

## The Sound of Silence

Many musical works present a peculiar moment, the moment when the notes give way to the absence of sound, to the silence. We are used to analysis focused on harmony, on counterpoint, or more recently on timbre; but we lack in a syntax of what is purportedly not said, either because it is implied or because it is cut out in a more or less violent way from the musical flow.

Working on ancient<sup>1</sup> and modern<sup>2</sup> Figurenlehren, I will try to follow the Not-Said and its relationship with time, whether continuous, fissured or fragmented. This will be done by using perceptive archetypes which, according to the rhetorical tradition, I call *figures*. I will develop here the *figures by suppression*.

Before examining in detail each *figure by suppression*, however, I would like to point out two general behaviors related to the elimination of the speech matter: first of all, laconism, the “manner of speaking particular to the Spartans, characterized by the reduction of the speech to its essence”<sup>3</sup>. It is the concision of Caesar’s turns of phrase, it is the lightness desired by Italo Calvino for the literature of the years to come<sup>4</sup>. The so-called “contemporary music” too is rich in “laconic” compositions: the *Variations pour une porte et un soupir (Variations for a door and a sigh)* by Pierre Henry for instance, a piece of *musique concrète* lasting one hour, is entirely elaborated from the squeaking of a door and the sighs of a person.

Musical stasis appears also in the whole production of the American composer Morton Feldman, characterized by extra-long, motionless, never-ending notes. Among the very barest compositions we can count Salvatore Sciarrino’s ensemble piece *Infinito nero*. At the beginning of the piece, the confidential slap-tongue dialogue of flute, oboe and clarinet barely breaks the surrounding silence. The composer himself describes this peculiar beginning:

Silence is not the vacuum but the birth of the sound, the experience of life. Perhaps my silence is now more sober. I would never have thought of being able to write this beginning, with its breathing rate/rhythm. Are we listening to our own heart?<sup>5</sup>

Farther, he asserts laconism as a precise poetic choice:

I really reached the depths, the very sound of silence. My recent works are practically naked. This nudity is determining for listening. On that condition only music may take hold of us. All the forms of language and experience deteriorate, lose their normality when they are limited; yet one single sound is enough to make us understand what is sound or what is silence.<sup>6</sup>

There is a second type of extended suppression: the rhetorical *percursio*, i.e. an introduction, a rapid glance at or an actual summary of the speech to come. In my piece *Nitide imprecisioni*, the piano repeats in

<sup>1</sup> Joachim BURMEISTER, *Hypomnematum musicae poeticae*, Rostock, 1599; Joachim BURMEISTER, *Musicae practicae, sive artis canendi ratio*, ivi, 1601; Joachim BURMEISTER, *Musica autoschediastike*, ivi, 1601; Joachim BURMEISTER, *Musica poetica*, ivi, 1606; Johannes NUCIUS, *Musicae practicae*, Neisse, 1613; Joachim THURINGUS, *Opusculum bipartitum*, Berlin, 1624; Athanasius KIRCHER, *Musurgia universalis sive ars magna consoni et dissoni*, Roma, 1650; Elias WALTHER, *Dissertatione presso l’Università di Tubinga*, manoscritto, 1664; Christoph BERNHARD, *Tractatus compositionis augmentatus*, manoscritto, 16...?; Wolfgang Caspar PRINZ, *Phrynis Mytilenaeus, oder Satyrischer Componist*, Quedlinburg, 1676–79; Johann Georg AHLE, *Sommer-Gespräche*, Mülhausen, 1697; Thomas Balthasar JANOWKA, *Clavis ad Thesaurum magnae artis musicae*, Praga, 1701; Mauritius Johannes Gregorius VOGT, *Conclave Thesauri magnae artis musicae*, Praga, 1719; Johann Gottfried WALTHER, *Praecepta der misikalische Composition*, manoscritto, 1708; Johann Gottfried WALTHER, *Musikalische Lexicon*, Leipzig, 1732; Johann MATTHESON, *Der vollkommene Kapellmeister*, Hamburg, 1739; Meinrad SPIESS, *Tractatus musicus compositorio-practicus*, Augsburg, 1745; J. Adolf SCHEIBE, *Der Critischer Musicus*, Leipzig, 1745; Johann Nikolaus FORKEL, *Allgemeine Geschichte des Musik*, Leipzig, 1788-1801

