Rebuilding a Culture: Studies in Italian Music after Fascism, 1943-1953

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Abstract

The devastation enacted on the Italian nation by Mussolini's *ventennio* and the Second World War had cultural as well as political effects. Combined with the fading careers of the leading *generazione dell'ottanta* composers (Alfredo Casella, Gian Francesco Malipiero and Ildebrando Pizzetti), it led to a historical moment of perceived crisis and artistic vulnerability within Italian contemporary music. Yet by 1953, dodecaphony had swept the artistic establishment, musical theatre was beginning a renaissance, Italian composers featured prominently at the Darmstadt *Ferienkurse*, Milan was a pioneering frontier for electronic composition, and contemporary music journals and concerts had become major cultural loci. What happened to effect these monumental stylistic and historical transitions?

In addressing this question, this thesis provides a series of studies on music and the politics of musical culture in this ten-year period. It charts Italy's musical journey from the cultural destruction of the post-war period to its role in the early fifties within the meteoric international rise of the avant-garde artist as institutionally and governmentally-endorsed superman. Integrating stylistic and aesthetic analysis within a historicist framework, its chapters deal with topics such as the collective memory of fascism, internationalism, anti-fascist reaction, the appropriation of serialist aesthetics, the nature of Italian modernism in the 'aftermath', the Italian realist/formalist debates, the contradictory politics of musical 'commitment', and the growth of a 'new-music' culture. In demonstrating how the conflict of the Second World War and its diverse aftermath precipitated a pluralistic and increasingly avant-garde musical society in Italy, this study offers new insights into the transition between pre- and post-war modernist aesthetics and brings musicological focus onto an important but little-studied era.

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Preface:
'What will they do afterwards?'

> I could be making a mental study of the details of the attack, the dispositions of weapons and squads. But I am too fond of thinking about these men, studying them, making discoveries about them. What will they do 'afterwards', for instance? Will they recognise in post-war Italy something made by them? Will they understand what system will have to be used then in order to continue our struggle to better humanity?[1]

The ruminations of the partisan Kim in Italo Calvino's 1947 novel *The Path to the Spiders' Nests* neatly encapsulate the basic question that prompts this study: 'What will they do "afterwards"?' Nobody doubts the extraordinarily disruptive and devastating effect that the Second World War had on Italian culture, but whilst scholarly attention has often focussed directly onto the period of conflict, only recently has the 'aftermath' garnered any significant historical attention.[2] As soon as Mussolini's twenty-year Roman empire (the *ventennio*) collapsed in July 1943, Italian society was plunged into a 'terrible crisis',[3] and the next years would become crucial in determining the future of one of Europe's most prestigious civilisations, poised on the brink of revolution and burdened with the knowledge that it had created one of the most pernicious ideologies of modern times.

So how does a nation on the wrong side of history rebuild its artistic establishments and networks; what creative subjects are born out of the seeds of war, and how do they constitute the beginnings of modern Italian society? Calvino himself was one of the earliest to attempt an answer to this question, setting out the motivations, contradictions and privations of post-war Italian writers and attempting to dissect their literary achievements.[4] But musically, such a feat has not yet been attempted. Hence this present thesis, the first on Italian music in the immediate post-war period which combines historical, stylistic and analytical approaches; an attempt, however ambitious, to achieve a synthetic narrative.

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[1] Calvino, *The Path to the Spiders' Nests*, 145.
[2] See, for example, work by Anna Maria Torriglia, David Ward, David D Roberts, Ruth Ben-Ghiat, Claudio Pavone, Renate Holub and Jonathan Dunnage listed in the bibliography, the earliest dating from 1996.
[3] Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy*, 1.
[4] Calvino, 1966 preface to *The Path to the Spiders' Nests*, 7-30.

__Motivation: aims and boundaries__

Calvino's 'What will they do "afterwards"?' is, for these purposes, too concise a question. A less succinct but more detailed one could be put like this:

> How did Italian music recover from the effects of war and *ventennio* socially, politically and aesthetically, and how – in its transition to a thriving culture in the early 1950s – was it produced by (and did it produce) its own era?

The initial motivations that prompted this line of enquiry were diverse and multiple. Amongst them, an interest in the regrettably under-studied topic of Italian twentieth-century music after Puccini must rank as the broadest and most important. At a narrower level, the trope of the 'post-war' and all the cultural rebuilding that this entails quickly found its focus upon Italy as an extremely interesting and diverse exemplum. Then there are the two conflicting ideologies, fascism and socialism, that loom large over this period, providing fascinating touching-stones for debate about the nature and function of art and the artist. These could all be considered as the large-scale, mutually overlapping contexts in which this thesis takes shape. Connecting them together allows a historical locus to form around Italian composition and musical life after Mussolini into the modernising 50s, a period known in Italy as *il secondo dopoguerra*, with its many debates and contentions over cultural rebuilding, the role of the composer, and the place of Italian music within the wider world in the shadow of such a dehumanising epoch.

But in dialogue with these contexts, and playing a crucial part in informing their narratives, is the compositional and stylistic transition that marks Italian music in these ten years: a rate of change both of practice and geist unparalleled in any previous or subsequent decade of the century. Up to 1943, as Luigi Dallapiccola recalled, 'the only topic of conversation was *neo-classicism*';[5] and though at times this particular composer's historical narrative leaves much to be desired, his point essentially stands: the musical situation at the fall of Mussolini reflects the fading dominance of the *generazione dell'ottanta* composers (Alfredo Casella, Gian Francesco Malipiero and Ildebrando Pizzetti) who had lead Italian musical life since the 1920s and whose (initially adventurous) style had concretised into a rather mannered, idyllic and capricious moderation, displaying the 'ambivalent historical

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[5] Dallapiccola, 'On the Twelve-Note Road', 321.

character of modernist classicism' as Hermann Danuser judges it.[6] Assessing it thus is not intended to constitute a value-judgement, but it is necessary to paint this kind of picture if the vastly different high-modernism of Luciano Berio, Bruno Maderna and Luigi Nono in the early 1950s is to be seen for the revolution it was. By this point, a plethora of musics displaying various continuities and discontinuities with pre-war culture lay alongside this high-modernism, all only possible when considered as part of an overall transformative, experimental and transitional aesthetic. These 'alternative' modernisms, along with their more radical counterparts, give clues to the concept of the 'national' character and the debates of the nature of musical style, function and technique that give this thesis much of its discursive material.

Why 1943-1953? The initial and most obvious reason for this chosen time period is the gap that exists between histories of music under fascism finishing in 1945 and more analytical discussions of emerging modernist music in the early 1950s.[7] This ten year period is seldom assessed on its own merits, sometimes regarded as a musical backwater, and neglected since it falls between two historiographical centres.[8] As a consequence these core subjects of artistic rebuilding and stylistic transition – well explored in other disciplines and other nations – lie virtually untouched by the musicologist.[9] A ten year study gives enough space to measure transition whilst ensuring a level of depth appropriate to the overall methodology and the complexity of the subjects pursued. It avoids an historical atomism that could occur in a smaller time span whereby focus is only drawn to discontinuity (what makes *this* year special) rather than heterogeneity (how is this period located within – and demonstrating rupture from – its historical context). Thus historical continuity is as important as anything else, in recognition that these years do not exist in a historical

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[6]Danuser, 'Rewriting the Past: Classicisms of the inter-war Period', 275, specifically commenting on the many -ana compositions (Scarlattiana, Paganiniana etc.) of the *generazione dell'ottanta*.

[7] See works by Nicolodi, Sachs and Illiano ed. in the bibliography on music under fascism, alongside numerous other items focussing on composers from the mid-1950s.

[8] There are three main exceptions to this lack of literature concentrating specifically on this period. The volume *Italia Millenovecentocinquanta*, edited by Guido Salvetti and Bianca Maria Antolini in 1999, is a collection of essays centring on all aspects of music-making between 1945 and 1955. This thesis differs from it in three respects: it explores only 'new' musical composition, it presents a single-author narrative as opposed to a collection of isolated studies, and it analyses the music considered. Roberto Zanetti's *La Musica Italiana nel Novecento* is a lengthy general 'introduction' to Italian twentieth-century music published in 1985. Though its second volume discusses this period in quite some detail, it introduces a vast range of composers and therefore acts more as a reference work or a set of source readings. It also lacks any real analysis. Jürg Stenzl's *Von Giacomo Puccini zu Luigi Nono: Italienische Musik 1922-1952: Faschismus-Resistenza-Republik*, from 1990, likewise contains little analysis and is brief (though insightful) on the period in question.

[9] See Dunnage and Ginsborg on Italian post-war politics, Torriglia and Shiel on film, Torriglia and Ward on literature, and Thacker on music in post-war Germany (all in the Bibliography).

vacuum; this in part explains the decision to begin in 1943 instead of 1945. Of course there is another reason for this start date: the desire to write about music in Italy *after fascism* (Mussolini's reign effectively ended in 1943 as the Allies invaded southern Italy), recognising the importance of this moment in the national self-consciousness. This also prevents the privileging of the after-effects of the war over the after-effects of the *ventennio*. Ending discussion in 1953 signifies the closure of *il secondo dopoguerra*, the point at which the government of Italy's defining post-war leader Alcide de Gasperi fell (1945-1953), marking the beginning of the political turbulences and economic 'miracle' of the 1950s. Musically, moving into the mid-fifties is coterminous with moving into better-charted historical territory, and by 1953 the crucial generational shifts that mark the post-war period – from the *generazione dell'ottanta* of Casella/Malipiero/Pizzetti through the 'middle generation' of Dallapiccola/Petrassi to the younger school of Nono/Maderna/Berio – have been clearly effected.

In writing history, it has to be acknowledged that by including certain facts one is simultaneously leaving out other ones. There was a deliberate circumscribing of boundaries around this project in the decision to talk about 'new' art music, not all music. Essentially, it explores modernist music – and defining what this ambiguous label might signify in the context of post-war Italy is itself a core motivation. Areas such as the reception of older music, performance trends, operatic production, jazz, folk and light music, are therefore not addressed directly. Musical culture is of course composite and involves intertextual relations between works, so the aim is not to expunge discussion of any music that does not fall into a narrow time/genre-frame, but simply to acknowledge the fact that contemporary composition in this period was a fairly homogenous realm of discourse from which the historical critic can draw together resolvable narratives. Sometimes discussion of pre-war works is relevant (see the analysis of Dallapiccola's *Canti di Prigionia* in Chapter 2), but the focus is always on the ramifications in 'the here and now' of 1943-53. Two consequences of this should be noted. The older composers Gian Francesco Malipiero and Ildebrando Pizzetti are not discussed at any length in this thesis, though the first composed into the 1970s and the second into the 1960s. Though their music from these years is valuable, it can be considered to belong stylistically to a pre-war generation that does not easily fit into the narratives traced out here. A further study with different emphases would, it is imagined, integrate them properly. Secondly, Giacinto Scelsi is another active

composer not included; his isolation from contemporary trends, together with his nervous breakdown in the middle of this era (due to which nothing of substance is composed between 1945 and 1953 except the cantata *La Nascita del Verbo* of 1948) leaves little compositionally from this period, even if his posthumous reputation is greater than some other composers considered.[10]

Methodology: Syntheses and subjectivities

From the 'what' and the 'why' to the 'how'. In its methodology, this study attempts a deliberate synthesis: it is *historical* (that is, it arranges historical facts taken from historical texts and documents in order to demonstrate a historical point); but it is also *analytical* (that is, it considers many of these texts to be musical, and assigns to them equal interpretative value as non-musical ones). Thus analysis of musical material forms a constituent part of the discursive structure; with hindsight, it occupies almost half the thesis, though there was never a hard-and-fast quota. So above all else, this is a holistically *musicological* enterprise, in Joseph Kerman's sense of 'an amalgam of analysis and historical studies' flowing from 'a commitment to music as an aesthetic experience'.[11]

The challenges of writing what Michel Foucault labels 'effective history' in the 'postist' era (post-modern, post-history etc…) is vast, and the issues are only complicated by the interpretative variabilities of a non-semantic art form such as music.[12] Would it not be better, therefore, to stick either to analysis or history – but not attempt both? The dichotomy is, alas, flawed. It seems no longer adequate to ask along with Carl Dalhaus whether the significance of music is aesthetic or historical, or to conclude with him that 'attempts to reconcile aesthetics and history without resorting to devious methodology … are all doomed to failure by their very nature'.[13] The very interplay and mistaking of one for the other throughout the course of musicology belies their intractable linkage. The type of history presented here tries to discern and tease out the elements (both aural and written) that constitute Italian musical culture in this period, evaluate them against one another, and

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[10] Additionally, there is no mention of Scelsi in any of the hundred or so primary sources this thesis draws upon, and no other composers – in correspondence or in print – refer to him at all; he simply was not part of the discourse. This is reflected in *Italia Millenovecentocinquanta*: Scelsi's name is mentioned only once. See Reish, 'The Transformation of Giacinto Scelsi's Musical Style and Aesthetic, 1929-1959' for an effective assessment of his early music.

[11] Kerman, *Contemplating Music*, 228, 115.

[12] Foucault, 'Nietzsche, Genealogy and History' in *The Foucault Reader*, 89.

[13] Dahlhaus, *Foundations of Music History*, 32. See Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, v, xv.

arrange them in an order by which conclusions can reasonably be drawn on individual elements and sum totalities. In this sense it encompasses both Jean-François Lyotard's *petit récits* and the 'meta-narrative' that he disavowed so incredulously.[14] Coherence and divergence; this is a deliberate mix, springing out of the belief that while postmodernism's insistence on infinite historical subjectivities is important, each individual subjectivity cannot avoid having a logic that privileges the author's take on his or her subject: a story, a thread, a narrative.

Narrative is not, in itself, hegemonic or disingenuous; certain *kinds* of narrative inevitably are: those that might, say, seek to filter twentieth-century music through the lens of the teleological myth of 'progress' towards technical liberation. It was against this 'mainstream', 'History-with-a-capital-H' trend that Nicholas Cook and Anthony Pople's recent edited volume *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Music* was set, a book in which multiple authorship and a highly diverse choice of subject topics enabled the editors to state that 'this book presents not so much 'The … History' of twentieth-century music, or even 'a history' of it, as a series of complementary, sometimes overlapping, and often competing histories that reflect the contested nature of interpretation'.[15] Being within history, having it as tangibly close as the twentieth century, is threatening, and one might salute Cook et al. for bringing to the fore contestation and a degree of chronological misshapenness. This thesis, in many aspects, is of one accord with this sort of historiography. It bases itself in what Keith Jenkins call the 'starting point for the reflexive historian', an attitude that should deliberately 'call overt attention to their own process of production and explicitly indicate the constructed rather than the found nature of their referents.'[16] Therefore there is no attempt at exhaustive, 'authoritative' coverage of the material – hence the (crucial) use of the word 'studies' in the title – and whilst the chapters are written so that for the most part historical chronology is maintained, the discussion is predicated by the subject and not always by a need for temporal coherence between chapters. This is in recognition of the fact that there are several prominent 'colliding

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[14] 'I define postmodern as incredulity toward metanarratives', Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: a Report on Knowledge*, xxiv, 60. But tellingly, as Frederic Jameson acknowledges, the postmodernist creed has a kind of self-contradictory logic which dictates that 'everything significant about the disappearance of master narratives has itself to be couched in narrative form'. Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, xi.

[15] Cook, 'Introduction: Trajectories of Twentieth-Century Music', 3.

[16] Jenkins, *Rethinking History*, 81.

narratives' in this period (see below), and investigating these both individually and in their interactions is preferable to the futile attempt to talk about *everything*.

The fact is, though, that the twentieth century happened as a series of contiguous narratives just like any other period of time, and this fact should be acknowledged by the historian even at the expense of admitting ideological compromise. Hayden White even argues that

> the nature of this immanence in any narrative account of real events, events that are offered as the proper context of historical discourse … [is] real not because they occurred but because, first, they were remembered and, second, they are capable of finding a place in a chronologically ordered sequence.[17]

One of the most powerful arguments for the continuing relevance of narrative within historical representation is White's assertion that such a value 'arises out of a desire to have real events display the coherence, integrity, fullness and closure of an image of life that is and can only be imaginary'.[18] Thus there is a synthesis to be achieved here between Cook and Pople's 'competing histories' and another paradigm for twentieth-century music historiography: the final two volumes of Richard Taruskin's *The Oxford History of Western Music*, a univocal narrative that still preserves a contentious, against-the-grain 'hermeneutics of suspicion'.[19] Taruskin, as Charles Rosen avers, is attempting the 'first history of music which not only relates what was done but how and why', a task that presupposes narrative history, even if its production is inevitably prejudiced and one-sided.[20] Thus this thesis will at times narrate, and at times juxtapose; it will identify historical cause and effect, without capitulating to objectivisation, for as literary critic Terry Eagleton acknowledges, 'reading, viewing and listening involve constant focus-changing'.[21]

Musical analysis does not simply fit into this construction: it is essential to it. The balance between technical consideration of the music and aesthetic/historical/political discourse varies as the thesis progresses. Chapters 1 and 2 (paired together under the rubric 'The early years: reconstruction and cultural boundaries') are almost exclusively composed of the latter, whereas Chapters 3 and 4 ('Musical 'crisis' and stylistic experimentation')

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[17] White, *The Content of the Form*, 20.
[18] Ibid., 24.
[19] See especially 'The History of What?', the opening chapter of Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, v, ix-xviii.
[20] Rosen, 'Review of *The Oxford History of Western Music* (Richard Taruskin)', 41.
[21] Eagleton, *After Theory*, 93.

consist primarily of the former. Chapter 5 focuses on aesthetics, and, together with a mainly analytical Chapter 6, encompasses the 'Aesthetic and political debates' section; Chapter 7, moving the thesis to its historic end and demonstrating the extent of the stylistic transition, then follows. But whilst there are some sustained passages of pure analysis or history, often they are integrated – meshed – because the goal is both to demonstrate musico-stylistic and musico-social aspects of this period. Therefore analysis is not (of course) done for its own sake, but always seeks to precipitate or complement an historical or aesthetic point. Far from relegating it to a surface-level commentary, however, often deep-level structural, temporal, stylistic and pitch analysis of many musical works form the bulk of discussion; an attempt at a rigorous and penetrating history must be accompanied by rigorous and penetrating study of the scores themselves as historical objects:

> The need for a distinct discipline known as 'musical analysis' is itself the result of the increasingly urgent need to complement – not to replace – the evidently technical and theoretical aspects of all historical, musicological studies. If analysis prospers as a discipline concerned with the 'serious study of the scores themselves', then the general musical histories of later generations may come to differ greatly from many of the histories, the 'lives and works', admired today.[22]

For a start, the complexity of the works discussed here deserve such a treatment: musical examples and simple structural labelling would not do justice to the various meanings (political, stylistic, aesthetic) that they are trying to enact. And then there is the fact that many of the works addressed are, in a sense, written for the express purpose of analysis: the type of detailed craftsmanship they contain on the micro-level was intended to play its part on the macro-level in an historical drama of musical influence and stylistic transformation, to the same or greater extent as any accompanying aesthetical statements or historical circumstances.

That said, here musical analysis is conditioned by the individual work, and rather than privileging any particular method, analytical tools are selected for their appropriateness and ability to best examine the elements of each piece in relation to the surrounding discursive context. Thus they are by and large formed from standard musicological practices: set-theoretic labelling is used when appropriate; formal proportion is considered; some quasi-Schenkerian harmonic reductions are made; all is done within the framework of

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[22] Dunsby and Whittall, *Music Analysis in Theory and Practice*, 6-7.

standard post-tonal analytical thinking.[23] There is no intention to establish new analytical paradigms; the old ones, in this context at least, will do.

Meaning: colliding narratives

So both the social past and the musical past are here interrogated to provide clues to the diverse meanings of musical culture in this period. The real conclusions sought are not hard and fast rules, summed up in easy one-liners that boil down an entire era to one or two dominant modes of thought. There will be a number of quite individual subjects pursued in the course of this study, starting with post-war recovery and post-fascist ambiguity in Chapters 1 and 2, serial revolutions and alternative modernisms in Chapters 3 and 4, the aesthetisation and politicisation of musical creation in Chapters 5 and 6, and the charting of a technical transformation of style in Chapter 7. These topics are self-contained in one sense. Yet the large-scale processes that link them cannot be denied, nor can the fact that they all occupy a relatively similar discursive sphere. There are, it will be seen, overriding priorities that can be identified in the history and music of Italy after fascism that the musicologist's account cannot help but privilege, and historical continuities and growth that cannot simply be circumstantial. Substitute 'music' (or 'music history') for 'film', and one cannot avoid what the critic Sheila Johnson calls the 'subject position'

> the way in which a film solicits, demands even, a closely circumscribed reading from the viewer by means of its own formal operations. This distinction seems fruitful, inasmuch as it accepts that different individuals can interpret a text in different ways whilst insisting that the text itself imposes definite limits on their room to manoeuvre. In other words, it promises a method which avoids the two extremes of an infinite pluralism which posits as many possible readings as there are readers, each equally legitimate, and an essentialism which asserts a single 'true' meaning.[24]

Such an intersubjective approach is utilised equally in dealing with historical and musical facts in this thesis: the plurality of artistic expressions and historical debates in Italy between 1943 and 1953 cannot be interpreted objectively or definitively, but the nature of

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[23] It should be noted at this point that all musical examples are quoted in C.

[24] Johnson, (much) quoted in e.g. Clarke, 'Subject-Position and the Specification of Invariants in Music by Frank Zappa and P. J. Harvey', 352.

the 'object' itself imposes boundaries on the subjective reading, delimiting certain conclusions and foregrounding others. What form do these kind of boundary markers take? One answer to this question is found in what will be labelled 'colliding narratives', entities that permeate all of the chapters presented here and act as a matrix through which the discourse can be filtered:

fascism : antifascism
memory : myth
continuity : discontinuity
national : international
left-wing: right-wing
formalist : realist
serial: non-serial
tecnica : estetica
linguistic : stylistic
background : foreground
autonomy : engagement
individual : collective

These colliding narratives – specifically *not* binary oppositions, for they interact – form a thread that weaves through the different historical situations and diverse expressions of musical art. So for example (to take the first pairing), whilst the oppositional relation between fascist and post-fascist culture is most clear in the political purging and collective disowning of the musical past in the years 1943-6, it can be traced out into the later stages of the 40s and beyond in determining the drive to musical discontinuity and difference.[25] Likewise in the fourth pairing, whilst the construction of national identity in relation to the international was of paramount concern straight after Mussolini's jingoistic era, the conception of national traits and a uniquely 'Italian' facet to musical developments (in dialogue with the global) is traceable in the early 1950s in several different ways. These threads and narratives are not where the discourse starts (otherwise they would be meta-narratives imposed onto the study) but they emerge as the thesis develops, and they will structure the conclusion with which it ends.

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[25] To give one obvious, overarching example, John Waterhouse argues that Maderna, Nono and Berio were 'motivated almost from the start by the urge to create a post-war musical culture utterly different from almost anything that had existed in Italy before 1945'. Waterhouse, 'Since Verdi: Italian Serious Music 1860-1995' in *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Italian Culture*, 320.

The Early Years: Reconstruction and Cultural Boundaries

Chapter 1:
1943-1945: The years of Italy's (musical) darkness?

It is, as Richard Lamb puts it, a 'brutal story'.[1] The two year protracted conclusion of Italy's Second World War was the worst of all ends for what had already been a catastrophic conflict. The crumbling edifice of Mussolini's dictatorship, defeated in Africa and deeply unpopular at home, collapsed in July 1943 and a battle ensued between the Allies invading up from Sicily and a German counter-offensive in the north, wreaking destruction on swathes of Italian economic, architectural and industrial infrastructure as it went. Its various regions spent this period simultaneously in states of invasion, co-belligerency, coalition, partisan revolution, civil war and liberation, and thus Italy represents the paroxysm of violence which was the Second World War in microcosm.

This chapter gives an outline of this period (approximately September 1943 until December 1945), providing both a sketch of the political background necessary for this thesis and an account of musical life in the first 'post-fascist' years. The decision to start this whole project in 1943 – as opposed to 1945 – has been explained in the preface and as the various political, ideological and material circumstances of these initial two years are discussed here, it will become clear that many of the vicissitudes of the whole *secondo dopoguerra* period had their roots in the years 1943-1945, justifying an evaluation of these years even given their rather limited aesthetic and musical products. Most importantly, these two years are crucial in forming the trope of the 'post-war', its general instantiation within Italian culture and, specifically, its musical manifestations. The rhetoric that accompanies such a category – 'rebirth', 'reconstruction', 'renewal of culture' and so on – is to be interrogated throughout. These concepts are, to a certain extent, constructs of a modernist version of historical reasoning, put together by those composers whose sought legitimacy for new types of musical experimentation; but their very prominence in later historical discourse points towards truth amidst ideology. In fact, it would be naive to deny that the emotional and human cocktail of despair and hope at the end of World War II produced a sense of 'precipice' thinking, quite separate to Cold-war propagandist idioms:

> Never has our future been more unpredictable, never have we depended so much
> on political forces that cannot be trusted … It is as though mankind had divided
> itself between those that believe in human omnipotence (who think that

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[1] The subtitle of his *War in Italy 1943-1945*.

everything is possible if only one knows how to organise masses for it) and those for whom powerlessness has become the major experience of their lives.

But there remains also the truth that every end in history necessarily contains a new beginning: this beginning is the promise, the only 'message' which the end can produce. Beginning, before it becomes an event, is the supreme capacity of man; politically, it is identical with man's freedom.[2]

Such a juxtaposition (the opening and closing pages of Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, first published in 1951) powerfully dramatises a widespread sense of a post-war expectation in which the political and cultural rupture of the most devastating war in history was paradoxically considered the apex of man's liberty to create new cultural forms: amidst devastation lay the room to create a most powerful 'newness'.[3] Whatever the eventual results of such post-apocalyptic thinking, their power cannot be denied; as will be seen that throughout this era in Italy's history, Arendt's 'beginning, before it becomes an event' was a determining cultural and historical motivation.

War and liberation

The background and historical narrative of Italy's post-war fortunes will be discussed briefly in purely military/political terms before a focus is bought on the musical reconstruction of Italy's musical institutes and the activities of composers in the 1943-1945 period.

By 1943 Italy lay beleaguered, having suffered defeats in its African colonies, the bombing of Rome by the British, an embarrassingly botched invasion of Greece, and increasing subservience to a vindictive Adolf Hitler. In June the weakness of its navy in the Mediterranean arena had left the Allied armies lying an ominous 20 miles to its south on Malta and on the 9th of July the first Allied battalions landed on Sicily. On the 24th, the fascist *Gran Consiglio* met and voted their leader out of office by nineteen votes to seven; this decision, part of a coup conceived by the King Vitorrio Emmanuelle and Marshall Badoglio, led to the installation of the latter as temporary Prime Minister and the arrest of

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[2] Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, vii and 479.
[3] See the famous 1964 preface to Calvino's 1947 book *The Path to the Spiders' Nests*, and Simone de Beauvoir's recollections of the potentialities of Paris in the summer of 1944, *Force of Circumstance*, 17; even T.W. Adorno, in his 1945 essay 'What National Socialism has done to the arts', cannot hide a sort of resolute pugnacity in the aftermath of the 'politicisation, propagandising, collectivisation and commoditisation of art' under the Nazi regime: 'all these dangers can be met only by a strength of resistance surpassing anything non-conformist artists ever had to muster before'. Adorno, *Essays on Music*, 386.

Mussolini, and was greeted with rejoicing on the streets of Italy amidst a general expectation that this turn of events would lead to immediate peace.[4] Optimism soon turned to despair. Allied hopes for full unconditional surrender without invasion did not account for Italy's stubbornness, nor its inability to take decisive governmental decisions without Mussolini at the helm. Instead, negotiations for any peace took far too long, in which time, according to Giuseppe Mammarella, 'German forces had been pouring into Italy as a precaution against the collapse of the Italian army'[5] in a 'remarkably swift, efficient and massive response, flooding the entire area north of Rome with ten new divisions'.[6] The Italian army, 'left without orders, without even a commander, resisted the Germans for a few hours but was then forced to surrender'.[7] The bulk of Italy was, by October 1943, in Nazi hands.

The progress of the Allies upwards through 1943-5, illustrated in Example 1. 1, was painfully slow. The Germans wanted at all costs to defend their Austrian Border in the North, whilst the Allies, preparing an invasion of France from the beginning of 1944, were under-resourced and in no hurry to commit further troops; in fact, Italy was used by them 'to draw German forces into the peninsula and so weaken their chances of resisting an invasion of France'.[8] Due to the perceived treachery of Italy in the pre-war period, Britain in particular held an indifferent stance to the peninsula's security: Churchill famously advised the House of Commons in July 1943 that Italy must 'stew in her own juice' for a while.[9] Little land was gained above Naples in the winter of 1943 due to the 'Cassino' line in the difficult fighting terrain of the Neapolitan hill towns; the line held until May 1944, and when it broke Rome and Florence fell quickly, in June and August respectively. By this point, the effects of a partisan anti-fascist resistance in the north had begun to be felt. Conducting guerrilla raids with surprising efficacy on the occupying German forces and working with the Allied liberators, the resistance began to have a serious effect on the conflict in mid-1944. Even so, the final push from the Allies had to wait until the dying days of the war, when a severely weakened German army retreated within 20 days from the Po valley upwards across the Alto Adige and the Allies jubilantly liberated Venice and Turin.

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[4] Mack Smith, *Modern Italy, a Political History*, 412-414.
[5] Mammarella, *Italy after Fascism 1943-1965,* 25.
[6] Ellwood, *Italy 1943-1945*, 4.
[7] Mack Smith, *Modern Italy, a Political History* , 417.
[8] Ibid. 419.
[9] Lamb, *War in Italy*, 13.

May 1944 -

3.

Venice

Florence

Milan

Turin

Liberation of Rome June 1944 • Rome

Cassino • Gustav' Line

Line collapses May 1944

Naples

Palermo

3rd Sept. 1943 -

2.

Mussolini's Republic of Salò' established by Hitler

Venice

Milan

Turin

Florence

German invasion

• Rome

Front line November 1943

Naples

Badoglio Gov. established at Brindisi

Allied landings

Palermo

9th July 1943

1.

Venice

Florence

Milan

Turin

• Rome

Naples

Military Government Created at Syracuse

Palermo

Allied landings

April 1945

6.

Liberation of Milan by the partisans - 28th April

Venice • Liberation of Venice 25th April

Florence

Milan

Turin

Liberation of Turin 1st May

• Rome

The 'Final Push' - 9th April - 1st May 1945

Naples

Palermo

Oct. 1944-

5.

Venice

Milan

Turin

Winter Stalemate in the Foothills of the Appennines

Florence

• Rome

Naples

Palermo

July 1944 -

4.

Venice

Milan

Turin

Florence

Front line July 1944 (Gothic Line)

Liberation of Florence August 1944

• Rome

Naples

Palermo

Ex. 1. 1: The Battle for Italy 1943-1945 (Allied territory shown in grey). Dates and geographical information taken from Harris, *Allied Military Administration of Italy 1943-1945.*

The rule of Italy in this period divides as a matter of course across the boundaries of the conflict. The northern, Axis side is simpler to negotiate; to all intents and purposes, Hitler and the German war machine controlled military, political and social life from Naples upwards. This belies the 'official' position of the nation, which was as the 'Second Fascist Republic of Italy', more commonly known as the 'Republic of Salò', after the village on the shores of Lake Garda where the administration centred.[10] With a rescued Mussolini as its titular head (in reality as a puppet ruler, controlled by Hitler), the German regime within Italy brought with it many of the horrors of Nazism. Given enough time and the necessary circumstances, the 'Final Solution' would have been enacted on Italian Jewry in the same abhorrent fashion as Poland suffered. Still, many Italian Jews and anti-fascists were shot by rampaging German forces; others were interned in Italian concentration camps such as at Bolzano, Fossoli and Borgo San Dalmazzo (of which there were twenty), and 8,369 people were deported to Auschwitz and Dachau.[11]

Date	Prime Minister	Liberated areas	City	Nation Status
Sep 1943	Pietro Badoglio	Naples and South	Brindisi	Under Allied Military Governance
June 1944	Ivanoe Bonomi	Florence and South	Brindisi	Under Allied Military Governance
June 1945	Ferrucio Parri	Whole of Italy	Rome	Under Allied Military Governance
December 1945	Alcide de Gasperi	Whole of Italy	Rome	Republic of Italy

Ex. 1. 2: Liberated Italy's Governance

In the south, the governmental situation passed through a number of stages (Example 1. 2). June 1944, after the liberation of Rome, saw the first political shock of the new Italy. The rise of the left-wing and communist factions within the anti-fascist resistance, the Committee of National Liberation (CLN), toppled Badoglio's ramshackle and ex-fascist led government. In its place was installed a coalition of six parties under the leadership of Ivanoe Bonomi, which included Socialist politicians such as Saragat, the Italian Communist leader Palmiro Togliatti, as well as Liberals, Actionists and Christian Democrats such as Alcide de Gasperi. The range of political viewpoints was a progressive step for Italy, and perhaps even more encouraging was the clearing out of elements from

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[10] See Lamb, *War in Italy*, 23-33.
[11] Meir Michaelis estimates that 7,682 Italian Jews died in the Holocaust, over 20% of Italy's Jewish population. Quoted in Lamb, *War in Italy*, 52-3.

Mussolini's regime, with the government united behind the anti-fascist background and outlook of its key players. In terms of administrative policy decisions in liberated territory during the 1943-1945 period, whilst the respective Italian governments took up more power as the months advanced, little was accomplished politically without the sanction of the Allied Military Government (AMGOT), based at Salerno. It is also clear that control was exercised by the British side of the Anglo-American alliance. David Ellwood argues that

> It was in fact the British who for the most time provided the senior men and much of the soldiery in Italy concerned with 'civil affairs', who sent over a stream of important figures either to observe or participate in the running of the country and whose Prime Minister showed the keenest interest in what went on.[12]

However instability was endemic: in June 1945, after Axis forces had exited Italy (leaving behind only their administrators and politicians for the reconstruction) the anti-fascist coalition broke down: first the wave of popularity for the *resistenza* swept the partisan leader and socialist Ferruccio Parri, into government, then in December Alcide de Gasperi of the Christian Democrats began an eight-year premiership. Reconstruction henceforth moved at a much greater pace, helped in no small way by a billion dollars of aid from the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) rebuilding programme (the forerunner to Marshall Aid).

The idea of *resistenza*

At this point – before exploring Italy's musical reconstruction – a brief diversion to consider the potent idea of *resistenza* is necessary. There had, throughout Mussolini's regime, been underground (and sometimes even overt) opposition to Fascism from intellectuals such as Benedetto Croce and Antonio Gramsci, especially from the left. As the Italian military situation worsened into 1944, the key opposition group which had maintained its core even through oppression, *Giustizia e Libertà*, grew in strength, and had begun to develop regional CLNs. The key enemies they targeted, with guerrilla (and later outright) warfare, were both Hitler's troops and the troops of the *Repubblica Sociale Italiana*, the remnant of Mussolini's army based at Salò. Upwards of 250,000 people participated as resistance fighters: on the smaller scale sabotaging military manoeuvres and prompting factory strikes, on the larger

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[12] Ellwood, *Italy 1943-1945*, 8. See Harris, *Allied Military Administration of Italy 1943-1945*.

scale sparking civic uprisings in some small towns (such as Ossolo in the North and Imperia in the West), setting up local provisional governments behind enemy lines, and even at the end of the war liberating whole cities (such as Milan).[13]

This partisan action was a crucial component of the defeat of the Nazi forces in Italy. The 'idea' of *resistenza*, however, extends further than its military origins and – sublimated into a sense of national pride that inevitably mixes fact and fiction – became a fixed point of point of cultural referral, celebration and contention in Italian society from its birth to the present day.[14] Italy had been no stranger to movements of national pride and liberty that embedded themselves on class consciousness as a political frame of reference, and the spectre of the nineteenth-century *Risorgimento* hovers over any discussion of its twentieth-century parallel. And indeed, compared to the apathy shown by the Italian population to some of Mussolini's worst policies, the partisan uprising that helped to bring down Hitler's encroachment onto Italian soil was undoubtedly a positive force. Yet the simplistic reading of '*resistenza* as liberty' – a view of the movement as a heroic and noble era where any groups from any side of the political spectrum sprang up and joined together to undermine the Nazi occupation – runs into complications under closer inspection.[15] As David Ward writes,

> After more than half a century of intense speculation it is hardly surprising that the historiography of the Italian Resistance has resembled, and continues to resemble, an explosive minefield of competing interpretations that see it now as post-war Italy's original virtue, now as its original sin. In view of the crucial importance assigned to the anti-fascist struggle as the foundation on which Italy's first republic was built, it is no surprise that the resistance legacy came under the closest scrutiny from opposing ideological standpoints.[16]

Given that the partisans helped to bring down the Nazi regime in Northern Italy and destabilise Mussolini's Republic, thus helping to end the war and lessen the effect of holocaust on Italian Jewry, few could argue with the historical merits of the resistance; yet ascribing a quasi-legendary status to it disregards certain inevitable questions. As Ruth Ben-

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[13] For statistics, see in particular Delzell, *Mussolini's Enemies: The Italian Anti-fascist Resistance*, 261-314.

[14] Much recent study on the *resistenza* has emphasised its contradictory and ambiguous nature. See in particular Torriglia, *Broken Time, Fragmented Space: a Cultural Map for Post-War Italy*; Dunnage ed., *After the War: Violence, Justice, Continuity and Renewal in Italian Society*; Ward, *Antifacsisms: Cultural Politics in Italy 1943-1946*.

[15] For classic examples of this view, see Wiskemann, *Italy after 1945*, 2; Mack-Smith, *Modern Italy, a Political History*, 421.

[16] Ward, *Antifascisms: Cultural Politics in Italy 1943-1946*, 13.

Ghiat argues, a multitude of motivations can be ascribed for participation in the liberation: 'patriotism, class biases, rebellion against authority, personal vendettas, hatred of the Nazi occupiers, anti-fascist political beliefs, and the desire to avoid conscription'.[17] Ultimately, the problem lies in untangling the *resistenza* from less-than-neutral socialist, communist and Christian Democrat ideologies, both at the time and in subsequent decades.[18] This difficulty, according to Ward and Torriglia, is related to the historiographical mistake made by Benedetto Croce, whose historicism theorised fascism as virus or parenthesis, 'something foreign and "exogenous" to Italian history', atoned for by the partisan action which demonstrated Italy's essential goodness and readiness to 'resume the threads of its pre-Fascist liberal tradition'.[19] Recent historians have repeatedly disavowed 'fictions that see fascism in terms of rupture'; that is, a movement with neither precedent nor antecedent.[20]

The *resistenza* provided a chance for cultural as well as political renewal, and in fact it could be argued that the real victor in Italy's post war struggle was the flourishing artistic endeavour inspired by anti-fascism. 'What spirit of innovation and, in a certain sense, of unity there was in the resistance' according to the socialist theorist Norberto Bobbio 'survived not in politics, which was soon struck by fragmentation … but in culture', going on to identify this renewal of integrity in the 'broadening of cultural horizons beyond Italy's frontiers' and 'a new awareness of the role of the intellectual within society'.[21] The number of Italian intellectuals involved within the resistance, answering the veteran anti-fascist pioneer Giovanni Pintor's famous charge in November 1943 that 'musicians and writers must renounce our privileges in order to contribute to the liberation of all … intellectuals must be capable of transferring their experience to the terrain of common utility', was huge.[22] According to Sergio Pacifici,

> By 1955, no less that one hundred and seventy five works of fiction, poetry and autobiographical accounts had been directly inspired by, or in some ways

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[17] Ben-Ghiat, *Fascist Modernities, Italy 1922-1945*, 203.

[18] Claudio Pavone famously cast this era as one of 'civil war' between right and left, suggesting that this is the key to negotiating its plurality and its continuing presence in the instability of Italian politics to this day. Pavone, *Una Guerra Civile. Saggio sulla Moralità nella Resistenza.*

[19] Torriglia, *Broken Time, Fragmented Space: a Cultural Map for Post-War Italy*, xi. See also Roberts, *Historicism and Fascism in Modern Italy*, 68-80.

[20] Ward, *Antifascisms: Cultural Politics in Italy 1943-1946*, 23.

[21] Bobbio, *Ideological Profile of Twentieth-Century Italy*, 159.

[22] Pintor, *Sangue d'Europa (1939-1943)*, 247.

treated, one of the phases of the war, the underground, or the agonising period of adjustment following the war.[23]

The founding of the left-of-centre intellectual journals *Il Politecnico*, *Il Ponte*, *Libertà* and *Società* in 1945 provided an outlet for more impassioned and trenchant debate and writing on political matters than the country had seen since the first *dopoguerra*.[24] A Marxism radically inflected by the priorities of Antonio Gramsci, a burgeoning existential movement, and the work on neo-positivism by Ludovico Geymonat all date to this era. The realist novels of Italo Calvino (*Il Sentiero dei nidi di Ragno*, 1947) and Cesare Pavese (*Il Carcere* 1949) and the war-accounts of Carlo Levi (*Cristo si è fermata a Eboli*, 1945) and Primo Levi (*Se questo è un Uomo*, 1947) springing from a *resistenza* ideology of protest, represented a new confrontation with the real and non-heroic aesthetic of a disenfranchised culture, in contrast with the fascist 'society of spectacle'.[25] The birth of neo-realist cinema – films such as Vergano's *Il Sole Sorge Ancora* and Rossellini's *Roma, Città Aperta* (shot in Rome only a few weeks after the Germans had left the city) – was rooted within the desire to escape this propagandist ideology, though its break with the past may not have been as thorough as it consciously claimed.[26]

Relatively few Italian musicians were involved in the military *resistenza*: Massimo Mila, Fedele D'Amico, Mario Zafred, Riccardo Malipiero and Bruno Maderna make up the short list.[27] Mila, who was to become one of the foremost music critics and aestheticians of the post-war years, was perhaps the most active of all, eventually becoming Commissioner of War for the Cavanese-Val di Lanzo region.[28] All that is known of the musicologist D'Amico's role is that he edited a Catholic-Communist resistance paper 'Voce Operaio' between 1943-4, whilst records of the participation of Zafred and Malipiero are lost, and neither made reference to their partisan days in print.[29] Bruno Maderna's involvement began with his conscription into the Italian army in 1942, and whilst there, his encounters with

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[23] Pacifici, 'From Engagement to Alienation: a View of Contemporary Italian Literature', 245.

[24] These journals, of course, were joined by the more radical communist newspaper *L'Unità* and journal *Rinascita*.

[25] See Falasca-Zamponi, *Fascist Spectacle*.

[26] See the arguments of Torriglia, who establishes a link with the 'narrative realism' of 30s cinematography. *Broken Time, Fragmented Space: a Cultural Map for Post-War Italy*, 3-39.

[27] At this point a distinction should be noted to avoid later confusion: that between *generazione dell'ottanta* composer Gian Francesco Malipiero and his nephew, the young serialist Riccardo Malipiero.

[28] An interview Mila gave to Harvey Sachs in the early 80s is an important document of this period. Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy*, 48-54.

[29] See Gianturco and Gialdroni, 'Fedele D'Amico' in *Grove Music On-line*; Sartori, *Riccardo Malipiero*, 1957.

partisans from the *Fronte di Liberazione* led to his arrest in February 1945 by the SS. Escaping the Germans' clutches, he joined with the Veronese partisans.[30]

Over the next decade the motif of the *resistenza* frequently acted as muse and subject for much new music, even if, in Guido Salvetti's words, there was a 'wavering between simplistic equations … and artful metaphors'[31] Compositions that use resistance texts, imagery or melodies are numerous in the post-war era:

Mario Zafred:	*Sinfonia no. 4 'In onore della Resistenza'* (1948)
G.F. Ghedini:	*Concerto Funebre per Duccio Galimberti* (1948)
Vittorio Fellegara:	*Lettere di condannati a morte della Resistenza italiana* (1954)
Bruno Maderna:	Music for the Radio drama *Poesia della Resistenza* (1946)
	Quattre Lettere (Kranichsteiner Kammerkantate) (1953)
Luigi Nono:	*Epitaffio a Federico García Lorca* (1952)
	La Victoire de Guernica (1954)
	Il Canto Sospeso (1955)
	Diario Polacco '58 (1959)
	Intolleranza 1960 (1960)
Giacomo Manzoni	*Cinque Vicariote* (1958)

Ex. 1. 3: Works by Italian composers related to the *resistenza*, 1945-60.[32]

As can be seen, the largest and most prominent aesthetic confrontation with the *resistenza* was in the music and thought of Luigi Nono. Nono himself was only obliquely involved in partisan activity: according to Nuria Schoenberg-Nono, 'he and his sister hid arms and other important items such as metal stamps for counterfeit passes'.[33] But his later membership of the *Partito Comunista Italiano* (PCI) and particular interpretation of artistic *impegno* (engagement) led him to take on the *resistenza* as almost a self-designating mantle in the 1950s.[34] It is clear that by the 1960s Nono conceived it as inhabiting the whole of Italian music's moral aesthetic, motivating an engagement with the social problems of oppression and war:

> The resistance, as a concrete revolutionary act that is *fundamental to our lives*, necessitates and provokes precise, conscious and innovative choices. This was

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[30] See Mila, *Maderna Musicista Europeo*, 111-116; Baroni ed., *Bruno Maderna: Documenti*, 70-80; Fearn, *Bruno Maderna*, 332; see also, Nielinger, 'The Song Unsung: Luigi Nono's *Il Canto Sospeso*', 93.

[31] Salvetti, 'Political Ideologies and musical poetics in 20th–Century Italy', 148.

[32] Nöller includes a similar list in his *Engagement und Form*, 90. On Maderna's music for the Radio drama *Poesia della Resistenza* see Nielinger, 'Between Memorial and Political Manifesto: Nono's Anti-fascist Pieces, 1951-1966, 5.

[33] As reported in Nielinger, 'The Song Unsung: Luigi Nono's *Il Canto Sospeso*', 93.

[34] See Salvetti, 'Political Ideologies and Musical Poetics in 20th–Century Italy', 148. As Nielinger demonstrates, the high-profile premières of *Il Canto Sospeso* and *Intolleranza 1960* in West Germany, flying in the face of the autonomy of Darmstadt and incurring the wrath of Stockhausen and Adorno, were perhaps the musico-political event of the decade from an Italian perspective. 'The Song Unsung: Luigi Nono's Il Canto Sospeso', 83-100.

not only limited to the time of the armed fight, but also involves its complex continuation … [it is] an unceasing battle and a new conscience, continually pressing for subjective action and objective processes springing from the ideals and principles for which many fell and were assassinated.[35]

Likewise Massimo Mila would also prescribe a continuance of the *resistenza* experience for his contemporary generation, and wrote of the totalising position that period must occupy within the Italian musical establishment:

We are musicians, and we are people entirely committed to the historical fact of the resistance; we have produced it and been produced by it … Other musicians can be as passionate for other values as we are for the resistance … But, as is said, the resistance entails the total commitment of our conscience.[36]

For many Italian musicians, including Mila, Nono, Maderna, Mario Zafred and later Giacomo Manzoni, the framework of resistance is 'clearly associated with Italian communist identity', and indeed Nono commented that it engages in an 'elimination of the ubiquitous 'oppressive boot' of neo-capitalist society, to make way for socialist liberation.[37] Thus it is clearly a highly ideologised motto, and a problematic subject to interpret. It also has technical ramifications, most obviously in the dialectic of *resistenza* philosophy and 'adequate technical means and new possibilities'.[38] This whole topos will be much further explored and developed in Chapters 6 and 7. Here it has been enough to demonstrate how deep the legacy of the 1943-5 era ran in Italian post-war music, a music which, as Andrea Estero concludes, was born into 'humanism and moral tension'.[39]

Musical reconstruction

The inevitable disruption of musical activity caused by the Axis/Allied land battle during the 1943-1945 period was accompanied by an often surprising will-to-reconstruction within both existing musical institutions and novel artistic initiatives. The following two sections focus first on Allied governmental structuring and ideology, before moving on to the activities of composers during this era.

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[35] Nono, 'Musica e Resistenza' in *Scritti e Colloqui* vol. 1, 144 and 147.

[36] Mila, 'Capolavori per la *Resistenza*' [n.p.].

[37] Nono, 'Musica e Resistenza' in *Scritti e Colloqui* vol. 1, 145. See also the discussion in Nielinger, 'The Song Unsung: Luigi Nono's Il Canto Sospeso', 94-5.

[38] Nono, 'Musica e Resistenza' in *Scritti e Colloqui* vol. 1, 145.

[39] Estero, 'Il Musicista-come-Intellettuale nel Secondo Novecento Italiana: tra Politica e Ideologia', 345.

Chapter 1

Governmental policy and propaganda

There was no coordinated approach to music 'administration' in post-war Italy: music was administered (when it was thought about at all) by a confusing combination of Allied civil servants, an embryonic Italian government, established musical institutions such as opera houses, conservatoires, and annual festivals who attempted to resume normal musical life within the strictures of finance, facilities and personality. It is thus impossible to attempt to construct an account of a coherent Allied 'music policy', as is the case in Germany at a similar point.[40] However, exploring the way the nation's musical life was rebuilt in these two years gives the lie to a common, apolitical reading that would simply cast the surviving Italian musical institutions as troop entertainment until 1945, at which point things returned to a pre-war state of affairs.[41] In fact the speedy resumption of operatic production was a specific Allied (and overwhelmingly British) idea designed as much for the Italian public as for the troops, and has its own underlying political facets. This policy, which recognised music as a key element within the nation's psyche, can be seen in one of the earliest documents available on post-Mussolinian musical life, an army officer's account of music in Palermo through the winter of 1943-44, immediately following the Allies' invasion.

Capt. Gettel starts by identifying 'definite tendencies towards fatalism and despair' in the Sicilians' 'social thinking', and warns that the importance of music in restoring morale must not be underestimated: 'music is classed as a necessity, and therefore musicians attempting to reclaim their art and livelihood from the ashes would benefit from the whole-hearted support of their populace-at-large'.[42] He reports on an initial concert, funded by AMGOT: the Palermo Opera company at the Massimo cinema (with 'the inevitable program of Verdi, Puccini and Mascagni'), open to the civilian population in general. By November, the Allies had repaired the little-damaged Massimo Opera house for its company to return to public use. Meanwhile, the Conservatorio, 'thoroughly bombed out', was reopened on January the 15th, its Professor of Musicology being presented with reams of new, up-to-date scholarship. 'Rapidly', according to the Captain, concerts were 'assuming peace-time proportions', and included works by Respighi and Sibelius along with Boito and Verdi. Even given the lack of material and personnel, the quality of performances

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[40] See Thacker, *Music after Hitler, 1945-1955*, 18-39.
[41] For example Fearn, *Italian Opera after 1945*, 1-2.
[42] Capt. De Gettel, 'From Palermo', 358-9.

is noted as improving throughout the year; according to the chief conductor on the island, Maestro Raccuglia, 'all the first chair men' in the orchestra were fascists, but 'now my former *second*-chair men occupy the *first*-chairs'.

That this local demonstration of the Allies' support for the rebuilding of Italian musical culture was a national phenomenon is clear from the records kept of the British Council's work in Italy between 1943 and 1946. The Council, working with the Psychological Warfare Board (PWB), came quickly to the conclusion that music was vital: 'In a country where rich and poor alike are capable of saying "as we can't get a meal, let's go to the opera", music assumes an even greater importance than it possesses intrinsically.'[43] Whilst the Allied forces and the military provided in-house concerts and arranged performances, it is clear from the Foreign Office records that the Council as an institution was the conduit for more complex and deliberate cultural and artistic propaganda into Italy, propaganda firmly oriented in the direction of British art and literature. In early 1944 the need for such actions had been identified by the (PWB) of the Allied Government working in the liberated zones. Their report speaks for itself:

> The cultural hegemony of the Germans which sways Italian intellectuals has had profound political consequences … [it has] resulted in a far reaching influence on the best Italian minds which gave them automatically a bias in favour of things German and in some cases went further to prejudice them in favour of Nazism … the present time when the Hunnish fury is provoking such a violent reaction in classes of Italians, would be a good time to start an effort to break the German domination over intellectual circles and to bring the fruits of Anglo-Saxon culture to the Italian people.[44]

The revival and rebuilding of the work of the British Council was essential to a 'de-Germanification' of Italy; from the appointment of an ambassador to Rome after its liberation, the British Council was up and running by early 1945, re-staffing the British School at Rome and setting up council offices in Milan, Turin, Florence, Rome and Palermo (much early work centred on the dismissal of previous employees deemed unsuitable for their connection to the fascist regime). Music was an integral part of the Council's mission, and the orientation was decidedly towards British music in a way that sometimes showed an

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[43] 'Mr Kennedy-Cooke, report on Italian culture to the Foreign office', FO folder 924, 9.
[44] 'Report on Italian-German cultural relations', FO folder 924, [n.p.].

underlying imperialist mentality.[45] In this situation the peninsula was at the cultural mercy of the liberator's pride; thus it is not surprising to see the privileging of British works in the programming of the Army Welfare concerts:

> Lieutenant Royalton Kitsch in doing all he can to spread a knowledge of British music, it is wisely not forcing it. His method with a new orchestra is to conduct it in its first concert in well-known standard works. Then he introduces a small British work (Delius' *Cuckoo* and Heming's *Threnody for a Dead Soldier* are his usual 'spearheads') into the next concert … later British works will occupy up to half the programme, but never more.[46]

Over the 1945-6 period, whilst the Allied administration was still operating in conjunction with the Italian Government, this tendency spread further, with the performances of the following works being reported:

Arnold Bax	*Tintagel*	**Edward Elgar**	*Cockaigne Overture*
Arthur Bliss	*Things to come*	**Edward Elgar**	*Symphonic Variations*
Frank Bridge	*Two Entr'actes*	**William Walton**	*Viola Concerto*
Frederick Delius	*Walk to the paradise Garden*	**John Ireland**	*Piano Concerto*
Frederick Delius	*On hearing the first cuckoo*	**William Walton**	*Belshazzar's Feast*
Robert Heming	*Threnody*	**Benjamin Britten**	*Michaelangelo Sonnets*
		Benjamin Britten	*Sinfonia da Reqiuem*

Ex. 1. 4: British works performed in Rome from April 1945 to March 1946

As can be seen, the emphasis on British works resulted in a surprising amount of new music, works conceived within a reasonably 'progressive' idiom such as Britten's *Sinfonia da Requiem*, on the programme.[47] This is in stark contrast to the lack of attention given to modern Italian music, a concern presumably buried by the early conclusion of the Foreign Office that 'they have had little of merit to show since the death of Puccini'.[48] The only reference in Kennedy-Cooke's April 1945 report demonstrates his Rome-bias, only mentioning composers based in that city: 'The leading Italian composer is said to be Petrassi, who has founded a new society called Musica Viva, which is about to give

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[45] For instance, a Foreign Office report suggests that Italian musicians apparently 'knew just enough of the modern British composers to believe that in this art Britain at present leads the world', surely a tendentious judgment with hindsight (or at the time). 'Mr Kennedy-Cooke, report on Italian culture to the Foreign office', FO folder 924, 9.

[46] Ibid., 19. Harry Beard, in an ongoing correspondence in *The Musical Times*, often bemoaned the quality of British performance and works chosen to 'keep Italian circles up to date with English musical trends', 'Music in Rome', 138. See especially issues of the journal in Oct. 1944, May and June 1945.

[47] Ronald Bottrall, 'Report on 1 year of British Council work in Italy April 1945-March 1946', FO folder 924, 6.

[48] 'Mr Kennedy-Cooke, report on Italian culture to the Foreign office', FO folder 924, 19.

concerts. Casella is elderly and very ill. Mascagni is older still and completely in retirement.'[49] Whether or not these biases left a permanent mark on Italian musical culture after 1945 is debateable, but it is certainly the case that certain British composers (especially Benjamin Britten) enjoyed a healthy post-war reputation in Italy. Britten subsequently had pieces performed at the Venice Festival Internazionale di Musica in 1946, 1958 and 1953, several operas staged (*Peter Grimes* at La Scala in 1947, *The Rape of Lucretia* at the Rome Opera in 1949, *Turn of the Screw* at the Venice festival in 1954) and toured his *Seven Sonnets of Michelangelo* with Peter Pears in 1948.

Whilst the Allied attitude to music control was pro-British and anti-German (see below for further evidence of this second stance), its approach to complicity with Fascism on the part of Italian composers was much more cautious. There is no mandated line from the British Council papers on the issue, and the closest one gets to official policy is found in British Broadcasting Corporation records. Operatives from the BBC were dispatched to Rome following liberation to supervise the Italian radio network, and in a report from February 1945, Captain Peter W.A. Moyes states

> It should be remembered that very few existing personalities were absolutely blameless under fascism and such was the position in days gone by that practically every musician who wished to continue his career or even earn a livelihood through music was forced to accept fascism and condone its principles. Under this system of blackmail, it is very hard to find positive proof against anyone but we may take it for granted that the young composers and musicians were all of necessity fascist, especially the so-called progressive modernistic or futurist groups which fascism assisted to further its own ends, and to add verisimilitude to its propaganda of progress … [Lastly,] little opportunity was presented to these musicians to collaborate with the Germans.[50]

A list of names included by Moyes reflects his resigned and pragmatic judgments: only Adriano Lualdi, Franco Casavola and Ennio Porrino are prohibited, leaving Dallapiccola, Petrassi, Malipiero, Riccardo Nielsen, Riccardo Pick-Mangiagalli, Umberto Giordano and (more surprisingly) Casella and Franco Alfano listed as 'not unduly connected with

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[49] Ibid., 20.
[50] Moyes, quoted in Levi, 'The Reception of Contemporary Italian Music in Britain During the Fascist Era' in Illiano ed. *Italian Music During the Fascist Period*, 36-7.

Fascism'; thus Erik Levi concludes that 'Italian composers escaped the taint of complicity which had affected their colleagues in Nazi Germany'.[51]

In the North of the country, in German hands for a year and a half, the Republic of Salò had little economic muscle, nor will, to control artistic production. The Ministry of Popular Culture (MinCulProp), central to Mussolini's cultural control in the fascist period, nominally continued to fund and administer musical life, but its ignoble unseating from its Rome base in the autumn of 1943 to Venice, with the loss of most of its employees, resulted in curtailment of its previous powers. Fiamma Nicolodi shows that from 1944, among the opera houses only La Fenice in Venice survived with its subsidies intact (being the closest geographically to the MinCulProp), resulting in the redundancy of operatic players in such places as Rome and Florence.[52] They were 'organised into cooperatives' and 'accepted difficult transfers to cities that had theatres, or ceded to other institutions' and thus performances were effectively reduced to a minimum.[53] On the night of the 15th August 1943 structural damage was incurred by the *Teatro alla Scala* in Milan after Allied bombing, rendering it unusable until its memorable restoration and the return of Arturo Toscanini in May 1946. The same fate befell Florence's *Teatro Comunale* and Genoa's *Teatro Carlo Felice*. With the lack of money to pay the players and low audience attendance, it is hard not to agree with John Waterhouse that in these places 'professional musical life virtually ground to a halt'.[54] Yet Harvey Sachs points out that even given the 'reduced circumstances and makeshift conditions' the imperative of 'sheer economic necessity' and 'the morale of the populace' kept the theatres in business if and when they could.[55] One thing that did not cease was Mussolini's by now lacklustre attempts to control aesthetic taste to ends that would glorify the regime. For example, during the Nazi occupation of Rome in January 1944, Arturo Bonucci (a Fascist functionary) wrote to composers offering a prize of 30,000 lira for the best

> hymn to the fascist republic or a March to the same ... the first must be solemn, severe, quasi-religious (in the German manner), the second instead in a military

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[51] Ibid., 36.

[52] La Fenice, in fact, provides one of the few examples of an operatic premiere in these years, Malipiero's *La Vita è Sogno*. Waterhouse, *Gian Francesco Malipiero, The Life, Music and Times of a Wayward Genius*, 54.

[53] Nicolodi, 'The New Republic: Reconstruction and the "Consumer Society', 208.

[54] Waterhouse, *Gian Francesco Malipiero*, 54.

[55] Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy*, 201. The conductor Vittorio Gui argued for this position,'Per la Vita Musicale di Domani', 308-314.

style, swift and youthful … the theme of the hymn or march could very well be a treatment of a theme from our grand Italian classical heritage.[56]

In the south of the country, liberating slowly from the Nazis, the nascent Brindisi government (later seated at Rome) made tentative steps to start supporting the arts. In December 1943 the decision was swiftly taken in principle to disband the remnants of the Ministry for Popular Culture, with its associations with fascist spectacle; the Badoglio government was to 'distribute its relative services to various existing departments'.[57] However, as Marcello Ruggieri shows, the precise nature of its replacement was the subject of much disagreement.[58] The original plans of May 1944 proposed a devolution of 'the services of internal and foreign press to the Ministry of the Interior, that of tourism and radio to the Ministry of Communication, and that of cinematography and the theatre to the National Education', and they met with staunch opposition from many who believed this action disadvantaged unity of decision-making inherent in a one-organisation model. Some argued forcibly for the 'creation of a new central organisation' akin to the old Ministry: 'the various branches of activity assigned to the responsibility of the Ministry of Popular Culture are evident … rendering opportune and useful their unitary coordination on the administrative terrain'.[59] This is in stark contrast to the protests of others (notably the Minister for Education, Adolfo Omodeo), who felt that the control of foreign publications by the Ministry of the Interior could be seen as a desire 'to conserve a police control on all that pertains to the cultural arena, and that is evidently contrary to the principals of liberty'.[60] In June 1945, within the pages of *Il Mondo*, Guido Gatti similarly warned against the continuance of the "abuses" and "cabals" of fascism: in the future, he argued 'any democratic state must not occupy itself with such things'.[61]

Eventually, in the Parri governments of 1945, the arts were put under the temporary supervision of the 'General Association for the Performance Industry' before reaching a more permanent home in the 'Under-Secretariat for Arts and Performance' in 1946. The 'Scoccimarro decree' was introduced in this year, granting 12% of performance tax

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[56] Bonucci, autograph letter to Petrassi, 14 Jan 1944, L713.
[57] Ruggieri, 'Lo Stato e le Organizzazione Musical: tra "Rappresentanza" e "Governo degli Interessi" (1926-1948)', 436.
[58] Ibid.
[59] 1944 governmental decree, quoted in ibid.
[60] Omodeo, quoted in ibid., 437.
[61] Gatti, 'Organizzazione del nostro teatro lirico', 13.

revenues to *enti autonomi* ('autonomous institutions') such as the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia.[62] The conservatories themselves saw a large scale re-organisation: as early as the Badoglio government, Ildebrando Pizzetti was 'nominated to preside over a study commission whose job it was to make provisions for the reorganisation of the conservatory system'.[63] This was an offshoot of the new government's half-hearted attempt at a kind of 'de-fascistisation', encouraged by the Allies, which sought to remove from public office those who had structured the country and held power due to their adherence to Mussolini.[64] Thus in 1943, Giuseppe Mulé, the boss of the Fascist Union of Musicians and one of Mussolini's closest allies, was sacked from his role as Director of the Santa Cecilia Academy in Rome, as was Adriano Lualdi, member of the Fascist Chamber of Deputies, from his similar position at the Naples conservatory in 1944.[65] Yet this process threw up some large contradictions. For instance, whilst Pizzetti, in charge of leading the rebirth of the conservatory system, had enjoyed a favourable relationship with Mussolini and had been a signatory of the 1932 fascist 'Manifesto of Italian Musicians for the tradition of Nineteenth-Century Romantic Art', Gian Francesco Malipiero (one of the intended targets of this manifesto) received the opposite treatment in 1945, as a letter to Guido Gatti demonstrates:

> Ten days ago I received a purgative papyrus in which my expulsion from the conservatory is proposed … on the grounds that I had been an exponent of Fascist music, that I have had money from fascism for the performance of my works … allegedly I have written music as an apologia for Fascism.[66]

Even worse luck was to befall Pietro Mascagni, composer of *Cavalliera Rusticana* and a devout Mussolini follower, who, according to Sachs, lived out his last years in Rome 'gratefully accepting lunches sent him by Pope Pius XII'.[67] Dallapiccola and Petrassi maintained their professorships at the Florence and Rome conservatories respectively; in the

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[62] See Salviucci, *La Musica e lo Stato*, 201-205.

[63] Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy,* 201.

[64] That this process was for that most part a failure can be seen in the fact that by 1948 many former Fascists were back in their old positions in government and on cultural committees, and as early as 1946 a neo-fascist party (the *Movimento Sociale Italiano*) had been formed. See Dunnage ed. *After the War: Violence, Justice, Continuity and Renewal in Italian Society*, 15.

[65] Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy,* 204.

[66] Letter from Malipiero to Gatti, 9 October 1945, quoted in Waterhouse, *Gian Francesco Malipiero*, 59 (the matter was later dropped). Malipiero was himself far from 'uncompromised' by fascism; see Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy*, 205, Waterhouse *Gian Francesco Malipiero*, 58-59.

[67] Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy,* 201.

case of Dallapiccola, with his burgeoning anti-fascist reputation (see Chapter 3) this is unsurprising; the musical elite had presumably forgotten Petrassi's employment by the Ministry of Press and Propaganda in the 30s, or his deployment as a delegate in Germany at the 'Permanent Council for the International Cooperation of Composers', the Nazi sponsored opponent to the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM), in 1942. Such ambiguity in 'cultural memory' will be explored in the following chapter.

Concerts, composition and 'la fervore di ricostruzione musicale'

In this period, optimism and pessimism abounded in equal measure: whilst the composer Alfredo Casella, writing in the last few months of his life, did not shy away from bemoaning 'the miserable conditions that befell our musical life in the 1943-4-5 years', he then concluded

> but Italy is equipped with almost limitless resources as regards creative energy and the power to recover. Therefore the musical situation in the last two years has shown a most clear and satisfactory improvement … thanks to this strength, Italy will be able to again take up its place amongst the great musical nations and to makes its contribution to the cause of civilisation. [68]

Amidst his problematic national/international oppositions, Casella demonstrates a sentiment which fits the facts. For while the large 'prestige' events of contemporary music, like the Venice Biennale and the Florence 'Maggio Musicale', did not re-emerge until late 1946 and 1947 respectively, musical activity at a local level was beginning to re-emerge even after the summer of 1944 – especially in the south of the country. Example 1. 5 shows a timeline charting the inevitable and destructive gap in festivals and events after June 1943, but also demonstrating some of the new initiatives emerging in late 1944.

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[68] Casella, 'L'avvenire della musica Italiana' in Zanetti, *La Musica Italiana nel Novecento* 1662-1663.
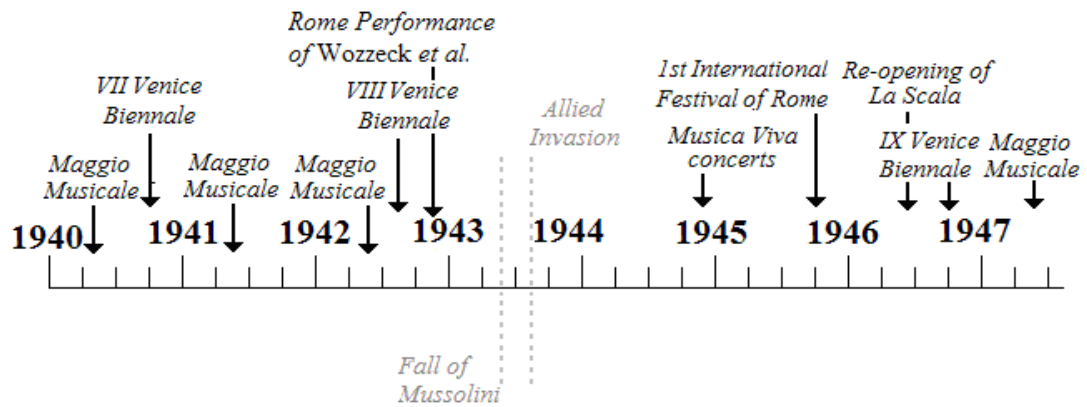
Ex. 1. 5: Timeline of concert activities in the years surrounding 1943-1946

Performances have already been described in Palermo, the earliest major musical centre to be liberated, from November 1943. Its conservatory orchestra reformed in 1944, as did the Filharmonia Laudamo in Messina and the Bellini Theatre and Lyceum in Catania.[69] In Naples, the Teatro San Carlo and the Conservatory 'San Pietro a Maiella' were offering 'popular operas' (the former) and regular orchestral concerts (the latter) by the summer. Late 1944 saw the famous Accademia Musicale Chigiana in Siena recommence its work, alongside the Bergamo Società del Quartetto.[70] The quickening of the pace of recovery was really felt in 1945, where by the end of the year cities were regaining the 'festival' and 'association' culture that was so prevalent in post *Risorgimento* life. Example 1. 6 demonstrates this, showing a timeline of the reformation and birth of certain musical and concert events (many of them new-music orientated) that went on to establish an international importance in the post-war period.

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[69] Ruggieri, 'L'Assetto Istituzionale e il Sistema Produttivo' in *Italia Millenovecentocinquanta*, 43; Beard, 'Music in Italy', 313. Ruggieri's article in Salvetti and Antoloni eds. *Italia Millenovecentocinquanta*, along with Bianca Maria Antolini's on 'L'Attività Concertistica', provide a wealth of details on the expansion of concert societies and civic music from 1946-1954.
[70] Ruggieri, ibid.

January —		
February —	*Amici della Musica*	*Taranto*
March —		
April —		
May —	*Gruppo Artisti Aquilani*	*L'Aquila*
June —	*Società del Quartetto*	*Milan*
July —		
August —	*Società amici dell'arte*	*Forlì*
September —		
October —	*Pro cultura*	*Turin*
November —	*Pomeriggi Musicali*	*Milan*
	Società del Quartetto	*Brescia*
	Polifonica	*Bari*
	Amici della Musica	*Udine*
December —	*Società Filharmonica*	*Genova*
	Società Filharmonica	*Trento*
	Amici della Musica	*Verona*

Ex. 1. 6: Musical societies born or reformed in 1945[71]

Marcello Ruggieri identifies a 'fervour of reconstruction' in which 'the defence of an identity, of 'tradition', the proud affirmation of a strong civilization in the face of the violence that had devastated the country, interweaved with the drive to a "spiritual even before a material reconstruction"'. The priority of cultural life – well demonstrated in the Milanese saying 'first bread, then La Scala, then housing' – was both a relief for a nation still in conflict at the beginning of the 1945 and an attempt at a cultural stimulus to aid the economic and political woes of post-Mussolinian governance. Performances were given with rushed rehearsal, and often caused controversy: the careers of many musicians were in the balance, and the political vacuum left by the end of the *ventennio* led to a vivid and contestatory atmosphere:

> Last summer [1944] there was … a mad musical frenzy in Rome. There was great demand and a ready supply. A discordant note was sometimes sounded when political accusations were used as backstage weapons to silence rivals; and many voices have shouted themselves hoarse in the hopes that they might get a hearing in America.[72]

Italy's national obsession, opera, followed a similar reconstruction pattern to concert music. The impossibility of performance in late 1943 gave way to a reopening of theatres in

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[71] Ibid., 43-4.
[72] Beard, 'Music in Italy' (May 1945), 158.

1944 and to a more complete return to normality late that year in the 1944/45 season. In 1944, the majority of references made in operatic reviews are to 'popular opera evenings' – i.e. arias and numbers instead of whole works performed – and there was a large element of troop entertainment in these concerts. Yet Boito's *Mefistofele* was performed in a summer season at Rome's Teatro Reale dell'opera, and it can be assumed this was not an isolated incident.[73] Come 1945, only the smaller provincial houses of Mantua, Verona, Bari, Lecce and Cagliari failed to produce a season (alongside the Teatro Reggio at Turin, a more illustrious theatre); La Scala staged a respectable twenty-five operas without its roof on (having sustained extensive damage, it was only reconstructed in the close season of 1946) and La Fenice in Venice, fifteen works.[74] People flocked to watch these performances, and Guido Gatti reported that 'the opera theatres in those cities which have been liberated, from Florence to Palermo, are crowded. It is said that for every performance they are fabulously packed out, as high an attendance even as was reserved a few years ago for a big international meeting in football'.[75]

But did this post-war hype inevitably lead to a boom and bust scenario? Gatti certainly seemed to think so; the people attending *Traviata* and *Gianni Schicchi* were 'naïve and uncultured', the 'new rich' flashing 'Allied money': 'a transient public, therefore, destined to liquefy one way or another in a month or a years time'. The Roman critic proposed that the culture of state intervention had created an operatic system of privilege and abuse, not open to 'intelligent amateur' lovers of opera. Whilst the state must be 'interested in the national education of the nation…to make known the best work produced in Italy and outside Italy', it naturally tends to see the works produced as a commodity, and works not in the best interests of art, but to exploit. The solution proposed: 'the state must limit its intervention to a few theatres and only for a fixed time', giving room for the private and civic sectors to step into the breach.[76] The conductor and anti-fascist fighter Vittorio Gui vociferously agreed with this sentiment, writing that 'as soon as [the state] starts work it becomes the oppressor … it is difficult to escape the inference of that terrible disease called "political protection"'.[77] Gatti and Gui faced their own critics, however, and in the pages of

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[73] Beard, 'Music in Italy' (Oct 1944), 314.

[74] See Ciancio, 'La Produzione dei Teatri d'Opera in Italia: 1945-50', in Salvetti and Antoloni eds. *Italia Millenovecentocinquanta*, 68-83.

[75] Gatti, 'Organizzazione del nostro Teatro Lirico', 13.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Gui, 'Per la Vita Musicale di Domani', 310.

Teatro Goffredo Petrassi argued that musicians could not do without 'the auxiliary of the state' for 'the job security of many categories of specialised workers: men of culture, and artists'.[78] Whilst the principles of those who tried to protect Italy from Fascist-style cultural appropriation were commendable, they faced the cruel reality (expressed by Petrassi) of an Italy whose pre-war exploitation of Toscanini and Caruso for foreign prestige would be surpassed by revenue generated from Callas and Giulini in the post-war period.

The programmes undertaken by the opera companies in these two years were for the most part conservative, and few twentieth-century works were heard – one could have viewed *La Traviata* in 15 different Italian cities in the year 1945, as well as 13 separate productions of *La Bohème*, 12 of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and 8 of *Pagliacci* – but only in the culturally progressive city of Milan did La Scala stage works such as Stravinsky's *Mavra*, Giorgio Federico Ghedini's *La Pulce d'oro*, and Strauss's expressionist *Salome*.[79] The latter was somewhat of an exception to the marked lack of Germano-Austrian opera in the 1945 season, and indeed the only other performance in the whole of the year was Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, again at La Scala. Thus the emphasis on German music under Mussolini, felt with increasing force after the 1939 Pact of Steel, receded quickly. There is less evidence that Italian theatres censored their own composers with as much rigidity, and there is no truth in the assertion that Guido Pannain made in a British journal at the end of 1944 that 'Mascagni has been banned': the elderly composer of *Cavalleria Rusticana*, complicit with Fascism to the last, had his magnum opus performed in seven Italian opera houses in 1945, and 48 times in the 1945-1950 period.[80]

It is at this point (1945) that the penchant for radical 'intellectual journals' prevalent within pre-war Italy sprung up again, in fact superseding previous efforts. Example 1. 7 shows that of the six main music journals publishing during the conflict, all ceased publication between December 1942 and September 1943. *Rivista Musicale Italiana* and *La Rassegna Musicale*, Italy's most prestigious reviews, were re-released in 1946 and 1947 respectively; the others faded from view entirely, unsurprisingly in the case of the *Rassegna Dorica* and *Musica d'Oggi*, the first of whose 'articles demonstrated a total adherence to

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[78] Petrassi, 'Cronache Musicale' in Petrassi, *Scritti e Interviste*, 63-64.

[79] Ciancio, 'La Produzione dei Teatri d'Opera in Italia: 1945-50, in Salvetti and Antoloni eds. *Italia Millenovecentocinquanta*, 68-83. In fact Ballo identifies these operas as 'tentative' exceptions to the trend towards 'natural conservatism' that had been enforced by fascism on normally avant-garde Milan. Ballo, 'La vita musica a Milano', 13.

[80] Pannain, 'Music in Italy', 313; for statistics see Ciancio, 'La Produzione dei Teatri d'Opera in Italia: 1945-50, in Salvetti and Antoloni eds. *Italia Millenovecentocinquanta*, 68-83.

fascist ideology' and the second of which had 'moderate' ties to the regime.[81] But alongside the more established papers, a plethora of small musical publications were founded in 1945 and 1946, some of which lasted only a year and others that laid down firmer roots. Milan and Rome were the principal bases in this regard, though Florence also played its part. Filled with reviews and opinion pieces, these journals constructed much musical reception and thought in the post-war period; in the 1944-5 period they also provided much needed news from cities that, for practical reasons, were hard to visit from the north (for instance, columns such as Domenico de Paoli's 'Vita Musicale di Roma'). Notable too is the extent to which musical criticism was included on an equal footing with the other arts in non-music specific publications; in this regard, *Il Mondo* was particularly strong, and Dallapiccola alone wrote 31 articles for this *Rassegna di lettere, scienze, arti, musica* between 1945 and 1947, alongside contributions from other musicians such as Gatti, Petrassi, Fedele D'Amico and Luigi Cortese.
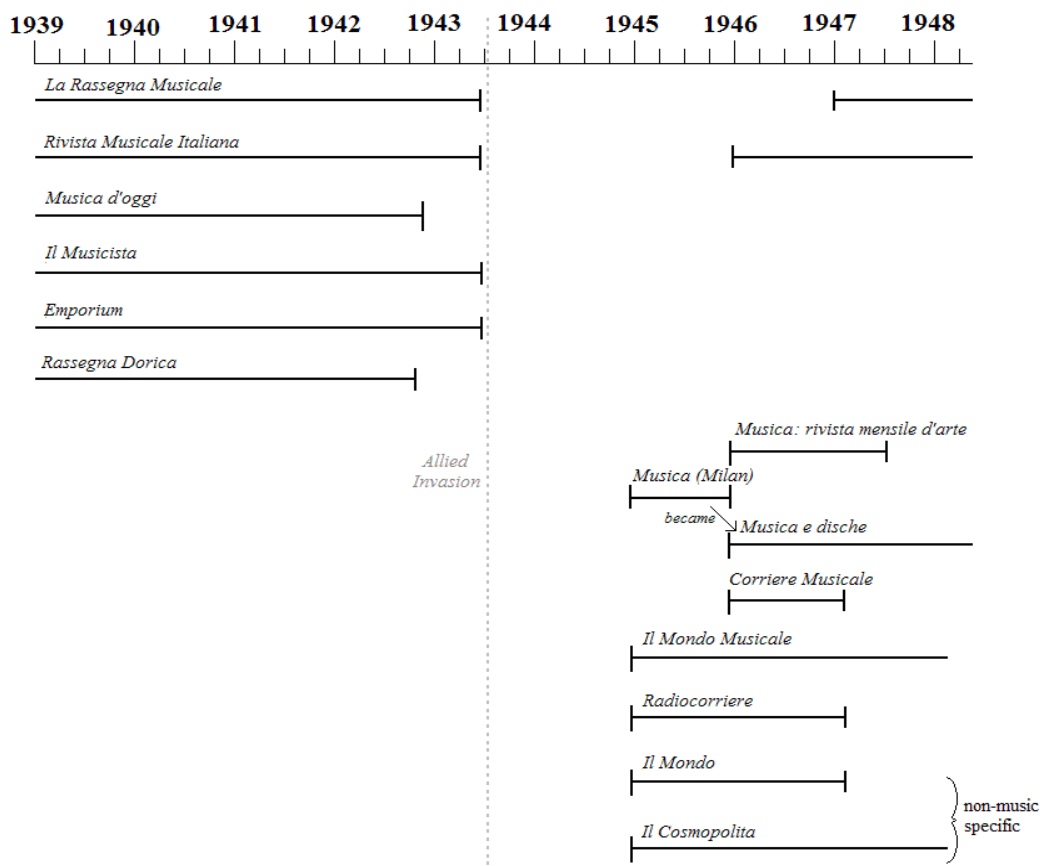
Ex. 1. 7: Italian music journal publication 199-1948

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[81] Conti, 'Introductions to *Rassegna Dorica* and *Musica d'Oggi*' on-line (accessed 29 Jan 2009).

By 1945 this new 'fervour' for music after years of conflict had swept through the nation; but even if, as Ruggieri asserts, it 'knew no geographical, social or generational bounds', it is possible to locate it most strikingly in certain cities that, as for many centuries, had stood as cultural powerhouses and rival artistic hegemonies, and again resumed their position up-stream of culture.[82] In Milan, Turin and Rome especially, the drive to renewal was keenly felt. Ferdinando Ballo, later commissioner for music at the Venice Biennale and an important Milanese critic, reported in November 1945 a general cultural malaise whereby the city had 'been reduced to the level of a small provincial French or Balkan town'. The young music critics 'desired to renovate the programs towards a more accentuated modernity', and the absence of the totemic presence of La Scala through bomb damage acted as a catalyst on the Milanese conscience towards such an endeavour. This turn to modernity was concurrently a turn to chamber music, as the creation of the Società del Quartetto, the Camerata Musicale and the Pomerriggi Musicale testifies. The last of these, under the direction of the prestigious conductor Fernando Previtali, gave concerts 'led by Italian and foreign performers and with the collaboration of the very best artists of European fame, who presented programmes focused on contemporary music'.[83] These kinds of concerts were a huge public success, which, in Ballo's opinion, made a strong case for the privileging of chamber music above opera in future Milanese life. In October the last Italian city to be liberated, Turin, saw a newly formed association named Pro Cultura give a concert sponsored by the Radiofonica Audizioni Italiane (RAI) devoted solely to modern works by Bartók, Hindemith, Busoni and Milhaud.[84] In the pages of *Il Mondo* Massimo Mila noted the positive reception accorded to the music, where in contrast to the reactionary attitude shown by Italian audiences to such composers during the *ventennio*, there was 'not even a shadow of the bourgeoisie mad fear of being mocked the minute they don't understand something; no prideful condemnation, no hasty rejection'.[85]

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[82] Ruggieri, 'L'Assetto Istituzionale e il Sistema Produttivo', 42.

[83] Ballo, 'La musica a Milano', in *Il Mondo*, 13.

[84] Nicolodi, 'The New Republic: Reconstruction and the "Consumer Society"', 208. At the time, the RAI was a privately owned public service broadcaster created at the Allies' request from the remnants of the fascist controlled *Ente Italiano Audizioni Radiofoniche* (EIAR) on the 26th October 1944. Administered by the British Psychological Warfare Board for around a year, it passed into Italian hands on the 15th of July 1945. It also sponsored a listings and review journal entitled *Radiocorriere*. See Giuliani, 'La Musica alla RAI: dagli Anni della Reorganizzazione al Terzo Programma (1945-1954)' in Salvetti and Antoloni eds. *Italia Millenovecentocinquanta*, 175-209.

[85] Mila, quoted in Nicolodi, 'The New Republic: Reconstruction and the "Consumer Society"' 209.

However, in many of its aspects, Rome provides the most interesting examples of innovative new musical life after its liberation in June 1944. The 1944-1945 chamber season at the Accademia Filharmonia Romana gave the city a 'fresh energy' under the direction of Virgilio Mortari, and in November the RAI sponsored an 'Autumn Cycle' of concerts including 'programmes dedicated to French, Russian and Anglo-American music'.[86] Harry Beard commented that the whole season 'was indicative of the desire to make up for the lost years of the war and hear in a few weeks all the music that had been excluded for four years'.[87] Indeed, this was the express aim of one afternoon concert in the summer season, which had the provocative title 'Music prohibited in Germany'; though nothing more is known of its contents, it shows that as early as the summer of 1944 some elements of the musical establishment were acknowledging the negative politicising of art by totalitarian culture in the preceding years, and attempting to atone for Italy's part in it.[88] During the 'Autumn Cycle', Dallapiccola's *Sex Carmina Alcaei* had their first performance under the baton of Previtali; as Kämper notes, the ability of the composer to travel from Florence to Rome to attend was in itself a miracle, at a time when one could 'only move with the permission of the Allied authorities'.[89]

One of the most interesting developments was the creation by Petrassi, with the assistance of Nicola Costarelli, Vieri Tosatti, Sergio Lauricella and Guido Turchi, of an exciting (though short-lived) artistic venture. 'Musica Viva' was a concert society that in practice functioned in a similar manner to Schoenberg's 'Verein für musikalische Privataufführungen' (1919-21) though its private nature was more a result of desperate circumstance than deliberate exclusion. Concerts were given of new music and works discussed over a number of months at the end of 1944 in a spirit of deliberate reaction to the violence and destruction of culture endemic in the middle two-thirds of Italy at the time. Petrassi later wrote almost bemusedly that 'the day of the liberation of Rome was an unimaginable day, such was the chaos. I therefore thought that in this chaos it was somehow necessary to save music'.[90] The urge to act even with limited resources and small ambitions gave this venture a surprisingly un-ideologised (and refreshingly) disorganised air, as Petrassi's account shows:

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[86] Beard, 'Music in Rome', 158.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Kämper, *Luigi Dallapiccola, la Vita e l'opera*, 98.
[90] Petrassi, *Scritti e Interviste*, 324.

