Kurs: CA1004 Självständigt arbete 40 hp
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New Audience Innovative Practice
Institutionen för klassisk musik

Handledare: Sven Åberg

Francesco Moretti

Musicians can fly
Heterogeneous material, Renaissance sources and contemporary group improvisation
Homage to Umberto Eco (1932-2016)

Skriftlig reflektion inom självständigt arbete
Till dokumentationen hör en videoinspelning av konserten. Den finns även:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apHtIqk3QEk
Innehållsförteckning

INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................................. 5
  TO MY DADDY ........................................................................................................... 5
  BECAUSE OF THE ACCORDION ........................................................................... 6
  NOWADAYS .............................................................................................................. 6
  AS A CIRCLE ............................................................................................................. 7
  TERMINOLOGY ......................................................................................................... 7
  WRITING THIS THESIS ........................................................................................... 8

RESEARCH QUESTIONS .............................................................................................. 10
  ABOUT THE QUESTIONS ......................................................................................... 10

THE SOUND EVENT ..................................................................................................... 13
  WHO, WHEN, WHERE, HOW ................................................................................ 14
  WHAT HAPPENED .................................................................................................... 18

REFLECTIONS AND EVALUATIONS OVER REPORTS .......................................... 23
  EMMA ....................................................................................................................... 24
  JUSTYNA .................................................................................................................. 26

ANALYSIS OF THE ARTWORK ..................................................................................... 28
  CHOICE AND CHANCE OF THE MUSIC MATERIAL .............................................. 29
  THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD WITHIN IT .................................................................... 30
  A LOVE SUPREME ................................................................................................... 30
  MUSICA ANTICA AND MODERN IMPROVISATION .............................................. 31
  DEDICATED TO UMBERTO ECO ............................................................................ 31

INTERPRETING ............................................................................................................. 33
  PERFORMANCE AND RECORDING ......................................................................... 33
  THE VOICE ............................................................................................................... 35
  WHAT MATTERS ....................................................................................................... 36
Omaggio ad Umberto Eco (1932-2016)

“Music and life are all about style”
by Miles Davis

Davis, Miles (1990).
INTRODUCTION

This thesis is meant to be a personal link to the beginning of my artistic “circle”, which I started many years ago. As John Cage said:

“I remember loving sound before I ever took a music lesson, and so we make our lives by what we love”
Cage, John (1961).

As it happens while moving in a circularly symmetric structure, after a while wondering inside it, like a particle in a synchrotron or like a driver in the main ring-shaped roads around the centre of Milano, a clear perception of which was the starting point or which is the actual position disappears. I would like, with this work, to connect and to give a meaning to the beginning and to the end of this magic circle.

TO MY DADDY

First of all, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my father Giuseppe, called Pino by family and friends. Since I was a child, he often played in the car some tapes of classical music, usually Mozart’s “Symphony K40” or Stravinsky’s “Pulcinella” or even the Rock-Baroque music by “Rondò Veneziano”. In addition to this he had always woken me up with the sound of the wonderful Italian public radio-channel of classical music, “FD5”, streamed at that time on cable, while nowadays on radio waves, with amazing sound quality all around Italy.

In the years which followed my childhood, my father made it quite public his disapproval of my pursuit to learn the accordion. Anyway, I believe he has been attentive to my progress, even if has been my mother, with her artistic sensitivity, to give me the best advice for developing my musicality often giving suggestions I would later hear from my best teachers!

My mother Marina, I believe, is what the great American composer Aaron Copland calls a “gifted listener” (I will use this term throughout the text and quote its source at the beginning of the chapter titled “Some purposes”), meaning a person open to new experiences and critical evaluations.

When I was about 9 years old I started playing accordion -without having ever heard the sound of that instrument- just because I was told it was a “complete” musical “instrument”, according to the first definition in Collins Dictionary (Available: https://www.collinsdictionary.com/it/dizionario/inglese/instrument – March 2016):

“Instrument: a tool or a device that is used to do a particular task, especially a scientific task”

which in my specific case was the polyphony. I knew that polyphony was the element which made symphonic music for me so rich, interesting and never boring enough not to be heard once more.
I had my first music lessons by chance. A teacher of accordion and very inspiring person, a visual artist definitely more famous as a painter than as a musician, was living in the same building of my family.

After ten months, discovering music as learning equations and fractions, summing quarters to eight-notes, through purely spoken solfège exercises, without having any idea of pitch connected to those points on the staff, I could finally play my first notes. My parents, amazed by my growing interest in such an apparently dry subject and exhausted by the noise of my everyday solfège, finally bought me an accordion.

**BECAUSE OF THE ACCORDION**

“In itself, a piece may conform both to good taste and to the rules of composition, and hence be well written, but still run counter to the instruments”

by Johann Joachim Quantz

Goehr, Lydia (1994).

As my music background had been purely classical, once discovered, at the age of 16, that finally a class of accordion was opening at Milano conservatoire, while previously the nearest conservatoire teaching accordion was in Florence, almost 400km away, I immediately took the chance to belong to that venerated group of privileged people called “classical musicians”.

Anyway, having an accordion as the main instrument meant for me not only being partly excluded from the classical music environment, which I had been yearning for, but also having no chance to experience all the classic-romantic-literature, which I have been regardless able to enjoy through the five years of compulsory piano lessons.

Moreover, the original repertoire for accordion -which is a very young instrument invented less than two centuries ago- consists in 20th century compositions, while the many transcriptions for the instrument usually aim to interpret musica antica, principally written for historical keyboard such as organ and harpsichord.

**NOWADAYS**

Composing, interpreting, improvising: these are 3 elements in creating a music event which are nowadays mostly used to be observed as separate features: the first two inside the classical music environment, respectively within the characters of the composer and the musician-interpreter, such as the instrumentalist or the conductor. The last one has been strongly associated with the 20th century music stream called Jazz.

Thus, these three elements have become deeply connected parts of my cultural and practice-based music background and artistic research.
AS A CIRCLE

Trying to describe which experiences influenced my artistic development, concerning the three fields above mentioned, it is possible to glimpse a circular connection, which starts from these three elements, apparently disconnected or just connected by straight lines, as the edges of a triangle, but which instead, in my imagination and in the creation of my master-project, were connected through a smooth subtle line, overlapping as indistinguishable points, in a unique, slight and centred symmetrical geometrical figure. At the centre of that, there is what we just call music.

In a recent interview with Umberto Eco:

“We are in the time, as an athlete, we need to step backward to prepare the jump forward…”
“...memory is the soul, to project us to the future we need a soul.”

Talking a bit more about my personal experience, which has been fundamental for me to achieve a better understanding of my further steps and for reflecting upon my intuitive decisions, I propose the three thematics in separate chapters, where I theoretically investigate some of their inner connections.

TERMINOLOGY

A couple of clarifications about the terminology inside the text:

First, for referring to what I specifically created in my master project, I prefer in this text the use of the term sound event instead of, for example, execution or performance, which are instead commonly perceived as an artistic proposal of fully prepared, rehearsed and organised material. Neither I use the word concert, which in a music school environment is closely associated with a classical music environment and all the clichés connected to it.

As it is possible to easily observe, for every type of concert -which is defined by the word preceding it, for example reggae, heavy metal or classical- one may expect a well determined kind of audience, divided by age, social class, political ideas, ethnicity and many other criteria.

Specifically, what I call sound event has not only been organised in the time-wave dimension and its structure, but also in the space and visual elements, as every event occurs in life and nature in the totality of the four dimensions: time and three space dimensions.

“Neither space nor time is substantially anything, but everything else in the world needs both of them. You could say space and time are the no thing in between the things that are three-dimensional things.”
Nevertheless, my creative process started from the will of presenting a specific (partly written, partly improvised) sound material. I instead use the term music event to describe every other generic happening, with unspecified space setting involving music, which was not to part of my master project. Secondly, I have chosen to use the Italian name musica antica for the music material, which I used in the sound event, and belongs the period of Italian Renaissance.

**WRITING THIS THESIS**

According to the first proposal of my last mentor, Per Mårtensson, this thesis was not supposed to be so extensively theoretical. He even suggested I create an innovative thesis, a multimedia-presentation of the sound event, which could be shared on my webpage, possibly together with some videos describing the preparation and a few words about the concepts underlying the artistic project. The YouTube link, on the front page of this thesis, actually refers to the video which is the realisation of this.

With great effort, I personally took care of all the audio and video editing, working on the program Adobe Premiere, which I learned to use through online tutorials and the really kind help of my dear friend Tina Amvon. Unfortunately, the recorded video-material regarding the preparation of the sound event was really not enough for a presentation. For this reason, I preferred to collect the reflections at the base of my creative process and to look into literature, first, for further reflections of what happened during the sound event, and secondly, to find other supporting examples of my operating mode during the creative process.

In the end, this thesis is both theoretical and practice based, since I needed a strong philosophical background for both getting confident in producing my project, and afterwards for accepting the results of it, which has been a worthwhile challenge during my third master in music.

In the previous sentence, I preferred using the adjective philosophical, rather than calling it theoretical, for the cultural and social background I investigated with the help of professor Per Mårtensson and my dear friend Christofer Elgh. The latter term could sound as purely logical and abstract, while I imagine the first one deeply linked with the passion (from the ancient Greek *philein*, love) I had in reading and studying dissertations (*sophia*, wisdom) fundamental concepts such as performance, artistic creation and philology in music. Moreover, music is actually the most practice-based art, since directly connected to our emotions, through the mechanic receptor of the ears, and the following complex mathematical procedure of Fourier analysis which our brain employs, the process of which is clearly and scientifically described by the Italian physicist Andrea Frova in “Armonia Celeste e Dodecafonia” (ref. Frova, Andrea (1999)) or his masterwork “Fisica nella Musica” (ref. Frova, Andrea (2006)).

This thesis is based on two questions and thus divided into two parts. The first part includes the description of the preparation and the happenings during the sound
event, along with feedback from the audience as well as from participants in the whole creative process. Through this critical approach, I could better evaluate which needs were missing and how I could achieve a better result next time I would organise an independent project involving so many people, where I am holding the responsibility for of the artistic part, as it happened during the sound event.

The second part, starting with the descriptive introduction “Analysis of the artwork”, includes more theoretical chapters which contain my reflections over quotes collected during the last 12 months pertinent to the artistic process I have been building, and I analysing it afterwards. I strongly believe that my use of quotes from great artists of my time can better express the theoretical concepts touched on in the text, and aid reflection in the reader, more efficiently than I can myself do with my own words.

The more theoretical part collects both my previous experiences in the field of music -as already mentioned in the introduction and which I only recently understood to have particularly influenced the creation of the sound event- together with the thoughts I have developed over some fundamental meanings in music during and after the creative process. The reflections I made past-event helped me better understand some of the choices I made intuitively during the process. In this way, not only the second research question is developed in the second part, but also part of the first is discussed.

The present text and my creative process root their major inspiration from texts by Aaron Copland, John Cage, Umberto Eco and Lydia Goher. In addition to those, I acquired a deep insight into the contemporary music context, and confirmation of my own ideas and experiences through reading many fundamental articles by great musicians highly active during my youth and still nowadays, inside the admirable book “Audio Culture” by Christoph Cox and Daneil Warner (ref. Cox, Christoph and Warner, Daneil (2013)).

The use of selected quotes throughout the whole thesis aims to support my own reflections, with similar comments and sentences by great artists who have made and continue making the history of music. As declared by Arved Ashby:

“A person quotes on earlier statement not in order to elucidate the statement but as an attempt to clarify the present in light of the past”

Ashby, Arved (2013).

As the reader may have already noticed, I distributed and spaced out every quote over a number of lines -differently than in the original text- in order to suggest a personal interpretation and facilitate a better understanding.
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How to organise a music event, where classical musicians are engaged in the creative process?

2. Understanding my creative process:
   How have my reflections on my previous artistic experience and my research on the practice of interpreting, composing and improvising, helped my understanding of the intuitive process employed in the sound event?

ABOUT THE QUESTIONS

1. Since I was sure not to be able to organize a project in Sweden myself - which would have needed both funding and a defined artistic proposal for the promotion at least one year before- I decided to experiment and challenge myself with a research project inside the college. I chose to base the project on the resources I most often had abundantly to hand -i.e. ideas and enthusiasm. In this particular case, for my thesis, I knew that the school could provide a newly built concert hall, the “Nathan Milstein Salen” at KMH campus in Stockholm, and that there was a school full of students. Moreover, I might have the chance to further collaborate with the very professional staff of sound and light technicians who previously had the pleasure to work with on projects such as the recording of my first solo cd “Repetita” as well as the recording of some concerts at KMH. For the musicians involved in a school music-project there are usually no economic resources available. Especially at the beginning of many creative processes in music at whatever level, there are also no sources available, as I experienced in Italy, or in Sweden as an immigrant. Most times for the artists involved there are no other advantages than the chance of creative development, some useful team-building exercises and a gain in experience. Since I had the possibility to collaborate just with students, the reliability of their participation and their respect of the time-plan was susceptible to lessons or occasionally to paid jobs. As a consequence, my task has been to organise the whole machine of human resources -which was my primary need for the sound event- and start an open-minded, modular approach to a creative process, sensitive to sudden changes.

2. The second research question is developed in the text with the presentation of the theoretical background which I investigated both before and after the sound event, and my reflections on it. My creative process followed mainly an intuitive and pragmatic approach. Describing it with a few “poetical” words:
I had a dream. Not concretely a defined sound dream. More generally a soundscape implying an emotional event, which connected more with the feelings I had while listening to proposed scores and improvisations, than a particular defined sound.

I learned to become ready for any change while developing my project, welcoming problems, suggestions and doubts over the efficacy of the result. The only need was the presence of an audience and some “actors”, who would be proposed something unusual.

The dream then changed according to pragmatic needs. New settings were suggested and new dreams became possible.

Finally, the result was not under my total control but mostly affected by the combination of many variables i.e. the musical experience of every participant, the team building and some lucky events. What best I could make and develop was the clearness and openness of my instructions to the participants.

I basically had the purpose of creating a project on my own, combining both my skills and passions in different fields and musical genre. One more intention was to challenge my leading skills and explore the complete artistic organization of a cultural event.

In the end, I have been in charge of the setting of the ensemble involved, the rehearsing plan, the booking of the concert hall, the light setting, the video material, post-editing of it and last but not least the “composition” of the sound event.

I have not been careful in clearly separating the readings which I collected previously or after the sound event, but I can affirm that before it, I had already read entirely the following books:


I also partly consulted before and deeply studied afterwards:


Reflecting over the meaning of the themes of interpreting, composing and improvising after the sound event, made me understand a bit more why I unconsciously refused some standards -which I will call cliché in the text- or why I made certain intuitive choices and even why I didn’t make a choice letting the chance drive the creative process, which felt purely intuitive to in the beginning.
“music was born free, and to win freedom is its destiny”
Busoni, Ferruccio (1911).
The music event has been called “Musicians Can Fly”. It can be considered a music composition, lasting about 50 minutes, planned to take place in a specific space -the “Nathan Milstein Salen” of the Kungliga Musikhögskolan of Stockholm. Both the full video of the performance -having a few small cuts due to technical problems with the cameras- and the edited video which is a presentation of the project, are available online. The latter, on my YouTube channel at the link specified on the front page, and the first one belongs to the files-archive of the music school.

The title, along with the picture shown at at page 12 (used for the sound event poster), aims to inspire the idea of the freedom of artistic inspiration and the wished freedom for the classical musicians involved. To fly out from the cage of the “historically correct” performance practice, from the clichés of classical music with its strictly organised hierarchy, through to a more direct approach to music-making. Starting from the ideas and emotions available inside every single musician and influenced by his/her background; encouraging them to relate these feelings to what is happening in the moment of presenting the sound material to an audience, without passing from the medium of the practice, the music edition, nor referring to any music-history contextualization.

Using a metaphor, as in the picture which I chose as the concert’s poster (and I personally took when I had the lucky chance to meet live in nature a marvellous Papilio Machaon), the instrumentalist, like a caterpillar, has already its beauty and his/her hue connecting with the surroundings, which is the classical music environment. But he/she also has inside all the tools necessary for becoming - throughout the creativity- a different, even more beautiful and skilled creature, more colourful and able to fly freely.