<sup>2</sup> AA.VV., *Les Unités Sémiotiques Temporelles: Éléments nouveaux d’analyse musicale*, Marseille, Éditions MIM – Documents Musurgia, 1996; AA.VV., *CD-ROM Les UST: Nouvelles clés pour l’écoute*, CD-Rom MAC/PC, Production MIM – Réalisation Cosa Mentale, 2002; AA.VV., sito Internet del MIM: <http://www.labo-mim.org>; Salvatore SCIARRINO, *Le figure della musica – da Beethoven ad oggi*, Milano, Ricordi, 1998.

<sup>3</sup> B. MORTARA GARAVELLI, *Manuale di retorica*, Milano, Bompiani, p. 254.

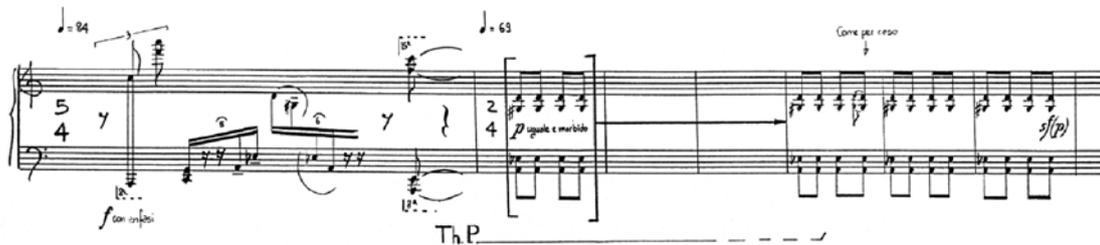
<sup>4</sup> Italo CALVINO, *Lezioni americane*, Milano, Garzanti, 1988.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.divertimentoensemble.it/Rondo%202004/info%20pezzi/02%2021%20marzo.html>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

an obsessing way a four notes chord until something like a “defect”, a “flaw” of execution comes to disjoin the two hands, thus creating an imperfection which will make possible the birth of the musical discourse. The piece starts with a very articulated and seemingly unexplainable gesture, which will be understood gradually and turn out to be a condensed anticipation of what occurs in the central part of the piece.

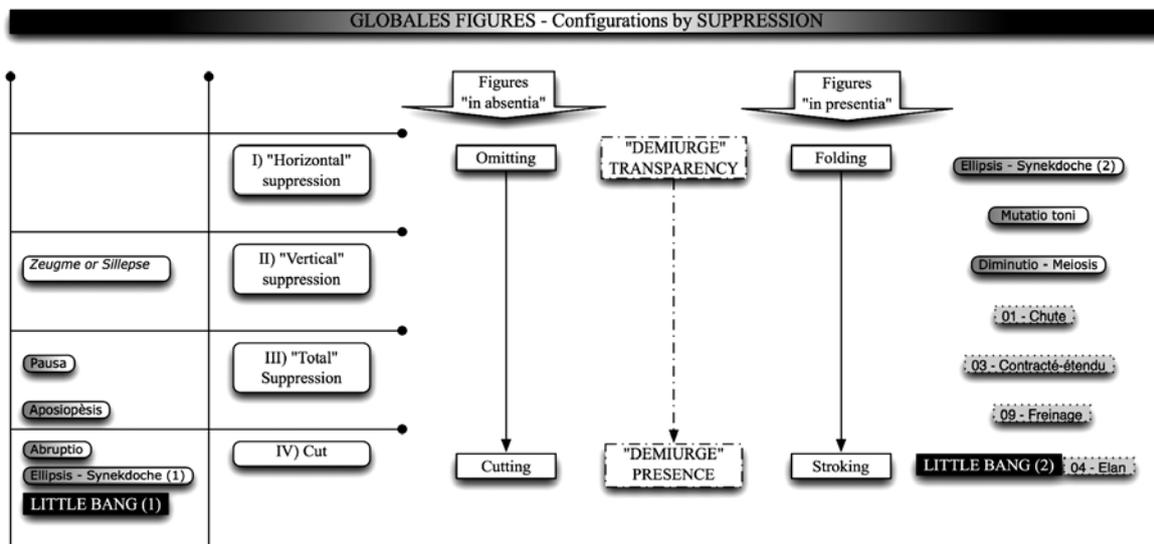
Figure 1. E. Cipollone, *Nitide imprecisioni*, pour piano – 1994 (beginning)



