptation toward mere iconography, seeks to celebrate the idea of an art that emerges directly from life.

The creation of a choreographic gesture that draws its inspiration and strength from direct experience unfolds through the movement of bodies tracing the lines of an intense and contemporary choreography, one that, while always grounded in technical rigor, follows the path of passion.

Visually, a large suspended frame evokes the anticipation of a work born from life; thus, the stage becomes the place where human passions are represented. Those same human passions are, musically, the very material that Monteverdi employed in his representation of the sacred, drawing from the same popular roots that nourished Caravaggio.

The construction of the musical structure follows the same need for aesthetic synthesis. It unfolds with a Baroque-style Prologue, in which the protagonist encounters the allegorical figure that represents him – in this case, Light.

The first act presents the human story of Caravaggio; the second immerses us in the art that flows from those experiences, from which he drew the strength for a disruptive vision, one that is ultimately transfigured into narrative.