

HUMOR IN MUSIC
POSSIBLE APPLICATIONS OF HUMOR THEORY TO MUSIC

by
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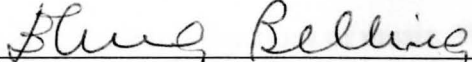
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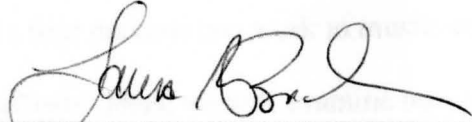
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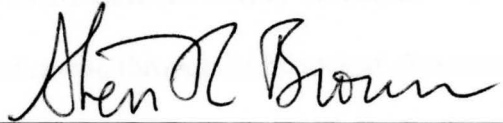
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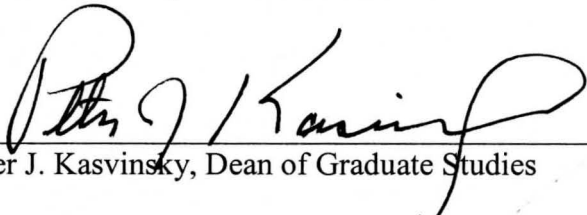
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Abstract

Starting from the belief that music is a sign system set into a precise network of cultural relations, we will survey the cultural values given to music as a semiotic system, focusing above all on the possible use of humor in music. We will discuss methodological issues and provide concrete analyses of different composition in an excursus in Western humorous tradition in order to explain the use of certain comic devices in music. The first part of the work will be dedicated to a historical and theoretical survey of the possible relation between speech, music and sound as cultural values, trying to identify the socially codified cultural functions of music. We will deal with the main approaches to music based on linguistic principles, with particular emphasis on those elaborated by Nicolas Ruwet, Jean-Jacques Nattiez, Gino Stefani, and Eero Tarasti, focusing above all on the notion they have borrowed from Charles S. Peirce's semiotic model and from Algirdas J. Greimas's generative linguistic. After having described the possible relationships between music and language, we will borrow Gino Stefani's Model of Musical Competence (MMC), we will try to apply Speech Act theory in music, showing how Grice's four maxims can work in music, and how they can be broken producing humorous effects. Thus, we will examine how the resources of verbal humor described by Attardo in the General Theory of Verbal Humor may function in vocal and instrumental music through an historical excursus in Western classical music tradition.

Acknowledgments

This thesis documents my two years of work on musical semiotics and on the application of humor in music at Youngstown State University, where I continued to develop the research in music and literature I started at the University of Bergamo, in Italy, in 1998 for my degree in foreign languages and literature.

This work has been possible thanks to the precious help of many people. First of all, Salvatore Attardo, who introduced me to humor theory with his courses and seminar; Laura Buch, who made my attempt to apply humor theory to music possible and, with her enthusiasm and suggestions, made me discover the comic spirit of Renaissance and Baroque music; Steve Brown, member of my thesis committee, who guided me in my TESOL studies, the second focus of these two years; Angela Locatelli, who has constantly followed my research from Italy giving me precious hints and suggestions; Rebecca Barnhouse, who put me up during my first year in Youngstown and helped me to understand this new country; Iole Checcone, who welcomed me to the U.S. when I first arrived in August 2000 and, since then, have more than maternally taken care of me, guiding me while making important choices; Mary Ann Napolitan-Keifer and her wonderful family, who have constantly supported me and made me really feel 'at home'.

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It remains to be underlined that all opinions on specific matters of the expansions and elaboration discussed here as well as all faults and shortcomings lie within the responsibility of the humble author.

*Alla nonna Melania
(1901-1996)*

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
INTRODUCTION.....	1
 <i>PART I: MUSICAL SEMIOTICS</i>	
I.1 Introduction.....	4
I.2 An Historical Overview of Musical Semiotics: from its Origins to the Present Days.....	5
I.3 Nicolas Ruwet and the First Semiotic Approaches to Music: the Principle of Repetition	22
I.4 Jean-Jacques Nattiez and the Tripartite Semiotic Model	35
I.5 Gino Stefani and the Model of Musical Competence.....	60
I.6 Eero Tarasti's Musical Semiotic Theory: from A. J. Greimas's Isotopy to C. S. Peirce Semiotic Model.....	68
I.7 Conclusion	94
 <i>PART II: HUMOR AND MUSIC</i>	
II.1 Introduction.....	96
II.2 From Verbal to Musical Incongruity	97
II.3 Analysis of Humor in Music.....	108
II.3.1 Un sonar di piva in fachinesco: Lirum Bililirum	109
II.3.2 La bella Franceschina.....	121
II.3.3 Cucú Cucú, Cucucú.....	126
II.3.4 Two English Madrigals: "Fair Phillys" and "Who Made Thee, Hob, Forsake the Plough? A dialogue Between Two Shepherds".....	130
II.3.5 Le Tableau de l'Opération de la Taille and La Cérémonie Turque.....	139
II.4 Conclusion.....	143
CONCLUSION.....	144
APPENDIX.....	145
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	172

INTRODUCTION

Music is one of the most fascinating codes of our culture and probably one of the most complex. Yet, little is still known about the complex functioning of this 'system of systems' that, despite being based on the activation of several codes at a time, is always perceived as a coherent whole.

In the last three decades musical semiotics has attempted to unveil the mechanisms on which music is based, formulating analytical approaches that, unlike most traditional musicological methods, has scientifically surveyed the issues related to nature of musical creation, interpretation and social functioning, offering new interesting insights that are more and more changing the traditional way of viewing music and musical discourse in general.

Scholars like Nicolas Ruwet, Jean-Jacques Nattiez, Jean Molino, Gino Stefani, Eero Tarasti, Robert Hatten, David Lidov, and William Echard have examined musical phenomena bringing into their analysis fundamental linguistics and semiotic concepts like *fragmentation*, *interpretant*, *isotopy*, and *competence*, and showing how they can be readapted to this sign system without simply assuming its identity with verbal language.

These analyses have inspired this work, making the author wonder not just about the general semiotic dynamics on which the art of sounds relies, but also about the functioning mechanisms of humor in music, a topic about which little has unfortunately been written so far. This is not surprising if we consider the quite recent life of musical semiotics, which was officially founded at the beginning of the 1970s, and of humor studies, which have been accepted as a field of academic research in the last decades.

Nevertheless, humor is an important feature of all cultures because it is able to show most of their subtlest cultural and social dynamics. It is a universal language that makes us understand our humanity.

As Casablanco Domingo points out, “lo que se entiende comúnmente por humor cubre, en realidad, una amplia gama de registros y de procedimientos, abarcando desde la broma más sencilla y directa a la de carácter más elaborado y sofisticado [...], de la mimesis y la parodia a la desviación sintáctica y la ironía”¹ (2000: 2). It is exactly for its complexity that humor deserves more attention and research.

The intent of this work is therefore to explore musical semiotics and humor as two related fields. As a matter of fact, only when we acknowledge the importance of that polymorphic sign system that music is, can we become aware of its constant interrelation with the articulated network of codes that constitutes a culture. Once having defined its role, we can examine particular aspects of the art of sounds.

For this reason, this thesis will divide into two parts. In the first one, we will survey the main semiotic features of music, accounting for the history of musical semiotics and discussing the main problems encountered by the early scholars who started to explore the possible relationships between the art of sounds and semio-linguistic notions. We will focus above all on the theories formulated by some of the most influent musical semioticians—Ruwet, Nattiez, Stefani, and Tarasti—in order to show the evolution undergone by this field that, despite being characterized by a

¹ “What we usually perceived as humor actually covers a wide range of patterns and procedures, which go from the easiest and most direct joke to the most elaborated and sophisticated [...]; from mimesis and parody to syntactical variation and irony”. Benet Casablanco Domingo is one of the few scholars who have attempted to explore the functioning of humor in music at the beginning of the new century. Unfortunately, this book was published very recently, when most of this thesis had already been written.

considerable variety of intents, is dominated by the common desire for a scientific methodology.

Having explained these semiotic premises, in the second part we will survey the possible application of humor theory. We will start by describing how the principles on which communication is based may be violated on purpose to produce humorous effects. Thus, we will survey the nature of this incongruity in order to describe the three main families of humor theories proposed by Victor Raskin (1985): *incongruity theories*, *hostility theories* and *release theories*.

From here we will attempt to describe the functioning of incongruity in music. Consequently, we will introduce the Semantic Script Theory of Humor (SSTH) by Raskin (1985) describing the key-concept of *script*, and the innovations introduced by the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) that, first elaborated by Salvatore Attardo and Victor Raskin at the beginning of the 1990s, has extensively been developed by Attardo since then. Thus, we will explain the six knowledge resources and the taxonomy of puns introduced by this theory.

After this theoretical part, we will see if and how the GTVH may function in music. By applying Gino Stefani's Model of Musical Competence (MMC), we will analyze several Renaissance and Baroque vocal and instrumental compositions, exploring how the knowledge resources of the GTVH can account for the humorous effect produced by these pieces.

PART I: *MUSICAL SEMIOTICS*

I.1. Introduction

In the first chapter of this interdisciplinary work, we will attempt to define musical semiotics and its history in order to offer an overall view of this relatively recent science that regards music as one of the fundamental codified sign systems of our culture. Therefore, we will discuss some of the main principles and theories formulated in the last three decades by musical semioticians and linguists.

In the second chapter, we will describe how semiotics of music was officially recognized as a new science during the seventies and how it has developed, offering a brief description of the most important musical semiotic approaches formulated since then and the new possible direction that it seems to be taking at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

In the following four chapters, we will discuss four of the most influential musical semiotic theories. In chapter two, we will examine the use of segmentation in music and the precursory analyses elaborated by French linguist Nicolas Ruwet in the 1960s, the first scholar to put forward the question of music signification. From there, in chapter three we will move to the central role played by Jean-Jacques Nattiez in defining the processes of musical signification through a tripartite model inspired by Molino. In chapter four, we will instead explore the Model of Musical Competence by Gino Stefani that will become the fundamental tool we will adopt for our analyses in the second part of this work. Finally, chapter five will be a complex disquisition of the model of musical analysis proposed by Finnish semiotician Eero Tarasti, applying to music principles borrowed from Algirdas J. Greimas and Charles S. Peirce.

I.2. A Historical Overview of Musical Semiotics: from its Origins to the Present Days

Musical semiotics became an official science studying music as sign, meaning and communication at the beginning of the 1970s, when some specialized linguistic journals started to publish essays dealing with how the linguistic principle formulated during the previous decades by scholars like Jakobson, Peirce, Greimas, Molino, Sebeok, Lotman, and Morris could be applied to that “particularly hybrid sign system” (Echard 1999: 1) that music is.

In October 1971, the fifth issue of the French journal *Musique en jeu* was entirely dedicated to Musical Semiotics in order to survey the possible relationships between music and language. This number included an essay about the situation of this new branch of semiotics and a bibliography completed by Jean-Jacques Nattiez, several studies by Springer, Nettl, Bright, Harweg, Eco, Mâche, and the translation into French of an essay written by Jakobson. This unpublished study that the scholar presented at the Prague Linguistic Circle in 1932 is extremely important because it can be regarded as the first attempt to explore the possible relationships between language and the art of sounds. As a matter of fact, Jakobson analyzed in it the intuition of musicologist Becking about the application of a certain some phonologic principles to music many decades before scholars began to give a certain importance to the semiotic nature of music.

In 1972 Musical Semiotics was officially presented at the International Symposium on Current Musical Writing in Rome. The same year, the Society of Ethnomusicology organized a debate about “Functionalism and Structuralism” where the possible applications of these concepts to music were taken into account; meanwhile the

American Musicological Society offered an entire session of its annual congress to “Linguistic Methods in Musicology” in order to discuss the use of structural-linguistic methods to the art of sounds. The following year, a special issue of *Musique en jeu* was entirely dedicated to “Musique, méthodologie, sémiologie”, whereas *Versus*, another Italian semiotic journal, included in its fifth issue titled “Per una semiologia della musica” three essays by Nattiez, Stefani and Osmond-Smith where semiotics was presented as the future of musical analysis.

In 1972, Ruwet—a French linguist well known for his poetic analyses based on Jakobson’s linguistic principles and his interest in Chomsky’s theory—collected in one volume titled *Langage, musique, poésie* the precursory musicological analyses he formulated from 1959 through 1967. The book was welcomed by his contemporaries as the first outstanding example of musical analysis based on repetition and segmentation, as we will see more in detail in chapter two.

The new branch of semiotics created a large interest in a number of scholars who gather in Belgrade during the autumn 1973 for the first International Congress on Musical Semiotics to discuss how to renovate traditional musicology with new scientific approaches. The debate continued in May 1974 at the International Symposium on Musical Semiotics in Rome, whereas a month later (June 1974), the first Congress of the International Society of Semiotic Studies reserved a session to musical semiotics, recognizing the worldwide importance attained by this science that aims “not to discard every familiar view of musical communication, but to review the intellectual traditions of the modern world and to show how they relate to discipline of semiotics” (Monelle 1992:1).

Nattiez opened this session outlining the works in this branch of semiotics published during the previous four years. Although he started by claiming that “jusqu’à une date relativement récente, il était légitime de croire que la musique restait un champ négligé par la problématique sémiologique”², he recognized that the interest of musicologists in the application of linguistic and structuralist theories to the art of sounds was witnessing, on one hand, the crisis of traditional musicology and musical analysis and, on the other, how music was undergoing the influence of linguistics, a science that during the 1960s and 1970s was more and more enthusiastically regarded as “éventuelle ‘science pilote des sciences humaines’”³ (Nattiez 1979: 196). Nattiez himself started to elaborate an analytical method based on the tripartite semiotic model by Molino that he would continue to expand through some fundamental principles by American philosopher Peirce, as we will see more extensively in chapter three.

Starting from these two assumptions, several semiotic approaches to music and musical metalanguage have been formulated throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Most of them deal with different theories and are sometimes in contrast with one another. Nevertheless, they all aim to clarify in a scientific way different aspects of the complex functioning of that polymorphic system that music is. In the compendium about semiotics and music that Nattiez publishes at the end of the 1980s, he describes these different analyses as the natural consequence of the fact that “nessuno [...] ha ancora mai proposto un paradigma di analisi abbastanza coerente, un corpus di metodi universalmente adottato che consenta di parlare di *una* scienza semiologica”⁴ (Nattiez 1990: 186). According to

²“Until recently, it was right to think that music was a field neglected by semiotics”.

³ “The possible leading science of human sciences”.

⁴ “Nobody [...] has ever proposed a paradigm of analyses coherent enough, a corpus of methods universally applied that could let us talk of *one* Semiotics”.

Marconi and Stefani, the need of a large number of methods is fundamental in musical analysis because music is a field that always “*implica in modo traverso, reticolare e interdisciplinare un vasto insieme di competenze*”⁵ (Marconi and Stefani 1987: 10).

Finnish semiotician Tarasti too agrees with this idea and recognizes that “musical semiotics has never constituted *one* monolithic approach or analytical method. [...] For who can say definitely what semiotic is, and especially musical semiotics?” (Tarasti 1996: xi). Echard goes even further on when he defines music as the most complex of all significant forms and underlines that “it is this richness that makes music an important source-case for a general semiotics. But it is also this richness that has often divided musical semiotics into competing camps, each one incomplete” (Echard 1999: 2).

After the first attempts to apply linguistic principles to this sign system elaborated by the founders of musical semiotics, in the 1980s a considerable number of young scholars that Stefani (Marconi & Stefani 1987) regards as the second generation of musical semiotics start investigating new possible analytical approaches. Tarasti is the most active among them. As we will show in chapter five, he has explored the possible application of theories by Peirce and Greimas to music, opening innovating perspectives. During the last two decades, he has considerably contributed to the study of musical semiotics throughout the world by taking part in the foundation of the International Research project of Musical Signification⁶. Tarasti has also turned the University of Helsinki—where he directs the department of Musicology—into one of the main centers for the study of this science, organizing symposia and seminars.

⁵ “Involves in an implicit, interrelated and interdisciplinary way a wide range of competences”.

⁶ The International Research Project of Musical Signification was founded at the French Broadcasting Company in Paris in 1985. Since then Helsinki had been its administrative and spiritual center. The project consists of more than three hundred scholars who have been organizing conferences and conventions in Imatra, Helsinki, Edinburgh, Paris, Bologna and Aix-en-Provence.

In 1992, Raymond Monelle—professor of music at the University of Edinburgh—publishes *Linguistics and Semiotics in Music*, a book where he offers an interesting historical overview of musical semiotics describing its origins, its evolution, and the philosophic and linguistic principles from which it originated. It is an insightful survey where he basically draws a comparison between the main linguistic theories formulated throughout the twentieth century and the ways they have influenced musical semiotic approaches. According to Lidov, this work is the first “compact but comprehensive and appreciative guide to musical semiotics [and] has no counterpart for the semiotics of dance, painting, film, visual arts, theater or any other special subject outside, perhaps, verbal art” (Lidov 1990: 1).