> I took the initiative, with four or five other young musicians, to found a group
> called Musica Viva, with the aim of promoting contemporary music. We
> organised, to start with, 8 concerts … Our concerts were diverse: I recall that
> Casella and Suzanne Danco performed *Das Büch der Hängenden Gärten* by
> Schoenberg and Stravinsky's *Octet*, as well as some Hindemith, new music by
> Nino Rota played by Gatti Aldrovandi, and there was also a pianist who played 5
> or 6 of my 'Invenzioni'. We encountered some diverse personalities in Rome at
> that time, because the city was isolated from all and collaboration could not go
> beyond the local. Of the eight concert programmes only 4 or 5 proved possible in
> the end; we begged for finances from many parties, and I recall that 8000 lira
> came from my pocket in 1944. This was the experiment of Musica Viva.[91]

Petrassi's group gave the Italian première of already established works from the modernist canon such as the Schoenberg song-cycle, mixed cleverly with contemporary Italian chamber works by young Roman composers such as Mario Peragallo, Riccardo Nielsen, Virgilio Mortari and Gino Contilli, as well as piano works by Petrassi and Turchi. The ambition to explore the repressed modernist canon was thus linked to the cause of young composers, to the task of 'discovering new voices', a mission which 'now, more than ever … acquires the nature of extreme urgency', as Petrassi commented at the time.[92]

Evaluating Musica Viva is a difficult task; documentation is lacking, few reviews exist, and those that do demonstrate that the whole venture caused not a little bemusement: one critic concluded simply 'Performance: perfect; public reception: good; critical reception: no-one has understood it, and the shrewdest have stayed silent'.[93] Petrassi himself understood that not all would 'get it': a year later he wrote that the 'many important artistic manifestations to have come from Musica Viva were 'admittedly "trendy"'.[94] Seen purely in terms of its objective musical content, the concerts were the most significant venture in progressive art music during the years of Italy's musical reconstruction. Petrassi's efforts certainly increased his renown, enough to lead to his designation as the 'leading Italian composer' in the previously mentioned British Foreign Office report. The catalytic impact of the organisation was enough to inspire Matteo Glinksi's 1946 series 'L'ora di Music' ('The music hour'), a wide-ranging series of Roman concerts that would later be linked with Carlo Maria Giulini and the RAI.[95] Yet in its brevity – only 4 or 5 concerts – Musica Viva's

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[91] Restagno, *Petrassi*, 28-29.
[92] Petrassi, 'Un nuova Musicisti: Guido Turchi' in *Il Cosmopolita*, 19th July 1945, 6, reprinted in *Scritti e Interviste*, 56.
[93] de Paoli, 'Vita Musicale in Roma', 13.
[94] Petrassi, 'Cronache Musicale' in *Scritti e Interviste*, 63-64.
[95] See Zanetti, *La Musica Italiana nel Novecento*, 1128, fn. 59.

potential was frustratingly unrealised. Petrassi claimed that 'naturally after it had recouped all its outgoings the organisation dissolved, because it could not go forward any more; it was of no more benefit and help'; one cannot help feeling, however, that the abrupt ending had something to do with the fact that the room used for the concerts doubled as a 'gambling hall'.[96] And artistically the initiative received criticisms of elitism – 'True love for art, or just snobbism?' was de Paoli's provocation – and indeed, Petrassi had commented in print the rather boastful assertion that the society had been 'followed by the most intelligent and well-prepared public today in Rome'[97]

By the summer of 1945, Musica Viva gave way to an altogether larger initiative for Petrassi, who along with Casella and Gatti was involved in forming a committee to organise the First International Festival of Cinematic, Dramatic and Musical Art in Rome.[98] The committee divided its festivities, which were to last from September until December of that year, into constituent artistic categories: thus the *Primo Festival Internazionale di Musica*, 'First International Festival of Music' took place between the 8th of November and the 14th of December. The Accademia di Santa Cecilia and the RAI provided the funding and orchestras, and the concerts were held in the Teatro Adriano. The very concept of the initiative was 'post-war' in its essence: 'an appeal to the Bonomi government was made in March 1945 by a group of intellectuals and cultural personalities not involved in the conflict, postulating the artistic rebirth of the capital through a festival'.[99] So, as Maria Grazia Sità argues, the festival was 'directly born from the total cessation of conflict'; as already seen, 'rebirth', 'born from the conflict' are familiar tropes in the rhetoric of *secondo dopoguerra* musical events, and would reach their zenith in the publicity surrounding the re-launch of the Venice Biennale in 1946 (see Chapter 3).[100]

The programme of the Rome festival sought to cater for a high art audience and though its focus was not on any particular period, contemporary music played a major role. Whilst the opening three concerts were all masterpieces from the classical canon – Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* and two operas (Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and Verdi's *Otello*)

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[96] Restagno, *Petrassi*, 29. That 'Musica Viva' was accused of being a cover for illegal activity can be suggested from Petrassi's assertion in 1986 (a little too defensive given the gap of 40 years) that 'I obtained this hospitality supposing to serve no one but Musica Viva'.
[97] de Paoli, 'Vita Musicale in Roma', 13; Petrassi, in *Scritti e Interviste*, 63-64.
[98] See Cosulich, *Roma 45: Il Risveglio delle Arti*, 8, for a list of participants.
[99] Ibid.
[100] See Sitá, 'I Festival' in Salvetti and Antoloni eds. *Italia Millenovecentocinquanta,* 120 and 122-123 for a full programme of the festival; also, see Zanetti, *La Musica Italiana nel Novecento*, 1122-1123, whose narrative of musical life 'after the catastrophe' begins with this festival.

the next was a ballet – utilising the novel 'dodecafonia' – by Roman Vlad, which 'aroused a great attention' in being one of the earliest major serial works of the post-war period.[101] *La Dama delle Camelie* was produced by the renowned choreographer Aurel Milloss alongside Bartók's ballet *The Miraculous Mandarin* and both were adventurous undertakings on behalf of the programmers.[102] The festival's other works included the Italian premières of Milhaud's *Le Pauvre Matelot*, Hindemith's *Symphonic Metamorphoses* and a *Serenata* by Martinů, all of which might have fared badly under the Mussolinian climate of censorship. A projected performance of Stravinsky's *Symphony in C* was cancelled due to the impossibility of obtaining parts for the orchestra, which would have disappointed an Italian audience with a well-known love for the Russian composer.[103] The rest of the new music was Italian, and the premières or first major performances were given of works by ten writers: Vlad, Ghedini, Petrassi, Pizzetti, Casella, Previtali, Alfano, Vittorio Rieti, Vergilio Mortari and Vincenzo Tommasini. By including copious amounts of Italian new music, this festival demonstrated both a emerging vitality in composition and a public receptivity to this kind of art.

But a less positive reading of the festival, whilst acknowledging its openness to contemporary trends, would note the absence of non-Italian contemporary music; Hindemith, Milhaud and Bartók aside, Zanetti argues, there was 'not much to add plausibility to the internationalist boast'.[104] This is an important point, not least because it was one made at the time by Luigi Dallapiccola, a name missing from the programme. In a quiet extraordinary polemic written on the 15th of December 1945 (the day after the festival finished), the Florentine composer vented his anger against the festival, claiming that he had only heard of the event though a 'poster on a wall'. He went on to attack its apparent internationalism, drawing doubt over whether it could even declare itself 'national':

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[101] Zanetti, *La Musica Italiana nel Novecento*, 1124. See Alberto Savinio's account of the Beethoven, Mozart and Verdi performances in *Roma 45: Il Risveglio delle Arti*, 192-196.

[102] Bartók's *The Miraculous Mandarin* had been included in one of the most extraordinary concert series of the war years, in which many works banned in Nazi Germany such as Berg's *Wozzeck* and Busoni's opera *Arlecchino* were played without censure at La Scala in Milan and at the Teatro Reale in Rome in the autumn of 1942. See D'Amico, 'Lettere da Roma', 335-9; see also Nicolodi, *Musica e Musicisti nel Ventennio Fascista*, 25-6. Its return to Rome in 1945 may have been a symbolic gesture towards this 'moment' of modernist liberation or, perhaps, simply due to the fact that parts for the orchestra were readily available and well-rehearsed.

[103] Sitá, 'I festival', in Salvetti and Antoloni eds. *Italia Millenovecentocinquanta*, 121.

[104] Zanetti, *La Musica Italiana nel Novecento*, 1124.

> Looking at the programme and seeing the names of Italian contemporary composers represented, we find Ottorino Respighi, Bolognese, *Resident in Rome* and dead since 1936, Ildebrando Pizzetti, Parmese, *Resident in Rome*, Alfredo Casella, *Resident in Rome*, Virgilio Mortari, Lombardian, *Resident in Rome*, Goffredo Petrassi, Zagarolian, *Resident in Rome*, Fernando Previtali, *Resident in Rome*, Roman Vlad, *Resident in Rome*. Giorgio Federico Ghedini, the only one who cannot say *civis romanus sum* (he was born in Cuneo and lives in Turin) seems to have been invited to play the part of the poor Lazarus … one is astonished and dismayed to see that Venice, Bologna, Florence, Genoa and Naples have produced nothing, *absolutely nothing*, worthy to be presented … If Rome, at least in regards to its music, would like to demonstrate that it is no longer the capital of a fascist state, its conscience should start to feel a certain responsibility.[105]

The force of Dallapiccola's vituperation is striking. He goes on to argue that in the future, music festivals would have to reach beyond their borders to fully represent the rebirth of post-war culture, and in the course of doing so, pleads for the renewal of Italy's membership of the ISCM. As shall be seen in the next chapter, he himself was acting as the progenitor for this move, and thus occupies a less-than-objective position in relation to his charges. But this little episode is far from trivial and cannot simply be explained away in terms of parochial rivalries; indeed, it evidences a very important element of post-war musico-political contention.

The accusation of 'Rome-centricity' was a fractious claim in 1945: the extent to which the myth of the 'eternal city' defined fascism and the way in which this image was to be expunged from national consciousness was still being debated.[106] Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi convincingly demonstrates the power of the 'semantically-rich Roman myth', in which 'Rome teleologically announced the coming of Fascism and its empire' and the subjective, selective interpretation of Rome's history gave legitimacy to military and cultural expansion.[107] Many had acquiesced in Mussolini's declaration that 'Rome is our departure and reference point: it is our symbol or, if you wish, our myth … we dream of Roman Italy i.e. wise and strong, disciplined and imperial' and this had thus tarnished the moral image of the capital.[108] But the simple fact is that, in 1945, the city still existed, traded and formed a major part of the nation's political soul and artistic economy, and

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[105] Dallapiccola, 'Quia Nominor Leo', 13.

[106] This debate took its place amongst the opposing post-war readings of fascism in Italy as virus (Benedetto Croce) or autobiography (Carlo Levi). See Ward, *Antifascisms: Cultural Politics in Italy 1943-1946*, 127).

[107] See Falasca-Zamponi, *Fascist Spectacle*, 90-5; also Visser, 'Fascist Doctrine and the Cult of the Romanità', 5-22.

[108] Mussolini, quoted in Falasca-Zamponi, *Fascist Spectacle*, 92.

therefore was a problematic but unavoidable entity. The necessity of at least gesturing towards an alternative and post-fascist reality through concert programming had obviously irked Dallapiccola who, invoking one of the founders of fascist philosophy, wrote elsewhere that 'those who stated that "Rome was a different city from all the others"' were 'childishly messing around endlessly with the permutations on ROMA-AMOR dear to Gabrielle d'Annunzio'.[109]

Beyond all of this lies a larger point, emphasised strongly by various musicians at the time including Dallapiccola: Italy must 'go out' from its isolation into internationalist cooperation – an argument not without complications.[110] While such rhetoric portrays Fascist Italy as an autarkic state modelled on German-style *volk*-nationalism, in truth the complicated motivations of the regime's ill-defined doctrine gave rise both to internationalism and hermeticism, the first in order to appropriate, export and influence outside cultures, the second to ensure an internal sense of artistic superiority. As Ruth Ben-Ghiat shows, the various intellectual and critical paths taken by the fascist intelligentsia in the late 1920s and early 1930s (for instance, the divergence in belief of the *Strapaese* and *Novecento* schools) held common the idea that Italian culture needed to encompass and explore all manifestations of international modernity in order to re-compose them inside their own borders into what she labels 'Fascist Modernity' – then to export back to the world this new artistic direction; thus effecting a kind of cultural colonialism.[111] The equation of fascism with either internal or external reification was too simplistic, both on ontological grounds and simply because Italian Fascism was a badly managed contradiction:

> tensions between protectionism and internationalisation were exacerbated rather than resolved by the fascist regime … admonitions to 'keep Italy Italian' co-existed with incitements to adopt an 'imperial' consciousness founded on a belief in fascism as a universal rather than a national phenomenon.[112]

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[109] Dallapiccola, 'Per una rinascita della S.I.M.C., 12. The antipathy between Rome and other artistically less well-funded cities can be seen in, for example, the rivalry between the two radio broadcasting centres of post-fascist Italy, Rome and Turin. See Petrassi, 'Cronache Musicale' in *Scritti e Interviste*, 69. Anna Maria Torriglia argues that 'international' in a wider cultural sense often meant America, though musically Europe was still the dominant influence. Torriglia, *Broken Time, Fragmented Space: a Cultural Map for Post-War Italy*, 79-117.

[110] See Casella's already-quoted assertion that 'Italy will be able to again take up its place amongst the great musical nations and to makes its contribution to the cause of civilisation'. 'L'avvenire della musica Italiana' in Zanetti, *La Musica Italiana nel Novecento* 1662-1663; the statements of Dallapiccola in 'Per una Rinascita della SIMC', 12; 'Uomini al Festival della SICM', 10 and his contribution to the column 'La Ricostruzione Musicale in Italia'(related in chapter 3); and also Petrassi, 'Scuola di Composizione', 10.

[111] Ben-Ghiat, *Fascist Modernities*, especially 1-45.

[112] Ibid., 11.

Mutatis Mutandis: in the post-war period, the politics of internationalism are thereby problematised; when musicians talked of such concepts, the line is not clear between those who wished to contribute to world music and those who wished Italy to regain an artistic 'greatness' amongst the nations. Thus when Gatti urged state intervention in the running of the opera houses, he coyly acquiesced to the second of these categories, even if he is far from arguing for a return to the fascist politics of the international: 'Intervening, the state not only justifies such legalities, but favours a production – if I can use such a commercial expression – that, exported, will not only be useful for prestige, but for national economics'.[113] Another complicated and contradictory example comes from Vittorio Gui, who, having served the anti-fascist cause against the Germans in 1944, wrote with almost tortuous reluctance in 1945 of how Italian artists needed to become cultural exporters in the German manner in order to demonstrate cultural viability and (in a Crocean sense) ensure the country's essential health:

> After the 1918 defeat, a few months on from the treaty of Versailles, German artists descended on the neutral and victorious countries, imposing themselves on the attentions, and often admiration, of the populace … thus Germany rapidly recaptured the path of reconstruction by means of propaganda carried out by its artists. But must we really cite this example today from the people that have ruined Europe; will only this help us understand such reasoning? Must we take a lesson from those who have destroyed Europe? And us? Will we not be able to remind the world that the native country of Rossini, Bellini and Verdi has not been destroyed by fascism, has not fallen with it? [114]

That Gui would draw on such an example is remarkable in the climate of resistance and anti-fascism (and even more so given its author). It shows that the cultural intersubjectivity of national consciousness was far from neutral territory at the end of 1945; as Ben-Ghiat puts it, 'for two decades, fascism provided the context for the reception of messages about Self and Other, Italy and the world, that would be transformed in the post-war period'.[115] Such politically complex issues were soon to be addressed practically in the first major test of Italy's new dawn, and the next chapter explores this issue further in the arena of the first post-war ISCM festival.

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[113] Gatti, 'Organizzazione del nostro teatro lirico', 13
[114] Gui, 'Per la Vita Musicale di Domani', 309.
[115] Ben-Ghiat, *Fascist Modernities*, 211.

Chapter 2:
Dallapiccola in London: internationalism and cultural memory in post-war Italy

This chapter has as its starting point the still fragile sense of self-image latent within Italian society after 1945. Three human catastrophes –*ventennio*, war and *resistenza* – had imbued culture with a ubiquitous politicisation surrounding the near past; fascism had entailed 'fascist spectacle', the war had ensured artistic isolation, and the *resistenza* an ambiguous plethora of anti-fascisms. In Anna Maria Torriglia's words,

> Painters, writers and intellectuals were all dealing with the uneasy task of confronting the nation's fascist heritage and were entrapped in an effort of almost promethean dimensions. On the one hand, they were striving to erase their individual and collective pasts; on the other, they were willing to construct a better present and, possibly, future for themselves and the country … In such a scenario, 'culture' constituted the place of a possible renegotiation between the personal and the public spheres … [it] represented a 'locus' where a new assemblage of the national identity could happen.[1]

Modern Italian music was struggling to define itself against the past, and felt a similar uneasiness in its relation to the outside world and to external cultures and 'internationalism'. In 1946, the year on which this chapter focuses, a 'new assemblage of national identity' was being constructed, and an impulse to demonstrate artistic openness and adventure included a strong affirmation of the *global* nature of modernism's grand project, alongside a plainly deliberate attempt by many musicians to get as far away as possible from the stultifying, insular and naïve environment of Mussolini's Italy.[2] The vicissitudes of this trend will be the focus of the current chapter, and rather than a 'thick description' of the subject, in the

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[1] Torriglia, *Broken Time, Fragmented Space: a Cultural Map for Post-War Italy*, xi-xii.

[2] The political exigencies of an artistic establishment that at once tried to impose Nazi-style cultural conservatism on its composers and permitted the performance of Berg's *Wozzeck* and Bartók's *The Miraculous Mandarin* in 1942 prompt caution in evaluating the so-called 'autarchic' nature of war-time Italy (Nicolodi, *Musica e Musicisti nel Ventennio Fascisti*, 25-6). Much post-war use of this term comes from a desire in Guido Salvetti's words to wear 'the badge of anti-fascism' and overemphasise opposition and discontinuity between fascist nationalism and post-war avant-garde trends (Salvetti, 'Political Ideologies and Musical Poetics in 20th-Century Italy', 147). Roberto Zanetti goes much further than Salvetti in emphasising the cultural effects of any kind of autarky: 'the extension of the autarchic concepts of Latin and solar myths (in short, provincialism) to the artistic and musical spheres … carried the Italian people to the margins of the international artistic arena'; Zanetti, *La Musica Italiana nel Novecento*, 1109-1110. Salvetti's criticism of writers that 'naively' narrate the historical binary of autarky-reinternationalisation would surely be directed at large-scale histories such as Zanetti's. However the reality is somewhere in between these polarisations: if it is impossible to claim that the Fascist regime created a hermetically sealed cultural space, it is also perverse to deny it had any effects on national image-making and international relations, and did not render complex the idea of nationhood in the post-war period.

manner of the preceding chapter, a single unique case study will provide the framework for the discussion: the readmission of an Italian section to the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM) in July 1946, and the debates that surrounded this event. Additionally, the work intimately tied to this moment – Dallapiccola's *Canti di Prigionia* ('Songs of a Prisoner', composed 1938-41) – will be analysed against the grains of internationalism and 'cultural memory', in order to show how both Italy and the world struggled with the near past, the pre-war period; how they interpreted this era; and the effect on post-fascist musical politics.[3] In narrating this historical tale (which will be based in part on unpublished archival sources) the idea is to hold up as a paradigm one of the most politically charged musical incidents in the post-war period and to interrogate it both musically and historically, to find out what it demonstrates of the position and importance of the 'international' in Italian musical life and the process Italian music underwent to try and redefine its present in relation to its past.

'La ricostruzione musicale': the foundational ambiguity of 'internationalism'

Musical culture has almost universally questioned the role of national boundaries within matters of artistic form and style.[4] One example of this process, coming just at the very moment Italy was picking herself up and (materially speaking) rebuilding infrastructure after the Second World War, is found in a column in the first issue of a new journal, *Musica*, entitled 'La Ricostruzione Musicale' ('Musical Reconstruction'), published in March 1946. The editors, amongst them the conductor Matteo Glinski, had written to several prominent Italian musicians to ask two questions:

> 1. What are, in your judgment, the current needs of Italian musical life as a consequence of the war?
> 2. In the eventuality of an active foreign interest in this matter, of which some signs can already be seen, in what form do you think it would preferably be realized?

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[3] The concept of 'cultural' memory is taken from the work of historian Pierre Nora, who uses it to define a kind of constructed collective memory (distinct from 'history') which a society uses to cope with its identity after a major historical shift has occurred. Nora, 'General Introduction' to *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de Memoire*, i, vii-xxi

[4] Taruskin, 'Nationalism' in *Grove Music On-line* (accessed 18 Mar 2010) provides a useful introduction to such debates.

The answers given are as illuminating as the questions were leading. Almost all contributors were eager to establish their 'internationalist credentials', and some of their opinions are worth quoting at length.

> The outside world will welcome our best works and our most valued artists. This cordial hospitality is encouraging and exciting. Equally, it will be returned by us as soon as possible. The splendid consequences of Italian successes in foreign lands are well known. *Ludovico Rocca*
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> The positive help that could come from outside cannot be therefore purely good-natured and simply financial; it should be in the form of subsidies for orchestral engagements, concerts or tours outside of Italy during a part of the year … thus providing the moral satisfaction of being known and appreciated outside one's own country. *Fernando Previtali*
>
> It is to be hoped that outside interest is not concretised only in contributory acts to restore the material elements of Italian musical life. Beyond scores, instruments, institutions, there are people, there are artists who have all the incredible suffering and misery and disablement brought about by the war. Is it too much to ask that a human interest accompanies and sustains the artistic interest? *Luigi Ronga*
>
> Concerning help coming like rain from outside of Italy, I do not believe that to be a practical solution: the monetary contribution that affluent tourists can give as their contribution is embedded in the very trade, and nothing more is needed. *Vittorio Gui*
>
> What could the outside world do for our musical life? Much indeed, I believe, beyond the fact that it wants us to return to our destroyed theatres again. But it could also, with little expense and difficulty, reinforce us abundantly with musical editions – orchestral parts and scores – putting us at the level of knowledge of the most recent production of the major composers resident in America, in England and France. *Massimo Mila*
>
> After seven years of suffocating within the confines of their own country, the only salvation [for artists] is that which is open to all: to go out into the international arena. In not doing this our musical life will become increasingly restricted, and disputes will become more acute, the provincialism more perilous. The time should have passed in which autarky exalted itself amongst intellectuals. *Luigi Dallapiccola*.[5]

From these statements, four main points arise. Firstly, whilst they demonstrate a mainly positive reaction to externalism, there is a discernable sensitivity that this should take the form of cooperation, not aid; there was a 'human' dimension to the recovery, in the words

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[5] 'La Ricostruzione Musicale in Italia' in Zanetti, *La Musica Italiana nel Novecento,*1650-1655.

of the critic Luigi Ronga. This aversion to being seen as a neutral territory for the consumption and propagation of an American imperialism is certainly seen in Vittorio Gui's dismissive reply. Secondly, the idea of internationalism-as-prestige, noted in the close of Chapter 2 within the writings of Gui and Guido Gatti, is still very present, and the views of Rocca, Ronga and Previtali seem to envisage the engagement of Italian orchestras with the international concert industry as a chance for Italy to recover status. In contrast, thirdly, Massimo Mila urges an *input* of foreign aesthetics and trends that would have a vitalising effect on Italian composers.[6] Fourthly, all the respondents seem reluctant to confront cultural memory head on; the exception being Luigi Dallapiccola. In an attempt to construct a musical morality based on fascist-rejection, Dallapiccola produced a plethora of articles and public statements similar to his reply in *Musica*, appearing in diverse periodicals in 1945 and 1946. They form the most cogent and sustained critique from a composer of a supposed 'autarky' that had damaged Italy's musical life, alongside one of the more specific proposals for a solution. And it is in enacting this solution himself that Dallapiccola emerges as the main player in the internationalism debates: his ideologies and their practical outworking will form the core historical narrative for this chapter.

In the summer of 1945 Dallapiccola was on the margins of a Florentine literary circle that included the critic and poet Alessandro Bonsanti, the editor-in-chief of the left-leaning paper *Il Mondo*. Bonsanti engaged Dallapiccola as a music writer, and through regular columns the composer found a readily available outlet for his musico-political views.[7] In total Dallapiccola wrote twenty nine articles for the journal between 7th April 1945 and 5th October 1946; his very first takes as its starting point the 'music-public antimony' by which modern music is either politicised to a party's own ends or marginalised as a decadent affair: 'the fact that only the spectacles of the fair can be counted on for effective public participation (and therefore on conspicuous proceeds), shows we are not a public fit to listen to *music* (less than ever contemporary music)'.[8] The consequence of

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[6] In this regard, the Milanese critic is joined by several other important voices in 1946. Goffredo Petrassi, who had never really closed his ears to 'foreign' modernity, used his columns in *Il cosmopolita* and *Teatro* to write extensively of foreign composers and their latest works in 1945-6: Ravel, Walton, Stravinsky, Bloch, and Honegger are all covered with an acumen and insight (Petrassi, *Scritti e Interviste*, 36-81). An article by Malipiero from 1946 in the widely read French journal *La Revue Musicale* focuses on composers from Russia, Great Britain, Spain, 'the Schoenberg School', France and America (Malipiero, 'Prométhée Enchaîné', 241-243). Alfredo Casella's approach to this approach has already been noted in the previous chapter ('L'avvenire della musica Italiana', in Zanetti, *La Musica Italiana nel Novecento*, 1662-3).
[7] See Kämper, *Luigi Dallapiccola: La Vita e l'Opere*, p. 129.
[8] Dallapiccola, 'Per una Rinascita della SIMC', 12.

such musical barbarism was, in Dallapiccola's phrase, the 'coquetry of home-bred institutions', i.e. nationalism. In searching for a route out of this, the composer turned to a prescient historical moment:

> Twenty years ago German avant-garde musicians, instead of compromising with their own art, for the first time – after an age of nationalism – hastened to belong to all Europe; maybe to all the world: they turned to look beyond the confines of their country, no longer to display to the world their own activities, as happened ordinarily in the international 1700s, but to address to their musician colleagues, working with the same faith as them, words of peace and of fraternity.[9]

Dallapiccola refers to the formation of the International Society for Contemporary Music (henceforth ISCM) in Salzburg in 1923. The composer goes on to give a brief history of the organisation and argued for its primacy and necessity in musical life. He posited that the ISCM was necessary as much for social as musical reasons, and he gave a passionate plea for its restoration:

> Now people have finished their destruction, as frontiers are opened, composers that keep the faith envisage a revival of the I.S.C.M. or a society with a similar intent and organisation. It is inevitable that the radical differences between men will be rendered more difficult but for a frank recovery of contact. Perhaps the revival of the I.S.C.M., with its annual rapprochement of artist and of people, could initiate the end of the isolation that was not the slightest of our suffering in these last years.[10]

In the following months it became clear that the ISCM was Dallapiccola's chosen vehicle with which to tackle the perceived crisis of 'self-other' identity that Italian composers faced.[11] But the status of the ISCM and its past history vis-à-vis Italy problematised such a categorical proposal.

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[9] Ibid., 12.

[10] Dallapiccola, 'Per una Rinascita della SIMC', 12.

[11] Ben-Ghiat, *Fascist Modernities*, 211. In total Dallapiccola wrote eight articles in Italian journals on the ISCM between April 1945 and July 1947: 'Per una Rinascita della SIMC', (*Il Mondo* 7th April 1945); 'Società Internazionale di Musica Contemporanea (*Il Mondo*, 6th July 1946); 'Uomini al Festival della SIMC' (*Il Mondo*, 3rd August 1946); 'Festival di Londra' (*La Nuova Stampa*, 8th August 1946); 'Musica Contemporanea a Londra' (*La Lettura* 10th August 1946); 'Musiche al festival della S.I.M.C.' (*Il Mondo*, 7th September 1946); 'In Margine alla S.I.M.C.' (*Il Mondo Europea*, 1st July 1947); 'Il XXI festival della S.I.M.C' (*Il Mondo Europea*, 15th July 1947).

Italy and the breakdown of the international before the war

Between its inception in 1922 and its waning of influence after the Second World War, the ISCM was one of the foremost voices and means of impetus behind musical modernism.[12] It was born into what was, according to Peter Franklin, the

> exuberantly crusading, contestatory, and decentring musical-cultural enthusiasms of the early 1920s … [These years] spawned a proliferation of groupings, associations, specific-interest festivals, and journals. The International Society for Contemporary Music (1922), Varèse's International Composers Guild (1922), the modernist Donaueschingen Chamber Music Festival (1921), the high-status and relatively conservative Salzburg festival (1920), and the journals *Musikblatter des Anbruch*, (Vienna, 1919), *Music and Letters* (London 1920) and *Melos* (Berlin 1920) all came into being in the early post-war years.[13]

The ISCM was founded on three key principles: there would be an annual festival that moved from country to country every year (see Example 2. 1) as the centrepiece for the society's activity; it would be directed by an international umbrella organisation which connected together individual national sections; and its activities were to be as equal as possible, even providing in its constitution a clause guaranteeing the fair treatment of members 'regardless of aesthetic trends or the nationality, race, religion or political views of the composer'.[14] Thus the ISCM excelled above all others groups for more than twenty years in its internationalist pretext. Additionally, the society often outdid its competitors in its capacity as the platform for important premières: 1924 saw Schoenberg's *Erwartung* and 1925 Stravinsky performing his own *Sonata* for piano; in 1927 Berg's *Chamber Concerto* and Bartók's *First Piano Concerto* were heard for the first time; in 1934 Webern's *Concerto for Nine Instruments*; and in 1936 Berg's *Violin Concerto*. Even this short list of compositions demonstrates that the ISCM certainly carried with it various political and musical implications. Its attempt to work for the furtherance of 'new' music across cultures resulted in it becoming the locus for many widespread disagreements over what should constitute new musical style; attacked on one side for focussing too heavily on atonal music,

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[12] A general history of the organisation can be found in Anton Haefeli's *Die Internationale Gesellschaft für Neue Musik (IGNM): ihre Geschichte von 1922 bis zur Gegenwart*. A one-off journal of the society, *Music Today*, was published in 1949 and includes Edward Dent's brief history 'Looking Backward'. See also Zanetti, *SIMC: Storia della Società Internazionale di Musica Contemporanea*.

[13] Franklin, 'Between the Wars: Traditions, Modernisms and the "Little People from the Suburbs", 190.

[14] Dallapiccola, 'Per una Rinascita della SIMC', 12. See Evans, 'The Salzburg Festival' in the *Musical Times*, September 1922, 628-631; Dent, 'Looking Backward' in *Music Today*, October 1949, 6.

and on the other for being a prominent proponent of the type of mediocrity Adorno called 'music festival music', the ISCM's stated desire to judge music on the basis of merit was often challenged since a performance at one of its festivals often signalled that a composer had entered the mainstream.[15] Certainly, there was an ISCM 'type' of music centred around a modernist (though still 'expressive') teleology, and Peter Franklin argues that the organisation 'played a part in the institutionalization of the modernist musical discourse of tonal 'collapse' and stylistic 'experimentation', and of the relevant critical oppositions and exclusions'.[16]

1923	Salzburg	Castelnuovo-Tedesco; Busoni	1933	Amsterdam	Petrassi
1924	Prague	Rieti; Malipiero	**1934**	**Florence**	*
1925a	Prague	Busoni; Rieti; Malipiero	1935	Prague	Dallapiccola; Petrassi
1925b	**Venice**	Rieti, Labroca, Malipiero	1936	Barcelona	-
1926	Zurich	Casella	1937	Paris	Malipiero, Casella, Dall.
1927	Frankfurt	Castelnuovo-Tedesco	1938	London	Nielsen
1928	**Siena**	Tomassini, Alfano	1939	Warsaw	Dallapiccola
1929	Geneva	Lualdi	1941	New York	-
1930	Liege /Brussels	Casella, Veretti	1942	San Francisco	Rieti
			1946	London	Dallapiccola
1931	Oxford /London	Pilati, Mortarti	1947	Copenhagen	Zecchi, Pizetti, Negri
			1948	Amsterdam	Malipiero
1932	Vienna	Rieti; Malipiero	**1949**	**Palermo**	Contilli, Casella, Maderna

*concert of Italian orchestral music given on 2th April: Dallapiccola, Alfano, Malipiero, Casella, Mulé; concert of Italian chamber music given on 7th April: Labroca, Gorini, Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Nielsen, Pizetti.

Ex. 2. 1: ISCM Festivals 1923-1949, with Italian composers performed

Into such contentious territory, the Italian section of the ISCM could not have started in a more inauspicious manner, launched at a meeting held in 1923 at the villa of Gabriele d'Annunzio, poet, visionary and fascist *persona importante* by d'Annunzio, Casella and Malipiero under the name *Corporazione delle Nuove Musiche* (CDNM).[17] The rhetoric of triumphalism and the sacralisation of art so prominent in Italian fascist culture is replicated in the inaugural booklet published by the corporation in 1925, which – in declaring the formation of the society by a 'unanimous will', and by vouchsafing its exclusively 'spiritual' aims – sets a particularly Nietzschean tone.[18] The fact that the origins and

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[15] Adorno, 'The Ageing of the New Music', *Essays on Music*, 182.

[16] Franklin, 'Between the Wars: Traditions, Modernisms and the "Little People from the Suburbs"', 190.

[17] See Waterhouse, *Gian Francesco Malipiero*, 24, 33-5.

[18] 'What is the "Corporazione delle Nuove Musiche", what has it already done and what does it intend to do?', EJD 2/8/7, 3. It was released simply as a CDNM publication, though one can reasonably assume its author was Casella. Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi speaks at length of the importation of the sacred into the aesthetic in Italian society under Mussolini's influence, leaning heavily on Walter Benjamin. Falasca-Zamponi, *Fascist*

founders of the CDNM were deeply rooted in fascist culture is revealing: whilst it does not necessarily implicate the organisation morally in the regime, it shows the presence of a complex and ambiguous national doctrine from the beginning.

Through into the late 20s and early 30s, the relationship between the ISCM and the CDNM, under the leadership of Casella, flourished: Italy hosted an international festival of chamber music at Venice in 1925, a full festival in 1928 at Siena, and a particularly successful festival at Florence in 1934.[19] At home, the *Corporazione* organised many events (17 concerts across Italy even in its first year), the most prominent of which was the 1924 tour of Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* across the country and Stravinsky conducting *Les Noces* in 1928 (at which point the CDNM became known simply as the 'Italian section' of the ISCM).[20] By the middle of the 30s however, all was not well within the central ISCM. The German section in 1933 was banned by the *Reichsmusikkammer* amid accusations of 'Kulturbolshevismus' (cultural bolshevism). Instead, led by Richard Straus, the Germans staged two festivals of what was titled the 'Permanent Council for the International Cooperation of Composers'. Composers were invited to these events from countries that Germany considered appropriate (Germany, Austria, Italy, Finland and Sweden): Adriano Lualdi, who had entered the Italian bureaucracy as a member of the Fascist Syndicate of Musicians in 1929, was invited to the Vichy festival in 1934. Italy retained its membership of the ISCM for a longer period, but by the late 1930s its section, still led by Casella, was facing the pressure to disband. No Italian artists were represented at all at the 1936 festival in Barcelona, following the Anglo-American sanctions imposed in response to Mussolini's Ethiopian campaign. These sanctions had the concomitant effect of hardening attitudes of autarkic nationalism amongst the music intelligentsia, and there were short-lived and variously unsuccessful attempts to control the performance and teaching of foreign music.[21] So it is unsurprising to find that Casella was eventually forced to write a letter of resignation to Edward Dent on behalf of the Italian section on the 24th of March 1939, two months before the ISCM festival in Warsaw:

Spectacle, 9-14; Benjamin, 'The work of Art in the age of Mechanical Reproduction' in Arendt ed. *Illuminations*, 211-245.

[19] Dent later commented that 'few festivals of ours have been so enjoyable as those of Venice, Siena and Florence' … 'The three Italian festivals … were perhaps the most generally successful of all our meetings'. EJD 1/1/1/2, 6; Dent, 'Looking Backward', 15.

[20] See Parrino, 'Casella, D'Annunzio and the Italian Premiere of *Pierrot Lunaire*'.

[21] See Waterhouse, *Gian Francesco Malipiero*, 54; Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy*, 144-145, Slonimsky, *Music Since 1900*: 398-399.

With real sadness I must communicate to you that our Minister of Popular Culture (on whom depends, without exception as you know, all that which concerns our musical dealings with the outside world) has refused the funding that in other years has enabled our section to attend the annual festival of the ISCM. The minister explained this refusal by the insufficient space given to our composers in other years and the jury's part in this. Last year, for instance, Italy was represented in London by only one solitary work. And this year the same situation has been repeated, the circumstance being aggravated by our country occupying on the program at Warsaw the same merit as Argentina, while Belgium and Holland each receive three performances in the same programme ...
I am therefore obliged to tell you that our section has permanently and irrevocably withdrawn from the ISCM.[22]

It appears that as with most instances of repression under Mussolini, the ISCM was given its marching orders not by a direct ban from *Il Duce* but by the personal artistic mores of certain fascist administrators; on this occasion, from Giuseppe Mulé, a composer and president of the Fascist Union of Musicians, and Nicola de Pirro, cultural tsar and head of theatre administration. They argued that it was not viable, in the years of the Pact of Steel and the increasing politicisation of art for propaganda purposes, to tolerate a society that failed to garner prestige for Italy and allowed corrupting external influences into the country. Besides, it was frankly not in Casella's interest to be leading the ISCM any more. The elderly composer had by this point felt the need to demonstrate his adherence to a widespread ethnocentricity, writing an article in February 1939 denouncing certain Italian composers for their "internationalism", calling their music "the product of international Judaism"'.[23] It seems that Dallapiccola, however, was furious about the decision, and he urged Casella to mount a legal challenge over the ministry's actions; when he didn't, he accused him of bias and of distancing the Italian section from the ISCM since 1935.[24] So Italy's resignation in 1939 was a politically ambiguous and contested affair, as 'the dynamic *agit-prop* that for a time had touched Italy now grabbed hold of it'.[25]

The 1946 ISCM Festival

After the fall of Mussolini, however, questions of national identity and international spirit were oriented in the opposite direction, and the processes that led to the readmission of the

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[22] Quoted in Fiamma Nicolodi, *Musica e Musicisti nel Ventennio Fascista*, 265.
[23] In *Le Arti*, 256-64, quoted in Sachs *Music in Fascist Italy*, 187-8.
[24] Casella, autograph letter to Dallapiccola, 2 June 1941, FLD; Corti, autograph letter to Dallapiccola, 6 June 1941, FLD.
[25] Nicolodi, *Musica e Musicisti nel Ventennio Fascista*, 265.

Italian section to the ISCM in July 1946 in London under Dallapiccola's leadership are a remarkable example of how cultural re-engagement worked in practice.

Though the American section had entertained the idea of holding an ISCM festival, Edward Dent had persuaded them that it was symbolically important to hold the first post-war festival in Europe. Venues proved exceptionally difficult to find in war-torn Britain, but the effort was judged to be worthwhile.[26] Edward Dent had maintained correspondence with Casella during the war, and in March 1945, Casella had enquired of him 'What is the ISCM doing? Do you believe that she will be reorganised and in what form? From all directions one hears of post-war initiatives that wish to imitate our old and glorious Society … We wish it well'.[27] Guido Gatti wrote to Dent also:

> I am pleased that you have resumed the presidency of the ISCM, and that you are prepared to give new impulse to this always-valuable musical association that surely, in the best of times, represents the very highest standard of international musical life. I will be eager to collaborate in whatever way I can with the reconstitution of the Italian section, together with some new members that could be selected by general agreement, with particular regard to the *Italian political situation*.[28]

The 'Italian political situation' was, however, to prove delicate and complex, as documents from the time demonstrate. In January 1946 Dent wrote to Casella asking him to send recent Italian music for consideration by the ISCM, a request Casella received enthusiastically.[29] He quickly gathered material and replied to Dent with a list of scores of suitable compositions 'demonstrating the best current tendencies in our school':[30]

Alfredo Casella	*Sei Studi per Pianoforte*
	Invenzioni per Pianoforte
Goffredo Petrassi	*Cori di Morti*
Luigi Dallapiccola	*Tre Canti di Prigionia*
	Cinque Frammenti di Sappho
Federico Ghedini	*Concerto d'Albatro*
Guido Turchi	*Trio*
Mario Zafred	*Secondo Concerto per due Pianoforti*
Camillo Togni	*Fantasie per Pianoforte*

Ex. 2. 2: Work list sent by Casella to Dent, March 17th 1946

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[26] See the minutes of an ISCM meeting held on 19 Feb 1946, folder 50.1000.
[27] Casella, autograph letter to Dent, 3 March 1945, EJD 4/77:1.
[28] Gatti, autograph letter to Dent, 7 June 1945, EJD 4/156: 2 [italics added].
[29] Casella, autograph letter to Dallapiccola, 9 Feb 1946, FLD. Dent later admitted that, given the subsequent circumstances, this letter was premature. Dallapiccola, 'Personal Report to the Committee of the Italian ISCM section', L.B13, 6.
[30] Casella, autograph letter to Dent, 17 Mar 1946, folder 50.1000, 1.

At almost exactly the same point Dallapiccola was making contact with some prominent musicians, amongst them Gatti, Alberto Mantelli, Ghedini, and Riccardo Nielsen, with a view to reforming the Italian section of the society. Thus the two composers who had famously fallen out over the ISCM in 1939 both became rivals in its resurrection. Casella began making reformulation plans under the banner of Petrassi's 'Musica Viva'. His letter on March the 17th announces this to Dent, and notes his displeasure at Dallapiccola's similar plans, which to him demonstrated that a gap was opening between the Roman and non-Roman elements of society:

> How are the preparations for the festival going? I hope to at least be able to send a delegate. I await your response on the merits of the proposition to make the Musica Viva the Italian Section of the ISCM. I do not have information on Dallapiccola's attempts to create on its behalf an Italian Section. I have to say, with all frankness, that his motion to totally exclude from the section the Roman elements, and in particular Petrassi and I, was not very nice. But I am this miserable provincial who seems to illustrate to our poor Italy the best of years gone by.[31]

Before long, however, it was clear that the ISCM would not favour Casella in their decision making. Dallapiccola wrote to Paul Collaer (a Belgian musicologist active in the ISCM) on the 16th of January to tell him that his group would turn either to Casella or Malipiero to be its president.[32] Collaer swiftly replied coyly that the 'prevailing view' in London was that 'younger musicians' should be encouraged to take the lead.[33] Dallapiccola consulted Mantelli and Ghedini, and replied on the 28th of February, asking what Collaer meant to imply by this suggestion.[34] The Belgian's rather surprising response was that Casella's fascist past would not permit his approval by the Society's delegates.[35] Hearing that Casella's past was well known by the ISCM shook the Italian musicians gathered around Dallapiccola, who was later to recall that he was 'astonished at the accuracy with which the outside world has been informed of every physical and ideological movement of Italian intellectuals during the years of the war'.[36] A letter from Dallapiccola, Ghedini and Mantelli to Gatti on the 8th of April reveals that a change of plan was being considered; the group had decided to inform Casella of Collaer's letter and to dissuade him from pursuing

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[31] Ibid.
[32] Dallapiccola, autograph letter to Collaer, 16 Jan 1946, FLD.
[33] Collaer, autograph letter to Dallapiccola, 1 Feb 1946, FLD.
[34] Dallapiccola, autograph letter to Collaer, 28 Feb 1946, FLD.
[35] Collaer, autograph letter to Dallapiccola, 25 Mar 1946, FLD.
[36] Dallapiccola, 'Personal report to the Committee of the Italian ISCM section', L.B13, 1-2.

the presidency of the Italian section. They wrote 'we do not believe it possible for him to return to the ISCM after his dealings with the Ministry for Popular Culture … can things really return to the way they were before and be administered by Fascists?'[37] Gatti was charged with breaking the news to Casella, and the two agreed that the composer would only play a part in an honorary committee.[38]

This decision was soon vindicated. The ISCM did want to reach out to Italy for cooperation, but the eventual invitation to the London festival (from Edward Clark, and coming at the end of May 1946), was to Dallapiccola instead of Casella.[39] It asked him to attend as a delegate and to hear a performance of his *Canti di Prigionia* – a work presumably brought to the attention of the Society by its inclusion on Casella's list. And in fact, the ISCM was treating Italy with relative clemency: whilst no other Italian works or delegates were chosen, nobody at all from Germany, Austria, Japan, or Finland were included; thus Italy was favoured amongst the Axis powers in even having a delegate invited to the Festival. These events prompted Dallapiccola to go ahead with forming an official Italian section to propose to the delegates at the London Festival, here reported publically on the 6th of July 1946 in *Il Mondo*:

> In many places in Europe and America … various national sections have been reconstituted and, amongst them, the Italian national section. Its committee of honour is composed of the engineer Enrico Carrara and Maestri Casella, Gui and Malipiero; the managing committee is composed of Guido Gatti, Dr G. Alberto Mantelli and the Maestri Cortese, Dallapiccola, Ghedini, Nielsen and Petrassi. The general secretary for this year has been nominated as Luigi Dallapiccola.[40]

So on Friday the 5th of June, Dallapiccola arrived in London. The fact that he could get there at all was improbable, given the circumstances, as Dietrich Kämper notes: 'the controls at Dover were severe: Italy had as yet still no treaty of peace with England and the visa concessions must have been granted as a specific exception.[41] The 'special cards and photographs for foreigners' Dallapiccola had to obtain left him anxious over the reception he was to receive as an Italian; he later wrote that 'I had not forgotten that Italy had declared

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[37] Dallapiccola, autograph letter to Gatti, 8 Apr 1946, FLD.
[38] Gatti, autograph letter to Dallapiccola, 19 Apr 1946 FLD.
[39] See the letter from Casella to Dallapiccola reprinted in Nicolodi ed. *Saggi, Testimonianze, Carteggio, Biografia e Bibliografia*, 71, and Dallapiccola's reply, which constitute their personal resolutions to the argument.
[40] Dallapiccola, 'Società Internazionale di Musica Contemporanea', 10.
[41] Kämper, *Luigi Dallapiccola: La Vita e l'Opere*, 139.

war … and that in July 1946 we still did not have a peace treaty. I thought it my duty to maintain my dignity: to be pleasant with everyone but to smile at no-one.[42]

The festival programme Dallapiccola would have been handed (seen in Example 2. 3) did not shy away from reminding him of Italy's uncertain position. Their section, along with that of Germany and Japan, was not listed, and he was present, as the jury minutes regarded him, only as an 'observer'. Dent's introductory note would have done little to reassure him that the war would go unmentioned:

> Even before war broke out political troubles began to affect the Society. Our German section was dissolved by the National-Socialist government soon after it came into power, and although the Fascist government had sanctioned the festival at Florence in 1934, our Italian section was forced to withdraw from the Society in 1939.[43]

This openness to the past characterised the festival. In a less measured tone than Dent, the national daily *News Chronicle* (sponsors of the event) enthusiastically reported the festival as the musical equivalent of V.E. day:

> For seven years the nations of the world have been isolated. The exchange of ideas was succeeded by the exchange of bombs. Today, the pendulum swings slowly back to sanity, and the artistic soul of Europe is released from its long nightmare of oppression… From the formerly occupied countries and from all over the world leading musicians are coming to London. They will meet in an atmosphere where the stifling influence of political and racial discrimination is but an evil memory of the past.[44]

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[42] Letter to Edward Clark, quoted in Lutyens *A Goldfish Bowl*, 167. The 'peace treaty' Dallapiccola refers to was the official application of the Potsdam conference conclusions specific to the Italian nation, its borders and foreign policy, which was not signed until the 10th of February 1947 and did not come into effect until the 31st of July that year. See Mamarella, *Italy after Fascism: A Political History 1943-1965*, 160.

[43] 'Programme of the XXth Festival of the ISCM, London 1946', 7.

[44] *News Chronicle*, 6 July 1946, 2.

Programme of the 20th ISCM Festival in London, July 1946

Saturday 6th July	3-5 pm	ENROLMENT OF MEMBERS	*Novellos, 160 Wardour Street*
	6.30 pm	RECEPTION OF DELEGATES BY THE 'NEWS CHRONICLE'	*Waldorf Hotel*
Sunday 7th July	3 pm	FIRST ORCHESTRAL CONCERT :	*Royal Opera House*

Richard Mohaupt (Germany-USA)	*Town Piper Music*	*(1940)*
Elisabeth Lutyens (England)	*Three Symphonic Preludes*	*(1944)*
Robert de Roos (Holland)	*Piano Concerto*	*(1943-44)*
Elsa Barraine (France)	*Second Symphony*	*(1938)*
Sergei Prokofiev (U.S.S.R.)	*Ode to the End of the War*	*(1945)*

Monday 8th July	7pm	FIRST CHAMBER CONCERT : *Goldsmiths Hall*

Jerzy Fitelberg (Poland-USA)	*Fifth String Quartet*	*(1945)*
Albert Moeschinger (Switzerland)	*Sonatina*	*(1944)*
Sten Broman (Sweden)	*Second String Quartet*	
Luigi Dallapiccola	*Songs From Captivity*	
Igor Stravinsky (France-USA)	*Sonata for two pianos*	*(1943-44)*
Paul Hindemith (Germany-USA)	*String quartet in Eb*	*(1943)*

Tuesday 9th July	7pm	CONCERT OF MUSIC BY HENRY PURCELL *Goldsmiths Hall* (1659-1695)

Wednesday 10th July	7pm	SECOND CHAMBER CONCERT: *Goldsmiths Hall*

Ernst Krenek (Austria-USA)	*Seventh String Quartet*	*(1944)*
Josef Zavadil (Czechoslovakia)	*Suite for Violin and Piano*	
Olivier Messiaen (France)	*Quatour pour la Fin du Temps*	*(1940)*
Arnold Schoenberg (Austria-USA)	*Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte*	*(1944)*

Thursday 11th July	10.45 am	ASSEMBLY OF DELEGATES	*Novellos, 160 Wardour Street*
	7 pm	PERFORMANCE BY THE BALLET RAMBERT	*Sadlers Wells*
Friday 12th July	10.45 am	ASSEMBLY OF DELEGATES	*Novellos, 160 Wardour Street*
	7 pm	CHAMBER ORCHESTRAL CONCERT :	*Goldsmiths Hall*

William Schuman (USA)	*Symphony for Strings*	*(1943)*
Andrzej Panufnik (Poland)	*Five Folk-Tunes*	
Anton Webern (Austria)	*1st Cantata*	*(1940)*
Tibor Harsanyi (Hungary-France)	*Divertimento No. 2*	*(1943)*

Sunday 14th July	3 pm	SECOND ORCHESTRAL CONCERT : *Royal Opera House*

Alan Rawsthorne (England)	*Corteges Overture*	*(1945)*
Raymond Loucheur (France)	*Nocturne for Orchestra*	*(1941)*
Roman Palester (Poland)	*Violin Concerto*	*(1939-41)*
Bela Bartok (Hungary-USA)	*Concerto for Orchestra*	*(1943)*

	7 to 9 pm	RECEPTION OF DELEGATES BY *74 Brook Street* THE BRITISH COUNCIL

Ex. 2. 3: Programme of the 20th ISCM Festival (schedule taken from pages 9-34).

Chapter 2

Dallapiccola's *Canti di Prigionia* were performed by the B.B.C. singers, conducted by Ernst Ansermet, on the 8th of July. The work was enormously successful, and the acclaim for its composer resounding: Dallapiccola writes that 'the cordiality noted before the concert increased even more after the execution of the *Canti di Prigionia*'.[45] The composer later gave this moment an aura of personal rebirth, writing that when he was given the honour of being especially invited onto the stage, 'I presented myself to the public; and it was thus that my new life started'.[46] The 'first great cultural conference since the war' thus lent Dallapiccola's music a rehabilitative quality[47], aided by the unequivocal praise given to him by the London reviewers of the festival:

> the festival threw up two or three compositions which were worthwhile and appropriate to the occasion. Firstly, Dallapiccola's 'Songs from Captivity', a fascinating and lively essay in unusual sonorities. It is written expertly …[48]

> of the younger composers who brought chamber music, Luigi Dallapiccola is outstanding. His *Songs from Captivity* for chorus, a large group of percussion, two harps and two pianos are settings of sentences from Mary Stuart, Boethius and Savanarola. They gave one a new and thrilling experience… Dallapiccola's music is 'like' nobody else's. He has the gifts and the authenticity of the real composer, and such are few and far between.[49]

That this was the first real public contact an Italian musician had with the international musical establishment, in particular the Anglo-American world, and that it resulted in such acclamation for one of Italy's most prominent composers, demonstrates the symbolic power this event holds in an assessment of post-war Italian music.

However, the internal wrangling behind the scenes of this festival paints a less positive picture of the musico-diplomatic scenario. Even after the success of the *Canti di Prigionia*, Italy was still not a member section of the ISCM, and Dallapiccola had tasked himself with re-negotiating their entry. The Assembly of ISCM Delegates was held on Thursday 11th of July at Novello's publishing house, and its deliberations are documented in full by means of a private report Dallapiccola drafted on his return to Italy. The minutes of the meeting show that 'a letter was read from Luigi Dallapiccola reporting the formation of a group of notable young Italian musicians which desired to be accepted as the Italian

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[45] Dallapiccola, 'Personal report to the Committee of the Italian ISCM section', L.B13, 1.
[46] Lutyens, *A Goldfish Bowl* 167.
[47] *News Chronicle*, Monday July 8th 1946, 3.
[48] Frank, 'The I.S.C.M. Festival', 234.
[49] Boys, 'London Festival of the International Society for Contemporary Music'. 18-19.

section of the International Society'.[50] Edward Clark (ISCM secretary) had privately indicated to the composer that there would be no problem in readmitting the Italian section, but in Dallapiccola's words, 'the matter was not to be so simple'.[51] He was, as seen above, 'astonished at the accuracy with which the outside world has been informed of every physical and ideological movement of Italian intellectuals during the years of the war', and in particular he was surprised at the negativity towards Casella shown in conversation with Manuel Rosenthal and Jacques Ibert and occasioned by a speech Casella had made at the French embassy in Rome in 1939.[52] Dallapiccola was sent out of the meeting room for 25 minutes, and when he was brought back in, Edward Dent informed him that the majority of delegates took exception to the inclusion of two names in the Italian section: Casella and Petrassi. Dallapiccola was then asked to defend each in turn, beginning with the elderly Roman composer.

> I spoke at length of the illness that has beset Casella over the last 4 years; I insisted on the influence that an imperfect state of health can have on the moral attitude of a person; I recalled that Casella – having a Jewish wife – believed it necessary to render the life of his wife less difficult, at least. From the bottom of the table a voice (maybe it was Alan Bush) replied to me that others had Jewish wives and yet did not descend to the compromises Casella made. [Alois] Hàba claimed Casella 'governed aggressively'; various delegates thought that it would not be possible for them to work with a man that had behaved so lowly. Then I pointed out that Casella would not have much to do with the delegates of the various sections, firstly because he is always gravely ill and secondly because he was taking part in the 'committee d'honour' and not in the executive committee. All were agreed that the 'Comité d'honneur' had only a 'decorative' function; but the name of Casella would not be accepted. I then insisted that for the young Italian school: [in French] 'there is a time before Casella and a time after him'. [Robert] Sanders replied that, whatever Casella represented in Italy, a clean moral behaviour had to be demanded from him … [Alexis] Roland-Manuel was the first to speak … He recommended that the assembly have all faith in me, and accept my deliberations and my assurances that 'Casella would absolutely not harm the ISCM' … But Alan Bush rose up (who Dent was later to define as "a most passionate communist, but who we don't take very seriously here), to hold a long discourse speaking of 'the executor', the 'persecutor', the 'torturer'. I responded that Casella had killed no one, denounced no one or tortured no one … But the attempt of Roland-Manuel had failed. At the beginning of the

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[50] 'Minutes of the 1946 ISCM General Assembly of Delegates', folder 50.1000, 8.
[51] Dallapiccola, 'Personal report to the Committee of the Italian ISCM section', L.B13, 1.
[52] Ibid., 2.

afternoon, it seemed to me necessary to assume responsibility myself, or to eliminate Casella, or see the non-admission of the Italian section. [53]

Politically speaking, there are several important strands to this debate. Firstly, the ISCM members were anxious to demonstrate a 'clean break' with anything to do with Fascism and the Axis regimes; this much is clear by its later official charging of the Italian sections with 'a thorough cleansing of its membership', and by the treatment of the returning German section in 1948.[54] So Casella, the public face of the rift between the ISCM and Italy in 1939, connected with racist statements and imbued with a Fascist way of handling external relationships, was not acceptable to the international compositional community. Secondly, the lack of categorical definition (in terms of ideology) latent in Italian Fascism is acknowledged, but the ISCM was clear: whether out of self-interest, the pressure to conform or actual spiritual adhesion to Fascist doctrine, any working association with the regime would not be tolerated. Thus on the international level, Dallapiccola's attempts to portray and interpret fascism as a multi-layered and culturally insidious phenomenon, involving the collective as mass-innocents, were unsuccessful.[55]

Thirdly, Alan Bush's intervention (from the far-left of the political spectrum) demonstrated that a Kafkaesque narrative of fascism which depicted a symbolic world of 'the executor', the 'persecutor', and the 'torturer' under Mussolini had powerful resonances outside of Italy. Whether or not anyone 'took him seriously', the images he invoked would have been potent enough for Dallapiccola, who was at the time working on an opera (*Il Prigioniero*) that explored all three of these categories (through the personality of the Jailer/Grand Inquisitor; see chapter 6). Fourthly, the ISCM's policy towards Casella was not framed in terms of a difficulty working with the composer on a personal level, but with what he symbolised – and defining this was the reason for the debate which lasted, by Dallapiccola's estimation, for 35 minutes.[56] Anton Haefeli argues that Casella was seen to

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[53] Ibid., 4-5.

[54] Two rival applications for readmission were sent from German sections to the Society in 1947; they were both told to return the next year having purged their membership of radical elements and Nazis. 'Minutes of the 1947 ISCM General Assembly of Delegates at Amsterdam', folder 50.1000, 7.

[55] Even some in the international community would have shared such sentiments: see Collaer, autograph letter to Dallapiccola, 25 Mar 1946, FLD.

[56] Letter from Dallapiccola to Fedele D'Amico, 3 Aug in *Saggi, Testimonianze, Carteggio, Biografia e Bibliografia*, 73.

be just too closely linked with Fascism; many regarded him 'the cultural figurehead Casella, the senior ISCM functionary: Mussolini's "right hand man" and musical prophet'.[57]

The discussion on Petrassi had a more positive outcome for the Italian section. Some ISCM members were worried about his involvement in the 1942 meeting of the 'Permanent Council for the International Cooperation of Composers', the Nazi sponsored opponent to the ISCM founded by Richard Strauss in 1934. However, Dallapiccola's arguments in the composer's favour were this time successful:

> The right side of the table (Egypt, Denmark, Holland, Czechoslovakia), put to me their very generic questions about Petrassi. I admitted that he was in Germany with Malipiero and Pizzetti in 1942, 'but to try to improve the conditions of modern music with respect to the Nazi regime'. It seemed that my words did not convince all. And now I put a question to them: 'Is there someone here that knows that the music of Petrassi was defended in Germany?' Sanders, who was standing (evidently to object to something) sat down and replied in the negative. In five minutes the 'Petrassi case' blew over and came to be considered non-existent.[58]

The lack of a link between Petrassi and an official pronouncement of fidelity to the regime seems to have been the determining factor in this discussion. The ISCM delegates were prepared to accept the likelihood that a composer could be used by a Fascist state for its own ends. They would have been aware that Petrassi's music, along with that of Malipiero and Dallapiccola, was in fact banned at some points in Germany for aesthetic reasons, and that the composer had shown no tendencies to the type of reactionary anti-Europeanism that marked the end of Casella's life. Regarding that composer, Dallapiccola's only option was clear to him: Casella had to be struck off from membership of the honorary committee of the Italian section. In the afternoon session of the meeting, this was done:

> Resuming discussion of the Italian application, a strong recommendation that the Italian section be charged with a thorough cleansing of its membership was made and that Signor Casella should retire from the Comité d'honneur, Mr Dallapiccola gave this undertaking and it was thereupon proposed by Hugo Weisgall (U.S.A.), seconded by Johan Bentzon (Denmark) and unanimously carried, that the application made by Luigi Dallapiccola for the re-admission of an Italian Section to the Society should be accepted.[59]

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[57] Haefeli, *Die Internationale Gesellschaft für Neue Musik (IGNM): ihre Geschichte von 1922 bis zur Gegenwart,* 286.

[58] Dallapiccola, 'Personal report to the Committee of the Italian ISCM section', L.B13, 5. Petrassi briefly recalled this festival in a later interview: Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy*, 142.

[59] 'Minutes of the 1946 ISCM General Assembly of Delegates at London', folder 50.1000, 9.

The dual aspects of this debate – the positive outcome for Italy and the convoluted and negative discussions needed to reach it – need to be taken together as complementing factors, facets of a delicate re-navigation of the boundaries of 'nation-state' and cultural memory in light of the tarnishing effects of the Second World War. It has been useful in particular to reveal how politicised this event was; in this regard, Charles Maier and Karen Painter's statement as recently as 2004 that 'Casella deputized Dallapiccola to renew Italy's representation at the ISCM' is shown as simplistic and incorrect by the sources drawn upon in this chapter.[60] Yet the complex ideologies surrounding post-war recovery seen at the 1946 ISCM festival are given a further level of meaning when the *Canti di Prigionia* are themselves interrogated, demonstrating how the musically ambivalent and the historically politicised fitted together in a unique way in the re-internationalisation of Italian music.

The ambiguous cultural memory of Dallapiccola's *Canti di Prigionia*

Given what is now known of the debates at the festival in 1946, it is important to reconsider the *Canti di Prigionia* not just as an example of Dallapiccola's well known 'protest-music' genre (as it has been conventionally interpreted) but as a work that fulfilled a specific function in a specific historical context, a function that is in part determined by its musical content.[61] The overwhelmingly positive reaction that greeted the *Canti* has already been shown, and it can be argued that in 1946 Dallapiccola's musical pronouncements counted as much as his verbal ones in demonstrating a renewal of Italian musical culture – a moving beyond Fascist aesthetics. This perception dominated later histories. In the 1950s, British and American commentators were pointing to the foundational status of the work in post-war Italian music:

> Dallapiccola has deeply impressed himself on my consciousness with his magnificent 'Canti di Prigionia', and this great and terrible score, twelve-note or no, has convinced me that Italy is once more back on the musical map.[62]
>
> Both the Canti and the opera [*Il Prigioniero*] reveal Dallapiccola as a prodigious musical personality, a man of high intellect and imagination, formidable

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[60] Maier and Painter, '"Songs of a Prisoner": Luigi Dallapiccola and the Politics of Voice under Fascism' in Illiano ed. *Italian Music during the Fascist period*, 571

[61] The *Canti di Prigionia* consist of three 'songs': 'Preghiere di Maria Stuarda' ('Prayer of Mary Stuart'), 'Invocazione di Boezio' ('Boethius's Invocation'), 'Congedo di Savanarola' ('Savanarola's Farewell').

[62] 'P.J.P', 'Review of Vlad, *Luigi Dallapiccola'*, 310.

technique, and broadly cultivated humanity. His is a genuinely new and important voice in contemporary music.[63]

And even later, historians have often strongly testified to its rehabilitative effects at the ISCM in 1946: William Austin writes of the 'most surprising and stirring work on the programme' whilst Anton Haefeli argues that the *Canti di Prigioniero* acted powerfully in being 'one of the few works which reacted to the shocks of class pursuit, race hatred and holocaust, of fascism and National Socialism combined'.[64] In Italy, it is no overstatement to say that the *Canti* proved talismanic in post-war musical rehabilitation, attested to by the central place it played in the resurrection of the Venice International Festival of Contemporary Music in September 1946, its performance at the Sagra Musicale Umbra in 1948, and at the 1949 Maggio Musicale Fiorentina;[65] the work also toured America in the early 1950s,[66] and in 1952 it appeared at the important *L'Oeuvre du XXe siècle* festival in Paris.[67] The idea of the *Canti* as the first part of an anti-fascist triptych (joined later by *Il Prigioniero*, 1949-50 and the *Canti di Liberazione*, 1955) was a potent one beyond 1946, and since this becomes a dominant hermeneutical lens through which scholars automatically interpret Dallapiccola's music, it seems (quite rightly) natural to ascribe the *Canti's* power at the first post-war ISCM festival to this characteristic: in essence they were received as a work of 'musical diplomacy'.[68] All this is strange, because, as will be argued, the *Canti di Prigionia* is anything but a post-war, rehabilitative work. If anything, its identity was constructed after its composition in 1938-41, both at the 1946 ISCM festival and in Italian musical life in general. Substituting an ontological analysis of the work for the more common *a posteriori* investigation sheds light on two rather problematic historical constructions surrounding the *Canti di Prigionia*.

The first is historical: the idea that the work was conceived in antagonism to fascism, and therefore the songs were, to quote Dallapiccola, 'buried by men and

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[63] Goldman, 'Current Chronicle', 405.

[64] Austin, *Music in the 20th Century*, 514; Haefeli, *Die Internationale Gesellschaft für Neue Musik (IGNM): ihre Geschichte von 1922 bis zur Gegenwart*, 289.

[65] See Sità, 'I Festival' in Salvetti and Antolini eds. *Italia Millenovecentocinquanta*, 117-137.

[66] Goldman, 'Current Chronicle', 405.

[67] See Carroll, *Music and Ideology in Cold War Europe*, 19, 61.

[68] For example, see Raymond Fearn's discussion of the work, *Luigi Dallapiccola*, 56-66. Much of this hermeneutical lens was built on the basis of Dallapiccola's article 'The Genesis of the *Canti di Prigionia* and *Il Prigioniero*: an Autobiographical Fragment', which appeared in *The Musical Quarterly* (thus ensuring a wide Anglo-American readership) in 1953. A revised translation can be found in Shackelford, *Dallapiccola on Opera*, 35-60.

circumstances … after their creation in Rome in 1941'.[69] In fact, the conception of the *Canti* came as Dallapiccola was only just ending a fifteen year political adherence to the fascist party, albeit shallow, and thus it is deeply ambiguous as a completely anti-fascist work. The much-quoted assertion by Goffredo Petrassi that Dallapiccola was, until 1938, 'a fervent fascist – so fervent that he sometimes annoyed us' testifies to this, as does the fact that Dallapiccola firmly took Mussolini's side against the economic sanctions during Italy's invasion of Ethiopia in 1935.[70] Jurg Stenzl and Fiamma Nicolodi both argue for such a historical reading.[71] Other scholars, such as Mario Sperenzi and Ben Earle, have increasingly come to the conclusion that the opera *Volo di Notte* – the very work Dallapiccola broke off composing to start the *Canti* in the September of 1938 – is inherently fascistic.[72] Earle's insights into the ideology of the opera demonstrate three important things: firstly, Dallapiccola's dramaturgy depends on mechanized, hyper-realist models of d'Annuzian inspiration and fascist spectacle; secondly the Airline director, the hero-god Rivière, identifies directly with Mussolini; and thirdly, the structure of *Volo di Notte* is both a microscopic and macroscopic 'crescendo-catharsis' motion towards the death of the pilot (Fabien) for the cause of modernity, symbolising the 'ego-annihilating absorption into the individual collective subject of fascism'.[73] Sperenzi's argument revolves around his reluctance to introduce himself to Dallapiccola at a performance of *Volo di Notte* in 1964:

> I remember well that afterwards, having anxiously awaited the performance of the work with interest, I was left disconcerted. I could not understand the fact that Dallapiccola, known for his anti-fascist views, had written an opera that at first sight seemed to me, if not an apology for the regime, at least strongly ambiguous in its exaltation, through the personality of Rivière, of the figure of the 'leader' of invincible will. Now, 30 years after the performance in 1964, I freely admit the simplicity of my equation 'Rivière: Mussolini = Airport: Italy'; but therein lies the enigma of this work.[74]

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[69] Letter to Lutyens, *A Goldfish Bowl*, 167. Dallapiccola made a similar remark in 'The Genesis of the *Canti di Prigionia* and *Il Prigioniero*: an Autobiographical fragment' (original *Musical Quarterly* version, 365): 'after the Rome performance, personalities and circumstances barred the way for the *Canti di Prigionia*'.

[70] Quoted in Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy*, 146.

[71] Stenzl, *Von Giacomo Puccini zu Luigi Nono. Italienische Musik 1922-1952: Faschismus – Resistenza – Republik*, 153-9. Nicolodi, *Musica e Musicista nel Ventennio Fascista*, 289-90.

[72] See Sperenzi, 'L'enigma del "Volo di Notte"' in *Dallapiccola. Lettere e Prospettive*, 259-275; Earle, 'The Avant-Garde Artist as Superman: Aesthetics and Politics in Dallapiccola's *Volo di Notte*' in Illiano ed. *Italian Music during the Fascist period*, 657-716.

[73] Ibid., respectively pages 692, 683 , 687.

[74] Sperenzi, 'L'Enigma del "Volo di Notte"' in de Santis (ed.) *Dallapiccola. Letture e Prospettive*, 259-60.

It is impossible to deny that the *Canti* were conceived within this problematic context. So the composer's testimony, which famously spoke of the work as a direct response to the racial laws, needs to be re-cast in light of the piece's historical proximity to other ideological motivations:

> How should I describe my state of mind when I learned from the radio of the decisions of the Fascist Government on that fatal September afternoon [1938]? I should have liked to protest; but, at the same time, I was aware that any gesture of mine would have been futile. Only through music could I express my indignation.[75]

And if the *Canti* are the first signs of a turn from Mussolinian dogma – and how this itself might work will be explored later on – they were given such a status by the composer *post facto*, so to speak, in the hey-day of 1950s anti-fascism and through the exigencies of a particular type of post-war selective memory. Giving weight to this assertion is the fact that the work was not received in Fascist Italy in any way consistent with Dallapiccola's conception of its political message. Whilst even *Volo di Notte* was publicly accused by Alceo Toni, one of the regime's more zealous official composers, of lacking the appropriate glorification of heroism,[76] the *Canti* - ostensibly the opposite type of work - made as the composer admits a 'terrific impression' at their first performance.[77] That the première could take place in 1941 in a prominent Roman theatre conducted by Fernando Previtali – on the day of the declaration of war against America no less – is testament to this. As Bjorn Heile ruefully notes, 'it is open to question how far a work premièred in Rome in December 1941 with no particular repercussions can be seen to be resistant'.[78] And the idea that the pieces were 'immediately buried by the authorities' is also quickly dispelled. If so, why after its radio première was Dallapiccola invited to submit the *Preghiere* (the first of the three *Canti* to be composed) to the prestigious and, by this point politically controlled Venice Biennale in 1940?[79] How could Mussolini himself towards the end of his life be found commenting 'we can expect good things from [Luigi] Dalla Piccola'?[80] If so, why in 1941 would

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[75] Dallapiccola, 'The Genesis of the *Canti di Prigionia* and *Il Prigioniero*: an autobiographical fragment' (original *Musical Quarterly* version, 362-3).
[76] See Fearn, *Luigi Dallapiccola*, 39.
[77] Dallapiccola, 'My Choral Music' in *The Composer's Point of View*, ed. Hines, 165.
[78] Heile, 'Review of Raymond Fearn, "The Music of Luigi Dallapiccola"', 152.
[79] Letter [on paper headed 'Festival Internazionale di Musica Contemporanea della Biennale di Venezia'] to Dallapiccola, 6th February 1940, FLD.
[80] Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy*, 15-16.

Dallapiccola be invited by Giuseppe Bottai (Minister for Education in Mussolini's government) to sit on a committee dedicated to systematically eliminating non-Italian works from conservatory curricula?[81] Why, as late as April 1943, was the composer was being urged in the press by Vittorio Mussolini (*Il Duce*'s son) to write a patriotic Fascist symphony?[82] And why, as Earle notes, would it be that 'the list of Dallapiccola's [Italian] commissions and performances from 1940-1943 is impressive'?[83] None of these revelations sit easily with the image of a reputation ruined by the anti-fascism of the *Canti* at the first performance of the first movement *Preghiere* (1938), nor the whole work (1941). The early post-war commentator on the work, Gianandrea Gavazzeni, only serves to reinforce this point: writing in 1946, he spoke of 'the number of critics that have written of [the *Canti*] with congenial affinity' and 'the favour it has met amongst listeners of different moral and aesthetic attitudes, both musicians and non'.[84]

So however much the *Canti* are protest music now, the Italian musical community did not understood it as such at the time – and nor did the Fascist authorities. The origins of the *Canti di Prigionia*, rather than being found in a subversive protest against fascism, were instead very much entangled with the regime. This was not the image of the work or of the composer that the ISCM was given in 1946, when the programme note to the *Canti* in the festival brochure proudly boasted of their roots in reaction to the racial laws of 1938.[85] In this sense, then, at the very core of Italy's internationalist project in the post war period was a work with compromised origins.

And even if the work is considered as an autonomous entity, it does not function as an uncomplicated act of protest against totalitarianism. Compared to Italian works from this period that are often seen as springing from the example of the *Canti*, and that specifically write about fascism, liberty and freedom – Luigi Nono's *Epitaffi per Federico García Lorca*, his *Il Canto Sospeso* and Bruno Maderna's *Kranichsteiner Kammerkantate* for instance – the *Canti* are much less overt. No wonder: Dallapiccola could not of course have written a clear 'anti-Mussolini' work in 1941 and Fedele D'Amico recognised this when he

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[81] See Nicolodi, *Musica e musicisti nel ventennio Fascisti*, 198-9.
[82] Quoted in D'Amico, *Canti di Prigionia*, 92.
[83] Earle, 'The Avant-Garde Artist as Superman: Aesthetics and Politics in Dallapiccola's *Volo di Notte* in Illiano ed. *Italian Music during the Fascist period*, 713.
[84] Gavazzeni, 'Dai Canti di Prigionia a Rencesvals' in *Musicisti di Europea*, 204.
[85] 'Programme of the XXth Festival of the ISCM, London 1946', 19-20.

pointed out as early as 1945 that the songs 'contain no political or social references'.[86] So the texts of the *Canti di Prigionia*, (seen at Example 2. 4), rather than protesting against Fascism (a problematic interpretation; they don't actually 'say' anything so specific), are inextricably linked to the fluctuation of their historical moment, described above. If anything, they are acting as Dallapiccola's *confessional voice*.

Prayer of Mary Stuart (from Stefan Zweig's biography of the Queen)

O Domine Deus! Speravi in Te.   O Lord my God, I have hoped in Thee,
O care mi Jesu! Nunc libera me.   O dear Lord Jesus set me free,
In dura catena, in miseria poena, desidero Te.   Despite my hard chains and misery, I desire Thee
Languendo, gemendo et genu flectendo,   I languish, and groaning bend my knee,
Adoro, imploro, ut liberes me.   Adoring, imploring Thee to set me free.

Boethius, from *The Consolation of Philosophy*

Felix qui potuit boni   Happy the man whose eyes once could
fontem visere lucidum   Perceive the shining fount of Good;
felix qui potuit gravis   Happy he whose unchecked mind
terrae solvere vincula   Could leave the chains of earth behind.

Savonarola, *Meditation on the Psalm "In thee, O Lord, have I put my trust"*

Premat mundus, insurgant hostes, nihil timeo   Let the world oppress, let the foe rise up, I fear nothing:
Quoniam in Te Domine speravi,   For in thee, O Lord, have I trusted,
Quoniam Tu es spes mea,   For thou art my hope,
Quoniam Tu altisimun posuisti refugium tuum   For thou hast placed thy refuge on the summit.

Ex. 2. 4: Texts of the *Canti di Prigionia*

How is this claim to be supported? For a start the words are all taken from those imprisoned for *heresy*, Mary Stuart because of her Catholic faith, Severinus Boethius by a Byzantine tyrant, and Girolamo Savonarola by the Medici because of his Florentine reforms. That all three went on to be executed for their outspoken beliefs is perhaps the most overt anti-authority move in the *Canti*, for which Dallapiccola deserves admiration.[87] But their exoneration is not the point, rather their vulnerability; and their fulfilment is in internal redemption, not in a vindication of their rights, as Fedele D'Amico wrote:

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[86] D'Amico, 'Canti di Prigionia' in *Società*, 95. Goldman makes a similar point in 1951, writing that the *Canti* 'are not songs of documentary captivity; they contain no allusions to circumstance'. 'Current Chronicle', 406.
[87] Alongside this, it is provocative that the 'Preghiere' of Mary Stuart is quoted from a book by Stefan Zweig (a prominent Jewish author whose libretto to Strauss's *Die Schweigsame Frau* led to the banning of the work in Hitler's Germany).

The 'prisoners' of Dallapiccola evidently are not free in the socialist sense (not even in the sense of the Christian democrats, though they are certainly Christians). They are simply prisoners that affirm their own exile and fetters. Their protest is an act of elementary humanity, invested with only an interior, religious redemption. But this does not make them less solemn or believable.[88]

Secondly, in invoking a pre-modern world and using the 'universal language' of Latin, they act as an escape route for the composer from the twentieth century, simultaneously letting Dallapiccola turn to religion (and to the symbolic community of the Catholic faith) which, it can be seen, steadily replaced nationalism as the spiritual muse in his life.[89] Thirdly, Mary Stuart's verse expresses a bodily agony that equates with the claustrophobia and crisis of spirit that overcame Dallapiccola during the composition of the *Canti*; D'Amico, again, touches on this when he speaks of a 'revolt (in advanced terms) from the society and the conditions in which the *Canti* were born, from the individuation of strength that this revolt calls us from'.[90] Fourthly, and paradoxically, Boethius' verse enunciates Dallapiccola's tendency towards Platonistic conceits, separating body and soul and holding that if one could only think well enough, one could escape the bodily realm. The 'higher good' of the mind is an empyrean of intellectual, literary and artistic autonomy, and the power to seek refuge in an art uncontaminated by politics is embraced; in essence, Dallapiccola offers salvation through the liberal arts. In all of this, the emphasis is on something less established than 'protest': more rightly, a confession of weakness; a 'coming to one's senses'; and an escapist mentality.

Underneath several layers of historically interpolated meaning then, the *Canti di Prigionia* is a multivalent work where such musical and historical ambivalences engage in an extraordinary fusion. The re-inscription of the work as a 'work of confession', in opposition to the conventional 'work of protest' demonstrates how thoroughly history itself changed this music and its remarkable flexibility in fitting the trope of the 'post-war', as Gavazzeni and D'Amico both observed in 1945:

This exact period of history and the mass of its composite elements has truly laid on this work a weight and an intensity of internal sentiment, the strength of an individual moral and emotive existence.[91]

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[88] D'Amico, 'Canti di Prigionia', 96-7.
[89] Fearn, *Luigi Dallapiccola*, 224. By 1941, the *Canti* were Dallapicocla's most religious work to date.
[90] D'Amico, 'Canti di Prigionia', 96.
[91] Gavazzeni, 'Dai Canti di Prigionia a Rencesvals' in *Musicisti di Europea*, 203.

> The *Canti di Prigionia* is really the retrieval of this content: it is the moment in which the metaphysics of Dallapiccola finally discovers its 'terrestrial veil' in which it is born and by which it is liberated: the link by which *it inserts itself in the human history of our time*.[92]

All these hermeneutical moves are confirmed in Dallapiccola's major symbolic act: the use of the Gregorian setting of the dark thirteenth-century judgment-day poem that sits at the heart of the Requiem mass: the 'Dies Irae, Dies Illa'.

Di - es   ir - ae Di - es   il - la Sol - vet Sae -clum in   fa - vi_____la Tes - te Da - vid cum sy - by_____lla
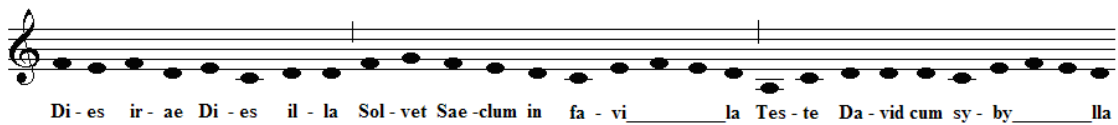
Ex. 2. 5: Plainchant melody of the 'Dies Irae, Dies Illa'

In the *Canti* this melody is prominent from the very beginning, and appears in one form or another on (almost) every single page of the score. Such heavy reliance on musical borrowing cannot fail to be without significance, and here the theoretical work of David Metzer and J. Peter Burkholder on musical appropriation is useful. Metzer argues that in twentieth century music

> [borrowed material] stands apart by virtue of being out of context. Such conspicuity intensifies the engagement between old and new … Once inside, it continuously points outside, as the prominence of the borrowing prods us to look back to its origins … transformation never assumes "primacy" over the original or provides the exclusive "framework" by which it can be understood … [the new work] cannot so easily control, let alone "strip", those associations.[93]

Metzer's fundamental point is that the appropriated object always carries its cultural discourse with it, and moreover the dialectic between old and new creates a novel type of work based on an aesthetics of non-integration, of cultural collision. Thus the 'Dies Irae', in this scheme, carries the monastic world of medieval Italy into the *Canti di Prigionia*, further reinforced by other medievalisms such as the use of parallel organum (the multitudinous bare fifths) and cori spezzati (the spilt 'choir' approach of the third movement).[94] Dallapiccola's cultural agenda and his life-long fascination with the world of Brunetto

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[92] D'Amico, 'Canti di Prigionia' in *Società*, 98-99 [italics added].

[93] Metzer, *Quotation and Meaning in Twentieth-Century Music*, 6-8.

[94] Stylistically, these traits are hallmarks of Dallapiccola's early music, evidenced in works such as the *Sei Cori di Michelangelo Buonarroti il Giovane* of 1933-6 and the *Tre Laudi* of 1936-7. See Fearn, *The Music of Luigi Dallapiccola,* 28-38.

Latini, Dante Alighieri and Jacopone da Todi make this kind of 'discourse transference' the most likely one, though nineteenth-century implications of the 'Dies Irae' within music (as a more specific reference to death and morbidity) cannot be ignored when considering the work on its own terms. But do either connotations have anything directly to do with anti-fascist oppression? More correctly, their signified meanings are fundamentally metaphysical: death culture, the dark self-mortification of medieval monasticism, the apocalyptic and imminent judgement of the world and the idea of divine eschatological wrath. Colliding with the circumstances of the *Canti's* composition - portentous times, a shift in personal beliefs – Dallapiccola's use of such associations suggests that the *Canti di Prigionia* is more a confessional-work responding to the call to repentance rather than a protest. It represents the composer's sudden 'claustrophobia' under a regime he is unsure of.[95] Thus Dallapiccola does not quote the 'Dies Irae' so much as wrestle with it. The extent to which the *Canti* tussle with their cultural associations is obvious if one considers Burkholder's 'taxonomy of borrowing'. Out of his 14 categories of borrowing, a full seven can be identified in Dallapiccola's use of the 'Dies Irae':

Burkholder's Borrowing 'Type'	Instrument	Bar
Modelling structure on the borrowed material	Multiple	Movt. II b. 132-183
Paraphrasing	Pn. I+II, Hp. I+II	Movt. III, b. 4-5, 7-8 etc.
Setting to new accompaniment	Multiple	Movt. I, b. 1-4
Using as a cantus firmus	Pn. I+II, Hp. I+II	Movt. III, b. 73-75
Stylistic allusion	Vb.	Movt. II, b. 49-56
Programmatic quotation aligned with a text	Multiple	Movt. II, b. 1-132
In a patchwork texture alongside other melodies	Series/Dies Illa	throughout

Ex. 2. 6: Borrowing 'Types' in Dallapiccola, *Canti di Prigionia*.[96]

The transitional and ideologically confused nature of the *Canti* is demonstrated in its imaginative and plural use of the 'Dies Irae' chant as a negative motif of judgement and the realisation of doom. This is furthered by the knowledge that the melody was not originally

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[95] Dallapiccola noted that others had applied this word to his *Canti*. Dallapiccola, 'My Choral Music', 162.
[96] Burkholder, 'The Uses of Existing Music: Musical Borrowing as a Field', 854.

intended as a symbol of 'outcry' at the outset in 1938 simply because it wasn't used then: it is a later addition to the music, coming into the compositional process in July 1939. As the composer's sketchbooks in the Archive of the Gabinetto Viessueux in Florence show, the work originally started in bar 26 and made no mention of the Dies Irae melody. Only half a year later did Dallapiccola compose the first 26 bars as an introduction, which, almost as if to make up for its lack in the latter stages of the piece, features the chant more dogmatically than any other section of the work.[97] Therefore the case for seeing this work as a gradual process of 'repentance' and ideological transition for the composer is strengthened. John Waterhouse suspected as much: 'Dallapiccola's overwhelming urge to put his Fascist past firmly behind him may itself have been an important driving force behind those justly famous political protest works the *Canti di Prigionia* and *Il Prigioniero*'.[98]

If the constructed identity of the *Canti* in the post-war period rested in part upon the symbolic freight of the *'Dies Irae'*, it was also backed up by Dallapiccola's staunch reputation for a burgeoning modernism that represented compositional 'freedom' in the face of reactionary political repression. So the fact that the *Canti* were seen as Dallapiccola's first serial work is important. And the debt to Anton Webern in the *Canti* is heavy; they began to be written in 1938, the same year Dallapiccola was so impressed by *Das Augenlicht* at the London ISCM festival and penned his longest exposition of what he found irresistible in Webern's music: sonority, timbre, 'planes of sound', and the use of canonicism and combined canons as pure music (not as part of an orchestral texture).[99] One section of the *Canti* in particular is heavily redolent of the Second Viennese composer: the central section of the *Congedo di Savanarola*, which is constructed as a rigorous multiple canon. Example 2. 7 shows that there are two orchestral groupings: one of a 'choir' of 16 singers, four on each part, and one of an 'orchestra' of the instruments plus the remaining members of the chorus in four parts. The first group sings a double canon: between the contralto and the soprano (Canon 1), initially at the fifth and changing to the fourth in bar 50, the soprano offset from the contralto by five bars; and between the bass and the tenor (Canon 2), a shorter canon with the bass offset from the tenor by a minim, and inverting the tune, starting at the interval of a tritone.

