

SEAM PROJECT - SUSTAINED ELECTROACOUSTIC MUSIC

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ABSTRACT

The electroacoustic musical composition is close to a breaking point: almost one hundred years ago Ottorino Respighi introduced a recorded media into his composition *I Pini di Roma* and even today we don't have a shared consolidated electroacoustic practice to play it. Someone does it better than others, by its own knowledge consciousness equilibrium. It is only a recorded sound to be placed inside an orchestra, not a virtuoso part to be played on a handmade custom electroacoustic instrument disappeared from the earth except for memories, words, and scores. The problem is more serious and deep if consider most of today's electronic-manipulators don't know who Respighi was and what happened after him.

1. INTRODUCTION

Sustained electroacoustic Music is a project inspired by Alvisé Vidolin and Nicola Bernardini's article on *live electroacoustic music sustainability*. In their article they point at multiple faces of the sustainability problem such as: technological, notational or general conception issues. Even if the article aforementioned focuses only on *live* electroacoustic music, the concept of *sustainability* is applicable to any kind of documented music that uses electroacoustic environments including therefore the acousmatic works, instruments with tape and amplified works. This will be the purpose of the presented text.

The ambition of this project is to grow the interpretation and the electroacoustical musical practice with the consciousness of the electronic and informatics problems that had made difficult and arduous to approach to this music which prevented the growth of an interpretative thinking. It is possible, with a community structure, to determine, build and stratify interpretation of musical core, the repertoire, concealing the technological issues. They are instruments, not the music itself.

2. PROBLEMS

When we refer to a virtuoso musician, we often point at a violinist or at a piano player: someone who intensely practice on his instrument. This is the central point: Does the violinist builds its own violin every time he approaches a new composition? Does the pianist? The electroacoustic musician does it every time.

The electroacoustic music culture was born in a daily changing context. The sustainability of what the electroacoustic musicians and composers were doing during the years wasn't an interesting and useful point during the realisation of the compositions. Today the situation remains similar to decades ago. Sustainability is an intricate

and complex concept and *music sustainability* sounds like an *abstract problem* applied to an *abstract thing* only for a small number of people like an *abstract community* not related to the mass. Again, we acknowledge that mass-media, mass-culture, mass-society-things, are no place for the *sustained people*.

Contemporary music composition, even the electroacoustic music composition, is characterised by an interdisciplinary approach to research on sound and perception and writing itself. Writing something push the writing itself into a becoming writing, to the best comprehension of something. Yeah this is in a form of best wish.

If actual music is afflicted or not by the contemporary and electroacoustic music issue, it is an ordinary question, but the evidence that musical thinking changed thanks to the electroacoustic thought is an undeniable fact. Music was changed inexorably after the introduction of electronics and informatics in music composition, as well as the way how it has transformed the approach to playing and production of music.

An example. We have three interpretations of Beethoven's Complete Symphonies, by the famous conductor Herbert von Karajan. Each of those boxsets is a separate thing, a collection of objects. Not music itself. We have three sets of reproduction of the same musical things through the same mind. It is a huge resource of thinking, not a huge resource of music itself. Every man who has listened to Beethoven in a concert hall knows perfectly that his music can't fit in a box that can stay in a hand. But if the boxset is not Beethoven's music itself, it is sure an object of thinking. There is a point, sure, this is not the purpose it was built, but it doesn't matter. The point is that we have stratified musical thinking and listening attitude on Beethoven's music through interpretations of his music. We have not rewritten his music each time and we have not built his instruments each time. Is it a technological fact? A musical one? Both of them.

Luigi Nono's repertoire is not on a triple boxset of no one. It is on paper, in the best of the case. We have some recordings, yes we have them. But what can we study and interpret, if half of the instruments of the ensemble in a Nono's score was *Live Electronics Instruments* dated the '80s and it was not really described and not really *sustained* through the years? Who has memories of those instruments?

Looking at the Post-Graduate Doctoral offers to an electroacoustic musician all over the world, there are many *interactive-all-you-can-think-about* positions but nothing about *electroacoustic repertoire*. There are a lot of *Machines (that are) Learning* something, somewhere. All over the world, the music industry conceived the purpose of doing music. With or without problems. During that well studied *interaction learning* and, during this art of entertainment, where the industry is god, and *God is a DJ*, meanwhile there is also a repertoire of music that we must consider the core of the actual musical thinking that will disappear in a few years. Not the written papers, neither the recordings of that repertoire. We have *clouds* for that, and *Machine Learning* something of that, maybe. But it will

^{*} This work was supported by the XYZ Foundation

[†] This guy is a very good fellow

disappear the practice, the interpretation, and musical thinking itself and there will be no place for that. Because if there are clouds, they are grey and full of rain.

What can we do about a lot of music made by composers who have framed their music in events without sustain at all their electronic instruments through decades?

Here are the focal points. What will happen when all the people who are part of the history of a work and continuously manipulates its electronics and knows all the production problems during a concert will disappear? What will become the electroacoustic music repertoire if not the one played in the concert hall? Why we do concentrate too many resources and time on technical problems and not on musical interpretations and playing practices of repertoire?

3. SEAM

We have to study Vidolin's gestures to understand Nono, to have a clear sight on our music through an era. Vidolin is for Nono what Karajan was for Beethoven: time, consciousness and thinking. We need his work to know what was happening, what we have to do, what it is necessary and what doesn't matter. And that is we have to do, just one time, forever; refine it, maintain it, and again realise it forever.

