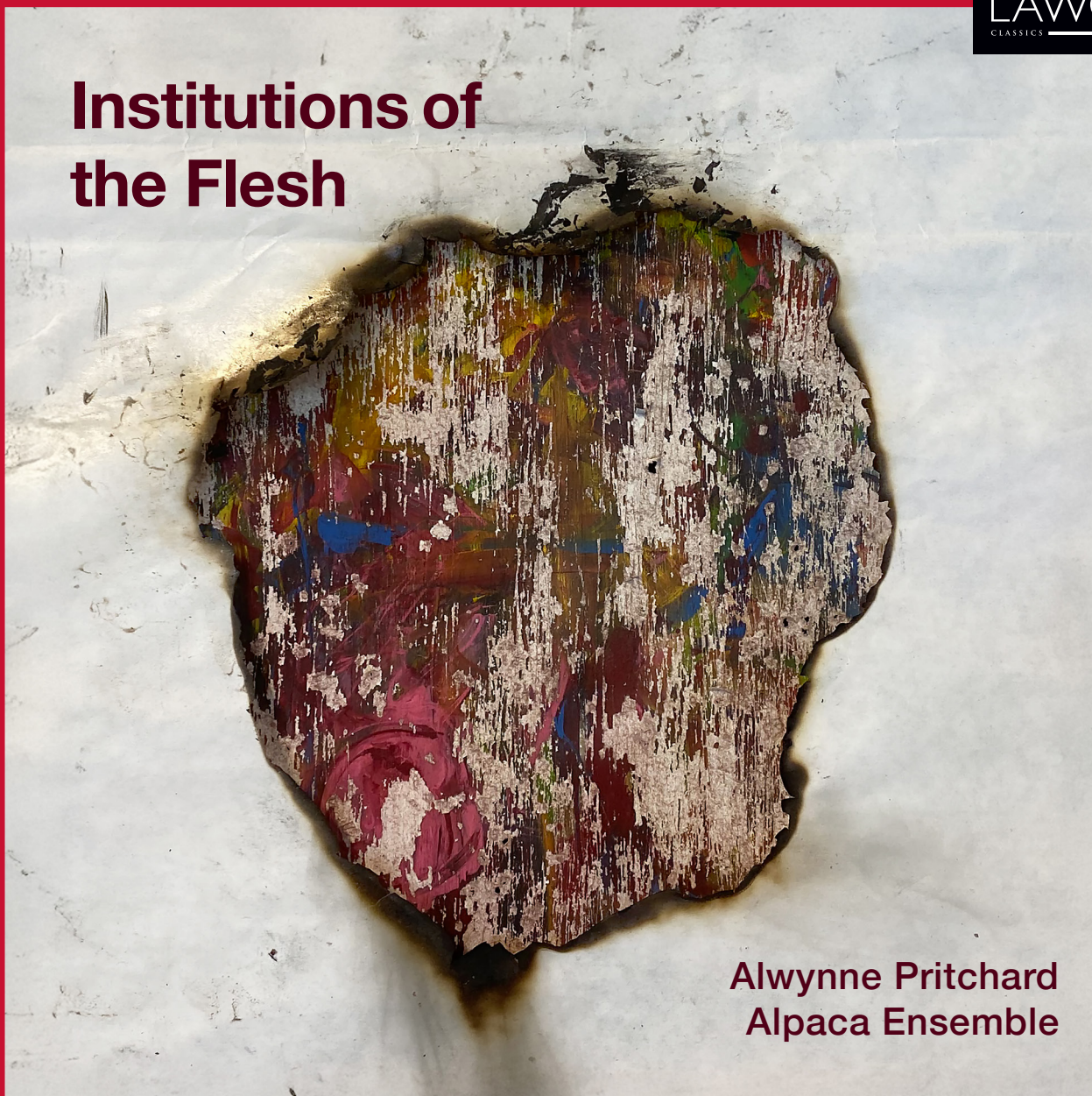