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[97] See the autographs in the Fondo Luigi Dallapiccola, especially LD Mus. 43.
[98] Waterhouse, 'Review of "Dallapiccola on Opera. 'Selected Writings of Luigi Dallapiccola" by Rudy Shackelford', 439.
[99] 'Anton Webern "Das Augenlicht"' in *Parole e Musica,* 225-230.
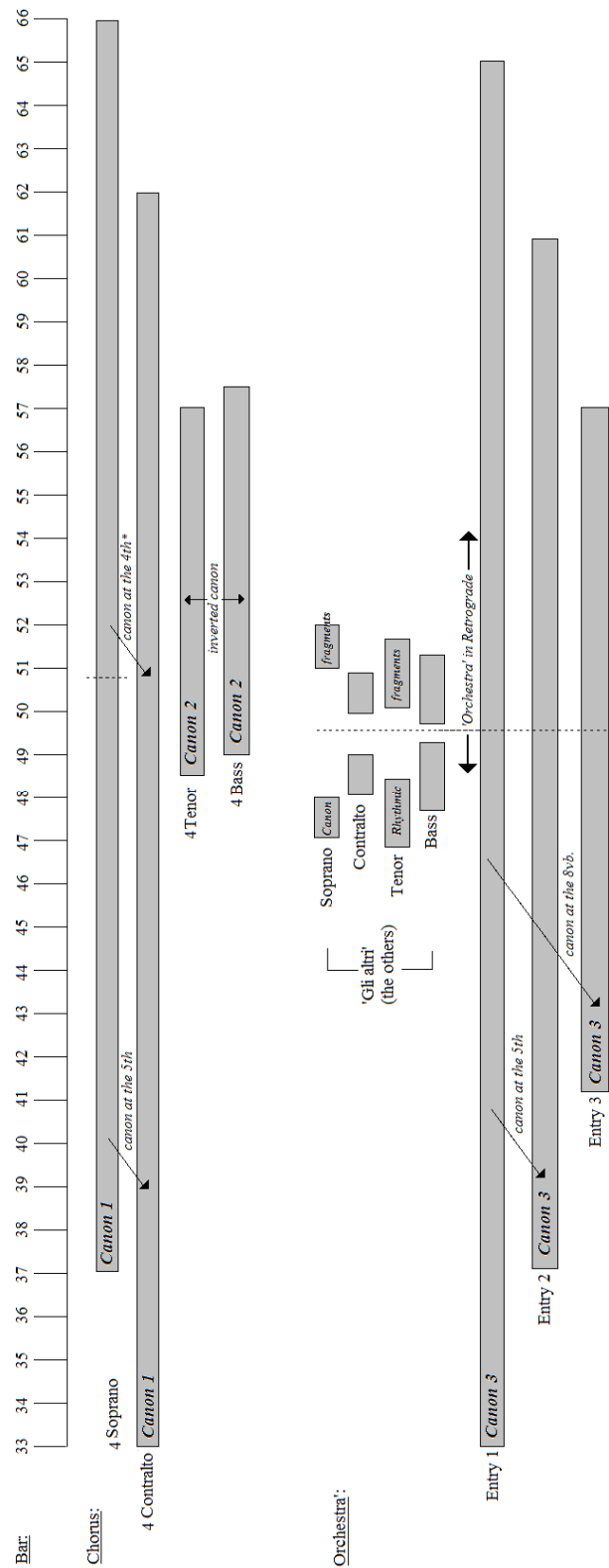
Ex. 2. 7: Canonic structure in bars 33-66 of Dallapiccola, *Canti di Prigionia*, 'Congedo di Savanarola'

The second grouping (labelled as the 'Orchestra') gives rise to the Schoenberg-'Die Mondfleck' comparison made by Roman Vlad,[100] as the three canonic parts (Canon 3) reverse on the third beat of bar 49 and play their material in retrograde (Example 2. 8); thus this entire section has a mirror-like construction under-girding it in its most prominent texture, that of the orchestra.[101]

Ex. 2. 8: Retrograde point (piano 1) bars 48-50, Dallapiccola, *Canti di Prigionia*, 'Congedo di Savanarola'

The combination of these three textures, a vocal double canon and an instrumental retrograde canon, achieve the kind of contrapuntal 'purity' which Dallapiccola so admired in passages such as this from *Das Augenlicht*, a single straight/retrograde canon followed by a double one:

Ex. 2. 9: Bars 47-57 of Webern, *Das Augenlicht*

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[100] Vlad, *Modernità e Tradizione nella Musica Contemporanea*, 206.

[101] Kämper calls it 'Fiamminghismo' ('Flemishness'), though he does not acknowledge the Webernian connotations of this phrase. Kämper, *Luigi Dallapiccola, La Vita e l'Opera*, 205; see also Webern, *The Path to the New Music*, 22-23.

Yet Dallapiccola's canons are infrequently serial, reflecting the *Canti* as a whole. Serialism forms part of a dialectic, a well-defined sign system. Creating a hierarchy of value and function between the serial and the modal elements of the work – between row and 'Dies Irae' – was something Dallapiccola was keen to highlight in his 'Genesis' essay:

> The twelve-tone system intrigued me, but I knew so little about it! Nevertheless, I based the entire composition on a twelve-tone series, and, as a symbolic gesture, counterpointed a fragment of the ancient liturgical sequence '*Dies irae, dies illa*'… I was convinced that the use of the '*Dies irae*' in the manner of a *cantus firmus* would facilitate the comprehension of my ideas.[102]

The problem is that the aesthetic binary presented here - serialism as structural, 'Dies Irae' as symbolic - is hardly borne out by analysis of the music.[103] In fact, there is an indefinite spectrum between these two positions, creating the very problem of classification, and thus the sense of fusion, that the *Canti* present. This is most obvious at the very opening:

Ex. 2. 10: Bars 1-4 of Dallapiccola, *Canti di Prigionia*, 'Preghiere di Maria Stuarda'

Some simple note-counting traces out the row and the 'Dies Irae': what is heard above all is not a linear set but a series of two four-note groups and a tetrachord woven around the familiar chant. This is facilitated by the construction of the 12-note series (Example 2. 11) which can be divided either into 3 distinct linear tetrachords or, if displaced by one note and treated circularly, three diminished sevenths. The series contributes distinct harmonic and

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[102] Dallapiccola, *Dallapiccola on Opera*, 47.
[103] See a letter from Dallapiccola to Wladimir Vogel, quoted in Fearn, *Luigi Dallapiccola*, 60, where the composer admits as much.

cellular groupings to the composition, as does the 'Dies Irae', in contrast to providing an ordered pitch set in a strictly serial way. And interestingly, though Dallapiccola specifically designated the 'Dies Irae' as a Cantus Firmus, at the opening this label is much more applicable to the serial line: it is the slower moving and lower melody.
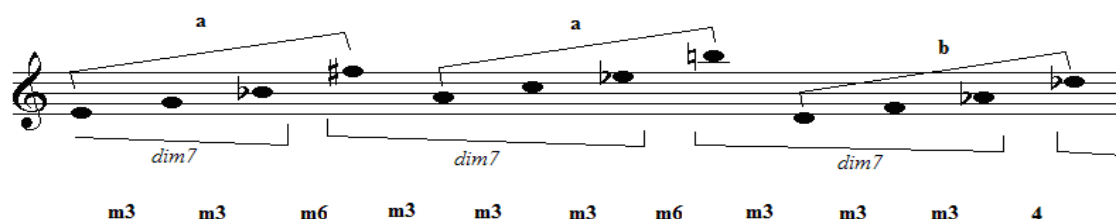
Ex. 2. 11: Row of Dallapiccola, *Canti di Prigionia*

This indefinite spectrum between serialism and symbolism needs some deeper analysis to tease out its details. Across the whole second movement, one might think at first glance that the serial method does here structure the music and offsets against it a symbolic chant. Dallapiccola uses a nested ternary form, his customary ABCBA arch that sets up an expectation of neat units of phrasing and repetition:[104]

Ex. 2. 12: Form in Dallapiccola, *Canti di Prigionia*, 'Invocazione di Boezio'

The opening A section consists of flights of fast moving crotchets echoing between the two pianos, underlain by chords and melodies. The piano line is constructed from various transformations of the row, and thus the series is utilised to produce waves of continuous motion, in a common configuration that sees the prime form followed by the retrograde or inversion:

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[104] See Fearn, *The Music of Luigi Dallapiccola*, 236 on Dallapiccola and symmetry.
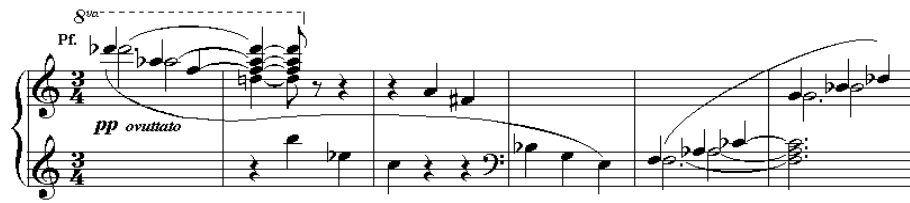
Ex. 2. 13: Bars 1-6 of Dallapiccola, *Canti di Prigionia*, 'Invocazione di Boezio'

Row choice is predicated on the linking interval between waves, to ensure that all connections (there are 27 in total) are minor and consequently preserve the ordered intervallic content of the row. The 'Dies Irae' melody is interspersed throughout this section in the manner seen at Example 2. 14, veiled by its registral placing and a second, off-beat bass line, and obscured by dissonant harmonisation and several 'false entries'. All these factors, aided by the fragmented and divided placing of the chant, can be taken as Dallapiccola's attempt to embed the ''Dies Irae'' into the already pre-existent score, giving it the sense of being an allusion to a past world:
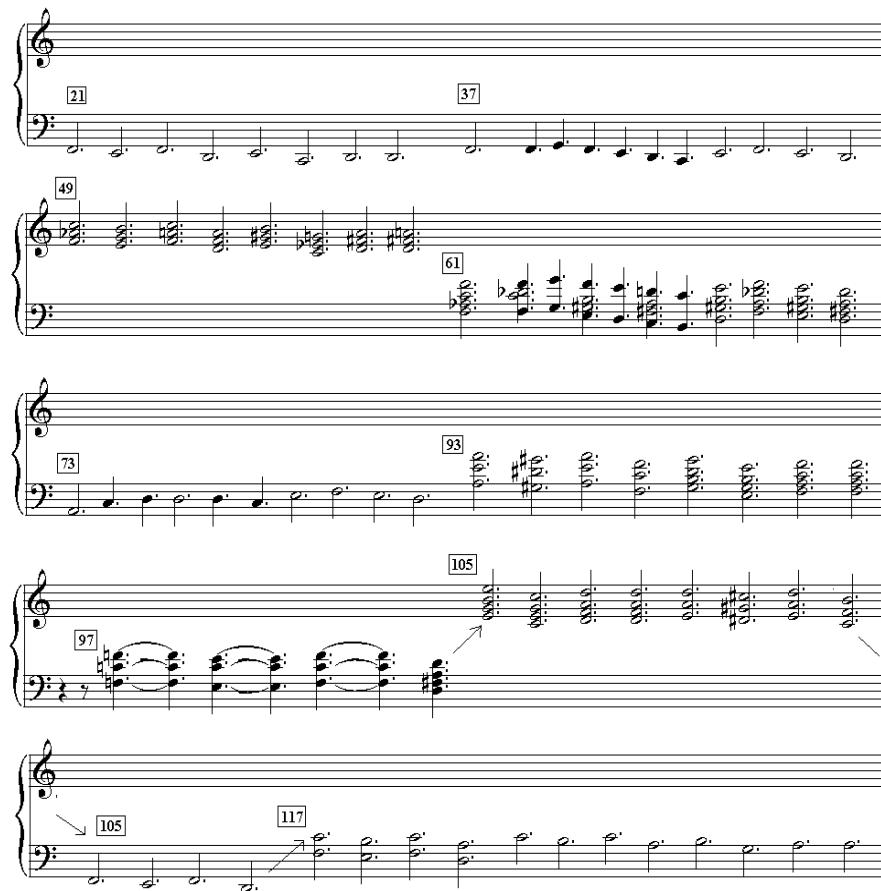
Ex. 2. 14: Occurrences of the 'Dies Irae' Melody, bars 1 to 133 of Dallapiccola, *Canti di Prigionia*, 'Invocazione di Boezio'

However, this is not the full story, as there are deeper-scale links between the harmonic basis of this section (or, at least, what Dallapiccola called the 'polarity' of certain pitch class sets) and the harmonies implicit in this melody.[105] As the D-centred plainchant melody is so firmly rooted round its centre, it takes on something of a tonic at the opening, and after the breakdown of the pianos in bar 82, it moves to a Dorian centred on A, acting as a kind of dominant. This D-A structure is then linked by voice-leading towards the C major tonality that finishes the section. Thus the only pitches that achieve a sense of harmonic centrality are derived from the modal chant; it is apparent that Dallapiccola's argument for a symbolic/structural dualism between the 'Dies Irae' and the row cannot here be sustained.

Bar   21   85   120   133
      D ———————— **A** ——————   **C**
                    ↘ C#   ↘ Ab
                                   Gb
                                     F
                                      E
                                       D
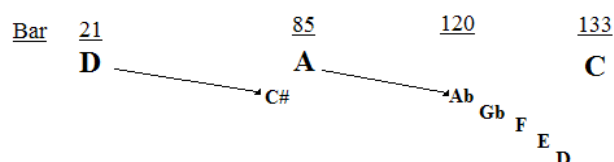
Ex. 2. 15: Harmonic movement in bars 1-133 of Dallapiccola, *Canti di Prigionia*, 'Invocazione di Boezio'

As soon as this has fully unfolded, the use of the series becomes immediately less obvious, and suspicions over the efficacy of Dallapiccola's symbol/structure hermeneutic are further confirmed. The reduction of the middle 'B' section of the movement (Example 2. 16) demonstrates that its chordal harmony cannot be derived directly from the series, but elements of the row can be found within, in particular the two four-note cells marked on the diagram as 'a' and 'b' (which are tetrachords from the row), and embedded on both the vertical and the horizontal level. Thus the series is symbolised within the harmony by recalling its most memorable units but not quoting it directly. Meanwhile, the choir's line in the outer sections is stylistically based on the *'Dies Irae'* whilst swerving away from it, as if the chant was at the outset only the starting point for Dallapiccola to set up a sound-world in which he could structure later ideas. Added to this, the cadential harmony is given direction by voice leading, which crucially happens within a modal C-Gm framework, whilst any fundamental line that can be traced seems to be conventionally reducible to an 'unsuccessful' $\hat{1}\,\hat{2}\,\hat{1}^\flat$ followed by a 'successful' $\hat{1}\,\hat{2}\,\hat{1}$. So, from initially seeming to quote or allude to a monastic chant in the midst of rigorous serialism, the structure/symbol roles are in fact entirely reversed.

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[105] Dallapiccola, 'On The Twelve-Note Road', 325-6.

Ex. 2. 16: Reduction of bars 133-157 from Dallapiccola, *Canti di Prigionia*, 'Invocazione di Boezio'

So it is clear that a reading of the *Canti di Prigionia* as an essentially serial work overlaid with symbolic resonances of blatant opposition to Mussolini's regime simply will not do. This was the image created by the work at the 1946 ISCM, and is part of the reason why its act of 'musical diplomacy' was so successful. Through these explorations, both historical and analytical, of Dallapiccola's role in London in 1946, it is hoped that the more general conclusion can be drawn; that both the notion of the past and of the international were equivocal 'others' within Italian musical culture in the post-war era. The engagement with these concepts was necessary but – more often than not – contradictory, politicized and filled with ambiguities, the result of what Torriglia calls 'an incapacity to reconcile a pre-war and post-war self'.[106] The necessity for cultural renewal was universal – Ben-Ghiat talks of 'images of purification, absolution, and rebirth' occurring throughout literature of this time – but it was heavily complicated by the past.[107] The questionable status of the *Canti di Prigionia* as a constructed work of 'protest' attests to a dubiously 'clean' status for Italian music come 1946. The result is that pre- and post-war Italian music cannot be seen as separate, wholly distinct entities:

> Not withstanding intellectuals' declarations about their thorough post-war renewal, it is possible to notice a substantial continuity between the culture of the twenties and thirties and that of the forties, between 'before' and 'after' the war. How could intellectuals possibly claim their estrangements from the *ventennio's* experience and from the cultural implications of that experience? … They did it precisely by claiming that post war culture was something radically new, fully unrelated to the one developed during the inter war years.[108]

Interestingly, though the claim to radical newness certainly was ideological in Dallapiccola's case, the very act of attempting a 'fusion' presented a new way to deal with serialism, a view of the series as a kind of elastic material that can perform both a structural role and achieve a kind of musical semiosis. Thus the politicised nature of both the 'Dies Irae' and dodecaphony are subverted and questioned in a way that demonstrates the composer's strong expressive language. Serialism could act not as a means of nullifying musical expressivity but as an outlet for the harmonic potential released by the rejection of diatonicism: an influential aesthetic dictum that anticipates the following chapter.

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[106] Torriglia, *Broken Time, Fragmented Space: a Cultural Map for Post-War Italy*, xi.
[107] Ben-Ghiat, *Fascist Modernities*, 203.
[108] Torriglia, *Broken Time, Fragmented Space: a Cultural Map for Post-war Italy*, 3, 6. For more on post-war continuity, see Dunnage ed. *After the War: Violence, Justice, Continuity and Renewal in Italian Society*.

Musical 'Crisis' and Stylistic Experimentation

Chapter 3:
'Un'estetica o una tecnica?' Reformulating dodecaphony in the music and debates of the later 1940s.

Modern music has divided itself, in a very obvious manner, into two camps: those who believe that the dodecaphonic technique will be the usual language of the future and those who consider it outmoded and ineffectual.

Humphrey Searle, December 1946[1]

This chapter starts with an ending. In 1944, as the end of the Second World War approached, Alfredo Casella, the most influential and controversial Italian composer of his generation, was suffering from an undiagnosed but serious illness that was to end his life in early 1947. Shocked and embittered by the horrid convulsions of the end of Italian Fascism – a cause that he had served with ample (if irregular) energy but that had turned on him in persecution for his Franco-Jewish wife – he penned what was to be his last work: the *Missa Solemnis 'Pro Pace'* Op. 71.

But rather than write a valedictory, Casella had a shock in store for his audience. At the centre of this work, while the semiquaver strings of the *Incarnatus* fade into the *Crucifixus*, the lower instruments begin to intone a low brooding passacaglia ground bass:

Ex. 3. 1: Bars 1-4 of the 'Crucifixus' from Casella, *Missa Solemnis 'Pro Pace'* Op. 71

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[1] Searle, 'Webern's Last Works', 5.

The same neo-classical Casella who had abandoned his radical musical explorations of the 1910s in a search for a *'maniera Italiana'* in the 20s and 30s, and whose dealings with Schoenberg had over the years turned increasingly sour, here writes his first, and last, full twelve note-row.[2] Admittedly, it is as nearly tonal as a series can get (a perfect fifth, two 4-note chromatic scales and a voice-leading semitone to finish), but symbolically it means a great deal. Standing as it does in the gap between one era and the next, in the broader picture of Italian twentieth-century music it acts as a prolepsis – a prophecy of the future, a giving up of the past – from one of its central and most colourful characters.

Crisis and conversion

This prolepsis was to have a swift fulfilment, for in the following decade Italian music went though an astonishing ideological, technical and aesthetic revolution with regards to the dodecaphonic practice of the Second Viennese School. To paraphrase Whittall, 1943-53 was Italy's 'serial decade'.[3] Before 1945, the availability of scores, manuals and performances of serial works was, as in many other counties, poor (though there are notable exceptions), and the number of composers using the technique small.[4] The post-war era marked the start of a rapid appropriation of information, debate and discussion of serialism and, almost as immediately, the use of the technique in a multitude of works by the most prominent young composers, 15 of which were full or partial serialists by 1953 (see Example 3. 2).[5] The story of Italian music increasingly becomes framed and defined by a compositional technique with an infamous potential to cause adulation and scorn in equal measure.

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[2] One can also find serial elements in Casella's previous and penultimate work, the *Concerto* Op. 69. The composer openly expressed his horror at this occurrence to his pupil Camillo Togni, writing 'as you see, the VIRUS has attacked even this champion of diatonicism!!!' (Dec 1944), quoted in Togni, *Carteggi e Scritti di Camillo Togni sul Novecento Italiano*, 220.

[3] Whittall, *Serialism*, 16.

[4] On the dissemination of the works of Schoenberg and his school in pre-war Italy, see Nicolodi, 'Luigi Dallapiccola e la Scuola di Vienna. Note in Margine a una Scelta' in *Orizzonto Musicali Italo-Europea 1860-1980*, 231-283; Conti, 'La Scuola di Vienna e la Dodecafonia nella pubblicistica Italiana (1911-1945)'. Whether this absence was due merely to an antipathy towards the technique in the prevailing stylistic trends or the result of 'autarchic' late fascist ideology is a contentious issue. See Zanetti, *La Musica Italiana nel Novecento*, 1153 for a statement of the latter view; Conti offers a more balanced assessment, arguing that reception of the twelve-note technique was hampered by 'the stereotype of Schoenberg's archaism opposed to the youthfulness of Italian works' and other 'aesthetic tendencies dominant amongst Italian music critics' as well as 'fascist nationalist ideology and the general climate of censorship', 155.

[5] Amongst those who did not were the older Malipiero and Pizzetti (the first receptive to the technique, the second hostile to it), Ghedini (though serial elements are found in some works from 1945-50), Valentino Bucchi, and Petrassi, whose serialism dates from after 1953 and is highly idiosyncratic.

1937 1938 1939 1940 1941 1942 1943 1944 1945 1946 1947 1948 1949 1950 1951 1952 1953

Ernst Krenek *Über Neue Musik* (1940)

Nicola Costarelli *Note on Dodecaphony* (1942)

First perfromance of Dallapiccola's *'Sex Carmina Alcaei'* (1944)

Concert of 'Il giovane Scuola' at the IX Venice Festival (1946)

Rene Leibowitz *Schoenberg and his school (in French)* (1946)

Rene Leibowitz *Structural rules of the 12-tone technique (in Italian)* (1947)

Carlo Jachino *Practical treatment of dodecaphonic technique* (1948)

1st International congress on Dodecaphonic Music - Milan (1949)

Arnold Schoenberg *Style and Idea (Italian trans.)* (1950)

Special dodecaphonic issues of the review 'Il Diapason' (1951)

Riccardo Malipiero *Dodecaphony as technique* (1953)

Luigi Dallapiccola — partial use

Giacinto Scelsi — partial use

Camillo Togni

Gino Contilli

Roman Vlad

Riccardo Malipiero — partial use

Guido Turchi

Riccardo Nielsen

Luigi Nono

Mario Peragallo — partial use

Bruno Maderna

Adone Zecchi

Luciano Berio

Antonio Veretti

Goffredo Petrassi

Ex. 3. 2 Composers taking up dodecaphony in post-war Italy, alongside important contextual events

This is not to immediately imply the idea of an Italian 'Stunde Null' or 'Zero hour' in 1945 or thereabouts. A better – and less ideologically loaded – locus of the discourse is to be found in the foreboding rhetoric of a perceived 'crisis' within musical language and the supposed 'directionless' mood in the face of the redundancy, even ethical ambiguity, of returning to pre-war trends. It is within the context of the immediacy of such aesthetic concerns and compositional problems that the era of Italian serialism grew up.[6] So, for instance, the influential new music journal *La Rassegna Musicale* opened its first post-war issue in January 1947 with Luigi Rogna's inflammatory article 'Crisis of Orientation'; the Quinta Congresso di Musica at Florence in 1948 held six sessions containing the words 'crisis' or 'problem' in their titles; and the declaration that issued from the 1st International Dodecaphonic Congress in 1949 (discussed in detail below) was based on the premise that 'in the confusion that reigns today, the congress has manifested its purpose to clarify musical problems'.[7] Even composers who recognised this category as socially constructed and in some way dangerously self-fulfilling gave credence to a particular challenge for young musicians:

> Italian music is not in crisis, as the crows love to repeat; or, at least if one can speak of crisis it is not in the negative and pernicious sense that has been alluded to up till now … but we do need to renew the thread of a lost faith, to overcome the pessimism and the infidelity that have started to erode our freshest energies.[8]

If it is to be asked why the turn to serialism was so sudden and universal – or better, what the protagonists of this era hoped to gain from 'the method' – then it is clear that all the fractured discourses – the relevant musical works *and* the endless debates in festivals, journals and congresses – must be considered within the framework of a perception of post-war Italian music as inherently unstable: a 'gunpowder factory' between atonal and tonal music, as Massimo Mila termed it.[9]

Since this corporate 'conversion' to dodecaphony was not the birth of an artistic trend but the appropriation of one which had already accrued a fair amount of aesthetic and historical baggage, Italian composers were presented with a problematic set of musical and

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[6] This was of course the era characterized by Adorno as that of the permanent alienation and angst of Schoenbergianism caused by the 'dialectic of loneliness' inherent within modern composition (*Philosophy of Modern Music*, 41-46); his 1953 essay 'On the Contemporary Relationship of Philosophy and Music' starts by referring to 'the crisis of modern music, which needs no introduction'. Adorno, *Essays on Music*, 135-61.
[7] Malipiero, 'Storia di un congresso', 12.
[8] Petrassi, 'Un nuova Musicista: Guido Turchi' in *Scritti e Interviste*, 56.
[9] Quoted in Smith-Brindle, 'Review of Vlad, *Modernità e Tradizione nella Musica Contemporanea*', 111.

political choices. How to keep an individual voice and an Italian spirit when serialism was steeped in the ruins of post-romantic German art? Of course, the situation was hardly unique to Italy. Across the world, and especially in Europe, composers in the post-war period were transforming Schoenbergian technique in their droves. That the process happened especially fast, early, and universally in Italy, allied to the sheer quantity of debate and open critique of the Schoenbergian method, does however give an indication of the distinctive nature of Italian compositional discourse at this time. Additionally, dodecaphony was implicated in the formalist/realist opposition that was being built into the very fabric of post-war art, defining the political and ethical battle over music's meaning and priorities in Cold War Europe. It is crucial to see how both sides of this dichotomy ironically sprang from the common ideologies of anti-oppression (and, in the case of Italy, anti-fascism), and how both saw themselves as liberating forces that were to save music from the aforementioned 'crisis' of the breakdown of cultural authority through the devastation of the war.

Venice, 1946: the 'rebirth' of the new

The resumption in September 1946 of the most important Italian festival for new music – the Venice International Festival of Contemporary Music – was a seminal moment in the history of Italian serialism, and its reception of dodecaphony is an important indication of the overall trend. The political nature of this festival was clear from the opening words in its programme, written by none other than Giovanni Ponti, a Christian Democratic Senator in de Gasperi's newly formed coalition government and President of the Biennale:

> This year the Venice International Festival of Contemporary Music, after the cessation of hostilities, is reborn from the dead. The Biennale, to whom much of the initiative Italy's artistic and spiritual rebirth has been entrusted, intends to recapture and continue its annual musical manifestations, thus giving through its activities a valid contribution to the international artistic scene … Therefore, this year's festival assumes an almost symbolic value, bringing back, even amidst a still dark and gloomy era, the most serene and free traditions of peace.[10]

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[10] 'Booklet of the IX Venice Festival of International Music', September 1946, 1.

Emphasis was, therefore, devoted to the international image of Italy; specifically, an 'ambition to see eleven countries represented', according to David Leonardi.[11]

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[11] Leonardi, 'Il Festival Internationale di Musica Contemporanea di Venezia (1946-54)' in Salvetti and Antolini eds. *Italia Millenovecentocinquanta*, 140.

Ex. 3. 3: Cover of the programme for the 'IX Festival Internazionale di Musica Contemporanea 1946' at the Venice Biennale

Put more radically, this festival was anti-fascist showmanship at its best, a 'pleasing spectacle to the public' prompted indirectly by the 'clearly political and financial' aspirations of the de Gasperi government to rehabilitate Italian cultural reputations.[12] So the fact that, as Goffredo Petrassi put it at the time, 'the grand protagonist was dodecaphony and central to all the polemics were the mystical martyrs of the twelve tones', demonstrates the sudden leap of serialism to the top of the critical and compositional agenda.[13] Zanetti also argues convincingly that at the festival 'dodecaphony certainly constituted the major revelation for many'.[14] In fact, the idea and metaphor of a 'battle' over artistic hegemony was taken up by many critics, amongst them Massimo Mila, who argued that serialism was engaged in a fight 'against other modern forces generally derived from stravinskiana and hindemithiana'. Mila himself would remain neutral on the topic (for now), adding that 'it is clear that everyone can write music that seems good to them…what is important it to see what works, whichever system pleases to elevate the humane'.[15]

This 'elevation of the humane' ensured an enthusiastic reception for Dallapiccola's triumphant *Canti di Prigionia,* aided by a long article in the festival programme written by Alberto Mantelli (one of Dallapiccola's ISCM associates) entitled 'Luigi Dallapiccola and the dodecaphonic language'. The author's most pressing concern was to establish that the evolutionary path by which Dallapiccola came to use the twelve-note technique was not a 'conversion experience' but a gradual assimilation: 'it should be affirmed that Luigi Dallapiccola's adhesion to dodecaphonic practice does not constitute a fracture in the development of his personality, but rather a spontaneous passage of evolution'.[16] The idea of stylistic fusion and the embedding of objective technique within subjective tonal language was thus the image created of the *Canti*, and it resulted in a highly successful reception for the work. Serialism obviously seems a positive feature here. However, reception of Webern's Symphony *Op. 21* (programmed in the same concert as the *Canti*) elicited an overwhelmingly negative reaction from the critics. Matteo Glinski, editor of the newly established journal *Musica*, declared that 'notwithstanding thirty years of dodecaphonismic propaganda, it becomes more unsupportable than ever'. The public awareness of the still obscure Second-Viennese composer was dire and with no helpful

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[12] Ibid., 140.
[13] Petrassi, 'Il IX Festival Musicale di Venezia' in *Gofreddo Petrassi: Scritti e Interviste*, 89.
[14] Zanetti, *La musica Italiana nel Novecento*, 1140.
[15] Mila, 'Il IX Festival Internationale di Musica a Venezia', 3.
[16] Mantelli in 'Booklet of the IX Venice Festival of International Music, September 1946', 29.

article to explain what they *should* be thinking, the audience's reaction was as much to do with unfamiliarity as distaste. Mila's verdict on Webern – though showing a more rounded perception of the music – still amounted to a criticism of it, a criticism located again within the nature of the content rather than its organisation: 'it is not incoherence or an absence of connections between ideas that induces the manifestations of our scepticism towards the true greatness of this composer, but rather the quality of these ideas: their extreme misery. If only, therefore, it could be incomprehensible music, as it seems to the public! But its emptiness is all too apparent'.[17] Thus the Webernian turn had decidedly not reached Italian audiences by this point.

This fact probably explains the disastrous reception of the penultimate night, given over to a group of chamber compositions that emanated (according to its title) from the *il giovane scuola* (the 'young Italian school').[18] The programme, conducted by a young Bruno Maderna contained few familiar works, all of them having been composed very recently in a post-liberation Italy:

Bruno Maderna	*Serenata per dodici strumenti* (1946)
Riccardo Malipiero	*Piccolo Concerto per pianoforte e orch. da camera* (1944)
Valentino Bucchi	*'La dolce Pena' per voce e nove strumenti* (1946)
Guido Turchi	*Trio per flauto, clarinetto e viola* (1945)
Camillo Togni	*Variazioni per pianoforte e orchestra* (1946)

Ex. 3. 4: Programme of the 'giovane scuola' concert at the Venice Biennale, 1946

Four out of these five pieces were serial, and were in most progressive styles (ironically, considering the course history was to take, Maderna's now lost *Serenata* was not dodecaphonic.[19] A typical reaction was that of the critic Giovanni Barblan, describing in inflammatory tones a 'squalid soirée, representing one of the most sore failures of the

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[17] Mila, 'Lettera da Venezia' quoted in *La Musica Italiana nel Novecento*, 1140.
[18] This label could have been a commonplace Italian phrase simply meaning 'some young Italian composers', implying no official pedagogical or stylistic connections (see Casella's use (in 1923), Nicolodi, *Musica e Musicisti nel Ventennio Fascista,* 45). However, using the phrase in the context of serialism would have been something of a statement.
[19] See the composer's programme note in the 'Booklet of the IX Venice Festival of International Music, September 1946', 62.

festival', at which the composers, 'appropriated whosoever's formula and with it set about to resolve the creative problem'[20].

The accusation of jumping on a 'musical bandwagon' could be interpreted as simplistic and reactionary rhetoric; an obvious slight that had been directed towards the technique on previous occasions. It has at its heart the charge that these composers somehow wrote outside of their own inspiration. However, the idea that composers could be prompted directly by a technique scandalized even Mila, whose musical aesthetics found a delicate balance between expression and form (see Chapter 5). Having implored composers to 'elevate the humane', and thus finding an emptiness of content in Webern, he concluded that 'in the work of these young composers one feels a naïve enthusiasm for a compositional practice in itself, the illusion that music can be born from enacting its elements, without the urgency of real necessity, of an interior world that pursues and that wants at all cost the light to come'.[21] This repeated demonstration – from Italy's most cogent musical aesthetician – of a metaphysical strain in post-war Italian musical thought is important. The fact is, many critics were arguing (for various and often unconsciously political reasons) for Mila's 'urgency of real necessity'. They were seeking what will be described as a 'humanistic synthesis': 'humanistic' in the sense of an artistic conscience through which the composer's main preoccupation is the human condition, and 'synthesis' through which such concerns find their voice in the dialectic of subjective expression tied to an objective technical novelty.

Mila was at heart an opponent of the deterministic tendencies implicit within conventional serial rhetoric, a rhetoric gaining ground in Europe through the work of René Leibowitz, as will be seen further on.

> Leibowitz is typical of those who, having accomplished the dissociation between the spiritual reality of art and the morphological aspects of the musical language, reverse the arbitrary nature of that dissociation, and assign all absolute truth in the work of art exclusively to elements of musical language, and in the process create an historical determinism that – with hindsight – hypostatizes imaginary deterministic laws using an imaginary evolution.[22]

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[20] Barblan, 'Quo vadis musicae' quoted in *La Musica Italiana nel Novecento*, 1143.
[21] Mila, 'Lettera da Venezia' quoted in *La Musica Italiana nel Novecento*, 1143.
[22] Mila, *L'esperienza musicale e l'estetica*, 89.

Such 'militant Hegelianism' (as Taruskin judges it) was at the heart of the *l'art pour l'art* scientism endemic in this period.[23] That it met resistance in Italy this early on, and that the tendency towards a pure, autonomous music in the rubble of a ruined culture was defied in some quarters, gives an initial indication as to the unique make-up of Italian culture into which serialism was colliding, as well as to some of the more imaginative outcomes of such a clash seen in Italian music of the 1950s. Fedele D'Amico, writing in 1948, held up Bartók as the model for a young, progressive composer facing Europe's moral crisis by appealing to a similar priority:

> Bartók was definitely facing into the future, but because the contemporary world did not offer any pretext to build this material future, his mediation between different stylistic and contemporary experiences (in which he was totally unaware of any philological need to please) becomes an icon of an anxiety that transcends its circumstance … Bartók has this typical feature: he does not know the poetic of the 'art as research' precisely because there is nothing further from him than the ethic of the 'life as research'.[24]

Serialism, by this view, was not to be opposed, but taken in its aesthetic context as an influential *but not self-fulfilling* constituent of compositional potential. The problem with the '"expositors and interpreters" of dodecaphonic theory', declared the composer Guido Turchi, is that they 'seem to converge more or less intentionally upon more disparate and contradictory formulations of an *ontological* demonstration of this 'creed', and typically of its dogmatic nature.[25]

But even given Turchi's fierce denunciation of such a stance (and Mila and D'Amico's more modest arguments), the recourse to ontology would have a not inconsiderable outing in post-war Italian music.

Milan, 1949: serialists at congress

Whilst the next significant 'dodecaphonic event' was to occur three years later in 1949, the intervening years saw the publication of two works that, for slightly different reasons, are important. The first introduces onto the scene the figure of Leibowitz, a man designated as

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[23] Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, v, 16; see Carroll, Music and Ideology in Cold War Europe, 141-164.
[24] D'Amico, 'Il compositore Moderno e il linguaggio Musicale', in *Atti di Quinto Congresso di Musica, Firenze*, 22-3.
[25] Turchi, 'Critica, Esegesi e Dodecafonia', 174.

the 'St John the Baptist of Schoenberg's "religion"' by French critic Claude Rostand (slightly confusing his biblical chronology), and whose philosophy of modern music was as influential, if not as developed, as Adorno's in post-war Europe.[26] His first article in an Italian journal came in 1947 in *Musica*, entitled 'The Structural Rules of Twelve-Tone Music', and the emphasis on the global imperative of the serial 'problem' is clear from the introduction:

> The problem of dodecaphonic music, which can understandably be deemed a most important one, has unexpectedly resumed a position of topical significance in various countries of Europe, since many of the most significant composers of the younger generation have declared themselves followers of the Schoenbergian ideal.[27]

Leibowitz's assumption that the tonal system is in crisis allows him to take a typical route through a practical analysis of serialism's capabilities, divided according to parameter (harmony, melody and structure), which is thus framed as a solution. This was applied to Schoenberg's Suite for Piano Op. 25 – the composer's first completely serial work and therefore the urtext of dodecaphony – which demonstrates the self-sufficient, autonomous properties of serialism to create 'in a magisterial way … elements of musical articulation capable of sustaining themselves'.[28] This position echoes the one taken by the widely read *Schoenberg and His School* in 1946 (available in Italy from 1948), where Leibowitz argues for the universal value of serialism, presenting a closed-system reasoning:

> In fact, if all twelve-tone composers handle a common technique in a common way, the technique acquires a collective quality, a universality, which is indispensable to every real language. We can say that all composers of this school use 1) the total resources of chromaticism, 2) a disciplined organisation

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[26] Quoted in Carroll, *Music and Ideology in Cold War Europe*, 104. Taruskin contrasts Adorno and Leibowitz's work around 1949 in *The Oxford History of Western Music*, v, 15-18. Adorno's presence in this period (and therefore this thesis) is minimal; his influence was really only felt in Italy in the mid-to-late 50s, and especially after the publication of Giacomo Manzoni's translation of *Philosophy of Modern Music* in 1959 with a famous introduction by Luigi Rognoni (though there were reviews of the German volume as early as 1950: Vlad, 'Recensione a Theodore W. Adorno, "Philosophie die Neuen Musik"', 361-364). For further details see Marino, 'La Ricezione dell'Estetica Musicale di Th.W Adorno in Italia', PhD diss (accessed 8 Mar 2010).

[27] Leibowitz, 'Le leggi Stutturali della Tecnica di Dodici Suoni', 212. Arved Ashby convincingly demonstrates the extent to which Schoenbergian rhetoric hinged on the assumption that 'musical composition, in analogy to science, was not an aesthetic project but rather a kind of problem solving … Twelve-tone techniques gained their very historical and intellectual legitimacy to the degree that they offered solutions to an ongoing compositional *Problemgeschichte*, or historical problematic'. Ashby, 'Schoenberg, Boulez, and Twelve-Tone Composition as "Ideal Type', 585.

[28] Leibowitz, 'Le leggi Stutturali della Tecnica di Dodici Suoni', 215.

of this material, 3) devices which enable this discipline to engender certain sound-forms, or idioms, that – quite aside from individual differences in talent and temperament – belong to the common syntax of composition.[29]

The emphasised necessity of the 'total resources of chromaticism' as musical material, and thus the need for a law to act as regulator, are common Schoenbergian constructs. Furthermore, both Leibowitz and Schoenberg posit a valid aesthetic tradition at work *before serialism*, that of chromaticism, and the goal of serialism is to present the complexities of twelve notes and their relations in a manner similar to the way diatonicism presented the relations of eight notes within the classical expression.

Leibowitz's work quickly became available in post-war Italy, and was received positively by Luigi Magnani, a prominent critic for *La Rassegna Musicale* and a supporter of the serial movement.[30] In acknowledging that Leibowitz sees the 'dodecaphonic technique as the foundation of the contemporary musical language', Magnani has no problem with the conclusion that 'the followers of such a school are situated at a higher level than other composers'. What he does argue is that 'in truth this music is too much in a phase of life and progression to have itself locked into definitions', thus following the critical line given by writers such as Dallapiccola where serialism is seen as living 'truth content', leaving more to do *after* the adoption of serialism which, as living technique, must evolve.[31]

Dallapiccola himself defended Leibowitz as 'not really an *enfant terrible*, but a young enthusiastic man … who I personally admire for his ingenuity, for his total lack of cunning'.[32] The Italian composer reads into *Schoenberg and His School* the intermediate nature of Leibowitz's pedagogy, claiming that 'he does not presume to have exhausted his

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[29] Leibowitz, *Schoenberg and His School*, 266.

[30] Leibowitz, of course, also worked the other side of the proselyte patch in promoting Italian dodecaphony outside the country: see 'Luigi Dallapiccola', 122-4.

[31] This of course leaves room for appreciation of non-serial modernism, an appreciation in short supply in Leibowitz's writing but considerably stronger in Italy. The most obvious case is that of Stravinsky, and as later chapters will show, he maintained an important position in Italian musical life after the war. The polarity between Schoenbergian expressionism and Stravinskyian anti-expressionism in Adorno's *Philosophy of New Music* (1949) was debated in *La Rassegna Musicale* as early as 1947, where Mantelli argued that, though serialism was 'the most legitimate parabola of musical evolution' the *Rite* was still music of inherent worth ('Igor Stawinsky e le sue Opere più Recenti', quoted in, R.C., 'Review of Periodicals', 203-4). After 1949, see Roman Vlad's rescue of Stravinsky in the same journal dated 1952 (in part a response to Adorno), 'Le Musiche Sacre di Stravinsky', reprinted in Vlad, *Modernità e Tradizione nella Musica Contemporanea*, 128-139, and Guido Turchi's 1953 criticism of the 'evangelical either-or' in the Stravinsky-Schoenberg debate, 'Critica, Esegesi e Dodecafonia', 173-180; on the other side, see Brunello Rondi's pejorative labeling of Stravinsky, Bartók and Hindemith as the 'the three grand "evasives" of the twentieth-century' in 'Chiaramento sulla Dodecafonia', 7.

[32] Dallapiccola, 'Schoenberg et Son Ecole', 288.

subject, but only to have shed first light'.[33] Indeed, it is perhaps Dallapiccola's most frequently protested principle that serialism is not the guarantor of musical expressivity, but is the fundamental facilitator, as he argued in his essay 'On the Twelve-Note Road' of 1951: 'each twelve tone work raises new problems and, if successful, finds new solutions'.[34] Much of the theoretical appropriation of twelve-note technique within Italian music came to be filtered through this conceptual lens.

Carlo Jachino's 1948 *Dodecaphonic Technique: a Practical Treatment* is in the same Leibowitzian vein in its abstraction of concrete necessary laws from selective history (though even the kindest critic would have to acknowledge it as a more modest work). It has the distinction of being the first Italian book on serialism, and in taking the form of a 'practical treatise' (see Example 3. 5) it follows in the footsteps of works such as Ernst Krenek's *Über Neue Musik* of 1937.[35] The preface establishes that as a consequence of the expansion to twelve notes from eight, the categories of 'repose' (tonic, dominant and subdominant) and 'movement' are jettisoned, as are that of 'dissonance', 'consonance' and 'cadence': 'in this sense it can be asserted that the dodecaphonic style is absolutely atonal'.[36] The chapters that follow, with the inspiring titles 'Dodecaphonic Scales – Dodecaphonic Melody – Dodecaphonic Harmony – Dodecaphonic Counterpoint – Dodecaphonic Composition', give strict guidance over avoiding tonal references and ensuring consistency between compositional elements, in order that 'the theme will thus come to be destroyed in its traditional architecture, losing its symmetrical parts…and the unity of composition will be given its coherence from the stylistic procedures of the dodecaphonic principle that should always be adhered to'.[37] Jachino's treatise is perhaps naïve and overly 'neat', and the rationale used to justify serialism is peculiar to the particular brand of zero-hour philosophy that has always dogged dodecaphony (Schoenberg's 'fin de siècle' becomes Boulez's 'post-war' and so on). But this is precisely the point: it was taken up avidly by Italian composers in this era, and therefore cannot be ignored.

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[33] Ibid, 289.
[34] Dallapiccola, 'On the Twelve-Note Road', 330.
[35] In fact, an advertisement for an Italian translation of Krenek's 1940 book *Studi di Contrappunto Basati del Sistema Dodecafonico* is found on the back flyleaf of Jachino's book.
[36] Jachino, *Tecnica Dodecafonica. Trattato Prattico*, 6.
[37] Ibid., 19.

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IV. ARMONIA DODECAFONICA

Inteso il vocabolo « armonia » come successione di accordi e cioè concatenazione di suoni disposti in senso verticale, è necessario, onde ottenere una armonia dodecafonica (nel significato stretto della parola), attenersi alle seguenti prescrizioni:

1) sottrarsi completamente alla sensazione di una precisa tonalità;

2) utilizzare, sia pure a frammenti, ma sempre secondo il loro ordine prestabilito, i suoni della serie dodecafonica scelta come base tematica.

Prendiamo la serie dell'esempio N. 2 A e serviamocene per comporre alcuni passi di carattere puramente armonico, evitando gli accordi consonanti che potrebbero ingenerare il senso della tonalità:
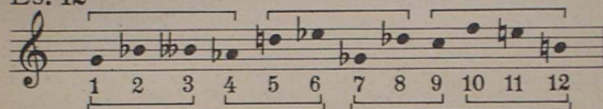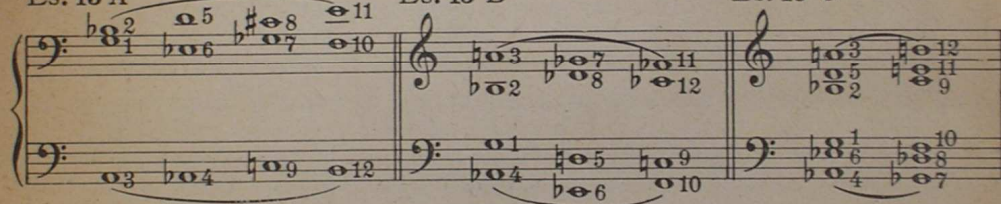
I numeri posti accanto ad ogni nota corrispondono al numero d'ordine dei suoni della serie dell'esempio N. 2 A. Osservare come siano stati esclusi i raddoppi di note. Un raddoppio di un suono in una combinazione disposta in senso verticale darebbe lo stesso risultato della ripetizione di un suono della serie disposta in senso orizzontale (melodia), e cioè una valorizzazione maggiore di un suono rispetto ad un altro, ciò che deve essere evitato.

E. 4808 C.

Ex. 3. 5: Jachino, *Tecnica Dodecafonica. Trattato Prattico*, 10

    If the minor critic Jachino is an all-too-easy target for a theory that posits a heavy Leibowitzian influence in post-war Italy, other examples can be found that enunciate a similar viewpoint. The most clear is Roman Vlad, whose 1953 essay 'Metaphysical elements in Schoenbergian poetry' culminates with the assertion that 'at the apex of its course the Schoenbergian tendency turned itself upside down: the absolute and antirational subjectivity of the expressionist period surrendered its position to a hyperrational objectivity, equally absolute, that was made concrete in the formulation of the dodecaphonic method'.[38] According to Vlad, this concept is at the very heart of a 'metaphysics' of dodecaphony. The term 'hyperrational' sums up succinctly the angle at which such writers came at serialism: atonality remains disengaged because of its antirationality; serialism solves this by embodying the rational. It is a prescient construct, not least because it engenders a musical style that seeks rationalistic comprehensibility. The debate over *linguaggio musicale*, considered in Chapter 5, was currently raging, and the influence of the idea of dodecaphony as a new 'language' – a controversial instantiation of a much-maligned *tecnica* – can be seen in Riccardo Malipiero's article 'La Dodecafonia come Tecnica':

> from the old trunk of traditional tonality that has little by little, as has been seen, lost its qualities, springs an apparently new fruit that is called the technique of twelve-tones … dodecaphony represents an historical continuity that no other technique seems to give … Dodecaphony has various reasons, in my opinion, to speak of itself as the heir of musical technique: its discipline of sounds, its dynamic of sounds, its foundation for the basic uniqueness of musical composition, and its lexical principle. For this reason the technique of twelve tones is the unique technique that makes possible a discourse that continues what was initiated by the modal system and furthered by the tonal one.[39]

The idea of a 'lexical principle' or a 'new grammar' that has all the expressiveness of the composer's 'voice' without the worn-out vocabulary of tonality was attractive to a number of composers. It enabled them to appear 'humanistic' and to use the twelve-notes: Camillo Togni expressed the idea in another way when he wrote 'the adoption of the dodecaphonic principle does not create an abstract constructivism, but the objectification of the expressive ideal'.[40] With this new language, tracts such as Jachino's offered the dictionary, Leibowitz's teleology offered the justification, and the pieces almost wrote themselves.

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[38] Vlad, *Modernità e Tradizione nella Musica Contemporanea*, 187.
[39] Malipiero, 'La Dodecafonia come Tecnica', 288.
[40] Togni, *Carteggi e Scritti di Camillo Togni sul Novecento Italiano*, 223.

In 1949, these debates precipitated the convening of the 1ˢᵗ Dodecaphonic Congress in Milan, organised by Malipiero and Wladimir Vogel:[41]

Programme of the 1st International Congress for dodecaphonic music

Milan, 4-7 May 1949

4th May **14:00** First Council. Nomination of the president of congress. Notification of the order of events

17:30 Orchestral Concert: Dallapiccola - *Cinque Frammenti di Sappho*
Liebermann – *Baudelaire*
Wallingford Riegger – *Symphony no. 3*

21:30 Second Council; official inauguration of Congress
Renè Leibowitz - 'The Genesis of Dodecaphony'

5th May **10:00** Third Council
Wladimir Vogel - 'Is dodecaphony a technique or an aesthetic?'

17:45 First chamber music concert: Schoenberg – *Suite for Piano*
Togni – *Tre preludi per Piano*
Krenek – *Kafkalieder for Soprano and Piano*
Paz – *Tre composizione dodecafonica per Clarinet and Piano*
Jelinek – *Quattro invenzioni per Piano*
Jemnitz – *Romantic pieces and anecdotes from Recueil*
Apostel – *Quartetto a fiati*

6th May **14:30** Fourth Council
Riccardo Malipiero - 'The possibility of founding an International society for dodecaphonic music'

17:45 Second chamber music concert: Berg – *Lyric Suite*
Hauer - *Jeu Dodecaphonique*
Vogel - *Varietudes*
Hartmann - *Quartet*

21:45 Fifth Council
Luigi Dallapiccola - 'Possibilities and developments for dodecaphony'

Participants

Hans Eric Apostel **(Austria)**

André Souris
Pierre Froidebise **(Belgium)**
Camille Schmitt

Hans Kollreuter **(Brazil)**

René Leibowitz
Georges Duhamel **(France)**

Karl Amadeus Hartmann
Josef Rufer **(Germany)**

Humphrey Searle **(England)**

John Cage **(America)**

Wladimir Vogel
Rolf Liebermann **(Switzerland)**
Alfred Keller

Luigi Dallapiccola
Mario Peragallo
Adone Zecchi **(Italy)**
Riccardo Malipiero
Bruno Maderna
Camillo Togni

Ex. 3. 6: Programme of the 1ˢᵗ International Dodecaphonic congress[42]

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[41] In fact it was not the 'First' international congress of its kind at all: a 'Festival de la Musique Dodecaphonique' had been held in Paris in 1947. See the memoirs of Humphrey Searle, 'Quadrille with a Raven', on-line (accessed 21 April 2008).
[42] Assembled from Piccardi, 'I pionieri della dodecafonia' items no. 3, 28, 29, 31.

The opening gambit quoted above ('to clarify musical problems') is by now familiar: the philosophic imperative of *problemgeschichte* hung over the discourse, thus legitimating it with the possibility of a solution. The terms in which the 1949 congress summarised this 'problem' are especially revealing. Malipiero, reporting on the event, famously set up the antithesis between *estetica e tecnica* seen in the title to this chapter:

> Is dodecaphony an aesthetic (and therefore limited in its language to a particular moment) or a technique (and therefore amenable to progress)? The declaration concluded that each of us must continually search and find new possibilities of expression beyond the ground rules dictated by the Viennese School, subject to other principles staying immutable. This, practically, signifies giving to artists the maximum freedom and disproves beyond doubt the legend created in our times that dodecaphonic music is a cold notion. Dodecaphonic music, which is the consequence of an evolutionary history, takes its place amongst the complexities of contemporary music of which it constitutes one of the strong forces. [43]

The debate boiled down to whether serialism should be seen as a specifically Viennese idiom or whether it could be transplanted outside its birthplace. The answer was, it seems, the second, and, as Guido Salvetti points out, this was 'if for no other reason, then for self-preservation'.[44] That the congress found dodecaphony best expressed as *tecnica*, a series of technical rules rather than an expressive influence, shows a de-historicising approach to the method, universalising its principles according to Leibowitzian priorities.

But given the usual triumphalist proclamations of such an ideology, the consequent emphasis on plurality of expression and serial freedom discernable in Malipiero's 'declaration' is interesting. In describing serialism as '*one* of the strong forces' of contemporary music, it is no wonder that this kind of talk elicited criticism from hard-line dodecaphonists such as Herman Scherchen, who subsequently criticised the declaration in *Melos*: 'the resolution declared that the twelve-tone technique, just like other methods of composition, represented only one of the possibilities for musical creation. The first conference for twelve-tone music thereby in effect declared itself superfluous'.[45] The reason for this curiously paradoxical situation is political, argues Doris Lanz, who links the

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[43] Malipiero, 'Storia di un Congresso', 12-13. This 'concluding declaration' was also published in the Milanese daily *La Corriere di Sera* and in French and German music journals.

[44] Salvetti, 'I compositori tra tecniche ed estetiche' in Salvetti and Antolini eds. *Italia Millenovecentocinquanta*, 259.

[45] Scherchen, 'Die Gegenwärlige Situation der Modernen Musik', 257-259.

congress with the Zhdanovian pronouncements of the Prague Manifesto of 1948.[46] Lanz diagnoses the source of the vague and vacillating tone of the closing statement as a compromise reached between two conflicting ideologies: that of the formalism of Leibowitz and the proto-socialism of Vogel. The former saw the serial method as a totalising force, an inevitable product of the evolution of music that represented the art in its most advanced and perfect form; whilst the latter argued for the historical constructed-ness of the twelve-note technique, which always needed to justify itself in terms of serving the masses through cultural means.[47] A high profile resignation from a member of the organising panel of the congress – the French socialist composer Serge Nigg, who judged that 'certain positions of principle [i.e. socialist realism] have taken the positions of others' – ensured that autonomous ideologies of serialism came into full collision with the ideologies of the European left.[48]

Cold War politics will be given further treatment at a later point in this thesis. For now, it is clear that ideological and aesthetic proximities to the Second Viennese School were the major concern for early Italian serialists. The very ability of serialism to be transported, its cultural malleability, was posing compositional confusion in a new, post-war situation. Maintaining a sense of originality was crucial, and any tendency to be seen as a mere 'disciple' or 'follower' was, quite excusably, to be avoided for social and political reasons. Yet these composers had discovered a way of composing that, for them, heralded a way out of the stylistic dead-end of post-operatic Italian music, and could give them the tools to build a new language. They were enthralled by its universalising power, as the booklet that accompanied the 1949 conference (written by Malipiero) shows:

> The spreading of such a [twelve-note] theory in many forms, in different countries according to civilisation and sensibility, often spontaneously germinating amongst the young, should demonstrate that dodecaphony is something which has a logic and necessity of its own.[49]

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[46] Lanz, 'Der Erste Internationale Zwölftonkongress Im Spannungsfeld von Ästhetik und Politik'. See chapter 5 and Carroll, *Music and Ideology in Cold-War Europe*, 37-49.

[47] Interestingly – Lanz does not point this out – such a debate cannot simply be reduced to the formalist-antiformalist binary, for Leibowitz himself was initially a supporter of aspects of the Prague resolution. See Carroll, *Music and Ideology in Cold-War Europe*, 122-3.

[48] Autograph telegram from Serge Nigg to Riccardo Malipiero in Piccardi, 'I pionieri della dodecafonia', item no. 14.

[49] Piccardi, 'I pionieri della dodecafonia', item no. 30.

But, as Carlo Piccardi argues, nobody really believed that the serial procedure ensured compositional success; there were still aesthetic decisions to be made under the 'superstructural' surface:

> For this generation, the adhesion to dodecaphony essentially signified a superstructural choice: under the dodecaphonic surface, the drive of functional discourse still continued, and the force of the serial choice could only bear the equilibrium of the here and now in individual formulations, not in the sense of dictating rules and motivating a synthesis.[50]

It is therefore necessary to turn to the music itself to interrogate how debates over the historical appropriation and dissemination of serial ideas in Italy in the late 40s were incarnated into concrete musical structures. A dichotomy has arisen in this historical narrative between the hyper-rational and the humanistic approaches, a dichotomy diagnosed early on by Massimo Mila, who identified within it 'a violent aspect which reminds me of the wars of religion, owing to the concomitance of the choice of a spiritual position and a technical fact'.[51] Therefore, a two-part analysis framed around this spiritual-technical axis will provide the framework for the rest of the chapter.

The 'hyper-rational' approach to the twelve notes

This category has been appropriated from the writings of Roman Vlad, so it seems appropriate to start with an early work of his before discussing other music. *Studi Dodecafonici* (1943) is an 'ideal type' for this hyper-rationalism, in which serialism, seen as a comprehensibility principle, is a linguistic rule of law that replaces the tonal system. Dodecaphony 'ensures' unity and creates a language which fulfils every expressive need: hence Vlad uses a cerebral approach to the serial material, which is laid out almost in a self-explanatory rational and logical manner:

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[50] Piccardi, 'Tra Ragioni Umane e Ragioni Estetiche: i Dodecafonici a Congresso', 249.
[51] Mila, 'Summary of "La Dodecafonia e la sua offensiva"', 7.

Ex. 3. 7: Bars 1-23 of Vlad, *Studi Dodecafonici*, movt. I

The engagement of *Studi Dodecafonici* with the serial principle is at first glance strikingly naïve. When the first movement is reduced to a structural diagram, an almost total lack of series transposition can be seen (Example 3. 8). Exploring further, indeed, the composer uses only the three transformations of the series in their original form throughout the whole piece; had series-transposition reached the far shores of Italy by 1943?[52]

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[52] There are two exceptions: R(1) is used in bars 55-69 (movt. 1) and R(7) in bars 34-37 (movt. 2).

Ex. 3. 8: Structure of Vlad, *Studi Dodecafonici* (movt.1) showing row use.

This very restriction, however, demonstrates an important analytical point. Vlad is forcing a focus in onto the material itself, the twelve notes as invariant order, and he does so for a reason. Looking at the row, one can see that the consecutive intervals are all consonant (save the last semitone) whilst the alternate intervals are often dissonant. This internal unity has one of its most surprising effects in what can be labelled the 'retrograde invariance' between the prime form and its inversion, the first and second rows in Example 3. 9. There are three separate invariant cells which are also related directly by retrograde, a relation involving ten notes of the twelve-note series. It may seem that the more obvious point is being missed here: that this causes an invariance between P and RI transformations. However, RI is not used in this work, but rather the (more Stravinskian) IR; and as there are also no transpositional processes, the actual sequence of RI is never achieved (RI would in fact be equivalent to IR (10)). Therefore the two- and five- note invariance that does occur is always invariant in retrograde.

Ex. 3. 9: P, I and IR forms of the row for Vlad, *Studi Dodecafonici*

Vlad harnesses the row's invariant properties without reducing the amount of material at his disposal, and simultaneously foregrounds the series itself. The restriction on transposition is a rationalist's construction of the highest order: the impression is of a composer mining the 12-note row for additional elements of unity and coherence beyond the unifying properties already provided by a 'straight' use of serialism. The *Studi Dodecafonici* delve further into serial operations through the continuity of un-ordered tetrachordal subsets, in a manner similar to Hauer's non-ordered tropes.[53] As can be seen clearly in Example 3. 7, the first movement often segments into 4-note groupings, and Example 3. 10 demonstrates that this is also true of a large proportion of other movements:

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[53] See Covach, 'The Zwölftonspiel of Josef Matthias Hauer', 149-184.

Ex. 3. 10: Bars 5-10 movt. III, bars 31 and 35 movt. IV of Vlad, *Studi Dodecafonici*

The sets are guaranteed a kind of 'hyper-unity' by their intervallic invariance. Example 3. 11 shows the 9 possible ordered tetrachordal subsets of this series; there are seven uses of the 000210 vector, containing two ic4 and one ic5, in what is termed the consecutive interval vector, which classifies the three linear intervals contained within the tetrachord.[54]

Ex. 3. 11: Invariance in the nine tetrachords of the series for *Studi Dodecafonici*

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[54] The modification of Allen Forte's 'interval vector' (*The Structure of Atonal Music*, 13-18) to 'consecutive interval vector' is perhaps only useful in such an extreme cases of uniformity such as these.

One can find a similar rationalistic agenda on display in Camillo Togni's 1944 set of *Piano Preludes* Op. 21, again with a tetrachordal basis. The pieces have a unity and regularity to them deriving from a very strict application of serial thinking to consistent and uniform gestures. David Osmond-Smith argues that 'by 1940, [Togni] was making Schoenberg's 'cellular' thinking his own',[55] and this is abundantly clear in the second prelude, where the series is divided into tetrachordal cells:
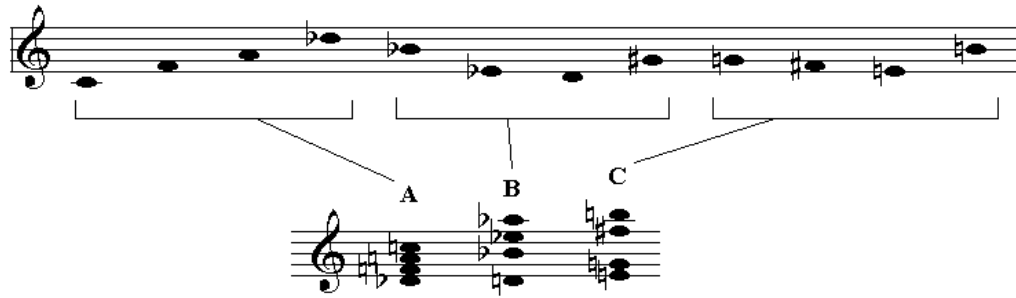
Ex. 3. 12: Series and derived tetrachords for Togni, *Piano Prelude* Op. 21 no.2.

Providing thereby a platform for the vertical as well as the horizontal, Togni keeps a sharp distinction between tetrachordal groupings, which are kept separate even when note groups are stretched to five. The effect is of an often-transitory thematic patterning, and a high degree of unity between harmony and melody:

Ex. 3. 13: Bars 13-17 of Togni, *Piano Prelude* Op. 21 no.2, showing tetrachordal divisions.[56]

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[55] Osmond Smith, 'Togni, Camillo' in *Grove Music On-line* (accessed 27 Feb 2010)

[56] Score and annotations by Moressi: 'Tradizione e Innovazione: le *Variazione per Pianoforte e orchestra* op. 27 (1945-1946) di Camillo Togni' in Dalmonte, Rossana and Russo, Marco eds. *Bruno Maderna: Studi e Testimonianze*, 182.

Even more regulated, however, is the transpositional choice. At this juncture, Togni's own analysis of the second Prelude, published in Alessandra Moressi's essay on the *Variazioni* op. 27 and presumably included amongst the sketches for the work, demonstrates the procedure:

Ex. 3. 14: Analysis of Togni, *Piano Prelude* Op. 21 no.2 by the composer[57]

One can see the cellular thinking in full operation; the tetrachords are kept intact whilst ordered in either prime, retrograde or, later on, a kind of inversion form, and occasionally extended towards the end of the work. The series is laid out in a clear and logical manner in prime and retrograde, before descending by semi-tones at each new statement, at the rate of approximately a bar. After the twelfth transposition is reached, Togni begins experimentation with overlaying the series and extending over the metrical regularity of a bar line; so, simultaneously he restricts himself to prime form to maintain transparency. Moressi comments that this 'suggests a view of the work as forging a relationship with the fundamental rules of the dodecaphonic system, from which technique it cannot be abstracted without losing its very reason for being'.[58]

Riccardo Malipiero's *Quattre Poesies de Paul Eluard* (1948) for soprano and piano, based on four separate poems of the French surrealist writer, provides another angle on this 'aesthetics of materiality', in a novel and curious experimentation with row addition. The second movement demonstrates this from the outset:

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[57] Included in Moressi, ibid.
[58] Ibid., 183.

Ex. 3. 15: Bars 1-8 of Malipiero, *Quatre Poesies de Paul Eluard*, movt. II

The initial row is built solely of minor thirds ascending stepwise; the only way this can be achieved is by alternately moving in whole-tone steps:

Ex. 3. 16: Row of Malipiero, *Quatre Poesies de Paul Eluard*, movt. II

As Example 3. 15 shows, another voice enters in bar 5 and acts as an unsettling counter-subject within the texture: a cycle of 5ths (12-note), which of course alternates whole-tone collections in an identical way to Malipiero's twelve-note row:

Ex. 3. 17: The cycle of fifths as alternating whole-tone scales

The shared whole-tone properties of the row and the cycle of fifths are unlikely to be a coincidence, and is another example of a creative serial design and experimentation with the number games of dodecaphony. However whilst in Vlad's *Studi Dodecafonici* the clarity of the initial material is maintained, Malipiero proceeds to systematically cloud and layer his material by the interaction between the three piano and one vocal parts. The progress of the movement through P, R, I and RI transformations of the series, with the cycle of fifths entwined within it, is designed to raise the register of the piano and vocal line until a peak at fortissimo in bar 17; thus moving from P(0) at the opening to P(7), then P(3) an octave above, and so forth. Retrograde often follows prime, and retrograde inversion follows inversion: this gives an arch-shape to the steady crotchet movement. By bar 17 the dissonance has become so great that the effect is of a chromatic aggregate. Then the energy of the movement dissipates, the tessitura gets wider, the syncopation stops, and the dissonance fades into a major 3rd. A return is thus heralded to the clarity of the opening, and accordingly the 5th and whole-tone derived content lies at the base of the texture:

Ex. 3. 18: Bars 19-24 of Malipiero, *Quatre Poesies de Paul Eluard*, movt. II

The *Sonata per Due Pianoforti* of 1953 by Riccardo Nielsen demonstrates a later example of the hyper-rational aesthetic, and by this point, other commentators were noting the trend: 'Togni and Nielsen … applied and apply the technique rigorously, staying faithful even in their personal style to Schoenberg'.[59] This bombastic and dissonant work displays, with crisp efficiency, the properties of its base material, and as Zanetti writes, it is its clarity that is most striking:

> In this *Sonata* is found, as in other music of the period, a light and open structure, a neat and rich instrumental taste, an expressivity that knows how to emerge from the seriousness that is undoubtedly present in the entire central movement and reach a real self-confidence in its procedures and clarity of tone.[60]

It opens with a double canon between retrograde and prime forms of the row:

Ex. 3. 19: Bars 1-5 of Nielsen, *Sonata per Due Pianoforti*, movt. I

In fact, this canonic motion interweaves through the texture for the totality of the movement ('extremely complex canonic forms are applied' throughout, in the words of Zanetti) though the statements of themes are never clear after the opening.[61] The material threatens at all time to descend into chromatic chaos, with several sections showing fragmented semiquaver

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[59] Unpublished lecture by Maderna from 1953-4, reprinted in Verzina, *Bruno Maderna: Étude historique et critique*, 45.
[60] Zanetti, *La Musica Italiana nel Novecento*. 1259.
[61] Ibid.

motion. Yet the work is pulled back from the brink by the outworking of the canon which, as the conclusion is reached, demonstrates a consistent and clear return to the retrograde-prime duality, giving a sense of unity between start and finish as reverse formations.

Ex. 3. 20: Bars 47-49 of Nielsen, *Sonata per Due Pianoforti*

The pieces discussed under the rubric of 'hyper-rationality' have demonstrated a relationship to the serial technique that vests the power of their aesthetic value in the pre-compositional material itself: they seem entranced by the method, dominated by it at the expense of other forms of artistic expression. They were, of course, searching for this kind of musical autonomy in the first place, as has been demonstrated by earlier discussion. The Leibowitzian influence that drew these Italian composers to focus on the self-sufficiency of the material must be seen within its context of the post-war cultural matrix, as Taruskin argues:

> Because it seems to deal only with 'purely musical' relationships of structure rather than with 'extra musical' considerations of expression, [serial] music seemed incapable of being commandeered for purposes of propaganda. Its only political stand seemed to be the rejection of politics and the affirmation of the right of the individual to turn away from the coercive public sphere.[62]

Caution should be used in ascribing political intent as a motivating factor in these compositions, almost as a hermeneutical filter in which to carry out analysis: there is a certain naivety in this music which mitigates against the accusation of strong ideology. It is also dangerous to venture a reading of the works already discussed as totally 'expressionless'. However, it is fair to say that the musical results of this de-subjectivising

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[62] Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, v, 17.

move spring from a type of serial reasoning very particular to this era, an aesthetic that faded away in part due to fierce and pointed criticism by other composers that sought a less individualised future for Italian music:

> A sense of isolation and a constant defensive emptiness is responsible for the 'mindset', the intellectual, spiritual, cultural and psychological constitution, of Schoenberg himself; an isolation that causes extreme exasperation and is a *definitive rational crystallisation* of titanic individualism, of desolate and inaccessible solipsism, springing from German art culture of the turn of the twentieth century and culminating in the way in which the 'serial' method has concluded its particular interpretation of Wagnerian chromaticism. With its own hands, therefore, it builds itself a cage where it resides … [63]

The musically humane and a 'lyrical synthesis'

A very different music was emerging from other Italian writers with a relationship to the serial procedure, simultaneously more self-conscious and less willing to disengage with humanistic concerns. At base, the music in this second category of dodecaphonic reformulation posited itself as arising metaphysically not from the method but from a more intrinsic musical expression. Dallapiccola, whose style will be explored here along with that of Maderna and Turchi, formulated it thus: 'great art … fully realises the expression of an inner truth, of a universal truth, which grips the whole of humanity'.[64] This sense of musical compulsion arose from the conscience of the artist for Maderna, and he argued that twelve-note technique was for him merely a historical contingency in need of subjective expression:

> there was a feeling of something new, but I never believed serialism was the only road open … music cannot be anything other than an expressive thing: a sound evinces a response, and sounds are only a means … take Op. 27 [Webern]: if we perform it with the greatest sensibility, it is a marvellous work, but if we realise it according to so called objectivity, it is an idiotic machine, whose series go forwards, then backwards.[65]

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[63] Turchi, 'Critica, Esegesi e dodecafonia', 179.

[64] Dallapiccola, 'Die Moderne Musik und ihre Beziehung zu den übrigen Künsten', 44, quoted in Earle, 'Dallapiccola and the Politics of Commitment: Re-reading *Il Prigioniero*', on-line, (accessed 18 Feb 2010), 11.

[65] Pinzauti, 'Conversation with Bruno Maderna' in Fearn, *Bruno Maderna*, 316, 318.

The 'lyrical' voice

Dallapiccola's *Tre Poemi for Voice and Chamber Orchestra* of 1949 (originally titled Variations for 14 Instruments) provide the clearest example of a circumstantial nexus, or overlap, between the lyrical concern and the Austro-German serial 'mainstream'. They were dedicated to Schoenberg 'for his 75th Birthday', and the completion date of the work is given as the 13th September, the day itself. The piece came as the two composers commenced a period of correspondence that lasted intermittently until Schoenberg's death, starting from the letter Dallapiccola wrote proposing the idea of the dedication. Schoenberg replied positively, adding:

> From what I can understand, you write to show that hardness is not necessarily engendered, apparently, from the dodecaphonic series. This is something I also try to achieve; where I do not succeed completely, in the future I hope that the hardness will not be seen, as today we do not see the hardness in Wagner. Or that it will be accepted.[66]

It is eminently plausible that Dallapiccola's lack of 'hardness' (härten) was the first thing Schoenberg had heard about the Italian composer's compositional style, especially if he had read René Leibowitz's 1947 article in *L'Arche* praising Dallapiccola's turn to serialism but chastising him for his 'lack of harmonic control', 'hedonistic concern' and 'decorative elements'. Leibowitz had suggested that Dallapiccola was 'dominated by the material instead of bringing it under the control of his compositional knowledge' and advised 'an attentive examination of Webern'.[67] Schoenberg's agreement (contra Leibowitz) with the attempt to distance serialism from 'hardness' (the precise meaning of which is frustratingly vague in this context but can be taken to mean un-lyrical) would have made an impression on Dallapiccola, who held Schoenberg in the deepest regard. It also shows Italian 'reformulation' of serialism in the late 40s working in reverse, with a unique glimpse from the heart of the Viennese school (the 'Urtext', as it were), of the reaction to this experimentation.

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[66] Schoenberg, letter to Dallapiccola, 16 Sep 1949, in *Saggi, Testimonianze, Carteggio, Biografia e Bibliografia,* 79.

[67] Leibowitz, 'Luigi Dallapiccola', 123.

p.n. = passing note
r.n. = resting note

Ex. 3. 21: Reduction of Dallapiccola, *Tre Poemi*, movt.1

Chapter 3

How do the *Tre Poemi* eschew this 'hardness'? The subject of Dallapiccola's 'Mediterranean sensuousness', his twelve-note 'softness', is a perennially complicated one, as it relies on a number of aesthetic configurations that, within the post-war era at least, are decidedly undetermined. Ben Earle sets out an oppositional chronology of the concept, whereby it is used to stereotype Dallapiccola amongst the ISCM in the 30s, pronounced as a universal by Mila and D'Amico in the 40s, denounced by the post-Webernians in the 60s and buried by Montecchi and de Santis in the 80s. Earle himself mounts a cogent 'defence of the old critical line … to provide an appreciation of the richness and complexity of the synthesis of stylistic, technical and expressive elements of Dallapiccola's music'.[68]

Earle devotes much discussion to melody, attempting to discern a vocal *cantabilità* in the *Cinque Frammenti di Sappho* of 1943.[69] The same principles he adumbrates in that work can be seen in the melodies of the first movement of *Tre Poemi*: Verdian 'emotional crescendos' (for example the quintuplet-sextuplet figures in bars 7 and 14); layers of phrasing (such as in bars 11-12.3), melismas at climaxes, and concentrated, differentiated articulation. However it is arguable that the most imaginative, expressive element of the *Tre Poemi* is the integration of the horizontal with the vertical. A reduction, following the one in the score, is given at Example 3. 21. Dallapiccola's harmonies manage to acquire the quite remarkable distinction of containing dissonances without sounding dissonant. Even his tritones (labelled 't') have a certain sweetness about them. There is little in the way of tonal reference going on here, but rather a careful attention to the placement of intervals; for what soon becomes clear is that the composer, even whilst keeping to a strict observance of the series order, is working within tension and release patterns, setting up dissonance, moving stepwise and resolving onto a major second or a sixth.[70] The clarity of these is ensured by the constant grouping of the pitch-class collections into tri-chords containing a note from the vocal line and two from the instruments. If the opening bars are split into gestural units with the trichords marked as pc-sets, this can be seen clearly:

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[68] Earle, 'Dallapiccola's Early Synthesis', 36.
[69] Ibid., 10-15.
[70] Even the tension generated by the numerous tritones is subsequently dissipated by other factors such as the resolution of the Ab in bar 3 to a G, or the addition of the Ab in bar 6 to turn a tritone into a dominant seventh.

Ex. 3. 22: Bars 1-6 of Dallapiccola, *Tre Poemi*, movt.1

The effect is heightened by a careful coordination between gesture and harmony, most clearly seen in the formation of three identical phrases at the outset. Rhythmic compression-expansion (triplet-quaver or semi-quaver to quaver or crotchet) is matched by a move from a dissonant pc-set to a semi-consonant one. This is maintained throughout the passage, with a bifurcation between 'tension' pc-sets [036], [027] and [014] and 'release' sets, which contain one tone and one other interval (typically a tritone, forming [026], with its dominant seventh resonances).

What is also evident in these few bars are a number of octave relations or identical pitches that are semi-adjacent (within a quaver) of each other.[71] Taken alongside the tension release patterns, the effect is what the composer designates 'polarity': for a brief moment, pitches are given a certain gravity and prominence, in the sense of a centre, through a

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[71] Though seemingly trivial, the use or avoidance of octave doubling was a topic of deep controversy within serialist aesthetics. See Schoenberg, *Style and idea*, 219-220. Both Leibowitz and Schoenberg condemn it, and accordingly, Malipiero and Vlad argue to curtail its usage in their writings of this period. However, few Italian composers made a conscious effort to thoroughly 'cleanse' their works of this tendency, and many agreed with Maderna's critique of Leibowitz's views as 'Talmudic' (quoted in Fearn, *Maderna*, 316). Dallapiccola himself only accepted the limitation in his later, stricter works (see Nathan, *Fragments from Conversation*, 229).

sensitivity to note placement and duration.[72] Whilst the effect is not a tonal hierarchy, the feeling is defined by the suggestion of such a category:
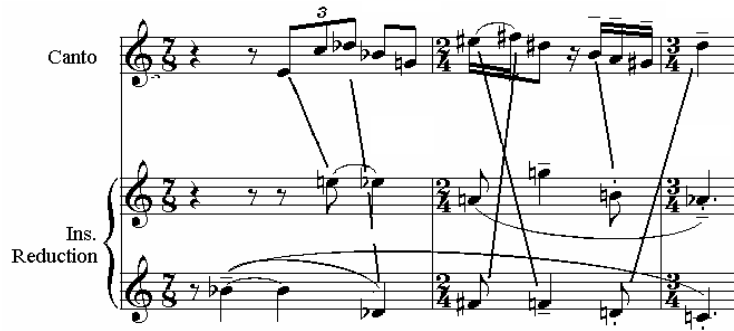
Ex. 3. 23: Octave relations at the opening of Dallapiccola, *Tre Poemi*, movt.1

And if the work is never conventionally diatonic, it does rely on scalic patterns of another kind. An aspect particular to the melody in this work is its octatonicism, a technique that plays a crucial role in Dallapiccola's post-war writing.[73] The row of the *Tre Poemi* divides into a 5-note and 7-note octatonic set, as can be seen in the opening soprano melody:
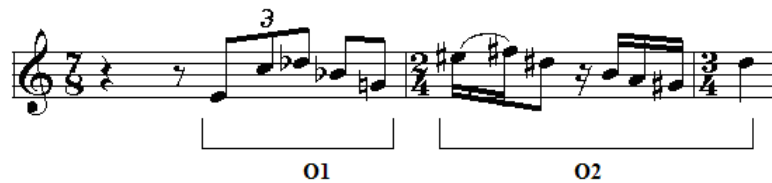
Ex. 3. 24: Octatonicism in the opening bars of Dallapiccola, *Tre Poemi*, movt.1[74]

This renders a continuous division of the row into 5/7 octatonic collections across the work, using all three forms of the scale:

[72] Dallapiccola, 'On The Twelve-Note Road', 325-6.
[73] Eckert, Michael. 'Octatonic Elements in the Music of Luigi Dallapiccola', 35-48; Alegant and Levy, 'Octatonicism in Dallapiccola's twelve-note music', 39-88.
[74] The octatonic scale can be transposed twice; here, O1 designates the scale starting C-D, O2 starting C-C#, O3 starting C#-D.

	Voice	Ins.
Verse 1	**5**(O1) **7**(O2)	**7**(O1) **5**(O2)
	7(O3) **5**(O2)	**5**(O3) **7**(O2)
	7(O3) **5**(O2)	**5**(O3) **7**(O1)
	5(O3) **7**(O2)	**5**(O3) **7**(O2)
		7(O3) **5**(O2)
Verse 2	**7**(O3) **5**(O1)	
	5(O2) **7**(O1)	
	5(O3) **7**(O1)	
	7(O3) **5**(O2)	

Ex. 3. 25: Octatonic collections in Dallapiccola, *Tre Poemi*, movt.1

There is therefore a sense of linear unity running through the melody of this work, confounded at times (as in the first two bars of the movement, which group the phrase into a group of 8 and of 4) but a constant harmonic thread; it creates, for example, vertical chains of subsets (such as ending with O2 in verse 1) and matching (such as that between voice and instrument in the first verse). Dallapiccola's octatonic practice, relying as it does on 'deformations' of the octatonic scale into 5 and 7 note subsets, forms an important if subtle constituent of the *Tre Poemi* even if, as Alegant and Levy argue, 'one remains unconvinced about the purity of these octatonic collections'.[75]

The *Tre Liriche Greche* (1948) by Bruno Maderna, together with their namesakes by Nono in the same year and Berio in 1946, all set transliterations of Greek poetry by the contemporary Italian writer Salvatore Quasimodo (published in 1940), and act somewhat in response to Dallapiccola's initiation in his set from 1942-5. They all also mark the very beginning of their respective composer's affiliation with serialism (an affiliation which, for Berio at least, was an ambivalent and short-lived affair: see chapter 7). Maderna's debt to the Dallapiccolian oeuvre was clearly formed by exposure to the *Liriche Greche*, and it is not surprising therefore to be able to find an equal level of expression in his settings of the text.[76] A letter from Maderna at the time shows him praising Schoenberg's 're-evaluation of the means of expression', but crediting Dallapiccola's *Liriche* with an 'evolution of these

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[75] Alegant and Levy, 'Octatonicism in Dallapiccola's Twelve-Note music', 78.
[76] Borio, 'L'Influenza di Dallapiccola sui Compositori Italiani nel Secondo Dopoguerra' in de Santis ed. *Dallapiccola. Letture e Prospettive*, 387.

principles'; the songs were of 'unquestioned beauty' and 'ingenious'.[77] Of course Maderna's aesthetic background lay not in the music of these composers, but rather in the Venetian mannerisms of his teacher Gian Francesco Malipiero and the modern classicism that predominated in the *generazione dell'ottanta*, with its finely crafted conventional forms, emphasis on picturesque depiction, Italianate sentiment and intuitive sense of lyricism.[78] This mix of characteristics was welded by Malipiero in the 30s and 40s to what Waterhouse calls a symphonic 'rationalism': a sense of balance and proportion in form and a tight, often polyphonic control on harmonic language.[79] Such a synthesis, in its motivation rather than its results, is reflected for Maderna in the integration of serialism into already existent aesthetics, a stance rather at odds with the *tabula rasa* reputation that marked other serialists.

Using similar instrumental forces to Dallapiccola's *Liriche*, Maderna conceives the row as a melodic and canonic device in the first and third of the songs, whereas in the third, he breaks it down into less conspicuously 'romantic' units. The opening of the first song, 'Canto Mattutino', is seen at Example 3. 26. Only the soprano and two flutes are used, and all three parts have a sometimes canonic, sometimes obbligato relationship. The writing is overwhelmingly melodic, but the conjunction of horizontal and vertical elements is far from accidental. Initially, flute 1 trails the soprano's arching line, taking pitches from it almost absent-mindedly (in a heterophonic fashion) to form unisons that either anticipate or follow the vocal line, and therefore come in and out of focus – essentially, oscillating between consonance and dissonance. The second flute enters into canon with the soprano in bar 5, and jointly they supply the pitches for the first flute, thereby creating ever more transient and veiled unisons. The shattering of a melody into pieces which are distributed between parts is a favourite Madernian tactic from his early period, and can be seen most obviously in the *Composizione no. 2* from 1951, which uses the ancient 'Greek Epitaph of Seikilos' as a base-material.[80]

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[77] Maderna, letter to Dallapiccola, 22 July 1949 in *Saggi, Testimonianze, Carteggio, Biografia e Bibliografia*, 75.

[78] For more on this artistic relationship, see the volume *Malipiero Maderna 1973-1993* ed. Paolo Cattelan, especially Nöller, '"Quando gli strumenti cantano". Malipiero, Maderna, la Metafisica e il Concetto d'Espressione nel Novecento', 229-244.

[79] Waterhouse, *Gian Francesco Malipiero*, 255.

[80] Fearn, *Bruno Maderna*, 56-68.

Ex. 3. 26: Bars 1-13 of Maderna, *Tre Liriche Greche* 'Canto Mattutino'

The soprano herself displays a fine *cantabilità* quality. A short slurred phrase, with an upward seventh (giving plenty of scope for portamento) broken by a quaver's breath, is followed by a repetition in rhythmic diminution, and then prolonged by a melismatic *flüchtig* quintuplet that rises and falls onto the lowest note and fades. This vocal 'type' can be seen in other situations:
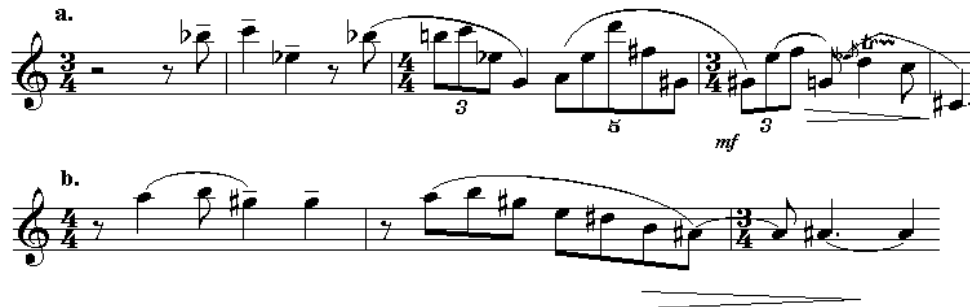
Ex. 3. 27: Flute 1, bars 14-18 and 38-40 of Maderna, *Tre Liriche Greche* 'Canto Mattutino'

This is all aided by the physiognomy of the row, which produces consonant intervals and both major and minor triads. Additionally, Maderna's attitude to register is relaxed and scope is given to widen the tessitura greatly, enabling leaps within chains of 7ths and 6ths (e.g. bar 27).
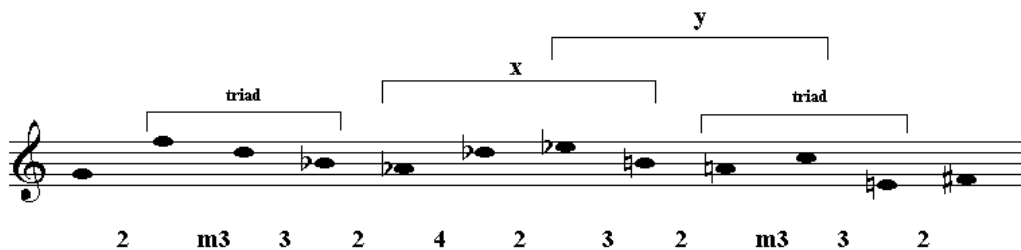
Ex. 3. 28: Row of Maderna, *Tre Liriche Greche* 'Canto Mattutino'

The row does not continue to be followed in a strict sense (though it dominates the writing in the third movement). Instead it begins to be shared amongst the parts in bar 10, and by bar 13, chromatic half-steps cloud what Raymond Fearn calls the 'mellifluous' harmonies of the initial measures.[81] Some of the basic building blocks (especially in the form of tetrachords, labelled x and y, and quintuplets) are maintained, and the melodicity and expressive phrasing are kept intact, but the row as unit is lost:

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[81] Ibid., 28.