Trying to describe my approach to the sound event, I would like to quote Umberto Eco -from the chapter “The Poetics of the Open Work”:

“A number of recent pieces of instrumental music are linked by a common feature: the considerable autonomy left to the individual performer in the way he chooses to play the work. Thus, he is not merely free to interpret the composer’s instruction following his own discretion (which in fact happens in traditional music), but he must impose his judgment on the form of the piece, as when he decides how long to hold a note or in what order to group the sounds: all this amounts to an act of improvised creation”

for example, he considers Karlheinz Stockhausen, Luciano Berio and Henry Pousseur.

Eco, Umberto (1962).

Umberto Eco remarks on the modern approach to classical music performances, which increased during the second half of the 20th century, and the freedom left to musician in interpreting the scores. The last two words which Eco uses are the adjective “improvised” -which connotes the unpredicted result of the execution-
and the noun “creation”, which specifies the creative process required in the work of the interpreter.
What I wanted to achieve was the sharing of this creative experience with classical musicians of the college, giving my personal and contemporary approach to the artistic result.

**WHO, WHEN, WHERE, HOW**

In the end, the participants engaged in the project were 16:

- **6 voices:**
  - Ingrid Berg, Lovisa Huledal, Szymon Rudzki, Oscar Quiding recording Dufay in studio, Klara Helga Dahlberg recording in studio; Oscar Quiding and Patrik Kesselmark, the latter kindly joining just the day of the performance.
- **6 instrumentalists:**
  - Emma Granstam, Matilda Larson – trumpet (and Emma recorded her voice on Shakespeare)
  - Mimosa Laine, Carl Appelgren – trombone, the latter only joining the general rehearsal and the performance
  - Ellen Ivansson – clarinet
  - Francesco Moretti – accordion, organ, voice
- **2 sound technicians:**
  - Erik Metall – post editing and on stage
  - Magnus Lindström Kolterud – studio recordings
- **1 light-technician:** Anders Blomqvist
  - **1 cameraman:** Benjamin Ek

Furthermore, the 4 composers involved:

- **3 from the past, 15th-16th century:** Guillaume Dufay, Francesco da Milano, Luca Marenzio
- **1 contemporary, beginning of the 3rd millennium:** Francesco Moretti

During the performance, the 11 people actively contributing:

- **4 voices:** Ingrid, Klara, Patrik and Oscar
- all the instrumentalists
- **1 sound technician controlling the recorded material:** Erik Metall

I started enrolling people for my master performance during October 2016, starting with the musicians I knew and have been inspired by for many years, good relationship but not yet any occasion for a musical collaboration.

The booking of the concert hall was made well in advance, according to the schedule of the musicians, trying to choose a less intense week for the brass players often involved in rehearsals and projects inside and outside the school.

After the first half of December all dates were fixed and shared with the participants: Nathan Milstein was reserved for the improvisation workshop Monday 27th and Tuesday 28th of February i.e. 12.00-14.30, 17.00-18.30, and Wednesday 1st of March i.e. 16.00-18.30.

Finally, Friday 3rd of March i.e. 11.30-14.00 was scheduled for a general rehearsal.

I arranged date of the concert for Thursday 9th of March 2017, almost a week’s time after the general rehearsal, to give musicians’ brain enough sleeping time to internalize and absorb the role they were expected to interpret in performance.
The choice of the team has been fundamental for the realization of the project. I couldn’t be sure of their participation, but in the end their professionalism seemed to be connected with the minimum request I was making to them: being present, at least, during the general rehearsal and the performance. Surely, for their full participation at the meetings, it would have been useful to set the timetable of the rehearsals a few months in advance, for the improvisation workshop, and having the collaboration of the institution, making it possible for students to gain of a few University credits or integrating the workshop in collaboration with some department. On reflection, having institutions collaborating in the workshop could have been limiting, first the freedom to personally choose the participants, secondly, for my personal growth during the creative process, to face all the unexpected or miscalculated troubles.

Among all the people I asked, just two declined, both before the first meeting. One informed me just two weeks before the sound event that, as a mistake, she had scheduled two concerts at the same time. The second one apparently felt panic before the first rehearsal, which I expect was due to the freedom and creative responsibility left to the musicians. Instead, according to him, it was because of a lack of specific information about what was needed to practice, in preparation of the event. I am not allowed to show in this text my dialogs with the latter person, nor his name. Nevertheless, I can describe this as the expected reaction from a good classical performer who refuses to explore the concept of improvisation and not-prepared performance, as the result of a subject not included -even having a bad reputation- inside the formative preparation received in the traditional classical music school-system.

In the end, since not all the singers would have been available on the date of the concert, the first meeting-day become useful for trying to record sound material to be used during the performance. Magnus proposed we utilize the studio for this purpose and the team were enthusiastic for this interesting and unusual chance of recording inside brand-new studios. I personally felt a great atmosphere that first day, even without the timetable or my working plan being strictly defined. I was just waiting for the inspiration and results from the experiences that week to then set and share with the participants all the details of the project along with my intentions. That first day I simply had it in mind to record a Kyrie by Dufay, the folk song he constructed the mass over and its text.

Actually, since the first time I was talking to the possible participants about the project, I remained generic, not describing any detail, but still being clear with the intention of artistic experiment I desired to achieve with them, as the free improvisation of a classical musician, guided and inspired by some Renaissance compositions and a modern piece of music created and organised by me. To say in all truth, what brought me to explore improvisation was mainly the unsureness that this concept gave to many of the friends I asked to play in the project. For all participants -except from Emma, who declared to know how to improvise in modal jazz- the first comment to my proposal had been exactly the same: “I have no idea how to improvise and I am scared of it, are you sure you want to engage me in this project?” After the first three similar replies, my answer to that question became a firm “Yes, that is why I want you, with your beautiful sound!”. This sounded like an interesting challenge, which is why it became my
purpose. And this purpose was exactly what apparently kept the people involved and curious about experimenting with it.

In this way, even some enthusiasm started spreading around the school from the participants, since when asked by them, I started describing the concepts involved in the project and how I desired them to not practice in preparation of it but just to rely on their musical experience and keep their artistic mind open.

My decision to organise a project with the minimum time engagement of the participants was connected with the practical resources I had and with the risks I could encounter. Since it was clear that I couldn’t ask them more, I tried to create the sound event around what was available, instead of encountering barriers or feeling unsatisfaction for what was not possible.

On Monday, I also had time to record the voice of Emma directly inside the concert hall, letting her be inspired by the text by Shakespeare, which I found inside the book by Schafer (ref. Schafer, Murray (1994)). I just asked her to try different rhythms in the enunciation of the text. Emma has been chosen to read that text after I had delightedly listened to her reading with great passion and sensuality a theatre-piece by William Shakespeare during a workshop with the teacher Rolf Christiansson.

Tuesday was spent working on the spatialization of the sound. Unfortunately, few instrumentalists were present, no more than half. Anyway, it was important for me and for the few there to directly experiment the sound space of the concert hall, through easy improvising tasks set by me, created in the moment and partly connected with the styles of improvisation required in the sound event.

Wednesday had been a day for discussing and for showing my temporary plan to Ingrid and Klara, the only people present that day, together with Tomasz. The funny and positive presence of my friend Tomasz, who was also eager to collaborate but busy on the performance day, was also fundamental to the good mood of the day and the team building.

The two girls were engaged in the project, interested in every single detail. As they showed me, their curiosity was linked with the need to feel safe about what could happen during the sound event.

Discussing and asking their help was a fundamental to me realising the exact needs of the musicians before being on stage, and how much needed were crystal-clear cues during the sound event: all the details that were needed to be fixed, all the cues that had to be set for achieving an explicit time-evolution of the sound event, all the details in scores that needed refined.

By the way, my relation with Klara during the meetings, had sometimes a similar approach Miles declares to have had with Coltrane:

“Trane liked to ask all these motherfucking questions back then about what he should or shouldn’t play.
Man, fuck that shit;
to me he was a professional musician
and I have always wanted whoever played with me
to find their own place in the music”
Kahn, Ashley (2002).
In hindsight, I can admit to feeling partly disappointed with her very deep interest in what I was creating, careful to keep secret some details about my composition techniques, as it happens now while I am writing this thesis. It is possible to recognise that many times in my previous experiences and in particular during this project, I have not achieved my ideal level of communication with the people involved, often pretending to have their full trust and participation in what I was creating. This defect of mine has been softened by the constant discussion and professionalism of the musicians involved.

The same approach I had with musicians, I also had with everybody in the team involved. I had already collaborated with Erik for the creation of my first solo CD, so it was great to fix a few hours together to check the material for the sound event, imagine the sound settings available, see the possibilities and take decisions for the editing of the sound which would be played in the concert hall: we set 4 loudspeakers in the 4 corners of the audience plus 2 hanging above the stage and directed towards the audience.

Benjamin is another person who contributed greatly to the success of what has been created. I asked him to video-document the event, as he had been suggested to me by other friends. He has been careful, professional and kind in everything, giving to the performance the possibility to have useful footage of the emotions conveyed. I just asked him to interview the participants but I was not expecting he would choose the moment straight after the sound event, which had all the positive energy and fresh feeling of the experience.

I am also reminded of what a pleasure and comfort it was to work with Anders - who still smiles at me every time we cross our way at school- to organise the lights. I desired them to be original and in a way sophisticated but still practical, to be programmed with quick changes possible and also to be meaningful for the sound message and experience of the musicians in a determinate moment. For example, the starting darkness had been considered to give more confidence to the improvising moments, secondly the spotlights for the moments more similar of a classical execution and in the final improvisation the use of a stage with the same light as the audience, as a friendly shared moment of confidence among musicians and audience and the finally reached self-confidence in improvisation by the musicians.

“Asked (...) whether he believed in predetermination, Coltrane paused and pondered:
“I believe you could say you make almost what you want, in a way you do, but when, that seems the part that you don’t have much to do with (...) You gotta set your course, but when you arrive (...) it doesn’t always happen like you planned.”
Kahn, Ashley (2002).

In the end, with the passion of participants to make the sound event succeed arose the possibility of involving new musicians last-minute, to create what I would call “the best sound combination which destiny could give me”. In other words, what I really wished to give was an interesting and balanced sound-space-shape -the even number of trumpets and trombones, and enough singers to cover sufficiently the parts of a madrigal by Luca Marenzio. The two musicians who barely just attended the concert were Patrik and Carl, respectively gently asked by Ingrid and Mimosa. For them it was not an easy task to join the sound event, which they probably
experienced as an adventure. Anyway, Patrik had been clear to ask not to attend the last improvising part, which was totally new for him. So, I thanked him for the help given until the madrigal and let him join the audience at the beginning of the second part.

**WHAT HAPPENED**

“Nothing is so boring as a merely well-rehearsed performance”  
Copland, Aaron (1959).

This quote by Aaron Copland has been like a good star, to follow during the whole preparation of the sound event. Actually, I could easily have been panicking for several reasons and during every moment of the project, which always had something unexpected. But one of my actual challenges was to accept every difficult situation, aiming at the sole purpose of having a group of skilled classical musicians finally playing at the sound event. In the end, there was never a general rehearsal. Just small parts -which I considered the most important for keeping the intensity and interest in the flow of the music- mainly the connections between sections, had been rehearsed once by almost all of the musicians. That was not the ideal situation nor the minimum I would have hoped for to stage the sound event. Anyway, it turned out to be enough in relation to my simple requests to the musicians and for the clarity of my instructions about it.

Colson Whitehead, from “The Intuitionist: The Aesthetics of Failure”  
“It is failure that guides evolution; perfection offers no incentive for improvement”  
Cox, Christoph and Warner, Daniel (2013).

I ended up collecting a certain amount of failures, as the little participations of musicians in the workshop, and a good amount of lucky moments, as with the final participation of enough musicians, which -exaggerating but considering the fortuitous result of the event- could define the sound event as a “Commedia all’Italiana”. The Italian movie-director Mario Monicelli, quoted in the Italian page of Wikipedia (Available: [https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commedia_all%27italiana](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commedia_all%27italiana), September 2017) defines it as:

“trattare con termini comici, divertenti, ironici, umoristici degli eventi che sono invece drammatici”

which basically means to deal with dramatic happenings in an ironic way.

In my specific case, both before and after the sound event, I have been occupied in processing, in a creative and positive way, all the defects and doubts which were inside the preparation and even in the further reflections upon it. The presentation YouTube video is actually the result of an accurate selection of the best moments of the performance and their juxtaposition, in order to collect together the best elements, which could be utilised for further developments in my creative practice and experiments.

The words of Anthony Braxton have been a good guide for the engagement of participants in the creative game, delimited inside the improvised parts. He writes
in the four final comments to his music, inside the article “Introduction to Catalog of Works”:

“a. Have fun with this material and don’t get hung up with any one area
b. Don’t misuse this material to have only “correct” performances without spirit of risk. (..)
c. Each performance must have something unique. (..)
d. Finally, I recommend as few rehearsals as possible so that everyone will be slightly nervous (..)”
Cox, Christoph and Warner, Daneil (2013).

I can affirm that the ludic aspect of the performance greatly contributed to the relaxation and trusted participation of the musicians. Even the one who in the end decided not to attend the sound event for panic, was almost convinced to give it a try during the previous days by my playful and joking approach to the project. This is what also commedia all’italiana teaches: being serious is not the only way to deal with dramatic happenings, in this case what is considered as frightening. Comedy has a great power of making people reflect differently, in an unusual way and becoming even more brave in dealing with misfortune.

The same day of the concert there was the possibility of accessing the stage beforehand during the afternoon, and the start of the first real “general” rehearsal with the almost full participation of the musicians involved in the sound event. Ellen came just half an hour before the performance but, in the end, my graphical scores describing the time plan of the complete sound event were clear enough to be followed, also paying attention to all the actions of the two groups, instrumentalists and singers, which have always been combined and synchronised to be easily followed and to raise the feeling of safety. As a result, the concept of improvisation was present during all the sound event, not only between sections and in the game in the final section. As I explicitly told the musicians that same day, nothing would have been considered to be wrong during my project because everybody was there to experiment with interactions while several things were happening, for considering and taking decisions, for having responsibility to contribute in the best way one could make both alone and inside the soundscape, as well as for belonging to the group as a whole, at the same time, inside the space of the concert hall.
Moreover, the position of the participants, spatialized throughout the concert hall, often offered to their ear just a partial perception of the outgoing music result. This was a space for them to realize the importance of the space in the emission of a sound and to open possibilities on how to react to it.

The following quote I shared with the participants before the first meeting. It shows the importance of accepting every sound happening and consequently the act to keep the coherence and flow of the event, determined by this impalpable variable called time.

In my personal experience and according to several professors I have been discussing with, such as Sergio Scappini, the skill of adapting to the sound result is not only fundamental for improvisation environments, but also in a good amount for the classical music situations, where not only the musicians need to adapt to the acoustic changes created by the audience, but also by the variety of changes that affect the performance of every single musician in the group, for example by adrenaline and chance-events:
"I’m on stage at a concert hall in Stockholm, Sweden, in the mid-1960 playing piano with the Miles Davis Quintet. We’re on tour, and this show is really heating up. The band is tight - we’re all in sync, all on the same wavelength. The music is flowing, we’re connecting with the audience, and everything feels magical, like we are waving a spell.

Tony Williams(...) Ron Carter(...) Wayne Shorter(...) The five of us have become an entity, shifting and flowing with the music. We are playing one of Miles Classics, “So what”, (...) it is the peak of everything. Miles starts playing, building up to his solo, and just as he’s about to really let loose, he takes a breath. And right then I play a chord that is just so wrong.

I don’t even know where it came from-it’s the wrong chord, in the wrong place, and now it’s hanging out there, like a piece of rotten fruit. I think, Oh, shit. It’s as if we’ve all been building this gorgeous house of sounds, and I just accidentally put a match to it. Miles paused for a fraction of a second, and then he plays some notes that somehow, miraculously make my chord sound right. In that moment, I believe my mouth actually fell open. Which kind of alchemy was this? And then Miles just took off from there, unleashing a solo that took the song in a new direction. The crowd went absolutely crazy.

In the dressing room after the show I asked Miles about it(...) Miles just winked at me, a hint of a smile... He didn't say anything. He didn’t have to. Miles wasn’t one to talk a whole lot about things when he could show us something instead. (...) In my mind, it was the “wrong” chord. But Miles never judged it- he just heard it as a sound that had happened... and because he didn’t judge it, he was able to run with it, to turn it into something amazing.

