STUDIO SU PASOLINI

FOR ACTOR, SOPRANO AND ENSEMBLE

ON TEXTS BY PIER PAOLO PASOLINI AND JAMES OPPENHEIM

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This project addresses two main topics: the usage of the *text* and the role of voice and music, as well as the role of the composer himself in today's world in *praxis*. I aim to expand on these topics through an analysis of my own work—*Studio su Pasolini,* based on a script by Pier Paolo Pasolini—and offer practical examples of how I applied my theoretical concepts throughout.

I present an example of how certain problematic aspects relating to music creation can create new opportunities for the composer to actively engage in current world problems, and, eventually, step out of the *elite* where the figure of the composer has been confined.

Given that my music avoids the hyper-technical rigidity that was developed starting in the second half of the 20th century in Central Europe, I decided to follow a more discursive and descriptive approach to the analysis of my work. This way of proceeding allows for a fluidity between my extra-musical thought and the purely musical analysis.

This analysis demonstrates how some of the theoretical precepts inform the musical realization of the work. From the role of music to micro-structural constructions, it becomes evident how both theory and *praxis* shaped my *Studio su Pasolini*.

This work opens the path to both the development of theoretical aspects (for instance, social relevance of music, the signifying relevance of the music, and the modality with which it

expresses these meanings), and the development of the techniques themselves that help to inform the concepts. This is a new path for me that seeks for a greater involvement of the composer with society, opening the space for future research that follows these lines.

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PREFACE

In the present work, I decided to follow a narrative approach to investigate the piece and its elements. I adopt a hermeneutic investigation of the material which allows for a subjective interpretation. Generally, humanity feels the need to reclaim a subjective relationship with studied objects. For a long time, the Natural Sciences dominated our perspective on the material studied, however, the scientific approach requires an objective and detached relationship with the phenomenon, and as a result we learn how to quantify experiences and ignore how we experience them. To illustrate this, consider just how much Einstein's relativistic concept of time affects our daily life. The point is that we live time subjectively, our experiences are based on the surrounding conditions of each individual or group of individuals. In other words, we need to interpret the objects rather than being merely a distant observer. As such, I believe that the hermeneutic approach to musical analysis will greatly develop in the near future. We have already left behind complex methodologies of analysis that involved rigid mathematical applications. A large percentage of my analysis proposes an interpretative-narrative approach of musical phenomenon, and only a small necessary space is dedicated to the rigid logical demonstration of quantitative analysis.

From my point of view, the most relevant aspect is the relationship between the music and the text, in its natural and almost instinctive manifestation. The descriptive analysis allows me to highlight the ideas that influenced my creative process, which was based on both accepting the predominance of the text and words while simultaneously avoiding diminishing the role of music. By giving weight to the words, music assumes a primary role on the stage itself; in my

view, it becomes drama. Likewise, through this work, the descriptive method allows me to state the vision I have as a composer.

1.   INTRODUCTION

In chapter five of *Unsung Voices* (1996), Carolyn Abbate describes the scene from Strauss's *Elektra* when Clytemnestra meets Elektra, in which the music that Clytemnestra cannot hear plays a narrative role. Music informs the audience about the truth that, previously, Clytemnestra herself claimed was impossible to know. Abbate comments: "Indeed, we generally assume that the message conveyed by that music—whatever form it takes—possesses absolute moral authority, that whatever falsehoods are spoken by a character, the music will speak across and thus expose the lies"[1]. This "absolute moral authority" is a concept that I develop in my work *Studio su Pasolini*, where my music assumes a precise narrative and dramatic role.

The music in my work is indivisible from the text. I dedicate a fair amount of space to both, showing how the text itself generates structures, and how my music ties together a spoken narration that would have been, otherwise, sectional and too far from its original context to be fully understood[2].

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[1] Carolyn Abbate. *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996, 156.

[2] It is Carlo di Carlo (Pasolini's collaborator), in an extract from *Teoria e Tecnica del Film di Pasolini* that tells us how the Italian Maestro follows an "ideal-chronological" order, rather than a logical one, that aims to provoke anger.

The first section of this paper presents the texts I worked with: Pier Paolo Pasolini's *La Rabbia*[3] and James Oppenheim's poem "Pittsburgh"[4]. In what follows, I outline Pasolini's themes and implications, and explain why I decided to include Oppenheim's poem "Pittsburgh" as an auxiliary text. A more analytical section addresses my core theme: "Music as a Third Character," that will not only expand the discussion about the role of music in this particular work, but also how I perceived and shaped it as a character.

Finally, the structure will be presented and discussed in general terms, explaining how the material is conducive to the creation of structures, followed by a demonstration of how small musical elements are developed throughout the piece to create a sense of unity in such an eclectic composition.

Concluding my analysis, I explore how music plays a vital role in shaping dramatic forces in a non-staged form in dialogue with the text; how my music filters my own reading of the text, resulting in a unique vision of the text itself; and finally, how the text influences the structure of the work.