Ex. 3. 29: Bars 28-32 of Maderna, *Tre Liriche Greche* 'Canto Mattutino'

The logic behind pitch choice therefore has another factor integrated with that of the series, and it is familiar one: the tension-release patterns seen in Dallapiccola's *Tre Poemi* are present in, and possibly motivate, Maderna's work. Veniero Rizzardi has commented that

> Maderna … constantly utilized a system of intervallic control that permitted a precise measurement of the expressive qualities of the material … the principle is that of putting every interval into the relief of a different grade of calm or tension.[82]

So the idea of an oppositional 'tensio-calmo' (Rizzardi's words) is an external aesthetic factor that derives from a property of the row: that is, the ability to form thirds, triads and perfect fifths. Example 3. 29 provides a good illustration of this. The overlap of parts and irregularly grouped quintuplets creates a sense of rhythmic dissonance, which is confirmed in the harmonic palate. The tension is resolved gesturally (the gradual breakdown into trills leading to a fermata) but is also upheld by culmination onto a minor third. A number of equivalent configurations can be seen using the perfect fifth as a moment of harmonic

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[82] Rizzardi, 'La Nuova Scuola Veneziana, 1948-1951' in Borio, Gianmario, Morelli, Giovanni and Rizzardi, Veniero eds. *Le Musiche degli Anni Cinquanta*, 6.

release at the beginning of the work, as marked on Example 3. 26. Additionally, the two fermatas used in the work to mark structural divisions, to which the music gravitates – bars 20 and 33, both occur on minor thirds. And ultimately, at the close of the work, the three parts are to arrive through canonic and serial operations on an F# major triad in second inversion (bar 41).

The lyricism and expressive nuances of the harmonic writing also engage with the subjective on the level of the text. Fearn hints at the 'evocation of a pastoral and primordial "greenness" within the text' which is reflected in the setting,[83] but this goes beyond a simple referentiality into the realm of explicit word-painting:

Canto Mattutino:

Musical gestures:

The golden birds with high voices,

entry of two 'birds' (flutes)
and one 'high voice' (soprano)

make a confused lament freely
through the lonesome wood to the
tops of the pines;

the series is obscured and hidden

one begins, another delays, another
calls towards the mountains

flute 1 begins; flute 2 delays

o--e--a--a

imitation of bird call - staccato trills,
fluttered quintuplets

and the echo, unending and friendly in
the void, repeats it from the depths
of the valley.

downward movement from high
register to low (valleys)

Ex. 3. 30: Text and Gesture in Maderna, *Tre Liriche Greche* 'Canto Mattutino'

Guido Turchi's enigmatic *Concerto Breve* of 1947 for string quartet is a classic example of Mila's 'inner necessity' with regards to the serial procedure: dodecaphony is an aesthetic which combines with an already existent compositional motivation and forms a synthesis with alternative stylistic tools. Like Dallapiccola's music, the technical aspects of the work, though strong and well-conceived, do not override other aesthetic influences; for Dallapiccola, Schoenbergian developing variation (see below) and tonal tension–release patterns are the model, whereas for Turchi, the *Concerto Breve* is the point at which Italian

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[83] Fearn, *Bruno Maderna*, 28.

serialism meets most clearly the stylisms of Bartók, the composer to whom it is dedicated and who Turchi held up as a paradigm for post-war musical directions.[84] The comparisons between the Hungarian composer's unique quartet style (particularly the height of his progressivism, the 4th Quartet) and Turchi's effort are manifold: the angular, often percussive effect of the rhythms; the use of clustered chromatic chords; the compact and highly economic use of material; the symmetrical pitch-scale construction; the horizontal/vertical equivalences in the harmony, and above all a degree of complication that Taruskin terms 'maximalism'.[85] Yet Turchi's dissonance goes beyond anything the Hungarian composer conceived, and his quartet is at times frighteningly expressionistic in its harsh timbres and lack of gestural resolutions. The opening of the work – a slow moving 'Elegia' – uses the sustained chromatic cluster A-A#-B (henceforth 1-2-3), and as the following example shows the other notes of the serial row combine to form similar clusters that at times threaten to fill out the aggregate, imitating passages from Bartók such as the opening of the 3rd Quartet:

Ex. 3. 31: Bars 1-5 of Turchi, *Concerto Breve*, movt. I

The row Turchi uses provides much of this dissonance as a starting point, and in addition to the 1-2-3 cell it contains three tritones and is based on three octatonic collections: these contribute to the complete lack of any tonal or scalic hierarchy (and thus continuity) in an opposite manner to Dallapiccola's *Tre Poemi* (which uses octatonic sets as melodic entities to bring about unity). The identity of the first pentachord to the

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[84] See Turchi, 'Critica, Esegesi, Dodecafonia', 173-180.
[85] Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, iv, 402-421 provides a lengthy analysis of the 4th Quartet, demonstrating its symmetrical pitch axes.

'Schoenberg' motif in Berg's *Chamber Concerto* should be noted – such 'extra-musical' allusions are a hallmark of Turchi's style, as shall be seen further on:

<div align="right">

Ex. 3. 32: Row of Turchi, *Concerto Breve*, movt. I

</div>

When it comes to the application of the row, the *Concerto Breve* is initially cautious. In fact, Vlad's self-limitation to the prime form of the row in the *Studi Dodecafonici* is mirrored in the first movement. However, unlike his Roman counterpart, Turchi's use of the series is not an instance of crystal-clear rationalism but in fact a complicated (and ultimately incomplete) matter. Giordano Montecchi comments that Turchi's music of this period came 'close to the 12-tone system without embracing it wholeheartedly', and displays 'a constructivist and contrapuntal rigour without excluding the use of expressive, non-serial motivic material'.[86] Example 3. 31 has already shown how a vertical and horizontal presentation of the row initiates the piece, and these bars are followed immediately by a chaotic two bars in which the rhythmic scotch-snap gesture is maintained along with the 1-2-3 motive, but the actual order of the series is jettisoned. A similar effect is achieved in the next bars:

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[86] Montecchi, 'Turchi, Guido', in *Grove Music On-line* (accessed 27 Feb. 2010). Turchi himself states 'it is possible to exercise an objective and serene critical control towards dodecaphony without needing to conform to its dictates, without fidelity to the prescriptions of its doctrine.' Turchi, 'Critica, Esegesi, Dodecafonia', 178.

Ex. 3. 33: Bars 67-68 of Turchi, *Concerto Breve*, movt. I

The simultaneous use of the row on both axes (horizontal and vertical) hints at crucial fact: Turchi, besides being influenced (in this work) by Bartók, is a Schoenbergian, aesthetically speaking. In the *Concerto Breve* there is a high level of thematicism and late-romantic use of motto rhythms (see Example 3. 34 below), a number of tortuous and yearning melodies suggesting *fin-de siècle* Vienna, the compression of conventional concerto form (the sequence of tempi 'Elegy – Allegro – Elegy' forms a ternary first movement, which is followed by a 'Rondo' to close) into its most intense configuration, frequent use of adumbrated unison passages, and a classic recourse to Bergian 'wedge' shape chromaticism (found in the Allegro). Turchi's conception of Schonbergianism was that

> 'from this *preordained* material, or better from this *intuitive fulcrum*, Schoenberg *derives* such a crop of *expressive elements* that demonstrate how life and fertility now expands the musical imagination of composers through the new technique'.[87]

Though he held an ambivalent attitude towards the ideologies behind this view, it rings true with the derivative material found in the *Concerto Breve*, iterative melodic cells originating from the row and subsequently abstracted (making links along the way with Bartók's modernist tendency towards 'dissection of the music into its elementary particles'):[88]

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[87] Turchi, 'Critica, Esegesi, Dodecafonia', 176.
[88] Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, iv, 418.
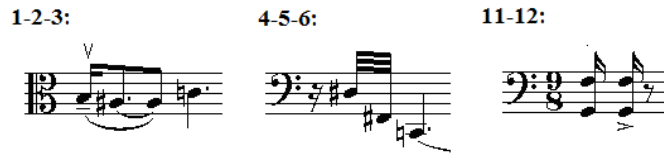
Ex. 3. 34: Extracted figures from Turchi, *Concerto Breve*, movt. I

So at heart, this work is predicated on the notion of romantic organic unity (hence the reference in print to 'life and fertility') and the *Weltanschauung* that proponents of *tecnica* wanted to delimit in the post-war period, placing Turchi fully in the camp of *estetica*. This can be seen most clearly in an apotheotic passage towards the end of the 'Elegy' in which a rigid 3-voice serial canon culminates onto a synthesis of many of the elements so far discussed: a tormented cello *ben cantato* melody using the scotch-snap motto rhythm (and underpinned by the 1-2-3 and 4-5-6 cells abstracted from the series) builds up into a motoric breakdown as the postponed statement of the 12th pitch class signals a conclusion:

Ex. 3. 35: Bars 17-24 of Turchi, *Concerto Breve*, movt. I

The dénouement of the entire work occurs when its spectre makes its appearance. In the midst of the chaos of the Allegro – in impeccably Second-Viennese fashion – Bartók's name is picked out by the first Violin:

Ex. 3. 36: Bars 104-7 of Turchi, *Concerto Breve*, movt. II

Structural imagination, serial fragmentation

Formally, both Dallapiccola's *Poemi* and Maderna's *Liriche* exhibit a degree of purpose and sophistication beyond Turchi's *Concerto Breve*. *Tre Poemi* can be seen as three different explorations of the concept of 'variation' (and this is born out by the original title for the set, 'Variations for 14 instruments'), with a unifying feature of all three sections being a reliance on a dialogic of contrasting textures:

Movement I	–	**Variations on a Series**
Movement II	–	**Canonic Variation form**
Movement III	–	**Obbligato Variation form**

The idea of a 'variation on a twelve-note series' derives from the Schoenbergian principle of 'developing' (Schoenberg) or 'perpetual' (Leibowitz) variation outlined for the first time in the Austrian composer's 1917 treatise 'Coherence, Counterpoint, Instrumentation, Instruction in Form'. It is a very specific trope that centres on the teleological narrative of serialism, which (corresponding to the sense of Adorno's negative dialectics) claims to have boiled sonata form down to its most Hegelian, its middle development section (the clash of thesis and antithesis). Schoenberg's conception of the process focuses on ensuring that

musical 'changes proceed more or less directly toward the goal of allowing new ideas to arise'.[89] Ethan Haimo gives a neat, dialectical schema that explains the practice:

> 1) An initial motivic figure is stated.
>
> 2) This is followed by another figure that retains enough of the features of the first to be recognised, but with significant changes.
>
> 3) Those changes effectively create new musical configurations which can then be subjected to further development.[90]

Within the first movement of the *Tre Poemi* the precedence is set by the text, taken from Joyce's *Pomes Penyeach* in the Eugenio Montale translation (seen at Example 3. 37). There is a kind of prototype 'developing variation' form on display here. Following the critical apparatus of Haimo, there can be discerned elements of one dimension being retained – the rhythmic continuity achieved by the use of 'che' at the beginning of the third line, the separation of the sub-clauses in lines 2 and 4 with the single syllable preposition – and of another dimension being developed – the drawing out of 'Gracile rosa' to 'Fragile e bella come rosa', which then gives freedom to extend further with 'e ancora più fragile'. These characteristics inherent in the text are magnified in the music. Example 3. 37 also shows the soprano line of the two verses in parallel. As can be seen, development is occurring even within the first verse, in terms of gestures with similar rhythm and contour patterns but with certain features, such as intervals, inverted. The second verse has moments of continuity with the first, the most prominent of which (from an aural perspective) is the opening 5 note group, unmodified in rhythm/underlay and similar in pitch. Other ideas taken from the first verse, such as the seven-note cell on 'strana meraviglia' (bar 11), are out-workings of previous ideas, while sections such as 'che veli ne'tuoi occhi' rely solely on one aspect of previous material (dwelling on the upwards semitone) while forming new gestural patterns.

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[89] Schoenberg, 'Coherence, Counterpoint, Instrumentation, Instruction in Form', quoted in Haimo 'Developing Variation and Schoenberg's Serial Music', 350.
[90] Ibid., 355.

Ex. 3. 37: Developing variation in the music and text of Dallapiccola, *Tre Poemi*, movt. I

These two vocal stanzas are also cast in developing variation form in terms of their hexachordal invariance, linking the technical and expressive spheres neatly:

Ex. 3. 38: Hexachordal Developing Variation in Dallapiccola, *Tre Poemi*, movt. I

Here the transformations are chosen to give continuity through their partial hexachordal invariance. Using all four forms of the row, but in a different order in the second verse, Dallapiccola's row choice leads to identical consecutive hexachords of 4 and 6-note invariance, a quite deliberate and calculated move designed to bring about melodic unity. The use of different row forms between verses, however, means that even given the pitch invariance, the order is dissimilar and therefore allows diversity of material.

Formally, the second movement is altogether different; hardly surprising, given the move from the poignant and wistful Joyce to the dramatic and torpid Michelangelo. Earlier, the tendency of each of these *Poemi* towards dualism was noted, and this is especially

apparent in this particular case. The division between heavily canonic sections and more fragmented passages explores aspects of timbre in the most detailed way. However it is the canonic writing that carries the structural weight:

bars. 17-22	23-40	41-61	62-79
Canonic Variations	***Timbral Variations***	***Canonic Variations***	***Timbral Variations***
Chiunque nasce a morte arriva nel fuggir del tempo, e'l sole niuna cosa lascia viva.	Manca il dolce e quel che dole e gl'ingegni e le parole e le nostre antiche prole, al sole ombre, al vento un fumo.	Come voi uomini fumo, liete e tristi come siete; ed or siam, come vedete, terra al sol, di vita priva. Ogni cosa a morte arriva.	Già fur gli occhi nostri interi con la luce in ogni speco; or son voti, orrendi e neri, e ciò porta il tempo seco.

Ex. 3. 39: Form of Dallapiccola, *Tre Poemi*, movt. II

As the structural crescendo is reached towards the middle of the movement (bar 49), Dallapiccola augments the notes of the second bar of the canon to provide jarring syncopated rhythms, and he chooses his row transformations to increase the tension by clustering entries on the octave (harp bar 41), the major second (clarinet bar 44) and the major 7th (oboe bar 45). As fortissimo is reached, and rhythmic values diminish to triplets, there is a sudden moment of clarity as the soprano intones 'fumo', and the canon reverses and is taken up by the instruments in retrograde.

The last movement's dualism lies in the dichotomy between chordal textures and a canonic/obbligato writing. The framework for the variation of a gradually expanding set of ideas can be seen in this formal chart; by addition of voices, the binary subsections increase in intensity until the final two utilize four simultaneous melodies:

	b. 81-84	85-87	88-89.3	89-92	92-93	94-97	98-100
Sop.		**Subject**		**Subject** (development I)		**Subject** (development II)	
Instruments	**Chords**	**Obbligato** (subject inversion)	**Chords + Obbligato**	**Subject + Obbligato** (subject inversion)	**Chords** (in 2-part canon)	**Subject** + **Obbligato** (subject dev. II inversion) + **Obbligato** (subject inversion)	**Chords** (in 4-part canon)

Ex. 3. 40: Form of Dallapiccola, *Tre Poemi*, movt. III

The opening chords are simple and elegant in their quasi-tonality, but as they are developed, first of all with an obbligato line, secondly with a two-voice canon and finally with a four-voice canon, dissonance emerges:

Ex. 3. 41: From initial to final 'Chords', bars 81-81 and 98-100 of Dallapiccola, *Tre Poemi*, movt. IV

The first movement of Maderna's *Tre Liriche Greche*, as has been seen, forms itself around the build up of tension and release patterns corresponding to the literary movement of the text. However the third ('Stellato') is the most serially and structurally determined:

Ex. 3. 42: Reduction of Maderna, *Tre Liriche Greche*, 'Stellato'

The 10-note row (no G/Bb) acts somewhat as a *cantus firmus*, usually occurring in a prime-retrograde configuration and hovering around the build up of sustained chords – a

tactic seen often in Dallapiccola's music.[91] The second-inversion B major chord in bar 4 is clouded by a second-inversion D minor, both of which oscillate around the text in the chorus parts while the series is unfolded and echoed between the piano and flutes. Over this static texture, the soprano solo intones 'throughout the night' (spoken) as a rhythmic drone. Around bar 17, the stasis ends, as the chorus emerges into a canonic exploration of the row, designed to draw out the parts onto the A-B-C# trichord seen in Example 3. 42 (even creating a hocket-like texture so the canons match-up exactly into the chord in bar 21). As the canonic motion transfers to the instrumental parts both in diminution and in its normative state, the lower chorus adds the crucial G-Bb dyad, unused in the movement until this point, which completes the 12-note pitch set. The most sophisticated aspect is the dovetailing, both in pitch and structural balance (each section being around 5 bars in length) between canon and harmony, and the control with which the graded move from consonance to chromatic aggregate is carried off.

The middle movement ('Le Danaids') is even more formally ambitious, containing hints towards novel techniques of serial fragmentation that will be further explored in Chapter 7. The serialization of rhythmic gestures is the most obvious early example of Maderna's experimentation with independent parametric thinking, a new direction which sprang out of the composition courses hosted by Hermann Scherchen in Venice in 1948. Nono also took part in these courses, and later recalled 'Scherchen had me study the new rhetoric of Dallapiccola's musical thinking: independently articulating relationships between pitches – time periods – timbres – phonetics – dynamics; not just the mechanical development of academic twelve-note linguistics, but powerful, independent fragments of infinite worlds.'[92] Example 3. 43 shows the nascent use of serialism applied to rhythm: prime and retrograde rhythmic cells, easy to spot within the pitched timpani, are also present in contour within the un-pitched tambura.

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[91] In fact the allusion to the elder composer goes beyond this in the opening gesture: the row is accompanied on its path by a shimmering and sustained B major triad in the upper chorus parts, a device very reminiscent of passages in Dallapiccola's *Tre Laudi* (1937), *Volo di Notte* (1938) and *Ulisse* (1968), where the associated image in the text is of stars (the triad representing the background of the firmament and the series as the bright stellar sparks; see Fearn, *Luigi Dallapiccola*, 34) Thus the title of Maderna's third Greek lyric ('stellato', starry) suggests a rather obvious musical borrowing, the intentions of which are unclear.

[92] Nono, 'Con Luigi Dallapiccola' in Restagno ed. *Nono*, 246.

Ex. 3. 43: Ostinato rhythms in bars 1-14 of Maderna, *Tre Liriche Greche*, 'Le Danaidi'

The base material used as a resource to be drawn upon by the instrumental parts is a twelve-note row. It is only found once in its entirety, in bars 19-21 in the piano part (Example 3. 44), but even before this point certain gestures are removed from it, most prominent of which are the 5-note 'wedge' shape figures. Bars 4-7, for example, contain these shapes within the melodic lines of Clarinet 1 and the Bass clarinet, as well as providing interjections by Clarinet 2 and Flute 1.

Ex. 3. 44: Base row material (pf. Bar 19-21) of Maderna, *Tre Liriche Greche*, 'Le Danaidi'

Hereafter, the pitch processes progressively fragment the row, drawing upon it for melodic and decorative resources in the filigree texture of the woodwind semi-quaver lines. The handling of this line increases in complexity when the latter sections of the piece are considered. The structural and dynamic climax of the ostinato/filigree texture is in bar 47; henceforth, the choral enunciations of the text turn into pitched notes and melodies, and the instrumental melodies turn from their fast semiquaver motion into longer lines. By bar 64, these lines are derived from a fragmentation of the base serial material, shown in Example 3. 45. Raymond Fearn's work in the Archivio Bruno Maderna (Universitá di Bologna) in the 1980s uncovered sketches which demonstrate how the composer formed the instrumental melodies by extracting notes from the base material one semi-quaver at a time, each pitch being held on until the next and thus forming rhythmic as well as melodic shape. In effect, 7 separate lines are produced with the same 'ghost' pitch set hovering overhead.[93] Even more adventurously, Maderna then joins these derived lines to form one arching melody given to the soprano soloist as an extended solo that brings the work to a close. Maderna is taking the twelve-note procedure here to new levels of potentiality/abstraction, and, it is fair to say, to a new era in Italian serialism that will be considered further in Chapter 6 and 7.

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[93] Fearn, *Bruno Maderna*, 45-48.

Ex. 3. 45: Derivation of instrumental lines from base material, Maderna, *Tre Liriche Greche*, 'Le Danaidi'

Chapter 4:
Alternative approaches to style and technique in works by Ghedini and Petrassi

As the central, stylistic section of this thesis develops, this chapter brings a focus to bear on two crucial non-serial works written within this period. Both represent the pinnacle of their composer's post-war achievements, and both display stylistic and technical characteristics that strongly pertain to an understanding o` musical modernism in this era. Simultaneously, they fulfil two further functions in the progress of this study. Firstly, in being non-serial works they balance out the emphasis on the method in the previous chapter, and in so doing they hopefully put dodecaphony in its right place: not as a hegemonic 'end-stage' of Italian composition in this period, but as a plural cultural meme that inserted itself into the gamut of other possibilities in post-war art. Secondly, devoting a chapter to these two pieces gives space for a longer and deeper consideration of 'the music itself' than has previously been possible, allowing the content of two large-scale texted works to provide the interpretative framework for aesthetic debates. They thus will be the means of revealing and exploring several new compositional directions, external influences, continuities with pre-war aesthetics and specific Italian mannerisms; in this sense, they act as representative 'types', as such trends that can be found in contemporaneous works by other composers. Additionally, one work hails from 1945, the other from 1950, and therefore they go beyond merely static historical examples of artistic method and illustrate aspects of continuity and change in these years. Moreover, they document – in the Italian context, at least – the shifting of balance within one particular aesthetic binary that shaped much of twentieth-century art music, in that the first foregrounds musical *style*, and the second reconfigures musical *language*.

Ghedini's new tonal stylistics: the *Concerto dell'Albatro* (1945)

Born in 1892, Giorgio Federico Ghedini hailed from Cuneo in the north (he taught for many years in Turin and Milan), and remained on the periphery of musical fame for much of his life. As the fascist regime turned to war, and he entered his sixth decade, few expected that

his music would be of more than local interest into the 1940s.[1] Yet between 1940 and 1950 Ghedini's work underwent a transformation that surprised many, and in this creative spring he embarked upon a 'stylistic turn' (as Stefano Parise has labelled it) that brought his well established manner into collision with modernity.[2] Gianandrea Gavazzeni was one of the earliest commentators on this volte-face:

> today, no longer physically young (in fact, in his later years), [Ghedini] finds himself in a period of vigour within his musical story, far away from a crystallisation of a stylistic position, from being held by the limits of a manner; and he demonstrates to all the surprises of such a mutation that can happen in the fervour of an inventive musicality.[3]

Ghedini grew to maturity as a composer within the *ventennio* years, surrounded by the latent neo-classicism of Casella, the hedonistic romanticism of Respighi and the capricious dramas of Malipiero. Stravinsky was an important model; national character and Latin aestheticism the muse. Above all, music was intensely *stylised*, and the invocation of manner, whether it be renaissance, baroque, or romantic, together with an emphasis on cleanness of instrumentation, shaped Ghedini's primary musical language. None of these artistic creeds is abandoned in the 1940s, but they undergo a metamorphosis into something novel. As documentary research by Parise has shown, the catalyst for this change was the physical displacement and exile brought on by the Second World War itself. A sense of artistic isolation, wedded to a melancholy brought on by an observation of suffering, firmly affected Ghedini's compositions of the middle 40s, and Parise goes so far as to express such war time experiences as producing 'a profound existential fracture in the musician's life'.[4] The fracture was one of style and genre, brought together with a new vigour that Gavazenni in 1946 called 'an impetuous musicality', and producing a 'redefinition of the coordinates of the Ghedinian language'.[5] In some ways it involved a confrontation with more international compositional models: more of the music of Stravinsky, and that of

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[1] See Parise, *Giorgio Federico Ghedini: l'Uomo, le Opere attraverso le Lettere* for a discussion ('through his letters') of the composer pre-1940; other authors, such as Zanetti, begin their discussions of Ghedini's music with *Architteture* (1940); *La Musica Italiana nel Novecento*, 1060-1074.

[2] Parise, 'Una Svolta Stilistica nel Secondo Dopoguerra: Giorgio Federico Ghedini' in Salvetti and Antolini eds. *Italia Millenovecentocinquanta*, 271-82.

[3] Gavazzeni, *Musicisti d'Europea*, 182.

[4] Parise, *Giorgio Federico Ghedini: l'Uomo, le Opere attraverso le Lettere*, 8. See also Ghedini's comments in 'La Ricostruzione Musicale in Italia' in Zanetti, *La Musica Italiana nel Novecento,* 1650.

[5] Gavazzeni, *Musicisti d'Europea*, 188; Parise, 'Una Svolta Stilistica nel Secondo Dopoguerra: Giorgio Federico Ghedini' in Salvetti and Antolini eds. *Italia Millenovecentocinquanta*, 271.

Bartók, Hindemith and the twelve-note composers. Thus what Zanetti labels as a 'hard, intelligent modernity' appears in Ghedini as a corresponding shift to the 'opening out of national boundaries, the 'advance into the international arena'.[6] The musical results were the orchestral work *Architetture* (1940), the vocal cantata *Concerto Spirituale* (1943), the *Sette Ricercari* (1943) for piano trio, the opera *Le Baccanti* (1944) and the *Concerto dell'Albatro* (1945). The last of these (the 'albatross concerto') is justly his most well-known work, both for its musical merits and its success in the post-war years, and will be the focus of the first half of this chapter.[7]

Scored for piano, violin, cello, speaker and orchestra, Ghedini's concerto was given its first performance at the Rome International Festival in September 1945. Its immediate success took the composer himself by surprise, as he revealed in a letter to Atilla Poggi:

> I am spending my time in Rome playing the *Concerto dell'Albatro* and the *Concerto Spirituale* for illustrious colleagues. It is being said that the Albatross is the best contemporary piece of Italian music! The concerto has already been included in the programme of the International Festival at the Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome in December. Then it will be given on the radio, in Milan, maybe Turin, Florence, Naples, maybe Bari etc … It is my first big success.[8]

After the performance, and his introduction to several important Roman composers by Goffredo Petrassi, the work changed Ghedini's fortunes, and brought him a better publisher (Suvini Zerboni) and more prestigious premières (such as the *Concerto Spirituale*, the *Piano Concerto* and the opera *Billy Budd* at the 1946, 1947 and 1949 Venice International festivals respectively).[9] The work takes its inspiration from Hermann Melville's *Moby-Dick* (1851) and while there is no sung part within the score, a passage from Chapter 42 of the book is used within the last movement of the concerto, recited 'slowly and softly' (as

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[6] Parise judges that whilst before the war Ghedini's 'position was not that different from the vast majority of Italian intellectuals, tolerating fascism more from conformity than fear', at its conclusion his letters contain many 'invectives against the regime', and after it he came close (in the eyes of Mila and Pavese) to a *resistenza* sentiment in the *Concerto Funebre per Duccio Galimberti* of 1948; *Giorgio Federico Ghedini: l'Uomo, le Opere attraverso le Lettere*, 8.

[7] Zanetti calls it 'his masterpiece, even one of the culminations of twentieth century musical literature' (*La Musica Italiana nel Novecento*, 1064), Gavazzeni 'his best result' (*Musicisti d'Europea*, 188), and Waterhouse deems that the work, 'which finally established his reputation in Italy, deserves to become a classic' ('Obituary for Giorgio Federico Ghedini', 372).

[8] Ghedini, quoted in Parise, 'Una Svolta Stilistica nel Secondo Dopoguerra: Giorgio Federico Ghedini' in Salvetti and Antolini eds. *Italia Millenovecentocinquanta*, 272.

[9] See Petrassi's recollections, *Scritti e Interviste*, 185.

Ghedini instructs) over the unfolding music.[10] Rather than being a routine texted work, then, the *Concerto dell'Albatro* in a sense distances itself from the *parole* of its text in not incorporating it musically into the fabric of the work, and in delaying its entrance until the fifth movement of the piece. Initially, Ghedini had wanted to base the whole work on a larger passage from *Moby- Dick*, but he revealed soon after its première that

> the subject of the literature became a purely musical subject and the new direction permitted only a minimal amount of the book. There are many protagonists that are introduced by the argument: their states of mind are in the four tempos of the instrumental movements.[11]

The musical 'internalization of the subject' is a crucial concept in understanding the artistic world of the concerto, and the physical/natural immediacy and pictorial imagery envisioned by the text (Example 4. 1) is meant to permeate the structure from the first bar. Indeed, as Waterhouse states, 'when the speaker eventually enters … the words seem to give a "local habitation and name" to what was already clear in the music'.[12]

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[10] Ghedini's choice of text was of his historical moment: according to Torriglia, after Fascism writers like Elio Vittorini and Cesare Pavese were regularly producing translations of Melville, Twain and Thoreau, creating a 'myth of America' which they hoped would 'mark Italy's plunge into modernity, *tout court*'; the translation of *Moby Dick* used by Ghedini was one of Pavese's earliest, from 1942. Torriglia, *Broken Time, Fragmented Space: a Cultural Map for Post-War Italy*, 79.

[11] Ghedini, 'Come Nacque il 'Concerto dell'Albatro'', quoted in Zanetti, *La Musica Italiana nel Novecento*, 1064.

[12] Waterhouse, 'Obituary for Giorgio Federico Ghedini', 372.
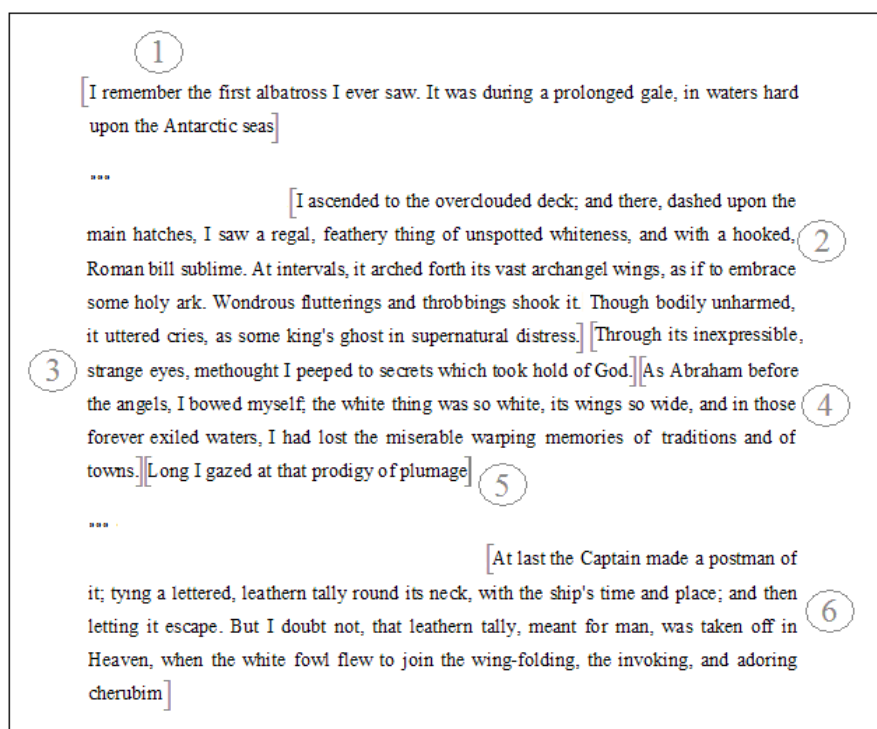
Ex. 4. 1: Passages from Chapter 42 of Melville's *Moby-Dick* divided according to the six sections of speech material in Ghedini, *Concerto dell'Albatro*, movt. V

The two earliest commentators on the work, Gavazenni and Gatti, maintained that the text prompted a focus on pure sonority, and they prioritize what is, on anybody's reading of the work, a very prominent characteristic: musical timbre. According to Gavazenni, for Ghedini '[texts] are always materials and elements called to the service of the music, under the domain of timbre and sound'. The 'situation' of the text – its hardness, loneliness, its emotionless evocation of a sea voyage – along with the more material features it invokes – the frigidity of the air, coldness of the foaming sea, and whiteness of the albatross – is inscribed upon the timbre, which attempts to reflect such features in both obvious and subtle ways:

> It is always the timbre that takes the aesthetic value in a zone where the rawness of the material is exposed … Ghedini thrives on the timbral anxiety found in the Melvillian albatross …. in the 'Albatross', the timbral genesis rises to be an actual language, understood in its autonomous meaning.[13]

Gatti similarly puts forward the phenomenological interpretation:

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[13] Gavazzeni, *Musicisti d'Europea*, 189-90

> The vision of a white bird with immense wing span, compared by the writer to an archangel, is gradually transfigured onto the musical level, on which freezing sonorities of a glassy transparency prevail, chilling timbres, immobile atmospheres and disembodied aurea bolaris.[14]

If Gatti's reading seems too literalist, however, one can turn to an 'historical' interpretation, which Zanetti advances and which seems also to be supported by Fenoglio and Pugliaro. Zanetti chooses to connect elements of Melville's expressive world to the post-war view of the desolate soul, and to the isolation and suffering observed by the composer:

> The text was chosen by the composer … for reasons bound up in the precise historical moment and the composer's personal circumstances. It is correct, therefore to locate the meaning within the important, lyrical Melvillian message, to which Ghedini assigned the role of recalling the human tragedy through which his generation had lived. From the spiritual and material upheaval observed, then, man can remove himself only to be confined in 'perpetual exile', condemned to 'wander in remote waters in the Antarctic sea' after having lost the 'miserable warping memories of traditions and of towns'. Also, more generally, Ghedini chose this text for its portrayal of the albatross, pervaded with a lyrical sense that is the expressive centre of Melville's poetry, a writing that seeks a re-invigoration of the soul, a recuperation of adolescent innocence, a return to naïve ways and to an awe at life.[15]

Zanetti's existential reading of the poem contextualises the text to an age devoid of essence through exile, present in Melville's book in the reality of the hardness of 'beauty' and the attempt by Ishmael to construct his own meaning of life. Thus for Ghedini to choose this specific text, in the age of Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* and other 'stunde nulle' existential sentiments, is prescient.[16] Furthermore, in taking the lyricism inherent with the figure of the albatross as a form of 'escapism' ('a recuperation of adolescent innocence, a return to naïve ways and to an awe at life'), Zanetti opens up a hermeneutical trajectory that hints at archaism, or the inhabitation of the 'outmoded'.[17] This latter category is taken up by

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[14] Gatti, 'Corrispondenza da Roma', quoted in Zanetti, *La Musica Italiana nel Novecento*, 1064. Waterhouse's obituary for the composer takes the same critical line, comparing the sonorities to the 'vast grey expanses of water'; 'Obituary for Giorgio Federico Ghedini', 372.

[15] Zanetti, *La Musica Italiana nel Novecento*, 1065.

[16] See Chapter 5. Contrary to this view is Bonisconti's metaphysical reading: 'the ingression of a human voice to speak the message, and the symbol of a mystical bird, can be felt as originating from another world … the music is spiritually locked, and it is this message that gives access' Bonisconti, 'G.F.Ghedini e le sue Ultime Opere', quoted in Zanetti, *La Musica Italiana nel Novecento*, 1066.

[17] It is interesting to contrast this aesthetic with the emerging neo-realism in Italian cinematography and literature, explored further in the next chapter.

Fenoglio and Pugliaro, who write of Ghedini's 'recuperation of the archaic', which unlike Casella's neoclassicism 'is not prone to excessive culturalism and aestheticism':

> From 1940 onwards, he operated a parallel and personal recuperation of certain aspects of Italian renaissance and Baroque music, almost seeming to move along the axis of history … in the *Concerto dell'Albatro*, the mechanism of the baroque concerto, with its opposition of sound blocks, its counterpoint and its instrumental concertante, came to be transfigured within a cutting edge and hard modern language, descending into an astral atmosphere of cold and blunt timbres.[18]

This delineation between the old and the new is a crucial point, for what is happening, according to Fenoglio and Pugliaro, is *not* nostalgia, but rather the transformation of archaic style within modern language (harmonic, melodic and timbral, as shall be seen in the following analysis); a kind of hyper-neoclassicism, refusing to objectify one particular musical style.

Movement I – Largo

The opening of the work certainly demonstrates the 'transparency' of timbre identified by Gatti. The use of octaves prominently arrayed over a large registral range is a common feature of the movement, and the 'bareness' of the sonorities, the restrained sound of a full string section at *pp*, and the structural crescendo evocatively conjure up the icy expanses of the Antarctic sea:

Ex. 4. 2: Bars 1-7 of Ghedini, *Concerto dell'Albatro*, movt. I

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[18] Fenoglio and Pugliaro, 'Introduction to the "Progetto Ghedini"', 5-6. The authors also point to a stream of existential thought in the *Concerto dell'albatro*.

Taken as a whole, it is apparent that Ghedini's focus on timbre works on different levels, and involves the use of certain timbral 'types' that signify a variety of meanings. Example 4. 3 gives one reading of these 'types', which can be categorised into three groups, each having physical and conceptual signification.

Timbral 'type': *[Musical signifier]*	High Solo Vln/Vc *[Fig. 1]*	Unison 8ves	'Wedge' motif
	Lyrical string warmth *[Fig. 2]*	High register piano	'Shimmering' arpeggios *[Fig. 5]*
	Ornamented Pno. line *[Fig. 3]*	Disembodiment (bitonal+hidden harmonies)	Repeated ascending /descending piano patterns *[Fig. 2/3]*
	⬇	⬇	⬇
Concept: *[Physical signified]*	Albatross	Frigidity	The sea
	⬇	⬇	⬇
'Meta-concept':	Existential beauty	Isolation	Stasis

Ex. 4. 3: Timbral 'types' in Ghedini, *Concerto dell'Albatro*, movt. I

These three categories are then taken on into subsequent movements, while their referents are varied. The 'types' are blurred with other musical parameters – the 'wedge' shape seen at Example 4. 4 is a pitch issue, as well as one of registral extremes – but maintain their consistency in creating an expectancy for a certain type of sonority over time. Some associations are obvious, such as the 'wedge' shape with waves or the ornamented piano line with birdsong. Others are less so, such as the harmonies 'hidden' within other harmonies, emerging out of the texture (see Example 4. 6) as a sign of isolation; the justification comes from the disembodiment of conventional timbre and the sense of loneliness this brings. Still more seem eminently plausible but yet have no 'rational' explanation, such as the connection between frigidity and the upper timbre of bare chords in the piano line. What is important to note is the carefully structured way in which timbre is consistently placed, and the determinism that lies behind it. In tracing out Ghedini's style, what he called his 'timbral research' assumes a large responsibility in making the leap from the archaic (the mechanisms of convention) to the modern (the mechanisms of sound). As Gavazenni wrote, the 'timbral genesis rises to be an actual language, understood in its

autonomous meaning';[19] and the implications of this would be felt in later music by Nono (see chapter 7) and even into the 1970s in the luminous sound-canvasses of Salvatore Sciarrino.

Ex. 4. 4: Wedge shape writing, figure 4 from Ghedini, *Concerto dell'Albatro*, movt. I

The simultaneous unity and diversity of the timbre is reflected within the harmonic and melodic material of the movement, and in its form. Example 4. 5 shows the two main melodies of the work, 'A' and 'B', the first introduced at the outset by the strings and the second immediately following in the piano. Both manage to convey similar musical gestures – in fact, the second could, at a glance, be mistaken for a transposition of the first – while in reality they are quite dissimilar in rhythm and intervallic content. The ear is, initially, tricked by the fact that they start with an ascending third scalic gesture, 'A' in the major and 'B' in the minor. They both operate within a conventional harmonic framework and form a thesis-antithesis statement, the first moving from Bb to F via a 'secondary dominant' of C, the second reversing this move, F-C-Bb

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[19] Gavazzeni, *Musicisti d'Europea*, 190.

Ex. 4. 5: Comparative analysis of the two main melodies from Ghedini, *Concerto dell'Albatro*, movt. I

However, working against this tonal apparatus, both melodies fill out the chromatic aggregate in a quasi-serial manner, using 11 out of 12 pitches.[20] In the one pitch repetition A and B do use, it is of the identical unit, the 3rd pitch, which (as both begin with the scalic 1-2-3) emphasises the major/minor dualism. The melodies also share a Bergian 'wedge' shape opening, both expanding in register from a middle pitch to a compound minor 2nd; this 'opening out' is consistent with the structural crescendo that they perform. The result of these commonalities is that 'A' and 'B' masquerade both as each other and as falsely consonant lines, and in this sense demonstrate a marked ambiguity that characterises the entire work.

Harmonically, ambiguity is a concept relevant to other passages in this movement. It is tempting to label music without a tonal centre in this work as bi-tonal, but the suggestion that they inhabit two equal (and conflicting) keys is misleading. Instead, as Example 4. 6 shows, tonal polarities such as the underlying pedal-point C major move in and out of the texture whilst being blurred by a succession of overlaid harmonies. At the outset, the C is lost within a large E major chord; it asserts its force more, emerging from the texture, where the higher harmony is static or where it includes a C; and it finally 'pushes through' to be the primary centre by the sixth bar of the figure. Thus several keys orbit one another, each with gravitational 'pulls' that render the tonality unstable until the last. A similar configuration can be found in the tracing out of an A-major triad in the bass from 5 bars

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[20] This is not the only dodecaphonic influence: there are various serial manipulations of melody such as that at figure 2, where the 1st violin melody is an inversion of the first 5 notes of melody 'B'. The increased chromaticism of Ghedini's most adventurous years would eventually lead to the *Canoni* for violin and 'cello, a brief quasi-serial work composed in 1947 that uses permutations on an 11-note row fairly strictly.

before figure 5, which is by turn affirmed and contradicted by more powerful harmonies in the solo violin and cello.

Ex. 4. 6: Harmony at figure 2 of Ghedini, *Concerto dell'Albatro*, movt. I

If a subtle twist of mid twentieth-century extended tonality is seen here within the Ghedinian language, this is further reinforced by a classically Italian piece of stylism, one of the few solidly identifiable 'nationalisms' in post-war Italian music. Ghedini, in his compositional syntax, shows a love for bare chords in fifths, sixths and thirds, often sensuously spaced and moving in parallel directions, frequently grouped into contrary motion units. Such devices, prevalent across a whole gamut of music as Waterhouse argues, act 'as sensations, not merely as 'functional' building-stones in the music's structure'.[21] Within the first movement of the *Concerto dell'Albatro*, the parallel writing is almost exclusively confined to the perfect fifth, and is seen most prominently in passages such as the piano solo shown in Example 4. 7. The driving chordal progressions create a series of oscillations between momentum and dissipation:

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[21] Waterhouse, 'The Italian Avant-Garde and National Tradition', 15. The critic quotes passages from Gian Francesco Malipiero's *Torneo Notturno* of 1929, Dallapiccola's *Cinque Frammenti di Sappho* of 1942 and Maderna's *Serenata no.* 2 of 1954; to this list could be added Respighi's *Trittico Bottocelliano* of 1927, (fig. 6, 'Vivo'), Dallapiccola's *Musica per tre Pianoforte (Inni)* of 1935 (bars 1-12).Casella's *Concerto op 69* of 1943 (the opening of the 'Sarabande') and Petrassi's *Sesto concerto* of 1956 (bars 208-210).

Ex. 4. 7: Parallel piano chords, figure 2 of Ghedini, *Concerto dell'Albatro*, movt. I

Example 4. 8 shows the form of this movement. Fenoglio and Pugliaro assert that in the *Concerto dell'Albatro* 'the mechanism of the baroque concerto, with its opposition of sound blocks, its counterpoint and its instrumental concertante, came to be transfigured within a cutting edge and hard modern language', and if this transfigured 'language' refers to the harmonic, timbral and melodic modernity it could be assumed that, formally speaking, there is a simple compliance with the mechanisms of the baroque.[22] This view will be radically challenged in later movements, but in the first movement (in order, presumably, to establish an archetype worth subverting) a concerto grosso framework is kept in the most part intact. The movement is basically ternary, with an introduction and a coda either side; the middle section is the canonic ascending-descending piano solo, whilst the outer sections, though not identical, have in common the return of the 'A' melody, the answer by the solo violin, the wedge pattern in the piano and the warmth of a homophonic string climax. The ending is set up fairly deliberately by the entry of the solo violin with a transposition of the 'A' melody up a perfect fifth to the dominant minor (so that it seems to be the 'B' melody at first) followed by a swerving back to the tonic of Bb at the close. Thus elements of sonata form thinking (first subject I, second subject V; second subject modulates to end in I) can be set alongside simple ternary form.

In his division and opposition of instrumental groups, the *grosso* mannerisms latent in Ghedini's formal style shine through; indeed, the original instrumental choice was a fundamentally significant gesture towards that particular musical style, whilst still leaving the composer with flexibility to alter and 'comment' on that same common practice. The choice of three soloists with an orchestra ('agreeing' in one sense of the word *concertare*) is already one step back from the single voice twentieth-century concerto ('opposing', in the other sense). Furthermore, in reducing his orchestral forces to the strings, one flute, two trombones and minimal percussion (the other wind and brass being entirely omitted from the score until the closing half of the fourth movement) Ghedini creates not only a ripieno but a sub-ripieno grouping:

Concertino	Sub-ripieno	Ripieno	Tutti
Str.	Vc.	Trmb.	All
Perc.	Pno.	Fl.	
	Vl.	Perc.	

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[22] Fenoglio and Pugliaro, 'Introduction to the "Progetto Ghedini"', 6.

Fig.: 1 2 3 4 5

Vln
Vc.
Pno.
Orch

A B A(7)

A Wedge A B Canon Wedge Hexachord Hexachord Wedge

A A B(I) A

Key Area:
Bb F Bb D C Bb F E Cm Bb F Bb F D A C A F Bb hex

pp < *pp* sub-Climax Climax *pp* < *ff* >

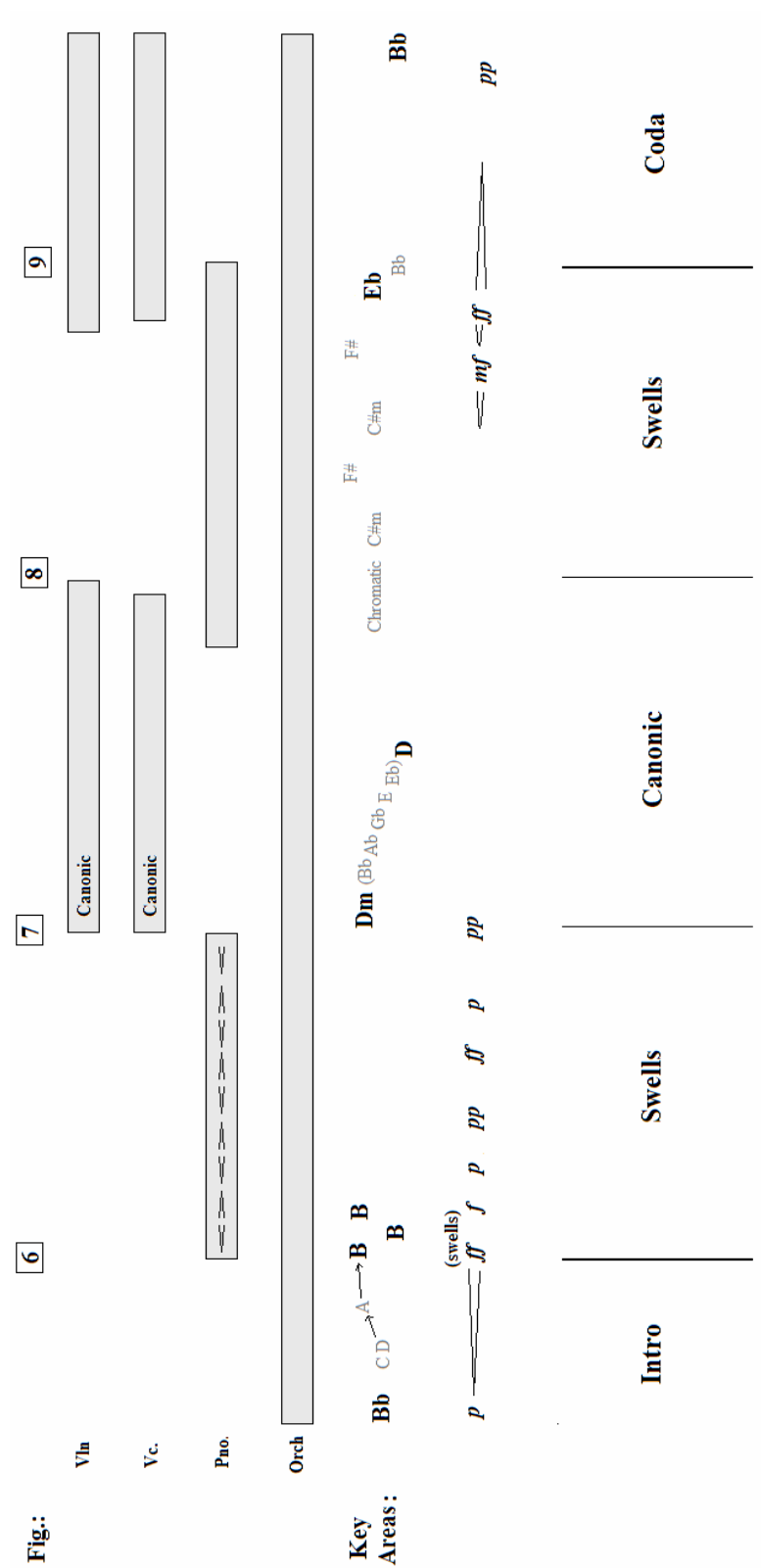Intro A B A₁ Coda

Ex. 4. 8: Form of Ghedini, *Concerto dell'Albatro*, movt. I

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II - Andante un poco mosso

Having laid the analytical groundwork for the stylistic makeup of the whole concerto through an exegesis of movement I, discussion of the subsequent movements can move forward at a quicker pace. The *Andante un poco mosso* and the *Andante sostenuto* that follow are slight, and perhaps taken together create a lull in momentum which could be interpreted as a more discursive slow middle movement, surrounded by the grandeur of the opening and the speed of the last two sections; again, concerto structure rears its head, this time Romantic. The *Andante un poco mosso* is cast in ternary form, and is the simplest of all five movements (see the formal chart at Example 4. 10). The opposition of instrumental groups has already been altered, with the piano and the strings forming the *concertino*, and the two other soloists the *ripieno*. The outer sections are characterized by their wave-like motion, the first with a series of swells and the second with a single large-scale one. Example 4. 9 shows two of the former, which are notable in their veiling of an underlying minor harmony with a more prominent upper major key, a technique already encountered. The striking B major chords are supported by a 'ricochet' figure in the cello and bass lines, and six sets of unison octaves which follow are also given momentum by the bass line which sweeps upwards, rocking back and forth between B and C#:

Ex. 4. 9: Four bars after figure 10, Ghedini, *Concerto dell'Albatro*, movt. II

Ex. 4. 10: Form of Ghedini, *Concerto dell'Albatro*, movt. II

The relentless, driving octaves in the piano are mainly triadic, and are structured harmonically in the ascending/descending patterns seen in the first movement. Thus several elements of Ghedini's unique harmonic language are becoming evident. The resulting timbre is unsettling: shimmering but unstable, its sheer repetition creates a sense of release when the other soloists interrupt it at figure 7. As it is gradually reintroduced towards the end, its incessant momentum requires less of a cadence than a breakdown, and this is exactly what is found at figure 9. Example 4. 11 shows the end of this figure, where the bi-tonal harmonies resulting from the previously frenetic chromaticism are left hanging as the violin arpeggiates, *quasi cadenza*, this bitonality; as all the elements fade out one by one, the underlying Bb gradually asserts itself in a by-now familiar manner.

Ex. 4. 11: From seven bars after figure 9, Ghedini, *Concerto dell'Albatro*, movt. II

Thus in this subtle way the movement ends in its original key of Bb, and the ruptures on the surface frigidity of the concerto are brought to an end.

III - Andante sostenuto

The release from the chromatic tension and semi-quaver motion that ends the second movement of the *Concerto dell'Albatro* precipitates a more serene and measured third. The most striking formally, it seems to be an ironic version of a passacaglia (or ricercare) with accompanying melodic variations. The 4 bar ground bass (Example 4. 12) passes through the string section from bottom to top, forming the three key areas Eb-Dm-D and almost accidentally landing on a strong affirmation of D major. As the work progresses, this ostinato is compressed into three bars at figure 11, augmented to five at figure 12, and rotated within itself (and its transposition in E major) at figure 14). So, maintaining a balance between continuous and discontinuous elements, it provides a quirky foundation for the variations laid on top of it.

Ex. 4. 12: Passacaglia/Ostinato of Ghedini, *Concerto dell'Albatro*, movt. III

The 'variations' arrive as the piano enters, with a bare melody stretching for nearly 40 bars, a singular line which again reinforces the absurdity of this movement. Robbed of its harmonic riches, the single notes on the piano sound mournful and empty, and combined with the almost comically chirpy ostinato the overall timbral pattern is somewhat disembodied and confused. This confusion is furthered by the construction of the melodic line. It can be divided up from its horizontal presentation into five vertical strata (in a quasi-paradigmatic fashion),[23] seen in Example 4. 13.

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[23] Similar, for example, to Nattiez, 'Varese's 'Density 21.5': A Study in Semiological Analysis', 243-340, and Eimert, 'Debussy's Jeux', 3-20.
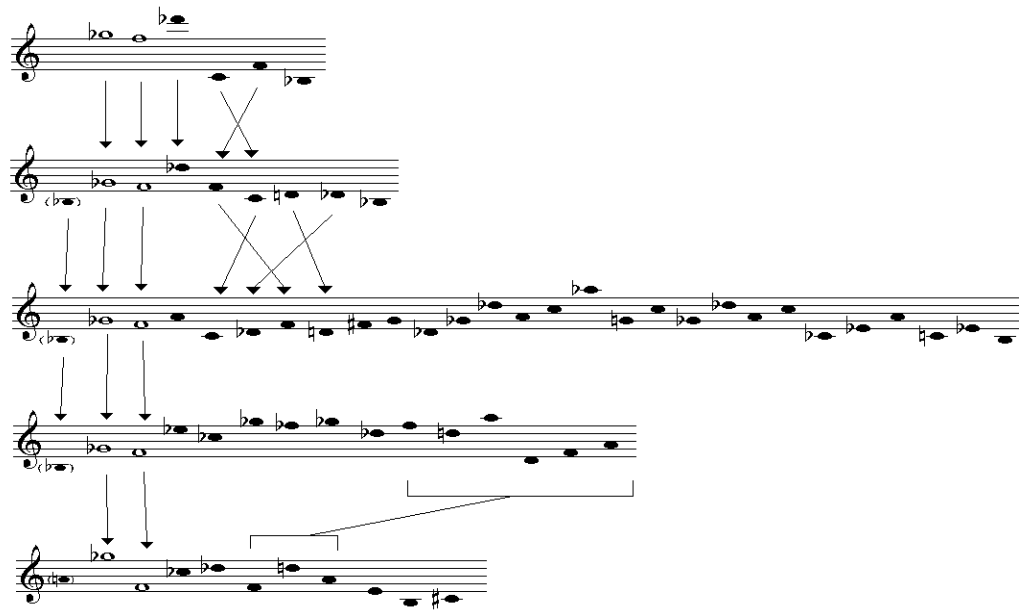
Ex. 4. 13: Piano melody divided into strata, figure 9-11 of Ghedini, *Concerto dell'Albatro*, movt. III

    This drawn-out melody insistently circles back to the prominent Bb-Gb-F motive (the Gb acting as an appoggiatura), emphasized by its longer notes. This gives it a relentless, stuck-in-a-groove quality; and as can be seen, other melodic intertextualities abound. From an initial 6-note statement, the line weaves other variations, increasing until a long and winding excursus in the third statement, and back to a shorter melody in the fifth. The effect is to centralize further the Bb-Gb-F motive as an inescapable gravitational device. Linguistically, the process of deriving these melodies is almost *iterative*, and in that sense what may seem like a rather directionless melody is actually based on some very unconventional thinking. Likewise, equally subtle is the way the major/minor paradox of the ostinato is reflected in the two cadential figures (Example 4. 14) which are prominent in ending their respective sections. This is embedded both in the harmonic ambiguity of the individual progressions and (comparatively) in the discontinuity between the two modulations, C-A and C#-A.

Ex. 4. 14: Two cadential figures, Ghedini, *Concerto dell'Albatro*, movt. III

After the cadential formula at figure 11, the violin continues the variation on this central melody, joined by the cello. As the formal scheme at Example 4. 15 shows, they coalesce with the piano at figure 13 onto a more continuous canonic line with a fast-moving and discrete (from the ostinato) chord progression. Another cadential figure, and the ground bass comes back to the fore in its ambiguous opening key of Dmaj/min.[24]

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[24] Though tonality is stretched in various ways in this work, one aspect of large-scale stability is the tendency for each movement to begin in the same key, the case in all but the fourth.
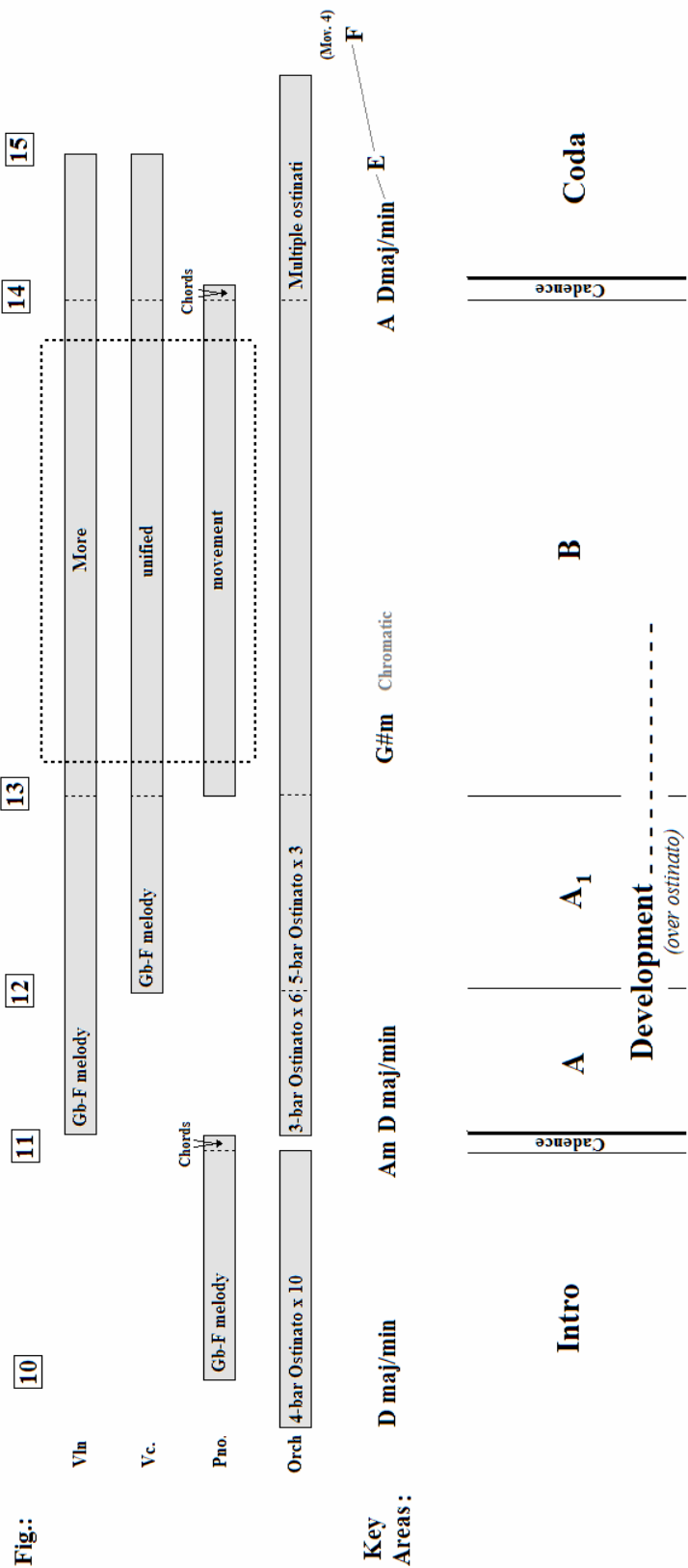
Ex. 4. 15: Form of Ghedini, *Concerto dell'Albatro*, movt. III

IV - Allegro Vivace

The fourth and fifth movements are structurally and expressively different from their preceding counterparts, and can also be typified as *historically* dissimilar in trying to inhabit and subvert romantic and early twentieth-century forms instead of those from earlier periods. This may be what Fenoglio and Pugliaro were proposing when, as will be recalled, they stated that in the *Concerto dell'Albatro*, Ghedini 'almost seems to move along the axis of history'.[25] The fourth movement in particular is closer to a romantic piano concerto movement than anything else, and at times the virtuosity of the most prominent instrument spills over into the other two soloists to suggest triple concerto style. For example, the octave work at figure 20 in the piano, leading into the tremolando at figure 21 and the confirmation of the A-D perfect cadence 6 bars before figure 22 are reminiscent of the burlesque scalic games in the 3rd movement of Shostakovich's second Piano concerto, whilst the violin line at figure 28 recalls the last movement of Elgar's concerto for that instrument. The sense of balance and proportion of the first three movements, with their introduction-coda framework, ternary structures and baroque forms, is jettisoned for a continual, forward moving chromatic line and an obscuring of the cadential function in both harmonic and gestural terms (see the formal chart at Example 4. 16).

The route to understanding this movement is through its ending, in which, over a sustained chord, the speaker enters reciting the first line of Melville's text. Whether or not one agrees with Bonisconti that this is a 'metaphysical moment', the effect for the listener is striking, disrupting the instrumental normality with a radically different 'voice'.[26] Viewing this as aesthetically the climactic point of the work (even if it comes musically on a section of stillness), the whole of this fourth movement falls into place as what Zanetti calls a 'cadence' to the entry of the speaker.[27] Thus this section is a large-scale example of musical irresolution, a yearning for the end that propels the ensemble through unbalanced, surging music. The fact that it is the longest of the movements demonstrates the extent to which Ghedini is attempting to prolong the catharsis.

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[25] Fenoglio and Pugliaro, 'Introduction to the "Progetto Ghedini"', 5.
[26] Bonisconti, 'G.F.Ghedini e le sue Ultime Opere', quoted in Zanetti, *La Musica Italiana nel Novecento*, 1066.
[27] Zanetti, *La Musica Italiana nel Novecento*, 1064.
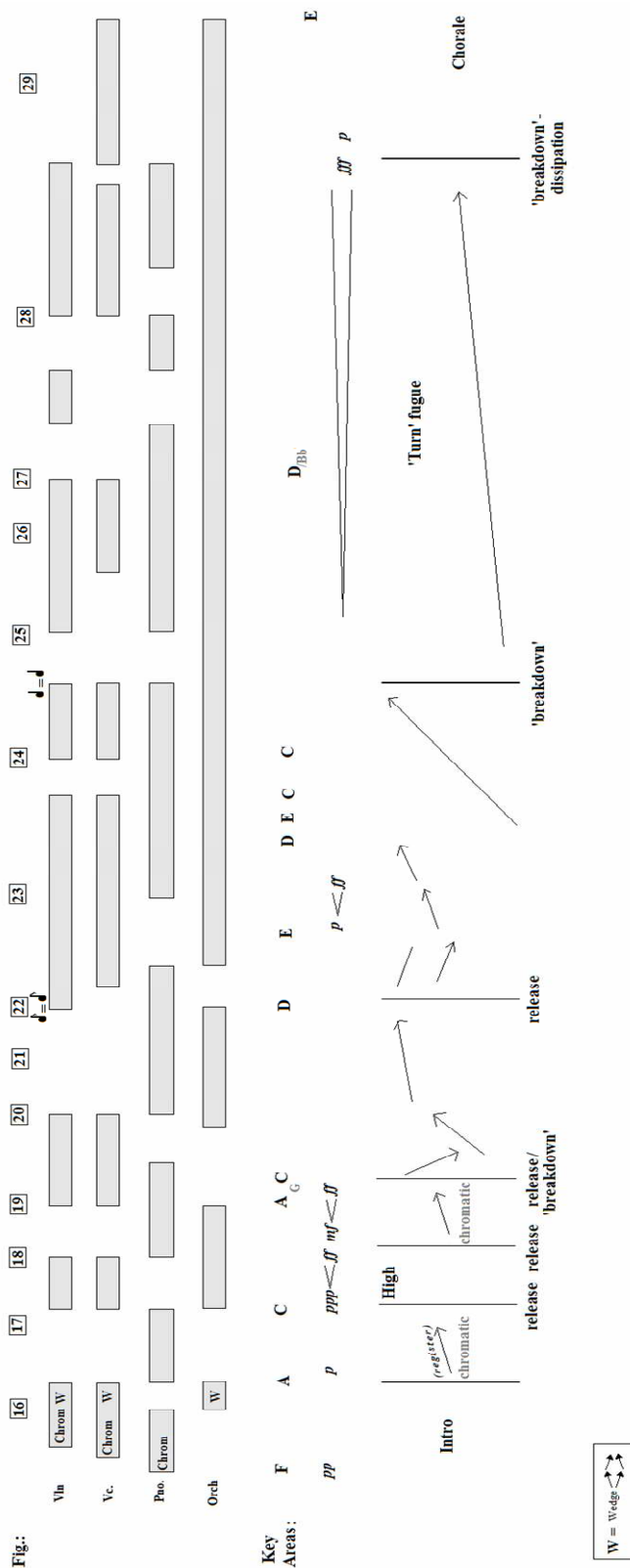
Ex. 4. 16: Form of Ghedini, *Concerto dell'Albatro*, movt. IV

As the formal plan shows, the discrete sections of the movement are lengthened by degrees, as each tries to extend its momentum further than before. Tension and release patterns are crucial in the effective gestural operation of such intense music. Towards the beginning, tension is generated from ascending/descending lines in octaves over bass pedals, and generally a large tessitura is covered chromatically. Release – for example, at 13 bars before figure 17 – comes from the sudden orchestral drop in dynamic and register, coupled with the pause on one central pitch for several bars. Later on in the movement, however tension increasingly comes from closely packed 'turn'-motifs (Example 4. 17), in which the upwards motion changes from an ascent through distinct key areas into a dissonant (and still upward-driven) chromatic haze; see especially figure 25 onwards. Likewise, the concept of 'release' is taken to a new level, becoming in reality more like musical 'breakdown'. Here the momentum suddenly dissipates and in its place new material with a substantially different metre and timbre emerges. At figure 22, the orchestra evaporates one by one, leaving the violin and piano to an awkward metric modulation into compound time. And at figure 24, as the piano and strings ascend into the ether, the strings unexpectedly start a canon in 5/4, completely at variance with what had gone before. These moments of 'fracture' constitute Ghedini's most extreme experimentation with the stylistic mechanisms he hoped to transfigure in the *Concerto dell'Albatro*.
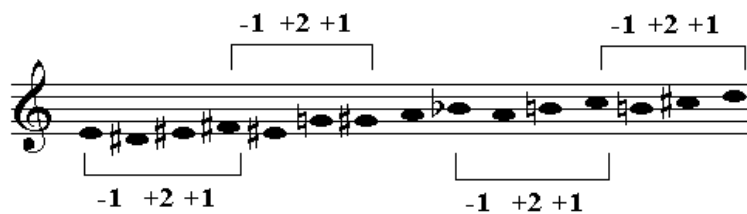
Ex. 4. 17: 'Turn' motive in Ghedini, *Concerto dell'Albatro*, movt. IV

The ultimate breakdown is the transition to a trombone and cello 'chorale' at the end of the movement, and this passage deserves special treatment, if only for its extreme harmonic discontinuities. Example 4. 18 shows the chorale, which, though it contains fairly fast moving lines that are almost polyphonic in their independence, maintains enough homogeneity to deserve that label.

Ex. 4. 18: Chorale, end of Ghedini, *Concerto dell'Albatro*, movt. I Ghedini, *Concerto dell'Albatro*, movt. IV

The harmonic make-up of this chorale is confusing, for though it often forms consonance, uses hymn-like voice leading and retains the suspension-resolution patterns of a Bachian archetype, the lines seem to wander almost aimlessly through various keys with

no central anchor. In this sense, though bringing in this gesture at the close of the work might recall the final section from Berg's 1935 *Violin Concerto*, the results are entirely different. The pitches are in fact determined by a kind of 'intuitive' voice-leading in which local suspensions are resolved in a traditional manner between two parts (the open seventh resolves onto a perfect fifth in several places, marked on the example), clouded by an unrelated note in the third; more akin to the woodwind/brass chorales in the second movement of Bartók's *Concerto for Orchestra* than to Berg. The cello line is rhythmically displaced in the middle of the section by the 5/4 bar, and brought back in by the same route, which gives the overall shape of the chorale a ternary form, gradually phasing out of sync and then back in again. This unity of purpose towards the end is aided by the introduction of more scalic voice leading along the same ascending/descending lines seen in previous movements; the whole-tone and G melodic minor scales forming a prolonged cadence onto E major. The effect is a collision of the baroque chorale tradition – its interdependence of voices, tension-release patterns and regular homophonic voice movement – with a kind of Stravinskian non-functional harmony where dissonance is not used according to traditional cadential rules and the direction of the musical gesture is often more important than the pitch itself; the most well-known example of this is, of course, the *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* from 1920, which also features a prominent chorale.

Unlike Stravinsky's *Symphonies* however, this is not how the movement ends, and the dissipation of momentum built into the chorale's harmonic resolution only serves to clear imaginative and aural space for the 'main event'. As Ghedini's alternative hymn arrives on E major, an ethereal string hexachord swells from inside a piano arpeggio, and against this shimmering resonance the speaker declaims his text and so starts the final movement:

Ex. 4. 19: Entrance of the speaker, Ghedini, *Concerto dell'Albatro*, movt. V

V – Andante

The last movement of the work is the most lyrical and tonal of them all, and acts as an extended coda. As can be seen on the formal plan at Example 4. 20, the figurative entrance of the albatross seen above is followed by a canonic melody, first in the cello, then in the trombone I, piano flute and violin. Similar in measure and rhythm to other solo canonic lines found in movements one and three, this melody is again an 11-note one in the mould of those labelled 'A' and 'B' in the first movement, and like them it also repeats its third pitch class (its 'major third'). The solemnity of the cello line, coming just as the protagonist is announced, can reasonably be taken as a musical depiction of the albatross itself (a 'regal thing', like an 'archangel'), especially with that instrument's imposing and lyrical timbre. Advancing this rather obvious sort of word-painting would seem to do Ghedini an injustice until the following figures and poetic verses are considered, using as they do all manner of musico-textual connections:

I remember the first albatross I ever saw. It was during a prolonged gale, in waters hard upon the Antarctic seas	**Cello as albatross**
I ascended to the overclouded deck; and there, dashed upon the main hatches, I saw a regal, feathery thing of unspotted whiteness, and with a hooked, Roman bill sublime. At intervals, it arched forth its vast archangel wings, as if to embrace some holy ark.	**Melodic ascension**
Wondrous flutterings and throbbings shook it.	**Timpani throbbings** **Violin decorative 'flutterings'**
Though bodily unharmed, it uttered cries, as some king's ghost in supernatural distress.	**High string outburst**
Through its inexpressible, strange eyes, methought I peeped to secrets which took hold of God.	**Dynamic climax; return of themes**

The climax reached at this point, on the invocation of the divine (was Bonisconti so far off after all?) threatens to turn as chromatic and frenzied as the fourth movement. But the return of the 'A' and 'B' melodies and the wedge shape motif in the piano and orchestra signals a gradually fading coda, returning harmonically, motivically and timbrally to the frozen centre of the work.

Fig.: 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40

Vln

Vc.

Pno.

Orch — Tromb. Fl.

Re-entry of 'B'

Re-entry of 'A'

Wedge   Wedge   Wedge   Wedge

Key Area: Bb   A   B   F   Bb   F   B   F   Bb

ppp f ff fff pp

Canonic Intro   'Filligree' Decorations   'supernatural cry'   Climax   **Serenity**   **Coda**   'Filligree' Decorations

Division of the text: 1   2   3   4   5   6
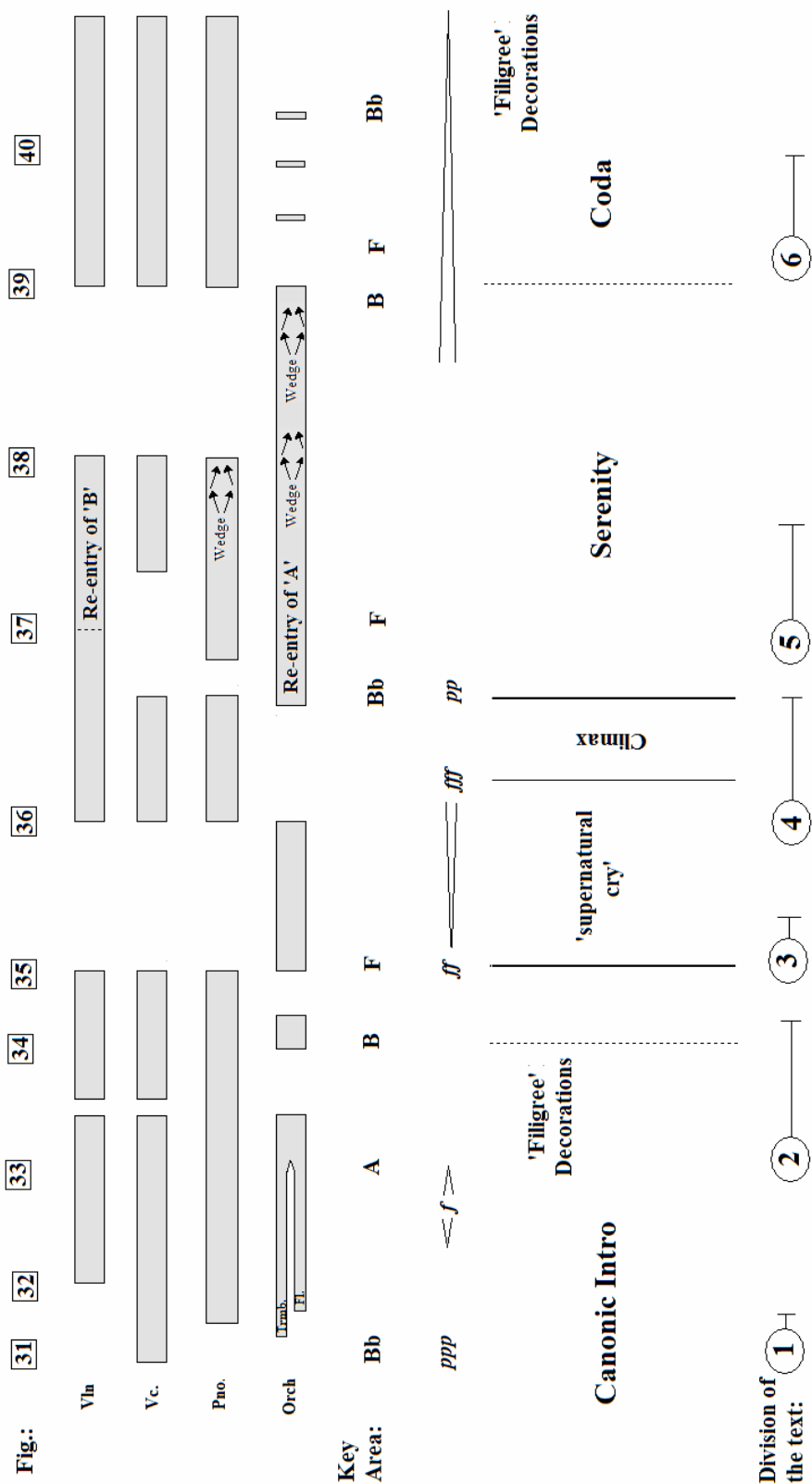
Ex. 4. 20: Form of Ghedini, *Concerto dell'Albatro*, movt. V

Chapter 4

Transformation of musical language: Petrassi's *Noche Oscura* (1950-1)

While the aesthetic conventionality of Ghedini's *Concerto dell'Albatro*, though heavily challenged and subverted at times, is reinforced at the close, Petrassi's *Noche Oscura* presents a more heterodox proposition. The vital importance of this symphonic-choral based work in the history of post-war Italian music can be sustained by a number of overlapping factors. Firstly, within the composer's own output it acts as a pivot point between technical, aesthetic and genre shifts that defined his career, and is often thought of as 'one of the greatest works in [Petrassi's] whole output'.[28] Secondly, the work displays technical aspects that are highly distinctive within their period: modernist, to be sure, but still fascinating 'crosscurrents' in the stream of Italian new music. Thirdly, the piece (and Petrassi himself) exerted a large influence on both younger Italian composers, for whom *Noche Oscura* became a vivid high-watermark of post-tonal language: at its first performance in Venice, a young Franco Donatoni was so impressed he asked to study with Petrassi on the spot.[29] Internationally, its première at the prestigious Salzburg festival under Mario Rossi in 1951 brought Petrassi's music to a wider audience and precipitated several important commissions.[30] Fourthly, in its marriage of religious text and music, it exhibits the sense of musical commitment to 'human' experience and spiritual angst that can be seen in many other Italian works in the post-war era, a trend the critic-composer Roman Vlad dubbed the 'nuova spiritualità'.[31]

Noche Oscura is a strange and yet captivating work. A setting of the poem 'Dark night of the Soul' by the medieval Spanish mystic San Juan de la Cruz (St John of the Cross), it is scored for mixed choir and orchestra and lasts only twenty minutes, though it constitutes, as Calum Macdonald rightly asserts, 'one of Petrassi's major utterances'.[32] The journey undertaken by the composer into the centre of the text, through musical suggestion,

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[28] Restagno, 'Petrassi, Goffredo', in *Grove Music On-line* (accessed 5 Mar 2009).

[29] Osmond-Smith, 'Donatoni, Franco' in *Grove Music On-line* (accessed 17 Mar 2010).

[30] See also the prominence given to *Noche Oscura* in English language obituaries following Petrassi's death in 2003: an 'influential composition' according to Anthony Tommasini, (*New York Times*, Wednesday Mar 5, 2003), it was a work 'generally held to be his masterpiece' in the words of Martin Anderson (*The Independent*, Thursday, 27 March 2003) that John Waterhouse claimed 'transformed [Petrassi's] outlook almost beyond recognition' (*The Guardian,* Wednesday 5 March 2003).

[31] Vlad, 'Panorama Espressivo della Musica Contemporanea' in *Modernità e Tradizione nella Musica Contemporanea*, 270. See, for instance, Casella, *Missa Pro Pace* (1945), Berio, *L'Annuciazione* (1945), Ghedini, *Concerto Funebre per Duccio Galimberti* (1948), Togni, *Psalm CXXVII* (1949), Petrassi, *Quattro Inni Sacri* (1950), Dallapiccola, *Job* (1950), and Bucchi, *Laudes Evangelii* (1952).

[32] Macdonald, '"Tutta Ora Vivente": Petrassi and the Concerto Principle', 9.

metaphor and word setting, is richly imaginative and led to some of the darkest music Petrassi ever wrote (in this sense, Petrassi and Ghedini converge in so closely inscribing the subjective text within the musical object). Musically, a useful 'hermeneutic window' views *Noche Oscura* as both transitional and culminatory in the output of the composer, which thus gives it its unique quality.[33] To take the first side of this paradox: from a style heavily influenced in the 1930s and 40s by Stravinskian neo-classicism (seen through the lens of Casella), Petrassi began cautiously composing with 12 notes in the *Récréation Concertante* of 1953. *Noche Oscura*, written in 1950-1, is thus chronologically transitional in this mutation, and indeed is the most heavily chromatic – verging on atonal – work to date; it also marked the first occurrence of row-like manipulation of material (by inversion and retrograde) in Petrassi's corpus. This has led some to claim that it represents 'Petrassi's breakthrough into modernism',[34] a not unproblematic statement (how to define 'modernism', and was Petrassi not 'in it' before?) that nevertheless correctly suggests that Noche Oscura is a crucial part of a process as yet incomplete in 1951.

Yet within the context of both his past and future work it is evident that (at least in terms of genre) *Noche Oscura* concludes a distinct group of Petrassi's theatrical and choral works from the 1940s; and therefore, in Mario Bortolotto's words, it 'signals a finishing point in the work of Petrassi'.[35] It is situated at the end point of two interlocking lineages: the religious 'sinfonico-corali' works *Psalm X* (1934-6), *Magnificat* (1939-40), *Coro Dei Morti* (1940-1) and the dramatic/balletic works *La follia di Orlando* (1942–3), *Il Cordovano* 1944–8, *Ritratto di Don Chisciotte* (1945) and *Morte dell'aria* (1949–50). Petrassi described the theatrical works of the war decade as 'experiments in which I have elaborated my ideas and techniques, seeking to increasingly broaden my vision of art and the commitment of man towards art'; this experimentation, as a result, led him, 'in 1950, to choose the text of St John of the Cross'.[36] And after completing *Noche Oscura*, Petrassi turned voltè-face from texted music until the early 1960s and concentrated in the main part on completing his eight concerti for orchestra. So there is a sense of fulfilment in this music whereby – even given the ongoing technical transition – the composer reaches a sophistication finely hewn from previous scores in the textual-musical sphere. Transition and fulfilment; Maurizio Billi

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[33] Lawrence Kramer's term in *Music as Cultural Practice*, 12.

[34] Anderson, *The Independent*, Thursday, 27 March 2003.

[35] Bortolotto, 'Il Cammino di Gofreddo Petrassi' in Gatti, Guido ed. *L'Opere di Goffredo Petrassi*: *Quaderni della Rassegna Musicale* no. 1, 50.

[36] Petrassi, 'Seminario di Composizione' in *Scritti e Interviste*, 135.

concludes that the piece is 'a work of synthesis and a fundamental point of arrival'.[37] Bearing in mind the presence of these continuous and discontinuous elements, the analytical approach to the work will first take in textual analysis and large-scale form before moving to small-scale exegesis, in an attempt to tease out the way Petrassi both inhabits the expressive world of his text and experiments with musical and stylistic parameters.

The 'abandonment of self in the divine': St John's text

It is clear from statements made by the composer that textual choice was an all-important aesthetic starting point.[38] The emotional and expressive immediacy that St John's text carries is self-apparent, and this very power leads to a complex entanglement between it and Petrassi's music that demands careful explication. In searching for the poem's 'true' meaning within this 20th century musical score, its surrounding *context*, the substance of its actual *text*, and Petrassi's own *subtext*, must be considered.

To tackle these priorities in order: the context of St John's *Noche Oscura* is its birth within the heights of Christian mysticism and sixteenth-century Spanish monasticism, within the transformation in structure and theology of the Carmelite order (to which St John belonged) under the influence of the teachings of St Teresa d'Avila.[39] One of Teresa's closest allies, St John redeveloped the mystical traditions of the Gnostics in the context of a theology of solitude, most especially in his concept of the 'Dark night of the soul'; the uniqueness of this construct lies at the centre of the poem in question. Briefly: the *gnosis*, or divine knowledge, is the goal of John's soul-searching, and his particular contribution to its formulation lies in illuminating 'the darkness of God': this is why, quoting Pseudo-Dionysius, John repeatedly called the light of God 'a dazzling ray of darkness'.[40] In seeking union with the divine, the soul must undergo an admonition of desire and a self-death:

> In the *Dark Night of the Soul* this stern demand for unlimited oblation and detachment … is applied even to the purest joys of spiritual life, all of which the disciple is taught to sacrifice; prizing the hours of aridity and interior darkness more than those of conscious communion, because these bring "diminished satisfaction with self".[41]

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[37] Billi, *Gofreddo Petrassi: la Produzione Sinfonico-Corale*, 74.
[38] See Lombardi, *Conversazioni con Petrassi*, 69, 505.
[39] See 'Carmelites, order of the' in Zimmerman, *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*, on line (accessed 11 June 2009). See Petrassi, *Scritti e Interviste*, 136-8, where the composer gives an in-depth commentary on the text.
[40] Turner, *The Darkness of God: Negativity in Christian Mysticism*, 235.
[41] Underhill, *The Mystics of the Church*, 184.

St John's process of spiritual growth, at times Platonic (juxtaposing the goodness of the spirit against the evil of the body) and at times panentheistic (as the soul reaches higher and higher states of union with God the self disappears into the Godhead), is analogous to a 'kind of death in life'; in suffering the depths of spiritual darkness, the 'God whose face cannot be seen' is encountered.[42] There is a fearsome quality about these religious experiences, for they involve pain, loss and silence. Yet 'at times, the soul is visited by wondrous raptures and delights, enjoying even now a foretaste of those pleasures which are for evermore', and this fact hints at the emotional instability, or even volatility, that such experiences might present when represented artistically.[43] Ultimately, the dark night seeks to achieve for souls 'their dispossession, the cessation of their autonomous operation'; thus the language and terminology resulting from such a quest is heavily symbolic and imprecise, as the experiences sought after are transcendent and ineffable, 'de-centering' the believer – in Turner's words – in order to re-centre him on a 'ground which is unknowable'.[44]

The text of the poem *Noche Oscura*, seen in Example 4. 21, is located both theoretically and circumstantially within John's spiritual worldview and overarching thesis: this fact is undeniable given that his major exposition of these ideas occurs in the book *Dark Night of the Soul*, which is conceived as a commentary on the poem. The eight stanzas are therefore at once a summation and the apotheosis of the 'dark night' theology. The narrative starts with the (feminine) soul proceeding into the dark night alone (ln.4) and in silence (ln.5). She is concealed from externality (ln. 9), and ascends a 'secreta escala' (ln. 7), which can be translated both as 'secret ladder' or 'secret scale', metaphorically representing the 10-fold steps of love to reach the divine. By line 14, she reveals the guidance of an inward light 'more sure than the light of the noon', and in line 18 the masculine pronoun is revealed as expectant goal. Verse 5 provides the climax: the 'transformada' of the 'amado' (beloved) in the presence of the 'amada' (lover). This is achieved by means of 'the night more lovely than the dawn', John's 'dazzling ray of darkness'. Verses 6-8 paint a picture of the erotic intimacy of this transformation: important to note are the emphasis on the virgin 'purity' of the soul (ln. 27), the 'suspension' of the sensory (ln. 35) and the 'abandonment of self' (ln. 35).

