# *Joyce's* Ulysses*: The Music of Chapter 11*

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Sweet coupled airs we sing –
No lonely seafarer
Holds clear of entertaining
Our green mirror.

Pleased by each purling note
Like honey twining
From her throat and my throat
Who lies a-pining?

***Abstract:*** *This paper considers in what ways chapter eleven of Joyce's* Ulysses *can be read as essentially musical. Joyce himself said of his eleventh chapter that it is technically like a* fuga per canonem*. Yet, the traditional fugue is by no means the sole model possibly guiding Joyce's composition of the text. The descriptions of musical performances, allusions to and mentions of a variety of musical pieces such as songs, operas, operettas, nursery rhymes, religious pieces and symphonic music as well as the repeated employment of musical terminology, the competent variations of tempo through verbal means and the exploration of phonological devices, significantly connected and interwoven with Bloom's inner monologues produce a sort of symbiosis of language and music and render the text its peculiar rhythm and the chapter its musical essentiality.*

For several reasons the eleventh chapter is the essentially musical part of *Ulysses*: its pages are largely occupied by the description of two musical performances; the chapter is all sprinkled with allusions from the sphere of music; Joyce makes use of multifarious phonological devices, besides trying to emulate musical ornaments and variations of tempo through verbal means; he himself has attributed to the chapter the technique of the fugue; the Wagnerian leitmotif is structurally employed; some approximations to modern music are also possible.

The two principal musical performances in the chapter are significantly connected with Bloom's inner monologues, since they strike the main notes haunting his mind and disturbing his emotions on that bright June day.

Even before the entrance of Bloom, one of the barmaids is singing a line from the light opera *Floradora*, when the passionate hero, sings to his faithless South Sea mistress, as they part pledging love: "0 my Dolores, queen of the eastern seas" (in the barmaid's mistaken version, "0 I dolores [...]"). Precisely on that day Bloom somehow feels he is in danger of having to part from his equally loving, loveable and flirtatious Molly. She is to him a kind of Eastern rarity, for she had been born and brought up in Gibraltar, and was daughter of a Spanish Jewess.

When early in the chapter Simon Dedalus remembers a famous past performance of *Love and War* (a duet for tenor and bass), Dollard sings a climatic passage in it:

"When love absorbs my ardent soul
I care not for the tomorrow [...]" (p. 270)

"War! War!" Father Cowley chimes in. At that moment Bloom is just hearing the fateful jingling of Boylan's carriage, as he departs for his date with Molly. He mutters to himself, "Love and war someone is".

Simon is then urged to sing an air from the opera *Martha,* "M'appari tutt amor". While he demurs ("My dancing days are over, Ben"), Richie Goulding, alone in the restaurant with Bloom, proclaims the *Sonnanbula* to be in his opinion, the most beautiful opera; he whistles a passage from an air in it. "What air is that?", Bloom asks. The reply does not help him to divert his mind from his obsessions: the air is "All is lost now", Richie informs. "A beautiful air", Bloom comments resignedly. "I know it well". (p. 272-3).

Finally Dedalus deigns to sing, in English, Lionel's aria in Martha, and begins:

"When first I saw that form endearing
Sorrow from me seemed to depart" [...] (p. 273)

Both Bloom and Richie are entranced: "braintipped, cheek touched with flame, [...] flow over skin limbs, human heart, soul, spine". (p. 273).

To Bloom it seems that "love itself is singing", "love's old sweet song". (It is when he nervously begins to play with the elastic band in his hands). Simon goes on singing:

"Full of hope and all delighted" [...]

And then:

"But alas, It was idle dreaming [...] "ray of hope" [...] (p. 274)

Bloom, looping and unlooping the elastic band, his nerves overstrung, thinks of the coincidence of names: Martha, the heroine in the opera, is also the name of his pen-

friend, whose letter he had received in the morning. Nevertheless it is Molly that will insistently come to the forefront of his mind. Bloom revives the first night he saw her, singing, smelling of lilac trees:

> Waiting, she sang. I turned her music. [...] She thanked me. Why did she me? Fate. Spanishy eyes. Under a peartree alone patio this hour in old Madrid one side in shadow. Dolores shedotores. At me. Luring. Ah, alluring. (p. 275)

At the close of the aria Simon displays the best of his privileged vocal gifts in a last crescendo:

> "Martha! Ah, Martha!"