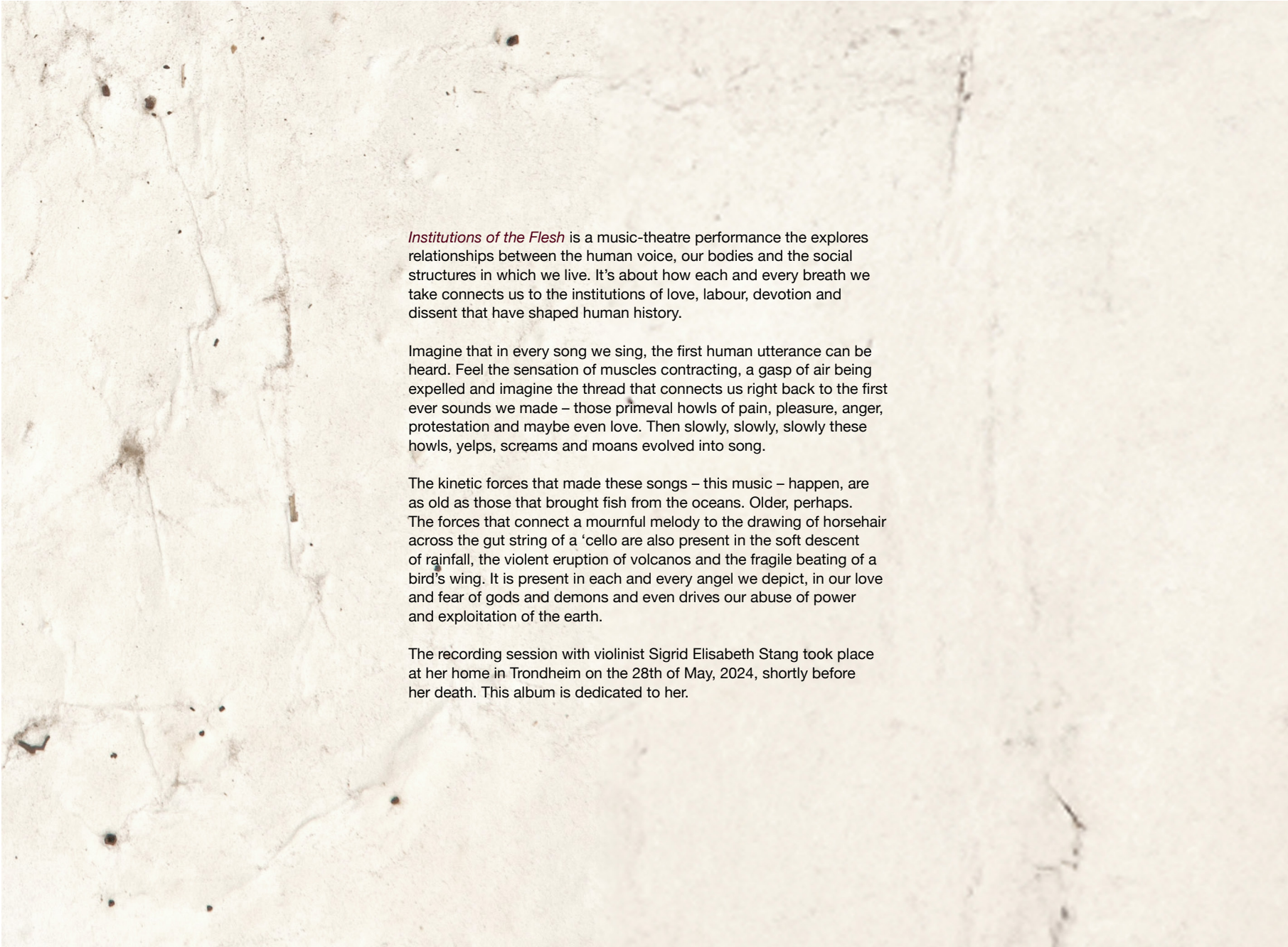