Miles trusted the band, and he trusted himself, and he always encouraged us to do the same. We all have a natural human tendency to take the safe route -to do the things we know will work-rather than taking a chance. But that’s the antithesis of Jazz(...) Jazz is about being in the moment, at every moment. It is about trusting yourself... If you can allow yourself to do that, you never stop exploring, you never stop learning, in music and in life.”

Hancock, Herbie (2014).
In the moment of the sound event, I felt I had no other choice than to trust the band and let things go their own way. It was an emotional moment, almost like a birth, to listen and feel the group engage in something I had only dreamed about. I had always believed in their skills as classical musicians but, up until that moment, even though most of the time I was not playing with them nor was I conducting anything more than giving a few cues through the use of lights -I was just hoping that the energies of the group could come together as positive as possible. The life-philosophy suggested by Hancock in the last lines, while referring specifically to the jazz music, has been the crucial node which developed my own personal attitude to the whole art of music, in whatever genre, both in the creative and the didactical side of it.

Even Ornette Coleman, historical example of free jazz, has been an inspiration for my attitude through the group work, with the purpose of creating a strong and confident team building, useful for the participants to feel safe in this unexplored field called improvisation:

“I don’t tell the members of my group what to do. I want them to play what they hear in the piece for themselves. (..)
The musicians have complete freedom, and so, of course, our final results depend entirely on the musicianship, emotional make-up and taste of the individual member. Our is at all time a group effort (..)
A strong personality with a star-complex would take away from the effectiveness of the group,
no matter how brilliantly he played.
Cox, Christoph and Warner, Daniel (2013).

In the case of the sound event, the freedom was not complete, even if I let them imagine that. During the first improvisation -where I suggested they create following the frame of rules I gave them, it happened instead that they found the freedom to expand, setting melodies to what was happening on stage, during the three repetitions of the Kyrie. Some of the lucky moments out of this freedom are present in the YouTube video.

The video of the performance, together with the great interviews and feedback taken by Benjamin, aims at showing -in the best way and also with a good flow through an accurate work of post-editing- the good results of this free meeting of skilled professionals and people who I sincerely love. Just one month before the sound event, the same people showed unsureness and fear in improvising, and now I feel that I at least succeeded in bringing on-stage their first improvisation improvised performance as a positive experience.

Dj Spooky(Paul D. Miller):

“Beats don’t lie and sound is all about flow:
don’t push the river.”
Cox, Christoph and Warner, Daniel (2013).

Surely, at the beginning and end of the performance, I experienced a quite static sense of time not far from traditional Japanese music culture, as I will talk more extensively in the theoretical part.
Anyway, the rhythm could have been more interesting according to a more Western taste, through the use of a greater rehearsing time and consequently the possibility of a better mixing of the sound material.

In the end, I could consider the effort given by the participants as the real minimum required to achieve anything similar to what I was dreaming about. However, I was surprised by the musicality and increased relaxation which I could observe and hear in certain moments of the sound event, which contributed to the surprisingly good final result - as the video shows - which means artistically interesting material. This term has been used by the composers Per Mårtensson and Henrik Frisk to explain to me verbally their evaluation of the sound event. I could now use this material in proposals for other projects and as a starting point for further developing my “composition” style.

I felt that a good flow of adrenaline was in the musicians, and unsureness has never been linked with a totally disastrous situation, where any of them became completely lost inside the sound event. I noticed eye contact among them and even some smiles.

In the end of the sound event, they were very excited and even seemed enthusiastic, as the YouTube video shows. All of them thanked me for the experience and I likewise thanked them on stage in the finale, introducing, their names one by one to the audience.

The YouTube video starts with Klara referring to when somebody in the audience verbally reacted already during the performance, which was something I was expecting to happen and actually gave unexpected energy to her and to the group, making her move as I was hoping she would have done (but that I actually in the end decided not to tell her) to let her be comfortable in making her own decision as how to present the surprise of her live voice, the first appearing in the sound event, coming from the audience, counterpointing with the same song recorded by her, coming from the loud-speakers.

As previously hinted in this text, the audience for a music event is primarily selected by the environment and the way the concert is presented: The KMH’s concert halls have some regular audience members composed by retired people who I have met in several concerts and events since I started studying there four years ago. Furthermore, the web promotion of the music events collects people specifically interested in the music genres of the different departments present inside the school and other people curious to the particular event as well. I had already known about the interest which the sound event had developed among some students of the school, who heard about it from their friends involved. In addition to this, I decided to use a poster showing a wide range of sharp greens and a natural figure, which could potentially have been seen as disgusting to some people. That negative reaction could be expected from the audience experiencing the experiment of a rule-breaker show, as the sound event was designed to be.

The title written on the poster was simply “Musicians can fly”, which remained quite open to several interpretations, with “heterogeneous material, Renaissance source and contemporary improvisation” as the particular subtitle, which could have contributed in defining the type of audience interested in it. Homage to Umberto Eco has been added in a corner of the picture to remember the great Italian intellectual - who died just one year ago - and whose writings on aesthetics and semiotics I desired to read for inspiration in finding a way to work with the sound material. Nothing explicitly referred to him within the sound event,
so that in the end of it I received some questions about the connections with his works by interested people from the audience.

The next time I propose something similar, I would wish to interact more with the audience to reveal the meanings explored and techniques used. As it was, during this experiment, I was interested in recording and proposing sound material free of sophisticated explanations, to allow the listener interpret - in the words of Eco - an “open work”.

In conclusion, I would call through the adjective “active” - as suggested by the professor Per Mårtensson - the audience engaged in the sound event, since they have been exposed to a singular richness of unusual happenings and broken clichés, inciting them to not only have moments of relaxed listening but also and primarily critical ones.

I received congratulations for the complexity and effectiveness of the result by Per Mårtensson, who has been of great inspiration and a teacher I could best discuss with and develop from. Per together with Christofer Elgh have been, among the many mentors I experienced during these two years of master, the only supporting, understanding and believing in what I was doing.

Unluckily for the completeness of this thesis, I did not manage to collect many comments and afterthoughts about the sound event as I hoped for. Many participants promised to write something about it and answer a few of my questions but, in the end, very few did. As they told me, after the experienced freedom of improvising in the project, they got back to their usual and busy practicing-routine of classical music students.

REFLECTIONS AND EVALUATIONS OVER REPORTS

I will not only report the exact words which Klara heard from an old man in the audience to his wife at the beginning of the performance, but also two evaluations of the experience had by one musician involved in the sound event, and one in the audience, respectively Emma and Justyna Krzyzanowska. I will use this material to briefly reflect over the results of the experiment.

“Vad är det för jävla skit. Ska det här kallas musik?”
an old voice from the audience, heard by Klara.

Sincerely, my ego, tired of the classical unreacting audience, couldn’t help but feel pride at having moved someone to be similarly disappointed. Furthermore, these kinds of assessments are very useful to evaluate the degree of that a music event can deviate from the expectation of the present audience.

It was considered by Klara and my ego as simply a very ignorant and unrespectful comment - that I would funnily call an “ontological doubt”.
On the contrary, it could be considered as an expected reaction from a conservative and long experienced classical music listener, used to the rituals and clichés which the Western environment imposes since probably almost a century. In fact, Malipiero declares, as quoted by Copland:

"Music, more than any other art, is born under the law of tradition"

Copland, Aaron (1959).

Finally, it can be observed in the video how Ingrid reacts to this story told by Klara. She underlines the positive consequences which happened, that were a proof of how engagement and energies were positive among participants and how their identity as musicians have been touched in the moment when part of the sound event has received an insult.

In fact, the musicians had been asked to improvise and utilise their creativity in the improvised parts. Klara felt the offence directed towards her and all the team. Even if the comment had been recorded at the beginning of the sound event, during the variations over Dufay, where the sound was recorded and the interpreters were just following an alea controllata to create a distorted background –it went contrary to the typical empathic silence of a typical classical music concert hall audience. In addition to this, I can easily understand that Klara, helping very actively with her comments and partly participating in the event as a protagonist, being the only other soloist than myself, felt herself particularly involved in the creative process.

Remembering again the moment when I had been talking with Klara to better plan the sound event, I can consider my unsure and doubtful feelings as fundamental reasons for her to feel engaged in helping me solve the several issues we had.

The same day of the concert, when we discovered that my accordion was tuned far lower than the Kyrie recorded by the voices, Klara insisted on asking Erik to try lowering the recorded pitch, to get a better tuning. Where my leadership failed, I have been very lucky to have experienced great support from the musicians.

**EMMA**

*I thought the ideas were interesting and it was fun to play but I think we would have needed one or two workshops more to just focus on some exercises because we were all quite new to this sort of improvising. I think maybe the time has been a bit short, so people were a bit stressed and, therefore, it is hard to say much about the group as a team. It would have been interesting to discover more about how we interact with each other after experimenting more and maybe to see what happens when we leave more space and listen more. It was nice to play with singers because I rarely do that. It could have been interesting to have some other types of sounds and maybe work with strings or percussion.*

Emma about the sound event.

It can be said, the conditions were not as in an ideal professional environment. But I would add no professional environment in music nowadays always has the will, nor all the resources needed to book so much time to rehearse, and check the many
details that Emma desired to explore. Regardless, her enjoyment of what has been achieved and her curiosity are a positive feedback over a project which probably would be worth trying again inside institutions for didactics.
Regarding the role and importance of listening, to build the musical team inside the extended space of the full concert hall, I collected a few quotes after the performance took place, reported in the end of this thesis under the chapter “Listen”, which could actually be the starting point for a future project’s proposal.

John Zorn, “The game pieces”:

“When (Earle) Brown wrote his open compositions, he was trying to get classical musicians to improvise, to contribute to the shaping of the piece. You, however, are writing for a group of skilled improvisers. John Zorn: Exactly. When Stockhausen and Cage created their own units, they were initiating a very eloquent dialogue between composer and performer. I took the whole process one step further, in terms of “the open work”, in that, when I write music, I write music for performers, for a community of players of which I, too, am a member.”
Cox, Christoph and Warner, Daneil (2013).

Reporting the experiences of both Brown and Zorn combined, the quote, taken from an interview with John Zorn, describes the same context I desired to create during the sound event.

John Zorn, talking about the games in music improvisation, from “The game pieces”
“My particular thrust in writing the game pieces-as with all of my music-is to engage, inspire, and enthral a group of musicians into doing music that they are excited about, so that excitement is passed on to the audience. It’s crucial that there’s a close relationship and a dialogue between performer and composer.”
Cox, Christoph and Warner, Daneil (2013).

The ludic aspect of the performance, as hinted in previous chapters, also appears in the evaluations by Emma. Moreover, she specifies the pleasant feeling of collaborating with singers, in a way that not so often happens to brass players.
In conclusion, after this first collaboration, I would be very glad to deepen and continue the working relation which has been created among myself, Klara and Emma during the sound event and its creative process. I therefore look forward to have another occasion to collaborate with them.

If I were proposed a similar project in a different or similar context, I would suggest and explicitly request the compulsory participation and engagement of the musicians to the workshops.

In conclusion, I am glad of the positive results of having helped the growing of the self-confidence and joy of musicians in improvising, helping them to “break the hard ice” of the fear for the first time they tried to do it.
On further reflection, another step would have been working on the team building of the group improvisation, developing better communication among participants. In this case, my final organization of the project and the music result would have
been set differently, to better follow the musicians’ acquired skills showing to the audience what the musicians had explored in the workshop.

As it is usually said by music teachers, during every performance a musician gains the same learning skill in interpretation and knowledge of the music piece which would otherwise require months of self-study. Similarly, I hope that the musicians involved in the sound event gained a good amount of confidence and experience in improvisation, which could be useful during their whole career. It has apparently been a small step, but evidently fundamental for them as improviser and most probably as both musician and person.

JUSTYNA

The last document is an evaluation of the performance by a person who was in the audience. This person is, in fact, very special for the purpose of my reflections over the first research question, since she is a musician that would have willingly joined the workshop and the sound event as a performer, if only she could have had time.

Very interesting concert with new concept. Haven't been to anything like it. Loved the idea of singing together with pre-recorded voice. But I think the different surround-effects were the best part, with musicians scattered in different places in the room. It added a new dimension to music listening. And I also liked that there wasn't any pause and it was all a long flow, a long show and that you just casually walked to and from the stage. The ending however, with the improvisation, was a bit too long. There could have been more elements to make it more interesting. Now after you'd understood how it worked it grew a bit tiresome. Justyna, about the sound event.

Justyna is a classical musician, with experience and curiosity in jazz and folk music. She plays harp. For her the sound event has been a new experience as a listener. She expresses her interest in two elements composing her sound experience among the audience: the mixture of real and pre-recorded sound, with the spatialization of the sound material. What she calls the “new dimension” is really what I had hoped to achieve -to break the stillness of the traditional stage and allow another communication channel to be activated among the musicians and the listeners. In this way, I also believe that the musician involved, with his/her movements, was conscious of influencing the message, as Emma underlined when talking about the need or a better rehearsed use of the spatialization, to get used to listening and joining the surrounding sound in the most actively conscious way.

Susan Sontag expresses my belief of the modern nature and cross-over way of making art:

“the basic unit of contemporary art is not the idea, but the analysis of and extension of sensations…”

Cox, Christoph and Warner, Daniel (2013).
I also feel very interested in the use of the adjective “casually”, which Justyna used to describe my moving on stage during the very first part of the performance, while the Kyrie was played, first by the loud-speaker, then together with me, then myself left alone to play it during the third repetition, still surrounded by the improvising lines of the other musicians at the back of the audience. This last feature also gave the wished feeling to the spectator: I was the first one stepping on the stage, once the performance had already started, in a dark atmosphere where I was not at all the central focus, contrary to a usual classical music concert. This mono-dimensionality, added with the not introduced nor justified presence of a musicians on stage, gave Justyna the general feeling of alienated randomness to the stream of events.

The evaluation from Justyna seems very positive and the good flow perceived by her is a confirmation of how well the sound material and the instructions had been organised by me and how good the team-work had developed among the musicians, good enough to hide any possible doubt or unsureness.

David Shea, from “Arcana: Musicians on Music”:

“The work of composing is not the one of invention but one of arrangement. All materials being both unique and fundamentally connected, the strategy and art of connecting forms creative work”
Cox, Christoph and Warner, Daneil (2013).

Brian Eno, from “Gossip in Philosophy”:

An artist is now much more seen as a connector of things, a person who scans the enormous field of possible places for artistic attention, and says, What I am going to do is draw your attention to this sequence of things”
Cox, Christoph and Warner, Daneil (2013).

Actually, the complaints of Justyna about the last part, considered by her as much less engaging than everything happening before, could be easily understood since, when the sound event became mono-dimensional, purely acoustic and on-stage, all the atmosphere had changed inside the music event situation where expectations for surprises were still high. Probably the last part, which in the beginning of the creative process I had planned to just belong to the workshop as a team-building exercise, and utilize just partly inside the performance, could be considered as not fitting inside the complexity built during the first part of the sound event. Describing more what happened, during the final game, where musicians were assembled in a circle on stage, I was in charge for helping keep a good flow, suggesting improvisations when the participants may have been too scared to do it, but still required by the score. Moreover, I informed them that I would lead the game to a more intense and rapid flow in the end. Actually, what happened during the sound event, was that I felt a playful flow and the enjoyment of the participants, good enough to make me decide to let the game have more time, without pushing many changes of improvisation and permitting it to become, more specifically, a didactical moment for the musicians and a moment for releasing all energies and tensions accumulated during the sound event. Finally, instead of accelerating and intensifying the improvisation, I let it go on relaxed as the musicians built it,
observing and interested their learning process and their free enjoyment of the improvisation.

“A creator often learns as much from his miscalculations as he does from his success”
Copland, Aaron (1959).

In conclusion, the ending part revealed itself as a lovely time for connecting and improvisation practice for the participants, to the detriment of the audience.

I underline that, in my opinion, the students had been involved in the creative process since attracted by the challenge and the learning environment underlying the creation of the sound event. For me, as well, it has been an experiment where I could learn a lot and where I have discovered that treating them as peers have been fundamental to get their help and participation, avoiding misunderstandings which I had often experienced in previous projects when acting as a more strict and autarchic leader.