And "in cry of passion dominant":

> "Co-me, thou lost one!
> Co-me thou dear one!
> Come!" (p. 275)

The chapter reaches a lyric climax with the description of Simon's superb tenor voice:

> I soared a bird, it held its flight, a swift soar silver orb it leaped serene, speeding, sustained, to come, don't spin it out too long breath long life, soaring high resplendent, aflame, crowned, high, in the effulgence symbolistic, high, of the ethereal bosom, high, of the high vast irradiation everywhere all soaring all around about the all, the endlessnessnessness ... (p. 275-6)

The total fusion of Bloom's emotion with the singer's is expressed by the telescoped word, "Siopold!", after Simon sings the last notes of the air:

> "– To me!" (p. 276)

There is a general emotional involvement. That voice to Bloom is "a lamentation". All songs turn upon love and loss. He begins and ends his letter to Martha under the emotion of the aria. He hums to himself, "La, la, la ree" [...] "La, la, la ree" [...] "La ree" [...] "Why minor is sad?", he ponders. (p. 280).

Parenthetically, Anthony Burgess suggests that there may be a reference to the Lydian scale (F major with B natural, not flat) in the name of one of the barmaids – Lydia, and to the minor scale in Mina's[2]. Mina is in fact quieter, less lively, more pensive than her companion.

When Simon stops and the enthusiastic clapping is appeased there is a sort of interval with transitional passages, as if from one to another episode in a fugue.

Miss Douce offers the shell she has brought from her holiday for people to listen to the distant roaring of the sea (one of the recurrences of the sea theme). Lidman tries to catch the hardly audible "voice of the waves", in *pianissimo*. Bob Cow1ey is discreetly playing the Minuet of *Don Giovanni* (Boylan's correlative?), when in the opera the hero dances with Zerlinda as a first step to his attempt at seduction.

For the first time, in this kind of transitional interval, we hear the "tap" of the approaching blind stripling. It sounds three times.

A sort of new part, or a new episode in the composition, seems to open with the execution of *The Croppy Boy*, – which in a sense prepares us for the theme of national politics in the next chapter, *The Cyclops*. But what matters in the circumstances of the moment are the notes of betrayal and defeat. (In the meantime Boylan has got very near Eccles Street).

The song, which deals with an episode of the 1798 Irish rebellion against England, tells of a boy who goes out in search of a priest to tell his sins and to confess that he will join the rebels in order to revenge the death of all the male members of his fami1y. Being the victim of some treason, the boy finds that the supposed priest is in fact a captain of the king, who orders him to be executed.

Stephen is somehow represented by the rebellious boy, who, like him, had cursed, had refused to attend Mass, had not prayed for the rest of his mother's soul. Bloom is utterly depressed:

> Chords dark. Lugugugubrious. Low in a cave of the dark earth. Embedded ore. Lump music. The voice of the dark age, of unlove, earth's fatigue made grave approach, and painful, come from afar, from hoary mountains [...] (p. 283)

Gifford finds that those words recall a scene in Wagner's *The Rhynegold*, when Wotan descends into the cavern of the dwarfish Nibelungs[3].

If the "croppy" boy seems to bring in Stephen on the scene, he has also affinities with Bloom. That boy's death fuses in Bloom mind with the death of his son Ruddy, when only eleven years old (an event that started some strangement of Molly from Bloom). "All gone. All fallen", Bloom ruminates. "Last of his name and of his race", like himself. "No son. Ruddy. Too late now. Or if not?" Like the "croppy" boy of the song, Bloom can also avow that "he bears no hate". "Hate, love", he muses. "Those are names". (p. 285). The final "pray for him" in the song applies to both the unfortunate boy and to Bloom, then departing from the Hotel.

From this point onwards noises, in onomatopoeias or in recol1ections in Bloom's mind ([...] "a whistle"; "locks and keys" [...] "towncrier" [...] (p. 289), begin to replace musical sounds, with which they had only occasiona1ly synchronized before. Burgess remarks that Joyce "finally reduces his fugue structure to mere noises"[4] – dull or strident, prosaic, offensive.