In order to organize the totality of *figures by suppression* despite the lack of anterior classifications, I tried to be imaginative: I first arranged the figures in generic constellations, then in a more and more precise way, up until when I could determine two main “suppressive” paths, both supported by a common logic which I called “demiurge presence”. The sudden interruption of the musical tissue and of temporal continuity can turn up either without any apparent reason, either provoked by a precise sound event; metaphorically, the hand which carries out the suppression may be visible or not.

I found the “demiurge” principle useful, but not sufficient for the organization of the *figures by suppression*. The artist’s hand (whether visible or not) can use a sharp knife or a blunt one: in the first case, the sound-matter, cut abruptly, will be followed by silence; in the second one, the sound-matter will be “shaken” and undergo a change, but without solution of continuity. To extend the metaphor, sound-matter and time, in this case, will only have been bent. To suggest the presence or the absence of sound following the suppression, I called the two paths “suppression *in absentia*” and “suppression *in praesentia*”.

Figure 2. Figures by suppression



**Configurations “in absentia”**

“Horizontal” suppression

What makes us understand that there has been an elision? A syntax – the tonal syntax for instance – shared by the composer as well as by the listener. In the following example, drawn from the first of the three Schumann’s *Fantasiestücke* op. 73, the clarinet does not complete the descending scale which, from relative G, seems to aim at relative Eb tonic. And neither the piano reaches the expected resolution for the

B leading-note at the right hand. We are faced with what could be called a “hole”: the notes suggested by our tonal ear miss, and in their place we find only silence.

Figure 3. R. Schumann, *Fantasiestücke* op. 73 for clarinet and piano, I (bars 17–21)



The rules of tonality are however not the only way to make the elision perceptible: in any syntax, tonal or not, the line “with the holes” can be doubled by another line, which will always remain complete. Thus in *Au bord de l'eau* the piano, which at the beginning simply accentuates the pulse by repeating the same chord, will quickly start to double the voice at bar 3. Whereas the right hand continues the melody until the end of the phrase, the voice keeps silent during four notes and joins up with the lost flow only *in extremis*.

Figure 4. G. Fauré, *Au bord de l'eau*, for voice and piano (beginning)



Figure 5. R. Schumann, *Fantasiestücke* op. 73 for clarinet and piano, III



The expectation of a determined behavior, moreover, can be induced by means of repetition. Again in Schumann's *Fantasiestücke*, but this time in the third and last one, the clarinet opens the movement brightly, with a swoop of eighth notes which cannot but arise the attention of the listener and be engraved in his memory. Slightly transposed and with a different piano accompaniment, the same gesture reappears at bars 5, 9 and 17. After the reprise, however, the piano starts alone the *n*th swoop: as if the clarinet took the time to breathe, it drops out the first four eighth notes, and joins up only at the end of the bar. In the three following reprises however, and until the end of the piece, the gesture will be repeated without particular changes.

Figure 6. W.A. Mozart, *Piano Concerto in D minor K466, III (finale)*

The finale of Mozart’s *Piano Concerto in D minor* also presents elisions made perceptible by the means of repetition. The first frame indicates the end of the first phrase: the following phrase being similar to the first one, one would expect a similar conclusion. On the contrary, as a glance to the second frame reveals, Mozart decides to surprise us by emptying the sound field. The elision is not absolute, but almost: we do not deal with a hole, but with a “cobweb”. This thin thread, however, this little trifle played by the brass will, with its disarming simplicity, contaminate the whole orchestra. Gradually, all the instruments will imitate, taking turns frantically, this descending *arpeggio*, will make it grow beyond measure, to the point of saturating the entire sound field and finally conclude, with this “overflow”, the piece.