As a matter of fact, after mapping the main linguistic and structuralist approaches formulated by Saussure, Prague phonology, American linguistics (Bloomfield, Harris, Sapir), Chomsky, Hjelmslev, Levi-Strauss, and Piaget, Monelle examines in a detailed way the main methodological problems encountered by musical semioticians in the last thirty years. In ten chapters he reviews Ruwet’s theory of repetition and its relationships with other attempts to explore segmentation in music; the philosophical foundation of the tripartite semiotic model elaborated by Nattiez readapting to music Molino’s semiotic scheme and his central concept of ‘neutral level’; Chomsky’s influence on Blacking’s competence and on Leirdhal and Jackendoff’s generative musicological system. He discusses the importance of the application to musical analysis of key-concepts by Peirce like iconicity and indexicality, some categories by Greimas, and the importance of temporal enfolding in music. He extensively surveys Tarasti’s use of these ideas in his articulated analytic model and the bases of Assavief’s theory of intonation. He also

includes a synthesis of methods based on markedness used by Robert Hatten in his analyses of Beethoven that had not been published yet at that time⁷. Monelle concludes his work with a provoking discussion about the possible application of Derrida's theory of deconstruction to music, an idea that he has continued to expand in the last years. Shortly, this considerable work offers an almost complete survey of work in musical semiotics up to and including the early 1990s, even though Echard notices that "[it] unfortunately excludes works in cultural studies and popular music studies" (1999: 2), a gap that has been filled in by other scholars in the last ten years.

More recently, Monelle seems to have opened new horizons to music theory in *The Sense of Music* (Monelle 2000), a collection of semiotic essays in which, as Hatten points out in the foreword to the book, "Monelle moves from traditional semiotic concerns with topics and tropes to postmodern concerns with the work as text, modes of temporality as they affect music form and genre, the construction of subjectivity, and the deconstruction of ideology" (ibid. xi). This means that the range of the possible significations becomes more articulated and, in this sense, "semiotics can be viewed as an endlessly emerging discipline, one whose pursuit of signification in all its forms can accommodate the philosophical urgencies of a critical postmodernism" (ibid: xiii).

At the turn of the twenty-first century, Echard (1999) writes a new extensive article titled "Musical Semiotics in the 1990s: The state of the art" where, on one hand, he wants to provide "a useful literary survey of major works published in English in musical semiotics in the 1990s" (ibid. 1)—although in most cases he actually goes back to the origins of most semiotic orientations—and, on the other hand, he attempts to

⁷This book was published two years later, in 1994 with the title *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation*.

demonstrate how during the last decade of the twentieth century “musical semiotics has achieved an important synthesis” (ibid.), offering a convincing discussion about the main directions taken by this science.

According to Echard, three important developments can be identified in musical semiotics throughout the 1990s. First of all, the interest in formalistic analyses has decreased and most scholars have focused their attention on hermeneutics, with works based on the study of the cultural values of music forms and events. Secondly, there has been the development of a new semiotic trend that examines the power of musical gesture, that is to say the more or less implicit “connections between music’s corporeal and symbolic aspects, and the subtle interplay between literal and increasingly abstract signs of embodiment in musical practice” (ibid. 2). Thirdly, there has been the emergence of a semiotic theory of musical personae and musical narrative. Echard’s analysis is particularly significant because it is supported by his impressive interdisciplinary background and competences that include most of the tendencies mentioned above: music theory, ethnomusicology, popular music studies, and semiotics used as main theoretical tool. As he writes, his work is an attempt

to find accommodations and meeting points between traditions in Peircean musical semiotics (which has tended to be concerned with the Western art music canon and disengaged from political or ideological analysis) and the Saussurian tradition existing in cultural studies and popular music studies (which has focused mostly on popular music, and maintains a keen interest in the politics and ideology of symbolic forms) (ibid.)

Now, we will briefly describe these three main approaches, accounting for the main innovations occurred in each of them before moving to a more detailed discussion

of some of the most important music semiotic theories in the following chapters of the first part of this research work.

In the last fifty years of the twentieth century, there have been two main positions in North America musicology. On one hand, there has been an influential musical theory based on formal mathematical principles; on the other hand, historical musicology has concentrated on questions of cultural history rather than on formal analysis. Little attention has instead been given to criticism and aesthetic. Some semioticians like Agawu and Hatten have tried to reconcile the dichotomy between formalism with hermeneutics, suggesting new possible directions. As Hatten underlines in his introduction to Monelle's new book,

if Nattiez (1975) introduced the first stage of formalist music semiotics, and Tarasti (1994), Hatten (1994), and Lidov (1999) contributed toward a second stage that reconciled the structuralist with the hermeneutic in interpreting musical meaning, then Monelle's essays could be said to mark the third stage, or *staging*, in which semiotic theory confronts postmodernism and emerges as viable, even after relinquishing the hitherto unacknowledged hegemony of its structuralist core. (Monelle 2002: xi).

Echard, too, seeks a possible mediation between them, although his position is more moderate. As a matter of fact, he considers "formalism [as] an intrinsic and necessary part of semiotics. But the hermeneutic direction taken by much recent work requires a flexible definition of what sort of activity analysis is, and what kind of truth claims can and should be made for it" (Echard 1999: 3).

Lidov is one of the few scholars who have been able "to systematically advance the study of articulatory mechanisms and formal structures in music semiotics in the 1990s" (ibid), taking into account also the interpretative process that in music is not

always possible to explain in systematic terms. He has shown the limits of the first formalistic articulation and segmentation elaborated by Ruwet, Molino and Nattiez, which were based on an unclear and simplified use of difference (binary opposition), and introduced the distinction between *pattern* and *grammar*. The former describes the specific characteristics of a given musical work, while the latter refers to the more generic features that in a piece can be related to the style and the era in which it is composed. Individual and stylistic characteristics are constantly interrelating with each other. Through these analytical notions Lidov has developed “a musical semiotics which is systematic and concerned with formal articulation, and is in that sense continuing important trends present in musical semiotics from the outset” (ibid. 4).

Lidov has also contributed to exploring the question of musical reference. Actually, it has always been very difficult to find a univocal definition of musical meaning. According to some traditional extreme positions, music means nothing and, consequently, has no referential value. Yet, from a more moderate point of view, musical events are considered meaningful in relation to each other or to the culture in which they are produced, where they are ‘read’ as a codified language. Semiotics deals with this second position. In the last decades, besides concentrating on the musical sign system, semioticians have focused on exploring the musical meanings that are too vague to be scientifically described in rational terms. These phenomena, that Cumming has defined *ineffable*, have led musical semiotics to consider hearing music as a fundamental and significant semiotic process that can complete aseptic formal mapping of it. In order to explain the ineffable, Lidov has introduced the idea of *processive sign*, which is “a sign in which the representament, the object, or the interpretant is a process” (Lidov 1999:

184). This notion implies that musical analysis is always related to a constantly in-process interpretative procedure open to detach constantly new dynamics of signification of the acoustic event.

Nevertheless, it is in analytical hermeneutics and musical narratology that semiotics of music has undergone the most interesting developments throughout the 1990s thanks to Hatten and Tarasti. As we have anticipated in several parts of this historical overview, these two scholars have had a central role in the most recent evolution of musical semiotics. Although their theories are quite different, they have both formulated analytical methods that take into account all the levels of musical signification as well as the ways music events can get extra-musical significance.

Hatten is generally associated with analytical hermeneutics because he has elaborated a semiotic theory based on structuralist and hermeneutic approaches. On one hand, he has tried to identify the relations between structures and meanings; on the other, he has been concerned not just with interpretation of musical structures but also with the processes through which these meanings are cast. The semiotician has also introduced the difference between two levels of musical understanding: the *stylistic* and the *strategic*. They are very close to Lidov's distinction between pattern and grammar because "[they] correspond respectively to the general principles and constraints of a style, and the individual choices and exceptions occasioned by a work" (Hatten 1994: 29). In his musical analyses Hatten surveys both levels of competence, paying particular attention to the problems deriving from the processes of decoding/encoding musical signification through cultural semantic units, that is to say through basic oppositions such as comic versus tragic, slow versus fast, happy versus sad and so on. In order to explain

them, Hatten extends to music the linguistic *theory of markedness* elaborated by Shapiro according to which

marked oppositions organize correlational mappings between structural and expressive oppositional pairs [...]. The marked terms 'line up' with each other and encompass a smaller area [...]. This 'congruence' between the markedness of signifier and signified is considered basic to markedness in language (ibid. 34).

He also borrows Pierce's idea of the *diagrammatic* in order to elucidate his theory. This notion is a structural iconism where similarity is based on the structure of oppositions rather than properties. In music they account for the functioning of basic semantic correlations, like for instance the traditional association of major and minor keys with the idea of happiness or sadness. Hatten moves from the analysis of basic musical units and the use of musical topics and styles within a musical culture to the larger level of *expressive genre*, which is "a higher-level correlation between a selection of characteristic topics and more complex cultural units (Echard 1999: 7). As he shows in his analysis of Beethoven's music (1994), the pastoral genre requires for example the use of a set of basic oppositional musical elements (high/middle/low style, mode, tempo, themes) able to recreate in the listener's mind topoi traditionally related to the idea of bucolic countryside. As far as stylistic change is concerned, Hatten extends the concept of metaphor in music pointing out that, while the traditional correlations within a style can be regarded as frozen metaphors, musical metaphors have a more dynamic nature because they constantly create new meanings in the listener's mind. As the semiotician stresses: "something akin to creative metaphor in language may be achieved in musical work when two different correlations are brought together to produce a third meaning" (Hatten 1994: 166). The author refers to such process as *troping*.

These are the fundamental innovations introduced in hermeneutics by Hatten who has surveyed above all the relationships between musical sounds and cultural meanings like Tarasti. Now we will quickly outline the main principles formulated by Tarasti in musical narratology that we will continue to discuss more extensively in chapter five. Tarasti tries to explain the processes of musical signification by mapping “systematically and term-by-term, Greimas’ trajectory of narrative generation into a musical context” (Echard 1995: 1), adding to it also some principles elaborated by Peirce. After noticing the limits of the structuralist and icon semiotic models formulated till the mid 1980s, this semiotician applies to music Greimas’ notion of isotopy as a foundation of his ‘Three-dimensional Model of Music Analysis’. Through it he wants to examine musical surface in order to detect the fundamental forces that guide the formation of the musical discourse and to introduce a formalism that can account for the dynamic nature of this process. He shows how the basic musical mechanisms of tensions and release can be explained by using the language of modal logic (will, must, being, doing). He defines musical features as different examples of isotopies and divides them into three categories: spatial, temporal and actorial. Then, he demonstrates how isotopies, modalities and more in general narrative structures are realized through entities that he calls *thematic actants*. In order to understand how they function, he borrows the three sign categories (symbol, icon, index) identified by Peirce at the end of the nineteenth century with their related nine subcategories.

Tarasti’s theory is definitely complex and very faithful to the linguistic theory from which it originates, unlike Hatten who readapts the principles he borrows from linguistic models less dogmatically. Nevertheless, both of them consider the use of

metaphorical verbal language as a valid analytical tool in music analysis. The notion of musical isotopy is very close to Hatten's idea of troping, although more powerfully applied to the different levels of musical organization. The only limit of isotopy is its vagueness and indeterminacy, given the fact that Greimas himself has constantly modified it throughout the last forty years (see Attardo 1994 chapter 2).

According to Echard, besides the new interest in musical hermeneutics and narratology, one of the most remarkable developments of musical semiotics in the 1990s has been the new investigation of the connections between music, gesture, and virtual musical personae, that is to say "a subjectivity which listeners perceive in music, the impression that music has a kind of agency and volition" (Echard 1999: 11). As a matter of fact, if Hatten and Tarasti consider the abstract competence of ideal listeners with certain competence, other semioticians underline the fact that music is always actualized and interpreted by *real* listeners in a given cultural, social context and temporal moment. Thus, several scholars have surveyed the question of *subjectivity* and elaborated musical theories based on musical persona, affect, and body.

Most of this work was inspired by articles written by Coker (1972), Cone (1974), Kivy (1980), and Lidov (1987). These semioticians started to demonstrate how we generally anthropomorphize music while listening to it and tend to find a direct correlation between different sorts of musical sound energy and energetic states of human body. According to the theory of musical personae, "these energetic indices and icons, perceived anthropomorphically, are elaborated and assembled into full-fledged musical actors, and as a result we often hear music as if we were conversing with another sentient being: the music seems to have agency" (Echard 1999:11). This may sound obvious if we

think that music is the result of acoustic waves. What is not always so evident is the fact that our way of manipulating physical energy and perceiving it is culturally based.

For Lidov (1999), music has *motional* and *emotional objects*. A musical composition has *motional object* in the sense that it has an inner development achieved through a certain organization of the flux of acoustic energy. The effects produced by these movements (gestures) become indices of emotions because able to generate certain physical feelings in the listener. Cummings (1999) extends this idea claiming that musical gestures need an interpretant, which is not just the physical reaction but also the affective response because “musical feelings do not translate automatically into structural descriptions but contain an added factor of gestural interpretation” (Cumming 1999: 133). Musical gesture can be represented for instance by the embodied understanding of a performer (a guitarist, a harpist or a drum player) who actualizes musical structures through physical movement.

Also Shepard and Wicke (1997) define musical sound as a constantly shifting of energetic structures that are heard as acoustic icons of emotions. This iconicity stands at the basis of their theory, although the way we perceive and interpret these emotional state is strongly determined by the cultural system surrounding us. In *Music and Cultural Theory* (1997) the two scholars analyze the values of musical personae, relating them to cultural studies, psychoanalysis, identity construction and deconstruction, construction of society and sociology.

Hatten (1999) has elaborated one of the most recent semiotic approaches to musical gesture that is the evolution of the notion of gesture first coined by Lidov and Cumming. As a matter of fact, for Hatten a gesture is “a molar bodily time-form which is

marked for significance” (Echard 1999: 13) that can show the process of shaping and shading musical expression. Nattiez has extensively examined this concept formulating different presuppositions about it in order to outline a possible semiotic theory of musical gesture. Starting from the idea that “gesture is movement interpretable as a sign, whether intentional or not, and as such it communicates information about the gesturer” (Hatten 1999: 5), Hatten attempts to demonstrate how gesture can be active at all level of his hermeneutic system.

According to Echard, the development of hermeneutic and narrative theories of music together with the new interest in musical personae and affects should be related to musical practice “as an intersubjective human activity connected to questions of power, gender, class, and other issues engaged [...] by cultural theory” (1999: 15). As a matter of fact, in the last years there has also been a large interest in cultural studies and popular culture in music. The first works in popular music semiotics go back to the late 1970s; the first one had actually been a study of punk rock written by Hebdige (1979). Although most of them analyze denotative and connotative values of sounds and forms in order to see how music, as a social activity, can fit into larger models of cultural practice, all of them address important theoretical questions. Tagg, Middleton and Cook seem to have largely contributed to this development.

Tagg (1991) focuses on pragmatics, in the sense that he surveys the social effects and uses with which music has always been associated, elaborating a sign typology that does not mean to account for “how music constructs these effects, but to help in naming and tracing the various chains of signification that wind through particular cultural

practices” (Echard 1999: 17). Basically, he tries to classify the most common ways music functions in different cultural contexts.

Middleton (1995) has made an important contribution to music cultural studies by applying Bakhtin’s dialogic theory to the art of sounds in order to demonstrate that also musical compositions should be regarded as a polymorphic systems of “interactive ‘voices’, each with its characteristic style-features” (Middleton 1995: 465). His model is based on the idea that music is a sign system and, “since signs are social products –that is, discourse is always and unavoidably referring to previous discourse- subjectivity is created in dialogue with other subjects, other discourses” (Ibid. 469). Therefore, any musical meaning is shaped by this dialogical relationship that inevitably enacts also dynamics of power, gender construction and politics, as Middleton shows in his analysis of Eurythmics’ songs.

Cook surveys instead the basic issue of what music can mean and how it does so by analyzing television commercials. The innovative core of his model is represented by the importance given to ‘context’ in defining the possible meanings of a musical piece. There is always a difference between “the concept of [communicated] meaning and that of effect” (Cook 1994: 27); hence, a musical work that is stylistically chaotic, can function in a very coherent way if used in a specific context (which has nothing to do with strictly musical elements) that gives it a logic. However, going back to Middleton’s dialogical voices, Cook too recognizes that, since meaning is defined in relation to contexts, it is the complex result of “a negotiation with logics besides that of internal musical rules” (Echard 1999: 19).

Although in this research we are not taking into account ethnomusicology, it is worth mentioning the deep connection that has always existed between this field and musical semiotics. According to Echard, during the last two decades, scholars like Nattiez, Blacking, Becker and Feld have contributed to both areas. In general, ethnomusicologists have worked with semiotic and cultural elements that have had a direct impact on musical semiotics. Martinez is probably one of the most representative scholars from this point of view because, besides trying to map Peircean categories in music, he has extended their application to his ethnomusicalogical research on the *rasa* system of Hindustani art music and to the social functions of Papua New Guinea music. In general, there have been very interesting developments in the application of semiotics to ethnomusicology in the last years. Indeed, some young scholars working with Tarasti at the University of Helsinki are at the moment studying zoosemiotics, that is to say the codified musical value of acoustic sounds used by animals.