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[42] Turner, *The Darkness of God: Negativity in Christian Mysticism*, 231, quoting Exodus 33 v. 20.
[43] Scott, *Aspects of Christian Mysticism*, 125.
[44] Turner, *The Darkness of God: Negativity in Christian Mysticism*, 246, 251.

Noche Oscura	**Darkened Night**

1. En una noche oscura,
   con ansias, en amores inflamada,
   ¡oh dichosa ventura!
   salí sin ser notada,
   estando ya mi casa sosegada.

   One dark night,
   fired with love's urgent longings
   - ah, the sheer grace! -
   I went out unseen,
   my house being now all stilled.

2. A oscuras y segura
   por la secreta escala, disfrazada,
   ¡oh dichosa ventura!
   a oscuras y encelada,
   estando ya mi casa sosegada.

   In darkness, and secure,
   by the secret ladder, disguised,
   - ah, the sheer grace! -
   in darkness and concealment,
   my house being now all stilled.

3. En la noche dichosa
   en secreto, que nadie me veia
   ni yo miraba cosa
   sin otra luz y guia
   sino la que en el corazón ardia.

   On that glad night,
   in secret, for no one saw me,
   nor did I look at anything,
   with no other light or guide
   than the one that burned in my heart.

4. Aquesta me guiaba
   más cierto que la luz del mediodia,
   adonde me esperaba
   quien yo bien me sabia,
   en parte donde naide parecia.

   This guided me
   more surely than the light of noon
   to where he was awaiting me
   - him I knew so well -
   there in a place where no one appeared.

5. ¡Oh noche que guiaste!
   ¡oh noche amable más que la alborada!
   ¡oh noche que juntaste
   Amado con amada,
   amada en el Amado transformada!

   O guiding night!
   O night more lovely than the dawn!
   O night that has united
   the Lover with his beloved,
   transforming the beloved in her Lover.

6. En mi pecho florido,
   que entero para Él solo se guardaba,
   allí quedó dormido,
   y yo le regalaba,
   y el ventalle de cedros aire daba.

   Upon my flowering breast
   which I kept wholly for him alone,
   there he lay sleeping,
   and I caressing him
   there in a breeze from the fanning cedars.

7. El aire del almena,
   cuando yo sus cabellos esparcia,
   con su mano serena
   en mi cuello heria,
   y todos mis sentidos suspendia.

   When the breeze blew from the turret,
   as I parted his hair,
   it wounded my neck
   with its gentle hand,
   suspending all my senses.

8. Quedéme y olvidéme,
   el rostro recliné sobre el Amado.
   Cesó todo, y dejéme,
   dejando mi cuidado
   entre las azucenas olvidado.

   I abandoned and forgot myself,
   laying my face on my Beloved;
   all things ceased; I went out from myself,
   leaving my cares
   forgotten among the lilies.

Ex. 4. 21: San Juan de La Cruz, 'Stanzas of the soul' from *The Ascent of Mount Carmel* (1579), as used in Petrassi's score; Eng. trans Kavanaugh and Rodriguez, *The collected works of St. John of the Cross*, 1-2.

In situating the text within in its context and making clear how, poetically speaking, St John expresses his mystico-religious philosophy, it is also abundantly obvious that, to a twentieth-century reader, such cast-iron meanings are not a priori justified.[45] For a start, in vesting this poem with a devotional (albeit mysterious) interpretation, a 'Christian reading', the absence of an explicit reference to God cannot be ignored, nor can the closeness of such poetry to the depiction of a male-female romance. And, in this regard, Petrassi did indeed make it very clear that in *Noche Oscura* he intended to swerve away from the explicitly religious into a more 'profane' reading of the text, and that the erotic and sensual is for him a complicating subtext:

> This text was not chosen because it was mystical, but because it consented to an interpretation we could call worldly, realistic and therefore more humane: I speak of our going out from doubt, from the chaos of the mind to seek the light.[46] … With *Noche Oscura* I took up in part again the religious idea that had guided my previous works, though indeed a little transformed, because the poem of St John of the Cross presents a religious face and an erotic face, a mystical eroticism typical of St John, of the Spanish baroque, of Saint Teresa and this period. It is treated as an already slightly compromised religiosity, not robbed of its ambiguity. [47]

This emphasis on the human (rather than the divine) side to the poem, as well as signifying the turn towards 'man' as artistic focus in the existentialism of the post-war period, also gives Petrassi the scope to avoid depictions of the 'highest' matter (i.e. the divine) in order to stress the immediacy of the soul's struggle in its yearning for fulfilment (his 'worldly' interpretation). It should be made clear that this is not a 'secularisation' of a sacred text so much as a more 'humanistic' reading of John's poem, which is still to be considered a spiritually powerful text. This is perhaps the key to understanding the essence of Petrassi's 'nuova spiritualità'.[48]

What then are the synthesised religio-humanistic concepts that are appropriated from St John within *Noche Oscura*? The most prominent is the idea of transformation: taking already extant material and raising it to new levels; in this case, the transformation is also a

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[45] Piero Santi comments '*Noche Oscura* is not a religious work in the theological and dogmatic sense. The sense of the absolute is manifested as a complete integration with existence…for Petrassi, this has no mystical quality in the devotional sense'. Santi, 'Goffredo Petrassi - Works', 7.
[46] Petrassi, 'Seminario di composizione' in Petrassi, *Scritti e Interviste*, 135-6.
[47] Restagno, *Petrassi*, 29.
[48] In this, Petrassi, is aligned with Dallapiccola, who universalises the Jewish and Catholic references in *Il Prigioniero* (1950) and *Ulisse* (1968). See Earle, 'Dallapiccola and the Politics of Commitment: Re-Reading *Il Prigioniero*', on-line, (accessed 18 Feb 2010), paras. 5-6, 30.

fusion of two distinct personalities, and musical parallels should be obvious. Secondly, the typical dualism of darkness and light which can be found in many compositions is complicated by the fact that for St John, darkness is 'more lovely than the dawn', and occupies its own, rehabilitated position as a guiding principle; however, amidst this complication, the notion of 'revelation' is still efficacious, whether positive or negative. Thirdly, the idea of 'secret' knowledge (especially in the guise of a 'scale') hints at hiddenness deep within the musical fabric. Lastly, there is questioning of language itself; and indeed Cascelli's work on the poem has shown that 'the mystical linguistic experience can be defined as language of crisis and crisis of language', and that in fact this abandonment into God simultaneously provokes 'a negative, the impotence and insufficiency of language, and a positive, the irrenunciability of language'.[49] According to Cascelli, this leads to two concomitant constructions: the oxymoron, and the tautology, and both can be found in St John's text. Again, it is possible to imagine an exportation into musical texture of the synthesis between two apparently contradictory states (the oxymoronic) and the need to say things twice (the tautological). And as the music is explored further, a struggle with compositional linguistics on Petrassi's part will become clear.
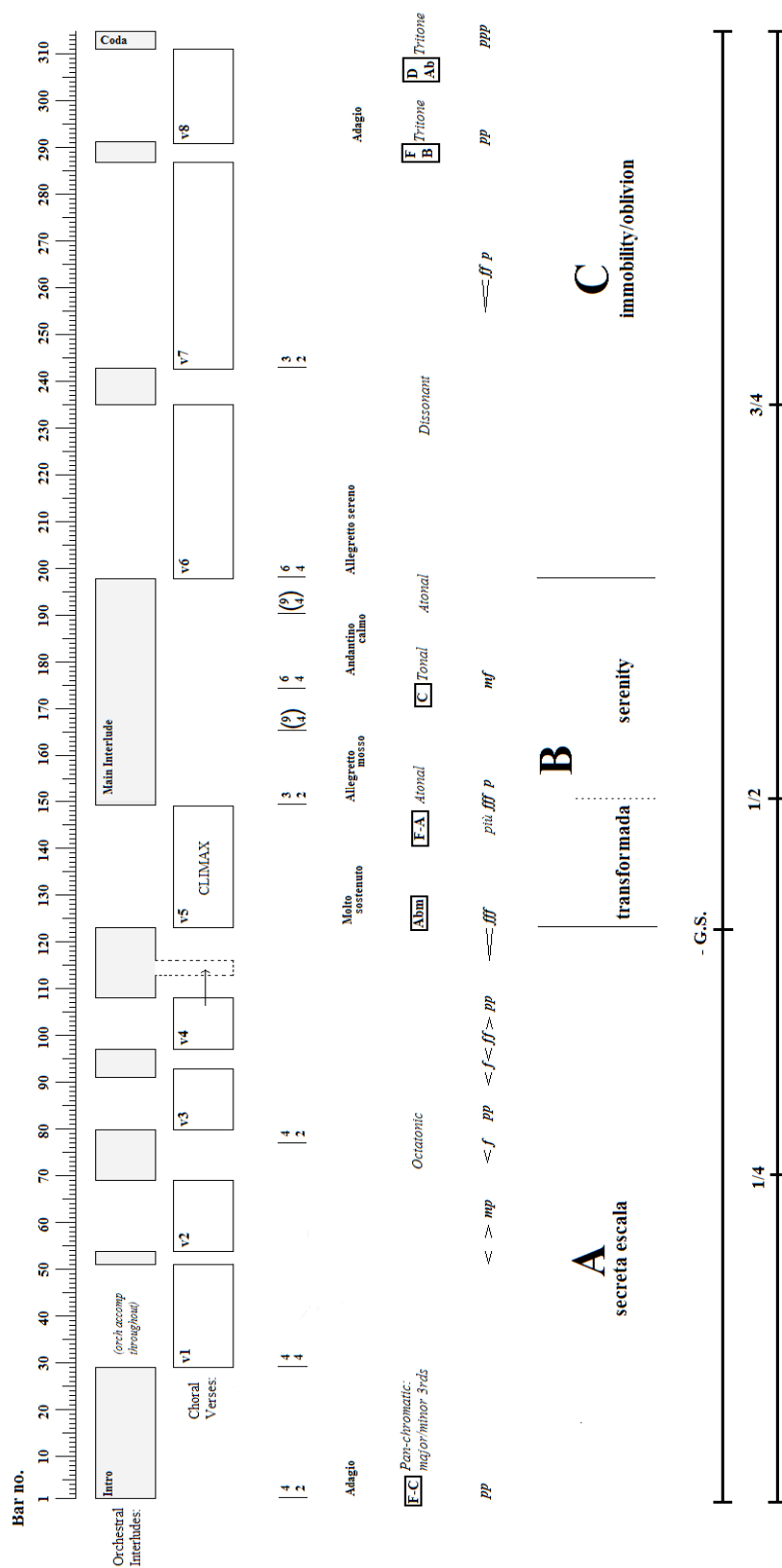
'Immobility' and momentum in large-scale form

The textual stratification of St John's poem is transplanted wholesale into Petrassi's music, and versification provides a clear and transparent structural framework within which choral and instrumental blocks of varying size reside (Example 4. 22). So the text, in demanding eight carefully delineated parts, necessitates a highly sectional work; Bortolotto describes the effect as 'anti-romantic in the extreme', going as far as to call it the 'maximum level of immobility'.[50] Allied with the repetitive motivic constrictions that will be demonstrated below, one is tempted to think this label apt (especially as many commentators invariably evaluate the work as 'dark').

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[49] Cascelli, 'Noche Oscura: Linguaggio di Crisi, Crisi di Linguaggio', 506
[50] Bortolotto, 'Il Cammino di Goffredo Petrassi' in Gatti, Guido ed. *L'opere di Goffredo Petrassi*: *Quaderni della Rassegna Musicale* no. 1, 46.

Bar no.

1 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 110 120 130 140 150 160 170 180 190 200 210 220 230 240 250 260 270 280 290 300 310

Orchestral Interludes: Intro *(orch accomp throughout)* Coda

Main Interlude

Choral Verses: v1 v2 v3 v4 v5 CLIMAX v6 v7 v8

4/2 4/4 4/2 4/2 (9/4) 6/4 3/2 (9/4) 6/4 3/2 (9/4) 6/4 3/2

Adagio Molto sostenuto Allegretto mosso Andantino calmo Allegretto sereno Adagio

F-C *Pan-chromatic: major/minor 3rds* *Octatonic* Abm F-A *Atonal* C *Tonal* *Atonal* *Dissonant* F *Tritone* B D *Tritone* Ab

pp v > mp < f pp <f<ff> pp più fff p <fff mf <ff p pp ppp

A
secreta escala

B
transformada   serenity

C
immobility/oblivion

- G.S.

1/4   1/2   3/4

Ex. 4. 22: Structural map (G.S. = Golden Section) of Petrassi, *Noche Oscura*

However, much of the music is experienced as a kind of in-the-moment momentum which, when fully formed at its climax, rapidly dissipates – not so much 'immobility' as 'paroxysm': sudden and short-lived outbursts of emotion or enlightenment. Bortolotto's silence on this fact is symptomatic of a lack of engagement in the literature with the proportions and timings of *Noche Oscura* in order to focus on either the text or the harmony.[51] Most guilty of this is Armando Gentilucci, who characterises the work as a continuous entity:

> Musically, in conformity to the text, we have a long passage from darkness to light, from heavy and dark sonorities to aerated ones, from sounds often woven with the luminosity of unearthly timbres to abstract atmospheres.[52]

But in fact, instead of a linear, ever increasing form of expansion within *Noche Oscura*, formal continuity and discontinuity coexist in an unusual tension that point to Petrassi's debt to the music of Stravinsky. When the sectional and textual structure is considered, it can be seen that the real climax happens less than half way through the composition, at the beginning of the middle section ('B' in Example 4. 22). This top-heavy weighting is crucial to an understanding of the work and to the concept of the transformation of the soul within that of the divine presence. This 'transformada', the aesthetic, gestural and dynamic centre of the work, occurs in verse 5 both textually and musically. The alternation between short verses and even shorter interludes comes at a rapid rate in the first 120 bars (section 'A', with each verse decreasing in length: 22 bars – 15 bars – 12 bars – 9 bars). Within this are several small-scale climax and depression patterns; this is the cause of any sense of paroxysm, a category that is closely allied to 'moments of 'revelation' present within the text. The arrival at *ff* in bar 123, growing over the whole verse to *più fff* in bar 150, is thus reached through an acceleration of momentum from the entrance of the choral parts. The tension is released cataclysmically by the drop to *ppp* in bar 148, the change to a 3/2 metre and the introduction of a low moto-rhythmic texture, far removed from the previous blaring brass.

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[51] See Vlad, *Modernita e Tradizione della Musica Moderna*, 232-235; Cascelli 'Noche Oscura: Linguaggio di Crisi, Crisi di Linguaggio', 505-516, Bortolotto, 'Il Cammino di Goffredo Petrassi', in Gatti, Guido ed. *L'Opere di Goffredo Petrassi*: *Quaderni della Rassegna Musicale* no. 1, 46-50. Roberto Zanetti goes as far as to include a formal plan, only (rather disappointingly) not to capitalise on it (*La Musica Italiana nel Novecento*, 1196-7).
[52] Gentilucci, *Guida all'Ascolto della Musica Contemporanea*, 305.

It is only at this point that the durational centre of the music is reached (marked on the formal chart as ½, and calculated in crotchets). Here, the concept of immobility *does* become more efficacious; the interludes and verses widen in scope (section 'C') and retain more continuity of dynamic and timbre, while the choral writing achieves a sense of stasis through more frequent chordal repetition and low register (for example, bars 291-294). Macdonald hears this section as a 'slowly evolving coda' working towards the 'self oblivion' of the words 'Ceso todó, y dejéme' ('all ceased, and I was not).[53] Harmonically and texturally, this is supported by the ambiguity of the tritone which dominates the pitch structure and the drawing back of the tempo; melodically, it has already been set up by the motivic cell seen at Example 4. 24, which lends itself to 'a climate of general immobility made possible through the constant iteration of a micro-organism where the most important characterisations are found in timbral mutation'.[54]

That the work starts out to reach a climax, outpaces itself in the delivery of that moment, and ends in static immobility is a more fitting conceptual framework than 'darkness into light', though that concept is a hugely important factor in both music and text (just not the structural determinant). Equally crucial is the sense of proportion that the piece achieves, even in its 'top heavy' motion: Petrassi spoke of a 'compact structure aimed at internal symmetry'[55], and this is won through the placing of the climax directly at the negative golden section, so the ratio of A:BC is the same as BC:ABC (see Example 4. 22, calculated according to number of crotchets). Balance and momentum are synthesised further if a more regular division of the work is taken into consideration (Example 4. 23), and this is manifestly obvious by the precise location of structural timings to coincide with verse changes. Verses 1 and 2 are completed directly on the ¼ mark of the work and verses 7 and 8 start at the ¾ mark, providing formal balance; whereas three verses are compressed into the second quarter of the piece and consequently only one occupies the third, producing the momentum-immobility dialectic identified above. This confirms the structuring of the climax and the long depression that follows it as quite deliberate and regular. It also shows

[53] Macdonald, '"Tutta Ora Vivente": Petrassi and the Concerto Principle', 9. Cascelli also applies the language of 'immobility' and 'oblivion' in reference to the final three verses ('Noche Oscura: Linguaggio di Crisi, Crisi di Linguaggio', 507). Bortolotto speculatively argues that this section, in turning to a 3-based metre from a 4-based one, is a figurative ideogram of the divine presence, being the 'perfect rhythm of medieval theory' ('Il cammino di Goffredo Petrassi', in Gatti, Guido ed. *L'Opere di Goffredo Petrassi*: *Quaderni della Rassegna Musicale* no. 1, 49).

[54] Billi, *Gofreddo Petrassi: la Produzione Sinfonico-Corale*, 77.

[55] Interview with Luciana Galliano, Petrassi, *Scritti e Interviste*, 364.

that, if Stravinsky is the model for the discontinuous, block-like versification, Debussy's and Bartók's proportionate sensibilities also play their part.
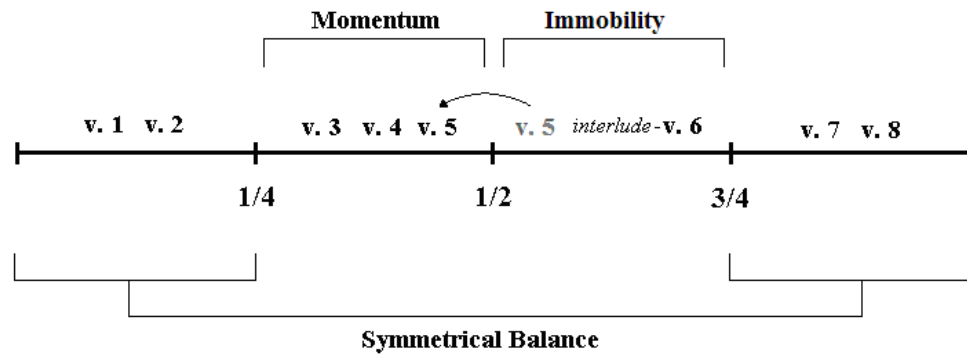
Ex. 4. 23: Balance and momentum in Petrassi, *Noche Oscura*

Motivic permeation and new modes of harmonic expression

Formally, then, the influence of Bartók and Stravinsky are combined in *Noche Oscura* with a quasi-mystical fusion of momentum and paroxysm that is, perhaps, unique to Petrassi. Such a heady mix certainly demonstrates a vibrant post-war Italian stylistics which influenced composers such as Turchi, Contilli and, later, Donatoni. But the wider question still remains: was this really Petrassi's 'breakthrough into modernism', as Anderson would have it? The manipulation of discrete intervallic content, with its serial overtones, might signal such an advance, and indeed the tetrachord that the composer places at the centre of his composition is generally the starting point of commentary on the piece.[56] These four notes become an almost obsessive 'motto theme' in *Noche Oscura* and go beyond simple note repetition in 'permeating' the structure with their physiognomy.[57] Two minor seconds connected by a major third, this cell is numerically suited to dominate many of the 4/2 passages of the piece with a bar-by-bar repetition at varying transpositions. From the outset the cell is omnipresent:
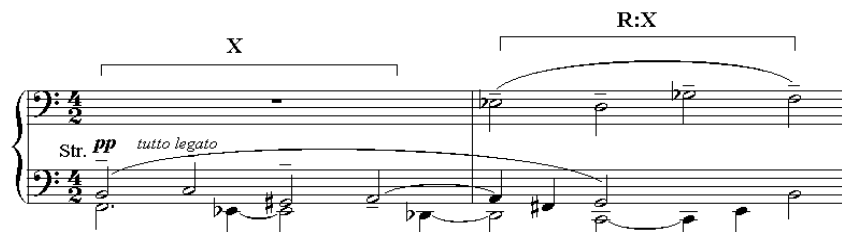
Ex. 4. 24: Bars 1 and 2 of Petrassi, *Noche Oscura*

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[56] See Macdonald, '"Tutta Ora Vivente": Petrassi and the Concerto Principle', 9; Cascelli, 'Noche Oscura: Linguaggio di Crisi, Crisi di Linguaggio', 509-10, Billi, *Gofreddo Petrassi: la Produzione Sinfonico-Corale*, 75.

[57] Their influence also extends beyond *Noche Oscura*, making appearance in later works such as the *Récréation Concertante* (1953), *Beatitudines* (1968–9) and *Orationes Christi* (1974–5).

These four notes are incredibly malleable, due in part to their latent octatonicism. They form one half of an octatonic collection, and their complement can be reordered into two other crucial formulations: its retrograde at the major third (such as occurs following the initial statement of the cell in the first bar) or its ordinary order at the tritone (an often-used transformation). As shown, taken with another complement (that of D-E-F) the cell also forms a harmonic minor scale:

Ex. 4. 25: Main cell and two primary derived cells from Petrassi, *Noche Oscura*

In permeating the texture, it also is itself modified and changed, operating as what Bortolotto describes as 'a musical figure of supernatural knowledge by which everything is supported'.[58] Whilst the two outer semitones are always kept intact, the cell can a) be retrograded, formed into an octatonic complement, b) have its middle interval displaced by an octave, c) divided into 2 and used to form part of a minor 2nd chain, d) have its middle interval modified, or e) expanded further into another principal motive, labelled Y (Example 4. 27; this configuration is overtly lyrical, and offers a counterpoint to the 'hardness' of 'X'). Example 4. 28 demonstrates the extent of these deformations in a passage near the beginning of the work.

Ex. 4. 27: Cell 'Y', Petrassi, *Noche Oscura*

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[58] Bortolotto, 'Il cammino di Goffredo Petrassi' in Gatti, Guido ed. *L'Opere di Goffredo Petrassi*: *Quaderni della Rassegna Musicale* no. 1, 46-7.

Ex. 4. 28: Bars 15-26 of Petrassi, *Noche Oscura*

Thus the use of retrograde and tritone relationships – in a quasi-combinatorial fashion, with the potential to fill out the total chromatic – is built into the musical material, epitomized in the initial entrance of the choral parts:

Ex. 4. 29: Choral entrance, Bar 30-31 of Petrassi, *Noche Oscura*

Having assessed the permeation of the musical pitch-space by one all-encompassing tetrachord, it seems logical to analyse the effect of this permeation in terms of the overall harmonic palette, which exists in three overlapping states (as indicated on the formal chart at Example 4. 22): octatonic, 'panchromatic'/atonal and tonal.

Octatonicism, whilst felt in a linear, scalic sense in the central 'x' cell, is also apparent in many harmonic configurations, particularly in the formal build-up to the 'transformada' section, i.e. the 'A' section of the work (its usage decreases after this point, though it is still to be found prominently in bars 240 and 239). Verses 1, 2 and 3 all reach climaxes of what has been labelled 'paroxysm' by octatonic means: they act as metaphor for the continual, and heightening, sense of *revelation*. Bars 57-8 are an ideal example: the relaxed cycling of an Eb major/minor triad (deriving from cell 'Y') in the choral and orchestral parts fades as the chorus sustain longer notes on 'oh'; these notes swell from *p* to *f*, and the chorus rise out of the orchestral texture to sing 'oh dicosa ventura' ('ah, the sheer grace') homophonically in sustained chords: in a moment of static 'revelation'. Example 4. 30 demonstrates the harmonic content of these moments, which are all built upon octatonic subsets, labelled according to the system established in Chapter 3.[59]

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[59] In postulating the audibility of the octatonic scale when stated vertically, the argument rests on the 'tight' intervallic content of the pc set (for instance, the large number of 2nds and major 7ths); see Alegant and Levey, 'Octatonicism in Dallapiccola's twelve-note music', 62-8.

Ex. 4. 30: *Noche Oscura*, octatonicism in the static 'revelation' harmonies

Petrassi's use of octatonicism is heavily indebted to Bartók's compositional practice in its horizontal and vertical application: alternative-step scales are 'exploited both melodically and harmonically … as pitch sets, that is, divorced from traditional tonal functions'.[60]

> Due to the free use of the modes, which lead to a weakening of the hierarchical pitch relations inherent in the traditional dominant-tonic progressions, greater emphasis had to be placed on the *intervallic properties* of both the harmonic and melodic constructions as a means of establishing local and large-scale structural coherence.[61]

Elliott Antokoletz identifies three pitch-set modes essential to Bartók's music (diatonic, octatonic, and whole tone) and there is a parallel between this and the octatonic-panchromatic-tonal schema seen in *Noche Oscura*. It is no wonder Petrassi spoke at length about the Hungarian composer's influence, considering that Bartók represented a 'road of liberty' between the Schoenberg-Stravinsky antithesis.[62] The importance of this influence should not be lost, for it had far reaching effects on Italian music through Petrassi and his pupil, Franco Donatoni, who later stated that he sought to emulate Bartók's 'cellular exposition and organic growth' and 'conservation of the fragment'.[63]

The use of the octatonic scale reaches its apotheosis most demonstrably in verses 4 and 5, in two of the most harmonically uncanny moments of the work. Bars 104-7 are shown in Example 4. 31. A cadence onto a unison Bb is created by chromatic voice-leading, which is followed by cascading octatonic scales in all three modes of transposition, accounting for every single pitch. Through a subtle layering and a holding-on of pitches

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[60] Antokoletz, *The Music of Bela Bartók*, 204.
[61] Ibid., 78.
[62] See Petrassi, *Scritti e Interviste*, 329-331, 359.
[63] Donatoni. 'Presenza di Bartók', 88.

over multiple beats, tonal chords are created and a large-scale plagal cadence (C-G) is formed.

Ex. 4. 31: Bars 104-7 of Petrassi, *Noche Oscura*

Such a clear synthesis between eight-note scales and diatonicism vividly draws the attention of the listener to the verdant harmonies, especially given the register, the orchestral silence surrounding the scoring and the pianissimo marking. A synthesis of a different, more direct kind occurs a few bars later as the choir bombastically enter to signal the 5th and most central verse: Here the combination of a rearranged 'X' motive with an octatonic scale, in the midst of highly fraught and chromatic harmony, is a fusion of two of Petrassi's most important compositional materials, interpreted analogously to the transformation of 'the lover into the beloved':

Ex. 4. 32: 'Transformada' moment, bars 128-9 of Petrassi, *Noche Oscura*

Aesthetically, the use of the octatonic scale in *Noche Oscura* may have yet more relevance than its status purely as a (by then common) twentieth-century musical trait. It is not too speculative to identify it with St John's 'secreta escala', his secret ladder or scale, which symbolizes one of the means by which the soul climbs up the mountain of God's holiness.[64] The scale occurs in the right part of the work and tails off when the 'transformada' has occurred, and though it is not used directly on the right words (which occur – only once, *piano* and very fleetingly in the soprano part – in bars 55-6), Petrassi is surely too subtle for that.

So much for eight pitches; a perhaps more immediate feature of the work is its frequent recourse to all 12 of them, often within very close proximity. *Noche Oscura* was the most non-diatonic of Petrassi's works to date, and yet it is neither atonal nor serial (nor, even, always dissonant). Shortly after its composition, and in order to define this characteristic more precisely, Roman Vlad coined the term 'panchromatic'. He spoke of the

> constant tendency of the composer to approach the panchromatic space through a complex diatonicism. Now from this point of view, the intrinsic structure of the sonic material of *Noche Oscura* demonstrates a point of arrival. In fact, it blossoms and is unfolded entirely from one germinal cell, whose nucleus is marked by a preference towards the adjacent second interval, and which is hardly ever arranged according to the guiding principles of the traditional diatonic scale, but freely invades the chromatic space (without constituting a complete and systematic dodecaphonic series) … The spontaneous application of the rules of economy that aims to condense in the minimum space the maximum variety of sounds brings Petrassi, more even than in his preceding works, to approach integral chromaticism.[65]

Vlad's main insight is that Petrassi approaches his pitch material from a diatonic position, but in the expression of his large palette of sounds, along with the adherence to such a strict and chromatic germinal cell, he fills the pitch aggregate purely from imaginative overflow (and not from dodecaphony, which is perhaps where Vlad wanted him to fill it from). This can be demonstrated right at the beginning if Example 4. 24 is considered again: the first two short bars of the work contain 13 notes and 11 pitch classes. Other areas of extreme chromaticism occur, for example, in bars 57-8, and the last few bars of the piece. Often the panchromatic 'filling' occurs through pitch addition to diatonic

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[64] It is perhaps also pertinent to recall Richard Taruskin's connection of octatonicism with 'exoticism' and the 'supernatural' in nineteenth-century Russian music, *Defining Russia Musically*, 448.
[65] See Vlad, *Modernita e Tradizione della Musica Moderna*, 234.

chords, as in bar 267, where a striking D major triad is 'corrupted' by the entrance of the pitches C-G followed by Bb-F#. Chordally, a number of hexachords, octachords and even a 9-note chord can be found at moments of textural intensification, as can be seen if these configurations are located on the formal plan:

Ex. 4. 33: Panchromatic chords in Petrassi, *Noche Oscura*

Yet neither octatonicism nor panchromaticism account for the totality of the work, and the yearning towards an extended tonal centre that still impinges upon much modernist music, whether as an ironic, nostalgic or expressive gesture, still plays a vital role in the communication of musical content for Petrassi. This can be seen even in the torpor of the climactic 'transformada' passage which, though both octatonic and highly dissonant, in its overall harmonic structure has a symmetrical tritone relationship and smooth voice leading between the consonant chords of its basic harmony:

Ex. 4. 34: Background reduction of bars 125-149 from Petrassi, *Noche Oscura*

As this section reaches its climax, this desire for the 'light' of consonance to emerge is displayed in its vivid fullness: the orchestra climb the 'secreta escala' of octatonicism using the germinal intervals of the motto theme, the register moves upwards over six octaves through a filling out of the chromatic to a point of numinous static revelation, and the moment of ecstasy is reached in the luminescence of an aerial major triad. Petrassi has absorbed the central and climactic 'transformada' metaphor within the *Dark Night of the*

Soul, and made it figuratively and literally the inner centre of text and work; a digestion of extra-musical concepts into musical fabric that operates at a deeper level than mere word-painting:

Ex. 4. 35: *Noche Oscura* bars 144-149

The F-A dyad left hanging from the denouement of the 'transformada' passage anticipates the central main interlude, bars 148-197, one of the most interesting passages for large-scale tonal implications (a two-level reduction is shown at Example 4. 36). The dyad is interrupted by moto-rhythmic highly dissonant quaver chords that Zanetti labels 'omoritmica' (homorhythms).[66] Between these, and through an assemblage of keys, the winding melodies shift down in register from f'' to C, where the tempo marking changes to *Andantino Calmo*, and a wash of C-based major 9th chords, the most consonant of the piece, symbolize the heights of transformational ecstasy. C major, as the reduction shows, is further enforced at a deep chordal level as the passage continues. The effect is sensual and (after the raging of the 'transformada') serene: the spacing of the chords across three octaves and the string dominance verges on the impressionistic melancholy of Vaughan Williams. As the rhythms re-enter in 187, sated and now in weary crotchets, the harmony tends through passive chords towards its eventual key of B major. In this it completes two tritone jumps (marked on the reduction) and thus presages the harmonic material of the 'slowly evolving coda'.

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[66] Zanetti, *La Musica Italiana nel Novecento*, 1196-7.

Ex. 4. 36: Reduction of the main interlude (bars 148-197), Petrassi, *Noche Oscura*

Plural stylistics: a 'break-though into modernism'?

The synthetic nature of *Noche Oscura* can be seen throughout the work in the sheer variety of gestural units that, in their stylistic diversity, create a plurality of music expression that was at once fresh and inspiring in post-war Italy. At times, Petrassi takes the listener from familiarity to unfamiliar and novel locations; 'stylistic directions pile up, interweave and erode one another' in a manner never chaotic but always carefully proportioned.[67] This is evident in the way an Italianate neo-madrigalism is integrated into the texture, not simply by retaining a structural versification and an overtly poetic character but also through a conscious declamatory four-part writing that is often imitative and jocular:

Ex. 4. 37: Bars 34-37 of Petrassi, *Noche Oscura*

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[67] Restagno, 'Petrassi, Goffredo', in *Grove Music On-line* (acessed 5 Mar 2009).

Petrassi is here engaging with an established Italian twentieth-century idiom, present in much Casella and Malipiero, not to mention Petrassi's own *Coro Dei Morti* (1941), Gino Contilli's *Tre Cori Sacri* of 1951, Guido Turchi's choral work *Invetttiva* (1947) and Mario Peragallo's operetta *La Collina* of 1947, and continuing into the second half of the century in capricious works such as Sylvano Bussotti's *Cinque frammenti all'Italia* (1967–8). Zanetti writes

> *Noche Oscura* is an important manifestation of musical civilisation, one of the culminations of Italian neo-madrigalism. Coming after the *Coro dei Morti*, one cannot help noticing that the writing is the most free contrapuntalism, based on imitative melodic processes or – more rightly – rhythms in each phrase, immediately animated within an interweaving of diverse lines (always moving neatly); when they come to an apex, they invite a reciprocal attraction that involves the affirmation of the harmonic sense.[68]

In the interdependence of 'line' (Zanetti's reciprocal attraction), a renaissance choral spirit is invoked, and it can be found in abundance in the first four verses. But its simple presence within the kaleidoscope alongside atonal and early twentieth century idioms and practice shows that *Noche Oscura*, in its deep-rooted modernism, functions as a kind of pluralistic melting pot of stylistics. An engagement with serialism that in some way tries to retain tonal lyricism has been identified, as has the influence (applied consciously or not) of Bartók in the golden section proportions of the work's form, the angularity of its melody and rhythm, and the latent octatonicism. Stravinsky is also a major presence: in the ambiguity between the major and minor third within transformations of the germinal cell 'x',[69] in the use of a 'microseries' (such as the Russian composer experimented with in the 1954 work *In memoriam Dylan Thomas*) and in the 'omoritmico' section of the work, which mischievously invokes the famous 'Augurs of Spring' chord from *Le Sacre*:
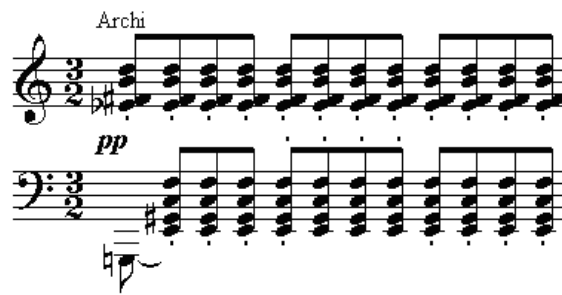
Ex. 4. 38: Orchestra, bar 149 of Petrassi, *Noche Oscura*

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[68] Zanetti, *La Musica Italiana nel Novecento*, 1200.
[69] See Bortolotto, 'Il Cammino di Goffredo Petrassi' in Gatti, Guido ed. *L'Opere di Goffredo Petrassi*: *Quaderni della Rassegna Musicale* no. 1, 46-7.

Importantly, what brings these post-war composers together is their attempt to form a post-tonal/romantic linguistics that avoided slipping into an abstracted focus on musical parameter: simply put, a refusal to disregard style and subjectivity as artistic determinants, even if in the post-tonal world they are divested of their discursive characteristics and deliberately used for incongruent and dislocated ends. Whether or not this constitutes a 'break-though into modernism', as Anderson argues (better, surely, to see it as an example of modernist divergence), it shows a fruitful tension between artistic culmination and fulfilment.

Aesthetic and Political Debates

Chapter 5:
'Linguaggio musicale', realism, and the role of the composer

> The essential question of modern art, as it was understood by modern artists during the first two thirds of the twentieth century … was whether artists lived in history or in society.
>
> Richard Taruskin[1]

At the afternoon meeting on the first day of an important congress on aesthetics held in Florence in May 1948, two of Italy's most influential music critics, Massimo Mila and Fedele D'Amico, stood up to deliver consecutive papers. Whilst dissimilar in outlook and scope – Mila's ontological and highly abstract focus contrasting with D'Amico's pragmatic, work-based approach – their conclusions saw both scripts reach a point of agreement as they turned to address the large-scale dichotomy Taruskin would later articulate: what was the modern composer's relation to society, and how did that relation affect the content of his or her art? Both concluded that abstract notions of the historical progress of art were threatening to destroy both the musical object and the composer as a musical subject:

> The present situation of music, as a whole, is ringing an alarm bell on the whole situation of culture … Its way of salvation will not be found in secluded and autonomous development, not in the very culture itself, but in an inescapable renewing of the custom of social structures, in the relationships which hold organically the common life of man and civilization together.[2]

> Against the dangerous personification of abstract notions, against the menace of unstoppable determinism implicit in the organic evolution of musical language, one must hold on tight and accent the moment of creative freedom.[3]

This chapter takes its cue from D'Amico and Mila, and focuses on the aesthetics of the musical act in the late 1940s, a period in which, following the reconstruction of Italy's musical life, there was real disagreement on the direction of art and its purpose. At the outset, it will seek to explore specifically Italian musical debates: the question of music as a 'language', the rupture between artistic subjectivity and objectivity, and the particularly national facets of the international polemic on realism and formalism. In discussing these issues, the idea is to cover both the major debates on musical expression and aesthetics in

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[1] Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, v, 221.
[2] D'Amico, 'Il Compositore Moderno e il Linguaggio Musicale' in *Atti del Quinto Congresso di Musica, Firenze*, 22.
[3] Mila, 'La Musica e il Linguaggio Musicale', in *Atti del Quinto Congresso di Musica, Firenze*, 32.

this historical period and to set up the terms on which the analytical material of Chapter 6 will proceed. The inherent presence of the politics of left and right will be unavoidable as the discussion progresses, and so towards the conclusion the chapter will open out into an exploration of the wider political trends represented by the figures of Jean-Paul Sartre and Antonio Gramsci, in the hope that these 'external influences' can illuminate this subject and anticipate its further development in the following chapter.

Musical language: from Croce to Mila

The contextual background to much mid-twentieth century Italian art theory is the neo-idealist work of the Neapolitan philosopher Benedetto Croce. Croce (1866-1952) was the archetypal Italian liberal in the Risorgimento mould, and his work spans the fin-de-siècle, inter-war and post-war period, thus standing as a towering presence in modern Italian thought. Aesthetically, his global prominence and the influence of his personality is the main reason the vast majority of Italian artists held to some version (weak or strong) of his ideal conception of the nature of art until the early 1950s. Idealism posits the mental process (the 'idea') as the first and most basic of realities, and the external world as a construction which only exists to the extent it can be ascertained mentally. Through Kant and, especially, Hegel, the concept had enjoyed a hegemonic position within continental aesthetics for well over two centuries (though it came into confrontation first with empiricism and then logical positivism) and lay behind much of the transcendentalism of nineteenth-century romantic art. According to Croce in his 1902 magnum opus *Estetica come Scienza dell'Espressione e Linguistica Generale* an artwork in its truest sense was not a physical, somatic or aural object, but rather an *intuition* (an important term) that originally motivates the artist, which then has to be revealed through expression:

> Human knowledge has two forms: it is either intuitive knowledge or logical knowledge: knowledge obtained through the imagination or knowledge obtained through the intellect … the work of art is an intuition … that which intuition reveals in a work of art is not space and time, but character, individual physiognomy.[4]

> Art is vision or intuition. The artist produces an image or picture. The person who enjoys art turns his eyes in the direction which the artist has pointed out to

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[4] Croce, *Aesthetic as Science of Expression and General Linguistic*, 31-35.

him, peers through the hole which has been opened for him, and reproduces in himself the artist's image.[5]

This basic premise led Croce to three main conclusions. Firstly, to talk truly about art was to talk about expression, and this deliberately prohibited the idea of *technique*: 'The concept of art as intuition excludes the conception of art as the production of *classes, types, species, genera*'.[6] In fact, in a discussion of the pure nature of art, Croce regarded talk of any kind of style or craft as wrongheaded; as Hugh Bredin writes, for the philosopher 'there were techniques involved in the externalisation of artworks, but these were externalisation techniques, not artistic techniques'.[7] This led to a conflation of the traditional Kantian categories of content and form, which for Croce were one and the same manifestation of expression.[8] Art, therefore 'is knowledge but not logic … feeling but not practical feeling', and its hidden depths lay in the strength of the original intuition rather than any practical craftsmanship.[9] Secondly, as the work of art was an idea and not an object, Croce believed in the fundamental unity of all arts. Though different in their means of expression and communication, literature, music and painting were all fully formed artistic concepts prior to their instantiation as artworks; thus for the critic, 'the study of artistic styles was no longer relevant; or, to be precise, the study of style was not a study of art but of something else'.[10] Croce wrote

> Since the individuality of intuition implies the individuality of expression, and since a painting is different from another painting no less than from a poem … it is vain to resort to abstract means of expression in order to set up another series of genera or classes. In the end, any theory whatsoever of the division of the arts is without foundation.[11]

Thirdly, for Croce art was neither mimetic nor representational. This was a logical deduction from his idealism: if the purely artistic concept is a mental idea or image then its expression will only represent *intuition*, not any externality. This doctrine is in essence indebted to a late-romantic view of the work of art as ineffable; and, as Roger Scruton

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[5] Croce, *Guide to Aesthetics*, 8.

[6] Ibid., 16.

[7] Bredin in Murray ed. *Key writers on Art: the Twentieth-Century*, 82.

[8] See the comments of Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music*, 143.

[9] Paolozzi trans. Verdicchio, *Benedetto Croce: Logic of the Real and the Duty of Liberty* (on-line, accessed 16 Mar 2010).

[10] Bredin in Murray ed. *Key Writers on Art: the Twentieth-Century*, 82.

[11] Croce, *Guide to Aesthetics*, 44.

points out, 'to attempt to make it effable is to reduce expression to representation, and therefore lose sight of the essence of art'.[12]

The extent to which Croce's aesthetics exerted their influence amongst musicians even towards the middle of the century can be found in one of the earliest treatises on aesthetics after the end of the war, *La Vita del Linguaggio Musicale* ('The Life of Musical Language'), published by Guido Pannain, a Neapolitan musicologist and composer, in 1947. The work starts with a bold statement of the intuitive and internal power of music: 'Musical language is the immediate language of self-expression' (subsequently an often-quoted phrase).[13] Pannain proceeded along similarly Crocean lines through his twelve chapters, taking the specifically musical context and demonstrated the need to arrive at an aesthetic judgment of individual works based on 'how they are associated with the original intuition that was produced from the imagination of a determined object'.[14] It is clear that though Pannain, as a musician, discusses in detail the history of music in the full intricacies of its stylistics, genre and development he considered the expression of the subject and the means by which this occurs as essentially one and the same:

> The difference between music and other arts is their way of appearing. In common parlance the difference is spoken of as the tools that the artist elects for his expression. But what things are these tools? Well, if art is a way of revealing the spirit, then there is no past and present, deliberation and choice. The instrument that the artist adopts coincides with the essentiality of his act. So it is only the illusion of appearance that makes us talk of the tools adopted by the artist.[15]

Cracks in the Crocean system

So far so Croce. But even given Pannain's tendency to see the 'tools' of the artist as an apparent rather than an actual object, in introducing the idea of the linguistic he both provoked and paved the way for something which, as Elio Gianturco reported in 1951, quickly became the category of the hour:

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[12] Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music*, 143.
[13] Pannain, *La Vita del Linguaggio Musicale*, 11. See for example Rinaldi, 'Funzione della Tecnica nel Linguaggio Musicale' in *Atti del Quinto Congresso di Musica, Firenze*, 114.
[14] Pannain, *La Vita del Linguaggio Musicale*, 12.
[15] Ibid., 12, 15.

> The contrecoups of this change in the realm of musical aesthetics resulted in the creation of a metaphor: *linguaggio musicale*, which soon became so popular as to be adopted as a slogan emblazoning a revision of the philosophies of music stemming from the Crocean system.[16]

Central to this process was the reestablishment of the Congress of Musicians and Musicologists held alongside the Maggio Musicale in Florence in 1948, under the presidency of Ildebrando Pizzetti, which took as its theme *Problemi Presenti del Linguaggio Musicale* ('The Problems Presented by Musical Language'). The proliferation of these sorts of congresses in the immediate post-war period, together with a large number of written reflections on musical aesthetics, demonstrate the self-reflective nature of post-war Italian musical life seen elsewhere in this thesis.[17] Maria Grazia Sità identifies an 'awakening of a desire to reconstruct occasions of debate and confrontation between musicians, critics and musicologists' after the war,[18] strong evidence of the plurality of discourses and debates over the fundamentals of artistic culture that demonstrates the symptoms of a generalised sense of 'crisis' that had spread through European modernism.[19]

At the 1948 Florence Congress, the debate on musical language – ostensibly the very 'tools' Croce and Pannain denied – polarised between the standard Crocean reading of *linguaggio musicale* and a 'reformed' current representing a very significant deviation from received wisdom, judged by Gianturco at the time to be a 'process of disintegration and re-adjustment of Croce's neo-idealistic aesthetics'.[20] Example 5. 1, though simplistic, demonstrates this division in tablature form, with an indication of which critics lay on either side of the debate.[21]

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[16] Gianturco, 'Massimo Mila and Present Italian Aesthetics', 16.

[17] One the one hand, see Sità, 'Italia 1948-1954: Convegni e Congressi' in *Italia Millenovecentocinquanta*, 347-368; on the other see Guido Pannain, *La Vita del Linguaggio Musicale* (1947), Massimo Mila *L'Esperienza Musicale e l'Estetica* (1950), Andrea Della Corte, *L'Interpretazione Musicale e Gli Interpreti* (1951), Giorgio Graziosi, *L'Interpretazione Musicale* (1952), Roman Vlad, *Modernità e Tradizione nella Musica Contemporanea* (1955) and, somewhat later but collecting earlier work, Fedele D'Amico's *I Casi della Musica* (1962).

[18] Sità, 'Italia 1948-1954: Convegni e Congressi' in *Italia Millenovecentocinquanta*, 347.

[19] See chapters 2 and 3. Of course, the Florence congresses were actually founded in the inter-war period and held alongside three early Maggio Musicali (1933, 1937 and 1938). See Pinzauti, *Storia del Maggio*, 17-32 esp. 19 and 28; Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy* 92-93.

[20] Gianturco, 'Massimo Mila and Present Italian Aesthetics', 15. That this was a widespread trend in post-war Italian theory is confirmed by Torriglia, who writes 'most intellectuals, particularly within the left, carved their theoretical position 'against' Croce's idealism, though these positions were nevertheless still informed by Crocean categories.' Torriglia, *Broken Time, Fragmented Space: a Cultural Map for Post-War Italy*, 156.

[21] See Fleischer, 'Discutendo il problema linguistico' in *Atti del Quinto Congresso di Musica, Firenze*, 156-7.

Classic Croceanism	**Reformed Croceanism**
⇓	⇓
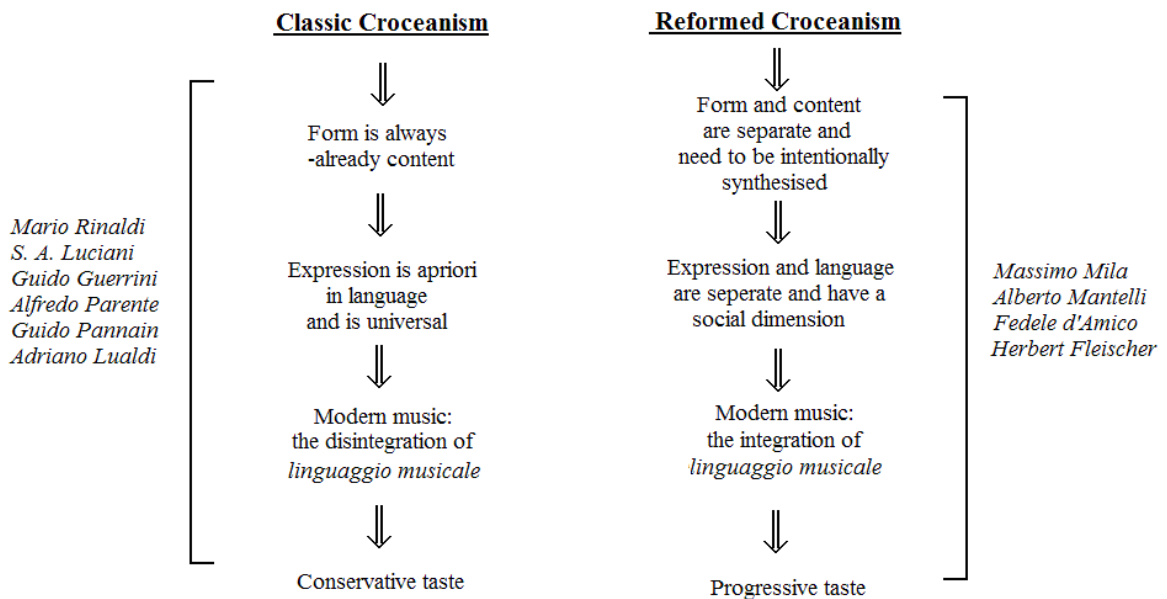
Ex. 5. 1: Two streams of thought on *linguaggio musicale* at the Florence congress 1948.

On the one side, Mario Rinaldi – a musicologist and pioneering Vivaldi scholar – argued that a musical idea comes to its composer as music, and it is this musical intuition that is *linguaggio musicale*: 'the whole of the music is already present in the miracle of inspiration'.[22] Differences between the arts 'pale' in the light of the common truths of their expression, and this supports the notion that musical form is already an expressive substance, and part of the intuition. In Rinaldi's scheme of things, the musical linguist is he who has 'found the exact poetic significance of a language'; that is, he who has identified how the language of the musician reveals his inner motivation.[23] Language, therefore, was an integral part of musical expression, but not 'technique', the very idea of which incorrectly supposed that the form and content of a work of art could be developed separately. Thus the focus on technique which so preoccupied the modern composer was unwise, and its emphasis in contemporary music was a 'grave error'.

> The modern composer, often musically cultured but philosophically weak, has tried (in the physical translation of his imagination) to intervene with his own pre-determined rules ... I say again: language is not the result of a preoccupation with technique, but is a poetic entity that is received and come to birth as an essential unity (accents, timbres, tonalities), born and developed in a specific situation.[24]

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[22] Rinaldi, 'Funzione della tecnica nel linguaggio musicale' in *Atti del Quinto Congresso di Musica, Firenze*, 114.
[23] Ibid., 109.
[24] Ibid., 112, 115.

Rinaldi aims his invective towards the conceptualising of composition as *ricerca* ('research'; a common term in post-war Italian avant-garde music), which he labelled as a 'torment'.[25] Instead, Rinaldi affirmed the long-standing view of Alfredo Parente that musical language had already reached a 'determinate perfection' which the modern musician only had to honour.[26]

The outcome of the classic Crocean view applied to music was a reaction against the perceived disintegration of modern music, and it inevitably led to a conservative approach to both musical style and compositional aesthetics. If Rinaldi thought that technical factors should be subordinated to expressive ones in modern composition, Alfredo Parente went further, lambasting those who

> devoted themselves to calculated and cerebral games and mental torments, to material not free in form, that is to say expressive form … they succeed in awakening – at the most – satisfaction, cold admiration, when they do not generate annoyance and impatience; they are not communicating any vibrations, any shudders, and they testify only to a frigid, cerebral (and above all) sensory pleasure of research for research's sake, of form for form's sake.[27]

Parente cast the problem as a 'moral' one: the inability of composers to give self-revelations of their expression and of critics to listen; Guido Guerrini, rather, thought the issue was a matter of taste, of the 'decline' of the 'glorious expression of musical language'.[28] So on Crocean grounds many firmly opposed the separation of musical intuition from musical means and deplored the increasing inclination to view techniques as autonomous entities. The contrast with the critical stance firmly taken at the 1st International Congress on Dodecaphonic Music in Milan, held a year after, could not be greater.

Over and against this, Massimo Mila presented a more nuanced view of the contemporary situation in a paper which would eventually be incorporated into his larger (and very influential) study *L'Esperienza Musicale e l'Estetica* ('Musical experience and the aesthetic') in 1950. He started from a fairly standard foundation, by now familiar: the term *linguaggio musicale* ascribes to music the dimension of language so it can be conceived of as a communicative art form, but the very thing it communicates is music,

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[25] Ibid., 111.

[26] Ibid., 112, quoting Parente's *La Musica e le Arti*, 201 (published in 1936).

[27] Parente, 'Il Problema del Linguaggio come Problema Morale' in *Atti del Quinto Congreso di Musica, Firenze*, 37.

[28] Guerrini, 'Il Tramonto di due Gloriose Espressioni del Lingiuagio Musicale', in *Atti del Quinto Congreso di Musica, Firenze*, 39-44.

since there is nothing to look for outside itself; thus music is 'not a tool of expression, but direct and immediate expression itself'.[29] However – and this is the heterodox notion from the point of view of the congress – musical language is still dependant on syntax, in that it has logic (tonal, gestural, formal) in the ordering of its elements:

> Musical language is therefore essentially syntax, and by this I mean that an intrinsic logic exists that coordinates the order and combinations of sounds. Pushing the metaphorical analogy of words and music to its limit, it should be acknowledged that music exists at the level of the un-corporeal features of logical and grammatical analysis … What remains is the syntax of the sentence, the number of its parts, the number and sequence of the composing elements, the indication of their functions. Music, in a direct comparison with spoken language, cannot go beyond this generic syntactic organization.[30]

Is this focus on the grammatical simple a way of smuggling in the much-maligned *tecnica* through the back door? Mila answered this question by referring his listeners to the recent writing of René Leibowitz (*Schönberg et son École*, published in Paris in 1947) a work which the Italian critic declared a history of music through its elements.[31] Mila endorses this approach on two counts: through it musical personality can be comprehended, and the reader can understand better the syntax of music and 'access the nucleus of the work of art'.[32] But he decries Leibowitz's a-historical stance: the danger is that the temporary separation from history, necessary for theoretical clarification, becomes an assumption, and starts to necessitate 'imaginary laws' and 'evolutionary principles' – the familiar serialist *telos* discussed in Chapter 3 and elsewhere.[33] According to Mila, Leibowitz's analysis is correct, but the value which he assigns it – as a totalizing evolutionary model, an 'unstoppable determinism', is wrong.[34]

Mila's approach to *linguaggio musicale* involves the syntactic, but not in a reductionist, autonomous sense. Instead, his theory is a dialectical one:

> In music, a synthesis with previous musical language is always operative, a synthesis between an already past, tested language (which was apparently subject to an evolutionary determinism) and new unthinkable elements outside of

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[29] Mila, 'La Musica e il Linguaggio Musicale' in *Atti del Quinto Congresso di Musica, Firenze*, 26.
[30] Ibid., 26-7.
[31] Ibid., 27-8.
[32] Ibid., 28.
[33] Ibid., 29.
[34] Ibid., 32.

the historical, political or social arena: namely the individual humanity of the individual composer and his psychological behaviour. The second is in a productive dialectic reaction with the first part.[35]

The substance of music therefore consists of the psychological 'inner humanity' of the composer (which Croce would have labelled intuition), the social aspect, and the relation with the already past syntax of musical language. Thus for Mila 'philology and glottology do not claim to be a substitution for the history of literature and poetry, but offer it precious work tools'.[36]

Extending Mila's thesis, Fedele D'Amico argued that the particular historical circumstances of the debates further mitigated the discussion of linguistics, because music of the western tradition had relied on the concept of common practice, with language a 'pre-existing detail', whilst modern composers were now faced with a situation where the linguistic has become a stand-alone concept, not an assumed lexicon for the composer to draw upon, and indeed 'not accepted as data belonging to his own time'.[37] How this situation has come about is not revealed, and indeed when Herbert Fleischer makes a similar point, there is not a small hint of Schoenbergian determinism: 'when the composer feels himself motivated by an always expressive necessity to invent a new language, his own, outside tradition; then, the technical grammatical question becomes acute'.[38] Yet D'Amico's point is more subtle, as he believes that contemporary music's turn to the technical is a historical consequence of the agony of the age, and therefore a fundamental aspect of its aesthetic. It does not work against expression: it is the expressive intuition itself.

It is clear that every work of art has some linguistic precedents. But in the past these were absorbed by the composer as an alive and contemporary tradition, implying a direct continuity with their human world … The modern composer is much richer in poetry, as he manages to put before your eyes the historic inequality between his re-thinking and the objects of this re-thinking.[39]

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[35] Ibid., 31.
[36] Ibid., 32.
[37] D'Amico, 'Il Compositore Moderno e il Linguaggio Musicale' in *Atti del Quinto Congresso di Musica, Firenze*, 12.
[38] Fleischer, 'Discutendo il Problema Linguistico', in *Atti del Quinto Congresso di Musica, Firenze*, 157.
[39] D'Amico, 'Il Compositore Moderno e il Linguaggio Musicale' in *Atti del Quinto Congresso di Musica, Firenze*, 14

The argument is an almost postmodern one: in the plural subjectivity of 'contorted and deformed' works such as Berg's *Wozzeck* and the 'annexationist activism' of Stravinsky, aesthetic value is to be found in the collision of past objects and present reformulations.[40]

Massimo Mila and 'espressione inconsapevole'

By now it should be clear how musicologists at the progressive end of the critical spectrum were advocating what has been termed a 'reformed Croceanism'. Firstly, Mila reverses the un-Kantian shift in Croce's aesthetic which claims that form and content are both present in the moment of intuition, and then secondly he argues that in fact expression is a compound of the intuitive, social, and psychological, leaving it open to the exploration of technique *and* humanistic concerns. Thus Carolyn Gianturco affirms that for Mila, 'an artist may achieve the highest possible aesthetic expression (in Croce's sense) even though his aims may be only technical; such composers as Stravinsky were examined in this light'.[41] Thirdly, the focus on technique within modern music could be reinterpreted as an expressive act, and a consequence of the 'universal pain of modern man' (Mila) or the 'solitude of the artist' (D'Amico).[42]

Yet the subjectivist tenets of Croce had not been abandoned, as might be supposed by this last reformulation. Syntax was a musical, not a logical, set of structures, and thus expressive:

> By *linguaggio musicale* – Mila explains this with pellucid clarity – the Italian aestheticians and music critics intended to highlight, not the practical, semantic vehicular function of language (music is neither symbolic of, nor subservient to, a reality beyond itself), but rather the internal relationships among music's structural factors – the syntax of music.[43]

That this distinction was held as important by other Italian musicians than Massimo Mila is clear in the fact that the new European 'objectivity' – the scientism closely related to logical positivism and the abstract tendencies of post-war art – was wholeheartedly rejected at the following year's Florence Congress, which was devoted to the theme *Soggettivismo e*

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[40] Ibid., 14, 16. This remark also has a political dimension, in that at the end of his paper, D'Amico points to the anti-fascism of Bela Bartók as the model for this aesthetic (22- 23).
[41] Gianturco, 'Mila, Massimo', in *Grove Music On-line* (accessed 23 Oct 2009).
[42] Mila, *L'Esperienza Musicale e l'Estetica*, 96; D'Amico, 'Il compositore Moderno e il linguaggio musicale' in *Atti del Quinto Congresso di Musica, Firenze*, 20.
[43] Elio Gianturco, 'Massimo Mila and Present Italian Aesthetics', 16.

Oggettivismo nell'Espressione Musicale ('Subjectivism and Objectivism in Musical Expression').[44]

> Why did Mila believe in a continuous regeneration of strong ideas and not in the rigour of a system, even if apparently stronger? Because the system, any system, was in itself felt to be *a priori* sealed, like a dangerous cage. Because in homage to the Crocean principle, according to which 'he who makes himself think scientifically has already ceased to think aesthetically', he esteemed as the major guarantee of relative objectivity the free expansion of the artwork into conceptual, metaphoric and analogic galaxies (in harmony with the volatile polymorphism of the fantastic imagination emitted from the creative imagination) above the cold rigour of a predetermined thought of axiomatic or scientific logic.[45]

To explain the apparent paradox between *syntax/tecnica* and the urge towards the human and the subjective (a tension felt strongly in 1948 and 1949) a most elegant solution was emerging in the concept of *espressione inconsapevole* (unconscious expression).

Mila cast the problem in terms of the composer's awareness of his or her creative act: his or her 'awareness of inspiration' went hand in hand with an 'unawareness of expression'.[46] In *L'Esperienza Musicale e l'Estetica* he sets up in opposition the arch-romanticist Hans Pfitzner – to whom the 'miracle of inspiration' was so metaphysical that 'even the need to write down the ideas that fall upon the musician is a painful burden' – against the positivist psychologist Julius Bahle – who demonstrated empirically that 'artistic creation is an "aware activity, aimed at a target, conditioned by human experience"'. Mila argued that the reality is somewhere in between: whilst, as Croce affirmed, 'the critic works within the poetry', it is also true that 'the history of art is full of Cristofori Colombi who have discovered America after *buscar Levante por el Poniente* [mistaking sunrise for sunset].' As Gianturco hints, modern music may itself simply be an extreme example of the second of these categories: hence Mila's idea that the artist's expression may be 'unconscious'. 'This notion is based on the assumption of the non-existence of "objective expression"';[47] and Mila certainly holds that the human agent is always crucial in the mediation between intuition and artistic object.

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[44] See especially Parente's labeling of objectivity as a 'fable', 'a word empty of any meaning'. Parente, 'La Favola dell'Oggettivismo' in *Atti del Sesto Congresso di Musica, Firenze*, 78.

[45] Gianfranco Vinay, 'L'Esperienza Musicale del Compagno Strawinsky e l'Estetica dell'Espressione Inconsapevole' in Pecker-Berio ed. *Intorna a Massimo Mila*, 176.

[46] Mila, *L'Esperienza Musicale e l'Estetica*, 133.

[47] Elio Gianturco, 'Massimo Mila and Present Italian Aesthetics', 19.

Thus, Mila's reasoning leads to *espressione inconsapevole,* unconscious expression; the composer is aware of the fabric of his or her art, but not always of the possibilities of its expression:

> According to the classical example of Croce, the critic – the artist's awareness – is comparable to a woman in labour who, in her spasms, judges and chooses movements and gestures that seem more useful towards her purpose, and discriminates against those which are useless … Awareness, during the act of artistic creation, is a truth that does not destroy the other term in the antithesis, so-called inspiration – in other words the lyrical and intuitive character of art. It is however preferable to address the whole aesthetic thought by means of the *espressione inconsapevole.*[48]

By this method, Mila could enact what Gianturco calls 'the salvage of phenomena': modern music (as seen above) could be saved from those who despised its *tecnica* by a recourse to syntax as a constituent part of its expression, an expression that could arise unawares even in art that focussed attention on the object. So neo-classicism and other modernist trends that reacted to the excesses of romanticism contained within them the only possible emotions of their era:

> Through the re-evocation of the styles of the past, it is a modern man who speaks, and says things which are only possible to conceive of in this century; these styles are objects of a longed-for emotion that presupposes a separation and a distinction between the artist of today and the antique model.[49]

This is perhaps the most substantial conclusion to be drawn in evaluating what was, by modern standards, a complex and rarefied debate: new and difficult music perhaps had hidden resources to meet Italian expectations of emotional comprehensibility. For Mila, as for many, the music of composers such as Stravinsky (with his synchronous musical stylism and use of musical material as an object) was the perfect example of *tecnica* achieving a peculiarly deep *espressione inconsapevole.*[50]

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[48] Mila, *L'Esperienza Musicale e l'Estetica*, 134-136.
[49] Quoted in Pecker-Berio ed. *Intorna a Massimo Mila*, 166 [1951].
[50] For an account of how Mila's thought developed in relation to later avant-garde trends in the 1950s and 60s, see Gianmario Borio, 'L'Attegiamento di Mila nei Confronti dell'Avanguardia Italiana' in Pecker-Berio ed. *Intorna a Massimo Mila*, 179-190.

Chapter 5

Musical objects: realism versus formalism

The precise formulation of musical language, however, has seldom been an abstract debate. It has generally rested on larger stylistic questions about the relationship between the composer and the audience, and to these this chapter now turns. By the late 40s, a sense of polarization emerges in contemporary music between the idea of music as a contribution to the common life of society or a self-contained, self-evolving object, a polarization very evident in some European spheres and little discussed in its Italian incarnation. This binary division between 'realism' and 'formalism' is most well known between music in Soviet Russia and reaction to it in the post-war music of the capitalist west. Its influence outside these zones was generally proportionate to the amount of national support for the 'red' cause, and thus it was very prominent in a post-war Italy where the PCI regularly polled a third of the votes. Socialist realism reached its zenith in the denunciations of Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Khachaturian and Muradeli in 1948 at the First All-Union Congress of Soviet composers by Andrey Zhdanov – a period known as *Zhdanovshchina*.[51] As Marina Frolova-Walker testifies, the doctrine 'was never worked out as a coherent theory' unless, that is, that theory simply demanded an art that was 'familiar in form and anodyne in content'.[52] However, for the purposes of this study, it can be assumed that socialist realism, even incoherently, still relied on a core conception of the 'real' in art as a 'socio-aesthetic ideal' where art is subservient to society, and aggressively for the people;[53] and its result was a vindication of national musical tropes and the attempt to vivify the listener towards a correct emotional response to the aims of the state ideology.

Italy, in fact, had its own version of realism in the 'neorealist' cinematic and literary movement, though without the exigencies of Soviet-style oppression. Neorealism was a style springing from the social-content films of the early 1930s, given a new, leftist edge by the anti-fascist impulse in the aftermath of liberation. Its era was short but intense, and included films such as Roberto Rossellini's trilogy *Roma, Città Aperta* (1945) *Paisà* (1946) and *Germania, Anno Zero* (1948), *Ladri di Biciclette* (Vittorio De Sica, 1948), *Riso Amaro* (Giuseppe De Santis, 1949), *La Strada* (Federico Fellini, 1954) and books such as *Cristo si*

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[51] See Maes, *A History of Russian Music: from Kamarinskaya to Babi Yar*, 298-317; Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, v, 8-13. Slonimsky reproduces several documents pertaining to the 1948 congress in *Music Since 1900*, 684-712.

[52] Frolova-Walker, 'National in Form, Socialist in Content: Musical Nation-Building in the Soviet Republics'. 368

[53] Vaughan James, *Soviet Socialist Realism*, 96.

è Fermato a Eboli (Carlo Levi, 1945) and *I Sentieri dei Nidi di Ragno* (Italo Calvino, 1947). Mark Shiel's summary of the aesthetic and techniques of this genre is useful: he casts neorealism in cinema as

> a historically and culturally-specific manifestation of the general aesthetic quality known as 'realism' which is characterised by a disposition to the ontological truth of the physical, visible world. From this perspective, the realism of Italian neorealism manifested itself in a distinctive visual style. This was typified by a preference for location filming, the use of nonprofessional actors, the avoidance of ornamental mise-en-scène, a preference for natural light, freely moving documentary style of photography, a non-interventionist approach to film directing, and an avoidance of complex editing and other post-production processes.[54]

Whilst neo-realism was sometimes socialist in orientation, its truth-telling style is also symptomatic of reaction against the supposed 'spectacle' art of the fascist era.[55] Its existence alongside socialist realism should caution against an overly simplistic interpretation of the trope of the 'real' in the musical debates of this period, especially given that formalism – seen as an oppositional aesthetic of autonomy and self-determination – is itself difficult to define.

The debates of 1949

One of the initial signs that the Italian musical world was confronting the real/formal debate came in 1948 in a provocative article by the Milanese critic Angiola Maria Bonisconti in *La Rassegna Musicale* which set out the terms on which a discussion could proceed. For Bonisconti, art was retreating from the cultural isolation of the 'so-called 'Novecentismo' of the first thirty years [1910-1940]' and was 'already far enough removed from it to speak of a clearing up of the spirit and of musical language, a new humanisation (even the hackneyed 'return to normality') or a new realism'.[56] He celebrated the fact that 'in at least some music of today, against the research into methods and the peculiar tools of objectivity there is counterpoised a research into human motives, motives of reality, that drive us to look inside

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[54] Shiel, *Italian Neorealism*, 1-2.
[55] For a contentious take on neorealism from one of its central protagonists, see the famous 1964 preface to Calvino's 1947 *The Path to the Spiders' Nests*, 7-30.
[56] Bonisconti, 'Il Nuovo Realismo Musicale', 123.

of ourselves'.[57] There is little evidence here of a Soviet turn to 'the people', nor indeed any idea of the pragmatic techniques of neorealist cinematography. In fact, the influence as Bonisconti admits is the humanism of 'eighteenth-century naturalism' against the 'bloodless affectations of decadence'.[58] Bonisconti's argument accuses various inter-war art movements (Bonisconti mentions *Neue Sachlichkeit* in particular) of dehumanizing the human and devaluing the subject, and the solution – this is the specifically Italian slant – is an *interior* one, to search inside of oneself for an art that more readily reflects an inner humanity. These values are deliberately vaguer than the politicised Soviet pronouncements: what Grazia-Sità identifies as 'the obsessive reoccurrence of the adjective "human" in all the relevant bibliographical material' masks a sense that many critics were unsure precisely what 'human' represented within the musical sphere.[59]

However Bonisconti is clear on one technical point: realism is 'in a large part ethnic by nature – ethnic understood spiritually more than geographically.' The model here is the music of Bartók (a familiar influence on Italian musicians in this era), de Falla and Stravinsky (though, predictably, the Stravinsky of *Les Noces*, *Petrushka* and *Le Sacre*: the subsequent 'nation-less' neoclassicism is not mentioned), and the use of folkloric components is especially praised:

> And so what we know of the function of the ethnic melos – and the extent of its occurrences – in the lexical definition of contemporary music becomes increasingly more interesting. In practice, in the aesthetic problem of reconcretisation, of renaturalising, folklore reacts to the academicism of scholarly and rational music … true ethnicity, understood in its just and ideal way, fits effectively into the camp of this realism of which I speak, and brings about a pure solution to all the bottlenecks caused by *verismo*.[60]

In May 1949 an innocent looking article in the pages of the communist daily *L'Unità* by one Riccardo Marcato, heavily criticising the recently initiated 'Art Clubs' at the Palazzo Carignano in Turin, caused a stir in the Italian press. That Marcato was an electrician at the FIAT plant – and therefore an *operaio* ('worker') – gave the attack an especial efficacy, and *L'Unità*'s editors knew it, mentioning the fact three times in editorials.

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[57] Ibid., 124.
[58] Ibid., 125.
[59] Sità, 'Italia 1948-1954: Convegni e Congressi' in *Italia Millenovecentocinquanta*, 368.
[60] Bonisconti, 'Il Nuovo Realismo Musicale', 125.

I write out of a love for the culture to which I dedicate much of my free time. I visited the exhibition of the 'Art Clubs' on the day of its public opening and I believe given what I have seen, my opinion may interest you. The exhibition has left me with a sense of dismay … Bourgeois society, which from its dawn has striven to give us Michelangelos, has been reduced to these artists who, with their surrealisms and their abstractivisms, represent the last convulsions of the monastic bourgeois spectacle. I believe that art should be understood not only by initiates, but by all: it must awaken admiration and comprehension especially amongst those that are incompetent [*gli incompetenti*] … It seems to me that what I have seen is not 'the research into new forms of expression' (as Salvatore Gatto has written in *L'Unità* on the 22nd); it is not the rising of a new art: it is the funeral and the decomposition of an old art, that is, of an old social system.[61]

Derogatory remarks about the elitism of the bourgeoisie would have been routine in the pages of *L'Unità*, but the issue that caused the most offence was the attack on sub-realist elements of modern art ('surrealisms' and 'abstractivisms') and the idea that art must be appropriate for 'incompetents'.

Such outright denunciation of modernism was received highly contentiously by musicians on the left: Massimo Mila and Fedele D'Amico, the former as music editor at the paper, the latter as an occasional contributor, both wrote long rebuttals. To Marcato's assertion that 'art must awaken admiration and comprehension especially amongst those that are incompetent', Mila replied

No: a minimum of competency – that is, the sort that is digested in the desire to understand – is needed in order to appreciate Michaelangelo's Moses and the Sistine Chapel frescoes, which – to be under no illusions – are hidden for many people. Art is a language and like all languages it only succeeds when it is understood. It requires, therefore, a minimum of active collaboration and willingness on the part of those who would like to enjoy it.[62]

In June, D'Amico similarly stated that if Marcato meant by 'incompetents' those who did not have a 'technical, systematic, professional' knowledge of art, he was correct, but if he meant that art must be 'immediately accessible' to anyone who turns to it, he was wrong: just as Italian as a tongue was a learnt skill, so was artistic understanding.[63] D'Amico turns to music history to demonstrate that the oppression of musicians has always come about when they are conscripted to serve a cause: 'liturgical cults, dance, theatre, popular

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[61] Marcato, 'Lettera di un Visitatore', 3.
[62] Mila, 'Una Polemica sull'Arte: Un Indipendente Risponde alla Lettera d'un Operaio', 3.
[63] D'Amico, 'Un'intervento di Fedele D'Amico nella Nostra Polemica: L'arte e gli "incompetenti"', 3.

festivals, aristocrats, ceremonies' were finally conquered by the romantic idea of art for its own sake, only to be destroyed by the imbrications 'of the MinCulProp'. [64] Here it can be seen that comparing the political proscriptions of social realism to the fascist regime's handling of art in the *ventennio* was a principal ideological weapon for the anti-realist camp.[65]

This exchange led directly into the most crucial debate to be considered, that in *Rinascita* in the October of 1949 between Mila and Palmiro Togliatti, leader of the PCI (using the pseudonym Roderigo di Castiglia).[66] That one of the most influential voices in twentieth-century Italian politics intervened in a musical matter should testify to its importance, and that the subject was the famous 1948 declaration of the First All-Union Congress of Soviet composers led by Zhdanov situates the deliberations within a wider context.[67] In a *Rassegna Musicale* article Mila had critiqued the declaration, calling the Russian politician 'ignorant' and the Moscow discussions a 'painful experience of incompetence' where 'mediocre composers deprived of originality and of success' had exhibited themselves as 'snarling curs', full of envy and 'ambition'.[68] Togliatti responded provocatively that Mila was making the same mistake as Croce, a blind anti-Soviet assessment 'judging Marxism with the racist criteria of Adolf Hitler'; thus demonstrating that the anti-fascist argument could be used by both real- and non-realists.[69] Opposing Mila's conclusions on the congress and the oppressive nature of the Soviet state's proscriptions, Togliatti argued that the congress participants had had 'full liberty to speak what they would', and the discussions had been 'grand, positive, and instructive'.[70] They had included a cohort of 'specialists' but also many 'of those who understand art as an expression of social life and would testify to the artist the existence of this life'. These were, of course, Marcato's *incompetenti*:

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[64] Ibid.

[65] See Dallapiccola, 'Musica Pianificata', 27-8.

[66] See di Castiglia 'Orientamento dell'Arte' in *Rinascita*, VI, 1949, n. 10, Mila/di Castiglia, Disorientamento dell'arte' in *Rinascita*, VI, 1949, n. 11; all were reprinted in Togliatti, *I corsivi di Roderigo*, 164-174.

[67] This debate is little commented on in the literature; Joachim Nöller makes mention of it, though he does not discuss its contents, *Engagement und Form*, 57; similarly Estero, 'Il Musicista-come-Intellettuale nel Secondo Novecento Italiana: tra Politica e Ideologia', 345.

[68] Mila, 'Recensioni di Werth, A: Musical Uproar in Moscow', 247.

[69] Togliatti, *I corsivi di Roderigo*, 164.

[70] Ibid.; the stenographic report, found in Slonimsky, *Music Since 1900*, 684-712 and (in a different form) Werth, *Musical Uproar in Moscow*, 47-87, casts doubt on this point.

And who says that artistic problems must occupy only those who are 'competent', who have been initiated into the cabalistic jargon of the small group of composers, or of critics, of philosophers, that have introduced them into their circle? The day that this happens, the mission of artists and of art will have finished.[71]

This is Togliatti's fundamental point: the music condemned under Zhdanov not only failed to serve the people by giving them what Zhdanov had called a 'Soviet *Kuchka*';[72] it had isolated them from new music with its 'formal intellectualism'. Likewise in Italy, 'the great majority of normal men' rejected contemporary Italian music as out of hand: 'is Massimo Mila not aware that even in the concerts for the refined in Italy they have started to shout at Schoenberg and to whistle at Malipiero? He seems to me to be a restricted member of the elect that understand and exalt this sort of degeneration'.[73]

Degeneration was, of course, formalism. Here Togliatti's line is that of Zhdanov, who had condemned 'anti-democratic formalism in music' using this sort of term in 1948.[74] To confirm that his agenda is to fall behind the communist-international, Togliatti uses the example of Shostakovich's *Symphony no. 7 'Leningrad'*, praised in 1942 at its première but now viewed with suspicion in Russia.

What was the fighter for Leningrad, in preferring a pop song from the gramophone to the *Seventh* of Shostakovich, looking for? He looks, simply, for art, that is, something that is near to us, making us think, quiver, endure. The pop song in which he found refuge was not art; but the over elaborateness of Shostakovich, besides not being art, becomes even mockery and dishonesty.[75]

Formalism, the 'over elaborate', 'impotent', and 'disintegrated' verdict on a modern music that lacks accessible content, emotional rhetoric, and prefers to address initiates with 'jargon', is contrasted with realism, 'the bearer … of the aspirations of society and of the people'.[76] Malipiero is attacked for his adherence to Schoenberg (though this is a highly tendentious judgment) and – perhaps following on the heels of the 'Quinto Congresso di Musica' in Florence the preceding year – Italian musicians are urged away from the search

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[71] Togliatti, *I corsivi di Roderigo*, 165.
[72] Werth, *Musical Uproar in Moscow*, 83, referring to the 'mighty five'.
[73] Togliatti, *I corsivi di Roderigo*, 165.
[74] Zhdanov quoted in Slonimsky, *Music Since 1900*, 691.
[75] Ibid., 166.
[76] Ibid., 166-7.

for a new 'language', and rather advised to use the musical language 'created by the people in the crucible of their history'.[77]

> By dint of the creation of new languages, of polemics, and of evasions, and of emptiness, and other operations of which by now any school student whatsoever knows how to speak of with 'competence', certain artistic currents have exhausted themselves in an exercise or game that could be called formalistic, from which is absent every inspiration accessible to the common man, every expression comprehensible to the common man.[78]

Whether this is an authentic 'Italian Zhadanovism' is open to question. It should be recalled that, unlike in Russia, the PCI was not in power, and the formalists (in the shape of the American-backed Christian Democrats) were in the ascendancy. And as Joachim Nöller points out, a concrete form of the realist/formalist binary may prove unhelpful in an Italian context where so many artists fell outside of its boundaries. It is true also that within Italian cultural socialism itself, there was much less coherence in the condemnation of bourgeoisie trends, partly due to the moderating influence of Elio Vittorini in left-wing journalistic culture,[79] partly due to the acrimonious split in the *Fronte Nuovo delle Arti*, a Milanese visual art group on the left, which led to the creation in Rome of the *Forma* group that was 'committed to abstract art, in opposition to such realists as Gattuso and to the official socialist realism of the Communist party'.[80] A striking manifesto was issued from this group in early 1947 which sought to bring together the two sides of the argument:

> We declare ourselves to be both Formalists and Marxists, in the conviction that the concepts Marxism and Formalism are not irreconcilable, particularly today, when the progressive elements of our society must represent a revolutionary and avant-garde approach, and not devote themselves to the error of a different and conformist realism, which, in its most recent expression in painting and sculpture, has shown what a limited and narrow path it creates.[81]

Yet on the musical front, Nöller takes this point too far when he argues that the accusation and condemnation of formalism 'does not have the usual emphasis', or that Togliatti 'avoids using its reproach'; the evidence from the exchange with Mila, where he uses that exact

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[77] Ibid., 166.
[78] Togliatti, *I corsivi di Roderigo*, 168 (Togliatti's reply after Mila's response).
[79] See Torriglia, *Broken Time, Fragmented Space: a Cultural Map for Post-War Italy*, xi.
[80] Killinger, *Culture and Customs of Italy*, 179.
[81] Manifesto published in the art Journal *Forma I* (15 March 1947), quoted in Nöller, *Engagement und Form*, 59.

word in a pejorative sense (six times), is enough to demonstrate this.[82] Whilst not an all-determining binary opposition, the ideas of realism and formalism did frame a spectrum of ideological positions which collapses in-on-itself without the two categories.

Mila's response to Togliatti's attacks was assured and masterly. To Togliatti's opening point that he had qllied himself with civic committees (i.e. the Christian Democrats) and Hitler in believing any falsehood going about the *Zhdanovschina*, he pointed out that, as the rest of the article mounted a staunch defence of standard socialist-realist doctrines, the appraisal of the facts of the Soviet case that he had received must indeed have been true: 'Zhdanov was ignorant *in musical matters*', and the Conference of Musicians 'painfully incompetent'.[83] Togliatti's choice of Malipiero and Schoenberg as examples of rejected formalists undermines his whole argument, according to Mila: these composers were becoming ever more accepted and praised in Italy, and Togliatti's denunciation had in fact been closer to Mussolini, at least in the case of Malipiero's banned opera *Favola del Figlio Cambiato* in 1934.[84] Such fickle treatment of the facts was, in Mila's view, a common marker of Zhadonivism: hadn't the Soviets 'invited [us] four years ago to admire the Leningrad Symphony as one of the highest realizations of Soviet musical art'?[85] For Mila this demonstrated the fundamental point: that though art was to serve the people (he was, after all a committed Marxist, otherwise the debate would not have occurred in *Rinascita*) it had another internal impulse that led composers to write music not immediately accessible; in fact, this depth was precisely where its power lay:

> Today, if we love art and esteem the people, we must have the loyalty to say to the people that art is difficult, and requires devotion, humility, dedication and sacrifice … I know from experience how much first experience can be modified from a deeper knowledge and meditation. Because of this I cannot take into consideration the rules of someone who, without having ever dedicated their life

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[82] Nöller, *Engagement und Form*, 58; see also, from 1951, Zafred, 'Ragioni dell'Antiformalismo' in Zanetti, *La Musica Italiana nel Novecento*, 1674-1679. Nielinger follows Nöller in stating that 'Togliatti preferred to avoid the term formalism altogether', Nielinger, 'The Song Unsung: Luigi Nono's *Il canto sospeso*', 96. This stance from both writers is a consequence of the main premise of their work: that the dialectical moulding of national communist identity to radical modernism in the music of Giacomo Manzoni and Luigi Nono (respectively) demonstrates the peculiar exigencies of Italian post-war life in the early 1950s. On this point they are indeed correct, and in fact (in regard to Nono at least) a similar conclusion will be the climactic point of chapter 6's historical narrative. However to arrive at this point in 1947-50 rather than 1953-60 and therefore underplay the similarities between early post-war Soviet realism and debates in Italy over realism/formalism is to put the cart before the horse.
[83] Togliatti, *I corsivi di Roderigo*, 168.
[84] See Waterhouse, *Gian Francesco Malipiero*, 46-7.
[85] Togliatti, *I corsivi di Roderigo*, 170.

to a particular reflection on specifically musical matters, and maybe not even to the general nature of art, objects when they turn the radio on to a fragment of a symphony by Shostakovich or some Malipiero.[86]

In the end, the discussion has come full circle: Mila's 'reformed' Croceanism led him (and others, including D'Amico and later Nono and Maderna) to the belief that though art was informed by society, it was not solely a social construct: it had an inner concept that required careful mediating via language and syntax. That is why there is found nowhere in Mila recourse to the all-encompassing, collective (and reductionist?) term *il popolo* ('the people'); he prefers to speak of 'l'uomini' ('humans') or 'l'umanità' ('humanity') as an interpersonal and plural group, capable of differing emotional and intellectual responses to art. This particular semantic foible is common in Italian music at this time and its absence from other European situations is telling. In his response to Mila's reply, Togliatti interprets and dismisses this as a *ritorno a dio* ('return to God'), yet Mila was hardly a Catholic agitator.[87] The debate was to rumble on in the pages of *Rinascita* over the course of the next year, and arguably would not be resolved.[88]

Polarities: realists and formalists into the 1950s

The ideologies behind Togliatti's intervention were sustained into the next decade by a pair of critics on the left, Mario Zafred and Rubens Tedeschi (who both wrote for the Rome edition of *L'Unità*), particularly in response to the rise of dodecaphony. Zafred had renounced modernist trends in the late 40s himself as a composer and became the most outspoken critic of abstract music of his day.[89] In the arts periodical *Ulisse* in 1951 he laid out his clearest statement yet of 'antiformalism'. Taking the reader through 50 years of 'formal research', from early Casella through Milhaud, Schoenberg, Varèse and 'the percussionist John Cage', he declares all claims to *ricerca* decadent and alienating:

> For a long time the vast majority of composers claiming to be 'avant-garde' have interpreted that term as meaning those who experiment with purely technical

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[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid., 173.