Institutions of the Flesh



Alwynne Pritchard
Alpaca Ensemble



Institutions of the Flesh is a music-theatre performance that explores relationships between the human voice, our bodies and the social structures in which we live. It's about how each and every breath we take connects us to the institutions of love, labour, devotion and dissent that have shaped human history.

Imagine that in every song we sing, the first human utterance can be heard. Feel the sensation of muscles contracting, a gasp of air being expelled and imagine the thread that connects us right back to the first ever sounds we made – those primeval howls of pain, pleasure, anger, protestation and maybe even love. Then slowly, slowly, slowly these howls, yelps, screams and moans evolved into song.

The kinetic forces that made these songs – this music – happen, are as old as those that brought fish from the oceans. Older, perhaps. The forces that connect a mournful melody to the drawing of horsehair across the gut string of a 'cello are also present in the soft descent of rainfall, the violent eruption of volcanos and the fragile beating of a bird's wing. It is present in each and every angel we depict, in our love and fear of gods and demons and even drives our abuse of power and exploitation of the earth.

The recording session with violinist Sigrid Elisabeth Stang took place at her home in Trondheim on the 28th of May, 2024, shortly before her death. This album is dedicated to her.



Alwynne Pritchard

Alwynne Pritchard works with vocal and physical performance, sound, video and text. She studied composition at the Royal Academy of Music in London and has a PhD from the University of Bristol. She has composed for, and performed with, leading musicians and ensembles across the globe, and her electro-acoustic composition *Decoy*, created at the Experimentalstudio des SWR in Freiburg for the Donaueschingen Musiktage, received the special prize given by the Foundation Ton Bruynèl, STEIM and the Foundation GAUDEAMUS.

At the time of writing, Alwynne has commissioned more than twenty-five pieces for her ongoing solo project, *DOG/ GOD*.

Over the last decade, Alwynne has collaborated frequently as an actor and vocalist (as well as composer) with the French company Scènes Théâtre Cinéma, and her music-theatre pieces *Hospice Lazy* and *We, Three* (both created for Alpaca Ensemble), as well as her various solo projects, have been presented across Europe, Scandinavia and in the USA.

In 2016, Alwynne was awarded the commission to create a fanfare or 'marker' to celebrate the opening of the University of Bergen's newly established Department of Art, Music and Design, for which she created the book of text scores, *up without an insistent casting away*.

Alwynne's professional life has also included stints as a presenter for BBC Radio 3, a composition teacher at Trinity Laban, London and as Artistic Director of both the Borealis festival and BIT20 Ensemble in Bergen, Norway. Her music is published by Verlag Neue Musik, Berlin.

Alwynne is co-founder and director of Neither Nor.

Alpaca Ensemble

Alpaca Ensemble is a flexible and dynamic collective, serving as a platform for experimentation, genre fusion, and creative exploration across classical, jazz, popular, and contemporary music. The ensemble collaborates with musicians, composers, and artists both within Trøndelag and across Norway, and remains committed to continual artistic development and to contributing to a vibrant and visible contemporary music scene in both the region and the country at large.

Alpaca has premiered numerous commissioned works and released dozens of recordings, several of which have been nominated for the Spellemann Award. In 2020, the ensemble was named Performer of the Year by the Norwegian Society of Composers.

Alpaca Ensemble features a variable line-up, and since its founding in 1996, the artistic leadership has consisted of Else Bø, Sigrid Elisabeth Stang, and Marianne Baudouin Lie. Our violinist, Sigrid Stang, passed away in the summer of 2024 following a prolonged illness. It is with deep sorrow that we now continue Alpaca Ensemble without her. At the same time, we are profoundly grateful for the years we shared — for the close friendship, for the music, and for Alpaca Ensemble, which has been invaluable to all three of us from our youth until today. We are especially thankful that we were able to complete this recording together during the final month of her life.



My hand describes the work of my heart

Text: Alwynne Pritchard

My hand describes the work of my heart
My breath shapes the words that describe the work of my hand
My hand strives to fulfil my heart's desire

My breath labours under the work of my hand striving to fulfil my heart's desire
My breath feeds my heart, fuels my struggles, labours and desires
My heart protests my hand's labours
But my hand maintains the body that feeds the breath that drives my heart

My hand executes

As I feel the air vibrating, I listen with my hand
I feel the song I sing with both my heart and my hand
And my hand, my heart in turn, drive me to song

In my hand I envisage the strange and beautiful contortions of Mannerist art
Depictions of angels, gods and warriors
Hands praying, deflecting, pleading, pointing, fleeing, defending

And my hand fits almost perfectly into the shadow cast in pigment
Dispersed with air from the lungs of my
Ancestors on the wall of a cave 30 000 years ago
Our almost incomprehensibly distant ancestors,
Harbingers of those great Mannerist masters

So my hand does not work alone
Our hands do not work alone

Nor does the hand of fate
As we cast ourselves into the unknown
To the sound of music that falls under ours hands
Or that was once even spelled out in the Guidonian hand

As we grasp the moment
Draw together
Read the handwriting on the wall

The future collecting before us
And the past surging behind

And I say Abracadabra
I say "Avra" 'kedoobar' — "I will create" "as has been spoken"

The Chimney Sweeper

Text: William Blake

A little black thing among the snow,
Crying "weep! 'weep!" in notes of woe!
"Where are thy father and mother? say?"
"They are both gone up to the church to pray.