According to Echard, during the 1990s musical semiotics have seen “the development of a powerful embodied theory of musical style and narrative within a kind of test-tube: the individualistic, idealized, only nominally social world of the philosophical aesthetics of Western art music” (ibid. 23). The beginning of the twenty-first century seems to witness an opening towards social studies. The next step should be the application of semiotic approaches to other musical traditions in order to extend the range of principles on which Western music has relied so far.

As we have seen so far, musical semiotics is an extremely articulated science that has gone through a complex evolution where it is hard to identify a unity of intents and purposes. This variety and richness of approaches related to the hybrid nature of the

object of its interest—music—has characterized this branch of semiotics since the very beginning and is still today one of its most distinctive traits. For this reason, in the next four chapters we will offer a more extensive analysis of some semiotic theories that have had a central role in the development of this science.

I.3. Nicolas Ruwet and the First Semiotic Approaches to Music: the Principle of Repetition

Nicolas Ruwet has been the first scholar who has attempted to apply linguistic principles and analytic methods to music and poetry, two semiotic systems that, according to this French linguist, had not been given the right importance during the 1950s and 1960s. For this reason, he decided to explore these fields in ten essays published in several linguistic and musicological journals from 1959 through 1971. At first, his analyses did not seem to arouse great interest in his contemporaries. It was only when he decided to collect them in one volume titled *Langage, musique, poésie*⁸ (1972), that linguists and semioticians realized the innovative spirit of his work and welcomed it as the first attempt to survey a completely new science: musical semiotics.

Divided into *Musique* and *Poétique*, two parts made up of five essays each, this book questions the limits and the partiality of traditional musicological and poetic, approaches offering interesting new insights through a wide range of examples.

⁸ The essays included in this volume are: "Contradictions du langage sériel", which first appeared in *Revue belge de Musicologie*, 13 (1959): 83-97; "Fonction de la parole dans la musique vocal", originally published in *Revue belge de Musicologie*, 15 (1961): 8-28; "Note sur les duplications dans l'oeuvre de Claude Debussy", which first appeared in *Revue belge de Musicologie*, 16 (1962): 57-70; "Méthodes d'analyse en musicologie", originally published in *Revue belge de Musicologie*, 20 (1966): 65-90; "Quelques remarques sur le rôle de la répétition dans la syntaxe musicale" in *To Honor Roman Jakobson*, Mouton, La Haye (1967): 1693-1703; "L'analyse structurale de la poésie" in *Linguistics* 2 (1963): 38-59; "Un sonnet de Louise Labé" in *Linguistics* 3 (1964): 62-83; "Sur un vers de Charles Baudelaire" in *Linguistics* 17 (1965): 69-77; "Limites de l'analyse linguistique et poétique" in *Langages* 12 (1968): 56-70; "Je te donne ces vers..." in *Poétique* 7, 1971: 355-401.

“Méthode d’analyse en musicologie” represents the core of Ruwet’s work because it deals with the need to set the principles of a new scientific methodology in musical analysis. The author begins his article pointing out that music is “un système sémiotique, partageant un certain nombre de traits communs—tels que l’existence d’une syntaxe—avec le langage et d’autres systèmes de signes”⁹ (Ruwet 1972: 100). Therefore, he decides to apply to the art of sounds principles that, even if originally formulated in relation with verbal language, can somehow be extended to other human sciences without simply assuming their equivalence.

Ruwet realizes that most traditional musical analyses “ne formulent pas les critères de découverte sur lesquels elles reposent”¹⁰ (ibid.), nor did they realize the necessity to describe in a clear way their methodological premises. For the scholar, it is instead fundamental to elaborate a semiotic model of analysis based on the explicit presentation of the principles applied. As he underlines, “dans tout système sémiotique, le rapport entre le code et le message peut être décrit de deux points de vue différents selon que l’on va du message au code, ou du code au message”¹¹ (ibid. 100). In the former case, we have an analytic approach because we have to decompose the given corpus of messages in different ways in order to detach the smallest units on which the corpus is built and their combinatory rules. The central problem is therefore to establish the possible methods of segmentation we can adopt, an important issue that has been widely debated by linguists throughout the twentieth century. In the latter case, we have to deal with a code and have to face the opposite situation because we know the principles

⁹ “a semiotic system sharing a certain number of common traits—such as the presence of syntax—with language and other sign systems”.

¹⁰ “Do not formulate the discovery criteria on which they are based”.

¹¹ “Into any semiotic system, the relationship between code and message can be described from two different perspectives, according to whether we move from message to code or from code to message”.

governing the combination of the elements we need to create concrete corpora. Hence, we have a synthetic model, which is close to the grammar system of a verbal language with which we are able to create complex structures of meaning starting from the basic units and their combinatory rules. This procedure may appear as the reverse image of the analytic method, of which it can establish the validity, given that “si le modèle est bon, sa transformation synthétique engendrera des messages qui ne figuraient pas dans le corpus initial (limité par définition) mais que les sujets reconnaîtront comme également bien formé”¹² (ibid. 101). However, it is very difficult to define in an exhaustive way the mechanisms of composition and decomposition of a system, and it is also hard to identify the smallest units of meaning starting from a given message. Usually, these units are fragmented and hard to grasp because they do not have a specific value but they become meaningful only when they are described and combined according to the mechanisms of the synthetic model.

Traditional musicology has never attempted to build a scientific method, even though the object of its research is one of the most complex semiotic systems of our culture. According to Ruwet, most musicologists do not realize the importance of explaining the theoretical principles of their work. Nevertheless, most of them are based on synthetic procedures because they move from the most abstract elements and combinatory rules in order to reconstruct the basic structures on which a musical piece has been built, taking for granted and ‘objective’ conceptual premises and procedures that are never explicitly presented. Yet, these premises and structures are not objective but they are strongly culturally connotated and their apparent ‘neutrality’ is the result of wide

¹² “If the model is good, its synthetic transformation will originate messages that were not included in the original corpus (limited for definition), but that will be recognized al the same as well done”.

acceptance and usage in Western musical tradition. As Seeger points out, “unlike the great progress made in the last two centuries by linguists [who] have developed a superb discipline of speech, musicologists have done nothing at all about a discipline of speech about music” (Seeger 1977: 38).

Ruwet realizes the necessity to develop an analytical methodology in musical discourse starting from the definition of the nature of some basic principles that are too often considered obvious--such as the modal system or the hierarchical structure of a musical composition organized in phrases, semi-phrases, sentences and so on--which in reality show the limits of traditional musicology. As a matter of fact, the French linguist wonders how we can we consider ‘natural’ the principles according to which we can say *a priori* that certain compositions are based on a certain modality or have a given codified structure. Even though we may agree on the fact that modal system is “la partie la plus abstraite du code”¹³ (ibid 102), we still need to clarify the rules that allow us to link a musical composition to its formal and abstract description.

Whenever we divide a musical piece into fragments articulated on different levels such as periods, phrases, semi-phrases, “la question cruciale, préliminaire à toutes les autres est la suivante: *quels sont les critères qui, dans tel cas particulier, ont présidé à la division?*”¹⁴ (Ibid.106). Nobody seems to have been able to answer this question so far. There are many principles of segmentation we can select in order to analyze a piece: rhythmical pattern, melodic ideas, timbre, dynamics, and so on. Nevertheless, it is impossible to establish a hierarchy among them or, at least, it would vary from piece to piece. Actually, there is not any scientific procedure though which we can demonstrate

¹³ “The most abstract part of the code”.

¹⁴ “The crucial question, preliminary to all the others is: *which are the criteria that, in this specific case, have determined the division?*”

the absolute validity of a pattern rather than another because they are all equally valid and ambiguous. Moreover, in one piece two or more items may be strongly related to each other enhancing a vicious circle in which each of them justifies the structure of the other and vice versa, without presenting the methodological principles on which their structure is based.

According to Ruwet, it is impossible to elaborate a method of analysis capable of to account for all the elements that make up a musical composition because music and musical metalanguage are two very articulated semiotic systems where “the tiniest phonetic changes—the shortening of a quaver to a dotted semiquaver, or the playing of a note on the clarinet instead of the oboe—always brings about a slight change of signification” (Monelle 1992: 60). However, in order to avoid running into the risk of the ‘*a priori* natural principles’ claimed by some traditional musicological methods, we should formulate a system as varied as possible based on different interrelated processes of segmentation and interpretation.

In order to elaborate a scientific method of musical analysis, Ruwet concentrates on the premises that justify musical segmentation, describing the two possible procedures we can adopt. On one hand, we can start from “analyses déjà faites et essayer de reconstruire les critères, pas nécessairement homogènes, qui y ont présidé”¹⁵ (ibid. 108). On the other hand we can choose “*un* principe donné, parfaitement explicite, quitte, à s’apercevoir qu’il est insuffisant, qu’il demande des aménagements, voire qu’il est à rejeter”¹⁶ (ibid.) and apply it to the compositions that we want to survey. Ruwet chooses

¹⁵ “Analyses which have already been done and try to reconstruct the criteria on which they were based”.

¹⁶ “*One* given and clearly expressed principle, unless we realize that it is insufficient and needs to be fixed, and we have consequently to reject it.

the follow the former procedure to formulate his paradigmatic method based on repetition.

He begins by introducing the difference between parametrical and non-parametrical musical elements. The former can be divided into those elements which do not vary throughout a composition, like timbre, and those which are defined through binary opposition, that is to say in relation to their opposite codified pole, such as the sequence of a *piano* followed by a *forte*, a *crescendo* followed by a *diminuendo*, a minor tonality followed by a modulation into a major tonality. These elements can be combined in different ways. Yet, the basic idea of segmentation does not change because works are fragmented into parts according to the presence or absence of the selected items on which we want to base our analysis. Non-parametrical units, instead, “ne se laissent pas ramener à une opposition binaire; ils se caractérisent plutôt par un assez grand nombre de distinctions à l’intérieur d’une même dimension”¹⁷ (ibid. 110). These elements are for instance represented by the large number of intervals that can be originated by moving along the chromatic, the melodic or the diatonic scales.

Ruwet chooses the principle of repetition as the central feature of his poetic and musical method. In doing so he follows the path started by Jakobson, the first linguist who explored the possible relationships between music, poetry and verbal language by showing that “il principio costitutivo del linguaggio poetico e [...] della sintassi musicale si fonda su rapporti di equivalenza—detto altrimenti sulla ripetizione”¹⁸ (Stefani 1976:

¹⁷ “Cannot be related to a binary opposition; on the contrary, they are rather characterized by a large number of differences inside one single dimension”.

¹⁸ “The constitutive principle of poetic language and [...] musical syntax is based on relationships of equivalence—that is to say on repetition”.

21). This idea is so largely accepted in music that musicians and musicologists sometime see it as one of its natural features.

Ruwet's interest in repetition is also inspired by Lévi-Strauss's analysis of myths in *Anthropologie Structurale* (1958). According to the French anthropologist, myths, unlike traditional narrative, "have a way of returning to the same relations and functions as though time were flowing in two directions, forward and back. They resemble language in that their intelligibility rests on the recurrence of various features which can thus be listed paradigmatically like phonemes" (Monelle 1992: 80). In the myth of Oedipus, for instance, the theme of fratricide and parricide occurs at repeated intervals. Lévi-Strauss elaborates a method of analysis of myths close to the reading of a musical score because recurrent themes must be read not only in an horizontal way from left to right, but also from top to bottom, just as if they had melodic and harmonic dimension¹⁹. To tell the truth, it is Lévi-Strauss (1968) himself who, in order to describe the structure of codified verbal language and music, uses the rhetorical artifice of extraterrestrial creatures landed on the Earth struggling to decipher our writing. When dealing with a musical score, they realize that there are patterns reappearing in horizontal and vertical alignment. Thus, they understand that a score should be read in two ways: in its linear diachronic development (from left to right) and in its vertical synchronic group of relationships. This similarity would prove that myths, like music, "repeat themselves syntagmatically as well as paradigmatically" (Monelle 1992: 82). However, Ruwet's use of repetition differs from Lévi-Strauss's because of his larger concern with scientific procedures: "his methods of segmentation are made fully explicit; his result can be checked by anyone [...]. His system is thus a true 'discovery procedure'" (ibid. 83).

¹⁹ For a graphical representation of the myth of Oedipus and further discussion, see Monelle 1992: 80-82.

The French linguist defines repetition as “identité entre des segments répartis à divers endroits de la chaîne syntagmatique”²⁰ (Ruwet 1972: 111), even though he recognizes that whenever we talk of identity we should explain the point of view we adopt in order to avoid misunderstandings. The identity between musical units he mentions should not be confused with the notion of physical similarity between two or more items – given that two concrete events are never completely identical – but, in a more abstract sense, as the similarity based on the presence of unities that can be somehow related to one another.

Having explained the importance of repetition, Ruwet selects the items (i.e. pitch, timbre, duration, sequence, and so on) to be taken into account to verify the similarities between the different parts of a composition. Thus, he begins to examine the syntagmatic structure in a programmed order by means of his method that he defines as a “machine à repérer les identités élémentaires”²¹ (Ibid. 112). First of all, he divides the composition into the longest fragments that are entirely repeated in different points of the piece and represents this first level of analysis through formulae like: A+B+A+X+B+Y. In these sequence the first letters of the alphabet indicate the recurrent patterns, while the last ones stand for the independent fragments based on non-recurrent items that Ruwet calls “restes” (Ibid.: 113). These non-recurrent passages can be regarded on the same level as recurrent passages in respect of length. By extending the principle of repetition to the temporal dimension, we apply it more abstractly in order to transform also units like X and Y into repetitions of the selected items. As a matter of fact, according to the ‘rule of length’ we can verify the result of segmentation by looking at pauses, temporal

²⁰ “Identity among fragments found in different points along the syntagmatic axis”.

²¹ “A machine for the discovery of elementary identities”.

proportions, rhythmical patterns, and linguistic division in the words in case of vocal music.

Whenever we do not manage to relate the independent parts to the main fragments, we have to survey them on a deeper level that we may see as a second level of organization. Thus, we may find out that they are shorter or longer than the original ones. In the former hypothesis, they cannot be regarded as units on the same level of the largest segments, while in the latter case, they may be divided either in units of the first level-- that is to say of first general segmentation, or into shorter fragments on the second level. Hence, the sequence $A+A+X+Y$ may be turned into: $(a+b)+(a+b)+(x+b)+(y+b)$. Only when a segment cannot be decomposed into any related parts, do we have to place it at a 'level zero' that precedes any possible segmentation.

Fragments that seem to be independent are often mere transformations of the same idea based on four possible procedures. First of all, if pitch and rhythm are separated, we may find similar contours with different rhythms or similar rhythms or vice versa. Secondly, the differences may be determined by suppressions, additions or permutations of certain items. Thirdly, in order to describe the similarity of two or more passages, we may need to shift from a higher level of analysis to a lower one. Through this procedure that Ruwet calls "*shunter*" (Ruwet 1972: 114), a sequence represented on a second level of analysis as $a+b+a+c$, can be summarized on the first level as $a+b=A$ and $a+c=A'$. Finally, units on the first level may be sometimes grouped into larger fragments on the 'level zero'. Sequences like $A+X^*+A+Y$ or $X+A^*+Y+A$, may be simplified into $A+B$ or $A+A'$ on level zero as long as Y is a transformation of X or there is a special

rhythmic feature—a pause or a prolongation of the note—on the point indicated with an asterisk.

Ruwet exemplifies his method applying it to several thirteenth and fourteenth century pieces: *Maria mouster reinû maît*, a Geisslerlied, *Kalenda maya*, an estampida by Raimbaut de Vaqueras, *Be m'anprendut* by Bernard de Ventadour, and *Molt me mervoil* by Guiot de Provins. He chooses to represent them following Lévi-Stauss's representational of myths:

les séquences équivalentes sont [...] écrites au-dessous les unes des autres, dans une même colonne, et le texte doit se lire, en faisant abstraction des blancs, de gauche à droite et de haut en bas. Ainsi, certains traits de structure sont immédiatement apparents, de même d'ailleurs que certaines ambiguïtés²² (ibid.117).

As the linguist points out, this procedure can be easily applied to monophonic compositions, while we would encounter more problems if used with polyphonic pieces.

If we decompose for instance the Geisslerlied *Maria mouster reinû maît*, we would get the first level sequence: A+A'+B+B, where A' is a slightly varied form of A. This sequence is the final result of the following elements on the first level:

- a) the original sequence of repeated and unrepeated passages X+B+B
- b) since X is longer than B, we have negative result and therefore have to go on a further segmentation of this fragment
- c) X can be decomposed into two parts each equal in length to B and represented as X=A+A' through melodic transformation.