A Shakespearean epigraph might have suited almost all the chapter excepting the end. ([...] "the isle is full of noises/ Sounds are sweet airs that give delight and hurt

not/ Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments/ Will hum about mine ears; and sometimes voices" [...]). But at the end the enchanting world of music is over, and the increasing noises may already represent Joyce's modulation to the next chapter, *The Cyclops*, which is among the most noisy ones in the book. The ship sails on, leaving behind the rock of the singing sirens.

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Another factor making the eleventh chapter of *Ulysses* essentially musical is the large number of interspersed mentions of, or short passages from, several musical pieces, as well as the repeated employment of musical terminology.

People in the Ormond Hotel never cease to allude to songs (about twenty of them), passages from operas (five at least are mentioned), operettas, nursery rhymes, religious pieces, chamber or symphonic music; etc., – the allusions on the level of the narrative being often counterpointed by similar material appearing in the streams of Bloom's inner monologue.

In accordance with the middle-class nature of the people and the life focalized in the book, Joyce reveals an obvious preference for popular music, or at least for pieces that were more widely known in the Dublin of his time, outside the circle of refined experts.

Several personages in the chapter keep extolling the great exponents of the *bel canto,* secondarily of known composers. Gilbert tells us that the Dubliners of Joyce's days were unusually fond of vocal and operatic music, – both kinds being largely cultivated there. A great "*divo"*, he says, especially if he was a tenor, awakened in people a fascination only comparable to that roused by great patriotic leaders and rebels.[5]

On the other hand, when Joyce was writing the Sirens episode, in Zürich, the musical season there is reported to have been particularly intense, refined, varied[6]. There were at the time first-rate performances of Wagner's operas.

Returning to our hero, next to his capacity to appreciate the qualities and peculiarities of male and female voices, Bloom could also enjoy orchestral music, and was especially curious about timbres; in his mind there emerge sometimes catalogues of stringed, wind, percussion or keyboard instruments, – and their impact on his sensibility is often characterized: "scraping fiddles" [...] "sawing the cello reminds you of toothache" [...] "trombone, under blowing like a grampus" [...] "other brass chaps" [...] the harp, "loosely gold glowing light" (p. 271), the hurdy-gurdy Molly delighted in, etc.); nor does he forget improvised instruments ("even comb and tissue paper you can knock a tune out of", p. 289). It is his conviction that "there is music everywhere" (p. 281) and in many things, – "blade of grass", "the shell of her hands", etc.

More than once Bloom is puzzled by the power of music, and its mystery: "sounds and number", he ponders, "musemathematics". "And you think you are hearing to the ethereal!" (p. 278).

Both Bloom and the other customers in the Ormond are familiar with a good deal of the terminology of musical technique. One has just to turn over the pages of

the chapter and underline dozens of examples: words like "solfa", "treble", "demisemi-quaver"; allusions to major and minor keys; or to Italian terms for different tempo in music, for different degrees of intensity, for changes in intensity or in expressiveness. To Dollard, singing a verse of *War and Peace* with excessive ardour, Cowley advices, in a parody of the Italian directions, "amoroso ma non troppo" (p. 270).

In the case of such directions, however, Joycean imitations are easier to find than the mention of the technical terms. One can easily discern the "allegro" of the barmaids, when they are watching the passage of the viceregal procession and hope to be seen and admired; the "andantino" of Pat, the waiter, going to and fro; the "adaggio" of Bloom's inner response to Dollard's low-pitched, ominous voice interpreting *The Croppy Boy*. Or else Joyce may be consciously varying the intensity: "crescendo"; "sforzando", "decrescendo", especially when he describes the two performances of Simon and Dollard. Variations in mood and expressiveness, as in music, are also obvious: "¨con grazia", "dolce, con brio", "cantabile", and so forth.

The "staccatto", for instance, which in music is a way of playing by detaching notes from the musical phrase, becomes a prominent trait of the style of *Ulysses*, – particularly noticeable in the Sirens chapter.

* * *

Joyce seems to have hesitated between being a singer or a writer: he would have to devote wholly to one of the two vocations. His father had been renowned for his beautiful tenor voice, and Joyce had inherited the gift. They say the Irish of his generation were surprised when they saw him acquire fame in literature, not in the *bel canto*[7].