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[3] Pasolini, Pier Paolo, Giovannino Guareschi, and Kanopy (Firm). *The Anger*. San Francisco, California, USA: Kanopy Streaming, 2014.

[4] Gomez, Manuel. 1927. *Poems for workers, an anthology.* Chicago: Published for Workers Party of America by Daily Worker Pub. Co., 7.

2.   THE TEXTS

In the present chapter, I will address the theme of the texts I have selected and the problems that I faced by setting them to music, as well as the role of music and its relation to the structure and functions of the texts. To provide a comprehensive analysis, it is also necessary to discuss the cultural context in relation to the themes presented, and my personal approach as a reader/composer.

2.1.   PASOLINI'S TEXT AND THE MUSIC SETTING

La Rabbia (The Anger, 1963) by the Italian director, poet, writer, and intellectual, Pier Paolo Pasolini, is the main textual source for my composition *Studio su Pasolini*. *La Rabbia* is a script from the eponymous movie presented in 1963, commissioned by the producer Gastone Ferranti. The movie falls into the genre of "essay-documentary" and strives to answer a fundamental question, *Why is our life dominated by unhappiness, distress, fear of war, by war itself?*

The film is composed as a collage of several old documentaries selected by Pasolini, which is then commented on by two narrators who interpret Pasolini's text in poetical and

narrative styles. This double-nature of the text made me think about an opera structure divided into both *recitativo* and *aria* sections. As a result, my first idea was to write an opera based on this valuable text, however, the narration did not present any action—it is mainly descriptive and strongly tied to images. Conversely, the poetical section carries a strong emotional impact, and I felt that its own musicality almost rejected any attempts to set it to music. It would have subjugated any possible musical idea. As Aristotle suggested: *In medio stat virtus*[5]. Following this model, I opted for a piece that presents a narrative approach without giving away the *affetti*. Therefore, I decided to maintain the narrative approach of the text by including an actor, while allowing the music to create the *aria*-like moments as well as the soprano parts. A sort of contemporary *oratorio* for an actor, soprano, and ensemble. However, a further issue appeared.

Pasolini himself—by selecting existing music from several periods and genres—created a remarkable musical commentary. The hardest task I faced was responding to the questions: *Why does this text still need music, if Pasolini's music selections are convincing? Why should I remove his text from the film's evocative images?* At that point, I was intrigued by the text and did not want to give up the idea of working on it with my own interpretation. The key point is that I wanted to interpret the text with my personal vision of a world that is different (without straying too far) from the world of the Maestro. I did not need his music selections, just as I did not need his visual selections. I wanted to retell to the people of our time what Pasolini had already seen in his time, albeit making it current by leaving out those parts that made the script anachronistic. Pasolini would have seen that his answers fit today's world, given the topicality of most of the content he pictured in *La Rabbia*, my intention here was to highlight those

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[5] The latin locution stands for "virtue lies in the middle way". It is an expression that dates back to the medieval Scholasticism, which adopted Aristotelean precepts. It is in the *Nicomachean Etics*, by Aristotle, that this teaching is originally expressed. Precisely, the literal translation from Aristotle's book is "the middle way is the best thing" ("μέσον τε καὶ ἄριστον"), but this will be rephrased by many Latin scholars over time.

predictions. In this way, people can listen to the messages by picturing the present world in their minds.

2.1.1. *Rem tene, musica sequentur*[6]: beyond programatic music.

Pasolini's text is presented without a chronological order and probably, as he states, without any logical order. In my work, although the music follows the flow of the original text, it also aims to create a background where these elements, without a specific order, can remain. In this sense, music creates a sheet of glue where political thoughts and poetical sentiments are placed.

The themes addressed by Pasolini's work are myriad. Racism as a global issue, especially in reference to the subjugation of the countries colonized by Europe during the 20th century, struggling to gain their independence. The distortions of the capitalistic countries, namely Italy and its tense relationships between FIAT, the car manufacturer, and its working class[7]. A tension

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[6] The original latin locution (presumably coined by Catone "the Wise") is: "Rem tene, verba sequentur", that exhort orators to have valid concepts, and, only after this, words will come naturally. My variation highlights the fact that I am in possession of valuable concepts, those contained in the Pasolini's script, and my music is generated, naturally, from there. This represents an attempt to push the limits of programatic music.