*“Vertical” suppression*

In this second type of *suppression* it is no more a single line or part of it that lacks, but all the lines altogether: from the horizontality of a single voice we pass therefore to the verticality of the whole musical staff. It is worth specifying what I mean by *vertical suppression*, and in what extent it differs from the *total suppression*: in the latter, which I will treat farther, all the instruments are silent, plunging the room in the reverberating silence of a *Große Pause*. In the *vertical suppression*, instead, there are no silences, but phrases made “wobbly” by the suppression of a bar at their beginning, in their middle or at their end.

Apropos, the *overture* of the *Marriage of Figaro* starts, precisely, by a *tacit* initial bar. The phrase follows the classical scheme *a – a’ – a”*, where the first two fragments are made of two bars, and the third of four. Mozart, however, has removed the first “theoretical” bar, so that *a* is composed of only one bar.

Figure 7. W.A. Mozart, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Overture (opening)

*“Total” suppression*

The *total suppression* coincides with the *Große Pause*. Already Burmeister mentions this musical situation, and calls it *aposiopesis*:

Aposiopesis is a total silence in all the voices, indicated by a given sign.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> J. BURMEISTER, *Hypomnematum musicae poeticae*, Rostock, 1599: «Aposiopesis est totale omnium vocum silentium quocunque signo datum.»

The particularity of the *total* suppression compared to the *cut*, which we will see in a moment, is its relative predictability: the *total* suppression comes at the end of a phrase, while a *cut* occurs when we least expect it.

In the *Prelude of Pour le piano*, Debussy uses this device to stop a gestural and temporal continuum otherwise very regular. The regular module is stopped a first time at bar 26, by three simple scale fragments accentuated on the first note. These groups of four notes are repeated once again, then everything stops, for a moment only, giving way to a very short but absolute silence.

Then the piece starts again from the beginning. When it comes to the same place, however, not only the scale fragments do not disappear after their second repetition, but the first group of four notes is repeated in an obsessing way six times, doubled in octaves, reinforced by other notes on the beat, and finally amplified by a *crescendo* which explodes bar 43. With the third appearance of the scale fragments, towards the end of the piece, Debussy succeeds in finding yet another solution: as at the beginning, here he stops again the flow of sounds with a silence. But this time, after the pause, he at last continues the always outlined but until then never realized descent of the groups of four notes.

It is not difficult to associate this figure to the *pausa* of the baroque treaties which, as Thuringus, Kircher, Printz, Janovka and Walther describe it, simply indicates a silence in a musical composition.

Figure 8. C. Debussy, *Pour le piano*, Prélude

The image displays a musical score for Debussy's 'Pour le piano' Prélude, consisting of four systems of piano notation. The first system shows the initial scale fragments with a dynamic marking of *m.d.* (mezzo-dolce). The second system features a box around a measure, followed by a *p* (piano) dynamic marking and a *pp* (pianissimo) marking. The third system continues the scale fragments. The fourth system includes dynamic markings of *peu*, *a*, *peu*, and *cresc.* (crescendo), leading to a *f* (forte) dynamic marking. Ellipses [...] are placed between the second and third systems, and between the fourth system and the bottom of the page.



### *Cut*

The traditional rhetorical meaning of the term *aposiopesis* (reserve) does not coincide with the just stated definition of Burmeister. The latter lacks, indeed, the voluntary, abrupt and unexpected rupture described by Mortara Garavelli:

The reserve or *aposiopesis* consists of the abrupt interruption of a speech when a subject has already been addressed <...> It is the rhetoric of silence, of an understatement so strong that it lets understand much more than what is actually said.<sup>8</sup>

The musical equivalent of what I called «cut» seems rather to be found as well in Vogt's definition of *abruptio*:

#### ABRUPTIO

There is *Abruptio* when a musical passage is stopped by a pause placed at its end.<sup>9</sup>

as in one of the two acceptations of the *ellipsis* given by Forkel:

#### ELLIPSIS or SYNEKDOQUE (1)

A notable form of expressing a sentiment occurs when its expression is suddenly suspended and broken off after a gradual and successively intensifying growth. This figure is called *ellipsis*. The art expressed by this device must seek to illuminate the path of the affections for the imagination, as it were. This can be achieved by two methods: first, when a gradually intensifying passage which has grown to great vehemence is unexpectedly interrupted, only to resume anew and proceed with an entirely altered thought. This form of *ellipsis* is found in the following Bach sonata:<sup>10</sup>



<sup>8</sup> B. MORTARA GARAVELLI, *op. cit.*, p. 255.