**ANALYSIS OF THE ARTWORK**

I can’t help but totally agree with Morton Feldman, from “Give My Regards to Eight Street: Collected Writings of Morton Feldman”:

“*My desire was not to “compose” but to project sound into time, free from a compositional rhetoric which had no place here*”
Cox, Christoph and Warner, Daneil (2013).

The music scores used in the sound event have a time span of circa one hundred years, among 15th and 16th century and are presented in chronological order. The audience enters the room where sounds of the instrumentalists are coming from the two edges of the organ, in the opposite position than the stage. The improvisation is based on long notes, with firstly a calm approach to the sound material, with the only, but not compulsory, constraint to connect sequences of intervals of minor seconds, fourth and fifth. These intervals were connected through the whole sound event, defining the basic cell that is utilised in the incipit of many toccate and ricercari by Francesco da Milano and in the incipit of my best piece of vocal music, whose text nowadays is even very close to my own emotional experience as emigrant, the madrigal “S’io Parto Io Moro” (If I go away I will die) by Luca Marenzio.

The time evolution of the improvisation follows other optional constraints and superimposes upon three versions, usually played three times, of the Kyrie by Dufay from the missa “Se la Face Ay Pale”, which, during the three versions, presents a mixed audio of respectively recorded material with the four voices spread with geometrical characteristics among 6 loud speaker with particular attention to the tenor (coming from the popular erotic song which gives the name to the missa) then a distorted recording plus the live accordion sound and finally, pure
accordion sound, which pretends to receive legitimation and acceptance as an interesting interpretation after the previous two sound experiments. It follows the audio recording of the text of the erotic song, mixed with the song sung in the background and finally the original song which is the tenor of the whole missa, where the audio recording is joined in counterpoint by Klara, sitting among the audience. A counterpoint improvisation on elements of the song originates from that. After the decomposition of Dufay’s missa, a second section starts with rearranged pieces originally written for lute by Francesco da Milano, who was famous at his time for having arranged several missas and vocal score into lute scores to be played at the courts of nobles. The composition chosen was organised so to create an evolution in time of the subject, which will be presented afterwards in the madrigal’s incipit. Voices are included in the execution, using the text of “S’io parto, io moro”. This section includes the transition of the participant musicians from off-stage settings to on-stage position. The third section starts on stage, with the madrigal rearranged by the whole group, instrumentalists and vocals, after an introductive interlude of recorded voice on the Shakespeare’s text about the harmony of the spheres, in connection with the initial Kyrie, created by superimposition of different delayed recorded layers, in a typical madrigal-technique, as Luciano Berio experimented on the text from “Ulysses”, by James Joyce.

“The simultaneous use of differing texts is rooted in the high medieval polyphony of the organum. Multi-track text is probably considerably older.”
M. Young, Percy (1963).

In conclusion, an improvisation game starts in a circle, where all participants improvise synchronised on reciprocal cues, based on a graphical score constructed upon elements of contemporary and free improvisation and elements presented in the written scores just played. The sound event did not have a fixed nor previously decided conclusion.

**CHOICE AND CHANCE OF THE MUSIC MATERIAL**

I came across the selected musica antica score-material during the year 2016. Streaming on YouTube Renaissance music, I listened, and loved, since the first counterpoint, some music by Francesco da Milano -who funnily enough has my same name and origins- and whose compositions can easily be found in Stockholm inside a wide monographic anthology at the Musik och Teater Biblioteket, but curiously printed in the city where I lived all my youth, which is Monza, close to Milano. Impressed by the essence of the counterpoint, clear, simple, slightly moving among tonal and modal feeling, as a century later Haendel mastered, I started transcribing and performing his music for some open-air concerts in Monza for Cinema Anteo during the summer. I noticed that some of the thematic incipit by Francesco da Milano were repeated in many compositions, as the germinal thematic interval series could not be exploited completely in only one composition, but on the contrary, needed many separate
inventions to reveal its malleable aspects, similarly as did J.S.Bach in his majestic work BWV1080.

One of these themes kept my attention until I find out why it was so dear to me: I found it in the incipit of my absolute favourite piece of madrigal music of 15th century “S’io parto, io moro” by Luca Marenzio, the entire score written in Carl Parrish and John F.Ohl’s “Masterpieces of music before 1750: an anthology of musical examples from Gregorian Chant to J.S.Bach” (ref. Parrish, Carl and F. Ohl, John (1952)).

Inside the same book I also found the Kyrie by Dufay, which I transcribed and executed for the same summer-event, since I’ve always been fascinated by the severe architecture or sonority by the missa “L’Homme Armé” by the same composer.

THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD WITHIN IT

The incipit has always been a critical point. Every incipit is a door which carries in a new space-time dimension. I refused to have in the sound event the moment when the silence is broken, since it is strongly connected with a process of construction of the form typical of classical music, where the imposed immobility of the listener is suddenly stimulated by the first sounds entering his/her mind, which he will carry and feel glad to remember throughout the whole composition, as a unity revealed with the composer’s skills.

In an opposite way, I decided to start from complexity and to deconstruct it, guided by the fundamental principles of communication of the aesthetic message described by Umberto Eco, which in my case was the musical message instead. The scientific method observes complex events and prepares repeatable experiments where simple variables can be analysed. Similarly, Umberto Eco presents his intellectual experiment to better describe the basic principles of semiology in his essay (ref. Eco, Umberto (1971)). The use of a scientific method of analysis is probably derived by my scientific way of working in the field of physics, my second and great passion.

A LOVE SUPREME

Thinking back to my musical choices for the sound event, another possible fil rouge which unconsciously connected them, could be considered as the love. During the sound event, a transfiguration happens in the opposite direction of the one that Dufay created with the erotic song, raising it into a state of supreme feeling of the absolute, using it as the dominant root of the structure of his composition, which had instead holy-celebration purposes. Similarly, the holy altar of classical music is irrupted in the sound event by the contemporaneity and the contingencies of our time, back in the direction of the original sentiment which guided the beauty of the melodies, love.

The madrigal is still connected to this sentiment through the painful feeling caused by the forced separation from the beloved object. In this specific case, the destiny - which could be seen as the inexorable moving of time and which is actually what music deals with and what it influences - is the motor for the struggle of moving away.
In conclusion, what art and aesthetic is talking about? Simply beauty. And, what is the highest beauty one could experience in our human life? The object of our love! Which, for a Christian believer, is usually embodied by the divinity.

Referring to the stretching of the tenor part “Terribilis Est Locus Iste”, inside the missa “Nuper Rosarum Flores”, with the same technique as for the cantus firmus in the missa “Se la Face Ay Pale”:

“By craft-work typical of the late middle ages, he(Dufay) stretches (...) into over-sized time value. (...) After this, the fragment of plainsong can no longer be perceived. Its institutional and authoritarian character is extended so far out that it is no longer human”

Damman, Rolf (1993).

MUSICA ANTICA AND MODERN IMPROVISATION

The musical combinations inside the sound event derive from my burning desire to share the beauty of my favourite music, from Italian Renaissance, and to combine it in a music event, to try to convey to the modern listener all the emotions I personally feel studying and listening to that music. Mixing these sources with a modern approach to the traditional performance would consequently open possibilities for a multidimensional way of experiencing new emotions connected to an art creation including musica antica. The artistic proposal follows a contemporary approach which mixes musica antica with modern improvised sound material and modern techniques, actively engaging the listeners, forcing him/her to generate a new set of aesthetic values. On this last specific theme, I refer to a text by Umberto Eco, “Generazione di linguaggi estetici in una lingua edenica” (ref. Eco, Umberto (1971).), which has been my main source of inspiration during this creative process. His works in semiology and his collaboration with music artists like Luciano Berio (ref. Eco, Umberto (1962)) have been great examples for the composition method of heterogenic material, and the setting of personal aesthetic parameters into the sound event.

DEDICATED TO UMBERTO ECO

I could not find an appropriate English translation for “Generazione di Messaggi Estetici in una Lingua Edenica” by Umberto Eco (ref. Eco, Umberto (1971)). Anyway, this small article has been briefly described by Michael Caesar:

In (...) On the Possibility of Generating Aesthetic Messages in an Edenic Language,
Eco tries to overcome the problem of always having to deal with terms like 'ambiguity' and 'self-referentiality', or 'form' and 'content', in the abstract because, if he wants to give practical examples, the analyst tends to work with aesthetic messages which have already been elaborated and which therefore present special complexities.
Eco therefore proposes to offer a small-scale working model of aesthetic language, involving a very simple language or code, and demonstrating the rules by which aesthetic messages can be generated. Three requirements are made of them, in order:

1. These rules will have to arise from inside the code itself, but to be capable of generating an alteration of the code, both of its form of expression and in its form of content. (..) capacity for generating self-contradictions.

2. It must also show how the aesthetic use of the given language is one of the most appropriate devices for generating these contradictions.

3. Finally, the model must prove that any contradictions generated by the aesthetic use of language at the level of its form of expression equally involve contradictions in the forms of its content; ‘ultimately, they entail a complete reorganizing of our conceptual vision of the universe’

Caesar, Michael (1999).

The moral implication that aesthetic implies, presented also by Lydia Goehr in her writing (ref. Goehr, Lydia (1994).), is clearly expressed in the article by Eco. The specific choice of using Adam and Eva inside the original-sin context for his article has not been chosen by chance.

Exploring and dissecting the great semiotic machine (the original version, in Italian):

“Caratteristiche dell’uso estetico di una lingua sono l’ambiguità e la autoriflessività” dei messaggi (Jakobson 1960).
L’ambiguità fa si che il messaggio risulti inventivo rispetto alle possibilità comunemente riconosciute al codice, ed è una caratteristica comune anche all’uso metaforico (ma non necessariamente estetico) del linguaggio (...).
Perché si abbia messaggio estetico non basta che si verifichi un’ambiguità al livello della forma del contenuto - dove, nel gioco di scambi metonimici, si attuano le sostituzioni metaforiche che obbligano a vedere il sistema semantico in modo diverso, e in modo diverso il mondo che esso coordina.
Occorre anche che avvengano alterazioni nell’ordine della forma dell’espressione, e alterazioni tali che il destinatario, mentre avverte un mutamento nella forma del contenuto, sia anche obbligato a ritornare al messaggio stesso, come entità fisica, per osservare le alterazioni della forma dell’espressione, riconoscendo una sorta di solidarietà tra l’alterazione verificatasi nel contenuto e quella verificatasi nell’espressione.
In tal modo il messaggio estetico diventa autoriflessivo, comunica anche la sua organizzazione fisica e in tal modo è possibile asserire che in arte vi è l’inscindibilità di forma e contenuto:
il che non deve significare che non sia possibile distinguere i due piani e quanto di specifico avviene a livello di ciascuno ma vuol dire invece che le mutazioni ai due livelli sono sempre l’una in funzione dell’altra.”

Consequently, in the last part of the article, it is described how the language of Adam, through the contradiction of the meanings given by God’s precept, swells
into the multiple possibilities of the form and content, which in fact is the way poetic messages are shaped.

“Il linguaggio gli si gonfia, e gli si amplia il mondo. Ovviamente né la lingua né il mondo sono più così armonici e univoci come al tempo della situazione(iniziale), ma ora non teme più la serie di contraddizioni che si celano nel codice, perché da un lato lo spingono a rivedere la forma che egli dà al mondo, dall’altro lo invogliano a sfruttarle per trarne effetti poetici. (..)
Ma c’è del metodo in questa follia, Adamo ci insegna che, per ristrutturare i codici, bisogna anzitutto provare a riscrivere i messaggi.”
Eco, Umberto (1971).

The conclusion, in the last three lines of the last quote, could be translated as:

“Adam teaches us that, to rebuild a code, first of all it is necessary to rewrite the messages”

which effectively is the artistic operation I have employed in my creative process.

INTERPRETING

PERFORMANCE AND RECORDING

“One could describe the musical work in term of current practice as a real time and connotative phenomenon that, prescribed within limited parameters, manifests itself differently in every case. These disparities (..) are what constitute interpretation and performance”

about music recordings:

“(..) so we should speak not of interpretation but musician’s conception of the text, as based on their own predictions as readers”
Arshby, Arved (2010).

I spent my youth listening to music from CDs; some of them I had already home, but the majority of them I borrowed from the libraries in Monza, my hometown. Listening to classical music at that time, was an ordinary practice of mine to gain relaxation and concentration through beauty and out from the city noise. I can consider myself very lucky to have fully enjoyed the wonderfully rich music life in Milano: the flourishing of new baroque ensembles in Milano and Bologna, symphonic orchestras in Milano, La Scala, and the international festival MITO,
where every year there have been a different world-music focus. Here great conductors and interpreters of worldwide importance share their art with the masses for really affordable prices and often in very original locations. I had the opportunity to listen for free to at least two concerts a week, just following musicians, music teachers, performance workers, who knew my burning interest in music, or helping stage photographers in their work. I was really craving to discover and enjoy more of the enchanting beauty which vibrates in the air of the theatres and concert halls.


“If you’re under ninety, chances are that you’ve spent most of your life listening to electronic music. The experience that used to be called music up until the 1920s - listening to someone sing or play a musical instrument live and unamplified - actually forms an increasingly minor percentage of our listening experiences now. Instead, we listen to records, or we listen to the radio, or we go to see musicians who transmit electronic signals through electronic PA system. It might seem extreme to include all the products of the recording age under the umbrella term electronic music, but I think it is warranted”

Cox, Christoph and Warner, Daneil (2013).

Anyway, my experience as a modern listener has been a rich mixture of both recorded and live music, which through the listening of the many interpretations of the music pieces, has made me able to easily become the gifted listener. Aaron Copland coins this phrase and describes great detail in his conferences about music, transcribed in the book “Music and Imagination”, which I often refer to in the present text.

The distinction among a proficient performance and an interesting recording has developed clearly in my mind since the different, unconnected fruition perceived of the two. The first experience is instantaneous and in the moment, directly from the personal attitude of the soloist(s). While playing a defined role on stage, he/she still shows his/her very personal struggle with the time-stress demand of his/her activity to the gifted listeners. On the other hand, recordings are often listened more than once and could even be stopped and repeated many times in a limited section. What my brain was trying to extrapolate from it, was the game of the parts; the distribution and balance of sound among the different voices acting in the symphonic game.

This fundamental thematic, which influenced and has driven the modern enjoyment and use of music is given in a complete analysis with similar points in books like “Absolute music, Mechanical Reproduction”, by Arved Arshby (ref. Ashby, Arved (2013)), “The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment And the Tuning of the World”, by Murray Schafer (ref. Schafer, Murray (1994)). Furthermore, it is given a more philosophical approach in “The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works” by Lydia Goehr (ref. Goehr, Lydia (1994)).

One particular and not secondary detail, which differs in a live performance and a recording, is definitely the sound quality. This may appear a common and well-known problem, which, nevertheless, is anyway always underestimated. Often sound engineers propose in the market more and more efficient and reliable loudspeakers for reproduction of sound and limiting the compression of the wide range of sound information into digital memory, but it could never have the
richness of the real sound that is still more fairly stored and reproduced from a Vinyl disk.

Anyway, even the sound-wave coming out from a perfect gramophone is far away from the real produced sound. As the physicist Andrea Frova explains in the book “Fisica nella Musica”, the listener’s mind, which is one of the most sophisticated machines in nature, adapts to the new medium in use and sets a new basis of parameters for the interpretation of sound waves. The modern listener is basically used to recognising the instrument. An oboe for example, has a particular sound-wave stored in CD or mp3-formant digital file, which the loudspeaker reproduces for him/her. Even though, in detailed observation a Fourier-analysis of the sound-wave shows a very different form from the real sound of an oboe. Similarly, it is very difficult for the 21“ century listener to accept the sound information coming from an old tape from 1984 as a good quality sound for an oboe. On the other hand, after a few minutes, also the modern “ear” -meaning the complex calculus made by the brain of the listener- will soon adapt and enjoy the old-fashioned recording.

These afterthoughts brought me to understand the importance and the value of recorded material during the sound event. I was intuitively interested to experiment with the mixture of acoustic and recorded sound, and present it to the audience with the wish to getting some interesting feedback about the thematic. The recordings have been proposed both in their acoustic original version with added spatialization and different techniques of modern sound transformation. Unconsciously, I have utilized different ways of sound processing including: distortion, delay, background-surrounding effect, mixture of same voice recorded and live.

