

**Curatorial tekst by Thomas Johannsen, artistic leader of the Genetic Choir Ensemble
For an odyssey by Giorgos Gripeos
Nieuw Dakota, 2018**

The Genetic Choir is a utopian singing ensemble. Believing in the possibility that we can be both self-decided as individuals and work together as a group, the Genetic Choir sings instant composition concerts with all music created on the spot. Anything – from the characteristic silence of a building to a pattern on the floor or a conversation between audience members – can form the basic ingredient for our music.

The Genetic Choir approaches the human voice as material: a physical phenomenon with audio-musical as well as emotional and social aspects. Material, in the sense that it can be worked, sculpted and used for musical as well as spatial-sensorical and social-interactive experiences with an audience. Genetic Choir compositions create meaning and beauty from seeming randomness, not unlike genes that multiply and mutate or oscillators that sync with each other after a certain tipping point. As we are singers of flesh and blood, the human component plays a role as well: Intention, timing, taste – 'free will' against group tendency and the imposing logic of the music itself. Not unlike Greek ancient myths did, our passion for improvisation explores the human condition: We are both active and reactive in dealing with reality, and we can never oversee the whole. How can we, then, best act in the complex, networked society of today?

The invitation by Giorgos Gripeos to create a fully improvised score for the 10 hour Odyssey reading is a wonderful challenge, and it fits the Genetic Choir like a glove. First of all, the Odyssey stems from an oral tradition and therefore putting the voices of all the different readers on 14 July central to our approach in creating the music is a great opportunity to shine the light on the myriad of musical aspects of the human speaking voice, that we usually just take for granted.

And then there is the story. My question as artistic preparation for the singers who will create the music is to choose a moment in the story that particularly strikes them and touches them personally. In preparing our ten hour journey, we will discuss these chosen points as meaningful markers in the enormous sea of time, moments that will be enhanced by our knowledge of a personal connection of someone in the group. And of course we will listen for those moments in the voices of the readers and sense them in the faces of the public. And while we don't prepare the music that will sound, and we don't intend to illustrate, we do expect that at those moments it will be audible that just there, a warm sunny spot, a glorious peak or a deep, dark abyss has been passed in the topography of somebody's experience of the story.