

MiniMiniature

A concert to experience together

CONCERT PERFORMANCES • AGES 0-3 • AGES 4-10



Institutional dossier • 2026

Project identity

A concert to experience together



2019

debut

105

performances

3

countries

2021

Uffizi

MiniMiniature is a concert performance for children and the adults who accompany them. Singing, piano, movement, small objects, words and silence all contribute to an experience in which the relationship between those making music and those listening belongs to the very form of the concert.

The performance space is not separated from the audience. Children and adults are welcomed close to the performers; the musicians move among them, make eye contact, change distances and directions, allowing what happens within the group to become part of the experience as it unfolds.

MiniMiniature grows out of many years and many thousands of hours of direct music-making with very young children in nurseries, preschools and with families. From this experience comes a central principle: music is offered as an experience grounded in relationship and wonder, without asking children to interact in ways defined by adults and without treating entertainment as an end in itself.

The use of the voice, the presence of objects, movement and silence are organised within a precise dramaturgy that at the same time leaves space for observation, waiting and improvisation. The quality of the relationship is not an element added to the artistic form: it is one of its constitutive conditions.

The project exists in two versions, ages 0-3 and 4-10, in which the same artistic framework takes different forms according to age.

By July 2026, MiniMiniature had been performed 105 times in Italy, Switzerland and Germany since its 2019 debut. Since 2021, MiniMiniature has presented performances in museums of the Uffizi Galleries, working with the Education Service. Between 2021 and 2023, it also completed three tours of early childhood settings in Friuli-Venezia Giulia for ERT-FVG.

Where it comes from

Before the performance, a musical practice



Could a concert be built that preserved this quality of encounter?

Before MiniMiniature there was a sustained, day-to-day practice of making music with children. For years, work in nurseries and preschools meant returning to the same groups week after week, bringing a varied repertoire, singing mainly without words, and observing what happened over time.

The continuity of these encounters made possible something that an occasional experience can rarely offer: seeing music become familiar without being explained; recognising very different ways of participating; observing children who seemed not to be paying attention remember a song or a gesture weeks later; and seeing how deeply the body, movement, gaze and voice participate in musical experience before any explicit request from an adult intervenes.

Over time, the performers' work became more refined not only in what to offer, but above all in how to be present. How close to come. How long to wait. When to repeat and when to change. How to address a song to one child without isolating them from the group. How to welcome an unexpected initiative without immediately turning it into a request for collective participation. How to keep the music alive even when many things are happening in the room at the same time.

This body of experience does not come from a system of prescribed behaviours, but from the accumulation of thousands of different situations. It required the performers to develop a particular sensitivity to relational timing: intervening without occupying all the space, offering without demanding a response, recognising that attention can manifest itself in ways very different from those immediately legible to an adult.

At a certain point, this experience gave rise to a specifically artistic question: could a concert be built that preserved this quality of encounter without turning it into an educational activity?

MiniMiniature was born from the search for an answer to this question.

The transition did not consist of bringing onto the stage what happened in nurseries. It was necessary to select, discard and compose. Some songs remained without words; others encountered texts and images. The piano took on an autonomous role alongside the voices. Objects, materials and visual transformations appeared. The performers' movements became part of the composition. The order of events gradually took on a dramaturgical structure.

Above all, the context changed: what in educational practice could develop through repeated encounters over weeks or months now had to become complete within the limited time of a concert. It was necessary to build an arc capable of welcoming people who were often meeting for the first time and who, forty or fifty minutes later, would go their separate ways again.

The long experience that came before continues to act beneath the surface of the performance as part of the performers' expertise: in their ability to read what is happening, to calibrate presence and distance, to hold the structure without making it rigid, and to distinguish a moment that calls for intervention from one that simply asks to be allowed to happen.

The birth of MiniMiniature therefore coincides with the moment when a practice matured through daily relationships with children became material for composition, until it found a form able to exist autonomously as a concert.

A musical and relational form

Space is part of the composition



Listening also means physically sharing a space.