[7] By being one of the largest employers in Italy, FIAT acquired a great responsibility for the Italian economy. In the 50's and 60's it counts more than 85,000 dependents, and in the 60's and 70's this number doubled to about 171,000. As a result, it was responsible for a large number of families and young people who, directly or indirectly, depended on the business strategies of this major industry in Italy. It was in those years that, from the dialectic between the company's ruling class and the working class, that the welfare apparatus emerged, which is now at a disadvantage due to the development of a new form of capitalism, and, in my opinion, the incompetence of the political ruling class. Strikes by the FIAT workers represented more than just a claim for specific rights, they were shaped on Marxist political assumptions, and reflected an actual class war. Labor unions and the Italian Communist Party (PCI) were counterparts to the industrial class, and they worked for and close to the workers in order to achieve social justice. Nowadays, delocalization and de-accountability, two prime feature of the new capitalistic society, make it impossible to reproduce the same environment. Therefore, this theme assumes a relevant importance in my presentation, since the dialectic has not be resolved.

that reflects the Gramscian idea of "cultural hegemony"[8] is sarcastically articulated in reference to the British working class, which "strikes for the tea time"[9].

Pasolini presents what I call a Marxist prophecy: on the one hand the film shows the images of the 1952 United States Republican Party presidential elections that will ensure the presidency to Mr. Eisenhower; on the other hand, and most importantly, the narration entails the poetical exaltation of the common people. These scenes constitute a touching and realistic picture of the people who live on the margins of society, and who symbolize injustice, regardless of race, gender, and age.

Contrary to other artists' approaches, like David Lang's[10] for instance, I do not want my music to be neutral when it is presented in conjunction with words, and/or drama. A music that does not affect the audience's sentiment is without any doubt a music that does not crystalize a message, leaving the audience solely with their interpretation. However, one may ask, *What is the role of the artist in this instance?* I definitely feel the necessary responsibility to present a theme as I perceive it. In my opinion, the intellectual operation of shaping the text through the music is almost an obligation for the composer. If a sculptor's material is left without shape for the observer to give his or her own interpretation of what it could be, would he or she still be a sculptor? Nowadays, this can be a challenging question. Pasolini's text has already had its

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[8] The idea of "cultural hegemony" has been coined by the Italian scholar and communist activist, Antonio Gramsci, and it refers to all the apparatuses of a dominant society able to instill its cultural fashion into the dominated class. This makes it possible that the values of the dominant class are the same of the dominated class, which strives to be a part of that culture. A thorough introduction to Gramsci's idea of "cultural hegemony" is well described in T. J. Jackson Lears' "The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities." *The American Historical Review* 90, no. 3 (1985): 567-93.

[9] Pier Paolo Pasolini. *La Rabbia* (1963).

[10] David Lang, in an Interview about his *The Difficulty of Crossing a Field,* says: "In most operas you sit back, everything makes sense, there's a story, a plot. You figure out, here's where I'm going to support the text, here's where I'm going to destroy it, and here's where I want everyone in the audience to burst into tears. This was not that kind of play, which is why I wanted to do it. I'm no longer interested in the manipulative". David Lang and Mac Wellman and Erika Munk. "The Difficulty of Defending a Form" *Theater* 30, no. 2 (2000): 34-43. https://muse.jhu.edu/ (accessed March 7, 2018).

context, and it is a powerful and highly artistic one. My task here was to apply a lens to interpret it and present it anew to a 21st century audience. Now, music, my music, is telling something on its own and it is interpreting, through my filters, the text. As a result, Pasolini's text is ready to be re-used and repurposed. The text becomes the pre-text for a new version of itself that is presented without images and without Pasolini's music selection.

Why select this particular text? Because after WWII and during the post-war era, we were still living in a state of "normality", and when one lives normally one does not look around critically; this state prevents people from creating a "state of emergency". Yet, more than 50 years after this text, the same bourgeoise world that Pasolini critiques has grown, and it has created sophisticated tools to protect itself from the "state of emergency". Declaring a "state of emergency" was Pasolini's goal, and, in his opinion, the task of all the poets. Poets, said Pasolini, live with their "eternal anger" and through their work they fight against this apparent normality. More than a decade later, French economic and social theorist, Jacques Attali, independently developed Pasolini's concern for normalization as an instrument of silencing people, giving music a fundamental role in the process. He writes, "When power wants people to forget, music is ritual sacrifice, the scapegoat; when it wants them to believe, music is enactment, *representation*; when it wants to silence them, it is reproduced, normalized, *repetition. ...* It [music] heralds the arrival of new social relations, music is becoming *composition*. *Representation* against *fear*, *repetition* against *harmony*, *composition* against *normality*"[11].

As a result, we live in a world where great art has lost its power to cry out for a "state of emergency". The commodification of music, visual art, and literature is a phenomenon that has been described by many intellectuals in the contemporary world. Attali says the following about

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[11] Attali, Jacques *Noise: the political economy of music*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1895.

music, "Fetishized as a commodity, music, is illustrative of our entire society". From Pasolini's text, and Jaques Attali's theory, we can derive methodically and aesthetically, an artistic code that I intend to embrace. My work became, in this way, a symbolic manifestation of my artistic intentions.