²² "Equivalent sequences are written [...] one beneath the other, and the text must be read from left to right and from top to bottom, considering the blanks as abstractions. Thus, some traits of the structure are immediately evident as well as some ambiguities".

If we move to the second level of the analysis we notice that:

- a) A' is made up of $x+b+y+b$
- b) b, x and y have the same duration and can therefore be rewritten as

$$A'=a+b+c+b$$
- c) in the original sequence A is represented by $A=a+B+C+b'$, where b' is a melodic transformation of B.
- d) $B= z+b'$. Since z is equal in length to b, we can represent it as $B=d+b'$.

After having explained the first similarity of the largest fragments, we could continue to survey the structure of the piece on a third level, where we would find the whole web of rhythmic and motivic relations, and, in case of extremely complex pieces, on a fourth level²³.

Ruwet's method of analysis works well with simple monophonic songs. Yet, when he tries to apply it to more sophisticated monophonic pieces, like *Kalenda maya*, by Raimbaut de Vaqueras, *Be m'anprendut* by Bernard de Ventadour, and *Molt me mervoil* by Guiot de Provins similarities are no longer so easy to identify and require subtler procedures that are not always able to account for their non recurrent parts²⁴.

Although someone may object that this analysis is basically what a musician would intuitively understand while reading a score, Ruwet is perfectly aware of the limits of his 'machine for the discovery of paradigms'. As a matter of fact, he tries to formulate a systematic procedure of segmentation that may be seen as realistic and scientific. As Monelle points out, "[Ruwet] does not even demand that the analyst actually follow his

²³ For further discussion about the other possible levels of segmentation of this composition, see Ruwet 1972: 118-119.

²⁴ The complete analysis of these pieces can be found in Ruwet1972: 121-131.

system in practice; he merely offers it as a way of verifying and clarifying an analysis reached largely by intuitive guesses” (Monelle 1992: 87).

However, according to Ruwet, there are two concrete results of his attempt to outline “une procédure de segmentation, basée sur les critères de répétition et de transformation”²⁵ (Ruwet 1972: 133). First of all, it offers a scientific alternative to traditional musicological analyses. Secondly, since it concentrates on the possible representation of musical units at different levels, it questions taxonomic views of musical structures. Actually, this procedure shows how musical forms can be represented as sequences of units on different levels. This is the consequence of the fact that “la syntaxe musicale est une syntaxe d’équivalences: les diverses unités ont entre elles des rapports d’équivalence de toutes sortes”²⁶ (ibid. 134). Therefore, for Ruwet it is basically impossible to find a way to represent the structure of a musical composition through a single unified schema.

French semiotician Nattiez recognizes the validity of Ruwet’s procedure, although he highlights some of its limits, making two important contributions to the discussion of the nature of segmentations. Firstly, he questions the ‘rule of equal length’ by proving how in certain composers inequality of length is a central feature to differentiate the parts of their pieces. Secondly, he claims that it is not true that it is impossible to represent a composition in one single schema. According to Nattiez, we can always find unitary criteria to decompose a piece into coherent segments and discover equivalences. What is important is that we make explicit all the criteria of our paradigmatic analysis.

²⁵ “A procedure of segmentation based on the criteria of repetition and transformation”.

²⁶ “Musical syntax is a syntax of equivalences: different units may have any sort of relation of equivalence”.

Other semioticians have explored the use of repetition in musical analysis. If Charles Seeger (1960) suggests a description of segments based on abstract logic, Canadian scholar Lidov talks of formative repetition to define repetition that articulates motives and phrases. It usually takes place immediately and it is “a *concrete* feature rather than an abstract generalization such as the aspects of harmony, tonality and meter” (Monelle 1992: 60), which works as a clear marker of segmentation.

Even though we could extend further our discussion about repetition and musical segmentation, we choose here to conclude by quoting the four observations made by Monelle that seem to grasp the central feature of the main problems related to the definition of this notion:

1. The only musical unit that seems universal and objective is the note (or single drum-stroke, gesture, or other feature). This has a number of properties, to do with pitch, value, dynamic, rhythm, timber and attack. Unfortunately, the relations that lead to analysis only begin when two or more notes are combined; the minimal analytical unit comprises at least two notes, usually more.
2. Segmentation in music will always be ultimately based on intuition, because the relation of phonology and semantics, of expression and content, functions differently in music. The clear separation of expression and content in language, which led Saussure to regard the linguistic symbol as ‘arbitrary’, is not a feature of music, where every aspect seems to be linked to semantics.
3. Analytical segmentation should be based on rational and explicit principles. It is not necessary for every worker to agree on the definitions of terms like ‘motive’ or ‘phrase’, provided each analysis is backed by a clear explanation of the terms employed. [...].
4. Segmentation on rational principles is most easily applied to monophonic music. While it is true that most human music is monody, the western tradition has produced elaborate monuments of harmony (ibid. 60).

I.4 The Three-Parted Semiotic Model: from Jean Molino to Jean-Jacques Nattiez

From 1967 to the first half of the 1970s, French semiotician Jean-Jacques starts to study the possible relationships between music and verbal language from a functionalistic perspective. Wondering about the possibility of applying some principles of structuralism to the arts of sounds, he moves from the assumption that

la linguistique moderne offre un certain nombre d'*attitudes* qui, transposées dans le domaine musical, doivent permettre des analyses plus fines et plus rigoureuses. La question est de savoir si les *modèles* linguistiques eux-mêmes peuvent être traduits tels quels en musicologie (Nattiez 1974: 198)²⁷.

Nevertheless, he refuses the idea that it is enough to compare music, as well as any other human science, to language in order to analyze it following linguistic principles claiming on the contrary that, if musical semiotics has among its goals the use of linguistic techniques, then, it must be based on “une sémiologie comparée de la musique qui, faisant apparaître la spécificité des deux sémies, montrera à partir de quel moment les méthodes linguistiques risquent d’être inefficaces pour la musique”²⁸ (ibid. 199).

For Nattiez the fundamental feature that distinguishes music from language is the fact that music is based on two different semiotic systems. In the first one, each syntagmatic unit is related to the other inner units that make up the genre or the musical style of a composition and, therefore, can be called endosemantic. The second system is instead represented by esosemantic relationships, that is to say those relationships that intrinsic musical elements establish with extra-musical phenomena. This double semiotic nature would explain the reason why all the early semio-musical attempts to identify

²⁷“Modern linguistics offers a certain number of attitudes that, if applied to the musical domain, should produce more subtle and rigorous analyses. The problem is to know whether linguistic models can be translated as they are into musicology”.

²⁸ “A comparative semiotics of music that, by underlining the specific features of the two sèmes, will be able to show when linguistic methods are useless in music”.

monemes and phonemes using structuralist theories ended up only by emphasizing the ambiguous nature of notes which can be seen at a time as 'words' or 'phonemes' according to the theoretical perspective we adopt.

However, the complex structure of Western musical system has made it possible to apply various linguistic theories to music, from Jakobsonian structuralism to the identification of the equivalent of Chomskian deep structures. Nevertheless, these analyses have not been very useful in providing systematic categorizations of this art because they are based on the relation between the syntactical and semantic level that in music is very difficult to define.

The necessity to create a new field of studies to deal with music and the musical metalanguage has led Nattiez to concentrate his studies on semiotics of music from the beginning of his career, to organize the first international congresses on semiotics of music and the *Groupe de recherches en sémiologie musicale*, a special research group with his students at the University of Montreal, and at the same time to collaborate on the publication of three special issues of *Musique en jeu*²⁹, with which musical semiotics was officially recognized as a new science.

Nattiez has always recognized the importance of Ruwet's structuralist method³⁰ as one of the first real attempts to elaborate a scientific methodology of musical analysis, although he does not agree with some of his premises. Actually, Nattiez (1977) criticizes Ruwet's theory of repetition because he considers excessively 'deterministic' the idea

²⁹ *Musique en jeu* (1971, 5) was dedicated to the first semiotic approaches to music –mainly essays about the possible comparisons between music and language and the application of phonology to music. *Musique en jeu* (1973, 10) contained articles about the three dominant approaches to music in the early 70s: functionalism, taxonomy, and generativism. *Musique en jeu* (1973, 12) focused on the application of Lévi-Strauss theory of myths in music. *Musique en jeu* (1975, 17) included two important articles by Molino and Ruwet about new musical semiotic theories.

³⁰ See previous chapter.

that in each musical or poetic composition it is always possible to find specific principles that govern it and determine its uniqueness. According to Nattiez, what makes a musical piece unique is instead the way in which the elements it contains are combined throughout the whole work. Therefore, a piece of music should not be seen as a unique system which has its own inner order, but rather as the result of an almost random combination of a set of given elements that determines a specific structure. Nonetheless, noticing how the principle of repetition by Ruwet is based on transformations that “portent sur les composantes internes d’unités associées paradigmatiquement, alors que les transformations linguistiques portent sur la position et les relations de classes abstraites d’unités”³¹ (Nattiez 1974: 199), he tries to demonstrate how this method is compatible to the ‘semio-stylistic’ description of the ‘neutral level’ of a musical work.

The ‘semio-stylistic’ description has a central role in Nattiez’s theory. It is the result of the application to music of the ‘mise en série’ or seriation elaborated by archaeologist J. C. Gardin in 1965 to study ancient documents, and later applied to semiotics by Jean Molino. This technique is based on the idea that the analysis of an individual work should be done by comparing it to a group of works “which are intuitively considered to belong to the same set” (John Stopford 1984: 136) in order to obtain a series of ‘paradigms’ which are independent from one another, although, all together, they represent the complete inventory of the possible elements that can be identified in a given corpus of similar works. Nattiez compares the relationships existing between the inventory of paradigms and the compositions to the relationships between *langue* and *parole* because “come la *langue* accomuna diversi atti di *parole*, come

³¹ “Lead to the inner components of units paradigmatically related, whereas linguistic transformations lead to the position and the relationships of abstract classes of units”.

un'opera accomuna diverse interpretazioni, così un 'inventario stilistico' accomuna diversi tipi di testi"³² (Marconi and Stefani 1987: 28).

Starting from these assumptions, he elaborates a musical semiotic model inspired by some principles of French philosopher Jean Molino, according to whom any system of communication used by human beings (language, music, dance, painting, movies, poetry, and so on) has a symbolic value and can therefore be seen as a semiotic object. This means, as Charles Sander Peirce and Ferdinand de Saussure—the theorists to whom semiotics owes its role in the twentieth century—claimed almost one century ago, that semiotics must be considered as “a comprehensible theory of knowledge applicable to any area of socially organized experience” (Stopford 1984: 129).

Yet, in any codified sign system an object acquires a specific meaning only when an individual uses it and relates it to his/her personal experience and knowledge of the world. Its meaning is not the result of a process in which a person produces a message to be conveyed to a receiver who has simply to decode it, but the sum of the meanings originally selected by its creator and those produced by the receiver who constructs in his/her mind a network of possible interpretants through a process of active attribution of values. Thomas A. Sebeok goes even further when he defines

the process of message exchanges, or *semiosis*, as an indispensable characteristic of all terrestrial life forms. It is this capacity for containing, replicating, and expressing messages, of extracting their signification, that, in fact distinguishes [human beings] more from the nonliving. (1991: 22).

Hence, in our daily life we have always to deal with the dynamics through which an object acquires meaning, or rather with how individuals select the specific referents of a sign, without forgetting that this is always an extremely complex phenomenon because

³² “in the same way as *langue* includes different acts of *parole*, and a text includes different interpretations, a 'stylistic inventory' includes different kinds of texts”.

the same object undergoes a process of signification not only in the mind of the person who produces a message but also in the mind of those to whom it is addressed.

This means, according to Molino, that any symbolic event usually has three central dimensions. The first one is the so-called *poietic process*, which corresponds to the creative process, that is to say to the concrete creative acts through which a new work is produced. The second one is the *esthesis process*, which consists of the strategies activated by the perception of the work. Actually, we never 'receive' the content of a message in a passive way, but we (re)create its meaning through our personal knowledge. These dimensions are related to a third fundamental element, the *material object*, that the *trace*—the piece of music, literature, or art in general—as we perceived it through the human five senses, on which the two previous processes are based and without which they would never exist. The semiotician coins the expression 'neutral level' for it in order to underline that, although connected to the poietic and esthetic dimensions, the object is not immediately affected by them. Thus, its immanent structures and recurrent properties can be examined in an objective way through the *analysis of the neutral level* that Nattiez describes as

a level of analysis at which one does not decide a priori whether the results generated by a specific analytical proceeding are relevant from the esthetic or poietic point of view. The analytical tools used for the delimitation and the classification of phenomena are systematically exploited, until they are exhausted, and are not replaced by substitutes until a new hypothesis or new difficulties lead to the proposition of new tools. 'Neutral' means both that the poietic and esthetic dimensions of the object have been 'neutralized', and that one proceeds to the end of a given procedure regardless of the results obtained. (Nattiez 1990: 13).

The central innovation introduced by Molino's method is therefore the necessity of the analysis of this intermediate neutral level through which it is possible to identify

features that neither the poietic process nor the esthetic one would ever highlight. Since the nature of the material object is never completely defined but redefined whenever new information or possible variables are considered, this analysis is open-ended because it is constantly changing according to the dialectical relationships that it may establish with the other two processes. However, we should not put the material object and its analysis on the same level because, as long as it is not the object of an analysis, the neutral event is just a physical phenomenon with no specific symbolic nature. Only when we examine its three different dimensions, can we speak of poietic, esthetic and neutral analysis.

We may think that the tripartite scheme suggested by Molino is based on the traditional model of communication used by Jakobson and Eco, only proposed with a new terminology. Yet, this is not true for two main reasons. First of all, semiotics is not the science of communication, but the science of how symbolic systems and the events they originate work—given the assumption that the main feature of human artifacts is their dynamic nature. Secondly, Molino introduces a significant innovation in the dynamics of communication because the esthetic process originates from the addressee and moves from the ‘receiver’ towards the composition and not vice versa. Thus, it is “heavily dependent upon the lived experience of the ‘receiver’” (Nattiez 1990b: 12). Actually, Jakobson’s model, like Molino’s, is basically a tripartite scheme in which a *sender* elaborates a *message* to be conveyed to a *receiver*. Yet, Jakobson enlarges it adding other important elements: a message must be related to a *context* and be based on a *code* shared by the people involved in the exchange. There must also be a *physical channel* through which the message can reach the addressee and a *psychological connection* between the subjects of the communication that guarantees the success of the

exchange. However, the most important element is the code, because without it communication would never take place. According to Jakobson, this model is fundamental from an epistemologic point of view because it would justify structuralist approaches to language and poetry. As a matter of fact, if there were just one meaning perceived in a univocal way by the subjects of the communication process, the semiotic analysis of information systems would be reduced to the examination of the immanent structures of language and texts.

Molino's innovations imply that, whereas in approaches following Jakobsonian principles the presence of a common code shared by all the people involved in the exchange is indispensable to the process of communication to take place, the esthetic analysis is

un processo attivo di costruzione: [...] gli interpretanti attribuiti dall'emittente all'opera che egli produce non sono necessariamente gli stessi che il destinatario proietta sull'opera e attraverso i quali egli avanza delle ipotesi su ciò che l'emittente ha voluto dire³³ (Nattiez 1977: 5).

The shift existing between the poietic and the aesthetic dimension becomes the core of the semiotic analysis, while the linearity of the traditional theory of communication is almost an exception. Thus, the symbolic object is no longer the medium of the univocal meaning originally selected by its creator, but rather the result of a complex process of production and, at the same time, the starting point of the strategies chosen by the individual using it. Nevertheless, a poietic process does not necessarily end up in an exchange of information because the original intent of the author of a work or message may not be grasped by the receiver(s). Eco basically agrees with this idea.

³³ "An active process of construction: [...] the interpretants the author gives to his/her work do not necessarily coincide with those that the addressee projects on it and by which s/he assumes what the author meant".

Indeed, although he starts from Jakobson's original model to formulate his semiotic theory, he introduces a significant innovation when he claims that communication is not based just on one code but on a *multiplicity of codes* not necessarily shared by the sender and the receiver of the message. He does not only recognize the difference between the poietic and the esthetic level, but he also suggests that an individual can activate several codes at the same time to (re)construct the meaning of a message or of an event because "la molteplicità dei sotto-codici che attraversano una cultura ci mostra che il medesimo messaggio può essere decodificato da diversi punti di vista e ricorrendo a sistemi convenzionali differenti"³⁴ (Eco 1965: 114). Thus, the message becomes "una forma vuota alla quale si possono attribuire diversi sensi possibili"³⁵ (ibid. 117). All this seems very similar to the concept of the neutral level introduced by Molino.

According to Nattiez, this is particularly true in music and, more generally, in any artistic discourse, because hardly ever does the way the hearer perceives a composition correspond to the strategies initially selected by the composer, which are usually related to different principles according to the historical period, the different musical traditions, and the subjects—either producers or hearers—using it. In twelve-tone pieces, for instance, the sequences of the series and its variations are very difficult to identify and follow for a first time listener with no specific knowledge.