[88] 'Il Musicista-come-Intellettuale nel Secondo Novecento Italiana: tra Politica e Ideologia', 345-6.

[89] Tedeschi demonstrates his adherence to the Zhdanov line in a mostly positive article on the debate in *Il Diapason* from 1953 entitled 'Cinque Anni di Polemica sulla Musica Realistica nell'U.R.S.S.' This issue of *Il Diapason* was devoted to 'realist art', demonstrating the continuing (if less influential) presence realism maintained in mainstream debate.

findings; they have focussed on altering musical language externally, neglecting to ask if such novelties, in outward appearances, correspond or not to the existence of an expression that can justify them as authentic on the level of art … the fiddling about with form, the claim of *purity*, is nothing if not basically an evasion and a non-participation in life, or at least a certain part of life. Because in reality, to detach oneself from human commitment and to take refuge in subtle games demonstrates an ultimate lack of belief in the eventual aim of art; it distorts art's essence, actively obstructing the forward march that humanity follows through art and all other camps of life. This then is the ultimate analysis of formalism: it is the most persistent and devious enemy of the art of today, the poison that a class arrives at in its decline.[90]

Zafred's position is a much more entrenched realism than Bonisconti's in 1948. It involved the return to Italian traditions, traits and people, not in order to ironically objectify them in a neoclassical sense (he thoroughly rejects this trend, and saw himself as still occupying an avant-garde that flowed from romanticism) but in order to build on 'the reasons and means of tradition and its successes'.[91] If this sounds like the worst kind of dogmatic agit-prop, it is worth remembering that it came within the context of the PCI's move to a more authoritarian stance in the early fifties, a move that would be short-lived, as the split within the party over the Hungarian uprising in 1956 would precipitate a turn from Moscow's influence in the 1960s and 70s.

But there were still many artistic ideologues on the left who viewed the values of realism positively whilst renouncing its methods.[92] This can be seen in the fact that, though formalist critics upheld their position into the 1950s – mainly gathered around the Milanese review *Il Diapason* – they often countered the realist position by arguing that their artistic results often held the moral high ground and made contact with what it truly meant to be human. Perhaps their most vocal advocate was Brunello Rondi, who in 1952 argued

the music of our time is the courageous, unselfish and above all correct and victorious liquidation of romantic subjectivism, and it is truly and profoundly the celebrated death of individualism … the access to morality, or at least to moral problems, is for me found in contemporary music, in how it is so often born from a human situation that seems to have such a strong moral commitment, a most

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[90] Zafred, 'Ragioni dell'Antiformalismo' in Zanetti, *La Italiana Muscia nel Novecento*, 1677-1678.
[91] Ibid., 1679.
[92] Additionally – and this demonstrates the inadequacies of the all-too-easy formalism/realism binary distinction complicated in Italy in this period – even traces of its 'method' can be seen in the music of Maderna, Berio and Nono: see Nöller, *Engagement und Form*, 87-92, who argues that choral/madrigal influences, serenade form and 'folk' texts all constitute 'real' factors in these composer's music of the early 1950s, a fact that clearly correlates with the Gramscian categories introduced below and the discussions of the 'background' clarity of this music in chapters 6 and 7.

full and rich expression, even if less 'happy' and 'pure' than certain free and vacuous romantic music.[93]

Thus Rondi demonstrated the subtle inflections of the issue: both sides believed in the 'human', but one side encapsulated this essence in the individual whilst the other in the collective. This explains the tendency of Roman Vlad, amongst others in the pages of *Il Diapason*, to leap upon anti-fascist works by 'formalist' composers (Wladimir Vogel's *Thyl Claes* and Schoenberg's *Survivor from Warsaw* for example) as the most truly profound answers to anti-formalism.

In Italy this distinction between collective and individualised humanity had particular efficacy against the usual anti-formalist arguments centring on 'dehumanisation'. This is amply illustrated by a surprisingly blunt article written by Luigi Dallapiccola in 1950 which acts as the composer's declaration against the realist camp. 'Musica Pianificata' ('Planned Music') attacked the Prague Resolution,[94] the declaration of many Soviet-friendly Europeans approving Zhdanov's decree in May 1948, and a document that followed from it a year later entitled 'Proposal of a Five-year plan for the Composers and Musicians of Czechoslovakia'.[95]

The timing of Dallapiccola's article is prescient; as Earle points out, it was the turning point in the relationship between Dallapiccola and the PCI.[96] Dallapiccola's archives contain five letters from the 'Associazione Italiana per i Rapporti con l'Unione Sovietica' (Association for the Italian-USSR Relationship) dating from the 1940s, a communist group who fostered solidarity between Russia and Italy; by the 19th April 1946 they were already asking Dallapiccola to join their organization, a request that intensified through 1947 as Dallapiccola's reputation grew. He seemed quite open to the idea, though he admitted that he was unsure of the 'doctrine' they were propagating.[97] But the 'Proposal of a Five-year plan' radically altered the composer's point of view, its Stalinist overtones drawing sharp criticism and a reaction to any form of musical 'planning'. In common with his

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[93] Rondi, '"Nuova Obbiettività" e Novità Umana nella Musica del Novecento', 6. See also, from a year later in the same journal, Rondi, 'Le Strade della Musica "Progressiva"'.

[94] Reprinted in Slonimsky, *Music Since 1900*, 711-12. See Carroll, *Music and Ideology in Cold War Europe*, 37-49.

[95] Dallapiccola, 'Musica Pianificata', *Il Ponte*, January 1950, 27-33.

[96] Earle, 'Dallapiccola and the Politics of Commitment: Re-reading *Il Prigioniero*', on-line, (accessed 18 Feb 2010), para. 8-11.

[97] Dallapiccola, autograph letter to the 'Associazione Italiana per i rapporti con l'Unione Sovietica', 4 May 1946, FLD.

contemporaries, he labelled this idea 'totalitarian' and compared it to the dictates of Mussolini.[98] He was repulsed by the compulsive and dogmatic tone of the Czech document – decrying the frequent use of the verb 'must' – and he reacted even more strongly to the idea that composition was for a collective, and therefore 'cannot be achieved by sitting at a table between four walls.'

> Four walls. Precisely. Here we reach the heart of the issue … The solitary man, between four walls, can himself become a dangerous subject. The solitary man, between four walls, can think. The saints had their greatest revelations in solitude. And the man who thinks is an individual, no longer a number in a collective: an individual with his own joys and sorrows. *Care* can be introduced through the keyhole and the 'critical' can be born in solitude.[99]

Dallapiccola had always held as fundamental the individual, subjective experience, and in 'Musica Pianificata', 'in the face of proposals for musical collectivisation, Dallapiccola insists on the indissolubly personal, necessarily solitary, nature of artistic creation'.[100] Moreover, he valued the skilled and specialist nature of musical competency, the highly developed state of musical language, echoing the position of Mila against Togliatti:

> it is obvious that without a minimum of preparation (I don't say technique, which would be asking too much; I say only aurality) no one can understand the music of Arnold Schoenberg or even the music of Joseph Haydn…. Furthermore, also the very possibility of comprehending the language of music depends on many factors, first above all *familiarity* with a given language.[101]

Dallapiccola's argument sits alongside that of Vlad, Mila and D'Amico as problematic to categorise in the real/formal dichotomy since it holds dear both compositional freedom and concern for humanity. Such a mix is typical of this period, a consequence of certain major external influences on the construction of the composer's role in Italian society.

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[98] Dallapiccola, 'Musica pianificata', *Il Ponte*, January 1950, 28.
[99] Ibid., 29.
[100] Earle, 'Dallapiccola and the Politics of Commitment: Re-reading *Il Prigioniero*', on-line, (accessed 18 Feb 2010), para. 10.
[101] Ibid., 31.

Musical composers: the influence of Sartre and Gramsci

Dallapiccola's thought on the relationship between art and humanity in 'Musica pianificata' is essentially Sartrean in its orientation, and in this he was not alone amongst Italian musicians. Jean-Paul Sartre, the doyen of post-war Parisian intellectuals, believed that 'a writer, addressing free men, has only one subject – freedom'; [102] and whilst writers and artists seldom develop the practical means to alter the course of political events, they fulfil a crucial societal role of *revealing* the truth about the world, displaying it to the public as an act of unmasking.[103] In doing so, they become *artistes engagé*, 'committed artists':

> The committed writer knows that words are action. He knows that to reveal is to change … the writer has chosen to reveal the world and particularly to reveal man to other men so that the latter may assume full responsibility before the object which has thus been laid bare …. The function of the writer is to act in such a way that nobody can be ignorant of the world and that nobody may say he is innocent of what it's all about.[104]

The contemporary writer, in Sartre's view, is a truth-teller even at its most horrific, and he was uniquely placed to articulate such a sentiment as a post-war writer. Sartre was, of course, an existentialist, raising the same paradox that faced Dallapiccola between an isolating theory of being and the urging of a collective spirit. Yet in circumscribing man as the centre of existence, existentialism simultaneously tears down any notion of transcendence, leaving the material reality of humanity as the only thing worth fighting for. In the classic Sartrean formulation, 'existence precedes essence': 'man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world – and defines himself afterwards'.[105] As Earle has pointed out, Sartre's reasoning was often fundamentally dialectical, and this can be seen in such syntheses as between individual freedom and collective responsibility, the autonomy

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[102] Sartre, *What is Literature?*, 48.

[103] In Sartre's prose the emphasis was almost always on the artists themselves, so it is worth noting the presence in Italy of a debate over the nature of 'il pubblico musica' ('the musical public') at this point, an argument centring on elitism amongst contemporary music listeners, the (non-Adornian) alienation of the 'new' music audience due to politicisation, the vacuous nature of musical criticism and the lack of 'authenticity' in modern music, all points raised in Dallapiccola, 'Interviste in Musica e Pubblico' (1949), FLD, LD.LV.52. See also Riccardo Malipiero, 'Le Public et la Musique', 24-26 from 1950.

[104] Ibid., 14-15.

[105] Sartre, 'Existentialism is a Humanism', 289.

of an artwork and its capacity to speak into the contemporary situation, and between the eternal nature of valuable man and his human frailty.[106]

Given his wariness towards a culturally proscriptive form of Marxism, it is not surprising that, according to David Caute, Sartre 'made plain his preference for the more flexible variety of communism which evolved in Italy under the guidance of Togliatti'.[107] And indeed by 1946 Sartre's work was becoming increasingly popular in Italy, mainly through the centre-left journal *Il Politecnico*.[108] Existentialism was enjoying a renewal of fortunes in philosophical discourse (Nicola Abbagnano's influential theory of 'positive existentialism' dates from 1948) and ideological commitment was, as Sergio Pacifici notes, a 'common assumption' in Italian literature of this era.[109] In the musical sphere, a major point of contact with Sartre was through René Leibowitz who, in championing twelve-note technique and tentatively welcoming the Prague Manifesto of 1948, displays a familiar theoretical synthesis. Leibowitz's influence on Italian music has already been discussed in Chapter 4. Slightly later in this period, his major attempt to synthesise artistic commitment and musical modernism came in *L'artiste et sa Conscience* ('The Artist and his Conscience'), a book written in 1950 with a preface by none other than Sartre.[110] Through the lens of Leibowitz's work, Sartrean commitment became a touchstone, a 'buzzword', and many Italian composers aspired to introduce political subjects and texts into the musical arena in a similar manner to Schoenberg, whose *A Survivor from Warsaw* was the paradigmatic subject of *L'artiste et sa Conscience* and increasingly held up as a model by Dallapiccola.[111]

And ranging wider than Leibowitz's sphere of influence, Guido Salvetti argues, 'the notion of commitment [*impegnare*] gained widespread consensus and above all achieved wide-ranging results. Commitment became the password that linked music, painting, literature and cinema'.[112] Togni wrote often of Sartre's influence on his contemporaries and set his prose in the Darmstadt-premièred *Tre studi per 'Morts sans sépulture' di J.P. Sartre*

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[106] Earle, 'Dallapiccola and the Politics of Commitment: Re-reading *Il Prigioniero*', on-line, (accessed 18 Feb 2010), para. 4.

[107] Caute, foreword to Sartre, *What is Literature?*, xx.

[108] See his article 'Una Nuova Cultura come Cultura Sintetica' (*Il Politecnico*, January 1946), and an interview (*Il Politecnico*, July/August 1946).

[109] Pacifici, 'From Engagement to Alienation: a Review of Contemporary Italian Literature', 244.

[110] Carroll, *Music and Ideology in Cold War Europe*, 116-128.

[111] Dallapiccola, *Dallapiccola on Opera*, 46. The work was very influential in Italy after its premiere at the 1950 Venice Biennale; see Restagno, *Nono*, 23. See also Verzina, 'Continuita Storica ed Esigenze Innovative', 8-12.

[112] Salvetti, 'Political ideologies and Musical poetics in 20th-Century Italy', 148.

of 1950;[113] Nono became a close friend of Sartre, connecting his thought closely to the engagement of *Intolleranza 1960,* and lauding Schoenberg's *A Survivor from Warsaw* in his 1960 Darmstadt lecture with a lengthy quote from 'What is Literature?';[114] Petrassi speaks of the influence of Albert Camus's *Les Juste*;[115] and Dallapiccola's debt to Sartre was immense, though he later admitted that he wasn't 'sympathetic' with all of Sartre's writings.[116]

It is clear, however, that many of these grandiose claims had a certain element of rhetoric to them. Sartre himself doubted whether it was possible for music to function as a counterpart to engaged literature:

> No, we do not want to 'commit' painting, sculpture and music 'too', or at least not in the same way. And why would we want to … as if at bottom there were only one art which expressed itself indifferently in one or the other of these languages, like the Spinozistic substance which is adequately reflected by each of its attributes.[117]

For Italian musicians devoted to Croce's aesthetics, with its emphasis on the essential unity of all artistic fields, this was an uncomfortable reality check, especially as Sartre maintained that Schoenberg's highly progressive music worked even further against the communication of his ethical motivations: 'Schoenberg is further removed from the workers than Mozart was from the peasants … his music says "permanent revolution" and the bourgeoisie hear "Evolution, Progress"'.[118] The tensions in the appropriation of Sartre in Italian musical circles are apparent, and they lead to an inevitable ambiguity in the process of translating political beliefs into musical sound. As Salvetti concludes, 'the ultimate guarantee of commitment lay in ones declared political allegiance', and for

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[113] Togni, *Carteggi e Scritti di Camillo Togni sul Novecento Italiana*, 207. Togni was at pains to view Sartre's work through the lens of Dallapiccola's 'religious humanism' (see Earle, 'The Politics of Commitment: Re-Reading Dallapiccola's *Il Prigioniero*', on-line, (accessed 18 Feb 2010), para. 3).

[114] Nono, 'Alcuni Precisazione su *Intolleranza 1960*' in *Scritti e Colloqui*, i, 101-3; 'Testo-Musica-Canto' in *Scritti e Colloqui*, i 64-5.

[115] Petrassi, *Scritti e Interviste*, 214, 235.

[116] Quoted in Togni, *Carteggi e Scritti di Camillo Togni sul Novecento Italiana*, 206. In fact the earliest and most formative importation of the rhetoric of *impegnare* into musical discourse was Fedele D'Amico's influential review of Dallapiccola's *Canti di Prigionia* on the eve of liberation in 1945, 'Canti di Prigionia', 97.

[117] Sartre, *What is Literature*?, 1. See Robinson, 'Sartre on Music', 451-7 for a discussion of Sartre's position on music and meaning.

[118] Sartre, preface to Leibowitz, *L'artiste et sa Conscience*, reprinted in *Situations*, 214. Adorno's critique of Schoenberg's *A Survivor From Warsaw* ('it implies, purposely or not, that even in so called extreme situations, indeed in them most of all, humanity flourishes') is pertinent here. Adorno, 'Commitment' in *Aesthetics and Politics*, 193.

composers such as Vlad, Togni, Dallapiccola and Petrassi, it is just this which is in doubt.[119]

The same cannot be said for Bruno Maderna and Luigi Nono in the early 50s, and to explain their musical and artistic self-conception, the work of Antonio Gramsci must be introduced. A prominent Italian activist and thinker before his death in 1937, Gramsci fundamentally revised Marxist thought after the failure of Italian socialism to oppose Mussolini in 1922, and reoriented communist doctrine along a radically different path that came to influence a generation of social theorists and revolutionaries on the left. During the ten years he spent imprisoned under fascism, Gramsci produced thirty three densely written notebooks from the isolation of his prison cell outlining his new theories for the implementation of socialism in Italy. Their publication at the end of the 40s, in the wake of the communist resurgence that shaped the next 50 years of Italian politics, was a defining moment in post-war Italian history.[120] Two concepts that feature heavily in Gramsci's thought are especially relevant to this discussion of a politically oriented music and – in the context of Maderna and Nono – a politically radical avant-garde: the interpretation of societal power structures in terms of *hegemony*, and the creation of the category of the *organic intellectual*.

According to Gramsci, Marx's diagnosis of capitalist exploitation did not fully take into account the working class's active part in their own domination. In the process of defining and creating power relations, a hegemonic structure had been set up that, through coercion and cultural manipulation, represses the proletariat and gives the bourgeoisie economic and societal leadership. Workers, in failing to produce their own internal cultural and social thought, struggle to forge links with the class of intellectuals who otherwise might articulate their aims. Fundamentally, Gramsci believed Lenin's Bolshevism ignored the cultural aspects of Marxism, and simply urged the workers to rise and destroy capitalism through economic and governmental revolution. He proposed a radical inversion of the base-superstructure binary that had characterised classical socialist thought: where previously the politico-economic sphere (base) was to be overthrown and the cultural sphere (superstructure) would follow, now superstructure was the route through which the

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[119] Salvetti, 'Political ideologies and Musical poetics in 20th-Century Italy', 148.
[120] Gramsci's letters (*Lettere dal Carcere*) were published by Opere in 1947, and his notebooks (*Quaderni del Carcere*) in successive volumes by Einaudi between 1948 and 1951.

proletariat could achieve hegemony, a hegemony that would precipitate a change at the base level. Thus Gramsci's theory valued gradual cultural shift over violent revolution.

Far from being a descriptive concept, hegemony is prescriptive: it gives a mandate to the socialist worker to be culturally and intellectually productive, to make contact with intellectuals and peasants and construct a new and powerful cultural bloc. The working class 'can only become the leading and dominant class to the extent that it succeeds in creating a system of class alliances which allows it to mobilize the majority of the working population against capitalism and the bourgeoisie state'.[121] As Steve Jones argues, 'a successful hegemonic group has to thoroughly recreate itself', and Gramsci argues that this is only achievable by raising up working class intellectuals:

> every leap forward towards a new breadth and complexity of the intellectual stratum is tied to an analogous movement on the part of the mass of the 'simple' who raise themselves to higher levels of culture and at the same time extend their circle of influence …[122]

Renewing artistic culture and placing socialist artists at the forefront of cultural development was crucial for Gramsci, who remarked that 'the absence of an artistic order … is connected to the absence of a moral and intellectual order, in other words the absence of an organic process of historical development'; in essence, Marxism would fail to be implemented without its most vociferous advocates gaining artistic hegemony.[123] Gramsci gives little indication of the shape his perfect culture would take, but hints that it would 'become a new way of feeling and seeing reality'.[124] He considered that this 'philosophy of praxis'

> consists precisely in asserting the moment of hegemony as essential to its conception of the state and to the 'accrediting' of the cultural fact, of cultural activity, of a cultural front as necessary alongside the merely economic and political ones.[125]

For this process to take place, however, Gramsci set about defining the other key concept in his 'Italianisation' of Marxist thought. In setting up an opposition between the traditional

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[121] Gramsci quoted in Jones, *Antonio Gramsci*, 45.
[122] Gramsci in Forgacs, *A Gramsci Reader*, 335.
[123] Gramsci, *Selections from Cultural Writings*, 103.
[124] Gramsci in Forgacs, *A Gramsci Reader*, 395.
[125] Ibid. 106.

bourgeoisie thinker – an elite figure who through his art aims to transcend politics and society – and the 'organic intellectual' – who rises from the proletariat and whose art is tied to popular consciousness – Gramsci was determined to re-inscribe the nature of the intellectual and her role in society, and thus lend a new kind of power to the class struggle:

> All men are intellectuals, one could therefore say: but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals … One of the most important characteristics of a group that is developing towards dominance is its struggle to assimilate and to conquer ideologically the traditional intellectuals, but this assimilation and conquest is made quicker and more efficacious the more the group in question succeeds in simultaneously elaborating its own organic intellectuals.[126]

This new type of thinker gives art over to the cause of political progress, moving away from elitism and finding within the human spirit a source of activism which by default must change the nature of their work:

> The logic of Gramsci's argument therefore points away from vanguardism and towards the development of a genuinely mass form of intellectual life… the organic intellectual must actively participate in practical life.[127]

The organic intellectual arises from the working classes, but uses culture as a means of forming hegemony in a manner more akin to that of the bourgeoisie intellectual. That this figure is comparable to Sartre's man of commitment has been noted by Bobbio:

> Gramsci proposed a solution to the profound and urgent need for political "commitment" (*impegno*) on the part of the man of culture by casting the connection between politics and culture in new terms. Culture no longer lay outside of the party, nor did it stand opposed to the party; it lay within the party and could be attained through the party, which operated as a "crucible for the unification of theory and practice".[128]

Such a vision did not fail to energise the cultural left in Italy in the late 40s, with the socialist writer and critic Elio Vittorini at the forefront through the publication of his short-lived journal *Il Politecnico*, and with prominent film-makers, artists and writers flocking to the PCI and participating in debates on Gramsci's renovations in the pages of *Rinascita* and *Società*.

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[126] Ibid., 304-5.
[127] Jones, *Antonio Gramsci*, 84-5.
[128] Bobbio, *Ideological profile of Twentieth-Century Italy*, 164.

The ideal candidates among Italian composers for Gramsci's doctrines were the young and impressionable Nono and his slightly older contemporary Maderna. Influenced by the left since their involvement with the anti-fascist partisans at the end of the war (see Chapter 1), both composers joined the PCI in 1952. Maderna's membership was fairly low-key, but Nono was an active campaigner, in 1963 running for a seat in the Chamber of Deputies (he lost).[129] But whilst both composer's works are often considered together with their socialism, its peculiarly Gramscian inflections are less frequently noted, even whilst this aspect is the most uniquely intriguing (and Italian) facet of their creative personalities.[130] It also helps to illuminate the most pressing question when considering Nono and Maderna's work: the emphasis they laid on the merging of a radical politics with the search for a high avant-garde technique: what will be termed their 'modernist-radical dialectic':

> The urgency of a new idealism, provoked by the *Resistenza*, was coupled with the search for adequate technical means and new possibilities, in electronic music as well. Ideological commitment went hand in hand with commitment to language. [Maderna's *Quattro Lettere*] is marked by the mutual interaction between its new and complex idealist content and the novel projection of musical concept and invention. There were only a few of us around Maderna at the time who spoke of total engagement, ideological as well as technical.[131]

Nono and Maderna saw their role within the Italian left as a struggle to produce within a socialist framework the most advanced and technically progressive work – in a word, to achieve *hegemony* in their respective field – and therefore to participate in the Gramscian imperative to 'invest all spheres of human activity with political meaning'.[132] They were aiming to show that socialism did not lead to backward thinking but in fact to the very forefront of musical research:

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[129] Durazzi, *Musical Poetics and Political Ideology in the work of Luigi Nono*, 32-33.

[130] Exceptions include Durazzi, *Musical Poetics and Political Ideology in the work of Luigi Nono*, 76, 79 and elsewhere; Nielinger,'The Song Unsung': Luigi Nono's *Il Canto Sospeso*', 94.

[131] Nono, 'Musica e Resistenza' in *Scritti e Colloqui*, i, 145.

[132] Durazzi, *Musical Poetics and Political Ideology in the work of Luigi Nono*, 3; Durazzi argues that Nono 'seems to have been attracted to the more abstract nature of Gramsci's political thought, with its definition of 'hegemony' in terms of prevailing ideologies rather than the wielding of coercive thought', a point that only strengthens the current, culturally specific, argument (ibid, 76). See de Carvalho, 'Towards Dialectic listening' in Davismoon, 'Luigi Nono: Fragments and Silence', 72-73 for an interpretation of Nono's relationship with the listener along Gramscian lines.

If Nono's aesthetic commitments made his modernism seems as necessary in the musical sphere as socialism seemed in the political and economic sphere, then his role as an intellectual was to write modern music about socialism.[133]

This put Nono in an oppositional relationship with realist trends precisely at a time when they were most contentious and polarising with respect to high-modernist formalism, and the attempt to transcend and override both categories is made plain by Ramazzotti:

> Nono, like many intellectuals on the left … saw that anti-formalism and the aesthetics of naturalism (in its inclination towards 'populism') risked the subalternity and passivity of the people, rather than contributing to the growth of their historical conscience … In the binary 'formalism-subjectivity' Nono recognised his 'mission' as a composer, one that shunned the idea of art as representing reality to express through his works the inseparable link between objective form and subjective content, so that the content reveals itself through form and the form displays its own content.[134]

One linking concept between serialism and socialism is that of *libertà* ('freedom'): interpreted literally, it implied a commitment to the oppressed working classes; interpreted figuratively and musically, it implied the loosening of the constraints of the classical gesture and of bourgeoisie tonal hierarchies and the invention of a neutral, 'non-hierarchical' musical system in the form of dodecaphony and pitch mutation. That these compositional methods could also be seen as antithetical to 'freedom' is a contradiction perhaps inherent within the nature of the dialectic, though Chapter 6 will show that it has an imaginative musical outworking. Luigi Rognoni (another committed communist musician who was later to work closely with Berio and Maderna) could therefore praise Honegger's *Giovanna d'Arca al Rogo* in *Il Politecnico* in 1946 by stating

> Above all, its value lies in its absolute freedom, liberated into the most vast instrumental possibilities, and loosed from whatever consonances and dissonances remained as a limiting remnant from the past … even these barriers are gradually falling apart thanks to the renewed conception of sound which demolishes every pre-existent definition … [135]

Maderna and Nono were also trying to play the part of the *organic intellectual*, who would give to the working class a new and unheard of music which they could truly call

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[133] Ibid., 68.

[134] Ramazzotti, *Luigi Nono*, 18-19.

[135] Quoted in Estero, 'Il Musicista-come-Intellettuale nel Secondo Novecento Italiana: tra Politica e Ideologia', 347.

their own, and become the artist-as-intellectual, as Estero puts it.[136] This did not exclude *a priori* the common, 'realist' tactics of musical message, and this is especially seen in the use of 'folklorisms' such as popular songs and dance rhythms. But under a Gramscian schema,

> Folklore becomes material that can be transformed and brought into a new aesthetic reality. This process is not far from the nexus of folklore research and cultural transformation in the sense propounded by Gramsci, at least it is closer than any attempt at a re-folklorisation of the national culture.[137]

As young composers, Nono and Maderna saw their work as fundamentally part of culture, not an opportunity to transcend it through the 'autonomous work'; they aimed to create what Gramsci called a 'national popular':

> Our reality is *existence* and *conscience*. As we *are* (and as we *construct*) society, so our music belongs to society, society in which we recognise ourselves; and we would like our music to contribute to an awakening in those around us of the same joy and security that pervades us.[138]

Through cultural renewal and a reversal of the base-superstructure relationship, Nono and Maderna would have felt themselves in the vanguard of the socialist struggle, and would have considered their roles as public intellectuals – organic and Sartean *impegnare*[139] – as crucial in refining the relationship between art and politics as a mutually beneficial one. As Nono later recalled, 'Gramsci's thought on the autonomy of confronting models was of great importance at the time'.[140]

That this modern-radical dialectic is atypical and peculiarly Italian is apparent, and certainly Gramsci's more subtle cultural formulations of the left produced a novel attitude to

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[136] Maderna and Nono were of course not from the working class: Nono's family was, in his words, 'media borghesia' (middle class), whilst Maderna's adopted guardian was a wealthy Vicenzian businesswoman who paid for a private education. Nono, *Scritti e Colloqui*, ii, 61; Dalmonte and Baroni ed. *Bruno Maderna: Documenti*, 7-36. Durazzi writes 'Nono's eligibility for the role [of organic intellectual] would seem questionable ... nonetheless, an aspiration to fulfil such a function was determinative for Nono's career.' Durazzi, *Musical Poetics and Political Ideology in the work of Luigi Nono*, 67.

[137] Nöller, *Engagement und Form*, 88.

[138] Nono, *Scritti e colloqui*, i, 421.

[139] In his Grove article on the composer Gianmario Borio brings these dual influences together when he attributes Nono's artistic thought to his 'exposure to the philosophical and political thought of Gramsci and Sartre', 'Nono' in *Grove Music On-line* (accessed 24 Aug. 2009).

[140] Quoted in Nielinger, 'The Song Unsung': Luigi Nono's *Il Canto Sospeso*', 96. Nielinger reports that 'Nono's library contains a large selection of Gramsci, including the first Einaudi edition of the prison letters and notebooks', 94; Ramazzotti notes also the influence on Nono of the neomarxist thinker György Lukács, *Luigi Nono*, 19.

realism and artistic style. This fact in part explains Nono's extraordinary entry into the PCI as early as 1952, a story which many find improbable:

> In 1952, when he decided to join the Italian communist party (PCI), [Nono] felt it necessary to inform his comrades that he wrote twelve-note music, "which in the socialist world was considered an expression of the worst bourgeois decadence" … "They responded that the party would take note of the problem, but that they could not resolve it for me, neither with prescriptions nor with any other form of interference in my work. The party preferred to influence the work of its artist members with open discussions rather than with regulations".[141]

Such flexibility may have been at odds with what many European and Italian communists would have considered the 'revolutionary spirit'; but it ensured that Maderna and Nono could write works in the 1950s that bridged the gap between Darmstadt and Moscow in a never-to-be repeated way, and demonstrate the unique and countervailing narrative of post-war Italian music.

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[141] Durazzi, *Musical Poetics and Political Ideology in the work of Luigi Nono*, 32.

<u>**Chapter 6:**</u>
<u>**Works of protest and commitment: the paradoxes of politicised music, 1948-1953**</u>

This chapter must start by bringing the historical locus of the thesis up to date. Moving into the late forties and early fifties, the multivalent and unstable arena of Italian political life shifted its focus from questions of rebuilding to those of governance and control. After the twenty-year dominance of the Fascist Party, it was crucial to determine where the dominant political loci would lie. The opposition inherent in the political landscape – that between radical left and centre-right – shaped the next 25 years of Italian society, and into the fifties it became apparent that it formed a bitter dividing point between Italian citizens who had suffered together under Mussolini. Indeed, the relative homogeneity of purpose that can be discerned in the immediate aftermath of the conflict was, according to Paul Ginsborg, built on a common anti-fascist sentiment that hid underlying ideological differences:

> [1945-1948] saw the gradual development on both a national and international level of two vast opposing fronts: the one having its focal points in the employed classes, the Christian Democrats and the United States; the other centred on the working-class movement, the communists and Russia. This conflict of interests and ideologies, at first masked in Italy by the continued cooperation of the anti-fascist parties, reached dramatic and decisive heights by the time of the spring elections of 1948.[1]

The elections Ginsborg refers to delivered a decisive majority to the centre-right Christian Democrats over the combined forces of the communist (PCI) and socialist (PSI) parties in April 1948. Italian voters had been panicked by the spectre of Soviet oppression in the February invasion of Czechoslovakia, and the Christian Democrats had effectively neutralised their socialist and communist political opponents in 1947 by removing them from the coalition and by mobilising the Catholic Church against the 'red peril'. The advent of Marshall Aid in 1948 also helped provide the economic stimulus that would orientate many Italians towards America's political agenda, and hence away from the left. From this point onwards, an irrevocable split occurred between the *ceto medi* (middle classes), the 'Americanised' proponents of capitalism, and the socialists that had believed the *resistenza* to be the dawn of a new era for a united left-wing government. An uneasy and unstable stalemate ensued, whilst for those on the left, the sense of betrayal of the ideals of Carlo

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[1] Ginsborg, *History of Contemporary Italy*, 72. See Mack-Smith, *Modern Italy: a Political History*, 417-434, for an account of the changing fortunes of the communist party in this period.

Roselli and Ferrucio Parri – and the loss of collective national unity forged by the corporate removal of the fascist government – was immense: it was felt that there had been a *rivoluzione interrotta*, an 'interrupted revolution'.[2]

Into this atmosphere of tense polarities, culture was a vital arena in which polemic could be given voice. The judgment of Torriglia, who argues that ''culture' constituted the place of a possible renegotiation between the personal and the public spheres … [and] represented a 'locus' where a new assemblage of the national identity could happen', has already been noted.[3] Having explored debates over the role of the composer and the function of the work in Chapter 5, this section turns to the musical products of this period that in some way or another make 'political statements'. Firstly three early pieces – by Casella, Zafred and Ghedini – will be briefly discussed under the rubric of 'tentative' steps towards a political art. None display a coherent set of processes by which the two zones of music and the social are synthesized, but together they all point towards an increasing moral consciousness amongst Italian musicians. Following this, as a kind of interlude, Dallapiccola's 1949-50 opera *Il Prigioniero* will be discussed; its interpretations as a political work are multiple, whether existential, *impegno* or religio-humanistic, and scholarship on the piece is recent, thorough and polemical enough to provide discursive material for commentary without venturing an in-depth analysis of the opera. Finally, as a kind of 'outcome', early political works by Maderna and Nono will lead to perhaps the most interesting questions concerning the relationship between concrete political action and the manipulation of compositional material. Throughout, the assumption is not that these works fit into some sort of teleological schema, or that all the composers involved were 'in' on a predetermined sequence of increasing political signification – though one of the desired end points will be to demonstrate how Luigi Nono's choral work *Il Canto Sospeso* (1955) is not the start of an era of Italian musical politicisation (as commonly held), but in fact marks the culmination of a lineage of similar (if less developed) works in the late 40s and early 50s. Rather, the music considered here is perhaps better seen as sustaining a mimetic relationship with a politically volatile society, encoding what Adorno call 'sedimented' meaning by virtue of being located inescapably within its own history.[4]

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[2] Nielinger, 'Between Memorial and Political Manifesto: Nono's Anti-Fascist Pieces, 1951-1966, 4.
[3] Torriglia, *Broken Time, Fragmented Space: a Cultural Map for Post-War Italy*, xi-xii.
[4] Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 163.

Chapter 6

Early post-war politicisation: Casella, Ghedini, and Zafred

The three works considered first are diverse: whilst one of their composers was a dying fascist, another was a militant communist and the third a reluctantly appropriated realist. But, taken together, they can demonstrate the beginnings of an aesthetic, as well as chart a development of means over time as the radical nature of these works increased.

Alfredo Casella's *Missa Solemnis 'Pro Pace'* of 1945 is the last piece by the leading Italian pre-war composer, the only one to be written after the fall of Fascism before his death in 1947. Composition commenced, as Casella was anxious to remind readers in numerous essays, on the 4th of June 1944 – the day of Rome's liberation from the German forces – and the work was premièred at the 1945 International Festival in Rome, a prominent display of the 'reconstruction' effort.[5] So the music, even before any details are considered, was set up to make a political statement, especially given the prominent appendage 'for peace' in its title. A typical reading of this Mass casts it as a 'work of response to the horrors of the Second World War and the wasting illness from which he had been suffering since the early 40s'.[6] As Fedele D'Amico notes, the battle against cancer did indeed constitute an alternative 'war' in which Casella was praying for peace.[7] Yet it is difficult to know in what way the music acts as plea for Italian peace in the midst of occupation in 1944-5; there is no more than the title to go on in this regard (thought that is important), no added text to the ordinary Latin of the mass, no musical quotations, and, as Casella himself recognized, no serious deviation from the standard emotional gestures and musical form of a Catholic Mass. So the *Missa* needs to be interpreted as a highly individualistic statement on the part of Casella which has political implications, not as a directly 'political' work. It can be read as a confessional work in which the conscience of Casella is laid bare; music which attempts to bring the suppressed memory of the war years (the ambivalent attitude to fascist oppression, the cosy relationship Casella enjoyed with the Fascist hierarchy, the years of fear regarding his half-Jewish wife in the early 40s) to the surface in order to expiate the circumstance of his past. The most cogent interpreter of this

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[5] See Casella, 'Della mia Missa' 22-25. This is a familiar trope in the post-war period: Dallapiccola likewise was prone to link historical occurrences with the start of composition, most famously in beginning the *Canti di Prigionia* on the day Mussolini announced the race laws in 1938 (see Shackelford, *Dallapiccola on Opera*, 45), whilst Malipiero linked the day the Germans invaded Venice in September 1943 with his third symphony (see Waterhouse, *Gian Francesco Malipiero*, 230).

[6] Bradford Robinson, introduction to the score of the *Missa Solemnis 'Pro Pace'*, 2.

[7] D'Amico, 'Sulla "Messa" di Casella', 133.

aspect of the *Missa* was Fedele D'Amico, its dedicatee, whose thoughts in an article dating from 1952 are worth quoting at length:

> In coming into contact with a religious text – indeed the highest religious text – the state and health of his soul seems to be his most solemn motivation ... for him, as for all of us, the actuality of the approaching 'memento mori' was enough of a stimulus to separate in his soul the true from the false, the necessary from the superfluous, and to lay out, without hiding anything, his own balance sheet … That which, in religious terms, has the appearance of a balance sheet and an examination of conscience, translates naturally in the score of this mass into a stylistic confession.[8]

How orthodox this 'turn to religion' was could be debated: D'Amico admits that one of Casella's motivations for composition was that a Mass was 'lacking from his catalogue';[9] and the composer himself seemed to see the 'conversion' experience as just one of the hallmarks of the romantic artist's passage through life:

> I do not know who said once that, in the life of every artist, there arrives a moment where it is necessary for him to offer at least a part of himself to God. And so has evidently happened in this work, in which the maturity of an artist and his vast sum of musical knowledge simultaneously converge into a unique attitude of humility and of faith towards the creator.[10]

Given Casella's espousal of his 'vast sum of musical knowledge', it is perhaps surprising that he considers this work to be marked by a sense of humility; yet it is there, in the dialectic between the tortuous realities that surrounded the composer in 1944 and the serenity which he sought. Such is clear in the opening bars of the work. Here the low D minor string ascent through chromatic appoggiaturas seems to set a dark and forbidding tone for the 'Kyrie', culminating in the melodramatic military rhythms of the strings when they reach the upper A. However this note suddenly precipitates an imperfect major cadence in which, subito *p*, a trill commences on A-B♮ and a dolce melody in the trombone on A maj$_6$ prefigures the unexpected entrance (on a weak beat) of a serene flute melody:

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[8] Ibid., 134-136.
[9] D'Amico, 'Sulla "Messa" di Casella', 133
[10] Casella, 'Della mia Missa', 26.

Ex. 6. 1: Bars 1-8 of Casella, *Missa Solemnis 'Pro Pace'*

This sort of radical emotional juxtaposition is a sign of Casella's intention to write music that explores the tragic and the peaceful: testimonial, confessional music. But, as Example 6. 2 shows, the climax of the Kyrie sees some of the most joyful music Casella had ever written: trumpet fanfares and a shimmering *fff* D major tutti; a peculiar way to set 'Lord have mercy'. Here it is clear Casella sees repentance as vindication and rebirth, but has not quite grasped how to express without sounding brazen and defiant.

Ex. 6. 2: Figure 10 of Casella, *Missa Solemnis 'Pro Pace'*.

Throughout the 'Kyrie' and the 'Gloria' Casella is wrestling with the moral weight of the text, and his breaking point comes in the 'Crucifixus'. In the manner of Bach before him (the *B Minor Mass*), this section is a passacaglia, and Casella chooses as his ground bass a twelve-note row:

Ex. 6. 3: Figure 12 of Casella, *Missa Solemnis 'Pro Pace'*

Whilst still rotating around F minor, this music resides on the chromatic limits of Casella's style, as the lines frequently overlap to produce harmonic aggregates of up to eight notes. The composer remarked that the *Missa*, and in particular the 'Crucifixus' text, required 'a profoundly tragic atmosphere, and it is worthy of a very free sonorous language that is nevertheless profoundly tonal'; and this equation between the 'extension' of compositional language and the urge to musical meaning ('linguistic daring equals moral contrition', in the words of Salvetti) will be encountered increasingly in other works considered in this chapter.[11]

The second work to be considered under the rubric of an 'early political work' is the *Concerto Funebre per Duccio Galimberti* by Ghedini (1948). Written as a memorial for the famed *resistenza* fighter Tancredi Duccio Galimberti, this work for tenor, bass, trombone, timpani and strings was written as Ghedini enjoyed more prominence than at any other point in his career. In the post-war musical climate, few established Italian musicians were suitable for the causes of communism until Maderna and Nono became prominent in the early 1950s: Petrassi and Dallapiccola were seen as too elitist and close to 'the academy'; older composers such as Pizzetti and Malipiero had rejected socialism when it had first appeared; whereas the young dodecaphonists were often aligned with western trends. But Andrea Estero has recently argued that, in the pages of the PCI organ *Rinascita*, Ghedini's music was for a season held up as a model for an Italian realism: 'Ghedini was the composer for *Rinascita* to support "unconditionally and without reserve", and the composer to whom was suggested … greater caution on the formalist front.[12] The grounds for this view were, according to Estero, part of an historical argument: Ghedini did not come with the baggage of bourgeois artisanship, for he had not taken part in the pre-war period in the 'series of tendencies, schools, and styles which moved further and further apart from one another';[13] rather, he had composed out of a 'free sentimental expression', not weighed down by the 'burden of linguistic and experimental research', which was labelled as 'intellectualistic' by the communist cultural apparatchiks.[14] Sergio Lauricella wrote in 1946 that

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[11] Casella, 'Della mia Missa', 23; Salvetti, 'I Compositori tra "Techniche" ed "Estetiche"', in Salvetti and Antolini eds. *Italia Millenovecentocinquanta*, 262.
[12] Estero, 'Il Musicista-come-Intellettuale nel Secondo Novecento Italiana: tra Politica e Ideologia', 343
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid., 344.

in his humanity, and by this I mean his free spiritual and sentimental expression, emptied from aesthetisms and intellectualistic schemes but simultaneously aware of his cultural function … in this very humanity, in this simplicity of feelings and expression, lies the best quality of the latest works of Ghedini.[15]

Considered within the context of the hotly contested realist/formalist binary seen in Chapter 5, it is clear Ghedini was being used as an example of the 'subjective' composer who could speak directly to the emotions of the musical public and could convey an ideological message. If, as Ghedini's biographer asserts, any 'interest in politics was always extraneous to his [musical] orientation' it would seem that this appropriation of his work by communist journalists was a matter of historical circumstance, not an intentional move on the part of the composer.[16] Yet Ghedini's music was considered appropriate for this cause for a reason, and as both Estero and Parise note, the *Concerto Funebre per Duccio Galimberti* seemed the work most ideally suited to this purpose. [17]

The connection in this 1948 Concerto with the *resistenza*, and with one of the most famed and beloved freedom-fighters of the left, is a powerfully symbolic one. Like Casella's *Missa*, the title is used to form an association with a sentiment rather than using a political text or a musical quotation to give a specific 'meaning'; however, Ghedini's extension to Casella lies in a choice of texts (taken from the book of Isaiah and the 'Ufficio dei defunti' of the Catholic death rites) which, more than those of a normal mass, display a 'protestatory' tone that can be taken as aimed against the martyrdom of Galimberti. The music also differs from Casella's mass in several of its 'realist' features and its conventional and comprehensible musical language, unsentimental but stirring. The judgment of Fenoglio and Pugliaro that the Ghedini's work is a case of 'neoromantic withdrawal' is perhaps too strong, but the piece certainly forms musical shapes that are based on local-consonance prolongation and resolution, with predominating pitch centres and the overall harmonic motion directed by voice leading.[18] The opening (Example 6. 4) demonstrates the musical results of such post-tonal thinking: severe sounding string block chords whose ultimate logic is determined by an upwards voice-leading in the outer extremities of the part-writing that returns cyclically to a C centre, and whose hard tone is supplied by the frequent

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[15] Lauricella, quoted in Estero, 'Il Musicista-come-Intellettuale nel Secondo Novecento Italiana: tra Politica e Ideologia', 344.

[16] Parise, *Giorgio Federico Ghedini: l'Uomo, le Opere attraverso le Lettere*, 10.

[17] Ibid., see also Estero, 'Il Musicista-come-Intellettuale nel Secondo Novecento Italiana: tra Politica e Ideologia', 343.

[18] Fenoglio and Pugliaro, *Progetto Ghedini*, 6.

addition of major seconds. Aside from these technical features, Ghedini's 'ear' seems to be the major carrier of expressive intent – as the realists would have condoned – and the impact of the music is felt in the tension between what could be termed the 'hardness' of some chords (marked with a +) and the 'sweetness' of others (marked with a *). In particular, added-note chords are a major feature of Ghedini's writing throughout (for example, bars 6-10 of movement IV, and the whole of the introduction to movement II), and are the predominant way he enriches his tonal language and sets up the scope for the timbral combinations which emerge from imaginative chord spelling.

Ex. 6. 4: Bars 1-12 of Ghedini, *Concerto Funebre per Duccio Galimberti*, movt. I

If Ghedini's approach to the work seems to be a through-composed expression of the text – and therefore lacks the 'intellectualisms' and 'materiality' that would have marked it out as formalistic – then there is still a place for pre-compositional determination. Indeed this only adds to the realism of the piece, for it comes in the shape of established musical conventions and easily accessible forms, such as the heavy dependence on canons and imitative writing (the entirety of movement III is a series of canons), or the use of monody in movement IV.[19] Often, such devices are a vehicle to ensure extreme dissonance is contained and accessible:

Ex. 6. 5: Bars 95-100 of Ghedini, *Concerto Funebre per Duccio Galimberti*, movt. III

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[19] Another obvious reference to 'tradition' is that the work is conceived of as a concerto; yet here, Ghedini is perhaps using the term loosely. Between 1943 and 1953, Ghedini wrote eight works with the phrase in the titles, and whilst some are clearly in a classical concerto form, others (such as this present work) are patently not oppositional/virtuosic music but rather aligned towards communality and integration.

The moment of apotheosis in the *Concerto dell'Albatro* of 1945 had been the striking entry of the speaker towards the end of the work above shimmering string chords; a similarly arresting event occurs in the last vocal section of the *Concerto Funebre*:

Ex. 6. 6: Bars 14-26 of Ghedini, *Concerto Funebre per Duccio Galimberti*, movt. IV

Until bar 16, the predominant gesture has been the confident declaration of eternal life from the tenor, accompanied by added-note chords in the strings centring on A major. As the Bass tails away, the harmony is released from its A major centre (bar 17) and through a dense chromatic alteration in bar 18 arrives onto a climactic E minor. Slowly, 'parlato con terrore ('speaking, with terror'), the voice changes to that of the Tenor, intoning the words 'I am the resurrection and the life' with hesitancy, each phrase followed in the score by a long pause, a dramatic tremolando, and the unconventional symbols [?!].

Why Ghedini chose to include such a vulnerable 'moment of doubt' in this work – in what some might consider a rather unsubtle fashion, and with a non-aural element – is unclear. What this moment does illustrate is the complexity of this recourse to spirituality and how, far from endorsing institutional faith, religion is a tool of expression used at Ghedini's whim. He had, paradoxically, become a materialist composer working with metaphysical materials. Again this fact cannot be separated from the politicized nature of post-war art music in Italy; the April 1948 victory for the Christian Democrats against the communists in the national elections led to the excommunication of all those on the far left from the Catholic church by Pope Pius XII in 1949.[20] This left many 'committed' Italian composers in an awkward position, as Salvetti notes:

> The *Concerto Funebre per Duccio Galimberti* of 1948 is an extraordinary example of an aesthetic of moral testimony … in such things it is particularly difficult to define the boundary lines in the musical world of Italian musicians between the moral disturbance left by the war and the choice of the establishment and the possibilities contained within the consolidation of the Catholic regime after the 18th April 1948.[21]

The end of Ghedini's concerto demonstrates that religion provided a useful arena for artistic expression in the post war years not in a reversion to dogma but as a highly symbolic realm in which to voice doubts and existential questioning. Like Casella, a 'crisis of faith' expressed with religious symbols was a pertinent way to articulate a protest against war and tyranny; as shall be seen below, Dallapiccola also felt the same motivation.[22]

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[20] Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy*, 116-7.
[21] Salvetti, 'I Compositori tra "Techniche" ed "Estetiche"', in Salvetti and Antolini eds. *Italia Millenovecentocinquanta*, 262.
[22] Another contemporary example of a religious work which ends with a 'crisis' moment of doubt is Ildebrando Pizzetti's *Ifigenia* of 1950, where in the finale the bass voice chants 'clearly but quietly' the words 'Centuries and millennia pass and the blood of the innocent still drips from the hour of war. Why, Lord do you permit it?' and then, in a long peroration on the *Donna Nobis Pacem*, the choir echo 'Why?', 'Warum?', 'Pourquoi?', 'Porque?'. See Salvetti, ibid., 263.

The last composer to be considered in this section found no such inspiration in Catholicism; his militant communism would never have allowed it. Mario Zafred, wrote a number of pieces with a political subtext – amongst them, the *Canti di Novembre* on texts by Montale from 1944 and the *Canto della Pace* for viola and orchestra of 1951 stand out – but the most well known is the *Sinfonia No.4 'In onore della Resistenza'* from 1950. On the surface, Zafred's fourth symphony offers none of the interpretative difficulty found in Casella or Ghedini: it is the Italian version of a classic socialist realism, using the most heroic of genres (Zafred would write a further six works in symphonic form) as a celebration of revolution and the spirit of *resistenza* bravery. As one commentator wrote at the time, Zafred's music favours

> an unashamedly popular sensibility, which brings clear accessibility to the music … it offers comfort, repose and recreation, and does not therefore require special strength of comprehension. A sane and robustly 'popular' music (not 'vulgar'), not too far distant from the national melos of the common heritage, and not concerned with (or embroiled in) formalistic speculation.'[23]

The motivation behind Zafred's infamous call to 'antiformalism' have been discussed in Chapter 6. Musically, this formulation works itself out in the *Sinfonia No.4* in three major ways, even when confining comment to the bombastic finale. Firstly, this movement is an 'heroic' paean to military glory, which transforms the ambiguities and horror of what was a bitter partisan war. The music is full of fanfares (for example, at figure 'C' in the brass), question-answer phrases, short fiery percussive themes (see Example 6. 8) and other militarisms. From the opening horn melody, joined by the remaining brass and then the strings, the idea of collective imitation is represented by the insistent use of canons, which are mainly divided into generic instrumental groupings. As Virgilio Bernadoni notes, Zafred's style is 'rooted in counterpoint', and the entry of each new theme is always reinforced by this device.[24] Formalism – 'the most subtle and persistent enemy of art today', in the composer's words – gives way to a thoroughly expressive vein of freely determined neoromanticism.[25] The *resistenza* is thus 'honoured' with no shadow of doubt, exculpating the communist fighters as true victors and thus subscribing heavily to the '*resistenza* myth'

[23] Giulio Viozzi, quoted in Zanetti, *La Musica Italiana nel Novecento*, 1390.
[24] Bernadoni, 'Zafred, Mario' in *Grove Music On-line* (accessed 21 Sep. 2009).
[25] Zafred, 'Ragioni dell'Antiformalismo', 1678.

prevalent on the left. To a formalist like Brunello Rondi, Zafred's motivations and choice of method were fundamentally at loggerheads:

> Moments of calm contemplation and of profound commotion have struck me in this symphony, moments which know how to penetrate the profound religious significance of the partisan *resistenza*, a sublime moment of our history. Such moments cannot surely tolerate a superficial delineation of propaganda or a rash heroicism without a fresh new accent. The generous energy with which the symphony is loaded, its violent dialectic, the burning urge of its biting brass at the bottom, in my opinion, surely does not seem the right type of rhetoric.[26]

Secondly, the 'realist' mode is encountered in what D'Amico labelled the 'absolute thematicism' of the work; the way in which the structure is permeated by repeated melodic groups to the exclusion of all other material.[27] Example 6. 7 shows the main themes with their distribution:

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[26] Rondi, 'Le Strade della Musica "Progressiva"', 8.
[27] D'Amico, quoted in Bernadoni, 'Zafred, Mario' in *Grove Music On-line* (accessed 21 Sep 2009).

Main themes:

Distribution of themes:
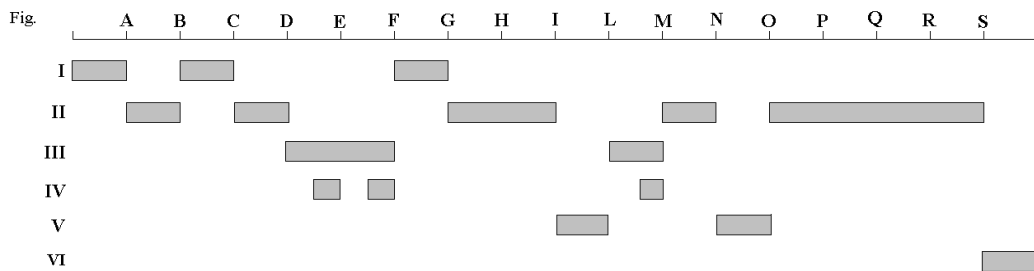
Ex. 6. 7: Thematic structure of Zafred, *Sinfonia No.4 'In onore della Resistenza'*, movt. IV

Though there is an obvious distortion of sectional duration on this diagram, the patterns of question-answer pairings that emerge – together with the strikingly regular changeover between themes – reveal that the movement has a high level of structural definition, and results in the creation of large-scale thematic areas. Fundamentally, the aesthetic is a kind of gregarious, enlarged exaltation of the symphonic principle (though it exhibits few elements of sonata form); Roman Vlad wrote of 'the dialectical tension which animates from inside the symphonic edifice, mainly produced by the differentiation of emphasis on the various themes.[28] In 'Ragioni dell'Antiformalismo' Zafred had spoke of the 'contact with the real' in terms of subjectivism and accessible musical material, and thematicism is perhaps the ultimately comprehensible construct, giving the listener a sense of musical narrative and communicating emotions with clarity. However, it should be acknowledged that the *Sinfonia* does have its progressive edge in local harmonic colorations, and as Vlad notes the

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[28] Vlad, quoted in Zanetti, *La Musica Italiana nel Novecento*, 1391.

influence of Bartók, in whose music 'the single sounds of a melodic line are illuminated from diverse harmonic points of view'.[29] Indeed the climactic end of the work (Example 6. 9), though rooted in E major, reaches its upwards goal through repeated octatonic scales.

The last 'realist' move Zafred made was to heed the Prague Declaration made in 1948 and include a reference to 'deep and genuine folk art' (and Soviet at that) in his work.[30] In concluding his *Sinfonia* with a majestic and vindicating quotation of 'Katyusha' or, in its Italian version, 'Fischia il Vento' (see Example 6. 8), a Russian folk song that became extremely popular with the communist anti-fascists in North Italy during the *resistenza*, Zafred became the first of many post-war Italian composers to use political song. In paving the way for this trend, a perhaps even subtler change has occurred from Casella and Ghedini: the power of music itself to encode societal concerns and to provide a framework for response to global situations, rather than relying on external, hinted notions of 'peace' (Casella) and 'doubt' (Ghedini), now turned to more concrete and radical ways of voicing its message.

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[29] Ibid.

[30] 'Declaration of the Second International Congress of Composers and Musicologists in Prague, 29th May 1949' in Slonimsky, *Music Since 1900*, 712.

Ex. 6. 8: Figure 'S' to the end, Zafred, *Sinfonia No.4 'In onore della Resistenza'*, movt. IV

Interlude: Dallapiccola's *Il Prigioniero*

Before turning to later developments – both theoretical and musical – in Italian political music in the post-war period, it is useful to consider Dallapiccola's 1949-50 one-act opera *Il Prigioniero* as an 'alternative politicisation' from the works of Casella, Ghedini and Zafred already considered and the music of Maderna and Nono to follow. That said, as a work it thoroughly resists that kind of glib simplification; in fact it is a uniquely ambiguous and hotly contested piece of musical theatre within the gamut of Italian twentieth century art, perhaps due to its role as the only Italian opera to have really entered the repertory since Puccini's *Turandot* in 1924. The precise political statement that the composer intended to make through its composition is clouded by many contrasting contextual issues surrounding its genesis, and by the contingency of Dallapiccola's statements on his own music (a contingency already encountered in Chapter 2). These controversies, alongside an exhaustive consideration of the philosophical and musical questions raised by the work, have been recently dealt with in a 2007 article by Ben Earle.[31]

 Il Prigioniero (The Prisoner) is a theatrically simple work with a deceptively simple plot.[32] Set 'in the second half of the sixteenth century', according to the score, and very obviously during the Spanish inquisition, the main narrative action (after an angst-ridden prologue from 'Il Madre', the mother) begins 'in a horrible subterranean cell' where a prisoner is incarcerated. In the second scene, the Jailer enters and reassures him with a cry of 'Fratello' ('brother) – one of the major leitmotifs – giving hope of pending release. As he leaves, the Prisoner notices that he has left the door unlocked behind him and, with trepidation, opens it to escape into a dark and haunting corridor. Evading two 'fra redemptor', he creeps along the passage in the third scene before emerging in the final scene into the open air. Exuberant, imagining the Jailer has let him walk free, and uttering Alleluias to God, he stretches his arms out in love towards a 'great cedar tree'; but in an operatic coup-de-grâce that has become legendary, these arms are met by those of the Grand Inquisitor (sung by the same actor as the Jailer), who utters the words 'Upon the threshold

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[31] Earle, 'Dallapiccola and the Politics of Commitment: Re-reading *Il Prigioniero*', on-line, (accessed 18 Feb 2010).

[32] Mila, in an important article from 1950 on the opera, ventured that Dallapiccola 'had in mind a form of theatrical oratorio, where the physical presence of the actors and the end result of the staging is a cumbersome addition, and all the dramatic substance of the action is given to the music'. Mila, '"Il Prigioniero" di Luigi Dallapiccola", 311.

of your salvation, why should you be so ungrateful and want to leave us?' before leading the prisoner, confusedly whispering 'la libertà?' under his breath, meekly to the stake.[33]

The drama of *Il Prigioniero* is certainly harrowing, not least in its attempt to synthesise a psychological 'torture by hope'. But whether it fits neatly into the mould of *musica impegno* is another matter. As Earle notes, on the surface its main gestures are towards the fin-de siècle world of Schoenberg's expressionism, Victorian Gothic literature and the absurdist world of Kafka's Joseph K;[34] and it is hard to reconcile any of these with the Platonistic, liberating optimism of Sartre, throwing off the chains of oppression, nor to identify precisely how the opera protests against totalitarianism and war – even given its common interpretation, together with the *Canti di Prigionia* and the *Canti di Liberazione*, as a work of 'protest music' (see Chapter 2). Dallapiccola is theoretically closest to Sartre if *Il Prigioniero* is considered as 'an act of unmasking', a truth-telling work even at its most horrific. Yet there are unanswered questions surrounding the opera's ideology: as Earle points outs, Dallapiccola's repeated plea for the apoliticism of the artist is in direct contradiction with Sartre's position.[35] Added to this, in changing the identity of the protagonist Rabbi Aser Abarbanel (in P.A. Villiers de l'Isle-Adam's short story on which the opera is based) simply to 'the prisoner', Dallapiccola may have wanted the sort of reaction he got from the sympathetic composer Roman Vlad, for whom it 'gave the work a most universal significance',[36] but the plan backfired: both the Catholic church and senior members of the Italian communist party (usually on opposite ideological ends of the spectrum) were outraged by the opera, seeing it as an attack on Spanish Catholicism and Stalin respectively.[37] Dallapiccola, who had been courted as a potential socialist composer in the late 40s after the success of the *Canti di Prigionia*, had by the mid-fifties become a musical figurehead in Italy for the cause of the right-wing Congress for Cultural Freedom

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[33] For a more substantial summary of the plot, see Samuel, *Music, text, and drama in Dallapiccola's 'Il Prigioniero'*, PhD diss.

[34] Earle, 'Dallapiccola and the Politics of Commitment: Re-reading *Il Prigioniero*', on-line, (accessed 18 Feb 2010), para. 69,70 and 80.

[35] Ibid., para. 44.

[36] Vlad, *Modernità e Tradizione nella Musica Contemporanea*, 212.

[37] Earle, 'Dallapiccola and the Politics of Commitment: re-reading *Il Prigioniero*', on-line, (accessed 18 Feb 2010), para. 7, 40.

(on whose committees he sat in connection with the 1954 festival *La Musica nel XX Secolo* in Rome).[38]

The tragic and hope-denying end to the opera causes problems for a reading of the work as a vindication of the principles of liberty: Mila tendentiously argued that Dallapiccola restored *Il Prigioniero's* historic context 'to its epic and heroic sense and reconnected it to the recent values of the resistance and of the war of liberation,[39] whilst Arblaster breezily states that 'the [Protestant] revolt of the Netherlands was, after all, successful, just as Italian Fascism was also defeated in the end';[40] but, as Earle observes, the Prisoner has no chance of witnessing such potential 'happy endings' as he walks to his execution and the final curtain falls.

So clearly critics such as Claudio Annibaldi have too easily conflated the Dallapiccolian vein of 'protest music' with Sartre's thought, using the term 'musica impegnare' as a catch-all term.[41] Yet Dallapiccola *is* trying to wrestle with post-war angst, and the links that he is so keen to establish between music and the cry of the oppressed are audible in *Il Prigioniero*. As Massimo Mila wrote at the time, he is a reluctantly political composer:

> Dallapiccola doesn't boast of political battle lines and does not put his art at the service of any ideology; but his participation in the bringing about of civilization permeates to the very deepest layers of his personality, and makes him an artist *engagé malgré lui* [engaged in spite of himself], which is the only valid way to be artistically committed.[42]

A more nuanced interpretation of the opera is therefore necessary, and it seems apparent that the reformulation of *musique engagé* in Dallapiccola's opera is the attempt to answer the basic questions of life and art in *religious* terms. This is antithetical to Sartrean existentialism, and so it seems prescient to propose a different frame of reference: that of Søren Kierkegaard, who (unlike Sartre) found a way of reconciling what he termed 'a leap of faith' with an existentialism that reconfigures philosophy around the basic premise of the

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[38] See chapter 5 for Dallapiccola's relationship in the 1940s with the PCI; on the Rome festival of 1954, see Carroll, *Music and Ideology in Cold War Europe*, 166-171, Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper?: The CIA and the Cultural Cold War*, 102-3.
[39] Mila, '"Il Prigioniero" di Luigi Dallapiccola", 304.
[40] Arblaster, *Viva La Liberta!: Politics in Opera*, 281.
[41] Annibaldi, 'Dallapiccola e l'Avanguardia "Impegnata"' in Gatti, *L'Opere di Luigi Dallapiccola*: *Quaderni della Rassegna Musicale*, 79-89.
[42] Mila, '"Il Prigioniero" di Luigi Dallapiccola", 303.

inviolate fact of man's existence. Kierkegaard's conception of doubt – of one's morals, of right and wrong – is a component part of true belief, the rational sense which is synthesised with the subjective moment of faith: 'it is faith which had brought doubt into the world'.[43] And as Vlad observed, this concept is heavily present in *Il Prigioniero*:

> The Prisoner instead meets his death with the most atrocious doubt that can torment the soul: death now appears not as an extreme act of liberation, but as a total and definitive annihilation of existence and therefore of human being. And it is only from this doubt, whose temptations are not spared even to the saints and which is the most profound of human motives, that a sense of the substantial and ineluctable tragedy of the human condition is born.[44]

The pinnacle of this doubt comes at the end: 'the conclusion is clearly meant to be "undecidable", according to Earle, drawing attention to the composer's statement that 'doubt has entered the opera house'.[45] Dallapiccola himself later acknowledged that 'some saw a complete negation of life and its values' in the ambiguity of the opera's ending.[46] Yet for Kierkegaard life was not the ultimate good and death/suffering the ultimate evil; instead, he famously spoke of the 'Sickness unto Death', the sense of despair which evolves from the placing of self-identity anywhere else apart from in God:

> there is in death infinitely much more hope than merely humanly speaking there is when there not only is life but this life exhibits the fullest health and vigour ... not even death is the sickness unto death, still less everything which is called earthly and temporal suffering: want, sickness, wretchedness, affliction, adversities, torments, mental sufferings, sorrow, grief.[47]

Such religious existentialism is embedded at an even deeper-than-contextual level in *Il Prigioniero*. As much can be seen in the way Dallapiccola so effectively dramatises an existential form of prayer in his musical narrative. It is important enough to Dallapiccola that he gives it his own row (Example 6. 9), which is then connected to the 'terror chords' that open the work and recur with frequency in the prologue.[48] Thus these chords

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[43] Kierkegaard, *Papers and Journals: a Selection*, 166.
[44] Vlad, *Modernità e Tradizione nella Musica Contemporanea*, 214-5.
[45] Earle, 'Dallapiccola and the Politics of Commitment: Re-reading *Il Prigioniero*', on-line, (accessed 18 Feb 2010), para. 64.
[46] Dallapiccola, 'What is the Answer to the Prisoner?', 27.
[47] Kierkegaard, *The Sickness unto Death*, 144-5.
[48] Fearn, *The Music of Luigi Dallapiccola*, 118-121. This label 'terror chords' is Fearn's, and given their heavy chromaticism and agitated rhythms, it seems appropriate.

simultaneously 'speak' prayer and terror, faith and lack of faith, a thoroughly Kierkegaardian duality:

Ex. 6. 9: Bars 1-4 and the 'prayer row', Dallapiccola, *Il Prigioniero*

After the prologue, on the two occasions where the prisoner prays for safety (using, of course, the prayer row) the 'terror chords' echo in the background:

Ex. 6. 10: Bars 255-6 and 645-5, Dallapiccola, *Il Prigioniero*

At the high point of the opera, as the prisoner emerges (praying) into the cool air of freedom, the chords do not simply echo but resound out *ff*, further reinforcing the tension between hope and despair (Example 6. 11). From this moment on – and this is the most chilling gesture of all – the opera draws to its conclusion with the prisoner led to the stake by the Grand Inquisitor, as the chorus softly undergird the texture with a quotation from the 'Preghiere di Maria Stuarda' (the first of the *Canti di Prigionia*), the prayer of one condemned to die. A self-referential symbolic realm has been entered, and Dallapiccola has

created a powerful synthesis of text and music that dramatises hope and despair, death and life.

Ex. 6. 11: Bars 792-6, Dallapiccola, *Il Prigioniero*

A new musical 'hegemony': Nono and Maderna's early political works

So metaphysical existentialism was Dallapiccola's highly reified answer to the horrors of the Second World War; yet others sought to voice protest in more materialist a fashion. As Chapter 5 proposed, the early works of Nono and Maderna can be conceived as an attempt to form a new musical hegemony along Gramscian lines, one in which the 'advances' of European high modernism were imbued with the emancipatory aspirations of post-war Italian communism. Such a marriage of natural opposites cuts across the mainstream dichotomy of left-realism/right-formalism which marks much of European music during the Cold War, where American anti-communist sentiment and capital was a major driving force behind Darmstadt, Donaeuschingen and the activities of the CIA-funded Congress for Cultural Freedom.[49] It thus constitutes a major divergence from the common narrative of post-war serialism, as Bjorn Heile recognises:

> [In Italy] the absence of a 'clear-slate' ideology, due not least to the myth of the liberation by the *resistenza*, led to a significantly different cultural atmosphere … [conventional histories display] an unfortunate neglect of such eminent serialists as Maderna and Nono, whose views differed significantly from those of the other serialists, notably in explicitly linking musical avant-gardism to radical politics.[50]

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[49] See Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper? The CIA and the Cultural Cold War*, 23, and Carroll, *Music and Ideology*, 141-64.
[50] Heile, 'Review of M.J. Grant, *Serial Music, Serial Aesthetics*', 135.

This section will consider the musical results of such a mentality. Two works from Nono and Maderna's radically innovative period of the early 50s will be analyzed: Nono's *Epitaffio per Federico García Lorca no.1* and Maderna's *Kranichsteiner Kammerkantate*. The focus will rest on the overall 'surface' expression the music carries and – most importantly – the way in which the *political* messages invested in these works are communicated. Therefore a discussion of more complicated technical features, particularly the 'tecnica degli sposamenti' ('technique of displacements') method of pitch permutation developed by Nono and Maderna at the end of the 1940s, will be held back until Chapter 7.

Luigi Nono: Epitaffio per Federico García Lorca no. 1 *(1951-2)*

In 1950, the *Variazioni Canoniche sulla Serie dell' Op 41 di Schoenberg* had provided Nono's first entry to the international musical arena, and had also been his first work with a political connection (see Chapter 7). Yet its political dimension – the link to Schoenberg's 'protest music' via a serial row – is tenuous at best. In 1951, an abortive project to set texts from the prison notebooks of the Czech communist Julius Fučik had come a step closer to explicit political comment within a musical composition, frustratingly unrealized.[51] So, in the winter of 1951, Nono set about composing the first of what would become a triptych of works, setting poetry by Federico García Lorca and Pablo Neruda that captured the emotional and physical torments of the Spanish Civil War – a conflict connected in the imagination of many with the finest hour of the European left and its struggle against Fascism. In Nono's opinion, the example of Lorca stood as a testament to the power of an organic art enacted within the arena of the people:

> The song of *free* Spain is *inside of us and in us*, notwithstanding the attempts to shut it out with the assassination of Federico García Lorca. *This marvellous Andalusian …* is for us young artists a master, a *friend* and a *brother*, who shows us the true path on which we, with our music, can be *men amongst men*. In the recognition and the conscience of this necessity we find the strength for our progress.[52]

The first of the Lorca Epitaphs, had its première at the 1952 Darmstadt Ferienkurse, conducted by Maderna. Nono takes a poem of protest and memorial by Neruda entitled 'La

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[51] See Nielinger, 'Between Memorial and Political Manifesto: Nono's Anti-fascist Pieces, 1951-1966', 7-11.
[52] Nono, 'Epitaffio per Federico García Lorca', *Scritti e Colloqui*, i, 421-2.

Guerra (1936)' and sets it between two brief, atmospheric aphorisms by Lorca, 'Tarde' and 'Casida de la rosa'.

'Tarde' ('Evening') is an evocative poem from the 1921-24 set of *Canciones* published by Lorca in Spain in 1927. In all probability Nono encountered the poem at Scherchen's 1948 Venice composition course through his contact with the Brazilian composer Eunice Katunda, who, with Maderna and Nono, formed a close artistic group that has been labelled 'La Nuova Scuola Veneziana' ('The New Venetian School').[53] Speaking of this meeting in 1987, Nono stated

> The most extraordinary thing that we lived through was the discovery of Lorca
> … What was the major focus of our attention was not so much the 'gypsy' Lorca
> as much as the metaphysical and surreal Lorca; the voice that put us in contact
> with other worlds. We thus found ourselves committed to the study of Lorca, of
> the rhythms of Mato Grosso and the rhythms of Andalusia. Bruno [Maderna] had
> a book that specifically studied gypsy rhythms, not gypsy in the folkloric sense
> but the Arabic gypsy of the Muezzin, whose songs used fourth and octave tones.
> So was born the first *Epitaffio*.[54]

This idea of the metaphysical and surreal 'voice' of Lorca is most applicable to this first movement, whilst the aspect of 'exotic' rhythmic importation comes to the fore in 'La Guerra'. Both works, however, demonstrate a technique of 'pitch set limitation', whereby a small set of pitches provides a pool from which a whole section of music draws its material. In 'Tarde', there are four different pitch collections:

**Ex. 6. 12:** Pc collections in Nono, *Epitaffio per Federico García Lorca no. 1*, 'Tarde'

The collections increase in size from four to six notes, before returning to the initial set as an *inclusio* at the close – which in part establishes this movement's ternary form, seen

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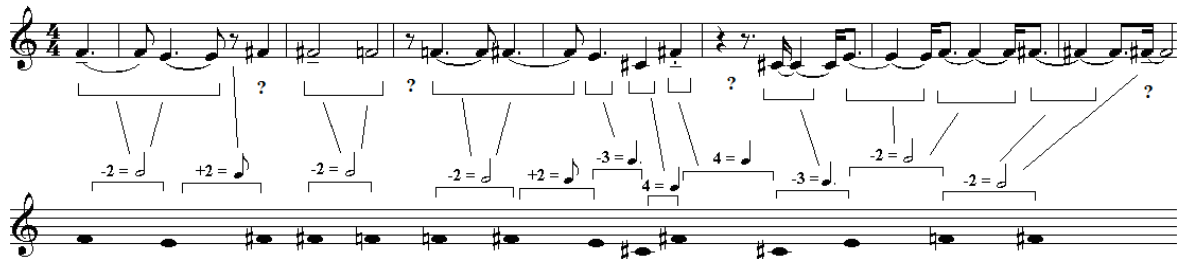
[53] Rizzardi, 'La "Nuova Scuola Veneziana". 1948–1951', 1-59.
[54] Nono, *Scritti e Colloqui*, ii, 501-2. According to the website of the Archivio Luigi Nono, Nono's library contains a number of Lorca's collected poetry sets, 'Catalogue' [on-line]. Durazzi ventures that 'Nono celebrated Lorca as a kind of socialist martyr', Durazzi, *Musical Poetics and Political Ideology in the work of Luigi Nono*, 78. On the place of the Spanish civil war in post-war music, see Pestalozza, 'La *Guerra Civile* Spagnola e i Musicisti Italiani del Dopoguerra', in *Federico García Lorca nella Musica Contemporanea*. ed. Antonio Trudu, 12–23.

on Example 6. 14. The aural effect is threefold: a generalized sense of stability created by melodically circling around a few intervallic centres; a sense of the widening of this circle as the movement progresses; and three specific moments (bars 12, 23 and 30) when a 'modulation' effect is achieved, even as the usual manoeuvres associated with this tonal device are absent. Added to this is the tight rhythmic control that Nono utilises: as Example 6. 13 shows in the opening clarinet melody, an equivalence is formed between intervals and rhythms, whereby each interval class has a corresponding durational class which its two notes take (marked by arrows on the example). Pascal Decroupet notes that 'in his compositions after *Variazione Canoniche*, Nono tried out various techniques which already bear within them the concept of a mutual permutation of parameters [Dimensionen], even if not as systematically as that which can be demonstrated in *Structures 1a* [Boulez]'.[55] This experimentation by Nono along similar lines to Darmstadt multi-parametric thinking will be explored further in Chapter 7.

Ex. 6. 13: Rhythmic/intervallic relations in the clarinet, bars 1-8 of Nono, *Epitaffio per Federico García Lorca no. 1*, 'Tarde'

As can be seen on the formal diagram below, the main movement of the work is carried by several long melodies in the clarinet, soprano and, at the end, the baritone, which rarely extend above *pp*. Around them the other instruments 'timbrally shadow' their pitches, whilst sometimes diverging from them or adumbrating their texture. Two instrumental sections, at the beginning of 'A' and 'B', see the instruments come together for longer and more continuous melodies.

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[55] Decroupet, 'Nono: Lorca-Epitaphien, Incontri' in Borio and Danuser ed., *Im Zenit der Moderne*, 340-1.

Three looming poplars
and one star

The silence bitten by
frogs resembles
a gauze veil seckled
with little green dabs

A stark tree
in the river
has broken out
in concentric
circles of bloom

And on the waters I dreamed
of a nut-brown Granada maiden

| 1 | 7 | 15 | 22 | 27 | 30 | 42 |

Bar.

Sop.   spoken   spoken   spoken   sung

Clar.   vowels   vowels

Cym.

Arp.
Cel.
Vib.

'timbral shadowing'   'klangfarben'   'timbral shadowing'   'timbral shadowing'

Dyn.   *PPP*   *p*   *ppp/pp*   *pp*

Pc Set   F - E - F# - C#   D - Bb - Ab - G - E   D - Eb - B - A - C - Bb   F - E - F# - C#

A   instrumental   B   instrumental   A

Ex. 6. 14: Form of Nono, *Epitaffio per Federico García Lorca no. 1*, 'Tarde'

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Added to this pitch and harmonic outline, an additional melodic link is made throughout with two forms of what is known as the 'gypsy scale', in its minor and Spanish variants: segments of these modes, seen in Example 6. 15, can be found in the four pitch collections. Whilst there is not a perfect overlap of pitch classes, as indicated in the example, in particular situations (for example, bar 6-7 and 15-17 in the clarinet, bars 33-34 in the baritone) the concentration on such interval progressions as minor 2nd-minor 3rd cannot fail to evoke these folk melodies.
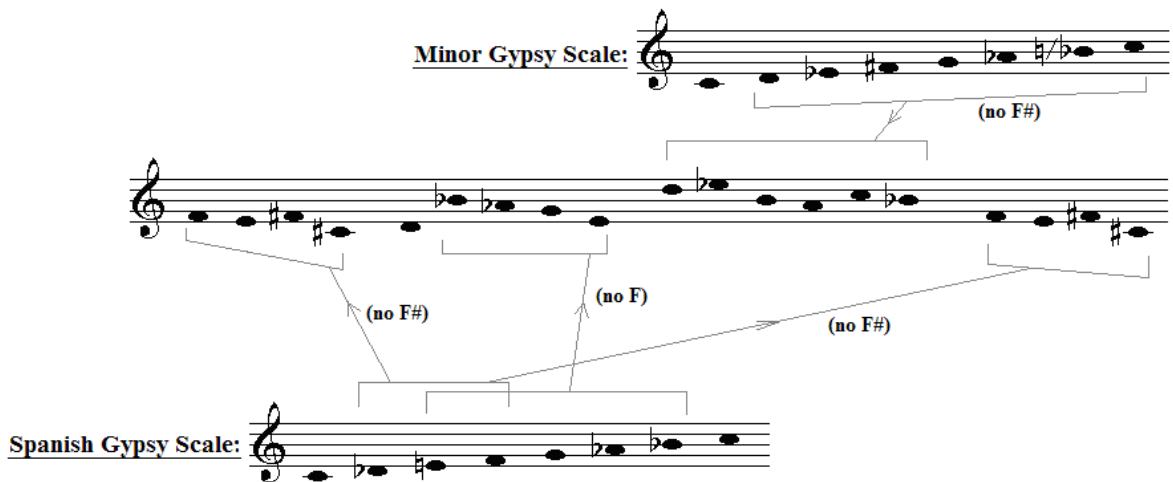
Ex. 6. 15: Spanish/Minor Gypsy Scales in Nono, *Epitaffio per Federico García Lorca no. 1*, 'Tarde'

The gesture towards the sound-world of Lorca's Spain is thus subtle and unassuming: a 'submerged borrowing', to use a term from Bruce Durazzi.[56] When Enzo Restagno asked Nono why he 'never included the horizontal element, the really melodic aspect, which is suggested by the music of the Andalusian gypsies', he replied

> The reason is simple: I was then still under the influence of my studies with Scherchen, who had made me use only three or four notes. If you take the movements of the *Epitaffio* you can see that they are based on four or five notes, and the dodecaphonic series never enters. These four or five notes can be derived from the *Bandiera Rossa*, from some songs by Katunda or, in the final song of the *Guardia Civile* [Epitaffio n. 3], simply from the sounds of the six strings of a guitar.[57]

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[56] Durazzi, 'Submerged Borrowings in Luigi Nono's *Epitaffi per Federico García Lorca*', Paper given at the Sixth Biennial ICMSN, 5 July 2009.
[57] Nono, 'Interview with Enzo Restagno', *Scritti e Colloqui*, ii 502.

Nono's allusions are encoded within a particular stage in his compositional journey, and the fragmented music that results consequently contains the voice but not the presence of Lorca. As Nono reveals, the paradigm of six fixed-pitch strings plucked in a quasi-improvisatory fashion upon a Spanish guitar is one intended evocation. This is not to say that there is little coherence, and as Example 6. 16 shows, fragmented melodic thoughts are often woven into a tapestry of Webernian Klangfarbenmelodie with a tight timbral control: notice the very specific articulation and dynamics markings, the use of the vibraphone pedal in bars 16 and 17, the matching of the Celeste's staccato-tenuto to the clarinet in bar 18, and the shaping of the overall contour into a series of waves. All these features are but the backdrop to the most prominent lines, that of the vocalists. Here, the metaphysical and surreal elements of Lorca's poetry (fully on display in the aphoristic and absurdist rhythms of the text of 'Tarde', which were meant as a play on the Japanese Haiku) come together. The soprano is instructed to sing vowel sounds whilst the baritone speaks in a very set rhythmical fashion until the very end; the result is alienating for the listener, the soprano ethereally present and the baritone dominating; the texture becomes even more surreal at the close, when the baritone line becomes pitched and leaps high up into the very top of his register (C#-F#), remaining there almost out of reach for 11 eleven bars on the same four pitches.

Ex. 6. 16: 'Klangfarbenmelodie' in bars 14-22 of Nono, *Epitaffio per Federico García Lorca no. 1*, 'Tarde'

In 'La Guerra (1936)', the subtleties of 'Tarde' are jettisoned for a directness of approach that becomes a roaring chorus of protest against the horrors inflicted upon Spain by the nationalist forces of General Franco. Nono had in fact desired to make the piece an even more explicitly political work by giving it the title 'Lenin', an idea only abandoned at the last moment.[58] The text of the poem is taken from Neruda's famous work *España en el Corazón* ('Spain in My Heart'), written at the time of the Spanish Civil War. Outraged by the assassination of Lorca in 1936 and soon to be convinced by the communist cause which he would serve for the rest of life, Neruda wrote vividly of the effects of the war on the Spanish consciousness:

Spain, wrapped in sleep, awakening
like a taste of wheat,
I saw you being born, perhaps, between the undergrowth
and the darkness, above,
rise up between the oak trees and scrubland
and fly through the air with open veins.

But I saw you being attacked on all sides
by ancient bandits. They came
wearing masks, with their crosses made
of vipers, with their feet wallowing
in the icy swamp of the dead.
And so I saw your body wrenched apart
lying broken
on the bloodied sands, open
without world, stinging in agony.
And until today the water of your sorrows flows
between the prison bars, and you wear
your crown of thorns in silence.
let me see which will be stronger, your pains

or the faces which pass by without looking at you.
I have lived with your aurora of muskets
and would that once again, people and gunpowder
might shake the dishonoured branches
until sleep again trembles, and are brought together
the fruits divided in the earth.

Ex. 6. 17: Neruda's 'La Guerra (1936)', Nono, *Epitaffio per Federico García Lorca no. 1*, España en el Corazón

At its most immediate, this text speaks of the innocence of pre-war Spain, its vulnerability, and presents the atrocities committed between 1936 and 1939 as acts of violence against it by exterior forces; interpreted, Neruda is venturing that Fascism was not inherent or latent within Spanish culture, but was extraneous to it. As already seen, something similar was being said of Italy under Fascism by the influential philosopher Benedetto Croce, who saw the rule of Mussolini as a 'parenthesis' in Italy's history and Fascism as a virus that, once

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[58] Archivio Luigi Nono, 'Epittafio per Gabriel Garcia Lorca no. 1' [on-line].

inoculated against, Italy would consign to the past.[59] Nono is perhaps displaying his acquiescence to such sentiments. But going further, Nono proposes that socialism is necessary as the historically mandated vehicle by which this processes will take place, by which (in Spain as well as Italy) 'sleep again trembles, and 'the fruits divided in the earth' are 'brought together'. In vocalising the protest against the tyranny enacted upon Spain by the Fascist doctrine, Nono combines anti-fascism with the cry of communist triumph in *Bandiera Rossa*, the partisan anthem of the PCI that forms the melodic and rhythmic basis of 'La Guerra (1936)':
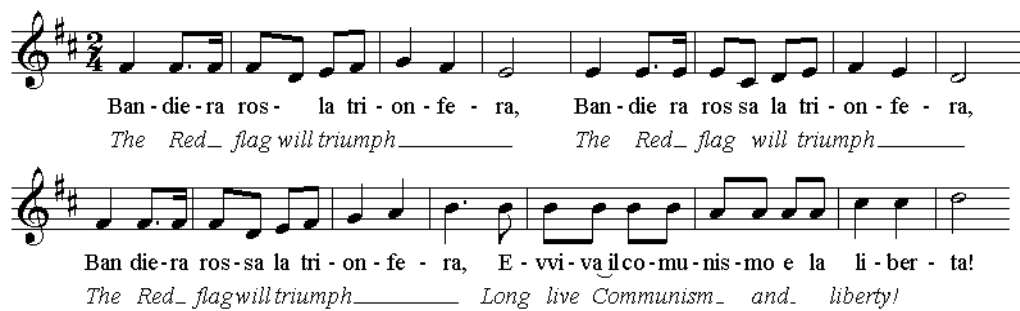
Ex. 6. 18: The partisan song 'Bandiera Rossa'.

Using this melody as base material Nono generates the vast majority of pitch and rhythmic material for this movement, using the permutation method explained in Chapter 7.[60] For now, it will be enough to note the magnitude of this statement: *Bandiera Rossa* was one of the most well known Socialist melodies, and its inclusion by one of European music's most prominent young composers in a work premièred at Darmstadt in 1952 brought the democratic ideology of the 'autonomous work' perilously close to the dogmas of post-war Eurocommunism. Nono later recalled his awareness of this situation, and Maderna's advice to him:

> I added to the second part of the *Epitaffio* the rhythm and the notes of *Bandiera Rossa*. When we got to Darmstadt in 1952, Bruno, who was abreast of all the major currents, told me that he was concerned. If that melody, given to the four tam-tams in the second part, were to have been recognised, it would have caused trouble. Imagine! In '52, at the height of the Cold war, with the communists put under so many accusations![61]

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[59] See Torriglia, *Broken Time, Fragmented Space: a Cultural Map for Post-War Italy*, xi.

[60] For further comments on the pitch processes in this first Epitaffio, especially the third movement 'Casida della Rosa' (not discussed here), see Decroupet, 'Nono: Lorca-Epitaphien, Incontri' in Borio and Danuser ed., *Im Zenit der Moderne*, 342-344.