In MiniMiniature, space is not the container in which the concert is simply placed. It is one of the elements through which the concert takes form.

The usual distance between performers and audience is reduced. Children and adults share the same space as the musical action, often only a few steps - sometimes only a few centimetres - from the voices and objects. The performers do not remain in a predetermined position: they come closer, move away, cross the space, change orientation, address a song to one part of the group and then another. The piano, although it provides a more stable point of reference, also takes part in this changing geography.

The result is a situation in which listening also means physically sharing a space. Sound does not always come from the same direction; a voice may arrive from close by and then move elsewhere; an object may appear at the centre of the group or travel through it; a look may create, for a few moments, a direct relationship between a performer and one person without interrupting the shared experience.

This proximity also changes the performers' presence. Every gesture is visible at close range, every movement carries weight, and the quality of gaze and waiting becomes part of the performance. Relationship becomes part of the very way the music is made.

Especially in the version for the youngest children, the child experiences the concert together with the adult who accompanies them. They are not treated as separate recipients: physical closeness, the looks they exchange, the way the adult welcomes a surprise or waits alongside the child all contribute to the quality of the experience.

Proximity, however, does not mean continually occupying the audience's space. An essential part of the construction lies precisely in the alternation between presence and distance. A performer may come closer and then withdraw; a broad movement may be followed by stillness; even the empty space left between one gesture and another becomes perceptible.

The performers' trajectories, the position of the audience, and the succession of more intimate or more expansive moments thus build a true dramaturgy of proximity.

The voice

Between singing and speech

The boundary between singing and storytelling remains deliberately fluid.

The voice is one of the central materials of MiniMiniature. Through it, sound can remain entirely musical, encounter words, generate an image, and return again to singing without these transitions interrupting the continuity of the experience.

An important part of the repertoire consists of songs without words. The absence of a text is a precise musical choice: melody, rhythm, timbre, articulation, dynamics and breath can by themselves construct a recognisable form, without verbal language immediately directing listening towards a particular image or predetermined meaning.

At other moments, words emerge within the singing. They may appear gradually and bring forth an image, an object, a character or a small situation. This is how the brief tableaux that run through the performance arise: the sea, snow, a spinning top, a kite, a grain of sand, a palette, a butterfly.

The text does not enter in order to explain the music. It temporarily changes its horizon: what until that moment had been heard without a specific verbal cue can suddenly encounter a figure, an action, a short story. And those same words can then make room once again for singing without words.

For this reason, the boundary between singing and storytelling remains deliberately fluid. A musical phrase can move towards speech, and a spoken phrase can fully retain rhythm, intonation and the quality of singing. The transition from one to the other belongs to the same vocal continuum.

The small stories retain this same quality. They are not constructed as elaborate narratives, but as brief appearances: a few words can be enough for a situation to take shape and come together with a gesture, movement or object.

This fluidity calls for a vocal approach that cannot be reduced to a single performance model. The vocal approach emerges from the needs of the pieces, from proximity to the audience, and from the need for the voice to retain immediacy and flexibility even when words appear.

In close proximity to the audience, direct address also takes on particular importance. For a few moments, a song can be directed towards a child, an adult or one part of the group without ceasing to belong to everyone.

It is in this continual movement - between sound and word, between song and short story, between one person and the group - that MiniMiniature's distinctive vocal language takes shape. The voice does not illustrate what happens on stage: it is one of the places in which what happens takes form.



The dramaturgy

A journey, not a sequence of pieces



"These gestures, too, have their own timing and are part of the dramaturgy."

MiniMiniature is constructed as a continuous journey. The different songs are not presented as autonomous episodes separated by pauses or scene changes: each grows out of what precedes it and prepares, more or less visibly, what will come next.

The dramaturgy begins with the welcome itself. The entrance of children and adults into the space does not simply precede the concert: it is its first movement. The voices, the performers' presence and the way the audience settles around the red carpet mean that there is no clear boundary between a "before" and the moment when the performance would formally begin.