To prevent catastrophic regression of musical thinking we must consider there are few dogmatic concepts to build, re-build and sustain an *electroacoustic repertoire*:

1. Open and Be Open
2. Don't Repeat Yourself
3. Think and Act as Community

SEAM is an Open, DRY, Community.

3.1. Meaning

seam | si:m |
noun

1. a line where two pieces of fabric are sewn together in a garment or other article.
 - a line where the edges of two pieces of wood, wallpaper, or another material touch each other: the task involved clamping the panels into position and arc welding a seam to join them.
 - a long thin indentation or scar: the track cleaves a seam through corn.
2. an underground layer of a mineral such as coal or gold: the buried forests became seams of coal.
 - a supply of something valuable: Sunderland have a rich seam of experienced players.
 - a trace or presence of something: there is a seam of despondency in Stipe's words.

verb

1. join with a seam: it can be used for seaming garments.
2. (usually as adjective seamed) make a long, narrow indentation in: men in middle age have seamed faces.

4. WRITE

The first macro category of music to be approached is the one that uses electroacoustic environments and technologies without any kind of documentation. Like Ottorino Respighi does with *I Pini di Roma* at the very beginnings, many composers until now never documented their works with the technologies at their disposal.

Speaking at newbie electroacoustic music students about *I'm Sitting in a Room* is a kind of multilevel experience. There are a lot of layers of different bits of knowledge and experiences possible approaching *I'm sitting*. One of these, of course, is how you can do it today.

4.1. 1969, I'm Sitting in a Room, Alvin Lucier

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5. REWRITE

The second topology of score approached has electroacoustic deep documentation and score notation with the, what we defined, hole words. Risonanze Erranti is a long work of the latest Nono's composition period, with many live electronics instruments inside the ensemble.

5.1. 1989, Risonanze Erranti, Luigi Nono

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6. PORT

The porting of music informatics to a sustained programming language and technology merge into a branch of interests of the authors: History of electronic instruments and the back to the future of music lost in the past for technological issues into a new possibility of music playing.

6.1. 1991, Mobile Locale, Michelangelo Lupone

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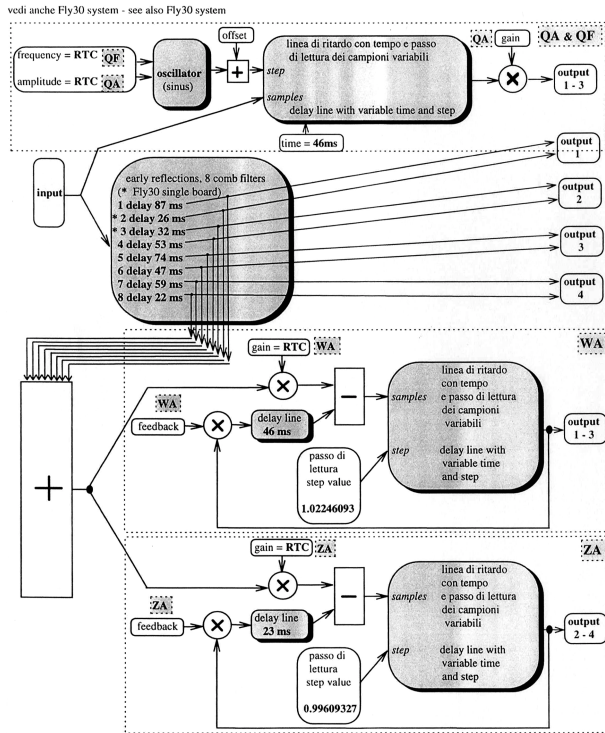


Figure 1: Ping.

7. INSTRUMENTS

Why faust?

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8. CONCLUSIONS

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. RTC Real Time Control
valori controllati in esecuzione - variable values during the performance
. L Canale di uscita 1 - channel output 1
. R Canale di uscita 2 - channel output 2
. V Valori riferiti a 22.05 KHz frequenza di campionamento
Values at 22.05 KHz sample rate
. QA, QF, WA, ZA vedi Simboli di partitura - see Score symbols

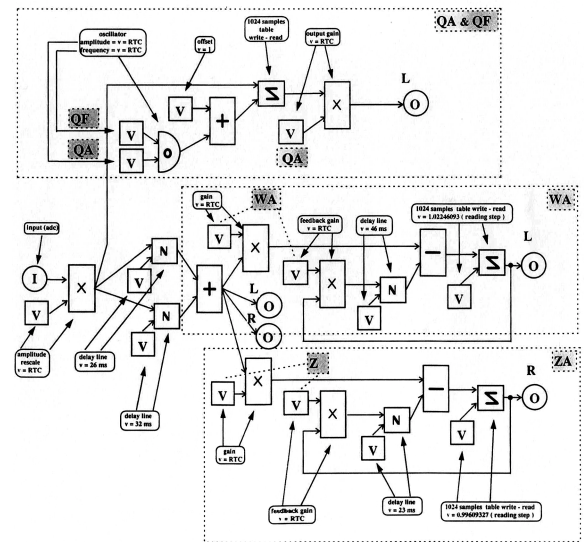


Figure 2: Ping.