THE VOICE

My fascination for Flemish and Italian Renaissance vocal music and its counterpoint has been great when I first heard it at a four-voices concert, in Chiesa di San Marco in Milano. My research in the musica antica grew together with the first trial of transcriptions for accordion of early music for organ. It was suggested to by the Maestro and putative father Sergio Scappini, at the conservatoire of Milano. The accordion teacher has always asked pupils to put a great effort in finding an enjoyable and a fluent musicality, following an explicit coherence in interpretation. He has never forced us to follow any of the so-called philological ways of interpreting -which have been changing and argued by theorist of music many times during the last century. Scappini was blossoming personally the musicality of the musicians, to a fresher, emotionally understandable and consequently clear communication of the musical message in the piece.

Associated with the concept which I call musicality, Lydia Goehr recalls the words of the great German philosopher:

“Kant thus argued that “a product of fine arts must be recognised to be art and not nature... as if it were a product of mere nature”

Goehr, Lydia (1994).
Copland specifies also:

“As a composer, I should like to think that any one of my works is capable of being read in several ways. Otherwise a work might be said to lack richness of meaning. But each different reading must in itself be convincing, musically and psychologically”

Copland, Aaron (1959).

A clear example regarding musicality, t by my teachers and conductors of the orchestras which I’ve been collaborating with, is the most “natural” approach to the sound which is given to the animal called human being, the “canto”.

The human voice and its attitude to the production of sound has always been regarded by instrumentalists and composers as the best way of conveying musical messages. It is the best way for the human psychology to receive direct and emotional messages. In a scientific way, we could then affirm that singing is maximizing the efficiency of the musical message. For instance, expressing in a less scientific way the concept, the singing can be regarded as the vivid soul of humanity. That is probably one of the main reasons why I have considered so important to be inspired by vocal music during the creation of the sound event for my master thesis.

Moreover, since the beginning of the creative process I desired to treat instrumental roles as vocal. Consequently I wrote scores, to let musician and singers better compare and blend their sound with one another. This choice has been recognised as an interesting experiment for the instrumentalists, as Emma underlines.

It was just a pity that the experience was so short.

**WHAT MATTERS**

Often during the (crowded) individual lessons in the Italian conservatoire, I have been asked to dare change my point of view in interpreting the music scores. I had to work hard to check if, after a long study and a deep interiorization of the music material, was worth the final musical result. Many times, my proposal was rejected by a too sophisticated, out of context or a lacking coherency approach to the music material. Nevertheless, that effort has been a fundamental step in constructing my own and personal. To explain more strictly I have been always taught that constructing musicality means that, during execution one shall consider dynamics to have hundred times more value and importance than a note.

A point of view by Braxton in the article “Introduction to Catalog of Works”:

“If the music is played too correctly it was probably played wrong”

Cox, Christoph and Warne, Daniel (2004).

In conclusion, some sound variables, which create what is called music, have a far more meaningful importance than others, and these variables I considered in the foreground of what I was going to create.
During the creative process, I learned how to focus on the main variables of the sound and of the sound event, leaving the less important variables open for the other musicians to fill.

## SOME PURPOSES

Copland affirms that:

“The dream of every musician who loves his art is to involve gifted listeners as an active force in the music community. The attribute of each individual listener, especially the gifted listener, is the principal resource we have in bringing to fruition the immense musical potentialities of our own time.”

The American composer expresses his wishes for the role of the music interpreter and – not just in music, but also in society – explaining the meaning of music interpretation. He goes on to describe the typical extreme characters musicians could assume (which according to him, in the middle of the 20th century were spreading among worldwide stages). From the highly egotistical musician who ignores the explanations in the written score to focus the attention on themselves, to the obsessively inflexible reader of a score, which remains in any case a poor representation of the composer’s will:

“I have mentioned what the composer expects from his interpreter. I should now logically state what the interpreter expects from the composers. Too often, however, the truth is that interpreters are not thinking about the composer at all - I mean the live composer.

In the past it was different. There are numerous instances of a work being written simply because some outstanding instrumentalist inspired it. (...) They are not interacting enough!

A healthy musical state of affair would include increased opportunities for interpreters and composers to meet and exchange ideas. This should be at school level(..)

If I were an interpreter I think I should like to have a sense that I had been a part of the full musical experience of my time, which inevitably means an active part in the development of the composers of any time(..) the indissoluble link between interpreter and composer makes their interaction one of the conditions of a healthy functioning musical community.”

Copland, Aaron (1959).

I can evaluate positively the result achieved in the sound event by making musicians a part of the creative process, as well as giving them the chance to work actively with me, “the composer”. A title familiar to them, as purely coming from the romantic music environment which inspires the modern classical music environment, as explained by Lydia Goehr. They would have used that title since I was partly interpreting the role of the creator of the sound material and the coordinator of the project, which was newly organised and an innovative one.
THE COMPOSER BEHIND

In conclusion, a discussion about interpretation cannot avoid considering both the human being called musician and the one called composer:

“The only sensible advice one can give a performing artist is to ask that a happy balance be found between slavish adherence to inadequate signs and a too liberal staying from the clear intention of the composer”

In addition to this the medium which permits the communication among the two artists, the score and the notation, has to be carefully considered. Copland expresses doubts of the absolute veracity of the written text, which, instead, is often taken as the true masterpiece (a theme widely discusses by Lydia Goehr):

“How faithful are composers to the notes they themselves put down?”

Every time an interpreter approaches a score, a creative process takes action. This can be limited by his/her background knowledge, experience of the musician and by the signs specified on the score. In the special case of the sound event, the composer was present, actively working with interpreters.

I learned how important it is for musicians to have clear scores and it has been interesting to see them in use, after only one explanation. The graphical score was shown to them to interpret the last improvising game. It confirms my idea that signs and symbols must be purposeful, without necessarily being constrained into the Western tradition of notation.

In the end, the scores with pentagrams and notes became, as in the tradition of musica antica, without having a definitive version nor acquiring an artistic absolute value for themselves, just as a track, which would remind and suggest melodic movements to musicians. Similarly, the graphic scores of the final group-improvisation were reminding, even more directly but more freely to be interpreted, the mood and the atmosphere requested to be acted by the musician in each game, named as written in the page.

This use of the score surely influenced my compositions, making me minimize every detail in the score that could have led to a too sophisticated interpretation process.

Finally, I report without any further comment needed, a quote reconsidering the real value of notation: Derek Bailey quotes the French Baroque composer, organist and harpsichordist Couperin.

“What we write is different from what we play”

Bailey, Derek (1993).
COMPOSING

The “indissoluble link between interpreter and composer” declared by Copland creates an effective bridge to the thematic of composition, touching my beliefs regarding contemporary music. It leads to my expectations of contemporary composers, developed by my direct connection and personal friendship with composition students at Milano conservatoire, and composer and musicologist Gabriella Mazzola.

Already during my diploma-studies in Milano, I had the chance and enthusiasm to collaborate with the Maestro Irlando Danieli, famous composers and teacher of composition in conservatoire, and to premiere scores of himself and his pupils. That collaboration and very dear friendship continued through my years in Stockholm. I have brought his music to different audiences in Sweden and Italy, organised thanks to the artistic esteem I shared with Sofia Ågren, conductor of the Uppsala Vokalensemble.

During these years in Sweden, and fascinated by creative and spontaneous approach to composition of the country, I worked hard to find new collaborations with young composers, who represented the present and future of music.

I have always believed in composers, and in the liveliness of their work. Though as a composer myself, I have never been considering my work as absolutely defined in what was written on the score.

Copland has a particularly interesting sentence concerning the interpreter and his/her relation with the composer:

“he partakes the same dedication of purpose (..) does share elements of creativity with the mind that forms the work of art”
Copland, Aaron (1959).

Another important feature which influenced my collaboration with these composers is that I have never linked them nor limited them to my specific and personal knowledge of the instrument. I have felt full of possibilities in discovery to let them approach the accordion, without imposing any element that could have already been in my imagination. I desired to be surprised by them and even by our reciprocal misunderstandings, what some might call errors. I really wanted to discover my instrument outside borders, of other instrumentalists’ way of thinking—which has often influenced the music written for accordion.

My collaborations have been rich in feedback and granted freedom for the composers in an engagement which had been part of the passionate game of creating art. Creativity has never been limited by shyness or fear, very often connected to the lacking of self-confidence in composers and instrumentalist. There has never been any limits between myself and them more than time restrictions for the preparation of the performance.

I also wished for this trusting and frank environment and during my collaboration with the musicians involved in the sound event.

“the worse feature of the composer´s life is the fact that he does not feel himself an integral part of the musical community”
Copland, Aaron (1959).
On the other hand, the following quote is useful to illuminate the common relationship among great classical interpreters and contemporary music:

“Violinist Jascha Heifetz informed his public that he occasionally performed works by contemporary composers for two reasons: first, to discourage the composers from writing anymore; second, to remind himself of how much he appreciates Beethoven.”
Goehr, Lydia (1994).

ABOUT PHILOLOGY

At this point, a connection back to the meaning of interpretation starts to rise and the following questions have become a driving force for my research of the beliefs. They brought me to create such a music event: what is possible to achieve for a contemporary interpreter from the reading of a music as score which is not from his/her time? Moreover, which kind of understanding and perception could be achieved in music which has not yet been reached through a recorded memory? A multitude of books talk about the fair or even so-called “correct” way of interpreting J. S. Bach and his embellishment but, as Copland suggests (e.g. quote at page 10), when a composer is alive, few musicians are able to get into his mind and understand his/her intentions and beliefs.

“Gerald Abraham (..) “Not only in Middle Ages”, he writes, “but for centuries after them, the concept of a single correct method of performance did not exist.”

More specifically, criticizing the still-alive romantic and post-romantic approach to interpretation:

“(..) interpretation and correct rendition. Both are embraced under the more general notion of a faithful performance and both have been described to indicate the objectivist’s belief that a work is fixed in meaning before interpretation takes place. Objectivity, after all, is the driving force behind Werktrue.”

“Alfred Brendel argues that the ideal is antiquated, fetishist, fallacious, and bourgeois.”

“Werktrue smacks of credulous, parade-ground solemnity”, he writes. it has, he continues, the connotations of “Viennese Classical Training” and “Nazi slave mentality”. But even such extreme sentiments have not generated significant change."
Goehr, Lydia (1994).

As previously mentioned, my personal experience as an accordionist, has let me to approach both contemporary and musica antica scores with a critical eye. I have been used to and always preferred to never listen to any recording of a piece before studying and interpreting it. In this way, whatever score I have approached in my life, I always had a personal and “modern” reading of the written score. Whatever period it was from, I developed in musicality thanks to the 10-years-long work
together with Scappini. This was the same hope for my musicians playing in the sound event.
On the other hand, every interpretation is always influenced by every personal listening tradition, where also philological interpretations are present and, in different amount, part of everybody`s background.

EDISON

I have often wondered, as also Arved Ashby (quoted in this page), how we embrace the spirit of the past, where not only musical instruments were deeply different, but mainly the psychology and the everyday-life environment of this group of animals that we call humanity. In Western culture for examples, mindsets have changed radically taste, sensibility and perception of reality. After the sound event, I read about the historical music perspective described in the writings by Lydia Goehr. I carefully reflected how this burning desire of understanding the past is a typical human dream, struggling to interpret past history (musical, but surely also social and scientific) in the light of the present. However, blindly taking any interpretation as an absolute truth or framework -considering how inapplicable different interpretations of the past can be- instead of forming an honest and independent response, does not leave space for evolution. In other words, I understood that I wanted my creative process to live completely inside the present, which learns through acceptance and the allowance of the unexpected.

From the chapter “Recording, Repetition and Memory”:

“(The problem of interpreting cadenzas) seems insignificant compared to a more persuasive "absurdity of putting things back in their place once time has passed.”
This concerns the most powerful and deep-seated -yet unrecognized- of all the influences wrought by recordings.
The issue is phrased most simply as a question:
Can we presume, or even hope, to know how a piece of music sounded before Edison`s invention?”
Ashby, Arved (2013).

In a radical way it could be said, according to Rolf Damman, that there are no chances for the modern man to understand the spirit of the music from Renaissance:

“Seen from today`s viewpoint, Dufay`s motet for consecration of the cathedral, Nuper rosarum flores, is musically incomprehensible.
It is closed to the modern mind.
The music of the late Gothic period alone is hermetically sealed against any technical or analytical ingress on the part of modern thinking.
The medieval world-view, as something totally alien, is arrayed against such an approach”
Damman, Rolf (1993).
In the time of Guillaume Dufay, even the locations of the music events were deeply different. Essentially the “ears” and perception of human beings were radically dissimilar.

While emotions have never changed their characteristic in the human body -as ancient dramas and stories (still enjoyed today) have explored and show us- human beings have changed their taste, sensibility and perception of the surrounding mutable social reality. In the same way, the further purposes of music have been moving away from the ancient use of the arts, music included, which according to the article by Rolf Damman, in the epoch of Dufay, were regarded as a purely artisanal activity.

As widely described by Arved Ashby (ref. Ashby, Arved (2013)) and by Lydia Goehr (ref. Goehr, Lydia (1994)), recordings have strongly deformed our perception and relation with the art of sound, and affected the role and meaning of music composition. In particular, John Cage describes (point 1 and 5 of the following quote) the continued noise of everyday life, creating a sound background to our lives. It actually had an impressive role since the industrial epoch.

This aspect still doesn’t seem to have been interiorized by the modern classical music listener and producer, who insists on referring to a pre-Edison, Romantic conception of music production and creation. Forcing the classical audience to critically listen to the electronic production of sound and compare it with the acoustic one has become a central focus of my experiment. Even if has not been fully analysed, I developed a growing interest in the subject and the same I wished the same for all who attended it.

John Cage have often proposed his critical interpretation of modern art and modern music fruition:

1“When I hear what we call music, it seems to me that someone is talking.
And talking about his feelings or about his ideas, of relationships.
But when I hear traffic, the sound of traffic here on Sixth Avenue, for instance,
I don’t have the feeling that anyone is talking,
I have the feeling that a sound is acting,
and I love the activity of sound.
What it does, is it gets louder and quieter, and it gets higher and lower.
And it gets longer and shorter. It does all the kind of things,
I’m completely satisfied with that,
I don’t need sound to talk to me.

2We don’t see much difference between time and space,
we don’t know where one begins and the other stops...(laughing!).

3Marcel Duchamps, for instance, began thinking of time
and thinking of music as being not a time art but a space art,
and he made a piece called “sculpture musical”
which means, different sounds coming from different places
and lasting producing a sculpture which is sonorous and which remains.

4People expect listening to be more than listening.
And so sometimes they speak of “inner listening”, or “the meaning of sound”.
When I talk about music, it finally comes to people’s minds
that I’m talking about sound that doesn’t mean anything.
That is not inner, but is just outer.
And they say, these people who understand that finally say,
you mean it’s just sounds?
To mean that for something to just be a sound is to be useless.
Whereas I love sounds, just as they are,
and I have no need for them to be anything more than what they are.
I don’t want sound to be psychological.
I don’t want a sound to pretend that is a bucket, or that is a president,
or that is in love with another sound(...laughing!).
I just want it to be a sound.
And I’m not so stupid either.
There was a German philosopher who is very well known,
his name was Emmanuel Kant, and he said there are two things that don’t have to
mean anything, one is music and the other is laughter.(..laughing?)
Don’t have to mean anything that is, in order to give us very deep pleasure.
(Saying to his black cat “But you know that, don’t you?”)

The sound experience which i prefer to all others, is the experience of silence.
And this silence, almost everywhere in the world now, is traffic.
If you listen to Beethoven or to Mozart, you see that they are always the same,
but if you listen to traffic, you see it is always different.”
(“John Cage about silence”, available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pcHnL7aS64Y - March 2017)

COMMUNICATION

The philosophical approach to communication advanced by John Cage at point 4 of
the last quote is apparently contrasting with the statement of another great
American composer:

“Every artist whatever his convictions, must sooner or later face
the problem of communication with an audience”
Copland, Aaron (1959).