From here, an arc of six songs takes shape, in which text, movement and visual appearances acquire different weights from one moment to the next. The small worlds that emerge during the performance do not build a single story: they appear, acquire substance, and then make room for something else.

What holds these tableaux together is above all the time of transformation. One element is not simply replaced by the next: something changes gradually. A song may change, a word may appear, an object may enter the space, a movement may expand or contract. Transitions are as much a part of the composition as the more recognisable moments of the performance.

A particular role is played by the gestures through which objects enter and leave the scene. They are sought out, picked up, opened, unfolded or shown; at the end they are gathered, folded when necessary, and carefully put away. These gestures, too, have their own timing and are part of the dramaturgy. Something that has been at the centre of the experience does not suddenly become irrelevant when a tableau ends: the way it leaves the scene prepares the transition to what follows.

There is also space for improvisation within the structure. This allows the performers to expand, shorten or transform certain passages while maintaining a living relationship with what is happening. The form remains recognisable, but its actual timing is not identical in every performance.

The dramaturgy does not seek a constant escalation of stimuli. Moments of greater movement may give way to stillness; a clearly defined image may be followed by a more contained moment; something that appears may simply disappear. The journey can thus become progressively more essential.

In the finale, this movement leads from image to sound and from sound to silence.

The objects

Making a world appear with very little



The objects in MiniMiniature are few, simple and closely linked to the individual tableaux of the performance. They do not create a permanent set: they enter the space only for the time needed to bring forth an image, and then restore the space to its essential simplicity.

Their function is not to replace what is being told with a complete visual representation. Rather, an object offers an anchor for the imagination. For a few minutes it can transform the way the space is perceived, give material substance to a word, extend a gesture or enter into dialogue with a song.

MiniMiniature therefore works more through suggestion than reproduction. There is no need to reconstruct a sea for the sea to appear, or to stage a complete story for a kite, a spinning top or a butterfly to acquire a presence of its own for a few moments. A few elements are enough for music, gesture and imagination to build together what is not materially there.

Objects do not arrive with instructions on how they should be interpreted. Their presence opens up a possibility: one person may follow their movement, another may watch the performer's gesture, another may continue to listen mainly to the music.

At certain moments, an object extends the body's gesture. A material can unfold through the space, alter a trajectory, and create a surface or volume that did not exist a few seconds earlier. At other times, a minimal element is enough for attention to gather around something very small. Showing enough for something to appear, without showing so much that it is exhausted.

Objects also have their own material presence: weight, texture, colour, and the way they behave. They are touched, moved, opened, folded, and they respond to the performers' gestures. This is another reason why they do not function as simple illustrations of the texts.

Finally, their appearance remains closely connected to the music. The moment in which something is shown, moved or transformed belongs to the time of singing and piano. The object does not interrupt the music in order to become the protagonist of the scene: it enters the music's own temporality.

The finale

Letting the experience come to an end

From singing to silence, and back

The finale of MiniMiniature does not coincide with the end of the last piece. It is built as a sequence of transitions in which singing, image, silence, piano, awakening and farewell gradually transform into one another.

The concluding image can take different forms. In one version, the large butterfly wings appear: after the song, the two singers let themselves sink beneath them, almost falling asleep. In another, the final tableau is constructed around a Christmas tree, beneath which the singers hide in the same way. The scenic image changes, but the same gesture remains recognisable: after bringing the image to completion, the performers disappear into it for a few moments.

In the butterfly finale, the wings are then removed, carefully folded and put away. What has just occupied the centre of the experience is not simply removed from the scene: the time taken to let it go remains visible.