In the Sirens chapter he not only tried to present a literary equivalent to a fugue, according to his own characterization of the technique, but he was, it seems, infinitely more interested in forcing a sort of symbiosis of language and music (in which he was excelled only by himself in *Finnegan's Wake*). How far composing a literary piece like music is a really praiseworthy attempt is a question open to discussion.

For his purposes Joyce worked miracles through his competent and hypersensitive exploration and manipulation of verbal sounds in most varied ways.

On the phonemic level he availed himself of every feature of vowels, – front, central back, corresponding to acute, grave, neuter; he explored their intensifying chromatism from high to low; he caused long and short, stressed and unstressed vowels, in artistic syllabic positions and distribution to create most varied rhythms; he linked vowels in falling or rising diphthongs of appealing sensuous effects. Likewise Joyce played with all the potentialities of consonant sounds to produce impressions of implosion, explosion, friction, harsh hissing or soft rustling, of swishing, of whispering, of smooth flowing or sweet murmur, etc. The immensely rich sensuousness of *Ulysses* is attained by verbal texture as well as by actual allusion.

Through juxtaposition, alternation and elaborate arrangements of phonemes Joyce attains heights of verbal orchestration and can make his words twang, ring, clang, hush, hum, tremble, yell, roar, or, at his will excite senses other than hearing. Nor does he neglect the rational elements of speech sounds handled in a manner to diversify rhythm and tempo creatively.

Though some critics are averse to what they call "phonological microanalysis", since, they argue, it was seldom in the poet's intention to descend to the phonemic level in order to express what they wanted to say, when we come to Joyce we have to recognize that he did pay great attention to his phonemic networks and embroidery. He intended, not only his words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, but also syllables, phonemes, even punctuation (or lack of it) to be part of the message by suggesting them in a myriad of different ways.

In Joyce's case it is difficult to separate what might be merely intuitive, instinctive, from deliberate, meticulous, deft art and craft. And at the end he might perhaps be much more conscious of all his phonological tricks – from the plane of the phoneme to that of the sentence and beyond – than his most minute exegets. (Confidentially, this continuous awareness may be the reason why he sometimes tires us, irritates us, – though he never causes our admiration of his talents to diminish).

If we take any page at random we will find lots of cases of verbal elements echoing sense and what is more – emitting a whole spectrum of suggestions and associations.

Apart from his innovations of truncated, fused or telescoped words, his simpler onomatopoeias, verbal suggestions, repetitions of specific kinds (often highly suggestive too), ellipses, etc. already contribute to a great extent to create the musicality of the chapter.

As for the onomatopoeias, they abound from the first to the last page, and are too obvious to require illustration ("jingle", giggle, tschink-tschunk, kram-kram, etc., etc.). The fact deserving notice in connection with them is that they are responsible for the part of noises in the chapter. A few of them are not so purely imitative, as, for instance, when Simon is seen blowing in to his pipe:

> He blew through the flue two husky fife notes. (p. 261)

Or when Miss Kennedy has a fit of laughter while drinking her tea:

> Again Kenny giggles [...] spluttered out of her mouth her tea, choking in tea and laughter, coughing with choking, crying [...] (p. 260)

Regarding what is belong called here "verbal suggestion", it is important to remark that in Joyce it is not meant, or not only meant, to express personal, lyrical experiences of the author (none of Keats's "Forlorn! the very word is like a bell/ To toll me back from thee to my sole self!"). In Joyce's case, verbal sounds are more often used to grasp what Hopkins has called the "inscape" of things or situations; yet, the principal

intention of Joyce's suggestive orchestration of speech sounds is undoubtedly to bring poetry nearer to music, – the sister arts and his two vocations.

Much more consciously, with a keener sense of opening new ways for poetic language, with more gusto than many poets before him, or even in his time, he has used speech sounds, not only, onomatopoeically, to represent what in nature is sound or noise, but also, synesthetically, to appeal to other senses – of sight, touch, taste, smell, thermic, kinetic senses; and, magically, to awaken distant emotions, vague dreams, buried memories, moods, indefinite, unthought-of associations.

Being essential1y poetic, Joyce's language never ceases to transmit pre-conceptual messages; but he attempts to do it as far as possible as music does. It is here above all, it seems, that Joyce fully succeeds, i.e., when he makes his words, phrases, sentences *work like* (not *be like)* music. This is a point to be kept in mind and underlined.

