

**Answers to the questionnaire
for
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QUESTION: Was your musical style influenced by some particular pieces of composers?

ANSWER: I do not think, or, at least, I cannot say, that my style was influenced by someone's music directly. However, I am grateful to a few people, who exposed me to many different fields and ideas.

Among the people, I am especially indebted to some of my professors: Guido Bega had the courage and the intuition to open to me wide the way to a professional education in Milan, rather than an amateurish one in my own birthplace.

Renato Dionisi taught me how to think about "MUSIC". He provided me with a method of work which I still use with few conceptual changes. During endless lessons with him, he gave me the consciousness, the practical skills and the technical mastery of the historical traditions of occidental music, from the Gregorian plain chant, to the beginning of the 20th century.

Azio Corghi "polished" my style and transformed me into a composer of my own time.

Finally, Alvis Vidolin had me discover the wonderful world of computer music, the boundless landscapes, the astonishing richness and the beauty of sound synthesis and the challenge that is cast on the musical practice and thinking as a whole.

Among the ideas, the familiarity with Stephen Mc Adams's psychological work on auditory images was a great source of inspiration; the approach of G. Sussman, one of my professors at MIT, on programming as a mental discipline provided me with the intellectual background for dealing with technology; the contact with general psychological research in cognition and with Jean-Pierre Changeux's book "The Neural Man" gave me the words, the concepts and the metaphors to think about and explore my own poetic world and to define an original compositional technique.

QUESTION: What is your opinion of John Cage?

ANSWER: What is more appropriate, with respect to John Cage, than an ... indeterminate opinion?

QUESTION: How would you describe the composers of your generation?

ANSWER: I am strongly convinced that my generation is living a fantastic time. We (i.e., the composers who were born between the late fifties and the early sixties) are historically at the right temporal distance from the previous strong generation, the composers who were born in the late twenties. We can think of them in a detached, objective way, as something which is already belonging to the past tradition. If we feel like doing it, we will deal with them. We no longer have to take them into account, we are no longer, more or less consciously, influenced or oppressed by them.

At the same time, a part of our generation is showing a much greater consciousness of the value of Music History. It no longer pretends to destroy it. In spite of some extreme and reactionary attitudes, most of us have learned how to relate to history and how to use this relationship to our own advantage.

Moreover, we come at a time when the only new instruments of our century, the electronic instruments (from large computers to compact synthesizers), have reached a level of conceptual and technical maturity which will yield dramatically new results in a near future. I am thinking neither about their commercial exploitation, nor about their spreading over a large community of users, but about the huge amounts of new ways of thinking (new ideas, methodologies, forms, materials and so on) which are becoming accessible to musicians thanks to the technological progress. It is not the technology per se, but the developments which were made possible by it. Such fields as artificial intelligence, cognitive psychology, digital signal processing, information theory and the like would not have gone so far without the advent of digital computers.

I feel that my generation can and ought to take up this challenge.

QUESTION: Do you recur to techniques or styles coming from our past musical tradition when you compose? Could you mention a concrete example?

ANSWER: Most of the past musical, artistic and social tradition lives in my body and in my mind in a way I cannot control. From this respect, I would like to think of my music as something that "resonates" of the past and "projects" to the future.

However, it is impossible to me to point to this or that particular aspect as a concrete example. It is a kind of interior feeling: I know it exists, but I am not able to grasp it consciously.

QUESTION: Which works from other composers you feel most close to or have influenced your compositional taste?

ANSWER: My tastes change. Some works I find interesting might sink into oblivion, other ones, on the contrary, might suddenly pop up and catch my attention.

Even a short list of the pieces or authors I appreciated for at least some time would be too large. I am struck by the purity of Marenzio and Palestrina, the unbelievable modernity of Gesualdo and Monteverdi, the combination of sublime mastery and perceptual clarity of the Choral Variations for organ "Von Himmel Hoch" by J.S. Bach, the rare mix of grace and sorrow of Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante in Eb K364, the profoundly artistic transcendentalism of Chopin's Etudes and Preludes, the brute force of the Rite of the Spring, the all-musical touch of Berio's Sinfonia, the quality and variety of timbral colors of G. Benjamin's At First Light.

Above all, perhaps, I should place the last five sonatas and string quartets by Beethoven. When I listen to them, both my body and my mind vibrate with an intensity I cannot describe.

QUESTION: What do you think about the complete linguistic freedom in today's music?

ANSWER: Freedom is an internal state in music, a personal sensation hard to explain, but easy to feel. It does not mean that one can do whatever one wishes, can choose any style at will or any method. This is just a visible surface, a fact of our time. Freedom, however, cannot be sought for on the surface, but only in the depth. It is not unusual that a fundamentally unconscious lack of it be hidden behind apparently unlimited choices.

Closer to real freedom is knowing what the constraints are, where they lie, which are the consequences of going beyond them, at as many levels as possible.

QUESTION: What are your main goals when you compose?

ANSWER: If I were able to explain my musical goals satisfactorily, I would probably be a writer rather than a musician. I certainly wish my music had a "progressist" social impact, but I am completely aware of its limits of expression and I am not "fool" enough to pretend that it will say what it cannot say. Maybe, it is also because of those very limits that music is so special among all the arts. I would already be pleased if it could arouse any kind of feelings and emotions within the listeners, and stir up either their imagination or their intellectual demands.

QUESTION: Do you have other interests that inspire your musical approach?

ANSWER: I have always been interested in the scientific world, i.e. in a certain way and method of thinking, rather than in its technological side. So, physics attracts me more than engineering, software more than hardware, and so on. At present, I am particularly seduced by progress in experimental and cognitive psychology and in neural sciences.

I am also increasingly intrigued by non-occidental music. Even if I try to understand not only its sound surface, but its social and ritual functions, its systems and techniques, its instruments and ways of expression, I acknowledge my own cultural biases and personal limits and do not feel like "violating" this music's identity by "quoting" it directly in my own compositions.