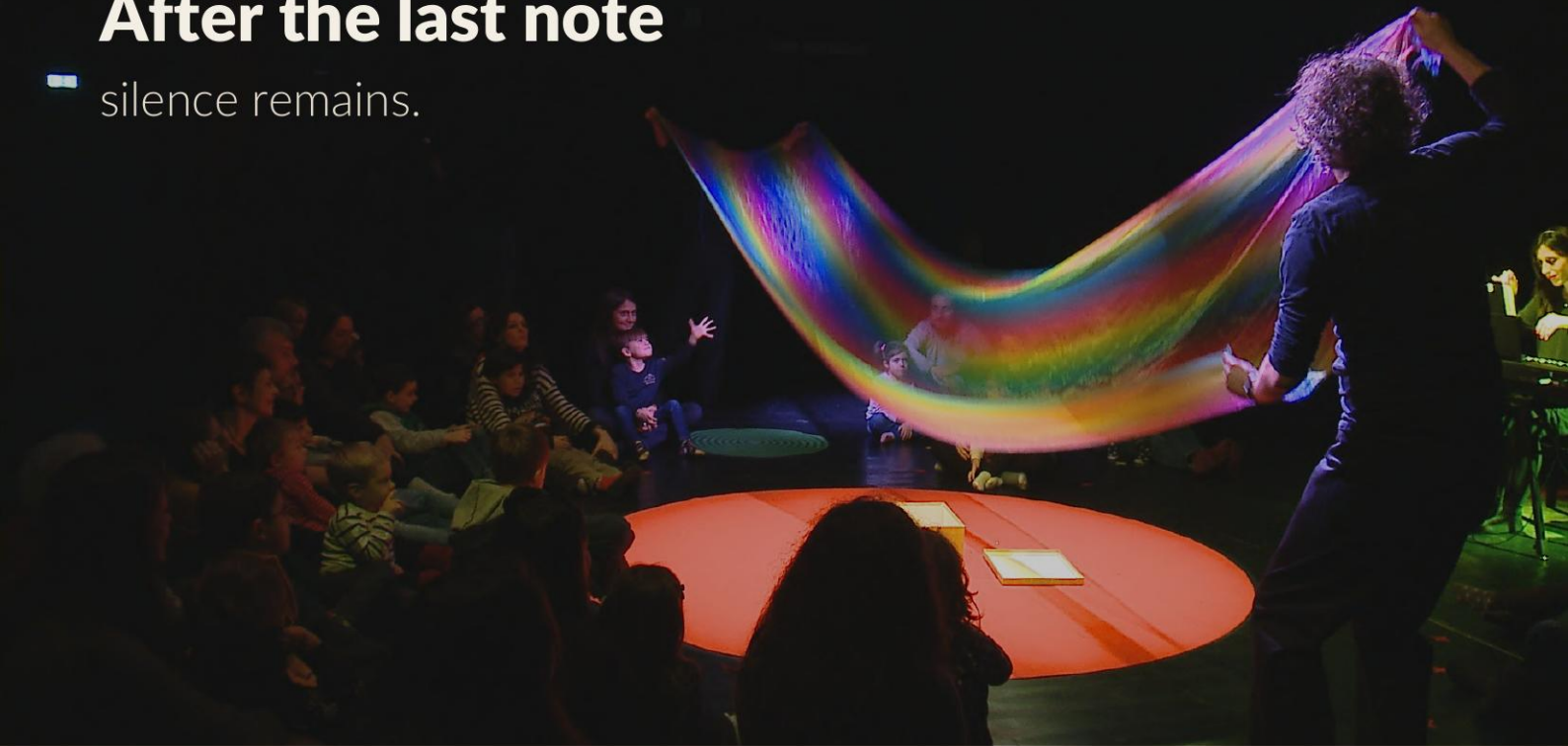
The performers then sit down again. Movement diminishes and the space gradually empties. What remains are the piano, the voices and the people present.

The piano repeats a short musical phrase a few times. During this time, the performers do not introduce a new story or try to fill the waiting: they look at the audience, meet the eyes of children and adults, and smile. After everything that has happened, the concert seems to gather itself into its simplest form: still being there, together, listening.

Finally comes the farewell. Three times, over a descending musical figure, the voices simply sing "ciao, ciao, ciao".

After the last note

silence remains.



Yet even the farewell does not immediately determine the end.

After the last note, silence remains.