Copland, same generation as Cage (barely 12 years difference), states in his quote
something more general about the music’s communicative power and inner nature.
It also includes not having a specific purpose in communication while creating
music. Appreciating sounds happening organically, without processing any
intentional thought over them, doesn’t preclude our minds to having associations
nor being affected by them, like Cage while enjoying the Sixth Avenue’s
background sound -as I will better explain in the text, quoting some words by
Franco Pulcini, in the chapter “Aura”.
Cage’s point of view is a provocation offered to the programmatic aims in music
and to the rather common misbelief that knowledge is needed for a better
understanding in music. Moreover, he makes a personal proposal for the modern
purposes in music and regarding the present and future evolution of the “ear” of the
listener of his time.
A quote from “Algorithms: Erasures and the Art of Memory” by Paul D. Miller:

“Dj culture - urban youth culture – is all about recombinant potential (...) (all techniques of manipulating sound) create music that (...) reflects the extreme density of the urban landscape and the way its geometric regularity contours and configures perception”

Cox, Christoph and Warner, Daneil (2013).

CRISIS

A widely known development, described since long time ago by the sociologist Theodor Adorno in “Philosophy of new music” (ref. Adorno, Theodor (1948)), and more recently from an analytic and scientific viewpoint by the physicist Andrea Frova (ref. Frova, Andrea (1999)), is that the crisis of so called “contemporary music” -as a social and historical reaction after the two World-Wars- has been connected with the proliferation of technicism in the academies and the rejection of the general public audience, mixed with the missed communication with them by the so called “art music” community.

“What seems to me a waste of time is the self-deceiving “major” effort
on the part of many composers who might better serve the community by the writing of a good piece for high school band.
Young composers are especially prone to overreaching themselves (...) to making grand gestures by the writing of ambitious works often in a crabbed style
that have no future whatever”

Copland, Aaron (1959).

I believe that what is shown in the Italian page of Wikipedia under the name “musica colta”, art music, (available: https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Musica_colta, May 2017), sketches clearly the issue which media culture seeps into the modern way of considering and using music.
The following picture is taken from the same webpage. It elucidates how modern art music has been considered itself as excluded, willing or not, from the media culture, locking itself in a “crystal cage”.
With the phonograph, media culture also had the chance to begin. With it developed many new genres, musical styles and even sets of musical instruments. In the following two sentences Derek Bailey expresses the evident contradiction of avant-garde and classical music being in the left box of the picture:

"seems to be a usual practice in writings about “straight” music, of treating the contemporary as special, quite segregated musical activity. Here one finds “Specialists” in “new” music as though music, in order to be normal and unspecialised, has to be a sort of archeology”
Bailey, Derek (1993)

Copland brings his personal experience to the polemic on the Western music environment:

“I myself lose patience with the European Music lover who wants our music to be all new, bran-new, absolutely different”
“(some) are convinced that only my so-called “severe” style is really serious. In my own mind there never was sharp a dichotomy between the various work I have written. Different purposes produce different kinds of work, that is all”
Copland, Aaron (1959).

In the same period when these discussions were active, while the avant-garde was getting far away from the audience possibility of a shared perception, mass culture
and recordings invaded the world with new genre of music, from Jazz to Rock until all the new styles, partly influenced by the use of electronic instruments.

The separation in hermetic boxes remains to the present day, not only partly, kept alive by the really differentiated markets and target audiences of the different genres (mainly retired people for classical music and specialists for contemporary music). Nevertheless, I am not the only one observing in the young generations of musicians, artists, composers (which categories are becoming more and more united in the crossover-art-creator figure) a natural approach and a co-mingling of all the music sources available in our everyday music-and-sound world.

John Zorn quote from notes to “The Carl Stalling Project” album:

“(..) an openness - a non hierarchical musical overview -
typical of today’s young composers
but all too rare before mid 1960s.
All genres of music are equal - no one is inherently better than the others (..)”
Cox, Christoph and Warne, Daniel (2004).

The approach which I defined “natural” has been easily observed as present in every age of human history of what we usually define with the name “classical music”, simply just because it has been written, so that testimonies of it has reached us in the present days:
Examples are numerous since Dufay’s use of popular songs (even with erotic texts) as a base for the construction of the sung parts of a Mass, the direct use of folk themes by Mozart and Beethoven (worldwide celebrated “Ode to Joy”), until the evolution of musical languages during the so-called Music nationalism during the 19th century and the ethnic influences brought by colonialism at the beginning of 20th century, which can be easily heard in the compositions of Debussy and in the operas of Puccini (ref. Cattin, Giulio (2012)).
In the specific case of my sound event, reflecting over it after it happened, I could understand that my creative process germinated in similar way as for the composers who I considered in the previous example, from what was my personal and a common cultural and musical background, which is my most commonly listened or for me interesting music. In the last centuries, it has been represented by folk songs but nowadays, through the use of digital records, became much more variegated, as it has been for me the modern interpretation of some scores of musica antica.

MEMORY

“Repetition has caused present-day-audiences
to demand interpretative originality
but to reject it when it becomes extreme enough to forestall memory”
Arshby, Arved (2013).

The quote above comes from the chapter “Recording, Repetition and Memory”, in which the reflections of Henri Bergson about the dynamic of memory, past and present moment are also explored.
The chapter, as hinted in the quote, refers specifically to the recordings as the memory-storage object, but, at the same time, since basically connected with the
way how the human mind processes the variable time through the use of memory, can be extended in some of the observations to the music enjoyment and to the composition process connected to it.
The musicologist Franco Pulcini, during a public seminar “La musica: un viaggio tra le emozioni” (music: a journey through emotions), which was held in 2009 at La Scala in Milano for the international festival MITO, (available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QRLa4tZ2w94 , February 2017), explains many features which characterizes the music experience. Some of them I would like to present in this chapter:
Usually the listening habits follow musical genre according to the taste, but nowadays the listening material available is so vast that it creates a certain confusion for the consumer (and, I would add, also surely for he/she who creates new music, as it happened to me during the creative process). Just thinking about the particular field of classical music, it is known that Verdi didn’t know anything about Monteverdi’s music nor Vivaldi about the music of the future.
As a consequence, a usual modern reaction to music is “I listened to it, but I haven’t understood”, which is coming from a Romantic-culture viewpoint, but which is instead not at all applied nowadays, for example, to novels nor to movies. The listeners have an underlying complex of inferiority.

Quoting Ornette Coleman from the article “Change of the Century”:

“With my music, as is the case with some of my friends who are painters, I often have people come to me and say,
“I like but I don’t understand it.”
Many people apparently don’t trust their reactions to art or to music unless there is a verbal explanation for it.
In music, the only thing that matters is whether you feel it or not.
(…) I love to play for people, and how they react affects my playing.”

Cox, Christoph and Warne, Daniel (2004).

Pulcini affirms also that musicality is a quality like intelligence, which it is not possible define. Furthermore, some basic principles for musicality are the ability to recognise musical themes and remember of the figures which music creates in its transformations. These principles are as fundamental as the ability of distinguish colours in order to appreciate a watercolour painting.
In conclusion, the musicologist reflects upon the meaning of listening, and the pleasure we gain from it, in connection with the expectation of something which is going to happen. Regarding the sense of hearing to its natural function for human being as animals immersed in the surrounding nature, the action of listening can be considered a tool for viewing something expected.

For the same reason, the voice is a very powerful tool for conveying emotions.

For the same reason, I understood that I have tried in the creative process to achieve a highly structured coherence among the pieces, interlacing them all with partly inner, hidden and partly evident links, following my natural and instinctive aesthetic, which was inspired by the examples discovered in the analysis of the music compositions from the past. Their intense coherence seems to have been the fundamental element for humanity to consider them as masterpieces.

In the avant-garde music of the 20th century, it often seems that the connection between a music event and the psychological activity of memorization of the
(listener has disappeared. The music has then apparently lost its “soul”, as said in the quote by Umberto Eco at page 7.

“una musica che ci sorprende sempre è un po' come se non ci sorprendesse mai”
(“A music which always surprises is a bit like never surprising”)
Franco Pulcini in “La Musica: un Viaggio tra le Emozioni” (available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QRLa4fZ2w94, February 2017)

TRANSCRIPTION

Reflecting again over the role of the interpreter, a fundamental question came to me spontaneously: How could the modern musician find the creativity of its time, as every epoch had indeed, away from the multiple “true” versions of the artwork proposed by all the recordings available? Moreover, making a further step into an activity which actually connects both the idea of the interpretation and the composing skills: Should the transcription to be considered as an artwork in itself? How does a transcription work in connection with our memory, especially in a world where so many versions of the same music are available to the listener?

I will not dwell on listing the several testimonies of rewarding transcriptions, which, not infrequently, have received greater acclaim than the original work. As happened in the sound event I created, the use of musica antica sources nowadays is even considered in the activity of composing: A particular use of J. S. Bach’s harpsichord concerto n.5 is a very pertinent example, greatly adapted to a modern context and used in an impressively communicative way during the movie-documentary “Waltz with Bashir”, 2008, by Max Richter. The strength of the emotional message provided has been surely pondered by the composer for the associative power which both of the memory the music in the several modern executions and the figure of Bach have in the collective imaginary.

In addition to this, I have been impressed by the work of 12 composers in the documentary movie “Un Gioco Ardito” by Francesco Leprino, about the life of Domenico Scarlatti. The 12 musicians, with different musical background and experience, from the contemporary composer Salvatore Sciarrino to the jazz pianist Giorgio Gaslini, were involved to the composition of new music inspired by 12 selected and genial sonatas of the Italian harpsichordist. Through all the movie recompositions alternated new invention and interpretations of short pieces, in all the spectrum of shades which exist among the performance, the arrangement and the transcription.

Previously in history, the recombination and even the use of mixed material has been for long time a healthy habit. Lydia Goehr, describing music context at the epoch of Haendel:

“The fact that musicians did not own their music, and the fact that music was functional, meant that one musician could make use of any other’s music”
Goehr, Lydia (1994).
Salvatore Sciarrino himself, an internationally celebrated contemporary composer, is renowned for new compositions directly inspired to early music sources (for example “Toccata e Fuga in Re Minore”, available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ahqnhtoZqoY, May 2017)

Finally, we must look at a composition or instead a mere performance the interpretation of J. S. Bach’s Goldbergs Variations by Ruggero Laganà at the harpsichord, alternated with Emanuela Piemonti at the piano?

“Does the transcription of a work offer the public something independently valuable, such that is comes to be judged on its own term independently of reference to the original work? (..) -the advantage of there not always being a clear answer to this question- should be obvious to those who find it valuable and interesting to judge a given composition both as an independent work and as a transcription.” Goehr, Lydia (1994).

These questions, even if they are never to be comprehensively answered, are to be a considered a further step into my process of understanding of the creative process during the sound event and also into the analysis of the desire I had and I still have in experimenting the re-use of music material from past times in modern-art contexts.

THE CASE PIAZZOLLA

Astor Piazzolla is one of the most celebrated composers in the classical music world; acclaimed by the masses and played by every star performer of classical music, despite belonging to the folk and jazz tradition. I have decided to dedicate a chapter to him, as his music had -and continues to have- a great impact on the accordion culture. Piazzolla influenced the attitude of accordionists on how to play the accordion, despite the fact that he played another instrument of the family, the Bandoneon. There was an underlying tendency of many composers who wrote for the accordion to imitate his music style. Almost nobody who plays Piazzolla’s music has ever seen any of the Argentinian bandoneon player’s original scores nor has his hand-written parts. This is simply because in most cases written parts do not exist or they are just sketches, notes useful for the improvisation. Moreover, since the composer is absolutely not considered in the history of music inside academies, almost nobody in classical environment is aware of basic elements of his life-story or cultural background; they usually do not even read the short but accurate page which Wikipedia have dedicated to him (available: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Astor_Piazzolla, May 2017).

Few people know that the fame of Astor Piazzolla, mainly after his death, is maybe due to a smart promotional activity of his Italian editor Aldo Pagani, who foresaw a great profit possibility in proposing the rearranged melodies of the bandoneon player, exploiting the cross-over nature of his music, to the classical environment,
through transcriptions, recordings and performances by classical music stars, for example Gidon Kremer who also has earnt considerable profits from it.

Nowadays, as an unhappy consequence, it is possible to have in classical music concert-programs of every kind, from purely classical to extravagantly contemporary or with tastelessly mixed genres, one or two music pieces attributed to Astor Piazzolla, played in a way that could be considered outrageous, from an over-rigid classical to an overs-winging gypsy style, and sounding as an insult to the great recordings which the Argentinian bandoneon player left and which none of the classical musicians listen to with the real interest and dedication, instead choosing modern recorded interpretations of pieces by composers centuries dead, whose original music is not in records nor in the memory of anybody still alive.

Piazzolla’s case is apparently opposite to the general philological attitude of classical music. What I instead desired to keep present in my creative process, and consequently wanted into my sound event, was the interpreting-balance which Copland describes. That balance is what my background taught me to be a respectful way of considering the art work of other composers as it happened for the interpretation the singers gave to Dufay’s Kyrie. Another purpose has instead the free use of the material inside a modern context which became the main element of the sound event.

Why do the classical musicians love Piazzolla's music?
More than for the evident beauty of its melodies, rhythm, original and coherent construction, they mostly enjoy it for the freedom left to the interpreter to play in “whatever way”, free from the oppressive and conventional ways, called maybe psychologie, but not only, which their everyday-work imposes for approaching classical music training and execution. Nevertheless, the result, which has potential to be great thanks to these principles, is often catastrophic, due to inappropriate competences in matter of free interpretation and improvisation (and for a common disrespect to the composer).

Why do audiences love Piazzolla’s music?
Simply because the melodies are still beautifully engaging, even in the least tasteful executions and, last but not the least, very often because the south-American sonorities of Astor Piazzolla’s music can free the soul of the listener from tasteless classical interpretations preceding or following it in the concert program.

What I call “The Piazzolla Case” could be regarded as one important example of the main effects brought by the media-culture and the crisis of the modern classical music environment.

Why do I feel so close to this theme and do I know so much about it?
I do it firstly because, when I talk about my instrument in the classical music environment, people misbelieve that in Conservatoires the music by Piazzola is taught as a main subject. Secondly, I lived 27 years of my life less than 40 km away from the Italian Editor of Piazzolla, so I had the chance to meet people connected to, hear the stories and legends about him, see many hand-written pages attributed to Astor Piazzolla, play and study them carefully, comparing them to the original recording.
SOME CONCLUSIONS

“The power relations between composers, conductors, performers, and audience actually mirror nothing other than the more elusive, theoretical struggle implicit in the relations that hold between works, performances, and audience(...) musicians(...) are forced to ask the modern question: -wherein resides the meaning and value of a musical work- in the work itself, in its realization through performance, or in the interpretative act of listening to a work?”
Goehr, Lydia (1994).

These are more reflections which I now recognise as actually underlying the creative process of the sound event.

TIME-STRESSED CREATIVITY

Changing the subject a little, in this chapter I will focus on a feature which can be commonly found in the history of music among the actual story of the composition process of some well-known masterpieces: lack of time, as a basic constraint to boost the creativity. In other words, in this chapter I analyse previous examples from history and in my personal experience, to be better compared with what happened during my creative process.

Some famous examples are: “Il Barbiere di Siviglia” by Gioacchino Rossini, opera written in only three weeks-time; Mozart's Overture to “Don Giovanni”, written in just one night, as the wife Constance tells in her writings; Shostakovich's 7th symphony, which had the first three movement written during the three weeks Leningrand’s siege (ref. Sadie, Stanley (1992)).

Continuing to talk about my direct experience, during my master NAIP at KMH in Stockholm, I collaborated for an entire year with the Italian composer Mauro Di Vincenzo, on the creation of the piece called “Discontinuum”. It was initially intended to be a 3-minutes encore, built over a repetition of a 12-notes series in the bass line.

As a starting point he sent me 3 basslines, asking which one could have been easily played fast and comfortably for accordion technique. Then the piece came into my hands. It was too fast to synchronise with the waving accents of the right hand. From that point on, which was a hard moment and a deep constraint for the first idea which the composer had of his piece, the creativity and the real art began, as synonymous with artisanal work, meaning the way of creating practical and useful objects out of contingencies, through experienced skills.

The first version of “Discontinuum” became the finale of a long piece, which used a slow metamorphosis as a tool to reach the final material from a slow and mathematically strict incipit.