<sup>9</sup> Mauritius Johannes Gregorius VOGT, *Conclave Thesauri magnae artis musicae*, Praga, 1719, p. 1: «Abruptio est, cum periodus musica in fine posita aliqua pausa abruptitur.»

<sup>10</sup> Johann Nikolaus FORKEL, *Allgemeine Geschichte des Musik*, Leipzig, 1788–1801, p. 56: «Eine auffallende Art von Aeußerung einer Empfindung ist die, wenn sie, nachdem sie nach und nach zu einem hohen Grad von Stärke angewachsen, auf einmal plötzlich stille steht, und abbricht. Diese Figur wird Ellipsis genannt. Die Kunst, die diese Art von Aeußerung ausdrücken will, muß sie daher so in ein Bild zu bringen suchen, daß dadurch der Gang der Leidenschaft für die Einbildungskraft gleichsam sichtbar werden kann. Sie kann es auf zweyerley Art bewerkstelligen, nemlich 1) wenn ein nach und nach zu einer großen Lebhaftigkeit angewachsener Satz unvermuthet abbricht, sodann aber mit einem ganz veränderten Gedanken aufs neue wieder anfängt, und weiter fortgeht. Von dieser Art ist folgende Ellipsis in einer Bachischen Sonate: »

In the first act of *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, Monteverdi provides us a beautiful example of *cut*. The last phrase of the fourth scene is truncated in a very clear way. It is true that the text underlines this cut, but it is present all the same in the musical part alone, which stops abruptly on what seems to me more a simple dominant chord than a real half-cadence.

Figure 9. C. Monteverdi, *Le Couronnement de Poppée*, act I, scene IV (finale)

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Ben sei paz - za ben sei paz - za se cre - di che ti pos - sa - no far cou -  
(Mosso)

-ten - ta e sal - va un gar - zon cie - co un gar - zon cie - co et u - na

cie - ca u - na cie - ca cal - va ben sei paz - za ben sei paz - za se cre - di.

Towards the end of the first movement of the *Piano Sonata* in Bb, Schubert's use of *cuts* is so massive that it brings almost to aphasia. It is an actual musical "stammering", extremely dramatic, which makes the sounds and the thoughts face the silence; the speech and the temporal flow seem to stop not because they came to their conclusion, but because they cannot be delivered anymore. Like Lucio Fontana in his *cuts*, Schubert lets us foresee another dimension, beyond the one which is in the foreground: a dimension made of the most deafening silence.

Figure 10. F. Schubert, *Piano Sonata in Bb Major D 960*, I (bars 315–332)



*SCIARRINO – Little bang (1)*

When the composer shows us what provokes the cut, the cause which has silence as an effect, we are faced with what Sciarrino calls, with a little reminder of the theory of the origin of the universe, the “little bang”. The sicilian composer, to tell the truth, associates this figure to multiple causal relationships: for my *Figurenlehre*, I preferred to split the *little bang* in two: when a musical situation is suddenly stopped by a specific event and is followed by silence, we deal with a cut in which the presence of the “demiurge” is quite visible.

In the other case, a specific event can come and disturb or deviate a musical situation without stopping the flow of time and sound. I will treat this last case with the figures by suppression “in praesentia”.

An excellent example for the first case, the *little bang* as a cut, is provided by the Italian opera. Puccini concludes the third act of *Bohème* by cutting the musical plot with a violent deflagration which leaves us, amazed, immersed in silence. The same act opens with a symmetrical gesture, which tears the silence to immediately plunge us in the heart of music (fig. 11).

On a quite smaller temporal scale, Mahler closes the first movement of his first symphony in a similar way: large blocks of sound are reduced to silence by some very loud timpani strokes. The resemblance of this passage to the quoted finale of Schubert’s sonata is surprising: in this case the piece finishes as an aporia, without resolution, as if to suggest to the modern listener that “Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent”.

The ability of Mahler, who succeeds in perfectly concluding the movement with the few means he allotted himself, is disconcerting all the same. In an orchestral fabric strewn with intervals of fourths jumping all over, the *timpani* burst in, repeating the same intervals, but this time alone, like a voice not in sync with the rest of the chorus.