It may last a few seconds or much longer. Sometimes no one seems to want to break it: children and adults remain seated, the performers continue to exchange glances with them, and for a short time there is simply nothing more to add. In some performances, it is precisely from this silence that a spontaneous request to hear something more arises.

This moment is not an empty interval after the music. It is the point at which everything that had until then sustained the experience - singing, words, gesture, movement, images, objects - can withdraw, leaving only the mutual presence of the people there.

The finale makes especially visible a choice that runs throughout MiniMiniature: not to rush a response and not to rush the ending. Parting, too, needs its own time.

The final image withdraws; the gesture diminishes; after the gesture, a few notes remain; after the notes, a farewell; after the farewell, silence.

The conclusion of MiniMiniature is a gradual stripping away, until the moment when the concert can simply be let go.

Pedagogical experience within the artistic form

Knowledge becoming form

Music Learning Theory

EDWIN E. GORDON

The pedagogical thinking that inspires MiniMiniature helps determine the conditions in which the artistic experience can take place, but is not translated into a message to be conveyed.



MiniMiniature also grows out of many years of reflection on music learning developed through the performers' work with children and adults. This background informs the concrete choices through which the performance was constructed.

An important reference is Edwin E. Gordon's Music Learning Theory, together with the experience gained through its application and through daily encounters with very young children. From this perspective come, among other things, the importance given to singing without words, variety of repertoire, movement, and the possibility of encountering music before verbal understanding is required.

In the transition to MiniMiniature, these elements are transformed artistically. A song is chosen for the musical qualities capable of sustaining a particular experience; movement enters the staging; silence acquires a formal value of its own.

Knowledge of music learning processes therefore acts above all as a form of design expertise: it guides the choice not to saturate the experience with words, suggests allowing time for repetition and recognition, and helps define repertoire, timing and ways of relating.

MiniMiniature does not assume that music intended for children must belong to a single vocabulary. Materials of different origins coexist within the project, including music by Johann Sebastian Bach, Edwin E. Gordon and original compositions by Arnolfo Borsacchi. Variety is not presented as content to be recognised or classified: it belongs to the musical experience being offered.

From this perspective, the accompanying adult can also share in the listening without necessarily taking on the role of interpreter or mediator of what is happening.

The pedagogical thinking that inspires MiniMiniature helps determine the conditions in which the artistic experience can take place, but is not translated into a message to be conveyed.

The journey

A form that can inhabit different places



MiniMiniature debuted in 2019 at Teatro BuonaLaPrima in Buggiano. By July 2026, the project had been performed 105 times, meeting children and adults in theatres, museums, festivals, libraries, nurseries and schools in Italy, Switzerland and Germany.

Since 2021, MiniMiniature has presented performances in museums of the Uffizi Galleries, working with the Education Service.

Between 2021 and 2023, MiniMiniature also completed three tours for ERT Friuli-Venezia Giulia, reaching nurseries and preschools.

Over the years, the project has been hosted, among other places, at Teatro di Antella, Centro Sfera Bianca in Lugano, Biblioteca Delfini in Modena, Kultur Palast in Hamburg, the Un Prato di Libri festival, and Biblioteca San Giorgio in Pistoia.

The variety of contexts has accompanied the development of the performance. Theatres, museum rooms, libraries and educational spaces create different conditions of distance, movement, acoustics and audience layout. Moving through them has meant testing which elements could adapt and which had to remain constant for MiniMiniature to retain its identity.

The more than one hundred performances have also served an internal function within the project: repeating the performance has made it possible to continually test its timing, transitions and proportions.

The current form comes not only from the initial conception, but from the experience accumulated by putting it to the test again each time in encounters with real people and real places.

Two versions

The same form, two age groups

0-3

3 songs entirely without words

3 with words and objects

approximately 40 minutes

up to 25 adult-child pairs

4-10

1 song entirely without words

5 with words and objects

approximately 50 minutes

up to 25 children in the performance space

MiniMiniature exists in two versions, for children aged 0-3 and 4-10 respectively. They share the project's artistic identity and fundamental structure, but differ in the way the six songs develop the relationship between music without words, text and objects.