As a second example, I collaborated with Nemanja Lakicevic, a young Norwegian composer studying at KMH at the same time: I was engaging young Italian and Swedish composers to write a composition for me to create a concert program for
my duo with the Italian guitarist Michael Barletta comprising of newly composed pieces only, to create a modern repertoire for the unusual instrument combination. The first composition which Lakicevic proposed, had many impracticable passages and one section was almost impossible to effectively coordinate in the duo in the only two rehearsals which me and Barletta could have before the concert, since living in two different countries. One day before the first rehearsal Nemanja, aware of our complaints, decided finally to write a totally new piece and told me “But you have to know that I have just time to write a short piece”. Then I replied to him “If you are going to write music which has a slow tempo, you could still achieve to write an intense and long-duration composition”. Finally, the piece delivered to us with name “Rounds” was, according to the composer, one of his best pieces. Moreover, it has been enjoyed and recognised as a masterpiece by both young Italian audiences during the festival “Milano Risuona Festival” in Milano and also by Swedish music specialists in contemporary music, during “LjudochLjud” festival in Stockholm.

During the Italian festival there was a performance of a piece which I had personally composed for the occasion, which I dedicated to my duo with the Italian guitarist Michael Barletta. The music was met with approval from the audience and for me it has been very emotional to receive a positive feedback for an activity -the composition- which I studied for a long time, but I hadn’t dared to create or to show on stage anything I had written for many years. That’s why the piece is called “Pozzo dei Desideri”, meaning well of wishes, and it is built on many constraints and on rhythmical broken symmetries. One of the constraints is the use of the notes derived from the names of the musicians of the duo and make them play with each other, exchanging during the composition and even fighting, during the fugato, against the BACH motif, representing the conservative tradition of classical music. The fast changes and adaptations which I needed to make inside the sound event plan during creative process surely boosted my creativity. In a way, I have been reminded that in the process I have been always keeping in mind what Di Vincenzo told me regarding his way of composing: he was pursuing the collection of a good amount of ideal material and reflections over its possible use inside the future score for the most part of the time available, while the creation of the composed material itself was for him usually happening in a very short period in the very last moment he could do it, which had been a very defined moment, since he confessed to me that he couldn’t even start composing without having a concrete deadline.

**IMPROVISING**

“notation is to improvisation as the portrait is to the living model”

Busoni, Ferruccio (1962).

This quotation connotes explicitly the direct link among the role of the interpreter and the art of the improviser. I would add to it that, among the two, a third person, the composer, who could even be the same person as for the other two roles, seems often to be the only artistic-creator among the three.

The picture which Busoni presents to us is strongly enlighting the liveliness and spontaneity of the act of improvising in art, especially in music.
I started listening to jazz music at the age of 14, from a collection of CDs with examples of the history and evolution of this genre, distributed once a week in an accurate selection by an Italian newspaper. Until having met Esperanza Spalding at the Blue Note Milano, where 8 years ago I got to listen her double concert for free, helping a stage photographer, I believed that that kind of music belonged to records or to a world too far away from my reality in both in space and in time. Even if I had the chance to attend regional jazz events with European musicians, only after my first visit at Blue Note that I saw it close up and understood that an enchanting human and musical world was still pretty alive and in continuous development, behind those records I listened with not even half of the dreaming surprise which the live performance gave to me.

Steve Lacy in “Improvisation” by Derek Bailey:

“I’m attracted to improvisation because of something I value, that is freshness (..) something you cannot possibly get from writing (..) it is a leap into the unknown (..) What I write is to take you to the edge safely so that you can go out there and find (..) other stuff”
Bailey, Derek (1993).

Something in this music-stream fascinated me: its mysterious but direct world, where clearly and without any previous knowledge, I could catch whether a performance was engaging enough to be considered sincere; where all musicians seemed really exposed; where it was so clear to understand which different role of leadership stars like Ahmad Jamal, Chick Corea or Ron Carter were playing in their band.

My listening skill and experience grew concert after concert, without allowing me the time to get in contact with the practice of the subject. Only after the diploma in accordion achieved in Milano conservatoire did I have time to reflect and choose to study jazz more in depth as one of my priorities: At that time, I was feeling the urge to develop my skills in composing, but the 10-years of academic training, as usual in Italian education, was not at all possible in my life nor in my economical plans. I have then chosen the solution of investing time in the study of the jazz, a music genre where composer and interpreter have been always deeply and inseparably connected. For this purpose, I bought and studied Mark Levine’s “The jazz theory book” (ref. Levine, Mark (1995)). That new point of view would have been my further approach to the art of creating music, after a modest experience having realised written harmonisations of basso continuo with Maestro Mario Calisi and rare attempts to present my personal musical inventions to Sergio Scappini.

I bought and studied James Levine’s book “Theory of jazz” and attended masterclasses of contemporary and jazz improvisation with Simone Zanchini. During the following years, improvisation became even part of my contemporary music repertoire, through pieces from all over the world like “Serenata per un Satellite”, wonderfully written by the Italian Bruno Maderna, “Sinistro” by the Finnish Yukka Tiensu and “for Sofia Gubaidulina” by the Japanese Yuji Takahashi. At the same time, during a new master, in chamber music, I’ve been analyzing 20th century music scores built on free or controlled “alea” by Luciano Berio and Karlheinz Stockhausen.
During my last period of study in Milano, Scappini has been a fundamental example of which effects and kind of language contemporary music avant-gardes, in their often not-so-different styles, have pushed the interpreter and the composer to try to achieve. He always had the desire to demonstrate that an adequate result could be achieved with much less effort and more beautiful credibility through the use of improvisation, as well shown by his composition “Per Esempio” (available: https://soundcloud.com/francescomorettiaccordion/impro-on-a-serie-by-sergio-scappini-per-esempio, January 2017) and by his skilled way of simulating in real time a musical composition, through improvisation, in the style of one of the different currents in contemporary music. Under these influences I couldn’t imagine the contemporary music parts of my project being anything but improvised sections.

**THE CAGE**

All these experiences which I had in classical music environments, refer at the same time to the subjects of composing, interpreting and improvising, even if Bailey well remembers us how much this environment is instead ordinarily based on a very strict approach to art:

> “formal, precious, self-absorbed, pompous, harbouring rigid conventions and carefully preserved hierarchical distinctions; obsessed with its geniuses and their timeless masterpieces, shunning at the accidental and the unexpected: the world of classical music provides and unlike setting for improvisation (..) and yet improvisation played and important part throughout most of its early history”

Bailey, Derek (1993).

I consider myself very lucky having had many occasions on stage to develop the improvising language, for example accompanying classical saxophonists passionate with jazz, dancing and playing in a performance with contact dancers or even improvising folk songs with a Swedish choir. I sincerely admit that I have never had time nor put too much effort into practicing what would have been my improvisation or studying scales and patterns before the moment of the performance. Anyway, I recognise with joyful feeling the emotions and the results achieved from keeping the ingenuous purity of the subject. As Charlie Parker used to say about jazz improvisation:

> “You've got to learn your instrument. Then, you practice, practice, practice. And then, when you finally get up there on the bandstand, forget all that and just wail”

Priestley, Brian (2005).

In the specific case of the sound event, I observed that I proposed to the musicians the really same approach I used in improvisation and in experimenting with contemporary music. In my latest and mature experience, the process involved is about forgetting rather than remembering. That’s the element which makes the actual difference among a real performance and a school concert.
Without the Conductor

During the performance, I didn’t wish to undertake the role of the conductor nor of the composer, I instead desired and wished to simply become, during the process, the coadjutor for the realization of the sound event, and a catalyst of the musician’s creativity.

In the chapter describing the role of improvisation in music history, Derek Bailey proposes the thesis that:

“The gradual restriction and eventual elimination of improvisation in music (...) seems to have taken place over the same period that saw the increasing ascendancy of the orchestral conductor, the composer’s proxy.”

And later quoting Elias Canetti’s impressions on the role of the conductor:

“The immobility of the audience is as much part of the conductor’s design as the obedience of the orchestra. They are under the compulsion to keep still. Until he appears they move about (...) indeed they are scarcely noticed. Then the conductor appears and everyone becomes still. He mounts the rostrum, clears his throat and raises his baton; silence falls. While he is conducting no-one may move and as soon as he finishes they must applaud. (...) The code of laws, in the form of the score, is in his hand. He is the living embodiment of the law, both positive and negative. His hands decree and prohibit. (...)”

Bailey, Derek (1993).

“...conductors earn much greater salaries than all other classical musicians (...) modern conductors have found themselves in an uneasy position because they are simultaneously regarded as masters (of orchestra and interpretation) and servants (of composers’ work) (...) They are asked to balance fidelity to the works specified by the composer against their allowed freedom for artistic gesture (...)”

William Steinberg once put it, that there is “no function in the entire realm of performing arts as universally misunderstood as that of conductors”.”

Goehr, Lydia (1994).

The last quotes paint a picture of a hard and contradictive time for the role of the conductor in the contest of the modern classical music crisis. From this point of view my wishes could be perfectly understood.

In my experience leading chamber groups, I have always encountered several troubles among the group. Feelings of mistrust, misunderstanding and desire to rebellion started to arise.
I specify that the musicians I worked with were mainly Italians and or mainly Swedish. The only difference I perceived in the first case was that the feelings were clearly externalized, while in the second case they were hidden. So this generated several different problems and a different quality of results. I believe that a chamber music group of 5 to 10 musicians without the dictatorship of a conductor can lead to the most problems and misunderstandings.

Nevertheless, I can’t help but believe in the magic that derives from the free creativity of a musician in combination with the team-work together with other musicians or artist. This was demonstrated in the positive results achieved in the sound event, even when the music was just interpreted. This delicate shift between magic and disaster lives as a conflict inside the personality of a classical musician and can depend on the level of frustration accumulated during the non-creative part of his/her job -especially when working under the dictatorship of an authoritarian conductor. This unsatisfaction is due to the lacking creativity and freedom. In fact, these two elements are closely connected to the common imagination of the work of an artist. They are promised to who is starting to study an art. Thus, they are what most of the artists wishes to be able to enjoy while working.

For example, I’ve always worked with peers and naturally treated them like that. On the other hand, my behaviour lead to conflicts when I gently asked them for following my wishes. It happened when I was pretending, like an authoritarian conductor, to follow exactly what I wrote in the score. I got sometimes the complete acceptance of my leadership by the musicians, but not a good fame nor the special-quality result I was wishing for. On the other hand, when I was partly interpreting the role of the composer -arranging other’s music and explaining which sound result I wished for-, I have seldom managed to catch the full attention and interest of the musicians.

“When you get right down to it, a composer is simply someone who tells other people what to do. I find this an unattractive way of getting things done. I’d like our activities to be more social – and anarchically so.”

Cage, John (1968).

In the specific case of my thesis project, the particular goal I just desired to achieve was to gather classical musicians and give them a reason to follow my instructions, making them trust me and believe in my sound dream. I imagined the sound event as a big party, which is what it happened to be.

“What is the purpose of writing music?
One is, of course, not dealing with purposes but dealing with sounds. Or the answer must take the form of a paradox: a purposeful purposeless or a purposeless play. This play, however, is an affirmation of life (...) not an attempt to bring order out of chaos nor to suggest improvements in creation, but simply a way of waking up to the very life we’re living, which is so excellent once one gets one’s mind and one’s desires out of its way and lets it act of its own accord.”

Cage, John (1961).
After the criticism of the modern classical music environment, presented in many passages of the theoretical part of this text, I will disclose few more cliché, during the remaining chapters, to give a full understanding of my artistic choices of intentionally uprooting and contrasting them from the moment of the performance. Before the sound event and the reflections upon it I have just deeply felt these elements as personally irritating and to be considered as the really boring and not-working parts inside the classical music concerts.

The stereotype, still living nowadays, that choral Renaissance music has to be performed a cappella, following a secular tradition, according to classical music consumers, has been already clearly confuted by Percy Young in 1963.

“It is always possible to idealize performances of the past. Thus a false aura of respectability often sites over Palestrina and his contemporaries. We imagine pure-throated chorister, (...) delivering motets and masses in impeccable style and perfect intonation (...) Unfortunately, false idealism often prevents our contemporary attempts at re-creation of this music. But Palestrina was too great a composer not to know that his singers (...) expected (...) to enjoy their singing; and enjoyment in singing is intimately related to expression. There is a good deal of internal evidence relating to expression in sixteenth-century music. Equally there is evidence that instruments- sometimes organ, sometimes brass instruments, sometimes strings, sometimes all-were called upon at times to support the voices.”

M. Young, Percy (1963).

Consequently, to give an unusual, fresh, unconventional, but historical at the same time, point of view, I have decided to mix, in the sound event, vocals with winds instruments, in particular brass. My original idea, before reading about Young’s text, has been the use of instruments in the interpretation of Dufay, deriving from my desire and enjoyment in playing the Kyrie by my own on the accordion and the will to propose it and let audience compare the three version: vocal, instrumental and played by just accordion. The use of instruments in the madrigal has simply necessary to cover in a balanced way all the 5 written parts, as my sound imagination was suggesting, but it has surely been an idea which, in my mind, acquired much more authority after the reading of the previous quote, few weeks before the sound event.

“Tenors I and II are composed instrumentally; the two tenor parts are as unmanageable for the breathing abilities of the human voice as they are unintelligible when heard. The process of stretching given choral notes into incomprehensible proportions of musical timing had been current since at least the late 12th century (..) The old wind instruments with their petrified shapes,
symbolically remote from humanity and superior to worldly affairs, are particularly well suited to performing this type of tenor construction.”

M. Young, Percy (1963).

Another cliché, which I have always considered limiting in the fruition of every kind of music which had it, is the static approach which classical music lovers and audiences are obliged to undertake when living the space of the concert hall: entering, noisily finding a seat, suddenly the room becomes quite after the first hand-clapping, keeping still for about one hour and a half, finally releasing with a last, liberatory clapping and then running away as fast as possible.

On the contrary, the great jazz music has been growing up in dirty pubs, in direct contact with people, as well described in the experiences of John Coltraine at the top of his career, preferring places of regular gigs than studios to try and develop his great masterpiece, “a love supreme” (ref. Kahn, Ashley (2002)).

I had at least the possibility of making two choices inside the Nathan Milstein concert-hall: first avoiding a clear beginning and end of the concert, letting people coming inside at a time when the performance had already started. Secondly, displaying the performance in various places of the concert hall, primarily offstage.

AURA

On the other hand, every cliché could be considered as part of a rituality, which remains a fundamental aspect in music.

Franco Pulcini, during the seminar, previously quoted in this text when reflecting on the determinant role of the memory in music, gives evidence of how the contemporary sound-pollution interferes in the listening of our favourite places, like the sound of a room in the family house, the noises of its objects. This aspect of the modern music leads to the discussion of certain considerations, spanning from the anthropological use of sense of hearing, as its function for the animal called mankind to have awareness of the surrounding world, passing by its spiritual meaning used for example in the Gospels, to the modern meaning of listening, which Pulcini simply defines as the action of decoding emotions.

The ritual aspect actually affects every part of the art of music and in the 20th century the keyword “aura” have stemmed from it.

“Aura and rituality disappeared in capitalism of reproducing different copies”

Benjamin, Walter (1935).

Benjamin refers to some feature of the music which can be enlightened or completed by other experiences, as expressed by Rolf Damman:

“The ceremonies of the consacration of the Florentine Chatedral was described by Jannocuis Manetti(...) Manetti’s report(…) : the music is so beautiful that he has become enraptured.
He experiences the foretaste of the angelic and heavenly music.
The “musica angelica” and the “music coelestis” - for which he yearns.”

Damman, Rolf (1993).
This character of the art of music have shifted during the centuries, until the typical God's inspiration for Romantic music composers, which could be clearly read, referring to Puccini and Brahms, in the book “Talks With Great Composers” (ref. M. Abell, Artur (1955)) and which was instead nature-inspired in the case of Grieg.

Still the modern classical music audience, as hinted previously in the text, is used to the Romantic ideal, as also referred indirectly in the following quote by Copland:

“This idea of music directed to a particular public
is usually a bit shocking to the music-lover”
Copland, Aaron (1959).

Without getting into the details of the definition of the word “aura”, which the historian and philosopher of music Benjamin considered disappearing in the art of music since the advent of recording technology and mass sharing of the products of it, less than a hundred years afterwards, I strongly believe to have found back that meaningful feeling of holy rituality in my fascinating interest in sonic events such as jazz improvisation or musica antica interpretations.