2.1.2. The role of music.

The role of music in this work exemplifies the aesthetic that I seek as a composer. I can summarize this aesthetic by giving an example from history: in the first decade of the XIX century, Arthur Schopenhauer had already written his masterwork, however, in those years it was not welcomed by the German academy, which was strongly influenced by idealism. Schopenhauer did not apply the rigorous methods of the idealists with which the German academy developed their thesis. Recalling the great humanist tradition, he mainly presented aphorisms and commentary to explain modern problems. For him, human dignity itself depended on freedom that is unconditional, and that cannot be a "fact", typical of the world of representations. On the contrary, freedom is an inner certainty[12]. In this way, my music cannot be based on a "fact", it is rather an action that emerges from the certainty that it *should be*. Artwork that is free from imposed facts, preset calculus, or rigorous techniques. It lives for itself, and only reacts to its own purposes. In this sense, in the present work, music became a third character on the scene.

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[12] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Schopenhauer e Nietzsche*.

2.2.　OPPENHEIM'S TEXT AND THE MUSIC SETTING

James Oppenheim lived through WWI and the post-war era in the United States. He was a pacifist, poet, novelist and editor. His poetical themes are the social and democratic aspects of life. His poem, "Pittsburgh," was included in an anthology of poems titled *Poems for Workers*, published for The Workers Party of America, by *The Daily Workers* (Chicago). The poem depicts the figure of the worker in the early steel factories of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania within a context that expresses the "suffering and heroism, the sacrifice and courage, the bitterness and devotion, the steady persistence" of the worker.

This text is independent from Pasolini's work; however, it develops one of the main arguments that was important to the Italian maestro. The image of the worker in Oppenheim's poem is surely a modest image. It provokes a compassionate sentiment. This feeling for modest people constitutes a main theme in Pasolini's work, making this "pivotal sentiment" the point of connection among the texts.

In my work, Oppenheim's verses highlight moments of *affetti,* the music is shaped like an *aria* and slows down the flow, since I did not want to use Pasolini's script as a source for the singing sections. This poem serves to fill this missing element, a singing component, that was necessary for my expressive construction, and it perfectly adheres to Pasolini's sentiment. It is a commentary on Pasolini's text, it recalls previous parts of the main text as a cue to interpret Pasolini's poetics and it assumes different forms in the score. It serves the main text and the musical role, and, although it presents a sort of independence from the Pasolini's text, it is an interpretative reinforcement of it.

3.   MUSIC AS A THIRD CHARACTER

The use of music as a third character comes from the need to write an opera without dramatic singers. The need to represent different characters without singers or actors led me to use music as a symbol of a particular role. The leitmotif of a character that never appears physically in the scene, a character that symbolizes itself, rather than just being what it represents. It is modesty itself, and I individuated this modesty in the music of the *local*[13], in the music of the people. I resort to the use of a conga drum and a repetitive pattern to recall the *common people.* It is not explicit at first, given that there is no reference to a precise geographical location in my work. This passage is exemplified in the following Figure 1:

Figure 1. Song I

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[13] The use of the term local, literally translated from Spanish, is used here as defined in: Ana María Ochoa Gautier. *Músicas Locales En Tiempos De globalización*. 1.th ed. Vol. 26. Buenos Aires: Grupo Editorial Norma, 2003.

Why the *local*? Western music has incorporated a great variety of materials from folk music, however, the more it advanced the more it created distance from those elements that were familiar to the people. When tonal music came to a critical point, Arnold Schoenberg refused those elements, creating a school that would be a trigger for future developments. Rather than listening to the reasoning of a composer, as Schoenberg does, I want to answer my question by pointing to the philosopher Theodor Adorno, who developed a theoretical gap between tradition and innovation, not in terms of necessity, as a composer might think, but in terms of theoretical thought. For Adorno, Schoenberg, represented an opposite tendency to the capitalistic culture of commodification, and at the same time it was the perfect expression of the post-individualistic music of the romantic era: it exemplified the "illuminated" capitalism and its internal contradictions, now unmasked. It was the contrast between the "new music" and the commodified music for the masses that is self-explanatory: to accomplish the formats of radio and cinema, commodified music (re)produced continuously the same modules, and harmonic progressions, giving a harmonic and peaceful idea of the society, while "new music" produced a "distress", the same one that was hidden by the media, but that exists in the capitalistic society. This sounds to me like a clever story, however, breaking the connection with the masses, abandoning the materials that people are able to interpret was the most unpopular move that "Western art music" could do. In my music, I expressed Pasolini's proximity to the common people by trying to retrieve that proximity to the masses through minimalist techniques (typical music of a post-modern era, commodified and open to mass consumption), and that taste of the *local* that in one gesture symbolizes the bridge that vanguardist music destroyed. By analyzing these elements within my work, one can identify what is not clear in a first listening.

