

"M. STROPPA AROUND METABOLAI"  
(3-5pm)

⊗ INTRODUCTION

- ⊖ thanks to Klaus Huber & Brian Ferneyough & the Hochschule for the invitation
  - it's really a great honor for me to be here, in what I consider one of the best schools in Europe
  - my apologies for the language : I wish my German were not so bad
    - ↳ please, feel free to interrupt me if I'm not clear or if some points are obscure (English is still a foreign language for me!)
- also, even if I have prepared some ideas to share with you, I would like to interact with you, have your reactions & your opinions
- I do not want this to be just a formal talk : I think I have to learn from you a great deal
  - ↳ again, please, feel free to interrupt me, contradict what I say at any moment
  - ↳ I would really appreciate if you did so
  - if you have any questions, please ask them!

⊖ brief summary of what I'll talk about: (FIG. 1)

Ⓐ Introduction (short)

1. who I am & where I come from
2. what the piece looks like: its position in my production

Ⓑ Part 1: A few suggestions about music & form

Part 2: Listening session # 1 (Metabolai)  
↳ How part 1 is (or is not) applied to M.

Part 3: Looking inside the sound: toward the computer. Time & freq. domains  
↳ Listening session # 2

Part 4: discussion

- last remark → I've not timed this talk in advance
  - This plan follows a logical & hopefully coherent development, but I may have to cut some of its parts due to time constraints
  - I'd like to leave some space for any questions and discussions.

(Freiburg / 10-17-1985)

(Andre Richard)

(A1/1)

- ⊖ - before talking about my music, I think it may be useful for you to know a little more about myself, because this will explain in part some of my choices
- very briefly, I studied in Italy (see #16.2), for a rather short time
  - > no "big" names among my professors, but very useful for teaching me the classical problems of music (rhythm, XVIII century op, harmony, form, etc.)
  - then IRCAM (Paris)
  - " M.I.T. (Boston) (Fulbright fellowship)
  - " (in 2/3 years) IRCAM again, for a longer time
- I did not feel like writing music very young (let alone the essays in Conservatory)
  - ↳ only 4/5 years ago did I begin my first attempts



(Freiburg / 10-17-1985)

A2/1

- ⊖ - there was a period of "confusion" in my compositional life (naturally) when [tried] different ways (serialism, "free" form [see Stockhausen, Boulez], neo-modal, atonal, etc.)
- I think of this period as a preparation; and of its pieces as experiments, attempts in pursuit of a personal poetics & aesthetics.

↳ M. is the first piece after this rambling moment & it's therefore extremely important for me & my personal growth.

- it's also the last piece I wrote before leaving Italy & my first piece for orchestra (I'm not afraid to acknowledge it)
- at that time, I was still a student at the Conservatory of Milan w/ A. Corghi
- so, M. is really a good example of what interests me now, of the problems that I want to cope with & that I'm dealing with.

- ⊖ - the title is Greek and means "variations".
- as a matter of fact, the whole piece is made of 7 variations, but there is no theme (or, if you wish, the theme is itself a variation) and the whole structure is quite different from the classic succession of variations.
- we'll see all that (and more) in a moment

↓  
go at the end of B1/3



(Freiburg / 10-17-1985)

(A2/2)

⊖ - first let me make a final observation:

- it's very hard for me, now, to talk about my music and about how I compose
- I've so many things to do in these years, that I have no time to think of why I'm doing such and such things with the depth I'd like to have

⊖ for the moment, I feel like being an observer of what my instinct is doing

- I do not have a system or a collection of systems from which to pick up my material (I don't want to!)
- I'm not sure that what I'm doing now is what I will be doing in the future
- i.e. I don't pretend to show a coherent & systematic theory of composition, I'm far away from that

- at the same time, I feel that "composition, nowadays, should both be a product of our mind (creative mind, intelligence), i.e. should have a well-thought structure, but also a product of our instinct, i.e. should have that irrationality that makes st. exceptional & unique

- finally, last, but not least, music is to be listened to (by some audience, more or less large), not just to be thought by specialists!

- I'm definitely seeking a contact and communication with the public. But how to do that, while still being "contemporary", i.e. without copying from the past, far or recent?



(Freiburg / 10-17-1985)

B1/1

⊖ - when I started writing I had this unconscious thoughts:

↳ I'm bored (too often) by contemporary pieces

- in the evening → Beethoven (other classic composers)

why?

→ where I came from (past → 'til total nihilism [last attempt to find a system, didn't work])  
no time to be part of a group due to my life)

↳ identity of my self as a composer nowadays

(deeper) - difficult perception (form?, no classic form!)

- concept of repetition / relationship w/ other parts

⊖ - always half consciously and half instinctively, I asked myself what was it that made those pieces from the past so enticing

↳ not to redo the past, but to <sup>try to</sup> understand it and through this to try to foresee the future (and give myself a reason to write)

- my academic education was in close contact with this past tradition (no treatises!)

- I learned how to "com-pose" (make a project) by doing my exercises in class (fugues, etc.)

- choose tonality (look at its rules & form)

↳ the best & most perfect system invented by the occidental musician for its consistency, coherence, span of life, quality of products, etc.

- some pts (superficial & not complete, but you're able to integrate them)

1. functionality → poles of attractions

- hinges (T-S-D)

- hierarchy of perception (many levels) - very important

- less "

- not "

can tell what's more/less important etc.

- see, e.g., inversions (they make a chord feeler / not allowed always)

- eg. (F16, 3)

(F16, 4)

- role of cp (horizontal force versus vertical)

- well calibrated alternance of attractions & repulsions, force & distension, from micro-level to large forms & structures

- fantastic complexity implicit in the rules of the system
- simplicity & refinement of results

begin to realize this multiplicity of levels

- immediate emotional
- complex/intellectual

in the tonal period the "abstract forms" were possible

- not based on texts or pictorial information
- not "function of dance (popular)
- based on the inner, fundamental rules of ton.

some of them:

1. pole T/D - (Sonata-form) (Bando)
  - larger forms (Symphony T-S-T-T)
2. concept of theme (its parts & its development)

need a relationship w/ theme

- don't think I'm a conservative
- ton. is a good eg., but only an eg. (could choose cp.)
- the purpose of my thought is to try to see where we came from

principles derived:

1. importance of hierarchy (structure / harmony / rhythm / etc.)
  - (≠ dodecaphony)
  - micro/macro levels

poles of attraction / repulsion  
like reference pts. of a complex structure

2. Symmetry (not geometric, see Bartok)

↳ repetition (varied or not) as one of the means to establish important pts



- reference pts → ability to hide details  
 ↳ capacity to know & to express what is more important and what is less  
 (too often there are too many things that fight against each other)  
 useful for yourself & the audience  
 how to make them appear and be audible (!)

- trajectories → perception of form (see visual arts)

different levels of complexity

- satisfaction (pleasure, emotion, goose-pimples) to non-specialist listeners
- " (intellectual involvement) to the professionalist

both, not just one! (this has always happened (with various weights for the 2 parts)  
 in classic music)

Intro to Part 2:

- you may be interested in what I did after all these words and if I managed to do it
- see A2/1: intro. to M
- listening session # 1

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(Figures)

- (1) Summary of the lecture
- (2) My studies & activity
- (3)  $1 - 11(s^2) - 3s^2 - 11 - 11$  (various chromaticisms)
- (4) Bahr's Hezziluk ( $11^{11+}$ )