[61] Nono, *Scritti e Colloqui*, ii, 501.

Of course Nono (and Maderna after him in 1953) had the perfect solution to this dilemma: the 'submerged borrowing', whereby the pitches and rhythms were fractured beyond all recognition through a serial array – though this unrecognizability is not always thus, as will be seen. Nono therefore hides his politics under a cloak of respectability as it were, and creates a gap between material and surface, between content and form, that enables him to construct a synthesis between radical politics and avant-garde composition that would have been politically unacceptable in 1950s GDR, besides being 'considered a degeneration into the subjective' at Darmstadt.[62] The basic paradox here is clear: the subject is kept in its ontological form, but jettisoned in its phenomenological form. But, for Nono, this paradox seemed not to require a resolution; in Durazzi's words, it was a 'performative act of self identity', and thus it was woven into the very fabric of his art.[63] Communism was Nono's syntax; his language was simply that of high modernism – a highly Gramscian construct. For some even this mix was perilously close to realism: Darmstadt theorist Heinz-Klaus Metzger lambasted the Lorca trilogy which 'succumbed to the slogans of the Prague Manifesto with a return to tonality, speaking choruses, arioso operatic clichés, popular dance rhythms and Gregorian chant'.[64]

In one sense, Metzger was correct, for while the pitch mutation technique ensured a surface-level removal from the political content of Nono's base material, many 'extra-musical' associations are present which enable this work to convey a great deal of meaning and achieve a high level of dramatic effect. Notions of military brashness, spoken outcries, musical ugliness, collectivity, and lost innocence are all induced by a combination of the form and large-scale gestures of the work, which creates a dramatic and forward-directed sense of motion, and the instrumental writing. Example 6. 19 shows the structural layout. Rather than the balanced ternary form of 'Tarde', 'La Guerra' features two major climaxes, one at the centre of the work and one at the very end; both of them are the culmination of a section of rhythmical 'takeover' whereby instruments/voices are silenced and solely the percussion sounds, in increasingly loud and trenchant tones. Nono also builds into this goal-

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[62] Ramazzotti, *Luigi Nono*, 23; see also for details of a revealing debate on 'subjective protest' and 'objective protest' in letters between Nono and Stockhausen from 1952.

[63] Durazzi, 'Submerged Borrowings in Luigi Nono's *Epitaffi per Federico García Lorca*', Paper given at the Sixth Biennial ICMSN, 5 July 2009.

[64] Nielinger, 'The Song Unsung': Luigi Nono's *Il Canto Sospeso*', 92. What Nöller termed the 'folklore debate' inherent in realist/formalist diatribes (the controversial avocation of folk subjects on the part of the proponents of realism) should also be noted at this point: Maderna, Nono and Berio all show indications of its influences, most notably in Berio's *Tre Canzoni Populari* of 1947 (see Chapter 7 in the context of that composer's *Chamber Music*). Nöller, *Engagement und Form*, 87.

directed motion a sense of reversal: nested within the overall AB structure, the pitch and instrumental choice suggest an internal 'abc' grouping in A and a 'bac' grouping in B.

In effect, the form is a narrative that reflects the text. The opening *pp* contrapuntal lines, delicate and small in scale, depict Spain in her innocence ('wrapped in sleep') but also come with a sense of uncontainable menace whose threat is realised in bar 34 with the entry of chaotic and angular orchestral lines (symbolizing the attack by 'ancient bandits'). Hereafter, as the text becomes more scarred by war, the percussion and voices wreak destruction on the musical texture through a series of *ff* violent outbursts. However, the destruction is pulled up short; the instrumental texture enters again, at first matching the previous dynamic but henceforth dying away to leave a luminous string chord (bars 98-112) above which the flute and clarinet again loom ominously. As noted, a musical reversal of the previous section has been achieved, in line with the 'silent crown of thorns' by which Neruda anticipates Spain's resurrection. The dénouement comes with the return of the drums, slowly rising to a chorus of voices and (at the close) military-like percussion that vindicates the desire 'that once again, people and gunpowder might shake the dishonoured branches until sleep again trembles'.[65]

> At the end of the second movement of *España en el corazón* the two epochs – that of the resistance and that of today – are brought into 'polyphonic' relationship with each other … What is expressed in Neruda as a vision (that which is strewn upon the earth may be gathered again, far away from the past and moving into a different future) Nono's music executes in concrete manner.[66]

On the very surface level this movement creates a sense of musical narrative, and even given the importance of the text, Nono's music itself attempts to encode powerful political statements.

> Probably the most particular trait of Nono's aesthetic is that his political claims for his work argue from its immanent musical logic and not only from its inclusion of verbal rhetoric in the form of politically charged texts, titles or narrative situations.[67]

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[65] Rizzardi similarly credits the *Epitaffi* with 'reaching the stage of 'narrative epic', using Sprechgesang and rendering explicit the folkloric derivation of the rhythms', 'Karlheinz Stockhausen e Luigi Nono; Teoria e Invenzione Musicale', 38. It is interesting – again – to consider the overlap this kind of *narration* might suggest in relation to *programme*, the doyen concept of socialist realism.

[66] Stenzl, *Von Giacomo Puccini zu Luigi Nono*, 206.

[67] Durazzi, *Musical Poetics and Political Ideology in the work of Luigi Nono*, 4.

Ex. 6. 19: Form of Nono, *Epitaffio per Federico García Lorca no. 1*, 'La Guerra (1936)'

Another manifestation of this in 'La Guerra' is in the way Nono limits his pitch collections, in a manner similar to 'Tarde' (four collections with the first and the last identical), further strengthening the narrative process of reversal and the widening out of the two 'b' sections.

Ex. 6. 20: Pitch set collections in Nono, *Epitaffio per Federico García Lorca no. 1*, 'La Guerra (1936)'

On the micro level, the concentration on developing the most subtle of textures from the 'Bandiera Rossa' material is profound:

Ex. 6. 21: Flute and clarinet, bars 1-14 of *Epitaffio per Federico García Lorca no. 1*, 'La Guerra (1936)'

The melodies, both circling around the same group of five pitches, seem to respond to each other: they draw upon the same 'pool of gestures', thereby producing imitative phrases; one is often offset from the other, and this device is aided by irregular metrical feel of two against three; and they invert each other's direction, though this is clouded by the fact that their movement is non-synchronous. The result is wonderfully contrapuntal, and indeed Durazzi has shown that the derivation of this opening from the partisan song is a very complex canons cancrizan, in which the permutations of the material in D major are pitted

against the inversion of the material in Bb.[68] To arrive at this from a simple diatonic tune demonstrates Nono's commitment to the overall project of synthesis that underlies his modernist-radical dialectic.

Ex. 6. 22: Bars 138-151 of Nono, *Epitaffio per Federico García Lorca no. 1*, 'La Guerra (1936)'

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[68] Durazzi, 'Submerged Borrowings in Luigi Nono's *Epitaffi per Federico García Lorca*', Paper given at the Sixth Biennial ICMSN, 5 July 2009.

As the movement closes, however, all this subtlety becomes too much (Example 6. 22). Here, 'Bandiera Rossa' at this point is brought to the foreground, hammered out by 16 percussion parts at full volume in both rhythmically straight and augmented forms: at the last, Nono reveals his hand as, in Durazzi's words, the partisan song 'bubbles to the surface'.[69]

Maderna: Kranichsteiner Kammerkantate *(1953)*

By far the most unusual work studied in this chapter, Maderna's 1953 *Kranichsteiner Kammerkantate* had its first performance at Darmstadt in the July of that year. The setting of four independent 'letters' related only by common themes was the closest Maderna was to come to an explicitly political composition. To some extent, the composer had already set a precedent in his 1950 work *Studi per 'il processo' di Kafka*, where the claustrophobia of the Czech writer's novel 'The Trial' had been evoked; as Carola Nielinger argues, presenting this absurdist tale of persecution and conviction-without-defence was an act vested with the contemporary relevance of a 'biting social critique' amidst the deception and judicial corruption endemic in post-fascist Italy.[70] But three years later, Maderna went much further, and for a première of a much larger scale and prominence: the Darmstadt Ferienkurse in the same year as highly autonomous works by Boulez (*Polyphonie X*) and Stockhausen (*Kontrapunkte*).

In the *Kranichsteiner Kammerkantate* Maderna chose to set texts of an unambiguously political nature, infused with subjectivity and jettisoning any common post-war gestures towards musical 'neutrality'. If Nono's *Epitaffi* had been close to the mark in 1952, Maderna went a further step towards an unlikely synthesis of Darmstadt and the PCI in 1953. The use of an anonymous *Kommerzialbrief* ('commercial letter') which viciously satirizes a capitalist factory owner and the love letters of a dying Kafka to Milena Jesenká are pointed enough, but it is the sources for the first and fourth movements that really indicate the radical nature of the work. The first sets a letter from the recently published *Lettere del Condannato della Resistenza* ('Letters of the Condemned [to death] of the Italian resistance'). Maderna wished to vocalise and animate the *resistenza* ideology and his own recollections musically – he spoke of the work in 1953 as an 'afterthought of my private

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[69] Ibid.
[70] Nielinger, 'Between Memorial and Political Manifesto: Nono's Anti-fascist Pieces, 1951-1966', 2.

experiences of the Resistance' – and was not afraid of publicly displaying his links with the left-wing resistance movement in the GDR at the height of the Cold War; Nono would later use the same volume in his *Il Canto Sospeso*, first performed in Cologne in 1956.[71] More controversial still was the choice of a prison letter for the fourth movement by Antonio Gramsci, an author whose legacy could very well still have been the establishment of a Communist government in Italy in the early 50s.

As in Nono's *Epitaffio*, the underlying compositional foundation of the *Kranichsteiner Kammerkantate* is the 'tecnica degli sposamenti', and again the subject material subsequently mutated was political, and even more famous that *Bandiera Rossa:* 'Fischia il Vento', the Russian folk song popular with the partisan anti-fascists during the *resistenza* (and encountered in Zafred's *Sinfonia no. 4* above).[72]

Ex. 6. 23: *Fischia il vento* (The Wind Whistles).

The first movement of the work, entitled 'Lettere del Condannato della *Resistenza*', begins with a bang (Example 6. 24). Instrumentally and dynamically, the chamber ensemble (Pic., Fl. Cl., B.Cl., Hrn., Xyl., Tmp. Perc., 2 Pf., Harm., Hrp., 9 Str.) could be that of many mid-twentieth-century writers (though Dallapiccola and Stravinsky spring most readily to mind), and the consistent use of both pianos throughout the piece combined with the Harp and pitched percussion gives the ensemble a hard and frosty attack. A rhythmic canon between the two pianos and a shorter, harmonic one between the winds and strings, all accented, is rounded off by a unison E-G# dyad, which sets up the introduction of the speaker. The effect is dramatic and moulded to the tragedy and 'suddenness' of the text; however, even in this opening elements of direction are discernible. The reductions on Example 6. 25 show that, through note duration and repetition, a number of 'poles' develop; for instance, F# at

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[71] Unpublished lecture by Maderna from 1953-4, in Verzina, *Bruno Maderna: Étude historique et critique*, 47.
[72] The song was further immortalised in this period with its quotation in Calvino's *The Path to the Spider's Nests*, 93. See Verzina, 'Tecnica della Mutazione e Tecnica Seriale in Vier Briefe (1953) di Bruno Maderna' for a full analytical explication of 'Fischia Il Vento' within the *Kranichsteiner Kammerkantate*.

the outset maintains a presence on every quaver of the first bar, as does A in the third. Thus an overall move can be posited from F# to B to an E/G# dyad: a sort of 'mutated' perfect cadence.

Ex. 6. 24: Bars 1-5 of Maderna, *Kranichsteiner Kammerkantate* 'Lettere del Condannato della *Resistenza*'

After the speaker's interjection, the piece continues with two sections 'A' and 'B', marked on the formal plan of the movement (see Example 6. 25). Gesturally, these sections are very similar: the instruments move from a Varèse-like percussive, pointillistic texture that traces out fleeting chords; they then ascend whilst gradually coalescing into longer melodies, and they then support a move to an allegro texture in which the bass reaches a dynamic and registral climax.

Intrumental gesture

Allegro

Fl./Cl.

pf.1

pf.2

Str.

canons

|6|

|7| Andante — pointillistic

|16| Allegro — pf.1 pf.2 hocket — cluster (A-Bb-B-C-C#-D-E) — B-A-B - A D (on 'nicht!') — but they will kill my body and not my innermost thoughts!

Andante — pointillistic — coalesce into upwards melodies

|27| Allegro — str. melody build up

|32| Adagio — dropping motifs — Farewell Maria.

E voice upwards G

I die with no regret. I am proud to sacrifice my life for a cause, for a just cause.

Bass

I want to write to you these few words ... I hope they will be of comfort to you against such terrible misfortune. Maria, they have condemned me to death, they will kill me ...

Speaker Solo

Dynamic

ff accenti

p

p   *mf* ——— *ff*

p

ff

pp

Intro

A

B

Coda

Ex. 6. 25: Form of Maderna, *Kranichsteiner Kammerkantate* 'Lettere del Condannato della *Resistenza*'

The matching of the compositional syntax with the text is therefore obvious; the tension built up through two statements ('but they will kill my body but not my innermost thoughts/I die with no regret. I am proud to sacrifice my life for a cause, a just cause') are given musically a sense of defiance and climax, emphasizing the moral pride that partisan fighter Bruno Frittaion feels whilst simultaneously dramatizing his hopeless plight.[73] Additionally, in moving from unfocussed and momentary pitch spaces the combination of longer melodies and registral intensification animates the increasing confidence with which the writer makes his assertions.

A similarly lyrical imitation between subject and object can be discerned in the bass melody of the two vocal sections (Example 6. 26), and indeed the concentration of the vocal line is the most prominent and striking aspect of the work. Unlike its surrounding accompaniment, the two melodies are classically phrased into antecedent-consequent units, and are shaped towards an upwards conclusion as noted above. Section A coalesces from Sprechgesang onto sung pitches; section B does exactly the reverse.[74]

Ex. 6. 26: Bass melody, Maderna, *Kranichsteiner Kammerkantate* 'Lettere del Condannato della *Resistenza*'

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[73] Frittaion was a partisan executed on the 1st February 1945; see Verzina, 'Musica e impegno nela Kranichsteiner Kammerkantate (1953): il tema della libertà', in Dalmonte, Rossana and Russo, Marco eds. *Bruno Maderna: Studi e Testimonianze*, 209.

[74] Verzina links such techniques to Schoenberg's *A Survivor from Warsaw*, which famously uses a bass speaker to declaim a political text. Verzina, 'Musica e Impegno nella Kranichsteiner Kammerkantate (1953): il Tema della Libertà' in Dalmonte, Rossana and Russo, Marco eds. *Bruno Maderna: Studi e Testimonianze,* 211. Another precedent could have been Dallapiccola's *Il Prigioniero*, bars 938-9.

When this melody is set against texture of the chamber ensemble, whether pointillistic, canonic or melodic, its coherence acts as a thread that holds the disparate energies of the composition together. Example 6. 27 shows this order/disorder binarism:

Ex. 6. 27: Bars 7-10 of Maderna, *Kranichsteiner Kammerkantate* 'Lettere del Condannato della *Resistenza*'

So there is at base a confluence of musical and political concerns in the form and gesture of this first letter. This is made all the more clear when the melodies that combine towards the end of each section are considered. The first three excerpts in Example 6. 28 show how small the initial melodic cells can be. The fourth is stretched, but still is cut short. The fifth, however, is phrased in a perfect arch shape and fully plays out its expressive potential, each note being progressively strengthened and then weakened by the addition/subtraction of one of the nine string parts.

Ex. 6. 28: Move to longer melodic units towards the end of Maderna, *Kranichsteiner Kammerkantate* 'Lettere del Condannato della *Resistenza*'

The climax of the movement delivers a subtle and unexpected expressive effect. The string melody (at the bottom of Example 6. 28), reaching its climax, traces out a fragment of 'Fischia Il Vento' before it fades into nothingness. This musical 'echo' of the sentiment expressed in the vocalist's final statement of defiance (it happens as soon as he has finished emphatically on a top G), becomes emblematic of Maderna's ability to suggest and synthesize the modernist and radical-political worlds he is attempting to circumscribe, without recourse to the kind of musical 'quotation' (with heavy signposting) he would have considered crude and shallow. It is as if, in a paroxysm of clarity, the composer suddenly remembers his origins.

The second movement of this work, 'Kommerzialbrief', uses an intriguing and unconventional text: an amalgamation of two letters of unknown source that Maderna labels 'commercial letters'. The original published score supplied only the musical material for the section, indicating that any generic 'business' letter could be recited over the instruments;

however archival research by Nicola Verzina has identified two sources which firmly point to the existence of a specific text used at the Darmstadt première and intended for future use.[75] A documentary security regarding the composer's textual wishes does not militate against the confusingly abrupt, de-contextualised nature of the words however (see Example 6. 29). The first fragment seems to be sent from one industrialist to another (a friend, hence the use of 'lieber') encouraging an aggressive capital-based stance towards the sacking of factory workers, whilst the second speaks of a holiday to the Swiss alpine resort of St Moritz to recover together 'after the psychological strain of this campaign' (presumably referring to the dismissals).[76]

The key to understanding these letters lies within the context of the post-war left-right political spectrum. Christian Democrat policy in the late 40s aimed to liberate industry from a protectionism won by the trade unions against the backdrop of communist influence and agitation during the post-war coalition government. The drive was to deregulate large organizations (collected together in what was known as the *confindustria*) and make it possible for them to sack large numbers of workers, increase productivity and thus stimulate economic recovery:

> At the workplace *Confindustria* demanded for its members the right to make redundant as much or as little of their workforce as they chose … for no serious reconstruction could take place while they were required to pay unproductive labour. Similarly they would not tolerate any schemes of worker's participation or control.[77]

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[75] See the critical notes in the re-edition score of the *Kranichsteiner Kammerkantate* published by Suvini Zerboni, ed. Verzina, 12; the same text is used on the recent recording of the work (Stradivarius, CD STR 33651)

[76] Verzina suggests the second letter is from the wife of the second industrialist to the first, bid., 12.

[77] Ginsborg, *History of Contemporary Italy*, 74.

Speaker

Bass:
My dear Friend, I understand very well your scruples about sacking your workers. But in our time of increasingly large conglomerations it is more than natural (unfortunately) that the individual must suffer in the interests of all. We have thought long about whether it is possible to find a way out. However, the buying up of small parallel companies that, although not decisive, ever more impede the development of our societies, would lose all meaning if we for sentimental reasons should try to take on a financial burden that would render the operation of our business all the more difficult. The only solution was that of "dismissal"

... and in any case there is no doubt that in our present economic situation the best workers will quickly find another job. We all know that today the interests of the individual no longer count and that each of us must be prepared to suffer damages for a higher cause.

Sop.:
We are leaving for St. Moritz the day after tomorrow, and will stay there two weeks and then want to go to the Riviera. It would be nice if we could meet up there, to spend some time together after the psychological strain of this campaign.

| 10 | 17 | 31 |

Instr.

Pf. 1 — A
Pf. 2 — Hocket

Pitch
Per.
Pf. I+II — Hocket
Str.
Fl., Cl., Xil., Hrn., Harm. — ripieno

concertino

R: A

Gesture

Texture

mp comodo

mp

mf ♪/♪ etc., fragmented

increasing rythmic complexity ♪ ♪/♪
sharper (pizz. + battuto col legno)

A

B

A
(shorter)

Ex. 6. 29: Formal plan of Maderna, *Kranichsteiner Kammerkantate*, 'Kommerzialbrief'

In light of this contextual knowledge, the first letter in this movement takes on a whole new light, one which Maderna, as a card-carrying PCI member, would have abhorred. The tone of the text, cynical and without scruples, portrays the industrialists as an uncaring and ruthless body, willing the 'individual to suffer in the interests of all'.[78] These archetypal capitalists see smaller companies as a 'financial burden' and consideration of their employees' rights as 'sentimental'. When writing to Nono about this work, Maderna spoke of a business letter 'from which it will become clear how a large capitalist TRUST can damage a small business'.[79] The second letter (ostensibly between the wives of the capitalists), nonchalantly talks of their rest and recovery – after the strain of so many sackings – in the typically bourgeois Swiss resort of St Moritz and the French Riviera. The socialist critique of capitalism as a dehumanizing hegemonic system 'in which the factory floor submits to the superior interests of the economy' is apparent in the sarcastic exaggerations of this text and its one-dimensional portrayal of the bourgeois character.[80] Maderna's use of this text is a stunning example of his Gramscian heritage, whereby 'the concrete and tangible are brought into the aesthetic system of the artwork'.[81]

The cynicism Maderna wanted to project onto these 'found' letters is clear from the marking 'fatuo' (fatuous) on the opening piano line. A constant stream of quaver notes, rests, dyads and triads flows from both pianos with no alteration in timbre, rhythm or articulation. This 'inexorable and mechanical uniformity',[82] a kind of obsessive insistence that renders the pitch space seemingly random and unhierarchical, is symptomatic of the intended air of cynicism and, like the first movement, attempts to encode the text onto the musical expression: thus the discontinuity of the writing seems less care*free* than care*less* with its material:
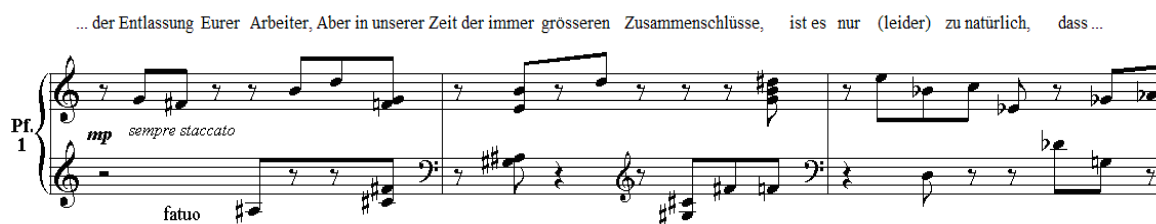
[78] Critical notes to the score of the *Kranichsteiner Kammerkantate* ed. Verzina, 12.
[79] Quoted in Nielinger, 'The Song Unsung': Luigi Nono's *Il Canto Sospeso*', 93.
[80] Verzina, 'Musica e Impegno nella Kranichsteiner Kammerkantate (1953): il Tema della Libertà' in Dalmonte, Rossana and Russo, Marco eds. *Bruno Maderna: Studi e Testimonianze*, 214.
[81] Nöller, *Engagement und Form*, 89.
[82] Verzina, 'Musica e Impegno nella Kranichsteiner Kammerkantate (1953): il Tema della Libertà' in Dalmonte, Rossana and Russo, Marco eds. *Bruno Maderna: Studi e Testimonianze*, 214.

Ex. 6. 30: Bars 1-3 of Maderna, *Kranichsteiner Kammerkantate*, 'Kommerzialbrief'

If these quavers are represented purely rhythmically across the whole of the opening section (that is, in the hocketed piano parts until the instruments enter), the way in which waves of continuous motion are interspersed with sporadic, separated units becomes clear:
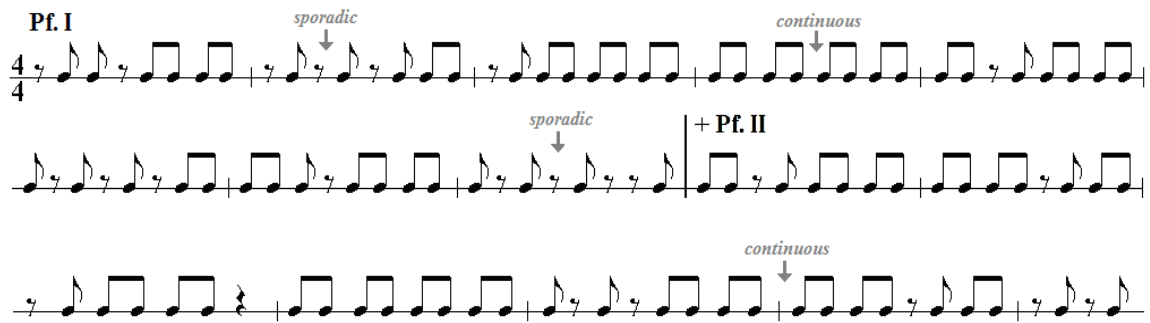
Ex. 6. 31: Bars 1-15 of Maderna, *Kranichsteiner Kammerkantate*, 'Kommerzialbrief', represented rhythmically

Pitch material seems therefore arbitrary and duration is pushed into the foreground, as a consequence of the fragmenting of the base melody through the *tecnica della sposamenti*. However the urge to create pitch repetition is still felt, and demonstrates that Maderna does not feel bound by his novel pitch permutation technique: Example 6. 32 shows several examples of identical pitch/register configurations in this opening piano passage. In this way temporary centres of gravity creep in, appearing almost as 'glitches' in the fabric of the structure.

Ex. 6. 32: Repetition in bars 9-12 of Maderna, *Kranichsteiner Kammerkantate*, 'Kommerzialbrief'

The formal plan of the work (Example 6. 29) shows a simple ternary form: each section gets progressively shorter – perhaps symbolising Maderna's impatience with these industrialists – and the second 'A' is the retrograde of the first piano's material from the opening section. The hocket-like structure between the two piano parts and the dividing of instruments into concertino-ripieno groupings when the instruments enter constitutes a complex middle section in which any superficial baroque mannerisms inherent in concerto hierarchy are turned on their heads. Here, the 'background' accompaniment is the still insistent and arbitrary piano quavers (with the addition of the harp), whilst the more soloistic ripieno figures are the fragmented lines of the rest of the ensemble, which, instead of drawing on a more diverse pitch spectrum, actually stick to a limited number of pitches. The division into two back-to-front opposing groups, one of which mechanically toils away whilst the other decadently amuses itself, has obvious latent political meaning.

Ex. 6. 33: Concertino/Ripieno groupings and pitch material in bars 17-30 of Maderna, *Kranichsteiner Kammerkantate*, 'Kommerzialbrief'

The last movement of this work, 'Gramsci - Lettere dal Carcere' is the most complex, using excerpts from two of Gramsci's letters written whilst imprisoned by Mussolini (to his wife in November 1926 and to his sister-in-law in August 1931). In the 'Lettere dal Carcere', Maderna is anxious to portray expressively the emotional torture of the socialist thinker, but also to identify with his theoretical formulation, particularly in relation to the psychological makeup of what Gramsci classed the 'organic intellectual'. The organic intellectual (or in this case, artist, though the distinction is un-Gramscian) has no need to seek power or inspiration from outside his or herself, and recognizes the danger that lies in a metaphysical, 'romantic' view of the artist-as-hero; in Steve Jones's words, 'to turn to the truths of religion, art or philosophy is also to turn away from the more pressing problems of political responsibility'.[83] Thus when Maderna presents Gramsci's words 'do not imagine that the feeling of being personally isolated throws me into desperation … I have never felt the need for moral strength from outside in order to live my life strongly' (see Example 6. 35) as the apotheosis of this movement and in some aspects the work as a whole, he is seeking to identify his art and role as intellectual with the organic, radical version of the Italian socialist intellectual. That he does this within the context of the movement which exhibits the 'most complexity, from a technical-compositional point of view' shows Maderna's aesthetic proximity to Nono's later formulation that 'the urgency of a new idealism, provoked by the *resistenza*, was coupled with the search for adequate technical means and new possibilities'.[84]

Complexity of durational material is immediately obvious in the multi-rhythmic polyphony of the opening 3 bars. This highly dense passage of instrumental introduction has the effect of a fluttering and chaotic sound, particular as the flute line is prominent. As Example 6. 34 shows, even in the first bar six metrical layers are used by the various instruments across the ensemble to create a claustrophobic space, and they destroy – as Niedhöfer comparably demonstrates in the *Serenata No. 2* (1953-4) – any 'clearly articulated sense of metre'.[85]

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[83] Jones, *Antonio Gramsci*, 89.
[84] Nono, 'Musica e *Resistenza* in *Scritti e Colloqui*, i, 145.
[85] Niedhöfer, 'Bruno Maderna's Serial arrays', para. 39.

Ex. 6. 34: Rhythmic complexity in the first bar of Maderna, *Kranichsteiner Kammerkantate* 'Gramsci – Lettere dal Carcere' (bold notes represent notes played)

Such durational disorder in a work that has, until this point, dealt only in quaver units (taking its cue from *Fischia Il Vento*) must point to a radical technical departure, and in fact it does, as Verzina has shown: Maderna has started applying the *tecnica della sposamenti* to rhythmic values, taking the four values from the partisan song and 'mutating' them by a magic square that adds or subtracts triplets and quintuplets according to its number sequence.[86] In a sense, Maderna had already extended his novel compositional techniques to rhythm earlier in the work, in that durations and rests were coterminous with the pitches as they were taken and mutated from the original base material. This was not an innovation: in the *Improvvisazione no. 1* of 1952, a similar process had occurred, with the added rule that notes were to be sustained until the next appearance of the pitch.[87] What happens in the fourth movement of the *Kranichsteiner Kammerkantate* represents an extra level of permutation, however, and an aesthetic much more committed to parametric control by a compositional method.

What is interesting is that the vastly confusing complexity this method generates is still located within a formal scheme and gestural outline which, if not conventional, seems very concerned with articulating and developing the vocal line, and with finding a division and a placement for the text that adequately expresses its message in a comprehensible way. This movement still feels anything but predetermined or random. This observation is, it

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[86] Verzina, 'Tecnica della mutazione e tecnica seriale in Vier Briefe (1953) di Bruno Maderna', 339-40.
[87] Niedhöfer, 'Bruno Maderna's Serial arrays', para. 15-6.

seems, part of a larger point that marks this music out from a European 'mainstream'. For the listener, the move to an integral serialism in the early 50s on the part of Boulez, Stockhausen and others destroyed the structural (Schenkerian) notions of background and middleground, leaving only the 'in the moment' foreground aurally perceivable. In the works considered here by Maderna and Nono, middleground is likewise hard to identify, but the political impulse towards dialecticism, in its high level of synthesis with musical language, compels an expressive and easily identifiable background, seen in easily dividable strophic forms, conventional climactic centre-end points, obvious large-scale gestures and narratological structures. Whilst there is little in the way of the goal-directed momentum on the localised level supplied by tonal scheme, a timbral process or a rhythmic permutation, there are identifiable surface features *and* a clear and uncomplicated foundational structure (hence the frequent use of formal diagrams in this analysis).

Structurally, 'Gramsci - Lettere dal Carcere' is again in ternary form (very similar to the 'Kommerzialbrief'), peaking towards the end of a more excitable 'B' section and fading by repeating some aspects of the opening texture. It creates a dramatic climax onto its most important segment of text ('even under the worst conditions, even in jail'), vindicating Gramsci's (and socialism's) inner strength even under oppression, and then abruptly silences the ensemble to focus the listener onto the speaker's words. Gesture, though exhibiting a localized fragmentation at points (e.g. bars 1 to 3) is continuous on a general scale (for example, the gradual emergence of longer melodies in bars 12 to 16 and the maintenance of identical pitch classes in each instrumental part from bars 20 to 25). Dynamic contour similarly follows a logical schema that fits with the text and the overall expressive direction of the music. There is a sense of a repeated localized F-centre (see bars 16 and 24), and even a very prominent hint towards a perfect cadence to end the work. Directional purpose therefore, at least in these aspects, seems very much preserved.

Ex. 6. 35: Formal plan of Maderna, *Kranichsteiner Kammerkantate*, 'Gramsci – Lettere dal Carcere'

It is the vocal line of the 'Lettere dal Carcere' that provides the most conclusive example of a political and radical sentiment that acts as the dialectical antithesis to integral serialism. Here, the *tecnica degli sposamenti* is jettisoned for a pitch organization of quite different origins: as Example 6. 36 shows, the pitches can be collected into groupings deriving either from one of the four most common modes (Aeolian, Dorian, Ionian, Mixolydian) or from the work's first and only full twelve-note row.

Ex. 6. 36: Vocal pitches in Maderna, *Kranichsteiner Kammerkantate*, 'Gramsci – Lettere dal Carcere',

Such melodic thinking demonstrates Maderna's commitment to a more 'aesthetic' mode of expression, and his freedom in allowing consonant pitch collections acting as 'recognisable' groupings (even if of only four notes) that invoke a pre-tonal world.

But it is not simply a matter of nice tunes. The Bass and Soprano here appear together for the first time in the *Kammerkantate*, and their character identities are indisputable: in putting the text into the mouth of the Bass, he must represent Gramsci and the Soprano the recipient of the letter, Gramsci's wife (Julija Schucht). That the soprano voice only appears in the 'A' parts of the movement, in which the letter is addressed to her (the text of the 'B' section is taken from a letter to Gramsci's sister-in-law) confirms this characterization. The Soprano sings wordlessly, *bocca chiusa*, and her interjections come after each bass phrase, almost as an echo (her part is even written in a smaller typeface). It seems that she is an off-stage presence, a 'phantom sound' as the opera scholar Carolyn Abbate would term it.[88] Her role, though, is crucial: she offers a more complex gamut of expression than the bombastic text would allow, and hints towards the vulnerable alienation of Gramsci. Was Maderna so convinced of the impenetrability of his doctrines? Certainly, the opposition he and Nono faced from certain Darmstadt composers created a nagging doubt in this entire project of musico-political synthesis.[89] His cautionary advice to Nono in 1952 to hide 'Bandiera Rossa' has already been noted;[90] in February 1953, he reveals that he included three other texts alongside those of *resistenza* fighters in the *Quattro Lettere* because he didn't want to 'cause speculation';[91] and by 1955, he was actively discouraging Nono from 'selling' himself 'in such a big way to politics and humanity'.[92] Unlike Nono, whose future lay very much along this path, Maderna never again wrote such a political work as his *Kantate* of 1953.

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[88] Abbate, 'Debussy's Phantom Sounds'*, 67-96.*
[89] See Nielinger, 'The Song Unsung': Luigi Nono's *Il Canto Sospeso*', 88-93.
[90] Nono, *Scritti e Colloqui*, ii, 501.
[91] Nielinger, 'The Song Unsung': Luigi Nono's *Il Canto Sospeso*', 93.
[92] Ibid., 97.

The Rise of the Avant-Garde

Chapter 7:
Nono, Maderna, Berio, and new means of expression, 1950-53

The final section of this thesis draws to completion an historical and musical narrative that started in the rubble of a corpulent post-fascist society and that ends with a multivalent new-music culture and the utopian beginnings of new serial, vocal and electronic means of expression. But the idea is not to put the finishing touches to a *telos*, an inevitable journey whereby Italian post-war music 'advanced' towards its destiny in the music studios of Milan and the *Ferienkurse*; if anything, diversions and pluralities 'along the way' have constituted the bulk of this study, and this final chapter sits alongside them simply as an exploration of another historical moment. However, it does not require a fully fledged teleology to acknowledge the large-scale changes that occurred in the relatively short period between immediate post-war music and society and that of the early 1950s; in fact a wonderfully pluriform sense of transition is one of the principal reasons this era – often passed over in the rush to get to the Darmstadt of the mid 50s – is being explored.

Works by three composers will be analysed within their context here: Nono's *Variazioni Canoniche* (1950), Maderna's *Musica su Due Dimensioni* (1952) and Berio's *Chamber Music* (1953). The first offers a radically new way of shaping orchestral sound and dealing with musical material; the second demonstrates Italian music's initial confrontation with electronic music; the third documents a new kind of theatrical vocality that would mark Italian music of the later twentieth century.

Nono: *Variazione Canoniche* (1950)

In 1948, a young Nono and a slightly older Maderna took part in Hermann Scherchen's international conducting courses in Venice. On the strength of their compositional talents, they were invited to study with the Maestro, and over the next five years a close friendship developed between all three. The introductions (both personal and musical) that Scherchen made for the two Italians were to prove formative in Italian music: Veniero Rizzardi compares the relationship to that between Messiaen and Boulez in France.[1] Its most obvious outcome was the invitation for both of them to submit works to the Darmstadt *Ferienkurse*, Nono for the first time in 1950 and Maderna in 1949. For the next ten years, both composers

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[1] Rizzardi, 'La Nuova Scuola Veneziana, 1948-1951', 2. For Nono's account of these years of study with Scherchen and the 1948 courses, see Restagno ed., *Nono*, 22-3.

would attend every summer school, graduating from observers to faculty by the end of the decade, and would receive performances and premières of their music every single year.

Nono's first public performance came at Darmstadt during this 1950 trip: the *Variazioni Canoniche sulla Serie dell' Op 41 di Schoenberg*, performed by the Darmstadt Landestheater-Orchester under the baton of Scherchen. It provoked a whirlstorm of publicity for the twenty-six year old, shocking the audience with its uncompromising modernity. Hans Werner Henze recalled that the *Variazioni* hit the audience 'so hard that they whistled as if in pain',[2] whilst Nono himself later claimed that the performance 'aroused an incredible scandal' and that 'there is a tape with the recording of that concert in which you can hear the voice of Scherchen turning to the rowdy public and shouting 'Schweinbande' (Herd of pigs!)'.[3] Yet though the work is a difficult one, it is an assured and often beautiful score, and contains much that was to influence a generation of musicians. The difficulty arises not from any sense of a too-dogmatic serial rigour. In fact, it is questionable whether this work is fully serial at all; only in the mid-50s, in works such as *Incontri* and *Il Canto Sospeso*, does the ordered row become the explicit pitch generator for Nono.[4] Rather, the combination of painfully slow-moving harmonies and violent percussive outbursts is held together by an abstraction: using as a *subject* a twelve-note row – and not just any row, but one by Schoenberg himself, from the Op. 41, *Ode to Napoleon Bonaparte* (1942).

The Schoenberg lineage: from analysis to music

And it is with Schoenberg that any analysis of the *Variazioni Canoniche* must start. It is usually inferred from the title of Nono's work that the use of this particular note row is an appropriation of a political statement. Schoenberg certainly liked to portray his *Ode*, together with *A Survivor from Warsaw* (1947), as his contribution to the genre of 'protest music', an outcry against Nazi tyranny: the text, taken from Bryon, is intended as a sardonic

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[2] Quoted by Fox, 'Luigi Nono and the Darmstadt School: Form and Meaning in the Early Works, 1950-1959' in Davismoon, Stephen ed. 'Luigi Nono: Fragments and Silence', 118.

[3] Nono in Restagno ed., *Nono*, 18. Fox ventures that with the *Variazioni* Nono 'achieved the *success de scandale* on which many subsequent Darmstadt reputations have been launched'. Ibid.

[4] That said, the work is inconceivable without dodecaphony, as the following analysis will show.

rendering of Hitler as a Napoleonic figure of conquest and totalitarian rule.[5] Schoenberg, in exile in America and anxious to prove his humanitarian credentials, wrote

> the idea came to me immediately to express with this piece the deep shock that people feel over all the crimes that are happening in this war … I knew that it was the moral duty of intellectuals to take a stand against tyranny.[6]

As already seen, Nono was far from averse to musico-political statements; and regarded highly Schoenberg's sense of the moral commitment required from the artist.[7] However, while such intentions are undoubtedly behind the use of Schoenberg's series, in comparison to the *Tre Epitaffi per Federico García Lorca* of 1951, *La victoire de Guernica* of 1954 and *Il Canto Sospeso* of 1955 (the first two using *resistenza* melodies and the third *resistenza* poetry) the *Variazioni* can hardly be regarded as overt *musica impegnare*. Nono himself never explicitly claimed political protest as a motive for this work, though he did acknowledge that he had used 'material from a pronounced anti-despotic piece'.[8] In this sense, and using Mario Vieira de Carvalho's phrase, the work simply succeeds in 'quoting an attitude' towards the relationship between music and society.[9]

More useful is the idea that the *Variazioni* venerate and evoke the ever-present spectre of the (not yet dead) Schoenberg. Christopher Fox's assertion that the *Variazioni* were a 'declaration of alliance with Schoenberg' in the face of 'neoclassicism and free-atonality' is in this sense simplistic: such basic choices had already been made by Italian composers and Nono himself, and were inherent within the situation of its première at Darmstadt.[10] The preoccupation with Schoenberg's aura can be attributed to two factors: an aesthetic-historical attempt on the part of Nono to locate himself within the Schoenbergian lineage as opposed to the emerging Webernian genealogy, and a material fascination with the derived properties of the row from the Op. 41, which took the Venetian composer beyond a mere declaration of fidelity to dodecaphony. The first was part of a larger

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[5] The root of the term 'protest music', so frequently used in the post-war environment, can found in Thompson [1944], 'Review of Schoenberg's *Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte*' [n.p.].

[6] Quoted by Spangemacher, 'Schoenberg as Role Model', in Davismoon ed. 'Luigi Nono: the Suspended Song', 37.

[7] Ironically Schoenberg was at this point – in the ferment of 1950 McCarthyism – strongly denouncing communism and distancing himself from any socialist connections. See his letter to Hermann Scherchen, 31 August 1950, quoted in ibid., 36.

[8] Stenzl, *Luigi Nono: Texte, Studien zu Seiner Musik*, 201.

[9] de Carvalho, 'Toward Dialectic Listening: Quotation and *Montage* in the Work of Luigi Nono', in Davismoon, Stephen ed. 'Luigi Nono: Fragments and Silence', 39.

[10] Fox, 'Luigi Nono and the Darmstadt School: Form and Meaning in the Early Works, 1950-1959' in Davismoon, Stephen ed. 'Luigi Nono: Fragments and Silence', 116.

standpoint taken by Nono throughout his life which, set against the post-war turn towards Webernian 'purity', viewed the avant-garde project in which he was implicated as the logical development of the Schoenbergian legacy: 'against the general ascendancy of Webern's posthumous reputation as a proto-serialist, and in particular distinction to implicit or explicit rejections of Schoenberg's legacy, Nono always identified Schoenberg's work as the most important point of departure for the new music of the 1950s'.[11] Durazzi notes the dual aesthetic-personal nature of Nono's stance: the links between his mentors Gian Francesco Malipiero/Hermann Scherchen and the Viennese Maestro, his preparation of the performance materials of Schoenberg's *Der Tanz um das Goldene Kalb* for its Darmstadt première in 1951, and not least his marriage to Nuria Schoenberg (the composer's daughter) in 1955.[12] In 1957, Nono's Darmstadt lecture 'Die Entwicklung der Reihentechnik' ('The development of serial technique') confirmed such an orientation.[13]

The second explanation for the recourse to Schoenberg is the series itself. Nono's treatment of the row is a vastly complex 'manipulation of the series to extract from it hidden potentialities and new material'.[14] Nono was not alone in such experimental research: across the late 40s, Maderna and Nono together studied renaissance counterpoint and puzzle canons with Gian-Francesco Malipiero, and were both influenced by Hindemith's 1940 treatise *Unterweisung im Tonsatz*, from which they took the binary harmonic distinction 'calmo/tensione' that will prove crucial in the analysis below.[15] Such study of the music of the past, and of mathematical models of harmony, demonstrates an underlying struggle with the idea of pre-determined compositional material that would mark much post-war modernism. So it is not surprising to find in the Archivio Luigi Nono sketches dated 1949-1950 relating to the gestation of the *Variazioni Canoniche* showing not only analyses of the series used in the *Ode to Napoleon* (marked with a cross) but also those of Schoenberg's *Third String Quartet Op. 30*, the *Suite Op. 29*, the *Klavierstück Op. 33a*, and the *Piano*

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[11] Durazzi, 'Musical Poetics and Political Ideology in the Work of Luigi Nono', 74.

[12] Ibid., 75. See also Nono's 'Prefazione alla Harmonielehre di Arnold Schoenberg' in Nono *Scritti e Colloqui*, i, 336-341.

[13] Rizzardi, 'La Nuova Scuola Veneziana (1948-1951)', 11. For Nono's lecture, see 'Lo Svilluppo della Tecnica Seriale' in *Scritti e Colloqui*, i, 19-42, esp. 23.

[14] Rizzardi, 'La Nuova Scuola Veneziana (1948-1951)', 11.

[15] See Schaller, 'L'Insegnamento di Bruno Maderna attraverso le Fonti Conservate Presso l'Archivio Luigi Nono' in Dalmonte and Baroni ed. *Bruno Maderna: Studi e Testimonianze*, 107-116 and also Restagno's interview with Nono in Nono, *Scritti e Colloqui*, ii, 477-479. A list of transcriptions and writings from Maderna and Nono's formative years of study in the 1940s can be found in the Archivio Luigi Nono, ALN M02.01.06/8-35 and M02.01.03/1-49.

Concerto Op. 42.[16] The series Nono eventually chose is itself one of Schoenberg's more unusual rows, (deliberately selected for its 'ambiguity' according to Rizzardi),[17] distinctive because the second hexachord is rather ingeniously a transposition (up a tone) of the first. Nono transforms this row by combining the first hexachord of I(3) and the second of P(8):

Ex. 7. 1: Row of Schoenberg's *Ode to Napoleon Bonaparte*/Nono's *Variazioni Canoniche*, symmetrical pc sets

The symmetrical division of the row into dyads, trichords, tetrachords and hexachords demonstrates its extraordinarily invariant properties. It means that fragments of the row, due to their similarity, can come to stand in place of the whole set itself in the eventual orchestration of the material; a kind of 'synedochal' property. All of this relies on the idea of the *Spiegelbild*, or mirror-image (demonstrated on Example 7. 1, where the two hexachords are both inversions and retrogrades of each other) that 'presides over each movement of the piece', particularly at the micro level.[18]

An exploration of the hyper-similarity of these melodic cells was central to Nono's compositional process. Once he had chosen and redefined his row, he subjected it to an

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[16] Sketchs for *Variazione Canoniche*, folder ALN 01.01/01-31.
[17] Rizzardi, 'La Nuova Scuola veneziana (1948-1951), 12.
[18] Ibid.

astonishingly complex and ultimately puzzling canonic treatment influenced by Flemish renaissance counterpoint. Later Nono himself even admitted that 'there are some elements that even today looking at the score I cannot succeed in remembering, but I know there are particular canons there.'[19] Using a graphic notation (seen in Example 7. 3), the sketches show Nono rotating tetrachords (6 permutations) and trichords (20 permutations) in order to chart the resulting contours on a serial array. These charts are then compared as entities in themselves, before Nono starts pairing different hexachordal transformations and again compares contours graphically. Experimenting with pitch formations to test the consistency of contour formations when smaller units from the overall row are rotated, it is clear that the linear nature of the twelve-notes as primary order is not to be maintained; indeed the music bears this out from the first bar.[20] One purpose of Nono's analysis is to develop a theory already identified in the *Liriche Greche* of Maderna in Chapter 3: a compositional method that separated intervals into 'calmer' and 'tenser' categories (in Maderna's words, *calmo/tensione*). Nono's extension of this idea was to codify it into an all-encompassing spectrum:
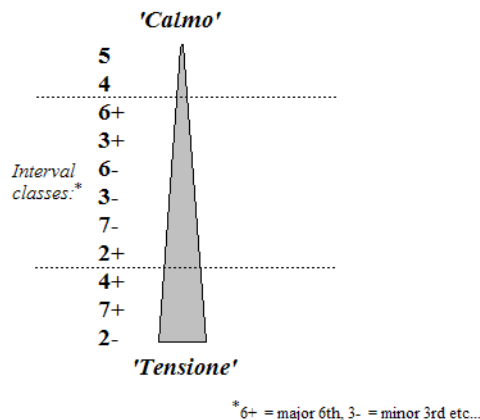
Ex. 7. 2: 'Calmo/tensione' spectrum [arrow added] in the sketches of Nono, *Variazioni Canoniche*, ALN 01.01/01.31

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[19] Restagno ed., *Nono*, 13.
[20] Nono also is concerned with the effect of a free use of registral displacement on the audibility of fundamental interval content, and an entire sheet in the sketches is devoted to this topic, ALN 01.01/01.31.
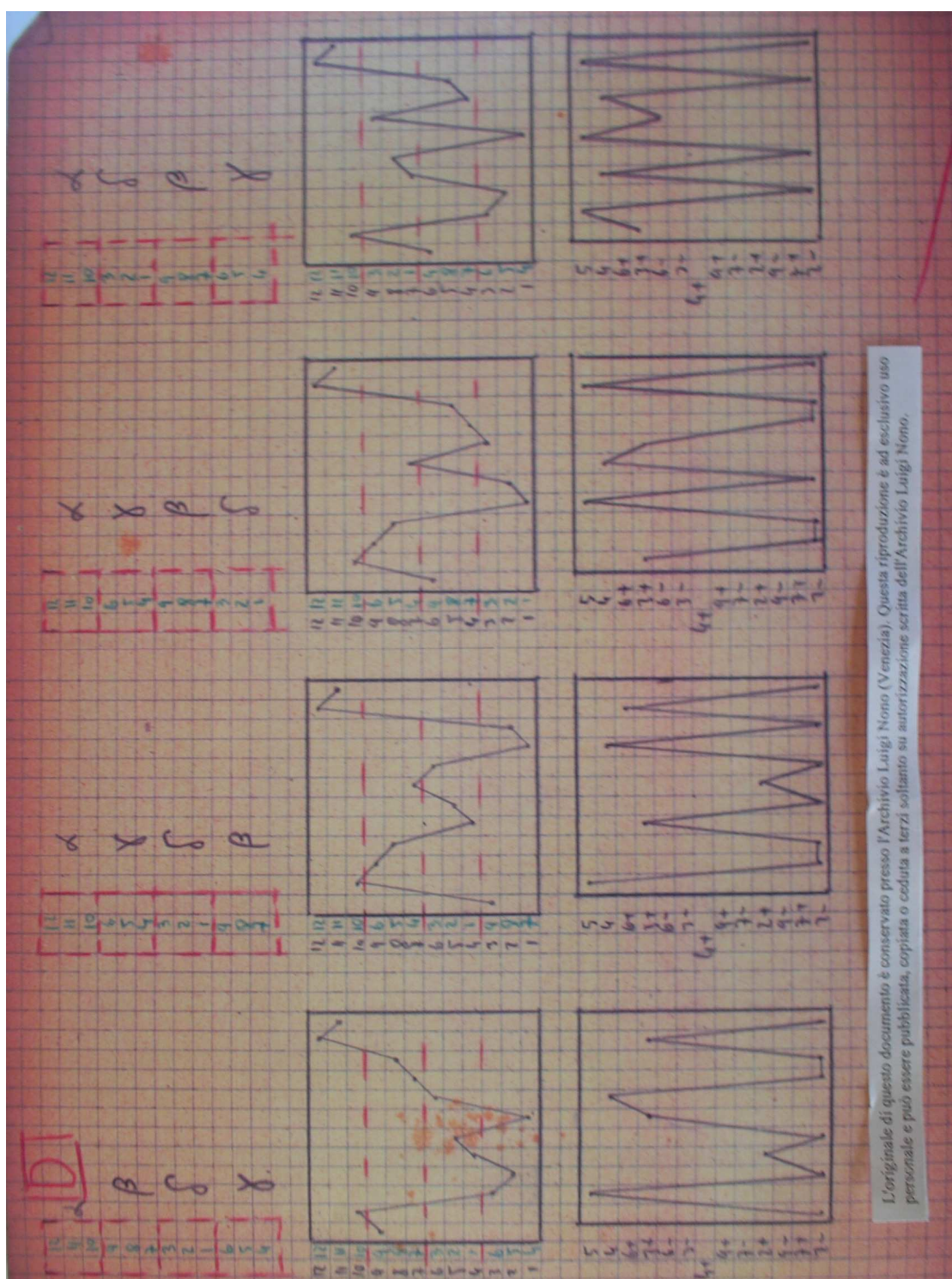
Ex. 7. 3: Graphic analysis by Nono of the row to Schoenberg's *Ode to Napoleon Bonaparte*, ALN
01.01/01.31

This spectrum is seen clearly in the above example: the top array is a simple chart of the rotated pitch classes, whilst the bottom expresses the same pitches in terms of their placement along the *calmo/tensione* spectrum. Nono is thus able to judge how the overall balance between these two categories is maintained as the series is broken down and manipulated, and he is also able to draw upon individual permutations with a precise knowledge of their harmonic and melodic properties. The intention behind such exhausting analysis was aesthetic/symbolic as well as mathematical. As de Carvalho has it, the aim is to ensure the series is 'not an insert from the "outside" into the context of the new work, but rather the whole *permeation* of the latter by the quoted material'.[21] In the *Variazione Canoniche* Nono explodes and dissects Schoenberg's composition.

Such a fragmentation is not restricted to the sphere of pitch, however. In Nono's 1957 Darmstadt lecture the composer was anxious to stress that the B-A-C-H motive in Schoenberg's *Variations for Orchestra* Op. 31 generated rhythmic permutations alongside thematic ones.[22] And in the *Variazioni Canoniche*, Nono took a step towards the serialization of rhythm comparable with the contemporaneous compositions of Boulez in Paris. As Whittall notes, integral serialism was at this time conceived within a 'shift of priority from twelve to six';[23] and just as hexachordal compositional thinking marks Nono's 'explosion' of Schoenberg's pitch series, so he creates an ordered set of six rhythmic values, decreasing from 8 to 1 quavers in length:

Ex. 7. 4: Base rhythmic series in sketches of Nono, *Variazione Canoniche*, ALN 01.01.01/01.10

This rhythmic series is linked to that of pitch in a relatively simple way: the pitch series is grouped into dyads which are each given a rhythmic unit, and the rhythm follows the notes as the dyads are rotated according to the contour patterns established in the analysis, generating a different rhythmic order each time. Example 7. 5 shows Nono working through this principle in the sketch material, Example 7. 6 demonstrates its application in the beginning of movement 4.

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[21] de Carvalho: 'Toward Dialectic Listening: Quotation and *Montage* in the work of Luigi Nono' in Davismoon, Stephen ed. 'Luigi Nono: Fragments and Silence', 38.

[22] Nono, 'Lo Svilluppo della Tecnica Seriale' in *Scritti e Colloqui*, i, 19-42, esp. 26-7.

[23] Whittall, *Serialism*, 164.

Ex. 7. 5: Rhythmic and pitch rotation in the sketches of Nono, *Variazioni Canoniche*, ALN 01.03.02/01.06

Ex. 7. 6: Bars 153-164 (with serial pitch/rhythmic groups marked) of Nono, *Variazione Canoniche*

This annotated example (bars 153-164) shows that Nono's highly deterministic rhythmic schema (using the series of Example 7. 4 with units doubled) is overlapped or layered on top of itself, so that the numerical durations are above all aural; each dyad sounds for its prescribed value, upon which point the next dyad enters over the top of it.[24] This produces an implicit 'impurity': much of the texture is achieved through octave doubling (and even at the 4th), rests are added at will, and note repetition is frequent. How far this can be labelled a 'true and real rhythmic series', as Rizzardi judges it, is debatable. Certainly, the results of Boulez's experiments in the same vein the next year, *Structures 1* for piano (1951-2), create a much more dismembered, incoherent sound-world, in contrast to Nono's carefully crafted melodic lines which, as Fox argues, 'reminds one more strongly of Mahler'.[25]

Ex. 7. 7: Bars 1-7 of Boulez, *Structures 1a* for Piano

However, this embryonic, prototypical use of rhythmic serialization, which is clearest within the second movement (bars 71 to 95, given over entirely to the percussion with two brief orchestral interjections), is a crucial innovation, and the introduction of the idea of 'interdependent' parametric fragments is a harbinger of what was to become a highly progressive aesthetic. And if Boulez provides an unsuitable point of comparison for Nono's new multi-parametric method of composition, a better source of influence is Edgard Varèse:

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[24] Rizzardi also notes the employment at other points of a 'negative' series of 'whole rests corresponding to the durational complexes of the rhythmic base series'. 'La Nuova Scuola Veneziana, 1948-1951', 14.
[25] Fox, 'Luigi Nono and the Darmstadt School: Form and Meaning in the Early Works, 1950-1959' in Davismoon, Stephen ed. 'Luigi Nono: Fragments and Silence', 117.

> The professor of composition at the Ferienkurse in 1950 was Edgard Varèse. I did not know who he was, had never heard his name. The day after the performance [of the *Variazioni*] I went to his class and he asked for my score. He analysed it for an hour, and afterwards instead of giving me his thoughts, he posed me problems, he made me understand the problems this score raised, and he pointed out some things which I had done in some cases without realising.[26]

Varèse's music was little known in Italy in 1950, and Nono had probably never studied any of his scores. However the points of comparison – particularly between the *Variazioni Canoniche* and *Ionisation* (performed in 1950 at Darmstadt) – are remarkable: the emphasis on percussion and attack/decay as structural devices, the novel exploration of timbre, and the use of overlaid instrumental groups as a dynamic force, are all signs of deep affinity between the compositional projects of the two.[27] The fruits of this artistic meeting were to become clear in future music by Nono (such as *Polifonica-Monodia-Ritmica*, 1951-2), but it is most important to note the highly novel timbral details, larger scale musical gestures and parametric independence in Nono's first work, radical within the European as well as Italian mainstream.

Canons and spatial architecture

This leads naturally on to a consideration of the more immediate surface features of the *Variazioni*: the canonic basis on which the whole work rests, and its timbre, space and architecture. As Rizzardi has demonstrated, the first movement is structured according to a rigid puzzle canon, 'its seventy measures entirely based upon a mirrored double canon'. Firstly, a 'counterpoint in two parts' is generated, to which a three stage model is applied:

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[26] Restagno ed., *Nono*, 18.
[27] See Stäbler, '…yes, No-no' in Davismoon ed. 'Luigi Nono: the Suspended Song', 69-70 and Ramazzotti, *Luigi Nono*, 21, for further connections between Nono and Varèse.

1. *the two voices are doubled each by their inversion*
2. *this inverted double canon is joined by its own retrograde*
3. *two of the voices are entirely retrograded, giving rise to a form of double chiasmus [parallelism].'*

... this elaborate form makes up the first section (A), repeated three times (B-C-D) ... to each of the 4 sections are assigned transposed forms, inverting and/or retrograding the sequence of original pitches ...The relative schematicity of this process is at this point destroyed by a reordering of the four parts in a sort of liberally completed pre-orchestration. To this there is subtracted (by filtering) material destined to constitute a further line of so-called 'rests'. These rests of the four sections A-B-C-D come to be ordered to their time in a double canon organized thus:

1 – 'remains' of A (prime form) – 'remains' of B (prime form)
2 – 'remains' of D (retrograde) – 'remains' of C (retrograde)

Finally, subtracting the pauses, this new canon comes to be placed amongst the B and C sections as an axis of the Spiegelbild [mirror image] complex:

A – B – Canons of the 'remains' – C – D.

Ex. 7. 8: Rizzardi's analysis of Nono, *Variazione Canoniche* movt. 1[28]

Such complexity is bemusing; and it is perhaps more useful for present purposes to demonstrate how on the local level Nono's serial procedure, which lacks the systematicity to allow for the identification of direct and perfectly formed melodic canons, is frequently canonic to the ear. It would seem prudent to identify what, in the context of the *Variazioni*, the idea of 'canon' might entail:

1. A series of clear and sustained horizontal lines (more than single notes).
2. A sense of overlap.
3. Common and recognizable interval groups occurring more than once.
4. A paradoxical juncture between harmonic simultaneity (hearing vertically) and melodic progression (hearing horizontally).

Example 7. 9, taken from the first movement (*Largo Vagamente*), demonstrates these principles in action. Whilst there are certainly no direct melodic imitations, the texture is essentially an unfolding set of melodic fragments that take over from each other with no

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[28] Rizzardi, 'La Nuova Scuola Veneziana, 1948-1951' 13-14. The analysis is useful insofar as it points to the presence of a discernible underlying puzzle canon of sorts, but it stops short of a 'full disclosure', contains a frustrating lack of visual examples, and is full of contradictions (such as his 3rd point on the chiasmic result of the initial canonic maneuvers, which in fact should logically return the whole thing back to its original form).

break; thereby fulfilling conditions 1 and 2. And at times, conventional canons – in which rhythmic and melodic contour is preserved in the 'answering' voice – are identifiable: for instance, between the trumpet and the flute in bar 17, the clarinet and the oboe in bar 23 and the violin and bassoon in bars 23-24. At other points, things are not so clear-cut, but in restricting the rhythmic units to multiples of 1-8 quavers (Nono has doubled the series-values seen in Example 7. 4) and in the preponderance of minor 2nd followed by major 3rd intervals, canonic connections are made by the staggered nature of entries. As Iddon writes, 'the interest here, then, does not lie in surface-level canons … but rather in subcutaneous canons that transform the way that individual polyphonic strands are generated.[29] The effect is of a highly expressive texture unfolding melodically as it moves seamlessly from moment to moment. Overall, dynamics are coordinated as a whole ensemble, as often are the harmonies: note the quasi-dominant seventh in bar 18; the unison arrival onto the C# as resting place in bar 19; and the constant E/F dyad lasting seven crotchets in bars 19-21. But even then there is a sense that these harmonic resting-places are only reached as a consequence of the horizontal motion of the melodies. In combating Stockhausen's attack on Nono's lack of textual clarity in *Il Canto Sospeso*, Morag Grant points to the intensely *communicative* aspect of Nono's instrumental writing; her comments could equally apply to the *Variazione Canoniche*:

> *Il Canto Sospeso* does not require such instances of semantic clarity to get its message across: the music itself is utterly sad. This is to suggest that there is a semantic level to this music which is more direct than in other serial compositions – in other words, that a specifically non-musical emotion can be portrayed. [30]

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[29] Iddon, 'Serial Canon(s): Nono's Variations and Boulez's Structures', 5-6. Iddon's interpretation of canon does not rest on the quality of 'sustained-ness' seen in condition 1, and his tracing of four hexachordal strands in bars 1-5 of the *Variazione Canoniche* differs from Example 7. 11 in positing canonic links between non-adjacent notes. The overall conclusion is similar however: invariant subsets from the series are interwoven to form a canonic texture.

[30] Grant, *Serial Music, Serial Aesthetics*, 203-4.

Ex. 7. 9: Bars 16-24 of Nono, *Variazioni Canoniche*

Nono's preliminary work, which involved fragmenting a series according to its latent properties, is very evident here, and the canonic aspect is mediated through the distinctive character of the initial fragments. The effect is of a music seemingly preoccupied with such interval groups as sonority itself – fulfilling condition 3 ('common and recognizable interval groups occurring more than once'). In Example 7. 11, from the very start of the work, one can see a network of pc sets ([014], [0145], [0123] and [01458]), derived from the invariant dyads, triads and tetrachords of the series, accounting for almost the totality of the pitch content. The effect is of a discontinuity in melodic lines, even visually giving a semblance of splintered texture. That this discontinuity lay at the heart of Nono's compositional experimental approach to the row can also be seen in the sketches, which contain scattered drawings showing tetrachords divided amongst the parts in a manner highly similar to what eventually emerges in the score:
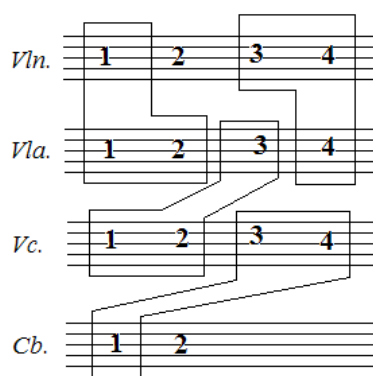
Ex. 7. 10: Row-sharing ideas found in the sketches of Nono, *Variazioni Canoniche* ALN 01.01/01 - 31

And in terms of condition 4 what is interesting from the canonic point of view is how this music blurs the boundary between harmonic simultaneity (hearing vertically) and melodic progression (hearing horizontally). Example 7. 12 is a reduction that presents two ways to 'read' these bars, with the intervallic results marked. The intervallic difference between these two 'versions' of the opening is marked; analysed against Nono's *calmo/tensione* spectrum (Calmo → 5 4 6+ 3+ 6- 3- 7- 2- 4+ 7+ 2- ← Tensione) it can be seen that whilst the melodies are weighted towards the 'tense' end of the spectrum, the resultant harmonies (excepting two fleeting minor 2nds) are much more 'calm'.[31]

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[31] See Borio, 'Nono a Darmstadt, Le opera strumentale degli anni cinquanta' in Restagno ed. *Nono*, 81. Iddon's graphing of these opening bars follows Forte (*The Structure of Atonal Music*, 135) and is in essence an alternative lay-out to that used in Example 10, without offering the dual interpretation of harmony-melody. Iddon, 'Serial Canon(s): Nono's Variations and Boulez's Structures', 10.

Ex. 7. 11: Bars 1-5 of Nono, *Variazioni Canoniche*

Ex. 7. 12: Reduction of bars 1-5 of Nono, *Variazione Canoniche*, interpreted melodically and harmonically

Thus there is an inherent tension between horizontal and vertical in Nono's canonic procedure, maintained as the movement progresses and a result of the essential 'vocality' of Nono's compositional thought:

> Most composition … retains the linearity of classical vocal technique, and often the extended maintenance of particular tones – just as, in singing, syllables are held for much longer than in spoken language. This is exactly what happens at the purely instrumental opening of *Il Canto Sospeso*. It depends on the overlay of sustained lines, but these individual sound events, by their length and particularly by their dynamic patterning, are a long way from the isolated tones of early serialism.[32]

This horizontal-vertical tension is mediated via Nono's innovative use of timbre: but caution should be used in applying the Second Viennese epithet *Klangfarbenmelodie*, even given the short length of the units from each instrument; there is no sense of one single joined-up line, and the overlapping of parts takes away any sense of a central, timbrally altered melody. Better is Michael Gorodecki's argument that 'the composition of sonority over-rides abstract rules … the very slow, constantly varying tempo allows the shapes to 'breathe' in a curious way'.[33] If conceived as an exploration of the sonorities deriving from certain small intervallic groups, and given the complex rotational forms of these groups seen in the sketches, this explains why octave doublings and false relations (even as early as the first phrase) are often prevalent; this goes as far as whole orchestral unison passages, such as at bar 94 or 112.

Ex. 7. 13: Octave doublings and repeated notes in Nono, *Variazione Canoniche*

The timbral explorations made by Nono are certainly vast: one feels that, for music composed in 1950, there are new extremes at every level: the sense of the depth of the *pp* opening, the colossal build up into the tritone C-F# tremolando *fff* chord of bars 242-243,

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[32] Grant, *Serial Music, Serial Aesthetics*, 205.
[33] Gorodecki, 'Strands in 20th-Century Italian Music: 1. Luigi Nono: A History of Belief', 10.

the harsh dryness of the percussion in movement II, the lush, Ligeti-like cloud chords that shimmer from one instrumental group to another in bars 52-54. As Ramazzotti puts it, 'Nono sought to provoke the listener towards a dialectic between the contemplation of *pianissimo* sounds and the provocations of *forte* extremes, stirring up a scandal amongst the Darmstadt public'.[34] Timbre is often uses as a structural device; for instance, tremolando used to designate climax in movement III, and the trill used to designate the fading of a section into nothingness in movement I. In the orchestration Nono's most familiar feature – his sense of expansive 'space' – is in evidence. Helmut Lachenmann writes

> Composing for Nono was increasingly all about creating spaces and making radical uses of mediums, virtually forcing them to become spaces for perceptions, opening tones and the constellation of sound as a potential space, creating an awareness of structure as a space made up of spaces … [35]

In the *Variazioni*, the kaleidoscopic timbres, dynamic echoes, and gradually expanding and contracting orchestral groupings all contribute to this aesthetic. As Federica Goffi-Hamilton puts it, 'Nono builds the experience of music within architectural space'; and it is no surprise to learn that one of Nono's closest friendships was with the pioneering post-war Venetian architect Carlo Scarpa, whom Nono immortalised in his 1984 work *A Carlo Scarpa, Architetto, ai suoi Infiniti Possibili*.[36] One of the main generators of the flexible musical time and space is the sense of breath and silence (in architectural terms, 'absence'), which 'becomes 'visible' in the 'voids' left in the score between sound blocks… in the canvas onto which cosmologically scattered fragments of sonic and architectural material are collaged'.[37] That this trait worked its way into the post-war Italian psyche is clear in the music of Salvatore Sciarrino, for whom 'the history of musical structures – his own and others' – is that of the spatialization of sound'.[38] These 'breaths' can be seen as part of an overall architecture in Example 7. 14, which gives a sort of form to the first movement. Here, the normal way of charting form seen so far in this study has been modified to heighten the visual sense of shape heard aurally in the music, as the waves of sound morph between instrumental groups and the expansion/contraction patterns pass by.

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[34] Ramazzotti, *Luigi Nono*, 21.
[35] Lachenmann, 'Touched by Nono' in Davismoon ed. 'Luigi Nono: the Suspended Song', 26.
[36] Goffi-Hamilton, 'Carlo Scarpa and the Eternal Canvas of Silence', 294.
[37] Ibid., 292, 296. See also de Carvalho's suggestion that Nono's architectural 'canvas' was (like Giovanni Gabrieli), inherently that of Venice's Basilica di San Marco, in 'Toward Dialectic Listening: Quotation and *Montage* in the Work of Luigi Nono', in Davismoon, Stephen ed. 'Luigi Nono: Fragments and Silence', 51.
[38] Osmond-Smith, 'Sciarrino, Salvatore' in *Grove Music Online* (accessed 17 Mar 2010).

Movt. II

+ perc.

Arp.
Pno.
Tp.

(70)

Bb — F

pp

(63)

Tp. + Pno. scales

Bb — F   Bb — F   Bb — F

Str.

Woodw.

'shimmering chords'

All

f

mp

(54)

Cl.   Bas.
Sop. Sax.

(46)

pp

C

(35)   **C**

Picc.
Fl   1 Vln.
Sop. Sax

tr

ppp

Trb.   Sop. Sax.
Bas.   Picc.

+

Pno.

Tr.   Hm.

mf

(21)

(45)   **C**

Picc.   Arp.
Fl
Sop. Sax.
Cl.
B. Cl   Pno.
Bas.
Tr.
Vln.   Vc.

tr

ppp

(13)

pp

Tr.   Hm.

(6)

Fl/Cl
Arp.
Str Soli.

(42)

Arp.
Pno.
Vln.   Vc.

p

Fl/Cl
Arp.
Str Soli.

ppp

A

(36)

Fl
Arp.
Sop. Sax.

pp

B
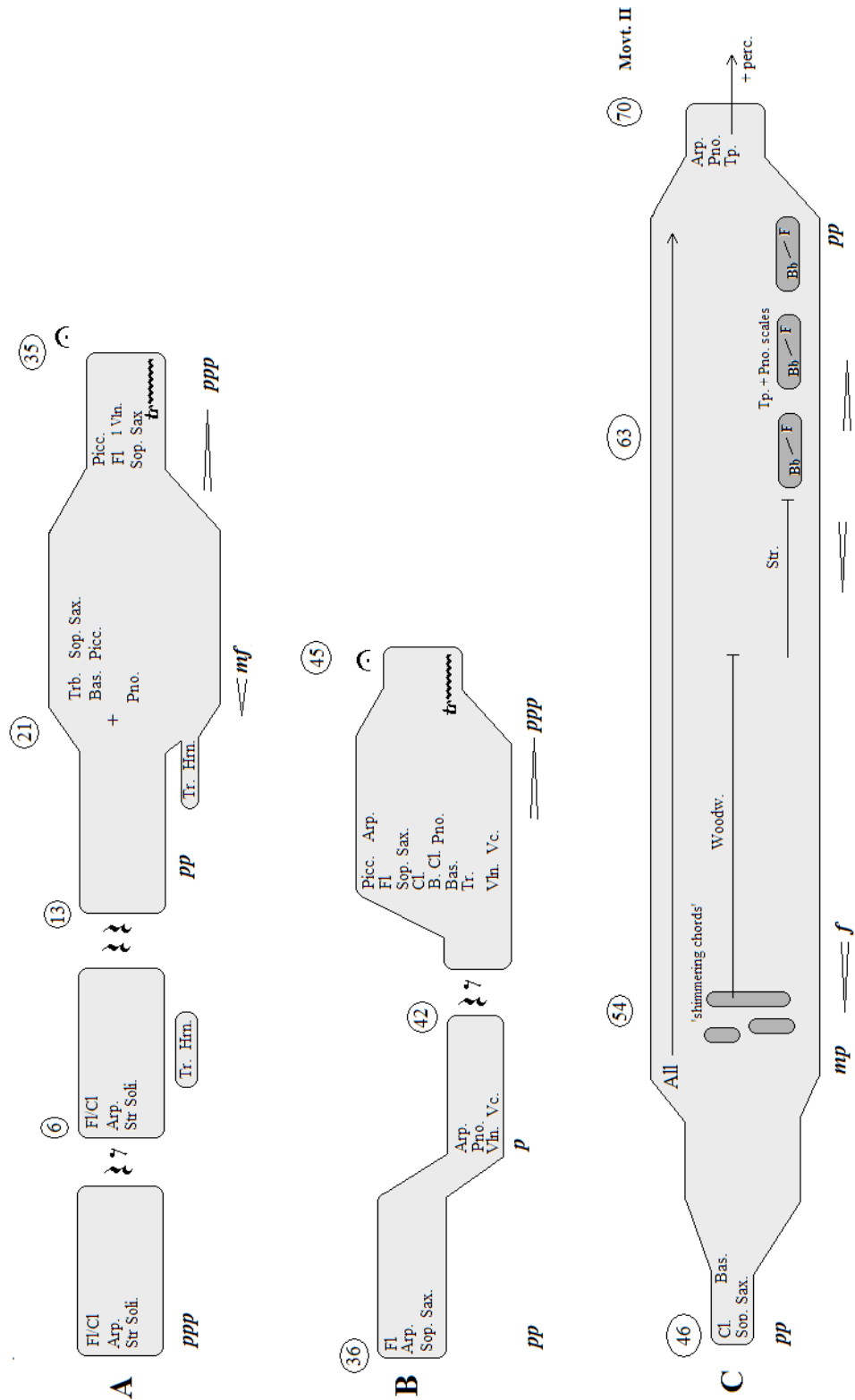
Ex. 7. 14: Formal design in Nono, *Variazioni Canoniche*, movt. I

The non-linear representation of this music is deliberate, and demonstrates how everything emerges from a very quiet central starting point from which three quite unrelated sections (in terms of motives, timbre and dynamic) emanate, before returning to their centre. The overall effect is of a fluid, expanding and contracting material, with little overall forward motion (though bars 63-70 certainly provide local direction).

This type of formal structure does not fit easily into the mould of 'variation' form suggested by the title *Variazione Canoniche*. However one large scale process does explain Nono's reasoning. As the piece progresses, a subtle and important shift in conceptual ground occurs, reaching a particular fulfilment in the last movement, *Lento* (bars 217-283). From this point onwards, the fragments of row become longer lines, and the shape of the actual linear material taken from Schoenberg's *Ode* begin to crystallize.[39] Take, for example, a comparison of a fragment from the clarinet line at bar 33 with the soprano saxophone at the beginning of the 4th movement:

Ex. 7. 15: Increasing length of row quotation towards the end of Nono, *Variazioni Canoniche*

This process continues until the close; in fact, the entire series is not quoted as a twelve note linear cell until the very last few bars of the piece, where it is hauntingly picked out again by the harp in octaves in its entirety; in this sense, the work as a totality is a gradual revealing of the properties and sonorities of the row until, at the last moment, the underlying melodic base is fully revealed. Thus Schoenberg is gradually revealed as the 'spectre' so revered by a young Nono. This can be characterized as a 'musical unfolding', a macro-level process (and quite specifically a 1950s phenomenon) that marks a considerable break with the pre-war serial aesthetic of material development. But it is also a retrograde 'variation form' structure – if the theme is read as the series at the close of the work, and the variations as its development and progressive fragmentation the nearer the beginning is

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[39] An important turning point in this process is the commencement of the fourth section (bars 217-225), where the harp lays on top of sustained string chords the first hexachord of I(3) and the second of P(10), which are combinatorial, thus demonstrating Nono's appropriation of a signature Schoenbergian *modus operandi*.

approached. Such subtly of compositional process would mark Nono out even at this early stage as a profoundly innovative musical mind.

A historical postscript: Italy at Darmstadt

The première of the *Variazione Canoniche* at Darmstadt in 1950 was only the third Italian work to be performed there, but its success would change the balance of European avant-garde music in the 50s. As Example 7. 16 shows, the number of Italian composers associated with the summer course would grow exponentially. It was Nono who in 1958 coined the term 'Darmstadt School' to describe the composers of integral serial music, and it was the same composer who effectively broke up the school with his invectives against the ahistoricity of Cageian aesthetics and the shift in Stockhausen's music in a controversial 1959 lecture entitled 'Geschichte und Gegenwart in der Musik Heute' ('The Presence of History in the Music of Today').[40] Maderna was universally seen as a 'father figure' at the courses, dying in Darmstadt in 1973, whilst younger composers such as Sylvano Busotti and Giacomo Manzoni, like Nono and Maderna, launched their careers there.

That many Italian composers felt the need to go abroad to strengthen their participation in the new-music project is perhaps due to the fact that, as Nöller puts it, 'in [post-war] Italy an infrastructure for new music was not conceivable'.[41] However, this study has shown that the lack of structure and funding in musical life (at least in comparison to the GDR, bankrolled by America) did not inhibit the rapid home-grown proliferation of new aesthetic trends, particularly in Milan, Venice and Rome. And the temptation for Italian musical historiography to take a geographical detour over the Alps at this point is to be treated with caution. Received opinion has all the best bits of post-war Italian music occurring in Germany: at best a wrong assessment, at worst, a tendentious capitulation to the modernist grand narrative itself.[42] So even though, with hindsight, Nono and Maderna's involvement in Darmstadt was a crucial historical occurrence, it did not necessarily have such immediate implications in Italian culture: Fedele D'Amico in 1954 could start a review of Nono's *Epitaffio per Federico García Lorca no. 2* (performed in Rome) by stating: 'the performance of this work was only the second encounter with its author; for the last couple of years his name has been cloaked in an aura of infallibility at German festivals, while in

[40] 'Presenza storica nella musica d'oggi' in Nono, *Scritti e Colloqui*, i, 46-54.
[41] Nöller, *Engagement und Form*, 88.
[42] For example, see Salzman and Desi, *The New Music Theatre: Seeing the Voice, Hearing the Body*, 171.

Italy he is practically unknown.'[43] This tension between local and global narratives has marked much of this thesis, and continues into the later 1950s.

Year	Italian works performed	Events
1949	Mario Peragallo *Musica per doppio quartetto d'archi (1948)* Bruno Maderna *Fantasia per due pianoforti (1949)*	
1950	Bruno Maderna *Composizione II für Kammerorchester (1950)* Camillo Togni *Fantasia per pianoforte op. 25 (1944)* Luigi Nono *Variazioni canoniche (1950)*	
1951	Camillo Togni *Tre studi per Morts sans sépulture (1950)* Luigi Nono *Polifonica - Monodia - Ritmica (1951)* Luigi Dallapiccola *Il prigioniero (1944-48)*	
1952	Goffredo Petrassi *Coro di morti (1940-41)* Luigi Dallapiccola *Job (1950), Rencesvals (1946)* Camillo Togni *Omaggio a Bach per due pianoforti (1952)* Luigi Nono *España en el corazón (1952)* Bruno Maderna *Musica su due dimensioni (1952)*	Maderna begins conducting
1953	Luigi Nono *Y su sangre ya viene cantando (1952)* Alfredo Casella *Burlesque aus Sicilienne et burlesque (1914)* Bruno Maderna *Kranichsteiner Kammerkantate (1953)*	Maderna's first lecture
1954	Luigi Dallapiccola *Quaderno musicale di Annalibera (1952)* Camillo Togni *Sonata per flauto e pianoforte (1953)* Bruno Maderna *Flötenkonzert (1954)* Luigi Nono *La victoire de Guernica (1954)*	
1955	Luigi Nono *Incontri (1955)* Camillo Togni *Helian di Trakl (1955)* Goffredo Petrassi *Concerto per orchestra n. 2 (1951)* Bruno Maderna *Quartetto per archi in due tempi (1955)*	Maderna takes part in the 'Young composer's working-group'
1956	Luigi Nono *Canti per tredici (1955)* Luciano Berio *Nones per orchestra (1954), Mutazioni (1954)* Bruno Maderna *Quartetto per archi in due tempi (1955), Notturno (1956)*	
1957	Franco Evangelisti *4!, Due piccoli pezzi (1954)* Giacomo Manzoni *Seconda piccola suite (1956)* Camillo Togni *Tre capricci per pianoforte (1954-57)* Bruno Maderna *Notturno (1956), Syntaxis (1957)* Luciano Berio *Mutazioni (1954), Perspectives (1957)* *Serenata I per flauto e 14 strumenti (1957)* *Tre studi per orchestra da camera (1956)*	Nono teaches one of the 'specialized courses'
1958	Franco Evangelisti *Incontri di fasce sonore (1956-57)* *Proiezione sonore (1955-56)* Luciano Berio *Perspectives (1957)* Bruno Maderna *Continuo (1958)* *Musica su due dimensioni (1958)* Franco Donatoni *Tre improvvisazioni per pianoforte (1957)* Luciano Berio *Sequenza I per flauto solo (1958)* Luigi Dallapiccola *Cinque canti per baritono e alcuni (1955)* Aldo Clementi *Composizione n. 1 per pianoforte (1957)* Luigi Nono *Cori di Didone (1958)* *Composizione per orchestra n. 1 (1951)* Nicolò Castiglioni *Inizio di movimento per pianoforte (1958)*	Maderna on faculty Round-table on the *Studio di Fonologia RAI, Milan*
1959	Bruno Maderna *Concerto per pianoforte e orchestra (1959)* *Musica su due dimensioni (1958)* Luciano Berio *Thema - Omaggio a Joyce (1958)* *Quartetto per archi (1956)* Angelo Paccagnini *Brevi canti (1958)* Sylvano Busotti *Piano Pieces for David Tudor (1959)* Luigi Nono *Diario polacco '58 (1958-59)* Nicolò Castiglioni *Cangianti per pianoforte (1959)*	Maderna and Nono on faculty Nono's controversial lecture *Geschichte und Gegenwart in der Musik heute*

Ex. 7. 16: Italy and Darmstadt

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[43] D'Amico, 'Current Chronicle', 589. The journal *Il Diapason* did keep Italian musicians updated with news from Darmstadt; for instance, see an article by its founder Wolfgang Steinecke, [1951] 'I Corsi Estivi Internazionali di Darmstadt per la Musica Contemporanea', 22-4.

Maderna: *Musica su Due Dimensioni* (1952)

If the previous analysis has demonstrated the ways in which one Italian composer was engaging with and redefining the high-modernist shibboleths of timbre, space and pitch, this section demonstrates an Italian contribution to another post-war development, that of the rise of electronic music and in particular the manipulation of instrumental sound sources to form what Pierre Schaeffer in 1948 had termed 'musique concrète'. The Parisian experimental scene centring around the work of Schaeffer and Pierre Henry at the Radiodiffusion Française in the late 40s has been well documented elsewhere, as has the rival hub around the experimental studio at Radio Cologne (set up in 1951), whose 'elektronische musik' was proudly developed from pure sine waves and involved no instruments at all.[44] Given that Luciano Berio's contribution to this emerging genre came in the late 50s – his *Thema (Omaggio a Joyce)* from 1958 stands alongside Stockhausen's *Gesang der Jünglinge* (1955) and Ligeti's *Artikulation* (1958) as a masterwork of early electroacoustic music – it may be surprising to learn that the earliest work of synthesised Italian music was written in 1952 by Bruno Maderna.[45] Not only that, but – along the same lines as Varèse's more famous *Déserts* (1954) – Maderna's *Musica su Due Dimensioni* is an very early example (perhaps the earliest) of a synthesis between electronic music and live performance. In demonstrating such new possibilities, the first opening had been made in Italy for the artistic currents which would create the *Studio di Fonologia Musicale*, established in Milan in 1955.

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[44] For general surveys, see Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, v, 187-92, Cross, 'Electronic Music, 1948-1953'. For a more in-depth discussion of the 'musique concrète'/'elektronische musik' debate, see Grant, *Serial Music, Serial Aesthetics*, 55-60.

[45] This is, of course, neglecting to mention the works developed for the *intonarumori* ('noise machines') by Luigi Russolo in 1913/4. The influence of the Italian Futurists – of which Russolo was a leading member – on electronic and synthesised music both before and after the Second World War was strong; however its legacy for Italian post-war composers seems to have been no greater than for their European counterparts. One would imagine it would, if anything, have been a sensitive comparison for Italians given the connections between futurism and Fascism; thus it is curious that when Maderna and Berio collaborated on their first work of *musique concrète* for the RAI in Milan 1954, they chose to title it *Ritratto di città* ('Portrait of a City') directly echoing (in both name and sound source) Russolo's most famous *intonarumori* composition *Il Risveglio di città* ('Awakening of a City') See Lombardi and Piccardi, *Rumori Futori*, 19-24.

The complex gestation of a 'makeshift' work

Premièred at the 1952 Darmstadt *Ferienkurse*, Maderna's *Musica su Due dimensioni* (henceforth *Musica*) 'for flute, cymbal and magnetic tape' is a confusing piece. The magnetic tape part was rushed in production and curtailed in scope; the first performance contained an un-notated flute cadenza; the programme note was incorrect (listing a piano amongst the instruments); and the composer himself had reservations over the work: the score was subsequently lost and in 1958 a revised version (in reality a totally different piece) was issued. Richard Taruskin judges the piece as 'obviously a makeshift';[46] yet Maderna never withdrew it,[47] and the recent research of Nicola Scaldaferri in providing a critical edition has established a basis for an historical and analytical account to begin. Working from the sketches preserved in the *Archivio Bruno Maderna* and the original Darmstadt recording, Scaldeferri has reconstructed the central flute episode and given some indication about the make-up of the tape part.[48] This section of the chapter will discuss the gestation of the work and its formal properties, whilst the next will demonstrate its rootedness in the 'tecnica degli sposamenti'.