Figure 2. Scene IV

In the previous example ([Figure 2](#)), one can see how three layers and two worlds coexist. The first layer is represented by the viola and cello, that perform a *counterpoint*, the symbol of Western art music. The second and third layer symbolize the *local* world; the crotals play a 3:2 clave, while the double bass performs a short version of a *Landó*[14] (a typical Afro-Peruvian dance in 6/4, or 12/8).

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[14] *Landó* is an Afro-Peruvian dance, derived from the African dance that arrived first in Brazil, where it became very popular. The Afro-Peruvian version of this original dance is one of the most popular musics of the *Peru Negro*, and its signature instrument is the *cajón*, probably the most known Peruvian instrument.

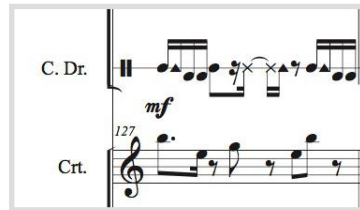The congas add another layer to this rhythmic complexity:

Figure 3. Scene IV-b ≤

Figure 3 demonstrates how the new rhythm is complementary to the 3:2 clave and this process automatically generates a new rhythm.

Pasolini's documentary film opens with a phrase that is not read by the actor in my work, and it is the fundamental question that will be answered throughout Pasolini's work: "Why is our life is dominated by unhappiness, distress, fear of war, by war itself?" I believe that this is a question that, in order to be investigated, requires us to go beyond words by using our intuitions, images, and sounds. This is a question that silences our thoughts. There is too much to say in response, and can be better expressed through intuitions. The answer needs to be read carefully, because, although it appears to be clear and brief, it leads to more questions. It is asking us to go further than our daily knowledge, far from newspapers and mass media. It requires a more careful reading. With my musical introduction, I allow ample time to read the sentence (projected for the audience). Soon the text gains major importance, music is reduced to effects, using extended techniques in the crotales and the vibraphone, which are activated using a string bow (Figure 4).
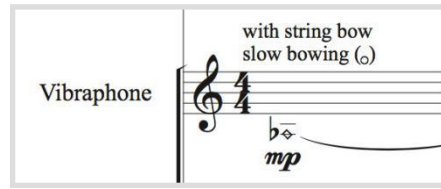
Figure 4. Introduction - vibraphone, bowing

Ethereal sounds, along with a mysterious bass *drone* create an almost thriller movie soundtrack (see Figure 5). We feel overwhelmed by the weight of this question and its prompt to reach an answer. This question is itself something we should be afraid of exploring, because exploring such a question means having the knowledge of what creates such horrifying sentiments, and knowing that we have a social and moral obligation, which can be larger than our possibilities. The act of reading and understanding this question requires a suspended moment, an isolation, a mystical acknowledgement.

Figure 5. Introduction

In [Figure 5](#), it is evident how the orchestration contributes to a feeling that aims to give to the listener a specific perception of the opening statement I discussed above. On the one hand, it channels a feeling. On the other hand, the gesture as a whole is interpreting a sentence that is not spoken. The audience is asked to read it as it is projected behind the scene, and my intention here is explicit: I create a sort of character that interprets on behalf the audience. A sort of Greek choir that is, in this instance, the voice of what is supposed to be our conscience. This echoes Schlegel's 19th century theory, where the Greek choir represented the ideal audience. However, this is not an accurate interpretation of the role of my music. I would rather address the way the music interprets the text, the way it suggests a feeling or reaction, producing *Pathos*. In this perspective, my vision is closer to the more accurate interpretation of the Greek choir by Nietzsche, described in *The Birth of Tragedy.* In order to unify human sentiments, one has to aim

for a common language, and the most contemporary composition systems often fail to create a common ground where audience can participate with a full and unambiguous understanding of the aural experience, and it is exactly with this belief that I examined a pseudo-tonal language within a (post) modern context: minimalism[15].

Figure 6. Scene II

Repetition, borrowed elements from tonality, and simplicity all aim to reach an audience whose only requirement is to *receive*. If at first glance the fragment presented in Figure 6 is, musically speaking, unworthy, it receives great importance in the context I just explained. Simplicity (represented by the alternation of "a" minor and "f" major, major seventh chords) guarantees unconditioned (unambiguous) accessibility. Repetition allows us to follow the narration with no distractions as the whole gesture isolates the moment and creates drama. Consider the line, "And in his eyes, glitters the light of bile. For a red flag betrayed, a divine effigy regained. But the darkness of conscience does not clamor for God, but for His statues"[16]. How does this text inform the music? Repetition can have a figurative meaning. Also, the

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[15] I refer to minimalism in a broad way. What I want to suggest is the idea of minimalism by iterating, and repeating constantly. However, these passages are treated differently and the do not present a neutral surface, conversely, they express meanings.

[16] Pasolini, *La Rabbia*.

insistent music responds to the image of the "statues of God". A statue is a static symbolic element that can embody redemption. The static music, almost "statuesque" in its repetitiveness, is both suggestive and ritualistic. It is deficient of content, since the degree of information that the musical elements bring is almost nothing. As a result, we have an action, through repetition, of a character that interprets the spoken text; we have interpretation, through musical materials and technique; the musical setting is functional, assuming a role that goes farther than just a comment.