A few instances of able employment of verbal suggestions, among a very extensive number of such throughout the chapter, will perhaps be enough to illustrate our point, although they will certainly lose in significance when taken out of the context.

It is chiefly the arrangement of the verbal sounds, rather than the descriptive terms (with no mention of song) that leads us here, as elsewhere, to listen to what may stand for the enticing songs of the Sirens:

> In a giggling peal young goldbronze voices blended [...]. They threw young heads back, bronzegigglegold, to let freely their laughter, screaming, your other, signals to each other, high piercing notes.
> Ah, panting, sighing. Sighing, ah, fordone, their mirth died down.
> [...]
> Douce gave full vent to a splendid yell, a full yell of full woman, delight, joy, indignation.
> [...]
> Shrill, with deep laughter, after bronze in gold, they urged each other to peal after peal, ringing in changes, bronzegold and goldbronze, shrilldeep, to laughter after laughter. And then laughed more. [...] All flushed (O!), panting, sweating (0!), all breathless. (p. 260)

In the repetitions and combinations of the words "gold" and "bronze" there is a predominantly visual suggestion, even a faint sense of texture, while the denotative reference to the metals vanish; what remains is a sense of rich, warm brilliance, of the shining thick hair of the barmaids, with undertones of sensuality.

Through liquids and sibilants and sipping-like /i/ sounds Joyce causes us to feel on our lips and palate the sloe-gin that Miss Douce pours for Boylan:

> Shebronze, dealing from her jar thick syrupy liquor for his lips, looked as it flowed [...]. Neatly she poured slowsyrupy sloe.(p. 265)

Concerning repetition, which is the very essence of music, still more obviously than of poetry, it had necessarily to be a constant, deftly managed figure, employed, not so much for emphasis, as usual, or even for incantatory effects, but first of all to emulate musical patterns.

The more elaborate cases of repetitions in the Sirens chapter deal with phonemes or syllables. Iterations of words, phrases, short sentences have patterns of their own, but at once involve, besides mental, also acoustic form and appeal.

In the following example, in which the repeated words entail repetitions of rhyming vowels, one has a vague impression of iterations of a tonic note (the long vowel in *ate*) and of some of its harmonic sounds:

> [...] Richie Goulding, Collis, Ward ate steak and kidney, steak then kidney, bite by bite of pie he ate, Bloom ate Bloom ate they ate. (p. 269)

We may find repetitions of the structure of short sentences, like musical phrases repeated with slight variations:

> Lionel Simon, singer, laughed. Father Bob Cowley played. Mina Kennedy served. Second gentleman paid. Tom Kerman strutted in; Lydia admired, admired. But Bloom sang dumb. (p. 276)

The little chain of sentences ends with "a dying fall".

There are intricate patterns of repetitions, such as the following, with a curious design of all alliterating sounds (/ai/, /e/, voiced and unvoiced plosives and unvoiced fricatives, remindful of sounds in a xilophone, since there is something woodenish in them):

> Bald deaf Pat brought quite flat pad ink. Pat set with ink pen quite flat pad. Pat took plate dish knife fork. Pat went. (p. 278)

Bloom thinks of Molly's agitation at Boylan's knock at the door, her hurried last touches to make herself more attractive: "Last tip to titivate". (p. 284)

Ellipses, often combined with clipped words, affect rhythm creating lively staccato effects; they may be also combined with repetition: "Bloo mur: dear sir. Dear Henry wrote: dear Mady". (p. 279)

Not satisfied with suggestive orchestration of speech sounds, in peculiar rhythmical arrangements, Joyce borrowed still more directly from music as he tried to adorn his chapter with what he intended to be the equivalents to musical ornaments, or flourishes. His fancy knew no limits.

Such attempts have been briefly noticed, among Joyce's critics, by Burgess and Stuart Gilbert, both offering a few examples. However, a careful research concerning this aspect of Joyce's language is yet to be carried out.