Considering just the first of the two, it could be considered as the answer, commonly accepted, as shown by the general and dramatically increasing average age of classical music concert halls and the instead growing worldwide interest for jazz, to the apparently transgressive and technically oversophisticated contemporary music scores, where the fetishism of the sign mixes with the uncontrolled over-detailed results of the sonic effect which the ear refuses because of the disconnection with any final possibility of memorization.

The great American composer declares:

“(…) the idea of group improvisation (…) as reserved for jazz age (…)
when five or six musicians improvise simultaneously
the result is even more fortuitous that its charm (…)”

The improvising performer is the very antithesis
of that tendency in contemporary composition
that demands absolute exactitude in the execution of the printed page”
Copland, Aaron (1959).

INTERPRETING-COMPOSING-IMPROVISING

This last theoretical section, includes a recapitulation of many concepts which have been fundamental for my creative process, particularly inside the chapter “Horror Vacui”, and more detailed reflections upon some specific music features which have been hinted inside this text, doubted and experimented during the
conceptualization of the sound event, experimented during it and examined afterwards: the use of music score, some psychologic attitude in music-performing and some features regarding the use of digital technology in music. In addition to this, a small chapter called “listen” includes two specific quotes regarding this thematic, which I consider important for a further development of my reflections about the sound event, in preparation of the next occasion to organise something similar.

THE MUSIC SCORE

A historical background of the problem associated with the value and the use of a music score has been clearly exposed by Jacques Charpentier, quoted in Derek Bailey’s book on improvisation:

“When, at the end of Middle Ages, the Occident attempted to notate musical discourse, it was actually only a sort of shorthand to guide an accomplished performer, who was otherwise a musician of oral and traditional training. These graphic signs were sufficiently precise to help him find his place, by mishap, he had a slip of memory (..)
Later on, the appearance of the musical staff on the one hand, and symbols of time duration on the other, made it possible to move to real notation which reflects with exactitude the whole of the musical material presented in this manner. At this point in history it does not seem as if the contemporaries of that time fully realised the consequences of their discovery. For in actual fact, from that moment on, a musical work was no longer strictly musical; it existed out of itself, so to speak, in the form of an object to which a name was given: the score. The score very soon ceased to be the mere perpetuation of tradition, to become the instrument of elaboration of the musical work itself”
Bailey, Derek (1993).

About the stunning importance that the score assumed in spite of the musical result, criticising the apparently transgressive modern approach to music art, which has anyway not affected its theoretical nor contingent aspects, Lydia Goehr affirms that:

“Cynical observers of classical music world might say that whatever has been challenged, it has certainly not affected the force of the work-concept. Whatever the reasons, have they to do with survival, convenience, or compromise, no modern musician (the ones the public know about) have brought about effective change in a work-based practice, for he still generally speaks about music in terms of works(..)”
Goehr, Lydia (1994).
In the sound event which I was going to create, it has been deeply interesting observing and presenting to the audience, at the same time during the performance, many of the several different approaches and techniques related to score reading and interpretations: The music which the vocal quartet recorded was written in the score with modern notation, translated from scores of Renaissance vocal music. Part of the rest of the music was my arrangement of instrumental musica antica mixed with newly composed sections, improvised parts where details were mainly transmitted orally, graphically painted and named with the purpose of setting a common language and helping the musician to remind them.

The use and superposition of various media and manipulation of them on the same material, at the same performing-time, has been used by Umberto Eco in the analysis of the semiology and by Luciano Berio when has been in collaboration with him. (ref. Eco, Umberto (1962))

Finally, the written material had just a functional use for what was strictly necessary, while, as previously underlined in this text, many variables of the resulting sound material has been left free to the creativity and invention of the musicians.

**HORROR VACUI**

“The assumption as to the occasional and transient nature of performances undetermined the need for what we now take to be a fully specifying notation”

Goehr, Lydia (1994).

In the need of specifications and control, typical of Western culture, it is not hard to foresee the laying psychological state and attitude called “Horror Vacui”, regarding the freedom which is left to the artistic fields, especially in the area which is shaped by one of the most impalpable and transcendent of the variables: the time!

In September 2009, the festival MITO organised many events with focus on the Japanese culture. During that month, I have been able to attend original performances of Japanese ritual music, traditional “Commedia dell’Arte” and contemporary music. The discovery of that new cultural world, presented in all its integrity, widened my mind on the concept of time perception which nowadays the celebrated composer Toshio Hosokawa utilize as a characterizing feature of his music compositions. I finally understood the meaning of his composition “Melodia” and which attitude and atmosphere was laying behind a poorly notated score.

In Japanese culture, the Western perception of time is annihilated. No space is left to the action since emptiness and silence surrounds everything as a smooth carpet where to lay few precious objects.

The concepts of time and space clearly mixes when action and sound are missing, exactly as John Cage describes in the point 2 of the quote at page 43. Contrarily, the relation among the written score and the sound event remains a sophisticated and separate constriction for the two variables.

The adrenaline generated by the first approach to this scary feeling, which meditation and apparently purposeless timing can give to an Occidental mind, originates from the “horror vacui”, which is a typical of modern consumeristic European culture and it is opposite to the “horror” instead described in the chapter “time-stressed creativity”.

61
Inside “Tri-Axium Writings”, Antony Braxton formulates the following reflection about the social and psychologic reasons under-lying Western culture:

“When I look back at the last couple of years and at what’s going on in (improvised) music, listening has become more and more important; silence became a major part of it. (…) When you have a piece of paper and you start a drawing, this nothing, this white can be very frightening (…) So that means this nothing is very, very powerful. (…) to listen to this nothing, that’s thrilling, I think. That’s really thrilling.”

Cox, Christoph and, Warner, Daneil (2013).

The mind is left impotent in front of the emptiness. This problem has been fundamental for the setting of my performance. I desired musicians to face the unknown and to let them make a step in the darkness comfortably. For this reason I preferred starting the performance without any empty time-space: without silence, without time for them to doubt or think through a free improvisation on simple interval rules, which could have even been optionally followed.

In the beginning of the sound event, time has been actually filled as the space of the concert has been filled with unexpected sounds, coming from unclear direction and for undefined length.

In my opinion, even Erik Satie, living among 19th and 20th century, quoted by Fernand Leger in Alan M. Gillmor “Erik Satie”, refers to the same typology of horror:

“You know, there’s a need to create furniture music, that is to say, music that would be a part of the surrounding noise and that would take them into account. I see it as melodious, as masking the clatter of knives and forks without drawing it completely, without imposing itself. It would fill up the awkward silences that occasionally descend on the guests. (…) it would neutralize the street noises that indiscreetly force themselves into the picture.”

Cox, Christoph and, Warner, Daneil (2013).

John Cage, who has often expressed his esteem for purposeless creative actions and shared in his writings several reflections on the silence and its meaning, has been, like me, strongly influenced by Oriental culture.

“I have nothing to say and I am saying it and that is poetry as I need it.”

Cage John (1949).

Günter Müller, in an interview for “Balance Beams”, shows another cultural limit of Western culture in relation with the concept of improvisation, which diffusely applies to the last century’s history of contemporary music:
“both aleatory and indeterminism
are words which have been coined (...) to bypass the word improvisation
and as such the influence of non-white sensibility”
Cox, Christoph and, Warner, Daneil (2013).

Moreover, improvisation is a field which has been emarginated by classical and partly pop records. It may have even been destroyed by the concept of a record itself in opposition to the performance and the actuality of the artistic event. This which commonly fascinates audiences and scares performers at the same time.

Some other aspects of fear that classical musicians could actually have during an improvisation are listed and faced by Carl Whitmer in the “General Basic Principles” in his book about Organ Improvisation. These principles sound very similar to the request “Relax and be alert”, a performance-note given by Takahashi in a composition I performed, “for Sophia Gubaidulina”.

“Don’t look forward to a finished and complete entity. The idea must always be kept in a state of flux.
An error may be only an unintentional rightness
Do not get too fussy about how every part of the things sounds. Go ahead.
All processes are at first awkward and clumsy and “funny”.
Polishing is not at all the important thing;
instead strive for a rough goahead energy
Do not be afraid of being wrong:
just be afraid of being uninteresting.”
Bailey, Derek (1993).

As Bailey explains in his book “Improvisation”, since schools and books started describing and teaching improvisation as a subject, it has become for some musicians strongly closed into schemes of styles and settings which specific characteristics have each of the most recognisable way of improvising inside historically settled cultural music-streams. But still, the suggestions given by Whitmer and by other great musicians could be applied over every type of improvisation to keep it alive as it should remain for preserving its magic.

The same concept is further discussed by Bailey who describes, particularly nowadays, what remains to be the scariest way of improvising for both musicians and listeners:

“whichever improvisation which is not idiomatic
is called free improvisation”
Bailey, Derek (1993).

What I could achieve in the sound event must be considered inside this field of improvisation. It was generated by mixture of material, blended freely by my imagination. Nevertheless, after many doubt from musicians in preparation of the sound event, in the moment of the performance we managed to keep away from negative thinking, which could have definitely affected negatively the final result.
In the end, for completeness, I will quote Frederic Rzewski, from “Little Bangs: A Nihilist Theory of Improvisation”. In which, he tries to clearly define the borders among the improvisation and the composition. Borders which I have never doubted or discussed in this text, where instead I have primarily set many of the connections and dependence among these fields. The result achieved by Rewski’s text is an explicit explanation of the psychological attitude involved in the two fields, and a celebration of the ethic value of improvisation inside the modern society.

“Composition and improvisation, however related, however inseparable in fact, remain two quite different, even contrary, mental processes. If composition has to do with remembering, and improvisation with forgetting, it is hard to imagine one without the other, since both of these are fundamental to the brain’s activity.

An improvised piece of music is held to be ‘free’. A written piece is assumed to be ‘Structured’. Depending on one’s point of view, freedom or structure might be considered to be desirable or undesirable qualities, (..)

In this way, improvisation resembles real life in the real world, unlike most written music, in which the interruptions of real life have been edited out. (..) In improvisation music, we can’t edit out the unwanted things that happen, so we just have to accept them. (..)

Because improvisation resembles ordinary real life in its precariousness and unpredictability, it contains a necessary element of realism, with which many people can immediately identify, even if the musical language is strange to them. (..)

Because improvisation resembles real life, it can illuminate this real life. It can make you aware that the surface of rationality that covers this reality may be only an illusion. (..)

Why, indeed must events have causes? Why assume that there is an ‘unknown’ cause rather than no cause?”

Cox, Christoph and Warner, Daneil (2013).

Copland also expresses the same concept:

Music can expand our awareness of the irrational, dark side of reality. (..)
Paradise is now, and can be only now.
Copland, Aaron (1959).

These last quotes made me reflect over my psychological attitude toward music. Thus, my creative process can be considered appealing to the irrational and lively part of life. This instinctive approach to life is actually satisfied by my artistic career, while I satisfy the rational side of my personality with my studies in mathematics, physics and computer programming.
In the section “Chronology” of the book “Audio Culture” it is possible to find two dates referring to some techniques I used:

“1930: Paul Hindemith and Hernst Toch employ superimposed phonograph recordings in live performance

1936: Carl Stalling begins composing music for warner brothers´cartoon, freely mixing classical, jazz, pop, folk, and country music”

Moreover, I report other quotes which made me understand that my creative process has been a natural consequence to the general attitude that humanity has toward digital sound after its advent in the past century:

Firstly, the passion for noises derived by the industrialization of society, described by Luigi Russolo in “The Art of Noises”:

“We therefore invite young musicians of talent to conduct a sustained observation of all noises, in order to understand the various rhythms of which they are composed, their principal and secondary tones. By comparing the various tones of noises with those of sounds, they will be convinced of the extent to which the former exceeds the latter. This will afford not only an understanding, but also a taste and passion for noises.”

Cox, Christoph and Warner, Daneil (2013).

Technology as a natural part of everyday life.

Cage, “Art and Technology”1969:

“Art’s in process of coming into its own: life. Life includes technology. (...) Art’s (Technology’s) self-(world-) alteration”

Cage, John (1993).

The struggle for an improvised musician to deal with a recording in a quote by Thiele, telling about the creation of Coltrane´s album “A Love Supreme”:

“Coltrane would make 30 takes on a tune when I first recorded him. They got worse.
Then, he wanted to go home.
You gotta capture it when it happens.
That’s jazz.”

Kahn, Ashley (2002).

Finally, the huge amount of sound material available, made possible the growth of the so-called DJ-culture and crossover traditions which could still be referred to my instinctive attitude to life and resources, which I would call “ecological” and I will refer to more properly in the final chapter:
“The Dj acts as the cybernetic inheritor of the improvisational tradition of jazz, where various motifs would be used and recycled by the various musicians of the genre”
Cox, Christoph and Warner, Daneil (2013).

Dj Spooky (Paul D. Miller), from “Cartridge Music: Of Palimpsests and Parataxis, or How to make a mix”:

“Gimmet Two Records, and I’ll make you a universe...”
Cox, Christoph and Warner, Daneil (2013).

Paul D. Miller in “Algorithms: Erasures and the Art of Memory”:

“As a conceptual artist, my work focuses on what I call “Differentiated Being” and its rapport with the electronically accelerated culture of the late 20th Century (..)
Djing posits music as an extension of a neurolinguistic relationship of humans being to their, as Marx put it, “alienated life elements”
Cox, Christoph and Warner, Daneil (2013).

In the last quote, I could perceive how my creative process can be considered as the usual and natural attitude which a modern “conceptual artist” have to the material he/she uses, which implicitly relates directly to the real life and to the society he/she lives in.

LISTEN

“The whole problem (it is really a natural thing, no problem at all) of listening to music is this: Hear the sounds as belonging together.
Let the composer spend his days making them belong together.
That is scarcely anybody’s job but his”
Cage, John (1993).

In the article with title “Listening to Music(1937)”:

“What I do think is that listening to music is one thing and making, composing music is another:
two different pleasures.
Just as sitting in a chair is quite different from constructing a chair.
Although one might be tempted to think that a knowledge of musical construction would lead to a deeper appreciation of music (..)
this is not the case.”
Cage, John (1993).
A REASON TO RESEARCH

After the sound event, I had space and time to read more books, reflect and finally investigate whether what I created has already been experimented in the artistic world of my time, since I personally had very few chances to see something which could have been considered similar to the sound event. A purpose has been also to discover whether my creation has just been an experiment rising from my isolated discontent and curiosity or a common feature deriving from the social and cultural context of the modern society.

With my great relief, through my readings, I have discovered to be part of an evolving artistic environment which belongs to my time, but which surely is not the most famous of celebrated among the masses, probably for the same reason which Montessori explains in the following sentence:

“Il progresso viene dalle cose nuove che nascono, e assai piú’ frequente dalle cose preesistenti che si vanno migliorando o perfezionando, ed esse, non essendo precedute, non sono premiate, anzi, spingono spesso i precnarsi al martirio”
Montessori, Maria (2000).

As clearly enlightened by Lydia Goehr, real changes in society and modernization of the cultural attitude cannot emerge from reconsidering philosophical theories or religious attitude from a past time and distribute or dispute them inside limited clubs, like contemporary classical music is acting since almost a century in the Western countries, but it can happens only starting from a deep discontent rising from the inside, which is actually what I tried to paint during the previous chapters and what I have understood being the propulsive power for my all the many decision I took during the creative process.

“Global changes have to be internally generated
as much in the mainstream as in the margins of culture.
It results from new desires, new beliefs, new theories,
and innovative and procreative experiments of imagination,
all of which have to bring about a general feeling of discontent with the old”
Goehr, Lydia (1994).

Moreover, Goehr explains how the concepts, but also their form, as Umberto Eco often specifies, have always been carrying moral implications. Personally, with my project, I have had an approach that I would call “ecological”, a typical ethical attitude of our times, as it has been a process which have exploit in the best way the resources available, leaving in the end participants satisfied from it and the audience, participating actively to the event, moved and reflective.

In the end, I can now completely understand how much a deep need in moral implications, connected to the artistic proposal, has been a fundamental starting point for giving me a reason to work on what I was going to experiment in my creative process.
OPEN QUESTIONS

Other point of views regarding the experience of the sound event could be proposed, considering for example a psychological study of the didactical part, connected with the way of building self-confidence and at the same time team complicity, for musicians and not, through music improvisation.

Another question could be more personal, as how to promote the sound event in different contexts the workshop where I would better use the experience I gained in this creative and reflective process.

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