3.1.   THE STRUCTURE

Pasolini's technique is fundamental to how I was inspired to use his text. In fact, through his "ideal-chronological" *montage* he aims to declare his "indignation against the bourgeoise world, and its resulting historical irresponsibility", and I "mounted" my music by following this structure. I created chunks of musical ideas that were able to bring about those sentiments that one experiences when watching and listening to the film.

Scenes	Contents	Operatic reference
I	Hypocrite Opposition	Recitativo Accompagnato
II	The Working Class	Recitativo Secco; Arioso; Aria
III	The Industrial Class	Recitativo Secco; Arioso
IV	"Pittsburgh" only	Aria
V	Revolution	Recitativo Secco; Aria
VI	The Modest	Arioso; Recitativo Accompagnato; Recitativo Secco
VII	-	Interlude
VIII	Marilyn Myth	Arioso

Table 1. Basic structure

The basic structure of my work emerges from the previous table, and is expressed in terms of recitativos (secco, and accompagnato), ariosos, and arias. As I stated, I ideally wanted to

create an operatic work, but in this instance "recitativo secco" turned into actor alone; "recitativo accompagnato" takes place when there is a narration accompanied by music, however, music tends to be more independent, or just a comment, while the narration does not present strong emotional content. "Arioso" is when the actor's speech is supported by music that aims to manipulate the *affetti*—music is substituted for the opera singer—while the songs emulate the proper aria moment, similar to the arioso in its function, but sung by the soprano. The use of minimal material in the songs helps the audience to not be seduced by the voice itself, as it is in traditional opera. I attempt to not take away attention from words, and my technical choices are coherent with this purpose. Music with voice, or the presence of the performer itself, can often be seducing. In this work, the soprano appears to be integrated with the instrumental ensemble, while the actor, the true depositary of the concepts, is well exposed. Carolyn Abbate, in the first chapter of her *Unsung Voice* (1996), reminds us that: "An attraction to opera means an attraction to singers' voices—this goes without saying. […] The sound of the singing voice becomes, as it were, a 'voice-object' and the sole centre of the listener attention"[17]. Conversely my music and voice aims to support the words instead of creating an autonomous entity. The whole work uses an agglomerate of the techniques described above (arias, ariosos, recitativos) which tend to generate structures, each of which functions to express meanings, those meanings inherent in the text.

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[17] Carolyn Abbate. *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996, 10.

Figure 7. Arioso

In [Figure 7](), the text belongs to the actor's part and it expresses poetically how the capitalistic world is "soaked" in strict formalism, "aseptic" in front of the "things of life", leaving its audience (through television and the communication media) detached from the hardships of the world. The actor's narration describes the voice of the capitalists (and the media that echo this voice) as pure formal poetry; the voice of the capitalists is deprived of content. The music follows this idea of a formal poetry, a lyrical melody conceived formally, and suggesting a "formal" harmonization, but with no connection with the surrounding world (the rest of the piece). This fragment moves, but where? Nowhere! It is pure formalism.

The center of the whole structure is occupied only by the soprano song, the narration is interrupted thereby leaving room for this isolated moment. Once again, the suggestion comes from the text; it exposed the issues within Western society, and after the song, the topic of the modest people is developed with poetical images from the so-called "Third World". The music here quotes the [first sections]() (dedicated to the industrial and rich world), because the responsibilities for misery and struggles where the modest people live are consequences of the developed part of the Western world. Facts in the world are connected, and in my score, music

connects this truth, which for Pasolini is the answer to the fundamental question. Music provides a signifying element that links ideas in the piece, music creates unity and provides connections.

If the central song is the pivotal point, the strongest moment still needs to come through, and it arrives at the end. The climax of the whole structure is the most lyrical moment in the narration, and it does not need any invasive music. For this reason, I adopted what I conceived as *arioso*, a secondary emotional music from the background, often repetitive, while the text, full of *pathos*, is spoken.

The structure appears to be anchored to Pasolini's text, which is fragmented, and with no apparent logic. However, the musical middle-, and micro-structures are conceived in order to create unity. Middle-structural levels involve the way in which the "moments" (*recitativos, arias, and ariosos*) are organized, while micro-structural levels refer to the particular process that a composer should never speak about, his or her own way of selecting, and organizing the musical material. In this context, it appears to be necessary to unfold this material in order to demonstrate (through a few significant examples) how unity is achieved in the micro-structural level.