Let us add a few instances of what somehow reminds us of different musical flourishes:

The *Appogiatura* is "a melodic ornament in which the principal note is delayed by a grace note introduced before it"[8]. It is indicated thus: 

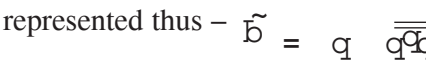
Bloom looped, unlooped, noded, disnoded. (p. 274)

Also:

Or if not? If not? Is still? (p. 285)

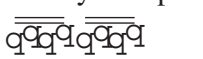
In the *Mordente* we have two grace notes, the former being an anticipation of the principal note and the latter the note above it. A special sign over a note indicates it:

[...] on her humming, bust ahumming [...] (p. 266)

The *Grupeto* is a group of brief notes turning upon one (above and below it), represented thus –  [9]

Of course the literary imitations are only approximations:

Roll of Bensoulbenjamin rolled to the quivery loveshivery roof-panes. (p. 270)

The *Trill* or *shake* consists of the rapid alternation of the main note with the one above it. It is indicated by "tr " placed over or under the note; if prolongued, the notation will be, tr. mm = 

There are possible slight variations. The example below was pointed out by both Burgess and Gilbert:

Her wayyavyeavyheavyeavyevyevy hair uncomb:'d. (p. 277)

Gilbert also explains that the final word (un comb:' d) "is written exactly as a singer might have to enounce it at the close of a cadence".[10]

The *Tremolo* may be single – a very rapid repetition of one note – or "with turn"; in this case, in wind instruments, it is a rapid alternation of up and down movements of the bow; in drums, the so-called "drum roll" is strictly a *tremolo* it is indicated thus: 

Single *tremolo* in the chapter:

He, hee hee hee hee (p. 280)

*Tremolo* "with turn":

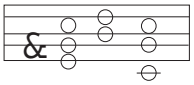
Fro, to: to, fro: (p. 286)

When we slide the back of our thumb over the white notes of the piano we produce the ornament called *Glissando* Joyce seems to emulate it in

Drops. Rain. Diddle iddle addle addle oodle oodle. (p. 282)

In his effort towards effects of simultaneity, Joyce also occasionally tries to give us the impression of musical chords, i.e., the combination of three or more notes harmoniously sounding together; Burgess regards the following as a chord with missing notes (*hollow fifths*):

Well, I must be. Are you off?
Yrfmstbues. Blmstup. (p. 286)

– which the critic represents in musical notation, thus: 

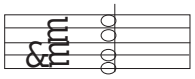
Burgess confesses that he finds a minimal musical significance in it; "it is the eye that is primarily intrigued".[11]

We have already mentioned *Siopold* (p. 276) as a sort of chord, or at least as a musical third. Another example would be, on p. 278, *Lidlydiawell,* from Lydia and Lidwell in very harmonious relationship.

Of more musical effect are the imitations of *Spread chords* or *Arpeggios,* as, for instance, in the playful arrangements with the name of a stout character, Ben Dollard:

Big Benaden Dollard, Big Benben. Big Benben.

Anyhow, the feeling of a spread chord here may be subjective: perhaps a better example occurs when, further on (p. 290), Joyce successively reduces the names of five male characters in a "spreading" of their first syllables:

[...] Li, Cow, Ker, Doll [...] 

Without a special denomination, but also a typical musical device, is the repetition of a note, each time followed by successive ones in the scale, which Joyce seems to do, for instance, when referring to the blindness of the piano tuner:

Nor Ben nor Bob nor Tom nor Si nor George nor tanks nor Richie nor Pat. Hee hee hee hee. He dit not see. (p. 290-1)

Outside the field of musical ornaments we can point out attempts to imitate other resources, like the *Fermata,* i.e., the delay in the duration of a note, which is prolongued at will and emphasized. The *Fermata* (represented thus, 𝄐) often immediately follows an *Affretando* (a passage hurrying on). Joyce's critics do not fail to register the *fermata* effect in the sensational ending of a paragraph already quoted here: "[...] the endlessnessnessness [...]" (p. 276)

Another interesting example is "Waaaaaaalk" (p. 186).

The more one reads the chapter the more one discovers various kinds of musical tricks marking the style: abrupt changes in key, chromatic modulations, effects of rests, of octaves, thirds, fifths, whose discussion would lead us too far from what is no more than a general appraisal of the musical aspect of the Sirens episode.

No doubt such extreme experiments involving strictly musical elements (like many others, of different kinds, in other chapters) are of relative, if not, sometimes, of small value from the literary point of view. Nevertheless, they are not to be neglected as elements marking the characteristic nature and themes of a given chapter: taken together they enhance its physiognomy.

