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[Author](#) || Mauro Petruzzello
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Santasangre – biographical notes

by Mauro Petruzzello

Santasangre is a company of artists created in 2001 by Diana Arbib, Luca Brinchi, Maria Carmela Milano and Pasquale Tricoci, later joined by musician Dario Salvagnini and performer Roberta Zanardo. Maria Carmela Milano, Pasquale Tricoci and Diana Arbib met at Accademia di Belle Arti in Rome, where Milano was studying painting, the other three scenography, whereas Luca Brinchi was a member of Neguvon, a group of performers whose work was inspired by body art. And exactly body art is the litmus paper test for the first works of the company, performances presented during sessions of electronic or industrial music in underground clubs. Their first work, *Celle silenziose (Silent Cells)* (2003), originated from the need to interweave their previous performances, where the imagery referred to a visionary world, a world that is beyond reality. The poetics of the company was immediately clear: the setting is where different languages – body, light, video, sound – proceed, without any of them becoming predominant over the others. The scenic re-writing of *Faust* dates back to 2005, as does the outset of a project, *Studi per un teatro apocalittico (Studies for an Apocalyptic Theatre)* consisting of three plays: *84.06*, freely inspired by George Orwell's *1984*; *Spettacolo sintetico per la stabilità sociale (Synthetic Performance for Social Stability)*, whose input was Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and *Seigradi (Sixdegrees)*, which, unlike the two others, does not refer to a literary text, but to a series of scientific theories on the overheating of the earth. The term apocalypse is used by Santasangre in a lay sense: it suggests revelation and at the same time ending, underlining the cyclic aspect of death/re-birth. These performances were followed by a research, expressed in hypotheses and tests modeled on a scientific methodology, of which the outcome is *Bestiale improvviso (Sudden Beastly)* (2010). In 2012 the company examined Olivier Messiaen's lieder cycle *Harawi*, and transformed it in a trans-media opera. In the same year the members of Santasangre altered the company and began a sequence of collaborations and projects that involved only some of the group, such as Luca Brinchi/Roberta Zanardo who, together with eighteen companies, took part in *Perdutamente (Madly)*, a collective project for Teatro di Roma, and attended to the setting, the lights and the costumes for *Hamlet* (2014) with Andrea Baracco and Biancofango; or as the project *Bangalore* (2013), a performance by Luca Brinchi and Biagio Caravano of Mk, and as *K/A Konia* (2014), a performance signed by Daria Arbib and Dario Salvagnini, inspired by the Dhikrs' practices of meditation, which the Dervishes use to reach a state of trance and a direct bond with God.