The micro-structure starts from the musical cell, which for me plays a significant role in the compositional process. In fact, the analysis of the motivic structure of the *counterpoint* in Scene IV, reveals a minimalistic-like process: one cell, a small element, that creates the whole material through minimal variations (developments) of itself.
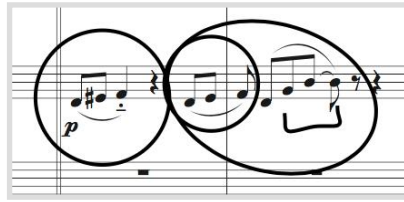
Figure 8. Scene IV-c

The second cell in Figure 8, is a compound of the first one (the generator) plus the intervallic span it covers (a third, "a-c"), starting from the next diatonic tone from "g" ("a" in "e" natural minor). In analytical terms, the following formula derives: $y = (x+1) + x^{18}$, where x is a minor third.

Now, going to Figure 8.1, crotales:

Figure 8.1. Crotales

Notice that the first unitary cell forms a fifth, followed by a (minor) third, then, again a fifth. The next example can be considered a coherent development. Starting from the same formula used for the strings, $y = (x+1) + x$, obtaining a slightly different tool: $y = [(x+1)] + 1 + x^{19}$. That is a fifth plus a (diatonic) second, plus a minor third. The pitch material gravitates around the motive in Figure 8: "e-g". In general, minor thirds are a unitary element in the whole piece, and the process described so far is applied in order to generate material.

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[18] *(x+1)* refers to the minor third interval (basic element), plus one diatonic step: a perfect fourth, in this case.

[19] Considering *[(x+1)]* = *X*, we obtain: *(X+1)+x*, which recalls the original formula. This represents a reiterative process.

The previous assertion is demonstrated in another relevant section of the score shown below:
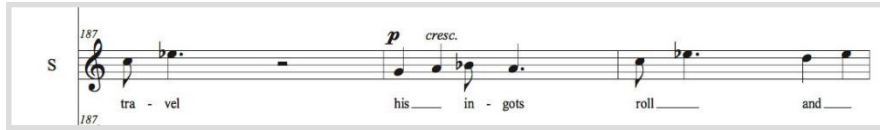

Figure 9. Scene V

Figure 9 shows the soprano part in Scene V. In the second measure of the example, the melodic fragment is included in a span of a minor third. The continuation of this fragment also starts with a minor third, just on the diatonic second up from the higher note of the previous fragment. From "g" (the first note of fragment 1) to "c", the element "*x+1*" comes into view, and again *x* starting fragment 2: *y = (x+1) + x* is again the matrix.

Also, the next scene (VI) presents the same process. I extracted an example from an *arioso*, where music has a secondary role:

Figure 10. Scene VI

Now *x* is a second, and it is going to generate the fragmented material. However, the minor third still plays a role in the construction. *x + (x+1)* is the central figure in the repeated phrase. The final derived motive shows *x + (x+1)* again, but it adds an "e" that is in relationship

of a major sixth from the initial tone "g", and it is the inversion of the minor third "g-e". "g" is a pole that divides the "b-flat" (minor third up), and "e" (minor third down). At the same time the minor third is the result of the formula $(x+1)$, which is a primary generative element.

All the material discussed so far is exposed in the introduction, the first pitches presented are: "a-flat; c; f; b-flat; g", and they are re-stated in fragments all over the introduction, fragments like the one in the following Figure 11:
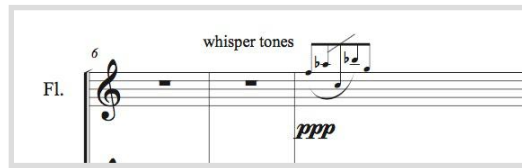

Figure 11. Introduction-a

Minor thirds "f - a-flat" and "b-flat - g" are divided by the "c", but I will discuss the role of the "c" later. If the first minor third is x, then we get a $(x+1)$, which is interpreted as a minor third plus a whole step, and again a variation of x. In conclusion: $x+(x+1)+x$.

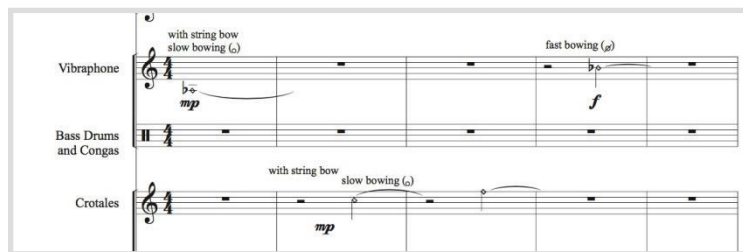The "c" is derived from the original generation of those pitches, at the very beginning of the piece:

Figure 12. Introduction-b

"A-flat" generates (diatonically) the following "c" and the "f", which are a distance of a third from "a-flat" (above and below, respectively). While the whole motive presents two minor thirds divided by this "c" intrusion as seen in the previous Figure 12.