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Since Joyce himself said of his eleventh chapter that it is technically like a *fuga per canonem*, we cannot help examining some essential notions about the fuguet though in extremely simplified and second-hand terms.[12]

It is known that the fugue is a procedure, or a kind of texture, rather than a set musical form, in spite of the fact that a large number of particular compositions are labelled as fugues as others are called sonatas or preludes.

The fugue varies so much that it is vain to describe it in a single way. One can only more confidently say that it is the supreme manifestation of contrapuntal music. It is typical of the baroque as distinct from the so-called classical music though it has attracted great classical composers: in his last period Beethoven often tried to wave the fugue into the sonata pattern.

More emphatically than any other kind of composition, in a fugue the interwining of melodic strands becomes its very process. Texture is made of such strands. (So far it accords, to some extent, with the texture of the Sirens chapter). The number of strands ("voices", or "parts") in a fugue is fixed beforehand.

The main "structural" parts of a fugue are the Exposition and the Episodes (or *divertimenti*).

The Exposition in the eleventh chapter would start after the word "Begin!", thus excluding the introductory pages with the lingtiistic fragments. The Exposition would then cover a not neatly marked first part, centred on the barmaids – their talk, their fuss, their coquetry – and the entrance of Bloom and Boylan. It is not possible to fix exact limits to it in the text.

In the Exposition of a fugue the voices enter one after the other with scraps of melody. The first voice is the Subject (or "dux", or "canon"); the second voice is called Answer. The former at first appears in the tonic key; the latter reproduces the Subject in the dominant key. It needs not be a perfect reproduction in the dominant, but there are rules according to which it can vary. The third voice, if any, is a repetition of the subject in a higher or lower octave; "when we have Subject, Answer, Subject and again Answer, we speak of a four-part fugue";[13] consequent1y, Subject and Answer keep alternating. When all the voices have entered, i.e., when the "entries" are over, the Exposition is over too.

Both Tyndall and Gilbert agree that the barmaids, Bloom and Boylan are the three "voices" of the supposed literary fugue that is the Sirens episode.[14] To Gi1bert – a great authority, since he was writing under Joyce's supervision – the Subject is represented by the barmaids, which is the same as saying that the Subject is the figurative Siren's song. The Answer, Gilbert affirms, is represented by "Bloom's entry and his subsequent monologue."[15]

Gilbert gives no further explanations, but, since the technical term seems to retain its ordinary meaning, one might say that Bloom, as Answer, responds to the suggested songs of Lydia and Mina, to the actual music in the concert-room, to the torturing "jingle" of Boylan's car. Moreover, he sustains the level of the inner monologue in counterpoint with the level, not only of the narrative, but of all such songs or sounds.

The Episodes are parts of connective tissue and usually develop what has appeared in the Exposition. One of its functions is to effect modulations to various related keys, so that the repeated entries may henceforward vary. The entries after the Exposition are much more freely handled.

In Chapter eleven the Episodes may be said to consist in the two main musical executions *(Martha's* aria and *The Croppy Boy).* It is then interesting to notice the more occasional interference of the barmaids, after their much more conspicuous position and their focalization in close up, in the Exposition.

Apart from the Episodes, there are flourishes in a fugue, technically called *codetta,* which work as minor transition passages. It is possible to detect some of such passages in our text; when we are reading the whole chapter the following passage, for instance, seems to have the nature of the codetta in the fugue:

> A duodene of birdnotes chirruped bright treble answer under sensitive hands. Brightly the keys, all twinking, linked, all harpsichording, called to a voice to sing the strain of dewy morn, of youth, of love's leavetaking, life's, love's morn. (p. 263)

After the first voice has stated the Subject it often continues in a different way, with the so-called Counter-Subject, which is a sort of counterpoint accompaniment to the Subject, or to the Answer. The term may also be applied to a Subject appearing later in the fugue.

Without any sufficient justification Gi1bert appoints Boylan as Counter-Subject. Is he so classed, if we are not oversimplifying, because he is linked – in counterpoint – to the Sirens by the power of seduction, and to Bloom by his attraction to Molly?

Other parts of the fugue seem irrelevant in the present parallel. The really important fact, as Gilbert recognizes, is that Subject, Answer, Counter-Subject and Episodes are often bound contrapuntally in the narrative and in the texture of Bloom's monologue.