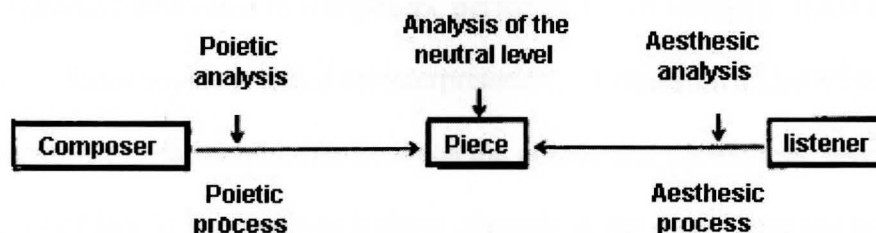
However, this does not imply that Molino's theory denies the process of communication. On the contrary, it demonstrates how the symbolic functioning of

³⁴ "The multiplicity of the sub-codes that cross a culture shows how the very same message may be decoded from different points of views and by using different conventional systems".

³⁵ "An empty shape to which we can given many different possible meanings".

communication is just “un caso particolare all’interno dei diversi modi di scambio, una delle conseguenze possibili dei processi di simbolizzazione”³⁶ (Nattiez 1990a: 13).

The core of Molino’s theory is the focus on the specific nature of symbolic phenomena and on their possible levels of organization. For Nattiez, “la prospettiva di Molino [...] è l’unica a proporre esplicitamente l’abbozzo di una semiologia organizzata dei fenomeni simbolici”³⁷ (ibid. 25) that he applies to the art of sound in order to describe music as a symbolic system able to enhance complex chains of interpretants in the process of signification. The French semiotician tries to explain how the interpretants are distributed on the three levels identified by Molino elaborating a tripartite musical model with which it is possible “to infer compositional and perceptual strategies from the observation of a piece’s structure” (Nattiez 1997: 44). With this model he doesn’t only survey compositions but also basic categories of the musical discourse such as rhythm, harmony, melody, tonal system, and so on. This model can be represented with the following scheme (ibid. 4):



³⁶ “One particular case among all the possible ways of exchanging messages, one of the possible consequences of the processes of symbolization”.

³⁷ Molino’s perspective [...] is the only one that explicitly outlines an organized semiotics of symbolic processes”.

The concrete physical manifestation of music is sound because “l’opera musicale si manifesta, nella sua realtà materiale, sotto forma di note”³⁸ (ibid. 54), which are the graphic representation of acoustic waves. Nevertheless, this physical event does not coincide with the neutral level since the way we perceive it is always culturally mediated. As Eco points out in *A Theory of Semiotics* (1974: 66), “every attempt to establish what the referent of a sign is, forces us to define the referent in terms of an abstract entity which moreover is only a cultural convention”. The referent of a musical composition is never sound but the systematic sequence of tonics and dominants through which traditional formal analysis usually describes the harmonic structure of most Western music from Renaissance to the early twentieth century.

The neutral object does not correspond to the musical score either. The score is just the conventional transcription of the object that in Western tradition makes the piece created by a composer recognizable as a unit and available to musicians. It enhances poietic and esthetic dimensions that represent “relations immanent in the events that [it] symbolizes [because] musical relations are not inherent per se but are the results of constructive processes in composers, performers, and listeners” (Lerdahl 1997: 425).

Since music is based on interpretation, we should wonder whether it is possible to determine precise boundaries between the poietic and the esthetic levels or not. As a matter of fact, if we conceive a piece of music as the mere sequence of the structural and harmonic relationships that appear in the score, the graphic symbol is the direct result of the poietic process, while the esthetic interpretation begins when someone performs or listens to it. If, on the contrary, we consider a composition complete only when it is

³⁸ “The composition manifests itself in its actual manifestations, musical compositions are perceived as notes”.

actualized, then the interpretation of the piece is at the same time the last part of the poietic dimension and the first of the esthetic one. In cultures where music is transmitted orally, it is not possible to draw clear limits between these two processes because the role of the composer-musician and that of the simple performer ambiguously overlap.

However, the fundamental difference between the score and the concrete musical event is based on the fact that “la partitura è una realtà fisica invariabile, mentre vi sono tante realizzazioni acustiche possibili quante sono le esecuzioni”³⁹ (Nattiez 1990a: 56) according to the chain of interpretants that the graphical transcription generates in the mind of the performers who give the piece a concrete acoustic form.

Since it preexists to any interpretation, the score can be regarded as a symbolic substitute of the musical fact from which we can start to identify the features of the neutral level. Musical semiotics is based on graphical notation that, according to Seeger (1958), can have either a prescriptive or a descriptive function. It is prescriptive when it is the complete written equivalent of its acoustic realization, while it is descriptive if it is absent or partial and, therefore, we have to transcribe a piece of music while it is being performed (this is for instance what would happen in oral or ethnic music). In the latter case, Nattiez considers the work of the semiotician very similar to that of the phonetician because they both translate into a codified system the sounds they perceive. It goes without saying that these conventions are always created in a precise historical moment and inside a given cultural tradition; consequently, their use “è possibile solo nell’ambito di pratiche acquisite, e quando esse cessano di esserlo, le notazioni restano mute”⁴⁰

³⁹ “Whereas the score is an invariable physical reality, there will be as many acoustic realizations as there are performances”.

⁴⁰ “It is possible only inside a system of accepted social practices; when they stop being socially accepted, the notational systems become mute”.

(Nattiez 1990a: 61). This is what happened for instance to many Baroque tablature systems after the seventeenth century.

Being the starting point of any semiotic interpretation in Western classical music, the score sets the pertinent traits of a composition because

the written note is, after all, a graphic sound for a given sound-material. The written note articulates, within an exterior continuum, units that have a beginning and an end. It captures a certain number of sound's salient characteristics—those that are essential to preserving certain systems (in classical music, first and foremost, pitch and duration; to a lesser degree, intensity, timbre, and tempo). When we analyze music by articulating a musical continuum into segments (whether we are working with a 'reliable' score or with a transcription), we are operating on material already composed of discrete units, and we go on to define units larger than the single note, larger units that are also in some sense 'discrete'. Analysis of the neutral level is only possible if one has at one's disposal this general discretization process (Nattiez 1990b: 81).

The meaning of a piece of music is always the combination of a process of creation, an acoustic event, and its possible interpretations. Any musical composition, as well as any artistic object, is “un messaggio fondamentalemente ambiguo, una pluralità di significanti che convivono in un solo significato”⁴¹ (Eco 1965: 9). It is, in Eco's words, an “opera aperta”⁴² (ibid.) on two levels: poietic and esthetic. Nattiez agrees with the Italian semiotician in considering *Klavierstück XI* by Stockhausen as the first ‘opera aperta’ in the history of music, together with *Sequenza per fl. solo* by Berio, *Echanges* by Pousseur, and the third *Sonata pour pf* by Boulez. These compositions are ‘poietically open’ because composers like Stockhausen explore all the possible combinations of a sequence on the basis of a probabilistic model. However, music is also open from the esthetic viewpoint, though here we should always distinguish the level of the performer,

⁴¹ “An essentially ambiguous message, a plurality of meanings all contained into one single meaning”.

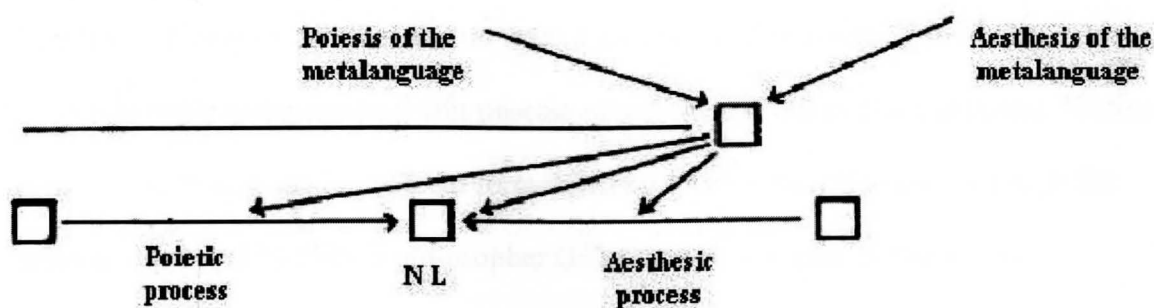
⁴² “Open work”.

who interprets and actualizes it through his/her specific musical competence, and that of the listener who perceives the sound and casts it only in his/her mind.

If music is a concrete physical event, whenever we describe it, we use verbal language, which is another symbolic system. Thus, the discourse about music is a *metalanguage* because it is used to describe the functioning of another object and, therefore, has a particular semiotic nature. As a matter of fact, although it deals with a system that has a triple nature from an esthetic perspective, it becomes itself the symbolic object of the three dimensions identified by Molino. First of all, musical metalanguage has a poietic level—of which it is possible to outline the basic principles—because it is the result of the creative work of a musicologist or of a semiotician. Secondly, an analysis is a concrete object that can be examined on its inner neutral level. Finally, this work is used by readers who can esthetically (re)construct its possible meanings through their own musical competence and experience of the world.

However, an analysis does not replace the object but is based on the event that it examines according to specific principles. Whenever we analyze the structure of a composition we provide it with “una rete di interpretanti che si presentano come modello degli interpretanti ‘naturali’ dell’opera nei processi reali di composizione, interpretazione e percezione”⁴³ (Nattiez 1990a: 118-119). This is clearly represented by the scheme suggested by Nattiez (1977: 6):

⁴³ “A network of interpretants that operate as the model of the ‘natural’ interpretants of the work in the actual processes of composition, interpretation and perception”.



The two levels of analysis—the concrete musical event and the discourse about music—are always separated because we cannot mix the perception of the concrete musical object/event by the performer or by the listeners with the analytical procedures adopted by the musicologist, who examines it with specific goals. Moreover, an analysis is always influenced also by the values of the cultural system in which it is produced.

If musical semiotics is at the same time “semiologia del fatto musicale e semiologia del discorso sulla musica, allora la semiologia dei parametri musicali è necessariamente doppia”⁴⁴ (Nattiez 1977: 6) because, on one hand, it includes a semantic analysis in which we have to decompose the meaning of a word in traits, that is to detect the meanings that an individual associates to concepts like ‘harmony’ or ‘harmonic’ referred to a given musical event that, using C. S. Peirce’s terminology, we can call *interpretants*. However, we should here remember that a word never has a univocal meaning, but gets different nuances according to the context and the situation in which it is set. On the other hand, this semantic analysis is intrinsically related to music because the meaning of words such as ‘melody’, ‘tonality’ or ‘modes’ is represented by the “tratti

⁴⁴ “The semiotic of musical facts and semiotics of the discourse about music, then semiotics of musical parameters is necessarily double”.

della *sostanza musicale* che sono stati così qualificati, cioè dagli *interpretanti* che l'analisi semiologica del fatto sonoro tenta d'isolare e di descrivere"⁴⁵ (ibid. 7).

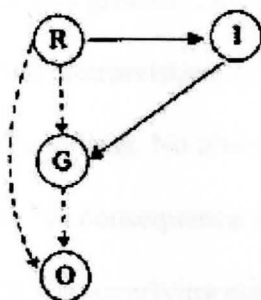
In order to explain how this process of signification takes place in music, Nattiez refers to the triadic semiotic model formulated by Charles Sanders Peirce through the scheme suggested by French philosopher Gilles-Gaston Granger in *Essai d'une philosophie du style* (1968), where he defines the Peircean triangle as "the most suggestive scheme about the functioning of linguistic signs and signs in general" (Granger 1968: 113). Starting from the assumption that "semiotics never reveals what the world is, but circumscribes what we know about it" (Sebeok 1991: 12), Nattiez focuses above all on the evolution of the concept of *interpretant* in Peirce's *Collected Papers* examining twelve of the different definitions of *sign* and *interpretant* formulated by the American philosopher from 1897 to 1906 that here we will briefly outline.

In 1897, Peirce formulates a first definition that already includes the basic elements of his semiotic model. In fact, knowledge is described in terms of a triadic relation between a *sign*, an *object* and an *interpretant*:

A sign, or *representamen* (R), is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity. It addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign. [...] I call the *interpretant* (I) of the first sign that sign which it creates. The sign stands for something, its *object* (O). It stands for that object, not in all respects, but in reference to a sort of idea, which I have sometimes called *ground* (G) of the representamen. «Idea» is here to be understood in a platonic sense in which we say that one man catches another man's idea. (1902: 2.92)

⁴⁵ "The traits of the *musical substance* that have accordingly been defined, that is say by the interpretants that semiotics of musical facts tries to isolate and describe".

In order to explain this definition and the following discussion, we will refer to the graphical representations suggested by French philosopher Gilles-Gaston Granger (1968: 114) that are very useful in grasping the essence of the Peircean model:



The *interpretant* is essentially a sign, or rather “a factor of the sign” (David Lidov 1999: 107), that stands for the object in the mind of a person for whom something is a sign or representamen. Yet, the original sign is not the object perceived in its entirety, but “a sign of something for something” (Stopford 1984: 129). It is an abstraction that Peirce compares to a Platonic idea; it coincides with the basic knowledge shared by two speakers when they manage to exchange meaning. A *ground* is the abstraction of the sign that the semiotician considers “indispensable, because we cannot comprehend an agreement of two things, except as an agreement in some respect, and this respect is such a pure abstraction as blackness” (Peirce 1867: 1.551). Hence, the definition of an object seems to be essentially based on the mediating role of a “quality or general attribute” (ibid.) through which the object is perceived. This notion seems to correspond to the semantic referents that a speaker selects in order to convey it to his/her hearer.

In 1902, he reformulates his first definition in the following terms:

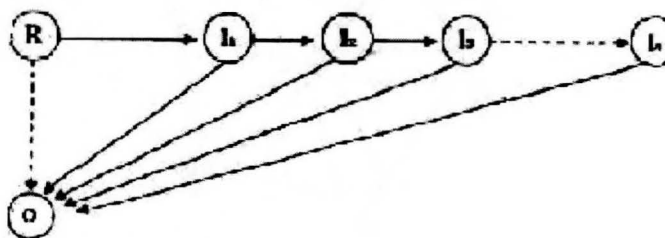
Genuine mediation is the character of a *Sign*. A *Sign* is anything which is related to a second thing, its *interpretant*, into relation to the same object, and that in such a way as to bring a fourth into relation to that same object in the same form, *ad infinitum* (1902: 2.92).

There are two central innovations in this second formulation. First of all, he abandons the concepts of idea and ground. Secondly, he describes the interpretant as a sign that does not have just one interpretation at a time, but is the result of a chain of relationships that is practically endless. No abstract quality mediates the relation between representamen and object, but “in consequence of every sign determining an interpretant, which is itself a sign, we have sign overlying sign” (1902: 2.94). The object can take on at the same time several nuances of signification resulting from the sequence of interpretants that makes “certainty become a sign perpetually displaced by other signs [...]. The sign is ‘determined’ only in the sense that it was drawn from another sign, and so on. This ‘determination’ is perpetually open-ended, like that of language itself, of mental ‘objects’” (Merrell 1991: 21).

According to Stopford (1984), behind the Peircean concept of the sign, there are two main ideas. The first one is that knowledge is a system of information not defined by the characteristics of each element that becomes part of it through a process of abstraction, but by the way these units constantly interrelate. Whenever we deal with a semiotic phenomenon, we have to select from this system only the relations that are relevant to the interpretation of a sign. It is interesting to notice that even Ferdinand de Saussure starts more or less from the same assumption when he defines language as “a system of interdependent terms in which the value of each of them results solely from the simultaneous presence of the others” (Saussure 1974: 114). Although these definitions

presuppose the concept of information as an epistemological category, we should not conclude that semiotics and information theory are based on the same principles because for Stopford (1984: 130) “the concept of sign is incomplete if it is considered information”. In information theory, information is just seen as a physical quantity of a system whose functions and values are defined through the mediating action of other external systems. In Peircean semiotics it is the interpretant that fulfills this role becoming “a necessary condition for a system to be informative” (ibid.). Nevertheless, the classical difference between message and code is also a distinction between information and the conditions of information exchange. In Peirce’s model this difference becomes the central idea of knowledge as mediation. This turns interpretation into an open-ended process in which “each interpretant of a sign is itself a sign” (ibid. 131). Hence, while a message is traditionally conveyed as a relationship between two things, the process through which this binary relation is coded and decoded is always triadic because it involves the mediation of the interpretant.