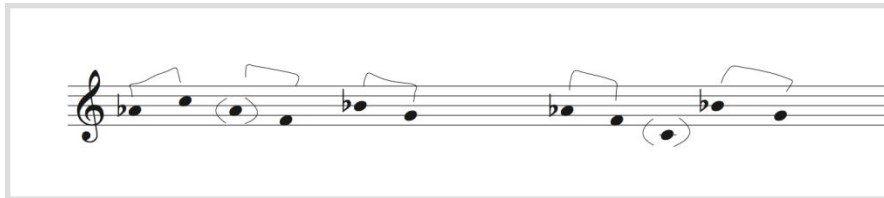It can be synthesized in the following way:

Figure 13. Schematic chart of the main generative cell

The rest of the construction develops this material. I decided to create a nine-note row (see Figure 13) from minor, and major thirds (however, the minor third has a more relevant role in this construction, and, as a result, in the whole piece), the fifth and its inversion, the fourth, which appears between the first and the second dyad, the second and the third one, and the fourth and the last dyad. The seconds separate the first construction and the second one, plus the relationship "c"/"b-flat", which appears very evident in the fragment. In a few words, I used the constituents derived from the tonal system: *seconds* as scale formations, *thirds* as chord constructions, and *fifths* (and its inversion) as the fundamental relationship/tension V-I, but they all participate in the construction of a different system.

The material of my work is the materialization of Pasolini's words on multiple levels. One can approach the score instinctively, or make cultural associations, or in an even more detailed analysis that reveals the correspondences that exist between the ideas and the material formation. In the following Figure 14, I show how the primary melodic material encountered in the introduction with the xylophone and crotals (first line) is related to the nine-tone row (second

line), including *pitch class set theory* labels for those who are more familiar with numbers in musical analysis (<u>Figure 14</u>).
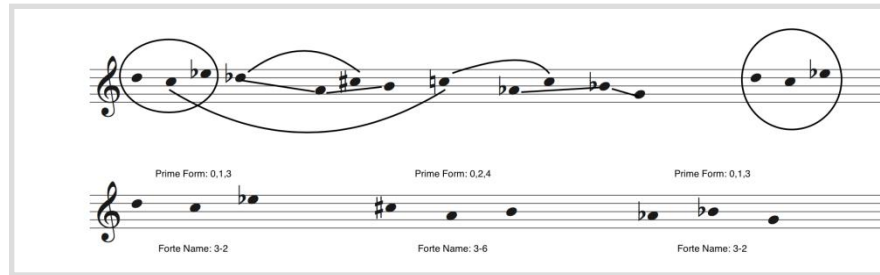

Figure 14. Row from the generative material

As a result, it can be inferred from what I exposed so far how the work presents cohesive musical material, which reinforces the unity of the work itself. In this sense, music participates as a force that creates a linear path for poetic and narrative images that would have otherwise been isolated.

4.   CODA

The narrative nature of the text has been maintained by including an actor, however, I show how instrumental music, as well as the soprano part, creates *aria*-like moments through the songs. Furthermore, the text has been commented on, reinforced, and enlivened throughout by the music in relation to my understanding of the text itself, which was an obligation for me as the composer.

In technical terms, my music has not been based on a "fact", it is rather an action that emerges from the certainty that it *should be*. In this manner, my music could be free; free to express ideas, and fuse together with the text, rather than subordinating itself to it. I have created a music that represents a leitmotif of a character that never appears physically in the scene, a character that symbolizes itself, rather than just being what it represents. It is an interpretive and authoritative character. It's role is to drive the listener toward a unique feeling, producing *Pathos*.

Particular emphasis lies on the structure that appears to be anchored to Pasolini's text, which is fragmented, and with no apparent logic, as I said. The analytic purpose of the last section aims to show how the musical middle-, and micro-, structures are conceived in order to define unity.

I created a structure that resembles an operatic work, however, paying attention to the use of minimal material in order to help the audience to not be seduced by the voices themselves (symbolic or not). If I aimed to create a converging movement through music, I did not want that

music to work only for itself. I point to the *affetti* to address a message, and not to show off a romantic ideal of music. My music aims to be unspoken words, it says what it is not said, and in this way the communication lies solely on the poetic level. As Pasolini states: "In theatre, word is presented two times: it is written, like in Homer's pages, but also spoken, like when two people speak at work: there is no longer beauty"[20].

Analyzing how music creates drama, how the text creates structures, and how my composition aims to give a unitary vision of the work in general, was a way for me to show how I repurposed this artwork from the 60's. The structure that I created by cutting parts from the longer original text focuses on those subjects that are universal, and nowadays they have a relevant meaning. Some of the images, as in the film, propose old icons and people from the past; thus we might not be able to put them in a well-known historical context. For this reason, I extrapolated the more universal concepts and I filtered the whole text through music. My music should be able to communicate a sentiment, and therefore helps us to understand the spoken words through the "doors of perception" (by using a Huxley's expression).

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[20] Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Affabulazioni*, Einaudi Ed., Torino, 1992.

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