* * *

After all, one feels that the traditional fugue is by no means the sole model possibly guiding Joyce's composition of the chapter.

William Blisset, for instance, will emphatically assert:

> In spite of the claim to fugal form, and in spite of the fact that what is actually presented as heard in the Episodes is a blur of Irish ballads, operatic arias, miscellaneous sounds, the musicality of Joyce in this the musical heart of the book is largely a Wagnerian musicality.[16]

For confirmation of what he says, he mentions a thematic prelude, the recurrence of motifs linked to symbols and to myth, the several attempts at chord-building (Wagner being the supreme harmonist and chord-builder). In short, along all his essay, Blisset will insist upon Wagner's influence on Joyce.[17]

Another argument that might be added to Blisset's is the occasional sensation, in the reader, of a prevalent "chromatism", we mean to say, of a composition at certain moments based on something like a chromatic scale, although it is not easy to point out definite examples in the text. Tentatively, let us take a sentence of questionable sense that seems to advance by semitones:

> Sparkling bronze azure eyed Blazure's skyblue bow and eyes. (p. 266)

On the other hand a distinction has to be made clear: Joyce certainly rejected the Wagnerian solemn mood and atmosphere. So, as he did with Homer, he substituted middle class matter-of-fact, irreverence and irony for the sublime, the heroic, the tragic in the German composer *(The. Meistersinger,* with its exceptional acceptance of the jocose, pleased Joyce better than the other operas).

That Joyce greatly admired Wagner, without ever granting it, and that he thought of emulating him, seems certain. While he was once attending a performance of *The Walkure,* Blisset tells us, he asked a friend, "Don't you find the musical effects of my Sirens better than Wagner's?" "No", the friend replied. And Joyce left the theatre on the spot, before the end of the spectacle.[18]

Whereas Wagner, in a more radical way than any previous opera composers, tended to make music work like dramatic poetry (cf., for instance, *Tristan and Isolde),* Joyce endeavoured to make poetic language achieve effects of sheer music. Both have come only midway, – but both have brought the two arts nearer.

* * *

Anyhow – though the idea seems quite arguable, and any assertion of the kind will require sufficent knowledge of modern music (which is not the present case) – we would venture the opinion that, in the Sirens chapter, Joyce came closer to atonal music (and even to later experiments in music) than to any musical form or style belonging to ages previous to his own.

While Joyce was working at *Ulysses* Schoenberg was also in labour to give birth to what he considered to be the natural consequence of innovations of Wagner and his followers.

Would Joyce know the atonal, but not yet strictly dodecaphonic, music that Schoenberg had already composed? Even if he did, the Sirens episode may still be said to have something prophetic regarding Shoenberg's later accomplishments. One feels, for instance, that Joyce did not tend to cultivate the melody in the senseful sentence: verbal sounds work rather individually, as if each of them was self-sufficient. Now an equivalent procedure has been pointed out as the central characteristic of the music of Webern, the most famous and influential follower of Schoemberg's musical technique.[19]

Satie and Varèse are other composers that deserve mention in connection with the way Joyce tried to imitate or suggest both noise and music in his verbal composition. Both Satie and Varèse have incorporated noise into music[20]. And though both were Joyce's contemporaries, again one may think of Joyce's foresight regarding "noise music", – since this innovation began to develop only by composers such as John Cage[21] – and only at least a decade after Joyce's death, in 1941.

In conclusion, if the Sirens episode contains something fugue-like, or Wagnerian – and it cannot be denied – it also incorporates into the world of literature a good deal of the extreme avant-garde movement in music.

U1timately certain passages in the Sirens episode leave in us the impression of serial music played on the *glockenspiel*. The following example, among many other possible ones, seems significant:

> Pat is a waiter hard of his hearing. Pat is a waiter who waits while you wait. Hee hee hee hee. He waits while you wait. Hee hee. A waiter is he. Hee hee hee hee. He waits while you wait. While you wait if you wait he will wait while you wait. Hee hee hee hee. Hoh. Wait while you wait. (p. 280)

## Notes

* First published in Estudos Anglo-Americanos n. 6/6, 1981-1982, p. 3-35. (with permission from the editor and author) Thanks to Viviane Carvalho da Anunciação for typing this text.

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