At the time the First Symphony was composed, the *timpani* were undergoing a remarkable technical revolution: the fixed tuning system was about to be abandoned for the benefit of the pedal. Before the

Figure 11. G. Puccini, *Bohème*, act III (opening and finale)

Musical score for the opening and finale of Act III of Puccini's *Bohème*. The score includes piano accompaniment and vocal lines for Mimì and Raù. The piano part starts with a tempo of 112 and "AND. MOSSO". The vocal lines feature lyrics in Italian: "Ci la - - sce - \_rem al \_la stagion dei fior!". The score includes various performance instructions such as "ff", "subito pp", "pp", "col canto", "Sostenendo", "dim...", "espressivo", "rall...", "un poco allarg.", "(allontanandosi)", and "(sipario calato)".

invention of the pedal, for centuries the interval of fourth had been (with rare exceptions) the only possible interval for this instrument. The outbreak of the *timpani* in this *finale* is so violent that it gives the impression of an assertion of historical identity, exactly at the time when the nature of the instrument is changing radically.<sup>11</sup>

Anyway, the strength of the “bang” is so impressive that the orchestra keeps silent for two bars and a half; it starts again but to be instantaneously silenced; it begins one more time and this time it lasts a little longer; then, after the *n*th interruption, it finally concludes the movement. As we already said it, Mahler’s talent is revealed by his conclusive strategy: breaking the rigorous alternation, he partially superimposes the intervention of the percussion to that of the other instruments, so that, gradually, the *timpani* and the orchestra fuse into the final *tutti* (fig. 12).

<sup>11</sup> James BLADES, article “Timpani”, in *The New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments*, London & New York, Macmillan Press, 1984, vol. III, pp. 596–7: «Mahler seems not have relied on lever-operated timpani for his First Symphony (1888), as in the last movement, at a point during a roll when the pitch of the drums is simultaneously lowered by a semitone, instructions are given for the second timpanist to effect the change. Regarding a performance of his Seventh Symphony, however, Mahler stated in a letter (1908) that ‘the timpanist must have a very good mechanical pedal drum’».

Figure 12. G. Mahler, *First Symphony*, I (finale)

The image displays a page of a musical score for the finale of Mahler's First Symphony. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with multiple staves for different instruments. The top section includes woodwinds (Flutes, Oboes, Clarinets, Bassoons), brass (Horns, Trumpets, Trombones), and Percussion (Snare, Triangle). The bottom section includes strings (Violins, Viola, Cello, Bass). Performance instructions are written above and below the staves, including tempo markings like 'Schnell' and 'G.P.', dynamic markings like 'f' and 'ff', and articulation like 'sempre stacc.' and 'gestopft'. There are also markings for 'zu 2' and 'zu 3' indicating multi-measure rests. The score is divided into measures, with some measures containing specific performance notes like 'mit Sord.' (with sordano) and 'arco' (arco). The overall structure is complex, with many notes and rests across the various staves.

In a very similar way, the UST Impulse is composed of an initial and a final phase, separated one from the other by an event. The final phase may consist of sound or of silence. The definition of this topos will be given in the following paragraphs.

## Configurations «in praesentia»

### *From the Folding...*

If we regard musical fabric as a matter, we can imagine the suppression like an external “stress” undergone by this matter. This stress can be violent, and “tear” the matter by leaving the vacuum of silence, or be less incisive, and only “fold” the matter without breaking it. It can also stop before bringing about rupture, be very fine and hide the hand of the composer (it is what we call *folding*); or it can be more vigorous, and reveal the presence of the author (and this is what we call *stroke*). The figures of musical rhetoric, the USTs and Sciarrino’s Figures mark out the course between these two extremes. Let’s start with the second meaning Forkel assigns to the word *ellipsis*:

There is ELLIPSIS or SYNEKDOCHE (2)

Second, it occurs when a likewise gradually intensifying passage progresses to a form of cadence but, instead of proceeding to the expected cadence based on the preceding harmonies, proceeds to a so called evaded cadence, and thereby breaks the thread of the modulations, as in the following example:



The more intense the sentiment which is to be abruptly interrupted, the more foreign and remote must be the cadence which replaces the expected one.<sup>12</sup>

It is a “deviation” from the envisaged course, achieved by means of a deceptive cadence.