Maderna's friendship with Herbert Eimert, established at the 1951 Darmstadt course, had provided the Italian composer with the opportunity to visit the *Institut für Phonetik* at the University of Bonn later that year, where he became acquainted with the work of Werner Meyer-Eppler, who in 1949 had published his *Elektronische Klangerzeugung* ('Electronic Sound-Production'), a pioneering treatise on the possibilities of music composed by entirely electronic means.[49] The tape recording and editing facilities at Bonn were excellent, and they caught Maderna's imagination. He wrote to Meyer-Eppler on the 13th May 1952 and enthused that 'he was very taken with this new means and was planning a new composition for flute, percussion and tape recorder', with an ambition for a première at the Darmstadt festival of that year.[50] Meyer-Eppler's reply was cautious, and revealing:

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[46] Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, v, 211.

[47] In fact, the composer would state in 1959 'I felt the necessity for this synthesis for the first time in 1952, and was very happy with it'. Quoted in Baroni and Dalmonte eds. *Bruno Maderna*: *Documenti,* 86.

[48] As Scaldaferri writes, this was a 'somewhat problematic' task, as 'neither the flute part used by [Severino] Gazzelloni nor the original tape part made by Maderna and [Werner] Meyer-Eppler have been found' (preface to the score of *Musica su Due dimensioni*, ix).

[49] For more on Meyer-Eppler's pioneering work, see Ungeheuer, *Wie die elektronische Musik 'erfunden' wurde …: Quellenstudie zu Werner Meyer-Epplers musikalischem Entwurf zwischen 1949 und 1953* and Grant, *Serial Music, Serial Aesthetics*, 29-30, 55-57.

[50] Ungeheuer, *Wie die elektronische Musik 'erfunden' wurde …,* 133.

What is significant, therefore, is that you propose two performers and apparatus combined together: the question is, is such a combination admissible? Pierre Schaeffer tried this in his work 'Orpheus', but the performance at Darmstadt last year (a sung cantata together with loudspeaker sounds) was not convincing. The fields of sonorous expression produced by a voice and by electronic music are in fact too diverse. I fear that likewise in a combination of traditional musical instruments and electronically generated sounds, all that will be created is an impression of contrast. Alternatively, it could be more natural if the piano and the flute were to be inserted into the process of electronic organisation and have their conventional sound taken from them, with an adequate positioning of microphones and further technical means. The result would then be fixed and ready on magnetic tape, and I think that this possibility is the only adaptation for the new means. … Above all, connecting it with other musical instruments would require, in my opinion, a large amount of preparatory work, and would need to be proved aurally.[51]

Maderna had unwittingly wandered into the 'latter day *guerre des bouffons* that was developing between Parisian *musique concrete* and the *Elektronische Musik* of Cologne'.[52] Meyer-Eppler already veered towards Cologne's antipathy concerning 'acoustic' sound sources, and seems to view pessimistically the proposed combination of live music and electronics in a public concert. The incongruity in timbre and coordination between the human voice and the electronically generated sounds of a magnetic tape led not to synthesis, Meyer-Eppler argued, but simple contrast. However, Maderna was determined to go ahead with his project. He aimed, according to Scaldaferri, to do two things: 'timbrally enrich the instrumental sounds, and to make a bond between the various transformations of serial material'.[53] So it is obvious from the finished product that Maderna wanted to conceive the overall serial dimensions 'more on the conceptual than the acoustic level' as a primary stage, and to assign a synthetic role to the secondary stage in the recording studio, whereby the mediation between live and electronic sound sources would be determined and the tape part realised; material first, technology second. However, such a viewpoint was to change as the years went on. Scaldaferri remarks that Maderna was commencing

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[51] Letter from Meyer-Eppler to Maderna, 14 May 1952, reprinted in Baroni and Dalmonte eds. *Studi su Bruno Maderna*, 62-3. 'Orpheus' is a reference to a lecture session entitled *Die Klangwelt der Elektronischen Musik* ('The Sound-World of Electronic Music'), which was followed by the first performances of Pierre Henry and Schaeffer's *Symphonie pour un Homme Seul* (1949-50) for tape recorder and their *Orphée* 51(1951) for tape and vocal choir.
[52] Osmond-Smith, *Berio*, 12.
[53] Scaldeferri, *Musica nel Laboratorio Elettroacustico*, 60.

a journey that started with the view of electronic tools simply as a timbral extension and a stimulus for complex serial development, but later arrived at mature works in which, on the contrary, the very point of strength is found in the exploitation of the *technical* possibilities of tape music.[54]

But in 1952, as the Darmstadt course rapidly approached, Maderna was writing to Nono that he had only written 80 bars, and that they 'are all wrong', seemingly struggling to understand how the electronicising of some of his ideas would alter their rigid compositional dimensions.[55] So when his studio date arrived on the 21st June, Maderna's planned work took an altogether unexpected turn.

Taped material in Bonn had, since 1948, been produced by the 'Melochord', an electronic keyboard invention of Harold Bode (see Example 7. 17). A conventional five octave polyphonic keyboard was used to deliver sinusoidal-wave sound signals which could be manipulated in their attack and decay, vibrato, and volume (using a foot pedal).

This instrument spanned five octaves, and was touch-sensitive, meaning that it responded to pressure applied to its keys. The Melochord was also the first instrument to feature a split keyboard, whereby the bottom two octaves could be sent to one tone generator, and the top three sent to another. The instrument also featured envelope generators that could set the amplitude shape of a note. Filters also could be set to establish formant regions at different pitch areas.[56]

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[54] Ibid., 61, italics added.
[55] Letter from Maderna to Nono, 30/31 May 1952, quoted in ibid.
[56] Ballora, 'History of Electroacoustic Music. The Cologne Studio: Elektronische Musik' on-line (accessed 12 Dec 2009).

Ex. 7. 17: Meyer Eppler at the 'Melochord', 1951 (photo in Ungeheuer, *Wie die elektronische Musik 'erfunden' wurde …*, 129)

The output from the Melochord could then be directly recorded onto magnetic tape, at which stage various manipulations could be applied: looping, splicing and retrograding. However, for Maderna's purposes, the idea was not to layer audio effects to compose a stand-alone composition, but to create a seamless whole that integrated an electronic tape and a live flute and piano line. Example 7. 18 shows the sketch for its opening (bars 1-19). The Melochord line (marked 'El.') takes its place amongst the sparse texture, at times with an unidentified envelope filter signalled, at other times with an undulating line 'signifying vibrato and always in proportion to the indicated width' (as the note indicates). The slowly meandering part writing is obviously set up to give enough time for the novel timbres to interact with one another; the line shape-shifts between instruments, exploring extremes of dynamic and attack, using a variety of articulations, delineating foreground and background objects (using the Schoenbergian Haupstimme/Nebestimme markings) and venturing towards Klangfarbenmelodie. As Niedhöfer writes, Maderna 'takes the opportunity to turn what could be realised mostly as a single line into a texture that projects single pitches as well as simultaneities'.[57] One can clearly see how this music attempts to inhabit a dual, hybridised state: music in 2D, as it were, a strikingly direct renunciation of the modernist alienation of the composer from the interpreter (couched as it was in the most technologically advanced context), and indeed to romantic *Werktreue* itself. In a Darmstadt lecture of 1959, Maderna commented:

> Music in two dimensions! What does the concept of dimensions mean to me? By dimensions I mean forms of musical communication: firstly, with traditional means, performers who play instruments or sing in front of an audience, and secondly by means of electro-acoustic recording and reproduction, in which there are employed, or processed, electronic or instrumental sounds which have been recorded … A synthesis of both these possibilities which I call 'dimensions' seems to me to be particularly fruitful since the performer – faced with the realisations of sound which are fixed on tape, made by the composer and controlled by him – achieves a much closer contact with the composer … [58]

[57] Niedhöfer, 'Bruno Maderna's Serial Arrays', para. 29.
[58] Quoted in Fearn, *Bruno Maderna*, 296.

Ex. 7. 18: Sketch material of bars 1-19 from Maderna, *Musica su due dimensioni*, reproduced in Scaldaferri (preface to the score, Appendix 1) and Fearn, *Maderna*, 81-2.

Ex. 7. 19: Sketch material of bars 96-103 from Maderna, *Musica su due dimensioni*, reproduced in Scaldaferri (preface to the score, Appendix 2)

A second sketch (Example 7. 19) shows some dissimilarity to the first: the texture is much more rhythmic – at times canonic – with an upper flute melody offset by a lower hocket-like structure. The tape part is notated differently: instead of direct pitches, three pitch areas are given (*alto, medio, basso*, 'high, middle, low') and the part is much more like a percussion line. Additionally, a Celeste has been added to the instrumentation, and is also present in a third sketch of bars 32-54 (not shown), where the notation of the electronic tape is, according to Raymond Fearn, more descriptive:

> Maderna, as was his custom in work later in the Milan Studio di Fonologia, gave descriptive titles to varieties of electronic sound (*'freddo allucinato'*: 'cold hallucination'; *'suoni fissi gli altri'*: 'the rest fixed sounds'; *'suoni morbidi, ondulati'*: 'soft, undulated sounds'; *'Lamiera'*: 'sheet metal').[59]

Unfortunately, it is probable that such subtle shadings of effect were lost in the eventual performance. Maderna emerged from the Bonn studio with a compromised work: all of the instrumental parts had to be recorded by the Melochord, leaving only the central episode for flute and a solitary cymbal stroke at the close as the much vaunted 'second dimension' in the Darmstadt performance (see Example 7. 25) Maderna's composition did not in fact synthesise, but instead juxtaposed, live and electronic music, in the format laid out at Example 7. 20 – precisely the solution Meyer Eppler wanted to avoid.
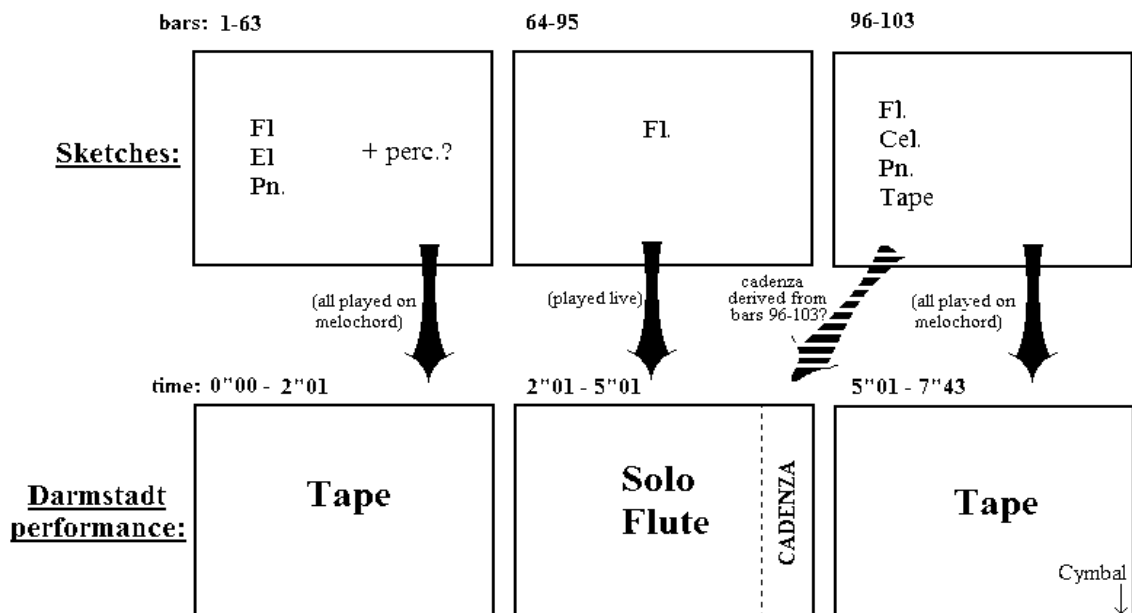
Ex. 7. 20: Sketch form of *Musica su due Dimensioni*, with eventual performance outcomes

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[59] Fearn, *Bruno Maderna*, 78; sketch on pg. 83.

Compositional identity and the 'tecnica degli sposamenti'

However, even given the failure of Maderna's synthesis, its potential and influence is clear. And in fact its serial material alone gives plenty of fuel for discussion. By 1952, Nono and Maderna had fully developed the technique that they labelled 'tecnica degli sposamenti', or 'technique of displacements', and had been using it in compositions such as *Improvisazione n. 1* (Nono) and *Studi per il "Llanto" di G. Lorca* (Maderna) from 1951.[60] As can be seen in a lecture given in 1953/4, Nono's veneration of the Schoenbergian heritage is shared less by Maderna, and the elder composer's insatiable appetite for novel compositional tools led him to integrate *sposamenta* at a deep level in his compositions of the early 1950s:

> What I did not like about twelve-tone theory is the principle by which, once a series is given, it has to reappear in its entirety, continuously, vertical and horizontally, for the sake of consistency in the musical discourse … Slowly but surely I proceeded to the study of serial mutations until I reached an elaborate system of totally complex and rigorous mutations … which, in (for instance) their rhythmic and timbral constructions, have in common with other composers the virtue of being the consequences of an original praxis of thought. … as you will see, there is no longer any need for the four fundamental forms of the series as defined by Schoenberg to reoccur (original, inversion, retrograde, retrograde inversion), especially if the work uses an integral series. Throughout, the expressive continuity is secured by the rigorous systematization of mutations.[61]

The work has two series (Example 7. 21a), both derived from permutations of three interlocking interval successions: {2+, 2+, 2+, 2+}, {5, 4, 3-, 2+}, {4, 3-, 2+, 5}'.[62] Niedhöfer has demonstrated how in the opening Melochord section, series [a] is permutated through 16 serial arrays to generate pitch and rhythmic material, finally 'wrapping round' to its original pitches.[63] Each pitch is also attached to a durational unit (Example 7. 21b); thus rhythm is serialized, though (as in Nono's *Variazione Canoniche*) not independently from the pitch serialization – in Nono, the two mapped onto each other dyadically, in Maderna, the relationship is less systematic.

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[60] See Borio, 'Sull'interazione tra lo studio degli schizzi e l'analisi dell'opera', 1-21.

[61] Maderna, unpublished lecture from 1953-4, reprinted in Verzina, *Bruno Maderna. Étude historique et critique*, 46.

[62] Niedhöfer, 'Bruno Maderna's Serial Arrays', para. 25. Niedhöfer's work on this piece is the first to fully explain its serial operations, and much of the following analysis is indebted to his archival work on the sketches.

[63] Ibid., paras. 22-30.

Ex. 7. 21a: Series [a] and [b] from Maderna's *Musica su due dimensioni*, with their derivations from rotated interval class sets.

Ex. 7. 21b: Rhythmic series from Maderna's *Musica su due dimensioni*

Niedhöfer's analysis does not extend into the second section, the subsequent flute solo. Here the material is generated by a permutation of series [b], with durational serialisation. The pitches of the series are charted on the first array in Example 7. 22a by a dot for each note. A displacement table (Example 7. 22b) is then used to move the dots along to the next array; so, for example, the initial pitch class C moves 11 spaces, Bb moves 9, F moves 11 and so on. Thus is generated a second array. Since the columns of the displacement table contain the same numerical values (only in different orders) after 16 *sposamenti* all of the original pitches 'wrap-around' back onto table 1.[64] The 16 arrays that arise from this procedure (Example 7. 23) are all dissimilar, and crucially now contain both pitch gaps (columns with no dots) and pitch simultaneities (columns with more than one dot).

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[64] As Niedhöfer points out, this type of displacement table is not a conventional magic square (as in the *Improvisazzione no.1*, 1951/2 or the *Kranichsteiner Kammerkantate*, 1953). It is only the columns that sum to 176 (ensuring the wrap-around), not the rows. Ibid., para. 27.

1. **2.**

A = 1, Bb = 2, B = 3, C = 4, C# = 5, D = 6, D# = 7, E = 8, F = 9, F# = 10, G = 11, G# = 12

(onto grid 3)
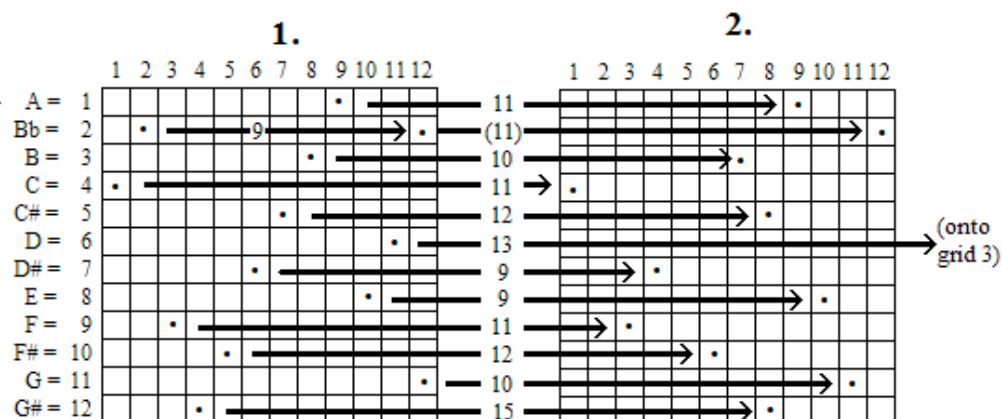
Ex. 7. 22a: Displacement of series for Maderna's *Musica su due Dimensioni* in a serial array, according to the numeric values in the second row of Ex. 7. 18b.

C	Bb	F	Ab	Gb	Eb	C#	B	A	E	D	G
11	9	11	15	12	9	12	10	11	11	13	10
15	11	9	11	9	12	9	11	10	9	10	13
9	11	15	11	9	12	9	10	14	13	11	9
11	15	11	9	12	9	12	14	10	10	9	11
11	13	10	9	10	14	11	9	12	11	9	11
9	10	13	11	14	10	10	12	9	15	11	9
13	11	9	10	10	11	14	12	9	9	11	15
10	9	11	13	11	10	10	9	12	11	15	11
9	12	9	12	9	11	15	11	9	10	10	14
12	9	12	9	11	9	11	9	11	11	14	10
12	9	12	9	11	15	11	13	10	10	10	11
9	12	9	12	15	11	9	10	13	14	11	10
10	10	11	14	13	10	9	11	15	9	12	9
11	14	10	10	10	13	11	15	11	12	9	12
10	10	14	11	11	9	10	9	11	12	9	12
14	11	10	10	9	11	13	11	9	9	12	9

Ex. 7. 22b: Displacement table for Maderna's *Musica su due Dimensioni*
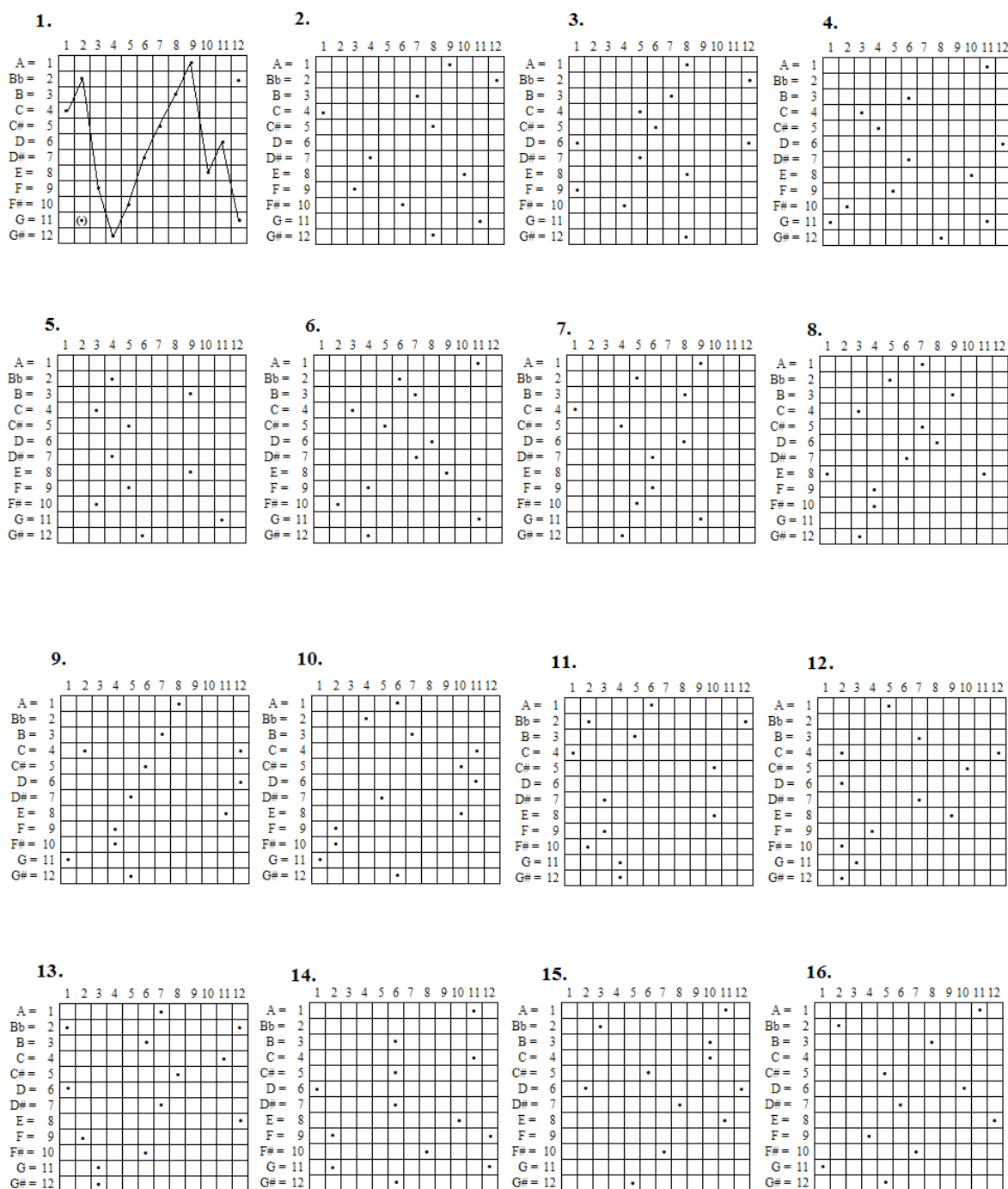
Ex. 7. 23: Serial arrays permutating series [b] of Maderna's *Musica su due dimensioni*

It is these 'gaps' and 'simultaneities' that Maderna exploits in his orchestration of the material generated (the solo flute section of the work, seen at Example 7. 25 in its final incarnation). The composer uses the pitch material of the arrays in this order: *1 – 2 – 3 – 4 - 5(½) – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9(modified) – 10(modified) – 11 – 12(modified)*.[65] Example 7. 24 shows a section of this line; each gap in the pitch material comes to represent a rest, whilst a simultaneity represents a chord: in the flute line which draws on this material, the first is interpreted as a crotchet rest and the second as either a two-note tremolando, a grace note, an alternate-note tuplet or a trill between notes. Thus though the array does not provide the sum totality of parametric information (Maderna still uses fairly coherent and standard gestures) it does provide an extra 'dimension' to the conventional serial model, whilst on the surface appearing freer by, for instance, allowing note repetition.

Such 'explorations' demonstrate an insatiable appetite for what Maderna often refers to as *nuova mezzi*, 'new tools', which function as 'a response to – and critique of – the dodecaphony of the Second Viennese School and Luigi Dallapiccola'.[66] As soon as the next year, in the *Serenata no. 2* (1953/4), Maderna takes the concept of 'displacement' a stage further, developing a serial 'filtering' technique borrowed from the electronic studio which removes durational units from a serial orchestration in order to lighten the texture in a manner analogous to the filtration devices built into the second version of the Melochord in 1953.[67] It is instructive to note how these works fit into the narrative of post-war serialism. Whilst increasingly giving the composer total parametric control and integration – as in Boulez and Stockhausen's contemporaneous works – they eschew the linking factor to the serial tradition: that any set (of pitches, timbres, or rhythms) is to be an *ordered* set. This was the 'aesthetic' which guaranteed unity for Schoenberg, and by which he argued the twelve-note technique could replace the tonal system without losing its coherence. And whilst the *tecnica degli sposamenti* has the potential to generate an enormous amount of material, as Chapter 6 argued, it is unified only at the ontological level (i.e. in its origins) not at the phenomenological level (i.e. in its sound).

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[65] The remaining arrays are used to generate the 3rd section of the work, for tape.
[66] Ibid., para. 41. Verzina notes that the similarity between this mutation procedure and Boulez's pre-compositional techniques of the same period. Verzina, 'Tecnica della Mutazione e Tecnica Seriale in 'Vier Briefe' (1953) di Bruno Maderna', 312.
[67] Niedhöfer, 'Bruno Maderna's Serial Arrays', paras. 35-38.

Ex. 7. 24: Bars 8-19 of the central flute sole from Maderna's *Musica su due dimensioni*, derived from serial arrays 3 and 4.

Ex. 7. 25: Score of Maderna, *Musica su due Dimensioni* (reconstructed by Nicola Scaldaferri from a recording)

Chapter 7

A historical postscript: Berio in New York and the path to the Studio di Fonologia

Maderna was undoubtedly the first Italian composer to explore the new possibilities of electronic music in 1952. However the impact of this development did not immediately 'feed back' into Italian musical culture, and it would take until 1954 for a more widespread dissemination of electronic ideas to occur. Crucial in this process was the burgeoning compositional career of Luciano Berio who, after a decade of composing juvenilia in a neo-classical idiom, was beginning to establish his reputation on the Milanese concert scene. A large influence on Berio's early music, as shall be seen, was Dallapiccola, with whom he studied in Tanglewood in 1952. An additional benefit to this course of lessons was the opportunity it afforded Berio to be in New York on the 28th October 1952, where the first public concert of electronic music (held in the Museum of Modern Art) featured tape music by Vladimir Ussachevsky and Otto Luening.[68]

The music obviously left its impression on Berio, who returned home and wrote eagerly in the pages of the recently established *Il Diapason* of 'a sonic pulsation never before heard' that 'filled the ears of the hearers'.[69] His article notes with displeasure that 'no young Italian musician has until now been able to seriously 'consume', in their own country, electronic experiences of this sort', using the complaint that occasionally escaped from his pen (and those of Maderna and Nono) in this period which cast Italian culture as backward-looking, constantly behind in European avant-garde trends, putting its 'redemptive hope' in 'tenors and mandolins'.[70] The trope of *libertà*, with its utopian dreams of total compositional control, is a motivational factor in Berio's plea for an exploration of the electronic world, expressed in the remarkably ambitious rhetoric of 'sound-source', 'free states' and 'sound-plasma':

> Given a sound source – which could be any instrument used in daily musical life, the violin, piano, flute – it is possible to organise a musical discourse beyond the limits of the instrument, delivering it from the traditions and unbroken realities of its own sound … using superimposition, editing, changing speeds, reversal, masking of the attack of a sound etc, one finds oneself immediately in a musical reality no longer given by one instrument and from its techniques but from the whole sphere of electronic knowledge … rhythm, harmony, melody and timbre,

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[68] See Cross, 'Electronic Music, 1948-1953', 56-59 for a discussion of this event, and for Ussachevsky and Luening's testimony.

[69] Berio 'Music for Tape Recorder' in Zanetti, *La Musica Italiana nel Novecento*, 1685.

[70] Ibid., 1685. It is unclear whether Berio knew that 'Tenors and mandolins' was an infamous pejorative put-down of Enrico Caruso used by Mussolini in 1931. Taruskin, *The History of Western Music*, iv, 751.

the various factors that enable us to coordinate musical facts, are in the case of music for *tape recorder* already present in a free state, almost released from any material and acoustic identification; almost as sound plasma, able to conform itself to any and whichever psychological means.[71]

But it is clear from the end of this illuminating article that Berio had a more practical aim than to write a purely aesthetic manifesto. Offhandedly he suggested, 'if nothing else', there was a connection to be made to the radio; in reality, he had already been actively pursuing such a course and, with an introduction to Luigi Rognoni (head of RAI's *Terzo Programma*) from Dallapiccola, his 'contacts within the RAI proliferated'.[72] As early as 1953, the year Berio met Maderna, the two joined forces with Roberto Leydi and the technician Marino Zuccheri to research and produce broadcastable *musique concrète* to be used 'in soundtracks and as backgrounds for fiction';[73] these were possibly first heard in a RAI broadcast on the 4th of December.[74]

By this point, Maderna and Berio were angling for an electronic music studio to be set up in Milan to rival those of Paris and Cologne. To this end, the two composers and their technical team worked towards two new compositions: *Sequenze e Strutture* (entirely for electronics) and, most importantly, *Ritratto di Città* a 'radiophonic portrait of Milan' and 'collage of sound-images', describing 'one day in the life of Milan from dawn to dusk'.[75] The success of this second work is self-evident: by 1955, RAI had agreed to fund an electronic music studio titled the 'Studio di Fonologia', with a remit to both contribute to scientific acoustic research and develop the artistic field. Resources were not as freely available as in Cologne, but as Osmond-Smith argues, the 'technical limitations of the studio' ended up as 'its most individual feature': a tape production process using a 'bank of nine oscillators' which were to revolutionise synthesised sound in the 1950s.[76] Out of this studio, works such as Maderna's *Syntaxis* (1957), Berio's *Thema, Omaggio a Joyce* (1958) and Nono's *A floresta é jovem e cheja de vida* (1966) would demonstrate how Berio's

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[71] Berio 'Music for Tape Recorder' in Zanetti, *La Musica Italiana nel Novecento*, 1686-8.

[72] For a general overview of this period, and the relationships between RAI and what was eventually to become the 'Studio di Fonologia', see de Benedictis and Rizzardi eds., *Nuova Musica alla Radio. Esperienze allo Studio di Fonologia della RAI di Milano* and de Benedictis, *Radiodramma e Arte Radiofonica. Storia e Funzioni della Musica per Radio in Italia*.

[73] Novati, 'The Archive of the "Studio di Fonologia di Milano della RAI"', 395.

[74] Scaldeferri, *Musica nel Laboratorio Elettroacustico*, 62.

[75] Osmond-Smith, *Berio*, 12; Fearn, *Bruno Maderna*, 79-80. See also Scaldeferri, *Musica nel Laboratorio Elettroacustico*, 64. *Ritratto di Città* won the coveted *Prix Italia* in 1955.

[76] Osmond-Smith, *Berio*, 12-13. The studio also contained a white noise generator, amplitude selectors, a dynamic modulator, ring modulators, a frequency shifter, pulse modulator, and various filters.

tenacity had established in Milan one of the primary centres of electronic music research in the late 1950s.

Berio: Chamber Music (1953)

And 1950s Milan was fast becoming the epicentre of Italian culture. The Studio di Fonologia was just one example of a burgeoning and creative world capitalising on the artistic ramifications of the post-war 'economic miracle', and the money pouring into the catwalks, *La Scala* and the *Spazialismo* exhibitions brought the city an aura of glamour that lasts to this day:

> The Piccolo Teatro was coming to turbulent life under the direction of Giorgio Strehler … Milanese galleries were beginning to take a predominant role in the marketing of contemporary art … the very skyline of Milan was sprouting new and challenging shapes as the Olivetti offices (1956), the Torre Velasca (1957), the Torre Pirelli (1958-9) and the Torre Galfa (1959) rose from the ground. Berio and Maderna were providing the musical complement to one of Milan's most adventurous decades.[77]

On the musical front, the establishment of the 'Diapason International Music Centre' by Luigi Rognoni in 1948 (with the express aim 'to break the cycles of indifference and diffidence that enclose contemporary music'), the issuing of its companion journal *Il Diapason* between 1950 and 1955,[78] the pioneering work of the 'Studio di Fonologia', the hegemony of *Casa Ricordi* and *Edizione Suvini Zerboni* in the Italian music publishing sphere and the high-profile concert series 'Incontri Musicali' started by Berio in 1955 all testify to Milan's musical dominance of the decade. And one other crucial 'musical meeting' occurred there in the 50s: that between Berio and the young American singer Cathy Berberian. Her astonishingly versatile voice would result in an artistic collaboration spanning decades, and would inspire Berio's fascination with virtuosity, 'understood not merely as technical dexterity, but as a manifestation of an agile musical intelligence that relishes the challenge of complexity'.[79] The first work Berio wrote for her, *Chamber Music*

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[77] Osmond-Smith, *Berio*, 13-14. See also Paulicelli, 'Art in Modern Italy: from the Machiaioli to the Transavanguardia', in *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Culture*, 256.

[78] First issue of *Il Diapason*, 'Editorial', 1 (author/s presumably the editorial team). See also Zanetti, *La Musica Italiana nel Novecento*, 1131-34.

[79] Osmond-Smith, 'Berio, Luciano' in the *New Grove* [on-line]. See also Osmond-Smith, 'The Tenth Oscillator: The Work of Cathy Berberian, 1958-1966', 2-13.

(1953), exhibits a beguiling sense of vocal inventiveness and a refreshingly heterodox approach to compositional systems, under the guise of an impeccably post-Webernian work.

'Consuming' the system: serial and formal elements

The influence of Dallapiccola, in all probability garnered more from his music than from the brief (eight weeks) period in which Berio studied with him at Tanglewood in 1952, is where most analyses of the younger composer's early music starts. Berio later famously recalled that

> I reacted to Dallapiccola with four different works: *Due Pezzi*, for violin and piano, *Cinque Variazioni*, for piano (based on the three-note melodic cell – *"fratello"* – from *Il Prigioniero*), *Chamber Music* (setting poems by Joyce) and *Variazioni* for chamber orchestra. With these pieces I entered into Dallapiccola's 'melodic' world, but they also allowed me to escape from it.[80]

Whether or not this sense of 'exorcism' from Dallapiccola's spectre (as Osmond-Smith has it) is a useful paradigm with which to consider this music, a cursory glance at *Chamber Music* shows the piece to be overtly Dallapiccolian on the surface: scored for a lyrical ensemble of female voice, clarinet, harp and cello (Dallapiccola specialised in such small-scale vocal combinations); setting poetry by James Joyce (whom Dallapiccola had first set in the *Tre Poemi* of 1949 and would return to in 1958 in *Requiescant*) over three movements; serially constructed (often on a canonic basis) but with a mellifluous sense of melodic line and the 'sweet' harmonies identified in the discussion of the *Tre Poemi* in Chapter 3. Certainly the beauty in Berio's music is more immediate than the calculated dialectics of Nono and Maderna. Yet the engagement with the serial system is not located in the technique's systematising, balancing effect (symmetrical constructions, row-as-melodic fragment and so on) but in the way the series is inspirational but not sovereign:

> when Berio establishes a reservoir of pre-compositional resources, he aims not at a self-defying ordinance, but a stimulus to the imagination that may well function as much by transgression as by observance. One consequence of this is that the analyst will often find in Berio's scores only hints or remnants of a 'system' which has in effect been consumed in the process of composition.[81]

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[80] Berio, *Two Interviews*, 53.
[81] Osmond-Smith, *Berio*, 9.

The row seen in Example 7. 26 certainly provides ample cellular fragmentation and symmetrical melodic patterning: it contains a large degree of inversional invariance, and units also related by retrograde.
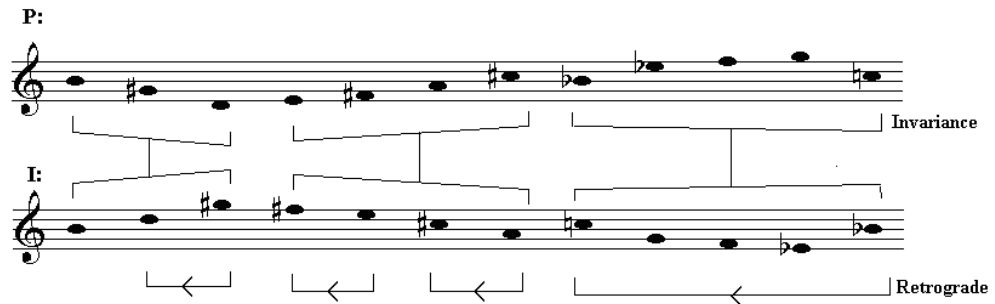
Ex. 7. 26: Row for Berio, *Chamber Music*, 'Strings in the earth and Air'

However it is obvious from the opening of the first movement – 'Strings in the earth and Air', the first poem from Joyce's *Chamber Music* – that the series is not always going to be used systematically. This introductory dialogue between the harp and the voice sees the voice playing on the retrograde invariant properties of the row without the need to stick to the order in its entirety, whereas the harp, heard almost as an obbligato circling around the central vocal line, does not follow the row at all, taking only the minor third leap (the most prominent intervallic gesture, as the vocal line shows) as its inspiration:

Ex. 7. 27: Bars 1-4 of Berio, *Chamber Music*, 'Strings in the earth and Air'

Following this, the four instruments engage in a semi-canonic passage with a closer fidelity to the series (Example 7. 28). Though the imitation between the cello and clarinet and two hands of the harp is clear, it is not exact, and in fact rhythmically the cello line dissolves

into faster double-stopped passages in bar 8. There is also a large amount of series 'borrowing' between parts; unlike in Nono's *Variazione Canoniche*, this is not due to a tracing of melodic shapes across different timbres, but simply a more relaxed, intuitive approach to melodic material and a desire to fill out the total chromatic; if Berio can find an unwanted note already in another part, he dispenses with the need to use it:

Ex. 7. 28: Bars 5-8 of Berio, *Chamber Music*, 'Strings in the earth and Air'

This is the most strict serial section; as the movement progresses, the row becomes harder to trace, and the writing becomes much more intent on fulfilling gestures – accentuating the Ab-C dyad in bar 15, creating a flowing whole-tone-arpeggio texture in bars 17-19, servicing quasi-tonal harmonies in bar 21-22 – rather than on seeing out any pitch order. Fragments of the series are retained however: the minor 3rd dyad is particularly prominent, especially in its 'scotch snap' rhythm of the opening (see the vocal part bars 22 and 24-5). Moreover, charting what serial manoeuvres there are in the music (Example 7. 29) demonstrates an underlying logic: the departure and return arch. As shown, a fragmentary serial structure can be boiled down through successive stages to the lower, circular figure, which posits the retrograde of the row as the central and starting point. Gradually over the course of verse 1, there is a transition to prime form; the return is made in the first half of verse two, and then a transition to inverted forms of the row in verse 3:
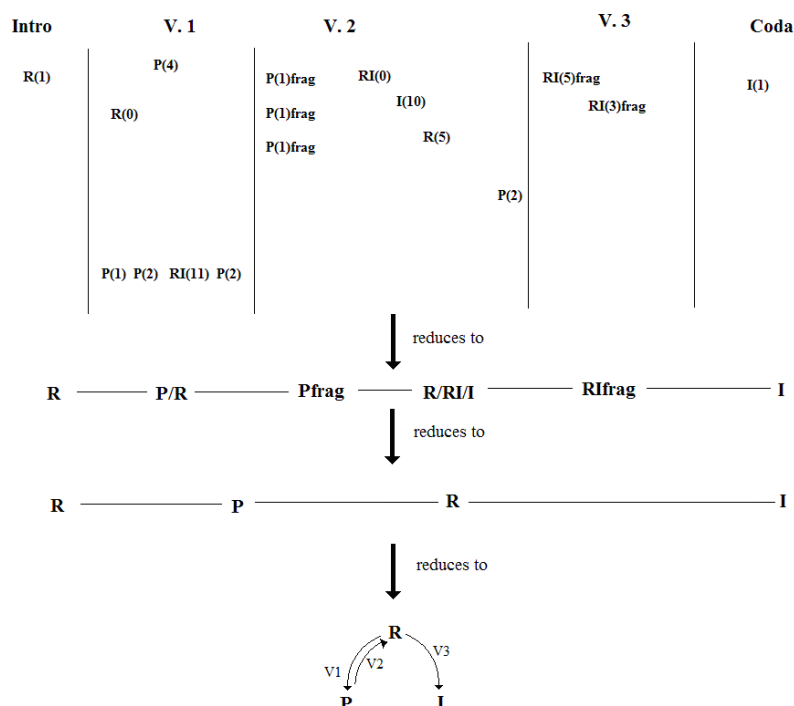
Ex. 7. 29: Serial structure and reduction to departure-return model in Berio, *Chamber Music*, 'Strings in the earth and Air'

This structure is a macro-level projection of the micro-level aspect of the original series, in which retrograde form was the linking component between the highly invariant prime and retrograde forms. Whilst this is hard to discern aurally – a consequence of the fact that (contra Dallapiccola's standard practice) Berio does not clearly delineate his verses – it is undoubtedly present and intentional, and whilst the arch shape form *is* a Dallapiccolian trait, Berio's use of it is not necessarily a gesture towards the elder composer's classically shaped 'balance', but rather a heliocentric model more akin to a view of composition as 'process'.[82]

New stylistics: virtuosic vocality and folklorisms

Berio's imaginative musical mind was thus already bursting out of the serial mainstream with which he was briefly associated in the mid-fifties (typified by a sporadic participation at Darmstadt from 1953 and the orchestral work *Nones* from 1954).[83] And the surface aspect of *Chamber Music* confirms this heterodoxy. As the decade progressed, Berio was to find

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[82] For a similar judgment on process in *Nones* (1954), see Michael Hicks, 'Exorcism and Epiphany: Luciano Berio's *Nones*', 256-7.
[83] See Whittall, *Serialism*, 195-6.

the medium of the voice the most fruitful arena for his musical experimentation, culminating in works such as *Thema, Omaggio a Joyce* (1958), *Sequenza III* (1966) and *A-ronne* (1975). Though the numinous, somatic aspects of sung text interested Berio – with all its connotations of 'soul', 'breathe' and 'grain' – perhaps the greatest attraction of an expanded vocal world was the voice's associative quality, and its ability to act referentially towards everyday life. Thus in breaking barriers of musical autonomy, the lineage that passes through Futurism, neo-realism and more latterly John Cage's musico-aesthetic productions (his *Aria* of 1958 was formative for Berio) would find its root back onto Italian soil. Mussgnug argues that Berio was one of the first to realise the 'extraordinary cultural wealth of the human voice', and to demonstrate that 'genuine artistic innovation needs to penetrate the historical and cultural meaning of apparently 'natural' gestures and sounds'.[84] As the composer put it much later, when delivering the Eliot Norton Lectures at Harvard:

> It can be useful for a composer to remember that the sound of a voice is always a quotation, always a gesture. The voice, whatever it does, even the simplest noise, is inescapably meaningful: it always triggers associations and it always carries within itself a model, whether natural or cultural.[85]

Berio also regarded his vocal writing as exploiting an inherent liminality between the process of language/meaning and the musical event:

> The most significant vocal music of the last few decades has been investigating … the possibility of exploring and absorbing musically the full face of language. Stepping out of the purely syllabic articulation of a text, vocal music can deal with the totality of its configurations. [86]

In *Chamber Music*, such an aesthetic is obviously in its early stages. Yet though certain aspects of the vocal line can be ascribed to the influence of Dallapiccola's renowned lyricism, other features point to a different and emerging philosophy. Example 7. 30 shows the opening of 'Monotone', the second movement of the work. Its deep, guttural tessitura explores the texture of the female voice in surprising ways: the stilted emphasis where the (a) of 'waters' is repeated with an accent in bar 7, and the muted/open-out instruction on the (m) of moan in 12-13, both blur the distinction between sung words and instrumental timbre.

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[84] Mussgnug, 'Writing Like Music: Luciano Berio, Umberto Eco and the New Avant-Garde', 91-2.
[85] Berio, *Remembering the Future*, 50.
[86] Ibid.

All_____ day I_____ hear the noise of__ wa (a) - - ters_

Ma - king - (m) - mo - an_____ mo - an mo - an,

(*) Always with the maximum continuity of sound and a slight <u>sforzando</u> on the attack of every note

Ex. 7. 30: Bars 3-16 of Berio, *Chamber Music*, 'Monotone'

More examples could be given of such 'extended vocal techniques', constituting an exploration of the drama of sung text: for instance, the long passages where the soprano is directed to hum (bars 14-16 and 24-26 of 'Strings in the earth and Air'), 'declaim the text' (bars 16-34 of 'Winds of May'), or use *Sprechgesang* (bars 62-65 of 'Winds of May'); the frequent use of portamento and trilling, the many accents put onto irregular syllables, and a general sense that the text is to be vocalised with the aid of the notes rather than sung directly (so, therefore, the words are printed conventionally under the music but the underlay is often not necessarily clear). Such 'virtuosic vocality' is not confined merely to the soprano, but permeates other aspects of the composition. Hence instrumental parts are often released into almost *Sequenza*-like passages of soloistic brilliance. The following is a long excerpt from the cello line of the first movement:

Ex. 7. 31: 'Cello line, bars 8-20 of Berio, *Chamber Music*, 'Strings in the earth and Air'

Much of Berio's vocal language here presages an aesthetic that would come to regard text as a sound source rather than simply a 'meaning'. For example, Donatoni's music is heavily indebted to Berio's experimentations on the boundaries of vocal composition, as Giordano Montecchi argues in reference to the younger composer's *L'Ultima Sera* (1980):

> [For Donatoni] the relationship between the vocal and the instrumental media constitutes an unresolved, if not unresolvable, problem … Throughout the eight fragments, the voice and the word interweave with the fluid pattern of the instruments, less as concertante soloists, rather as an intimate, fluid substance.[87]

In this period, just as Nono's artistic contacts with the architect Carlo Scarpa and the painter Emilio Vedova would indicate a strong strain of confluence between artistic mediums, Berio was also turning externally: to the voice of the near-past in James Joyce and that of the present in the linguist/philosopher Umberto Eco. The first writer in particular is relevant to this work, and Mussgnug writes that 'Berio came to view Joyce's overture as an ideal borderline between literature and music, a dynamic and deceptive play with quotations, in which linguistic meaning fades and finally dissolves into musical sound.[88]

The permeation of Joyce's text is one-and-the-same process as Berio's vocal experimentation – which raised the 'question of the voice's subjectivity or objectivity', according to Richard Causton – and Berio's dissatisfaction with a modernism that emphasized the autonomy of musical structure and the rigor of musical content.[89] As Restagno puts it, 'the contact with Joyce was deepened until it was transformed into a revelation, as, over time, Berio had the opportunity to explore the whole compass of contemporary music and to draw from his earlier studies.'[90] So Joyce's poems (Example 7. 32), as well as providing Berio with sonic material, enable him to inhabit a folkloric world that sees metaphysical and anthropomorphic meaning in the natural world and in the sound-scape of rivers and seas, and conjures up the enchanting powers of water, wind, dance and song:

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[87] Montecchi, 'Donatoni – Works,' 9.
[88] Mussgnug, 'Writing Like Music: Luciano Berio, Umberto Eco and the New Avant-Garde', 85.
[89] Causton, 'Berio's 'Visage' and the Theatre of Electroacoustic Music', 17.
[90] Restagno, *Berio*, 10.

I

Strings in the earth and air
  Make music sweet;
Strings by the river where
  The willows meet.

There's music along the river
  For Love wanders there,
Pale flowers on his mantle,
  Dark leaves on his hair.

All softly playing,
  With head to the music bent,
And fingers straying
  Upon an instrument.
    Joyce, *Chamber Music*, no. 1

II

All day I hear the noise of waters
  Making moan,
Sad as the sea-bird is when, going
  Forth alone,
He hears the winds cry to the water's
  Monotone.

The grey winds, the cold winds are blowing
  Where I go.
I hear the noise of many waters
  Far below.
All day, all night, I hear them flowing
  To and fro.
    Joyce, *Chamber Music*, no. 35

III

Winds of May, that dance on the sea,
Dancing a ring-around in glee
From furrow to furrow, while overhead
The foam flies up to be garlanded,
In silvery arches spanning the air,
Saw you my true love anywhere?
  Welladay! Welladay!
  For the winds of May!
Love is unhappy when love is away!
    Joyce, *Chamber Music*, no. 9

Ex. 7. 32: Texts for Berio's *Chamber Music*

Already in the *Tre Canzoni Populari* of 1947 Berio had demonstrated his uncanny ability to work with folk material in an utterly unselfconscious way, and in *Chamber Music* his musical 'omnivorism' is on display. From the ever present scotch-snap rhythm ♪ in the soprano line of the first movement (bars 2, 6, 14, 15, 22 and 24) to the already mentioned low female tessitura, the music is imbued with 'informal' musical references. Though the application is subtle, the ideas are of a generic kind, and do not necessarily signify an engagement with culturally-specific forms of folk music (as would be the case in the *Folksongs* of 1964). So a typical gesture is the evocation of a barrel-organ in the chords at the climax of 'Strings in the earth and Air':

Ex. 7. 33: Bars 21-22 of Berio, *Chamber Music*, 'Strings in the earth and Air'

This is not the only harmonic folklorism: in the following example, the underlying consonant harmony (in a passage already noted for its strict serial adherence) has the tell-tale heavy major/minor ambiguity which, taken as a whole, implies an underlying modality:

Ex. 7. 34: Bars 5-6 with reduction of Berio, *Chamber Music*, 'Strings in the earth and Air'

In the most adventurous movement of the work, the second, the folk influence extends beyond simple quotation and association. 'Monotone', as the title suggests, arises from the idea of the continuous drone, standard in much indigenous music which uses the paradigm of an offset discontinuity against an ever present continuity. Example 7. 35 uses a graphical analysis to chart the pitches of the four instruments:
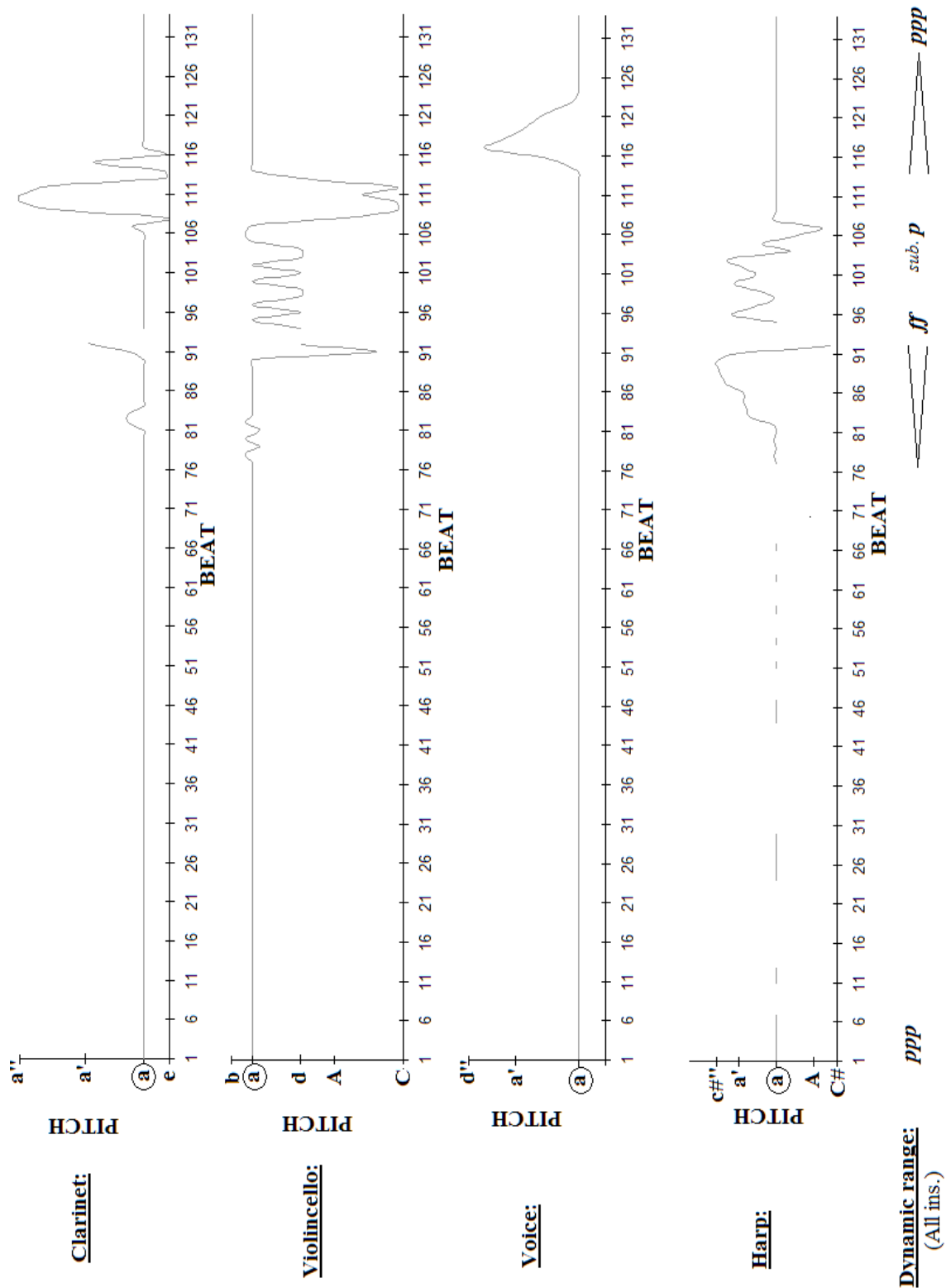
Ex. 7. 35: Graphic reduction of the pitch-processes from Berio, *Chamber Music*, 'Monotone' (♩ = 1 beat in simple time, ♩. = 1 beat in compound time)

Berio uses the canonic interplay between parts (the voice is two crotchets behind the cello, the clarinet five) to build a musical 'process-piece' whereby pitch material is first focussed onto a central 'A' and then widened, in line with what Osmond-Smith describes as Berio's evolving 'tendency to focus the listener's ear by working with only a limited choice of pitch materials at any one time'.[91]As can be seen, the central 'monotone' is maintained in the clarinet, cello and voice as a continuous canon, with the harp interjecting. Around bar 27 (ironically – and this is surely meant to be humorous – on the first actual occurrence of the word 'monotone'), pitch oscillations start to unsettle the texture, first on the semi-tone above and below the A, then extending rapidly into an explosion of notes that reach out over a span of 3 octaves. In bar 36, this is suddenly contained, the texture reduced to the voice still on the central A and at *ff*: on the chart this is represented by the gaps in the other parts at beat 92. From here there is a more gradual expansion: first of all, oscillations spanning a 5th, then a contrary motion expansion between the clarinet and the other two instruments, reaching a bottom C# and a top a''. Then follows a rapid contraction, whilst the voice doggedly sticks to its central A: only after this point does it move, in a gentle arc up to d'' and down again to the 'monotone' on which all instruments end. The effect is, understandably, quite dramatic.

Compositional restraint, theatricality and the minimal use of pitch hints at an expressive potential that is markedly against the serial mainstream – alongside the crucial control of register which means that notes do not function simply as pitch classes. Instead of internal thematic or serial relationships between content, the content itself (the monotone) is subjected to a process whereby it is first refracted timbrally, then in pitch and then register. The very necessity of charting such music graphically in analysis attests to uniqueness of this development; Berio was forging a musical language that would provide a map for later post-serial endeavours, where text, timbre, gesture and style would be radically transformed. Michael Gorodecki's verdict on the music of Franco Donatoni, who came to compositional prominence in the late 1950s, demonstrates that the paradigms he inhabited owed a great debt to Berio:

> what crucially refreshed every work was Donatoni's recovery of the sense of the quality of music: a reconciliation with the intuitive part of the brain, which

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91 Osmond-Smith, *Berio*, 10.

could allow him to shape the qualitative side of music into an abundant profusion of sustainable wholes.[92]

Though *Chamber Music* is ultimately contained within conventional frameworks (instrumentally, formally, texturally), it provides an indication of such future directions as these.

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[92] Gorodecki, 'Who's Pulling the Strings? Michael Gorodecki Introduces the Music of Franco Donatoni', 250.

Conclusion

> Historicism contents itself with establishing a causal connection between various moments in history. But no fact that is a cause is for that very reason historical. It became historical posthumously, as it were, through events that may be separated from it by thousands of years. A historian who takes this as his point of departure stops telling the sequence of events like the beads of a rosary. Instead he grasps the constellation which his own era has formed with a definite earlier one. (Walter Benjamin, 1940)[1]

This thesis has attempted to tread a delicate path between a number of apparent opposites. Global versus local narrative, sequential versus topical presentation, historical versus analytical discourse, mainstream versus crosscurrent music, general versus specific historical timeframe; all these levels of enquiry have been employed in order to carry out what Michel Foucault labelled 'effective history', which 'inverts the relationship that traditional history, in its dependence on metaphysics, establishes between proximity and distance'.[2] Rather than tell the story of Italian post-war music 'like the beads of a rosary', the aim has been to combine a narrative and an archaeological approach which recognises that a synthesis of these methods (even given its inherent incompleteness) was the most likely way to result in accurate and relevant conclusions.

And conclusions, in this final section, are paramount. They have appeared in part at various stages during the course of the text, but the discursive nature of the subject requires a detailed pulling together of its various historical, analytical and theoretical strands here in order to articulate what this thesis has demonstrated, and show how it constitutes a contribution to knowledge. It will be recalled that in the preface certain 'colliding narratives' were advanced, around which the multivalent aspects of this period circulated and whose oppositional crossover defines any discussion of post-war Italian music: they will appear in **bold** typeface as the conclusion progresses.

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[1] Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History' in Arendt ed. *Illuminations*, 255.
[2] Foucault, 'Nietzsche, Genealogy and History' in *The Foucault Reader*, 89.

Conclusion

Rebuilding a culture: music and the 'post-war'

Toby Thacker's 2007 book *Music After Hitler* is a thorough and magisterial account of the relationship between music and politics in the ten years after the fall of the Third Reich in Germany, tracing the course of musical propaganda, artistic control and politicisation from the Allied occupation of 1945-50 to the American/Soviet standoff in 1950-55. Judging a book by its cover, the present thesis, in its title and period of reference at least, could be construed as parallel to Thacker's work in the Italian sphere. But it isn't, and such a counterpart would be an unlikely endeavour. The idea of the 'post-war' in Thacker's book, centring on the competing politicisations of music in the FDR and GDR amid the tensions of the Cold War, is a much more concrete and well-documented phenomenon. The opening of *Music After Hitler* gives the game away, for while 'there is a huge literature on music in post-war Germany', the same cannot be said for Italy; likewise, whilst the occupying governments in Germany all devoted much resource to 'music control' through which public performances 'could not take place as some kind of spontaneous cultural manifestation', in Italy, virtually all musical life was a spontaneous cultural manifestation, and a disorganised one at times.[3]

But in Italy, the post-war trope is no less powerful; simply more plural, and functioning on the level of individual relationships, institutional activity, cultural memory and artistic style. It was crucial at the outset of this study to outline how musical life rebuilt itself materially in order to demonstrate the turmoil caused by a war that was not simply invasion or defence but a confusing mixture of both. Contrary to received wisdom, the Italian artistic scene was remarkably buoyant in the 1943-5 transition years, especially in the liberated south, and as the Germans retreated it seemed natural for musicians and audiences to return to their musical habits. Some concert series and journals would not survive, but the major ones (the Maggio Musicale Fiorentina, the Venice Biennale, *La Rassegna Musicale* and *Rivista Musicale*), returned after a lengthy gap in late 1946/7, to compete with a proliferation of newly established, more cutting-edge institutions (Milan's *Pomerriggi Musicale*, the journals *Musica*, *Il Diapason*). Ambitious events early on such as the 'Musica Viva' series and the Rome International Festival pointed to a bright future for modern music, even given their limitations and controversies. As the decade progressed, it has been seen how Italy became a hub for compositional debate, major festivals, prominent

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[3] Thacker, *Music After Hitler,* 1-3.

performances, musical experimentation and the emergence of new talent. This narrative in is stark contrast to the view of Eric Salzman and Thomas Desi:

> In 1946, Luigi Dallapiccola … said that the Italian musician, once the most endowed and sophisticated in the world, now lacked everything. Even a superficial impression of the Italian situation for many years thereafter would seem to confirm this. The next generation of Italian composers would have to go abroad to establish their careers and participate in the new avant-garde movements coming out of Germany and France.[4]

But this 'superficial impression' is exactly that: superficial, and without basis in the facts.[5] Though Darmstadt membership in the 1950s was perhaps an ultimate guarantee of international fame, Italian composers still spent a large amount of their time in Italy participating in and constructing the Italian cultural milieu. Of course, part of the beauty of such a milieu was that it was porous, not hermetically sealed, and fully immersed in international trends. But the highly successful Venice International festivals, the aesthetic congresses at the Maggio Musicale in 1948-9, the 1949 Dodecaphonic Festival, the engagement with the quintessentially Italian political thought of Gramsci, collaborations with Italian artists such as Quasimodo (Dallapiccola), Vedova and Scarpa (Nono), Milloss (Dallapiccola and Petrassi), Puecher (Maderna), Eco and Strehler (Berio), the emergence of the 'Nuova Scuola Veneziana' of Togni, Maderna and Nono in 1948-50 and the 'Studio di Fonologia' group of Rognoni, Maderna and Berio from 1953, all testify to the fact that 'going abroad' was only one aspect of a much larger truth. Italian music in this period was more than a homogeneous arena, but not less.

Allied control of Italy had lasted until 1946, and in this time there were isolated efforts to 'de-Germanicise' the arts, primarily by using pre-war institutions such as the British Council. The musical prominence of Ralph Vaughan William, Arnold Bax, Michael Tippett and especially Benjamin Britten in the late 1940s arose as a consequence of this propaganda. But beyond this, there was little governmental 'control', and as Italy's musical vitality had always been heavily devolved to prestigious historical institutions, what conflicts did arise were the old arguments over state funding and bureaucracy. Some prominent fascist musicians were immediately removed under Allied influence; beyond this an uneasy air of compromise is discernable: as Mack Smith writes, 'nearly everyone

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[4] Salzman and Desi, *The New Music Theatre: Seeing the Voice, Hearing the Body*, 171.
[5] Besides, that is, misquoting Dallapiccola: he was bemoaning a lack of manuscript paper and violin strings. 'La Ricostruzione Musicale in Italia' in Zanetti, *La Musica Italiana nel Novecento,*1651.

had been involved in fascism and therefore the apportionment of guilt seemed less relevant'.[6]

So the actual machinery of Italian music after the war displayed a remarkable resemblance to that of the pre-war period. This in itself is the defining problem that post-war musical composition faced: the historical **continuity – discontinuity** collision. Croce's thesis of history as the 'story of liberty' had led him to claim fascism to be a 'parenthesis' in Italian society, 'a disease stemming from a germ that was by no means specifically Italian, one that had been nurtured by the war experience, especially, in the otherwise healthy adolescent body of the Italian nation'.[7] Such thinking was an ideal escape-clause for those who wished their fascist past to be swept under the carpet, but it was roundly criticised as the century progressed for ignoring what Mirco Dondi calls 'the survival of a fascist mentality in the new Republic'.[8] The issue became a deeply sensitive one for Italian artists and composers, and provoked a number of overlapping reactions in which the narratives of **memory – myth** interact. Chapter 2 has demonstrated how most of them lay on the internationalism-cultural memory axis, where relations to the past (past styles, techniques, and national aesthetics) and to the outside world (foreign composers, advanced compositional methods, cosmopolitan styles) contained a number of ambivalences and spawned a multitude of debates.

A natural move on the part of some Italian composers – whose (often strong) connections to the fascist regime had progressively diminished as the full horror of xenophobic nationalism was unveiled – was to frame their post-war musical acts as 'anti-fascist'. Defining this adjective is a slippery task (what, it might be asked, even was *fascist* music?), and in practice this was simply a politics of reaction. It attempted (in a number of contradictory ways) to remove itself as far as possible from the style and content of music that had existed before the war and the conditions in which it had been created, without stopping to ask what had gone so wrong, causing a network of competing narratives of the **fascism – antifascism** antithesis.[9] The most obvious anti-fascist tactic amongst Italian

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[6] Mack Smith, *Modern Italy, A Political History*, 421.
[7] Roberts, David D, *Historicism and Fascism in Modern Italy*, 78.
[8] Dondi, 'The Fascist mentality after Fascism', 141.
[9] An example – one of many – of the contradictions inherent in this antithesis is the influence of Stravinsky on Italian musicians before the war (because of the crisp efficiency of his music) and after the war (because of his post-tonal harmonic/rhythmic palette), all the more complicated in the post-war period by Stravinsky's pre-war political opinions: 'I don't believe anybody venerates Mussolini more than I. To me, he is the *one man*

modernists was to gravitate towards the left-wing, and to use music as a tool of *resistenza* sentiment, either by creating works 'for the people' in a socialist realist manner, or by forging the modernist-radical dialectic met in Chapter 5 that relies on the theories of Gramsci. But further, as Chapter 3 shows, the whole serial project itself was shot through with anti-fascist reaction, either in its emphasis on the individual's *libertà* in contrast to fascist collectivism or in its removal of music from the subjective sphere into an autonomous realm of 12-note abstraction. And even the non-serial works examined in Chapter 4 show that they derive fully from the post-war moment of rebirth: Ghedini's music can be variously interpreted as escapism or existential, but it is certainly of its moment, and similarly, Petrassi's *nuova spiritualità* of the 1940s tries to establish a post-religious spirituality that resonates strongly with contemporaneous trends in Italian poetics.

Anti-fascism, Italy's post-war *tabula rasa*, was thus an ideology for all sides of the political and aesthetic spectrum to appropriate. As much is clear in the way the **formalist – realist** debate was played out in the musical realm: socialist musicians reacted to the objectivised music and elitist culture of the fascist period, whilst formalists compared the political proscriptions of social realism to the fascist regime's totalitarian handling of art in the *ventennio*. Such a dispute was understandable in a country with a strong party on the left, and the pronouncements on formalism of *L'Unità* around 1948-9 (and in particular Togliatti's interventions) can be seen as a predictable shot across the bows of avant-garde culture meant to precipitate a form of rigidly policed cultural Zhdanovism on musicians under communist influence. That debates usually associated with the Eastern bloc took on an Italian incarnation demonstrates the extent to which the nation was precariously balanced between the two colliding narratives of **left wing - right wing**, in the musical sphere as much as anywhere else. But crucially, Italian music swerved away from Togliatti's ideology when it met such interlocutors as Mila and D'Amico, whose historicist philosophy of the musical subject insisted that, though artistic creation drew its subjectivities from society, it was not solely a social construct with a social purpose, but had an inner concept of *libertà* that required careful mediating via language, syntax, and if necessary advanced technique. Later the communist Nono, who condemned socialist realism in print and through his music, would further strengthen this case.[10] So into the early 1950s, when competing

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who counts nowadays … he is the saviour of Italy and – let us hope – of Europe' [from 1935]. Quoted in Sachs (amongst others), *Music in Fascist Italy*, 168.
[10] For Nono's views on Zhadonovism, see Restagno, *Nono*, 30.

versions of the historical narrative of the post-war sowed seeds of discord and instability into political life, musically speaking it had produced the plurality of compositional practice resulting from anti-fascist reactionism that formed the bedrock of an Italian musical renaissance. This made Italy an exciting venue for new music into the 1980s; by then anti-fascism, as ambiguous and controversial as it was, had proved artistically very efficacious.

Italian musical modernism 1943-1953

> 'The period to which I make reference is brief – from 1946 to 1954 – but very intense in the history of twentieth-century Italian music'.[11]

Italian musical modernism in the post-war period is therefore highly stratified and differentiated. This is in part due to the diverse meanings of the denotation 'modernist' in European mid-twentieth century culture. In this thesis it has been used, reflecting current scholarship, in its widest sense to refer to music that is modernist in intention (i.e. serious and intense, looking to forge a style that was somehow meant to be 'new' and to point to a way forward, meant for an elite audience), modernist in substance (i.e. post-tonal, incorporating elements of dislocation, lack of sentimentality, anxious fragmentation between tradition and modernity) and modernist in context (i.e. music as the composer's statement of reality, received as a 'progressive' step on a compositional path, measured by 'influence' on others). Ultimately, it is a compositional attitude rather than simply a style.[12] Therefore it incorporates a spectrum of music from such avant-gardisms as integral serialism to 'renovations' such as neoclassicism (represented, perhaps, by Nono and Casella in this study); under this definition, no Italian composer was left untouched by its infractions and ironies after fascism. Indeed, the most telling implication of this thesis is that exploring such complicated and inspiring *modernità* is perhaps more interesting (and certainly easier) than categorising it.

That this sort of plurality of modernisms existed should not detract from the large-scale compositional transitions in this era: modernisms, like any other isms, shift and move in relation to each other (and, of course, alter in intensity). It has already been emphasised

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[11] Borio, 'L'Influenza di Dallapiccola sui Compositori Italiani nel Secondo Dopoguerra', in de Santis ed. *Dallapiccola: Letture e Prospettive,* 358.

[12] Whittall speaks of an overall category of 'post-tonal modernism' which 'lay at the heart of a complex compositional web whose diverse stylistic and structural elements embraced or resisted that modernism to varying degrees'. Whittall, *Exploring Twentieth-Century Music*, 186. See also his discussion of 'the meanings of modernism' in *Musical Composition in the Twentieth Century*, 8-11.

that the evolution from the pre-war neoclassical and decorative styles of the *generazione dell'ottanta* (Malipiero, Pizzetti and Casella) to the multi-faceted high modernism of Nono, Maderna and Berio seen in Chapter 7 was not an inevitable (teleological) process. It was, however, as Borio recognises, a 'very intense' change. Such intensity is unimaginable without the **serial – non-serial** narrative, a trend which left no single Italian composer of any stature untouched. Aesthetic changes occur in any musical generation, but serialism was different: it was a whole new way of going about the process of composition, and offered utopian dreams of freedom and unity. Previously styles had altered over time, but serialism offered a totally new *linguaggio musicale*.

Serialism was an aesthetic reaction to the post-war compositional crisis, a crisis no less real for being ideologically constructed and motivated. Without the sweeping away of the mannerisms and decadence that the fascist era symbolized (as well as many of its musicians), and without the heavy emphasis on reinvention and rebirth, serialism would never have had the impact it had on Italian musical culture, and the compositional careers of Maderna, Nono, Berio, Donatoni, Clementi and many others would have been remarkably different. The effects of serialism were therefore historic; and so it is ironic that there was such a strong move to base them on an absence of history. The contention that dodecaphony acts as a '**tecnica**', not a '**estetica**' argued across the journals and debates of the era – with even a congress called to affirm it in 1949 – is evidence for the underlying insecurity on which such a dehistoricising claim is built. Massimo Mila saw through it immediately:

> the profound motive lying behind the resistance dodecaphony meets is its manifest affirmation that, in origins, it is an exclusively technical fact of nature. In reality, dodecaphony is in fact a technique that, in a complex web of historical connections, is joined to an affirmation of custom and of temperament, to a choice of a conception of life. It is a technique that in the circumstances of its historical origin is strictly joined to a *Weltanschauung* [world-view] – that of German expressionism – and a moral climate – that of the collapse of the middle-European cultural environment. I am sure that it does not lack evidence to support its actual extension much further afield (in time and in space) from the focus of expressionism; but in arguing for dodecaphony as naturally technical, it deprives itself of its historical and psychological implications.[13]

Within the hyperrational aesthetic demonstrated musically in works by Vlad, Nielsen, Malipiero and Togni, more than ever before composers were controlled by the row

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[13] Mila, 'La Dodecafonia e la sua Offensiva', 12.

(by Schoenberg and, in proxy, history); by contrast, within the works of Turchi, Dallapiccola and Maderna there appears a more subtle, dialectic relationship in which the row functions as the release of new compositional potential. This second trend ensured that while an appropriated and largely autonomous 'Leibowitzian' serialism was important in post-war Italy, the more plural reactions to its provocation would eventually constitute the future of Italian music.

Serialism did not blossom in an epistemological or theoretical vacuum. The bipartite formation seen in Chapter 3 between the lyrical and hyper-rational approaches to the twelve notes betrays an overarching dualism in the modernist psyche between **linguistic – stylistic** questions, mirroring a parallel dichotomy in literature. In modernism's metaphysics, Michael Bell writes, there were

> two rival, apparently incommensurable interpretations of the linguistic turn. One view, which has its most philosophically magisterial expression in Martin Heidegger, sees the human involvement in language as resistant to technical or external analysis. Linguistic analysis has its uses but it cannot encompass the human use of language … The other view seeks to build on Saussure's perceptions to provide a radical analysis of culture, and an exposure of its ideology, through language. … On this view, if language is the index, and perhaps even the creating structure, of the human world, then it gives a complete critical insight into that world.[14]

Previous models in the 1930s – traditional instrumental forms, classical balance, melodic and thematic foundations – de-emphasised the linguistic element entirely (with Croce's intuitive expression and Stravinsky's neoclassical style at their base), whereas both serial and non-serial music after the war did almost the reverse. Serialism is an obvious case in point, particularly in its Webernian incarnation, whilst the influences of the major non-serial composers of the early twentieth-century, Stravinsky and Bartók, still came mainly in the form of linguistic devices: structural proportionality, a widespread octatonicism, an ambiguity between the major and minor third within transformations of a 'microseries', the ironic and compromised invocation of the tonal heritage, invariant pitch class sets, and in the use of ostinato and permutated rhythms.

The composers that fell under these latter influences in the most pronounced way, Ghedini, Petrassi and Turchi, were also all simultaneously attracted and repelled by an extended chromaticism bordering on dodecaphony, eager to investigate its potential but

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[14] Bell, 'The Metaphysics of Modernism' in Levenson ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism*, 17.

anxious to try and somehow make it their own discovery. Petrassi of course goes further than Ghedini, as reflected in their divergent later music, whilst Turchi was close to being a fully-fledged serial composer. In addition to the rhythmic, harmonic and formal rejuvenation and the logic of discontinuity learnt from Bartók and Stravinsky, these three composers are brought together by their mutual search for a post-tonal/post-romantic linguistics that would avoid slipping into an abstract focus on musical parameter, aiming above all – and this goes for the music of Dallapiccola as well – to be comprehensible.

'Comprehensibility', the Webernian *Faßlichkeit*, lost its emphasis in the Darmstadt serialism of Boulez and Stockhausen;[15] so a crucial observation was made in Chapter 6 that Nono, Berio and Maderna's music does not obliterate (through complexity) the analytical domain of the 'background', but rather provides clear and obvious markers at this level. To be sure, at the middleground level, Nono's canonic fragmentation, Maderna's 'tecnica degli sposamenti' and Berio's 'consumption' of the method renders such music as challenging as *Structures 1a*. But the overall narrative of works such as Nono's *Epitaffi*, both in its material and formal properties, is of an exemplary clarity. The ideological message is the motivation here, of course, but that does not negate the musical result: a reconfiguration of the relationship between **background** and **foreground**.

It is worth pointing out facets such as these for their analytical relevance, but also because they show how the modernism in this thesis (and, of course, in general) is inconceivable outside the framework of twentieth-century Italian society. Take the stylistic difference between the chromaticism of Gian Francesco Malipiero and the fragmented, uncompromising music of Luigi Nono. These two names seem apt not simply because their styles are evidently opposed (nor because of their pupil-teacher relationship, signifying generational transition), but because they share – even in their opposition – a rootedness in national identity. Malipiero's came through the liberal traditions of Mediterranean decadence, warmth and caprice, the *Risorgimento* dream of a united Italy; Nono's through the struggle for the equal distribution of peace and wealth and the creation of a new socialist society, the *Resistenza* dream of a free Italy. Whether their music displays characteristics of *italianità* (in terms of chords, forms and content) matters less than that their music flowed out of national situations, invoked national symbols, and made connections with Italian art, literature and poetry. Looking further, one can say the same thing about Ghedini's *Concerto*

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[15] Webern, *The Path to the New Music*, 10.

dell'Albatro and Petrassi's *Noche Oscura*. Of course, such works are still vaguely and confusedly 'Italian'; traits such as neo-madrigalism, concerto grosso form, bare parallel contrary-motion chords, motivic fixation and lyricism abound in both pieces, but are generally never fixed in place, vestiges of a complicated **national – international** dichotomy.

The final chapter of this thesis brings together arguably the three most famous Italian composers of the post-war period in a juxtaposition of various experimentations. Whilst much has been written on Nono, Maderna and Berio in Italian (and to a lesser extent English), their early music had not been subjected to much rigorous analysis, nor typically placed in its context of the post-war milieu, until this point. Even Berio, the most well-known name to Anglo-American scholars, suffers in this regard: whilst the literature is huge on works such as *Sinfonia* (1967) and the *Sequenza* cycle (1958-2002), *Chamber Music* prompts nothing more than a passing mention in English or Italian sources. The analysis presented here perhaps offers no new paradigms (the 'loose', Dallapiccolian approach to serialism, the 'process' nature of composition and the emphasis on folk material are all familiar), but it identifies the origin of these characteristics and shows how they were both *rooted in* post-war Italian musical culture and *enacted upon* that culture a shift towards the extended vocal, theatrical, virtuosic and indigenous; trends which mark Italian (and much contemporary) music to this day.[16] Nono's *Variazione Canoniche* proves to be an admirably well-constructed work with a uniquely personal handling of the Schoenbergian legacy, bypassing the aesthetic/technique debates of serialists by internalising the canonic subject, connecting rhythmic and pitch series, utilising a subtle grading system of harmonic control and framing the whole in the spacious, antiphonal orchestral writing for which he was to become so famous. Quotation of 'external' music and the invocation of another compositional 'spectre' was also a fundamental aspect to Nono's style, and it would influence composers like Donatoni, who from the early 1960s often started composition with a pre-existent fragment of his own or somebody else's work (most relevantly, that of Schoenberg in *Etwas ruhiger im Ausdruck* from 1967).

Maderna's *Musica su Due Dimensioni* is but one example of how the technological revolution embraced by classical music in the 1950s was dependent in part on Italian

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[16] See Fearn, *Italian Opera after 1945*, especially 57-108, for a discussion of a 'new musical theatre' in the 1960s, including Berio's concept of the 'opera aperta' ('open work'), Nono and Manzoni's *azione scenica*, and the flamboyant post-modernisms of theatrical music by Maderna and Bussotti.

pioneers, and his combining of electronics and live rigorous serialism was a paradigm-former as early as 1953. The breaking down of the categorical barriers between musical media – for example, electronics and live performance in *Musica su Due Dimensioni,* the use of 'found' texts and letters in the *Kranichsteiner Kammerkantate,* radio broadcast as composition in *Don Perlimplin* (1961), the flute as the protagonist in the opera *Hyperion* (1964), the pastiche/collage effects of *Venetian Journal* (1972) – was one of Maderna's signature legacies, his fundamentally post-modernist achievement. Without this influence, the flamboyant music of Sylvano Busotti, whose music is considered an activity and a process as much as a concrete entity, is inconceivable. Italian music in this period thus carves out for itself a label-defying course. Its effects would be the production of a roster of compositional talent unrivalled in the later twentieth century: in the wake of Berio, Maderna and Nono, and under their direct influence, would come Busotti, Donatoni, Sciarrino, Manzoni, Aldo Clementi, Franco Evangelisti, Nicolò Castiglioni, Adriano Guarnieri and Ada Gentile.

Musical meaning in post-war Italy

This study has uncovered a wide range of interactions between musical and extra-musical meaning within this period. In doing so, some conventional narratives have been challenged, whilst others have been explored in more depth. An example of the former is the role played by Dallapiccola's pre-war work *Canti di Prigionia* in the post-war politics of rebirth and anti-fascist reaction. Held up for many years as an exemplary encoding of protest against Mussolini onto a startlingly progressive musical canvas, Chapter 2 of this thesis shows how the origins of the work and its entanglement with Italian fascism necessitate a re-evaluation of this interpretation. What is important to note is that the *Canti* emerge from such a reassessment not with less meaning, but with multi-faceted meaning. Remarkably, the music is changed by the course of history, enabling it to be a work of 'confession' in 1941, a work of 'diplomacy' in 1946, and a work of 'protest' in 1950. The chameleon story of the *Canti di Prigionia* mirrors the conclusions on the trope of the 'post-war', which saw composers and musicians embroiled in the ambiguities of what Torriglia calls 'collective amnesia'.[17]

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[17] Torriglia, *Broken Time, Fragmented Space: a Cultural Map for Post-War Italy*, xi.

The *Canti* are an early example of the close link between political meaning and music in the post-war period. Before the war, musical style of course cannot be detached from politics (the decadence of d'Annuzianismo, the 'Italianate' mannerisms of the numerous serenades and burlesques, the strict, authoritarian nature of musical interpretation, the 'back to Monteverdi' trends were all symptoms in one way or another of a Fascist mentality) but it would have been considered crude to give a piece of music an overt, worldly, realistic subject. Under the dictates of Croce, art was an unmediated expression of an inner intuition, divorced from concrete means and techniques. After the war however, the reformulations of Croce's philosophy by critics such as Mila allowed subjectivity and technical progression to join forces; by implication, musical meaning concretised, became less opaque, and started to absorb the subject of history directly. Expression was no longer the same as language, and therefore was open to the social dimension; furthermore the concept of *espressione inconsapevole* redeemed *tecnica* as an expressive force, albeit unconscious. The diametric opposition that formed between serialists who wanted to escape subjectivity and 'committed' musicians who wanted to embrace it (the **autonomy – engagement** collision) is marked.

The musical consequences of the growth of political music from Casella's *Missa 'Pro Pace'* to Maderna's *Kranichsteiner Kammerkantate* in 1953 are twofold: a concretisation of political message and a rupture in how this message is expressed. Whilst Casella only uses the phrase 'for peace' in his title, Ghedini in 1948 starts to express post-war angst in commemoration of an anti-fascist hero (with an all-too-easily exploited neo-realist sound), and Zafred goes as far as to include an actual partisan song as his climactic gesture in 1950. *Il Prigioniero* is in a different category; it exhibits a different political route that few followed, in its tendency to a expressionism that nevertheless could only be a product of its historical moment. By the time of Nono's *Epitaffi per Federico García Lorca* (1952) the direction tended towards more blatant and firm expressions of political opinion. Maderna's *Kranichsteiner Kantate* the following year takes this all a step further, using *resistenza* melodies and texts, viciously satirising the injustices of capitalism, invoking Gramsci's organicist materialism, celebrating the indomitable anti-fascist spirit, and clearly narrating the horrors of political oppression. This trend continued into the later 1950s and 1960s through Nono and Manzoni's increasingly vocal communism, through provocative gestures such as the musical collaboration with the workers of an industrial plant (Nono, *La*

Fabbrica Illuminata, 1964) or the dramatisation of a combination of Nazi and Nuclear holocaust, in the process upsetting civic and ecclesiastical groups (Manzoni, *Atomtod*, 1965).

It is not too strong to label some of these elements – together with the aforementioned emphasis on a clearly defined analytical 'background' – as realist. In fact, Nöller does just that, noting the heavy presence of 'folklorism' in works by Nono and Maderna of this time (popular songs, rumba rhythms, flamenco, gypsy music, seen also in the less politically conscious music of Berio).[18] Yet this is only half the story: in applying a highly distorting pitch permutation technique to already existing – and very identifiable - musical material, Maderna and Nono create music with inherent liminality, as opposed to the direct – if simple – messages of socialist realist composers; hence Nöller's binary division 'impegno versus socialist realism'.[19] Their music displays a basic paradox between the origin and the result of their starting points. Whilst both the textual and formal aspects of the music are inescapably political, on the pitch and timbral level expressive content is masked.[20] This was of course the intention, and says much about Maderna and Nono's status as high-modernists, for in the ultimate constructivist work, the ontology of the music (i.e. its pre-compositional makeup) is often more important than how it sounds.

Aside from the works of socialist musicians, the most common set of values that were encoded within music during this time could be labelled humanistic, a humanism of the **individual** rather than that of the **collective**. The highly sophisticated engagement with their texts of the *Concerto dell'Albatro* and *Noche Oscura* illustrates an attempt to penetrate to the very depth of the writer's lonely message, be it St John or Hermann Melville; their success should be seen both as a sign of a widespread post-war Italian priority for self-examination and as an impeccably modernist permeation of the subject material. Serialism almost invariably led down such a road: Maderna polemically characterised 'Italian dodecaphonists, as is in part the case amongst other dodecaphonists the world over today' as 'by nature and character individualists'.[21] The *libertà* in Dallapiccola's *Il Prigioniero* was an expression of solitary individualism, the existential artist fully 'becoming' between 'four

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[18] Nöller, *Engagement und Form*, 87-88.
[19] Ibid, 57.
[20] This becomes clear in the reception of Nono's *Il Canto Sospeso*, where the composer also fragments the text; see Stockhausen's attack on the work for its handling of its words in 'Music and Speech', 40–64, and Nono's reply in 'Testo-Musica-Canto', *Scritti e Colloqui*, i, 80-2.
[21] Unpublished lecture by Maderna from 1953-4, reprinted in Verzina, *Bruno Maderna: Étude historique et critique*, 45-6.

walls'; likewise Mila emphasised *l'uomo* and not *il popolo* (a foible evidently springing from a distaste for Mussolini's collectivism). The liberation from fascism was a chance to return to the era of the set-apart intellectual, the 'bearer of a neo-enlightenment culture' acting as a prophetic voice within society.[22]

But the influence of Gramsci set Nono, Maderna and later, Manzoni onto a different path. The dialectic forged between the historical materialism of Marx and the ultra-refined, abstract music of the post-war serialists is one of the more surprising twists of the narrative in this thesis. A 'third way' politics before its time, Gramsci's theories allowed a blatant paradox to emerge in Italian music where music that strongly 'means' was wedded to musical language that tries to 'mean' nothing at all. On the stage of international modernism, the implications of Nono's political music would not be felt until the late 50s: *Il Canto Sospeso* and *Intolleranza 1960* (works which could not be dismissed as mere partisan realism) would provoke a storm of controversy in the GDR (where *Il canto Sospeso* met with opposition from Stockhausen and Eimert) and Venice (where *Intolleranza 1960* 'provoked protest and uproar').[23] Yet the lineage of similar (if developing) works from Italian composers before this crucial point demonstrates the evolution of a synthesis whereby 'invention and technical command serve to communicate a message whose fully perceptible depth is what counts'.[24] This fact situates this and other twentieth-century musical paradigms right at the heart of music in *secondo dopoguerra* Italy, and testifies to its importance.

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[22] Bobbio, *Ideological Profile of Twentieth-Century Italy*, 166.
[23] Nielinger, 'The Song Unsung: Luigi Nono's *Il Canto Sospeso*', 90; Borio, 'Nono' in *Grove Music On-line*.
[24] Massimo Mila, 'La Linea Nono', quoted in Nielinger, 'The Song Unsung: Luigi Nono's *Il Canto Sospeso*', 83.

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