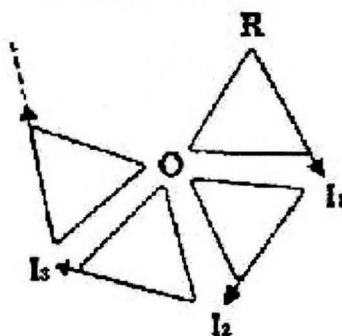
The concept of interpretant *ad infinitum* becomes the core of Peirce’s semiotic triangle that Granger considers very suggestive to explain the dynamic of most sign systems and represents with the following scheme (1968: 115):



Having explained the complex nature of the interpretant, the American philosopher extends his semiotic theory to a deeper level:

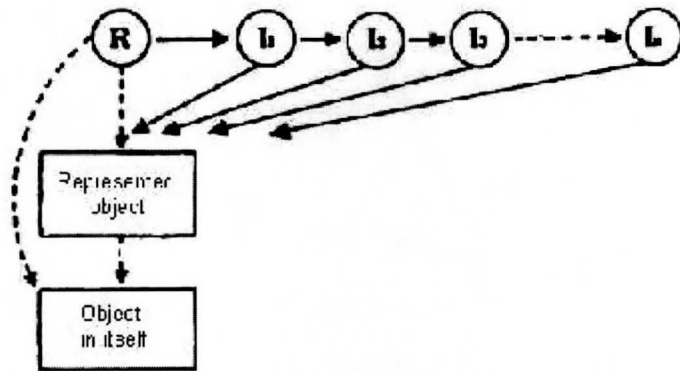
A sign, or representamen, is a first which stands in such a genuine triadic relation to a second, called its object, as to be capable of determining a third, called its interpretant, to assume the same triadic relation to its object in which it stands itself to the same object [...]. The third must indeed stand in such a relation, and thus must be capable of determining a third of its own; but besides that, it must have a second triadic relation in which the representamen, or rather the relation thereof to its object, shall be its own (the third's) object, and must be capable of determining a third to this relation. All this must be true of the third's third and so endlessly. A sign is a representamen with a mental interpretant (1902: 2.274).

At this point, the triadic relationship is repeated at the level of the interpretant, enhancing a chain of interrelated effects in which the first interpretant becomes the representamen of the second one and so on. Yet, all these triangular semiotic sub-systems—that can be compared to the sequence of mental spaces activated by the references selected by a speaker or a composer—are always related to this object and interact all together in order to define its possible meaning, as the graphic representation suggested by J. P. Paillet (1974: 45) clearly shows:

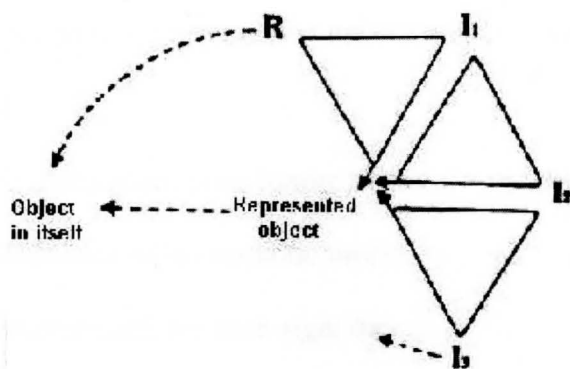


At the same time, Peirce points out that the sign is always made up by a representamen and an interpretant. Although this double nature seems to imply the traditional relation between a sign and its signified, the American philosopher does not consider the object of the sign, because the reality suggested by the sign is not the object but the interpretant, which is here the mental substitute of the object. Nevertheless, as Jean-Jacques Nattiez (1990a) has remarked, Peirce ends up by contradicting himself giving the interpretant the function he attributed to the ground in his first definition.

The role of the object becomes very important at this point. It acquires two distinct natures because “a sign has two objects, its *object as it is represented* and its *object in itself*” (1904: 31). This double status of the object can be compared to the discrepancy between the neutral level and the results of the poietic and esthetic processes. As a matter of fact, for Molino a symbolic phenomenon has always a form that can be viewed independently from the strategies adopted to create or interpret it that seems to correspond to the Peircean ‘object in itself’, while the ‘represented object’ coincides with the possible poietic or esthetic ‘interpreted’ object. This makes the Peircean semiotic model more articulated, as we can see in the representation suggested by Jean-Jacques Nattiez (1990: 149):



The chain of interpretants refers to the mental projection of the 'represented object' that, despite its mediating position, has nothing to do with the concept of ground suggested by Peirce in his 1897 definition. Actually, the object can semiotically exist only within the interpretants that are its mental representations. The process through which an object acquires meaning is a very complex procedure where the represented object is the result of a chain of intrinsically related semiotic sub-systems where each interpretant generates a new one, in a sequence through which the object in itself finds its representations. This is exemplified in the scheme that Jean-Jacques Nattiez (*ibid.*) infers from Peirce's third definition (1902) and puts at the basis of his musical tripartite model:



This definition of sign and its relation with the object—in itself or represented—seems to suggest that “Peirce’s ‘sign’ is clearly analogous to Saussure’s signifier” (Nattiez 1990b: 7), though the American semiotician introduces the innovative idea that even the thing to which the sign refers (interpretant) is itself a sign because this process of referring is endless. Thus, the object of the sign is “a virtual object, that does not exist except within and through the infinite multiplicity of interpretans, by means of which the person using the sign seeks to allude to the object” (ibid.).

As long as we deal with concrete objects, it is possible to distinguish the object from its representations, but if the concept has a rather abstract nature or is an artistic work, drawing a possible line of distinction between the two sides becomes very difficult. When we try to ground words like ‘sadness’ or ‘happiness’ and explain their content, many other signs come in our mind (contentment, satisfaction, sorrow, discontentment, and so on), all related to the personal experience of the sign’s user. Peirce tries to solve the problem about the distinction between the interpretant and the object by claiming that: “anything belongs to the interpretant that describes the quality or character of the fact, anything to the object that, without doing it, distinguishes this fact from others like

it" (1906: 5.474). In this definition the idea of quality is somehow similar to the original idea of ground.

Yet, the interpretant is no longer a univocal concept shared by the users as in Peirce's first definition of his semiotic model. In fact, he identifies three distinct categories of interpretants for each sign: the interpretant as represented to be understood by the user, the interpretant as it is perceived and reconstructed by the receiver of a sign and the interpretant in itself, that is to say what results from the intersection of the two processes. It is again a definition that can be compared to Molino's tripartite model because it clearly states the difference between the poietic and the esthetic processes, even if it does not recognize the inner nature of the object in itself, which is just described as the intersection of the previous two dimensions. In 1906 Peirce offers a clear definition of this distinction

The *Immediate interpretant* [...] is the interpretant as revealed in the right understanding of the sign itself, and it is ordinarily called the meaning of the sign; [...] in the second place, we have to take note of the *dynamical interpretant*, which is the actual effect which the sign, as a sign, really determines. Finally, there is what I provisionally term the *final interpretant*, which refers to the manner in which the sign tends to represent itself to be related to its object (1906: 4.536).

The idea of meaning used by the semiotician undergoes many changes in his papers. If in his earliest essays he identifies it with the original "intended interpretants of a symbol" (1903: 5175), later he views it from the side of the final receivers, as the "interpretants, or proper significate effects of signs" (1906: 5.475), relating it to the concept of habit, that is to say the tendency to respond in a given way to a certain stimulus, which seems quite in contradiction with the multiple nature of interpretants.

Despite the contradictions that sometimes can be found in the impressive work of Peirce, we must recognize the importance of his triangular semiotic model, and, above all, of the idea of the infinite chain of interpretants that correspond to the possible mental representations of the object. This idea seems also to account, from a semiotic perspective, for the semantic process of reference in grounding concepts, things and meanings in discourse, which always implies the activation of a sequence of mental spaces that assures the success of the information exchange.

Since “the task of semiotics is to identify interpretants according to the three poles of the tripartition, and to establish their relationships to one another” (Nattiez 1990b: 29), it must be based on analytical methods through which it is possible to describe the characteristics of the interpretants and of the object to which they refer. In music the tripartite dynamics becomes very complex because they are always articulated on two levels. In fact, while the musician ‘talks’ using music, the musicologist goes inevitably through *the bias of speech*. This means that, “cercando di descrivere come funziona un’opera, l’analisi è in effetti *simulazione* (e nei casi più rigorosi modello), ma mai *produzione*”⁴⁶ (ibid. 118).

Whenever we observe the structures of a piece of music and give them pertinence, we proceed to their *interpretation*. However, to interpret them “it is necessary to have at one’s disposal a *theory* of the poietic and a *theory* of the esthetic” (Nattiez 1997: 414).

Nattiez lists six main types of analysis that can be used to detect the relationships between the two external processes and the neutral level. The first one focuses only on the immanent structure of a composition excluding any other level, considering it as the

⁴⁶ “By attempting to describe how a musical composition works, an analysis is basically *simulation* (an in the most rigorous cases a model), but never *production*”.

only object in which all the processes of signification are generated. The second one, called inductive-poietic, is the most frequently used in music because it moves from the analysis of the neutral level to the possible poietic dynamics. It observes the recurrent structures of a piece of music and then infers what the composer had in mind while creating it. In the external-poietic method, instead, the musicologist gathers poietic documents such as letters, drafts, projects written by the author and through them examines the final work. These last two techniques work also on the esthetic side. In fact, in the inductive-esthetic procedure the musicologist first describes his/her personal impressions while listening to a composition and then examines more scientifically its structure, while in the external-esthetic process he does the contrary because he starts from the analysis of the musical object and then add his/her personal considerations about the effects of its structures. In the last technique, which is very frequent, the musicologist moves from the assumption that we can apply an immanent analysis to the esthetic and poietic levels at the same time because they are all equally pertinent.

However, for Nattiez any semiotic analysis should be accompanied also by a critical comparison with other similar existing procedures and by a clear explanation of the principles on which is it based to guarantee its reliability. In fact, any analysis is characterized, on one hand, by the approaches to the musical substance, that is to say the way it views the musical features selected; on the other hand, by the different methods of operating.

Yet, musicological and semiotic analyses are just some of the many existing analytical procedures. As a matter of fact, the musical event includes all the possible

“forme verbali strettamente collegate all’evento sonoro ‘*strictu senso*’”⁴⁷ (Nattiez 1989: 142) such as the audience’s reaction, pieces of criticisms, the composer’s personal description of his/her production and so on. Thus, the semiotic object of Nattiez’s method is not just an acoustical manifestation but an articulated network of symbolic forms that must be examined considering the chains of possible interpretants that operate on the three different levels on which the French scholar bases his musical semiotic theory.

I.5. Gino Stefani and the Model of Musical Competence

Music, like any codified ritual or sign system, is always produced inside a cultural system that influences the principles and the values on which its functioning mechanisms are based. Musical Semiotics deals with these mechanisms and approaches music as sign, communication, and language according to different linguistic and semiotic theories.

According to Gino Stefani, who was one of the founders of this field in the early 1970s, musical semiotics should not focus only on musical compositions to describe their inner structures, but also on the role of musical discourse in the network of systems that make up a culture. This is why he claims that musical-semiotic analysis should be articulated in different levels. First of all, we should take into consideration the general meanings given to musical structures and/or pieces by a selected group of people. Secondly, we should survey a selected composition or musical phenomenon according to a scientific method of analysis whose principles must be clearly stated⁴⁸.

⁴⁷ “verbal forms closely related to the musical event *strictu senso*”.

⁴⁸ Gino Stefani gives an extensive description of the different possible levels of musical-semiotic analysis in the third part of *Introduzione alla semiotica della musica* (1976) with many exemplifications taken from classical musical tradition, pop and folk music.

The Italian semiotician moves from the assumption that in music “tutto è o può essere segno”⁴⁹ (ibid: 16) because musical structures are related to other generic cultural codes. As a matter of fact, apart from notes and rows that can be considered as ‘genuine’ musical elements, music borrows many rhythmic patterns and structures from poetry and dance, pitches and sound dynamics are based on natural phenomena, while avant-gardes composers have related music to various technological resources. Moreover, music manifests itself in various ways creating relationships between expression and content (signifier and signified), the codes it activates (tactile, visual, physical, kinesthetic) and the different musical modes. Any musical piece activates at the same time most of these codes that are constantly interrelating with one another.

Given this complexity, whenever we want to examine a musical composition, we should start from the idea that we first perceive it as “unità confusa di cui non si può propriamente parlare, ma che si può solo indicare”⁵⁰ (ibid. 36). Only when we realize that “la sua unità è un sistema composto e allo stesso tempo scomponibile”⁵¹ (ibid), can we begin to understand it.

However, it is not enough to deal with mere signs in music to formulate a theory of musical semiotics. Stefani claims that, in order to elaborate a scientific model, we need “un discours fondé sur des principes et des critères explicites, donnant lieu à des lois cumulables dans un ensemble coherent: bref, d’un discours à tendance scientifique”

⁴⁹ “Everything is or can be regarded as sign”.

⁵⁰ “Confused unity of which we cannot really talk but that we can only indicate”.

⁵¹ “Its unity is a composed as well as a decomposable system”.

Seymour 1979: 1029)⁵². This is what the Italian semiotician does by formulating his analytical model that he calls 'Model of Musical Competence'.

In this model he starts from the key concept of musical competence, which is our general ability to produce sense about or through a musical event, or rather "the ability to realize either individual or social projects by means of music. By music we mean here every social practice or individual experience about sounds which is or can be collected under this name" (Stefani 1984: 219). This competence refers here to all the levels of codes that constitute the Western musical system. The concept of code is considered in semiotic terms as the correlation of signifier and signified, which in music becomes the relationship existing between sound events and all the meanings that can be related to them.

Stefani articulates the *Model of Musical Competence* (MMC) into the following five progressive code levels:

1. *General Codes* (GC): perceptual and mental schemes, anthropological attitudes and behaviors, basic conventions through which we perceive or construct or interpret every experience and therefore sound events too;
2. *Social Practices* (SP): projects and modes of both material and symbolic production within a certain society; in short, cultural institutions such as language, religion, technology, sciences, and the like, including musical practices (concert, ballet, criticism, and so on);

⁵²“A discourse based on explicit principles and criteria originating rules that can be put together coherently; briefly, of a discourse of scientific nature”. In order to formulate a scientific model, Stefani moves from the principles formulated by Luis J. Prieto in his theory about the foundation of human sciences in *Pertinence et pratique*.

3. *Musical Techniques* (MT): systems, methods, devices being more or less specific and exclusive of musical practices, such as musical scales, instruments, compositional devices, and so on;
4. *Style* (St): particular ways of performing the previous three categories to the specific principles found in a given historical age, in a given author, in an esthetic or philosophical movement, and so on;
5. *Opus* (Op): the concrete codes used in a singular musical work or event that can also be considered as the idiolect of a piece.

These levels can be used to examine musical works as well as basic musical elements. In the well-known opening theme of the *Fifth Symphony* by Beethoven, for instance, the GC is the sequence of well-marked, relatively short sound impulses of middle strength and consistency that are usually perceived and interpreted as 'strokes'. The SP are here related to the fact that we usually associate 'strokes' to the idea of knocking on the door or against a solid board. Thus, they are a clear signal of beginning, which creates a sense of suspense, for something that is about to happen, or an entry in a ceremony, or an oratorical exordium. If we move to the more technical MT level, we see that the 'strokes' consist of a sequence of three notes (G – G – G – E Flat) that, from a technical point of view too, creates ambiguity and suspense about the key, durations and phrasing because it does not offer the traditional clues that make us understand from the very beginning the key and the rhythmic structure of the composition. The level of the Style (St) is in this specific case very clear because we are dealing with a piece that has become a real topos of Western musical tradition. Therefore, we perceive the dramatic tone of the strokes, more precisely, the 'titanic heroism' that characterizes Beethoven's

style, which is also one of the main features of the new Romantic musical passion and historical references. Finally, at the level of the Opus (Op), this motive full of pathos that erupts suddenly into the beginning of the symphony, anticipating its entire content, has been described by the author himself and by musicologists as the image of 'destiny knocking on the door'.

In this type of analysis, the different levels are based on continuity and hierarchy because competence is stratified and moves from 'basic human' knowledge to more articulated 'social' and 'musical' competences. Consequently, each level includes all the previous ones and is itself part of the following. The quality of competence is here defined by the intersection of two dimensions: the artistic one and the semantic one. This paradigmatic application of the 'Model of Musical Competence' would account also for the ambiguity of musical events. As we have seen, the same elements occur in all the five levels with different functions and possible meanings. In the *Fifth Symphony*, for instance, the 'strokes' are the central feature that is examined in different ways according to the level of competence taken into consideration.

Since the hierarchical application of the MMC cannot simultaneously reflect all the possible levels of competence, we can also apply it in a combinatorial way, that is to say, considering all five levels equivalent with respect to a central point that can be either the observer or the musical event.

The beginning of *Symphony in C, K 551* by W. A. Mozart is another good example for the application of the MMC. On the GC level the first measures of this piece are characterized by a triple repetition of a ternary meter followed by a pause that a generic listener usually perceives as the sound of the trumpet or the clatter of a

tambourine announcing the beginning of an important event. As far as the SP level is concerned, here we have a sign event in which we can recognize the first theme related to the second by a musical bridge according to the most traditional scheme of the sonata form. At the level of MT, the allegro tempo and the perfect correspondence of the duration of the note to the meter of the bar indicates the beginning of a ceremony with martial connotations. Finally, at Mt and Op levels we can say that Mozart's brilliant creativity is here strictly connected to the institution of the concerto form and, therefore, to its articulated structures and rhetorical conventions, such as the presence of the double theme in the exposition.