Because I was happy upon the heath,
And smil'd among the winter's snow,
They clothed me in the clothes of death,
And taught me to sing the notes of woe.

And because I am happy and dance and sing,
They think they have done me no injury,
And are gone to praise God and his Priest and King,
Who make up a heaven of our misery."

The human heart is a muscle

Text: Alwynne Pritchard

The human heart is a muscle in the middle of your chest, tilted slightly to the left. It's about the size of your fist and is made up of three layers of tissue: a thin outer layer that protects and surrounds it; a thick, muscular layer that contracts and relaxes as it pumps blood round your body; and a thin inner layer that makes up the lining of its four chambers and valves. The upper chambers of the heart are called the atria, and the lower chambers are called the ventricles. The right side of your heart receives de-oxygenated blood, which it pumps to your lungs for a fresh supply of oxygen. The left side of your heart pumps the re-oxygenated blood back round your body. Each day, your heart beats around one-hundred thousand times, pumping blood through a network of vessels that delivers oxygen and nutrients that enables your organs and muscles to function as they should. Heart beat, drum beat, wing beat, brow beat. According to the American Heart Association, Broken Heart Syndrome is caused by a surge of hormones as the result of an emotionally stressful event. Broken Heart Syndrome causes the heart to stop operating normally, resulting in its failure. When your heart breaks, it is temporarily paralysed. Broken Heart syndrome is unique, in that it can develop in anyone, at any age. Heart beat, drum beat, wing beat, brow beat.

Black is the Colour

Text: Trad from Scotland

Black is the color of my true love's hair
His lips are something rosy fair
The purest eyes and the strongest hands
I love the ground on whereon he stands

I love my lover and well he knows
I love the ground on where he goes
If he on earth no more I see
My life will quickly leave me

The winter's passed and the leaves are green
The time has passed that we have seen
But still I hope the time will come
When he and I will be as one

The Luckless Angel

Text: Heiner Müller

Translation: Bernard Schütze and Caroline Schütze

The past surges behind him, pouring rubble on wings and shoulders
thundering like buried drums, while in front of him the future collects,
crushes his eyes, explodes his eyeballs like a star wrenching the word into a
resounding gag, strangling him with its breath. For a time one still sees the
beating of his wings, hears the crash of stones, falling before, above, behind
him, growing louder with each furious, futile struggle, weakening, lessening,
as the struggle subsides. Then the moment closes over him. The luckless
angel is silent, resting in the rapidly flooded space, waiting for history in
the petrification of flight, glance, breath. Until the renewed rush of powerful
wings swelling in waves through the stone signals his flight.

And did those feet in ancient time

Text: William Blake

And did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's Mountains Green
And was the holy lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen

And did the countenance devine
Shine forth upon these clouded hills
And was Jerusalem builded here
Among these dark Satanic mills

And did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's Mountains Green

Among these dark Satanic mills

Alwynne Pritchard (1968*)

01. My hand describes the work of my heart__05:31
02. The Chimney Sweeper__05:47
03. Interlude 1__03:30
04. The human heart is a muscle__04:51
05. Black is the Colour__07:48
06. Interlude 2__04:54
07. I do this, and then I do that__04:06
08. The Luckless Angel__02:25
09. And did those feet in ancient time__06:12

Musicians:

Alwynne Pritchard

Composer, Additional sound design,
Text, Voice

Sigrid Elisabeth Stang

Violin

Else Bø

Piano

Marianne Baudouin Lie

Cello

Thorolf Thuestad

Sound design and live electronics

Michele Braga

Venice lockdown recordings

Margrethe Kvaran,

Helena Nakstad,

Agnes Severin,

Ragne Fougner Nordhagen

and Dulcie Pugh

Pre-recorded children's voices

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