MUTATIO TONI is of the same kind. Lengthily treated by Bernhard and Walther, it indicates a sudden change of mode – for the first author – or of tonality – for the second.

In the DIMINUTIO or MEIOSIS, however, we have no more one phrase altered in its continuity, but a particular long note parcelled out in many shorter notes of the same pitch:

The diminution or reduction has a double musical significance: the *diminutio notarum*, and the *diminutio subjecti* or *thematicis*. There is *diminutio notarum* when a longer note, a half-note or a whole-note for instance, is divided into many shorter notes.<sup>13</sup>

The definition of the first UST (the underlinings in the text are mine), a unit made up of two phases following one another separated by an “edge” – a true *folding* – represents the prototype of the suppression “in praesentia”. Unfortunately, the definition given by MiM conceals an evident contradiction: the pitch is regarded first as a fundamental component of the *topos*, then like an additional component. In spite of this inaccuracy however, the temporal course of the UST *Falling* remains clear and univocal.

<sup>12</sup> J. FORKEL, *op. cit.*, p. 56: «2) Wenn ein ebenfalls nach und nach sehr lebhaft gewordener Satz bis zu einer Art von Cadenz fortgeführt wird, anstatt aber diejenige Cadenz zu machen, die sich aus der vorhergehenden Modulation hätte erwarten lassen, in eine sogenannte ausfliehende Cadenz fällt, und dadurch den Faden der Modulation abreist, z.B.

[EXAMPLE MUSICAL]

Je heftiger aber die Empfindung ist, deren Lauf schleunig unterbrochen werden soll, desto fremder und entfernter muß auch die Cadenz seyn, in welche die gewöhnliche verändert wird.»

<sup>13</sup> Meinrad SPIESS, *Tractatus musicus compositorio-practicus*, Augsburg, 1745, p. 156: «Verkleinerung, Verminderung, hat ein doppelte Bedeuten in der Music: eine wird genennet Diminutio Notarum, die andere Diminutio Subjecti oder Thematicis. Die erste geschiehet, wann aus einer Nota eines grösseren Valoris, v.g. aus einer Noten eines ganzen oder halben Tacts mehrere und kleinere gemacht werden.»

### UST 1 – Falling

#### Global Morphological Description

Unit delimited in time with two successive phases.

1st phase: is broadly uniform, even if the matter is animated by an internal movement.

2nd phase: comprises a movement of acceleration and evolves in pitch, either going up, or going down.

#### Other relevant and necessary characteristics

The 2nd phase cannot evolve uniformly. It must comprise an acceleration but not necessarily a variation of pitch.

The passage from the 1st to the 2nd phase is done by an abrupt change (“angular point”) and not in a continuous way <...>

Also the two *Unités Semiotiques Temporelles* which follow are bound by their bipartition: two distinct phases follow one another, without interposed pauses, but with a more and more evident rupture of continuity. In *Contracted-Outstretched* the irregularity transforms itself into regularity thanks to a “rupture” of continuity; in *Braking*, the kinetic dash is stopped and deviated of its course:

### UST 3 – Contracted-outstretched

#### Global Morphological Description

Unit delimited in time, with two contrasting successive phases.

“Contracted” phase: discontinuous and irregular matter.

“Outstretched” phase: broadly uniform.

#### Other relevant and necessary characteristics

<...> the transitional phase: cannot be a continuous trajectory. There is a rupture. <...>

### UST 9 – Braking

#### Global Morphological Description

Unit delimited in time, with a single phase, with a non-linear progression, made up of two opposite profiles following one another.

#### Semantic description

<...> Although morphologically one cannot distinguish two phases, semantically one feels 2 movements: a first one which “pushes ahead”, a second one who “withholds”.

#### Other relevant and necessary characteristics

The unit must last long enough to give the impression that the trajectory did not follow a normal unfolding, effect underlined by an evolution of intensity or of pitch.