According to Stefani, the MMC can also be regarded as a theory of grammar because "it is a finite set of rules that can generate an infinite number of occurrences considered correct by some competence" (ibid. 223). As a matter of fact, a semiotical competence of music should include also a part of musical grammar together with syntactic, semantic and pragmatic aspects. Tonal grammar, as traditionally conceived, is only a part of a possible grammar on tonal competence because, even though it codifies a grammar of syntax at MT level, it does not account for the complex nature of tonal rules, which are "a stratification of codes more or less coalescent: spatial, kinetic and emotional dimensions of intervals (GC levels); archaic oral gestures still surviving as sediments in major and minor modes (SP levels); rhetoric of discourse (SP levels); and stylistic sediments" (ibid. 224). MMC would instead describe most of these stratified codes.

If we take into consideration a simple musical element like the octave interval, for instance, we can say that, at GC level, it activates logical, energetic, spatial, and kinetic codes. The first one conveys the ideas of repetition, redundancy, emphasis, and relief; the

second one is related to the sense of reinforcement; the spatial and the kinetic codes communicate the image of great distance and, more in general, of amplification. At SP level the octave is based on two sets of codes. The former is the paralinguistic, which is associated to the concept of great fall or rise of voice; the latter is instead the concept of 'spontaneous' choral singing related to the idea of exclamation or cry. The MT level includes here five different sets of codes: scalar (associated to the whole compass of the scale ambitus), melodic (connected to the sense of unison, melodic reinforcement and amplification), tonal (conveys the sense of tonal reinforcement), harmony (perfect interval or harmonic reinforcement of an 'empty' interval depending on the era we refer it to), instrumental (particular sound effects used for virtuosity). Finally, as far as the St level is concerned, we can here relate the octave interval to baroque music, for its emphatic function particularly used in seventeenth-century ceremonial music, or to opera music by Verdi, where it is often exploited to emphasize the oral gesture. The level of Op is not mentioned here because we could consider an endless list of compositions in which this interval has a significant role and analyze it together with the pieces. However, if we see it as characteristic of Verdian music we could think of several famous arias, like for example "Libiamo ne' lieti calici" in *La Traviata*, where this interval introduces the famous toast made by Alfredo based on a simple bouncing melody repeated by Violetta and the chorus. According to Stefani's model, octaves represent more than simple intervals because they embody specific social and cultural values. Therefore, refusing them does not mean abandoning mere musical device but also codified socio-cultural projects that we can discover by the MMC. As a matter of fact, whereas "non-octave styles [twelve-tone music and classical polyphony] qualify themselves as aristocratic"

(ibid. 226), the use of the octave interval is usually associated to popular music. All this helps us to better understand the meaning of famous songs like *Over the Rainbow* or *Singing in the Rain*, which are built on an ascending octave interval.

Other intervals are so deeply culturally connotated that they are associated with one specific meaning coming from one specific use. This is what has happened for instance to the interval of the sixth, which is usually perceived as “the voice of the heart” (Stefani 1998: 198). Since the 1970s, it has been associated in its melodic form to *Love Story*, “a singable tune, easy to remember, loaded with meaning as befits the theme song of a film” (ibid. 199). The sixth is one of the most melodious intervals of Western classical music that conveys the idea of “pleasantness and tenderness, warmth and affection, gratifying emotional involvement, and deep symbolic associations with dreams and flying” (ibid. 201). According to Stefani, all this would depend on some fundamental features. First of all, while fourth and fifth intervals are strictly cadential intervals, the sixth is a not too large leap easily recognizable that we often associate in its ascending and descending form with “a spontaneous curve [...] which gives vent to an important emotion, [...], an intonational pattern that is only slightly emphatic, [...], an exuberant expression” (ibid). Secondly, since it does not fulfill the connecting role of the octaves or the tonal cadential nature of the fourths and fifths, it can have a freer melodic function. However, it is a combined interval with slightly different nuances according to how we see it. If we consider it as a fourth plus a third, we get a “euphoric euphony” (ibid. 202) emphasized and broadened. If instead we regard it as a fifth plus a second, it sounds like an extension of the fifth, as an intermediate step leading to the fifth, the main tonal interval. These are just some of the characteristics of the sixth that Stefani depicts in his

attempt to account for the pertinence of the socio, musical, and cultural meaning attributed to a musical element given that “the meaning of musical experience proceeds from the most fundamental features of human behavior to the most specifically artistic aspects” (ibid. 207) for which only the MMC can account.

The MMC is probably one of the better procedure formulated so far in musical semiotics because it allows us to operate in-depth analyses of musical events taking into account not just the strictly musical structures but also all for all the cultural meanings that are at the basis of these structures. For this reason the MMC the starting point of the analyses we will provide in the second part of this research in order to explain the possible functioning of humor mechanisms in music according to the General Theory of Verbal Humor.

I.6. Eero Tarasti’s Musical Semiotic Theory: from A. J. Greimas’s Isotopy to C. S. Peirce Semiotic Model

Eero Tarasti is a Finnish musical semiotician who belongs to the so-called ‘second generation of semioticians of music’, that is to say one of those scholars who started to deal with the science that studies music as sign, communication and language at the beginning of the 1980s. Starting from the fundamental assumption that human beings live “quite literally surrounded by various signs and significations, at the intersection point of messages coming from everywhere” (Tarasti 1990: 133), he analyzes the heterogeneous nature of Western music as a sign system, aware of the fact that whoever

wonders about the meaning of music takes a risk because "il entre sur un terrain complètement inconnu"⁵³ (Tarasti 1985: 650).

The constant redefinition of the musical discourse had led Tarasti to wonder whether it is possible to formulate a metalanguage able to describe universal musical categories or not, and if some linguistic theories can provide useful indications.

As a matter of fact, talking about music is always very problematic because it means representing it through verbal language, which is another sign system with which music has nothing in common⁵⁴. During the 1960s Charles Seeger underlined the dichotomy existing between musical knowledge deriving from the direct contact with music, and the one coming from the verbal discourses about it, wondering about how traditional musicology, which is a verbal speculation about music, can convey musical knowledge. In order to solve this problem, Seeger (1960) suggests three solutions. First of all, we can start from the assumption that language and music are based on the same universal principles; therefore a system can be 'translated' into the other without any problem. But this is an oversimplification usually rejected by musicians who, on the contrary, deny any relations between music and language. Between these two opposite positions, there is a third one that appears more plausible because it claims that it is possible to 'say' something about music using verbal language, although we must accept that some of its features cannot be described.

⁵³ "He enters a completely unknown field".

⁵⁴ According to Roland Barthes, music is a complex phenomenon that has been described with very different approaches throughout the centuries. That's why he claims that "il est très difficile parler de la musique. Beaucoup d'écrivains ont bien parlé de peinture; aucun [...] n'a bien parlé de musique, pas même Proust" ["It is very difficult to talk about music. Many writers wrote very well about painting; nobody has ever written well about music, not even Proust"]. (Barthes 1982: 247).

Tarasti, like Italian semiotician Gino Stefani (see following chapter), notices that music is a particular hybrid sign system so difficult to define because it manifests itself in various ways, creating relations between expression and content (signifier and signified), the codes it activates (tactile, visual, physical) and the different musical modalities. In the musical continuum, a composer captures external elements and translates them into notes that can reach the listener thanks to the ability of the executor, and become part of the knowledge of the listener that interprets them according to his own cultural background and personal knowledge of the world.

Musical semiotics focuses on music “en tant que processus signifiant”⁵⁵ (Stefani 1979: 1029), open to different approaches. It is “a discipline in flux, a science under construction” (Tarasti 1994: 5) in which the Finnish scholar tries to identify a unified method to explain the many correlations between musical sound and cultural meaning by “mapping, systematically and term-by-term, Greimas’ trajectory of narrative generation into a musical context” (Echard 1995: 1).

In order to do so, he analyzes the existing musical semiotic theories elaborated in the last decades identifying two main tendencies that he divides into ‘structuralist’ and ‘iconic’.

The first group is made up of the theories formulated during the 1960s as direct consequence of the application of structuralist theories in music, based on the study of the smallest significant units in music. Starting from the assumption that in music, too, it is possible to distinguish units of the first articulation (musical items, musical ‘words’) and of the second articulation (musical ‘phonemes’), musical semioticians tried to build units of signification from these small atoms. All systems, even the musical one, “were

⁵⁵ “As a process of signification”.

assumed to operate like language" (Tarasti 1994: 5) and any composition was considered a structure of communication.

According to Fubini (1973) the structural dimension that has been recognized in music during the last decades is related both to the development of formalistic theories that have underlined the syntactic and structural features of music production, and to the musical experiments carried out by the avant-gardes since the 1950s. Actually, these have made it more and more necessary to define the 'language' of music and its complex nature of system of systems in constant interaction with the other codes inside a culture. It is always very hard to establish the principles according to which music (as any other sign system different from verbal language) can be considered a 'language'. Nevertheless, we should avoid making the mistake of imposing verbal language as the normative model to which all the others have to conform. Although music can be defined as a language because of its systemic character, it is extremely difficult to explain, on one hand, how signs are structurally related to one another in a musical composition, and, on the other hand, how they acquire meaning interacting semiotically with the other sign systems inside a culture.

As a matter of fact, although structuralists analyze the smallest elements of the musical discourse, they have never taken into consideration how these small units relate to one another, imposing an unnaturally static character upon an art based on movement. Whenever we deal with music, we have to accept the constant variability of the meaning of its constituents. This is the reason why Eero Tarasti shows the limits of these theories underlining that "analyzing musical discourse with methods originally developed for the analysis of other sign systems without regard for the 'musicality' of music will lead to an

atomization of music, to its dissolution into mechanical units and their conglomerates" (Tarasti 1994: 18).

In order to understand the complex structure of music, we should survey it using different theories at the same time. The smaller the units we want to define are, the stronger the necessity to use several systems to examine them is.

Some of the methods that Tarasti includes in the structuralist group are not based on linguistics, even though he claims that we can consider them as "structuralist before structuralism" (Tarasti 1994: 7). One of the most important is the "Theory of triple articulation" formulated by Heinrich Schenker (1956) who distinguishes three different levels in the musical experience: *Vordergrund*, *Mittlegrund* and *Hintergrund*. The first one coincides with the audible musical surface, the second one is a process of reduction through which we can arrive to the last level that represents the reduction of the musical surface. He recognizes also a deep structure, the *Ursatz*, which corresponds to the overtone series of nature and manifest itself contrapuntally.

In order to explain this deep structure, Tarasti introduces in music the concept of *isotopy*—the core of the linguistic theory formulated by Algirdas J. Greimas—as the foundation for his analysis of structural levels and formal musical features, though he uses it at a very abstract level. As a matter of fact, whereas the French linguist defines isotopy as "a redundant complex of semantic categories permitting a uniform reading of a narration resulting from the partial readings of the utterances and from the solution of their ambiguities which is guided by the unique reading" (Greimas 1970: 188), the Finnish semiotician readapts it to the musical discourse as "the principle that articulates musical discourse into coherence sections" (Tarasti 1994: 18). This is a metaphorical

application of the concept of isotopy in which the musical discourse he mentions is essentially the musical surface that he views as “the final step in a generative process analogous to Greimas’ generative trajectory” (Echard 1999: 8). On one hand, he seeks the principles and forces that guide the formation of the musical discourse while, on the other hand, he introduces a formalism that can account for the dynamic nature of music.

The theory formulated by the French-Lithuanian linguist in his *Sémantique Structurale* (1966), which Monelle (1992) considers the last great work of French structuralism, has had a considerable influence on contemporary musical discourse with its two main ideas: *seme analysis* and *narrative grammar*. The first one is a deductive and systematic study of meaning itself, while the second one can be seen as the inductive application of this theory to literary narrative. According to the Greimasian analysis, a lexeme is a basic linguistic expression (a word or a phrase) that has its own “stylistic constellation” (ibid. 252) made up by the atoms of meaning (*semes*) related to the language and to the style of the author and the work. *Semes* are the smallest units of meaning that can be viewed from both a concrete and abstract point of view in their actual realization within linguistic units. Since the same lexeme can have different variations of meaning according to the context in which it appears, Greimas postulates that any lexeme must have at least an invariant seme that forms the so-called *semic nucleus*, around which other *contextual semes* gather. Their presence ensures intelligibility to the nucleus determining the meaning of a lexeme in an utterance or in a discourse. The relation between these variable elements and the constant nucleus originates a *sememe*. In order to establish the content of sememes, we have to consider only semes whose actual meaning is coherent with the context. Therefore, we must select

pertinent categories among the possible alternatives set on the semic axis of significance that each seme possesses. However, certain contextual semes called *classemes* have a more important function because they are not related to just one word or phrase, but they are recurrent elements that appear throughout a whole sentence or composition, giving life to *isotopies*.

Greimas has constantly reformulated this innovative principle over the years. If in the first formulation given in 1966 he claimed that “two linguistic words are isotopic if they share some classemes, or in other words, an isotopy is the repetition of a certain kind of semes (classemes) across parts of a text and/or context” (Attardo 1994: 73), in 1970 he abandoned the central distinction between semes and classemes. He replaced it with the generic term “semantic categories” and broadened the environment of isotopies to ‘text’ and ‘discourse’, no longer limited only to the smallest environment of two sememes. Two years later, he went further on defining isotopy as “the syntagmatic coherence of discourse” (ibid. 77), while, almost at the same time, Rastier (1972: 72) defined it as “any iteration of a linguistic unit”. In 1982 he returned to the idea that, “as an operational concept, isotopy at first designated iterativity along a syntagmatic chain of classemes which assure the homogeneity to the utterance-discourse” (Greimas and Courtés 1982: 163). According to Attardo (1994) it is possible to identify three main different definitions in the historical evolution of isotopy that show how this concept has progressively lost specificity. Isotopy can be seen as iteration of classemes (Greimas 1966), as iteration of semes (Greimas 1970), and as iteration of linguistic elements (Greimas 1972, Rastier 1972). Rastier has introduced a further difference between horizontal and vertical isotopies. Vertical isotopies are used for metaphors because they

relate two different elements that share some semes paradigmatically, but have no relation with the rest of the syntagmatic structure of language.

It is interesting to notice that Tarasti chooses to refer to the definition of isotopy given by Greimas in 1970. However, in his musical semiotic approach, isotopy loses part of its structural content since it is used metaphorically as a general term to explain any musical structure. He starts by identifying *phemes* and *semes* that could be regarded as possible musical equivalents of the smallest units of the discourse in a generative perspective. Of the elements that the Finnish semiotician groups into the generic class of *musemes*, "*phemes* are distinctive features of the signifier or acoustic substance that, when invested with meaning, become semes or features of the signified (the letter roughly equivalent to 'concept'). Several semes combine into larger [musical] units called lexemes" (Tarasti 1994: 304). Yet, semes have a double function in music. First of all, they are basic categories (speed, intensity, length, tension, continuity, and so on) that structure the texture of any musical composition organizing themselves into concrete lexemes through binary oppositions such as soft/loud, slow/fast, continuous/discontinuous, and so on. Secondly, semic oppositions can be considered as the main elements of survey in musical styles and esthetics analysis (Tarasti 1990: 148). Thus, we can for instance distinguish Bach's fugue themes according to the semic opposition instrumental/vocal; account for the *mythical semes* of Western musical tradition in different historical periods—above all of Romanticism⁵⁶--through endless oppositions. But we could also analyze the specific isotopic systems developed by each

⁵⁶ Tarasti (1985) identifies certain traditional types of musical elements and themes, particularly recurrent in the Romantic era, that he defines "*sèmes mytiques*" because they are stratified musical topoi in which he distinguishes sixteen sub-themes: mythical nature, the mythical hero, the magical, the fabulous, the balladic, the legendary, the sacred, the demonic, the fantastic, the mystic, the exotic, the pastoral, the tragic, the primitivistic, the national-musical, the sublime, the gestural.

author according to “his musical education, background, environment and general aesthetic-social context” (Tarasti 1996: 10) in order to find similarities and oppositions. It is surprising how different composers living in the same era ended up by developing similar mythical ideas with more or less the same topic without knowing it.

Although the combinations of semes are inexhaustible, Tarasti puts forward the methodologic question of how they are chosen and given a musical content. Whenever we consider a seme as an esthetic unit, we identify it inside precise stylistic musical categories. Hence, we describe its meaning ostensibly because “for every seme, one must indicate an equivalent musical *lexeme*, where the seme in question is a dominant or marked feature” (ibid. 149). These semes create a coherent network of relations that can be compared, in a semiotic metalanguage perspective, to a sequence of Peircean interpretants. They give life to a real ‘language’ system in which they are not only related to one another, but each of them is also able to create its own sub-system in which they activating a long chain of interpretants.

