

# CORRIERE DEL MEZZOGIORNO

NAPOLI E CAMPANIA

RUNNING UNTIL 26 JULY, THE STAGING OF THE CHINESE "POLY-ARTIST"

## Solemn refinement of *Carmina Burana*: Shen Wei makes the "Capuzzelle" sing



Photo by Francesco Squeglia

### *A Visionary Staging for the Devotees of San Carlo*

by Natascia Festa  
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perhaps we should say, the poly-artist—who is seen here as a choreographer, painter, calligrapher, and designer—sets the stage immediately, applying a homeopathic treatment of solemnity to the score of Carl Orff, the musician who in the 1930s set music to medieval manuscripts. Il Coro di Massimo napoletano (the Chorus of Teatro di San Carlo), directed by Salvatore Caputo, is arranged as though in a crypt in a lower section of the stage, which is divided into two unequal parts. In this dark bowel, the choir is placed in rows like the “cappuzelle,” the skulls of the Fontanelle Cemetery, dressed in black with caps and skull-like faces that loom in the dark.

The verses of "Fortuna Empress of the World" take on an even greater power and act as a resonating reminder of our transience and impermanence, and if possible, an even more conclusive evocation of: "Oh fortune, like the moon you are changeable, always waxing and waning, the odious life first oppresses and then soothes as fancy takes it; poverty and power it melts them like ice." Aloft, a human figure is suspended as if in nothingness—the void to which all will return—yet the woman here is also divine because she is framed as if in an aureola, which in Christian iconography was intended for the figure of Christ or the Madonna. From the starting lines of the poem "This Delirious World" ("Iste Mundus furibundus"), Shen Wei offers his vision of the collision of east and west. Another high point comes when above the underworld of the chorus of "skulls" drops a translucent screen on which float spermatozoa. Thus, the beginning of life coincides with the end of it. And it does so, however, with the rhythm that Orff wrote, "Rhythm is not something abstract, it is life itself, it is the force of language, the union between the music and the movement."