### ...to the stroke

### SCIARRINO – Little bang (2)

“Temporal continuity is thus made by small discontinuities of conscience.”<sup>14</sup>

“Now imagine a thesis enlarged and extended to two groups of sounds. The first group is more energetic, the second is light like a cloud and seems to spout out in the wake of the first one.”<sup>15</sup>

“It does not take a gigantic explosion for the two components to be associated, the most energetic component and its wake, the explosion and the fragments it projects.”<sup>16</sup>

### UST 4 – Impulse

#### Global Morphological Description

Unit delimited in time, with three successive phases:

1st phase: more or less long accent in the form of a homogeneous or iterative overall uniform sound, or of a short sound.

2nd phase: short profile, in the direction of an accentuation of intensity, pitch or another morphological feature; with or without accent on its end.

3rd phase: resonance, or its homogeneous decrescendo, or silence.

<sup>14</sup> Salvatore SCIARRINO, *Le figure della musica – da Beethoven ad oggi*, Milano, Ricordi, 1998, p. 60.

<sup>15</sup> S. SCIARRINO, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

When comparing the definition of the UST *Impulse* with the description of Sciarrino's *Little Bang*, even if the names and the contexts are different, it is easy to see that they actually concern the same *topos*: a temporal continuity is disturbed by a specific intervention, which comes to modify the initial situation. A very clear example in this respect can be found in the second movement of Schubert's Quartet op. 161. The *tremolo* by the second violin and the viola, frantic but globally motionless, is shattered by a single and precise pizzicato, which transforms instantly the *tremoli* into triplets.

Figure 13. F. Schubert, *Quartet op. 161*, II (bars 145–154)

After such abundance of musical examples, after this long speech around archetypes of time and silence, it is not easy to conclude. Let's do it abruptly, by letting resonate the suggested ideas in an nth, last silence.

## Santrauka

### Tylos skambėjimas

„Dzen sodo esmė yra ne tai, kas jame yra,  
o greičiau tai, ko jame nėra.“

Dzen aforizmas

Daugelyje muzikos kūrinių galima pastebėti ypatingą reiškinį: tarp natų atsiranda vietos begarsiams momentams – tylai. Mums įprasta, kad muzikos analizė yra sutelkiama į harmoniją, kontrapunktą arba (pastaruoju metu gana dažnai) į tembrą. Tačiau mums trūksta sintaksės to, kas yra sąmoningai nutylima – arba dėl to, kad tai suprantama iš potekstės, arba dėl to, kad tai švelnesniu ar šiurkštesniu būdu tiesiog pašalinama iš muzikos tėkmės.

Nagrinėdamas senąjį ir šiuolaikinį *Figurenlehren*, pabandyčiau pasekti šių nutylėjimų ir jų santykio su laiku – nepertraukiamu ar baigtiniu – pėdomis. Tai bus daroma pasitelkiant aiškius archetipus, kuriuos pagal retorikos tradiciją vadinu *figūromis*.

Norėdamas susisteminti *nutylėtas figūras*, aš pabandžiau pasitelkti fantaziją (nes nėra ankstesnių klasifikacijų): iš pradžių suskirsčiau jas į rūšis pagal kilmę, vėliau klasifikavau tol, kol nustačiau du pagrindinius „nutylėjimo“ būdus, pagrįstus įprasta logika, kurią pavadinau „demiurgo esamybe“. Staigus muzikinio audinio ir laikino nenutrūkstamumo sutrikdymas gali įvykti tiek be aiškios priežasties, tiek išprovokuotas tam tikro garsinio įvykio, o, metaforiškai sakant, trikdančioji ranka gali būti arba matoma, arba paslėpta.

Mano nuomone, „demiurgo“ principas yra naudingas, tačiau sisteminant *nutylėtas figūras* vien jo neužtenka. Menininko ranka (matoma ar paslėpta) gali naudotis aštriu arba atšipusiu peiliu: pirmuoju atveju šiurkščiai nurėžtą garsinę medžiagą keis tyla; antruoju – medžiaga pajus kirtį ir transformuosis, tačiau neišlaikys savo tęstinumo. Pratęsiant metaforą, šiuo atveju garsinė medžiaga ir laikas tiktai įlinkis. Įvardydamas garso buvimą arba nebuvimą, atsirandančius po nutylėjimo, tuos du būdus aš pavadinau „nutylėjimu *in absentia*“ ir „nutylėjimu *in praesentia*“. Visi šie būdai bus iliustruojami muzikos pavyzdžiais.