In the 0-3 version, three of the six songs remain entirely without words, while the other three, after first being presented as music alone, also encounter words and objects. The purely musical component therefore retains a particularly substantial presence throughout the concert.

In the 4-10 version, the balance changes: only one song remains entirely without words, while the other five also develop a verbal and visual dimension through texts and objects.

The difference between the two versions does not consist in offering younger children a simplified form of the performance. What changes is the balance of the different expressive materials: in the 0-3 version, more space is given to singing without words; in the 4-10 version, words and images enter the construction of the tableaux more frequently.

The 0-3 version lasts approximately forty minutes; the 4-10 version approximately fifty.

The 0-3 version can accommodate up to 25 adult-child pairs or, in educational settings, groups of up to 25 children accompanied according to the arrangements established by the host organisation.

In the 4-10 version, up to 25 children are welcomed into the performance space; in theatres, where the configuration allows, additional adult observers may be seated in the auditorium.

The two versions therefore retain the same conception of MiniMiniature while modulating its materials differently: six songs, two different balances between music without words, words and image.

The artistic team

Three musicians, one shared path



MiniMiniature is performed by Arnolfo Borsacchi, Pier Elisa Campus and Maddalena Bonechi. Two voices and piano form the project's stable ensemble.

Arnolfo Borsacchi is responsible for artistic direction, original compositions and texts, and is one of the two voices; Pier Elisa Campus is the other voice; Maddalena Bonechi is at the piano.

The presence of two singers does not correspond to a fixed division into characters or narrative functions. The two voices may move together, separate, respond to one another and take on different weights in the construction of each tableau.

Arnolfo Borsacchi and Pier Elisa Campus also share the ongoing experience of performing in Quartetto Gordon. This shared path is an important part of their musical history and of the work developed over time around two-voice singing, mutual listening and singing for early childhood. MiniMiniature also grows out of this continuity, while developing a distinct artistic form of its own.

The piano occupies a different but equally structural position. It is not simply an accompaniment to the voices: it defines harmonic and temporal spaces, supports transformations, links different moments, and can itself sustain the listening experience, as happens in the gradual stilling of the finale.

Voice, piano, gesture, movement and stage timing must belong to the same process. In a performance based on proximity, this requires not only precision in execution but also sufficient familiarity with one another to modify the duration, intensity or direction of a moment without losing the overall structure.

The trio is not merely the ensemble with which MiniMiniature is performed: it is the human and musical place in which its form is reconstructed each time.

Presenting MiniMiniature

An adaptable form, precise conditions

6 × 6 m

theatre reference

3 × 4 m

some educational settings

1 · 2 · 3

performances on the same day

MiniMiniature can enter different contexts without losing the essential conditions that determine its form. What is adapted is the configuration of the space, not the principle of proximity on which the concert is built.

The layout is defined in dialogue with the host venue. In a theatre, part of the stage or a platform may be used; in an educational or museum setting, a more contained room may be sufficient. As a reference, a theatre configuration requires approximately 6 × 6 metres, while in some educational settings MiniMiniature can also be performed in a space of around 3 × 4 metres. Different configurations can be considered case by case.

More important than absolute dimensions are the possibility of gathering the audience close to the performers, good mutual visibility, and the space needed for the two singers to move between the different points of the action.

One, two or three performances can be scheduled on the same day, making it possible to reach more groups while maintaining the intimate scale required by the project for each one.

Adaptation therefore serves to reconstruct, each time, the conditions needed for the same artistic conception to work: proximity, freedom of movement, visibility, quality of the listening experience, and a space in which performers and audience can genuinely be together.

Full technical requirements, setup arrangements and financial terms are defined with the host organisation and are available in a separate technical and organisational sheet.



Creating the conditions for children and adults to
inhabit a musical experience together.

MiniMiniature · concert performances for ages 0-3 and 4-10

MiniMiniature

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