In a musical work, as well as in a written text, we can have several isotopies functioning simultaneously on different levels and overlapping. These complex isotopies, are represented, for instance, by rhythmic patterns repeated throughout a composition, harmonic passages that can be referred to different tones, or passages belonging at the same time to more than one section in which a musical form is conventionally divided (like the telescoping technique used in the sonata form).

Redundancy has an important role in isotopic structure. It gives unity to the structure of a discourse that otherwise would be “meaning nonsense” (Monelle 1992: 235), even though too much redundancy becomes useless repetition. Reiteration can be

seen as the musical equivalent of redundancy since it assures coherence to a composition, making music, in this respect, more similar to the “*semantic* level of language, rather than to the grammatical and syntactic level” (ibid.).

Although isotopies give coherence and cohesion to a musical composition, we should remember that music is based on a very particular kind of coherence that allows us to perceive as homogeneous a discourse that is actually based on two fragmented and contrastive elements: notes and pauses, or rather, sound and silence⁵⁷.

At the end of the 1950s, musicologist Rudolf Réti defined this peculiar feature of music as a ‘thematic process’ resulting from the interaction of two dynamics that structure any musical piece, “l’une est extérieure et se fonde sur la fragmentation, le phrasé et le groupement du niveau de la manifestation de la musique; l’autre est immanente et recouvre ce qu’on appelle les phénomènes thématiques de la musique”⁵⁸ (Tarasti 1985: 651). It is at this second level that the dramatic development of a composition can be grasped. This ‘thematic process’ is very similar to Greimas’s isotopy. In fact, it assures coherence to a composition and, at the same time, allows us to better explore its functioning because it represents the fundamental criterion that influences all the other strategies activated by the musical discourse.

Tarasti identifies at least five different ways in which isotopy can function in music. First of all, it can be “a more or less achronic and abstract deep structure” (Tarasti 1994: 7) that can be compared to Schenker's deep structure or to the semiotic square in

⁵⁷ One of the most controversial points on which music is based, is how to define the principles according to which an acoustic phenomenon is perceived as *sound* and when, on the contrary, it is relegated to the sphere of *noises*. Indeed, the apparently natural way in which a culture makes this distinction hides a precise communicative project to which any acoustic realization must conform in order to be accepted. For further discussion see Stefani (1978).

⁵⁸ “One is external and based on fragmentation, phrasing and grouping on the level of musical manifestation; the other one is immanent and concerns what goes under the name of thematic phenomena of music”.

Greimas. It corresponds to the order in which the constitutive elements of a composition are presented and structured as 'making sense'. However, what is really important is not to demonstrate whether the semiotic square or any other logical scheme can show the coherence of music, but its enfolding in the temporal dimension to show in which order they appear in a composition and how this happens. Despite this first definition is presented as 'achronic', the Finnish semiotician immediately points out that a musical piece cannot be understood without considering music's temporal unfolding. Music is one of the subtlest symbolic means by which a culture controls time⁵⁹. It has an essential inner temporal dimension of 'becoming' that cannot be controlled by any culture, and at the same time "it functions in its temporality as a border and transition between nature and culture" (ibid. 58). This is why he refers to the three categories of temporal aspect elaborated by Greimas, *inchoativity*, *durativity*, *terminativity* (ibid. 8), and to that of perfectivity/imperfectivity.

The last one describes the relation of the temporal process to the central problem of any musical composition, that is to say the fact that any note that appears after the first one puts the balance of the whole composition in question thanks to the tension that

⁵⁹ According to Theo van Leeuwen (1999: 50-51), the timing of Western music is usually regularized in three ways: "(1) regularization of the tempo [that] remains constant during the whole of a song, piece, movement of a symphony or sonata and so on, (2) regularization of the amount of sound per measure, and regularization of the amount of measures per phrase. Any combination of these is possible in speech as in music or in semiotic production using 'non-musical' sounds and intricate patterns can be produced by alternating different degrees or types of regularization. The meaning of different metrical patterns is in part based on *provenance*, on 'where the patterns come from' (and on the association we have with that 'place'). In Western music triple patterns have a history of being associated with 'sentimental' rather than 'heroic' music, for instance. But there is another factor as well *experimental meaning potential* – our knowledge of what we do when we produce the pattern can be the basis for giving it a specific semiotic value in a specific context. In producing a triple pattern we know that we are doing something relatively artificial and unusual. Most human actions have a duple rhythm, and in music, too, triple rhythm is the exception rather than the rule". Nevertheless, there is also unmeasured time. As a matter of fact, Medieval Church music was based on a time fluctuation in which "the absence of a sense of regular pulse [...] could set sacred time apart from profane time, from the rhythm of everyday life and work [which] then became incorporated in the 'high' music of the Renaissance, replacing the eternal time of medieval high music, to celebrate the rules sacred in the new era – the work ethic, [...], the clock-like regulation of life, and [...] of the universe itself" (ibid. 51)

relates all the elements that it contains. This tension is always “la force motrice de l’oeuvre musicale”⁶⁰ (Tarasti 1985: 652). Secondly, isotopy can be seen as the thematic principle that gives coherence to the whole composition, even when its structure appears problematic because it subvert the traditional structure of a given form. This is what happens in the *Piano Sonata in E major* by Beethoven, whose three movements do not respect the traditional sequence of fast and slow of this musical form. In fact, in the first movement there is the alternation of “Allegro vivace” and “Adagio”, while the second part is a fast “Prestissimo” that leads to the last one, characterized by a large sequence of variations on a *lied*-type theme. Thus, the central theme of the sonata through which we can understand the previous parts, appears only at the very end, making “all that is heard in the work before [its] emergence belong to the ‘not yet’” (Tarasti 1994: 8). Thirdly, it can be identified with a musical genre (sonata, fugue, canon, and so on) through which a listener can structure what he perceives. From this point of view, musical forms offer “ready-made contexts which filter an immediate musical experience into a form and offer a self-evident isotopy for sound events” (ibid) that function only inside a specific tradition. As a matter of fact, these schemes are usually useless when we have to deal with avant-garde music or with traditions that are not related to Western tonal musical system.

Also the type of texture of the composition can operate as another kind of isotopy of which we realize the existence only when it is varied. In the first movement of the sonata *Les Adieux*, for instance, Beethoven chooses not to use the A-flat tonality in order to make its appearance more unexpected and striking at the beginning of the Allegro (Tarasti 1990: 142). Finally, it can correspond to the text strategy of a musical passage

⁶⁰ “is the enhancing power of any musical work”.

because the same theme can be modified in order to create different effects. The specificity of the art of sound is based on the fact that, on one hand, music is often considered as the voice of unattainable forces according to Romantic principles that are still very influent. On the other hand, the art of sound is entirely depending on its actual realizations. These contradictory features must be taken into consideration whenever we want to examine musical modes.

Isotopy is always considered in relation to three other main categories that Tarasti borrows from Greimasian theory: *spatiality*, *temporality*, and *actoriality*. These categories articulate tonal space, temporal structure, and thematic elements in an exteroceptive and interoceptive way, that is to say according to how they are concretely related in a composition and to the subtle inner musical dynamics on which these modalities are based. Each of them becomes a possible field in which it is possible to identify *débrayage* and *embrayage*, two other dynamics that, according to Monelle (1992: 258), can be more or less translated in English respectively as 'disengagement' and 'engagement'.

Spatiality is, from the interoceptive point of view, the articulation of notes around tonal centers or the opposition between tonality/atonality. The codified sequence of harmonic passages that must be followed in classical forms to move from the central tonality to its related tones and vice versa coincides with the system of engagement/disengagement strategies operating at this level. External spatiality is, instead, related to register because it coincides with "the different ways the (sound) space is filled throughout a composition" (Tarasti 1990: 145), both vertically (sound pitches) and horizontally, that is to say in the concrete sequence of notes and pauses. This outer

organization of the musical space allows the listener to perceive music as a sound continuum moving towards him. This feature is directly related to the fact that in tonal music any note of a composition is structured around a precise tonal center. In compositions following the traditional principles of Western music until the late nineteenth century, disengagement is represented by the fact that, in the first part, they usually start with notes in the middle register and then extend their field of action, whereas engagement coincides with the restriction of it. This spatial dynamic is for instance perfectly visible in the physical movements of the hands of a pianist moving along the keyboard. The wide range of interval leaps, embellishment by means of grace notes, arpeggios, chromatic sequences—that in Chopin and Wagner extend even over three or four octaves—used in Romantic melody to convey emotions and passion are other typical examples of spatial *débrayage*. Nevertheless, this disengagement concerns only external spatiality because inner spatiality, or rather the harmonic structure of a piece, usually remains centripetally organized around the original tonal core. According to Tarasti (1996: 13): “in an harmonic sense Romantic music maintains the principle of one tonal sense, a principle established as early as two hundred years earlier; while in terms of melody and other parameters, Romantic music may do all it can to weaken the external spatiality with a maximal and often irreducible *débrayage*”.

Temporal articulation is instead the rhythmic articulation of a musical piece. The outer organization of tempos, meters, time units and phrases, represents the space of *débrayage/embrayage* strategies according to how rhythmic patterns follow or diverge from the basic temporal scheme of a piece. Syncopation, for instance, can be seen as a disengagement strategy in relation to traditional rhythmic structures based on a precise

sequence of fixed accents. In the same way, the first tempo of a sonata sets a temporal point of reference from which the largo and the rapid finale represent a *débrayage*, while the return to the first structure, though with some variations, can be seen as an *embrayage* dynamic. In Romantic music, the rhythmic-symmetric structures of Classicism are abandoned and replaced by “a freely pulsating rhythm that follows no meter” (Tarasti 1996: 18), but there is still a wide use of cadenzas, rubatos and ritardandos, all techniques that create metrical disengagement. Whereas temporal articulation is, from an outer point of view, a metric-rhythmic analysis, interoceptively, it is based on the comparison of the constituents of a musical syntagm. However, there is also “an inner temporal network that can be called the aspect of ‘becoming’” (Tarasti 1990: 146). Musical events have an internal duration that allows us to identify a now/then, a before/after in relation to a contingent ‘now’ experienced in the enfolding of the musical continuum, which is also fundamental in defining mythical meanings in music. Although difficult to explain theoretically using generative systematism, for Tarasti “it is extremely important to understand this intuitive temporal structure of becoming” (ibid.) in the performance of a musical piece. Modalities become sometimes the central theme-actors of a composition because they are constantly repeated throughout it, as in Berlioz’s *Symphonie Fantastique*, where the main melodies become a sort of leitmotif. The narrative structure of such works leads the listener to recognize these themes and to follow their development “throughout the piece until the final victory [...] or the ultimate loss” (Tarasti 1996: 11).

Finally, *actoriality* is based on thematics because, whereas interoceptively it coincide with the distinction of theme-actors in a composition, from an exteroceptive

point of view is “a certain intentional figure [...] which usually corresponds to what is understood by a theme” (Tarasti 1990: 147). The listener recognizes the theme and identifies himself/herself with it; s/he anthropomorphizes the elements of a composition becoming a sort of ‘actant’, of living musical subject. Thus, the theme becomes “the ego of the narrative, which has three points of centrality: *hic, nunc, et ego*” (Tarasti 1990: 3).

In the 1970s, the introduction of the concept of modalities and modalization revolutionized semiotic studies of human communication. They should not be confused with the traditional musical modes, but considered from a philosophical and linguistic point of view as the way in which the process of music takes place. Yet, while in the Greimasian theory they convey the intentions of speakers toward the content of their utterances, in music they do not coincide only with what the performer or the listener can add to the ‘niveau neuter’ of a musical piece from the outside, but also with inner musical mechanism because modalities are usually a direct consequences of the three dimensions mentioned above. Actually, they could be identified with the relationships existing between two motifs or sections, or the way a main idea is presented and related to the other minor themes in the natural movement of the musical continuum toward a conclusion.

Tarasti identifies in a convincing manner three basic Greimasian modalities in music: ‘being’ (*être*), ‘doing’ (*faire*), and ‘becoming’ (*devenir*). The first one represents a state of stability, non-tensions, repose and musical consonance, while ‘doing’ can be seen as a concrete dynamic event or as musical dissonance. Between these two extremes there is ‘becoming’ (*devenir*), which coincides with the ‘normal’ temporal musical unfolding.

Nevertheless, it is possible to identify five other modalities operating in the musical discourse. The first one is 'will' (*vouloir*), which corresponds to the inner tendency of music to move towards something else. It is an important dynamic operating in codified Western musical tradition where there are many structures that "seem to be en route, passages from one fixed point to another" (Monelle 1992: 260) with a mere preparatory or developmental function. 'Can' (*pouvoir*) is another modality that has to do with the efficiency and power of music, and its technical resources (performance techniques, virtuosity, etc.). This dynamic is influenced by many factors that impose some limitations to its potentialities. The first obligation is represented by the characteristics and the technique of the instrument used, while the second one is style, which determines some limits from a formal point of view. Indeed, while a traditional Baroque movement usually ends in the original key or in a related one, a twelve-tone composition must follow certain patterns in the variations of the tone row, while an Indian improvisation always reflects the raga. These impositions coincide with musical 'must' (*devoir*), a third kind of modality represented by codified musical genres and forms. 'Know' (*savoir*) is instead "the cognitive moment of music" (Tarasti: 1994, 49) because it is related to the density of the musical content of a passage, theme, or episode. Redundancy, repetition, and poverty of information are the contrary of this modal dynamic.

Yet, as Monelle (1992) underlines, in classic compositions, *savoir* is condensed in the small space of a theme that is then varied and developed with a wide use of redundant elements. This is what happens, for instance, in Beethoven's *Eroica*, where two opening hammerstrokes are a rhetorical device to draw the attention of the listener to the well-

known dominant theme, which is concentrated in only six bars and then varied throughout the whole movement. Finally, 'believe' (*croire*) is a modality that corresponds to the epistemic values of music, and its persuasiveness in conveying values such as truth/untruth, lie/secret, in the different parts of a piece.

Modal articulations coincide in music with "the living tensions inside the external manifestation" (Tarasti: 1994, 39). The themes and the elements of a composition are usually organized in hierarchic structures in which each of the themes is subordinated to some other through a modal dynamic that gives different values of pertinence to each of them. According to Lerdahl and Jackendoff, the hierarchic relationships between two or more inner musical features can be explained as the result of the dynamic interaction of 'will' and 'must'. Tarasti (1990) also suggests that, according to this principle, it might be possible to obtain a modal grammar of any musical composition by isolating and examining, at a time, pitch structures, metrical-rhythmic patterns, and dynamic values according to its modal contents.

Nevertheless, we should not forget that musical manifestation entirely relies on the choices made by the executor and the fact that "la même oeuvre puisse être interprétée de façons différentes, est la preuve que les modalités des sujets musicaux se distinguent, ou que ces sujets appliquent les mêmes modalités à doses différentes au même objet sémiotique"⁶¹ (Tarasti 1985: 655).

However, even if Tarasti shows quite systematically how the fundamental principles of generative grammar can be applied to that hybrid system of systems that music is, Echard sees this theory as a "fairly uncritical adoption of the work of Greimas

⁶¹ "the same musical work can be interpreted in different ways proves either that the modalities of the musical subjects differ from one another or that these subjects apply the same modalities to different extents to the same semiotic object".

which is today seen by many as a deeply problematic theoretical heritage, full of arbitrary choices and unexplained mechanisms.” (Echard 1999: 10). Albeit Tarasti manages to go beyond some limits of

the simple binarism of Greimas’s narrative trajectory by placing emphasis on modal relations and the affective dimension of actoriality in the musical surface [...] ironically, several readers [...] have been unable to escape the impression that, for all its systematicity, the analyses produced by this method seem in the some sense deeply arbitrary” (Ibid.)

Yet, Tarasti is not alone in his attempt to apply generative grammar to vocal and instrumental music. Hungarian semiotician Márta Grabócz, too, starts from Greimasian theory in her thorough analysis of Liszt’s piano works, though her approach is more idiosyncratic because her isotopies function above all as classemes. She bases her study on intonation theory and partially adapts it to narrative grammar, suggesting that “music is best understood as a heroic drama; not only in works inspired by literature and landscape, but even in pieces with abstract titles” (Monelle 1992: 258).

She considers semes as the smallest semantic units in her system of analysis the wide corpus of Lisztian music she examines. First, they coincide with motifs (in mottos, musical passages or accompaniment figures), to illustrative-associative figures and to symbols; but at the same time they can be seen in a wider sense as musical-historical ‘symbolism’ as activated by the harmonic and melodic structure of a piece, such as the rhetorical use of onomatopoeia in sixteenth century madrigals. In order to formulate this definition, she examines the evolution of this concept in Greimas’ theory, selecting the one given by the French linguist in his 1982 *Analytical Dictionary*:

the nature of semes is purely relational and never substantial, and seme cannot be defined as the end-term of the relation that one sets up or grasps with at least one other term of the same relational network. Thus, we acknowledge that semic categories are logically anterior to semes that can make up these categories and that semes can be apprehended only within the elementary structure of signification. It is by giving a precise logical status to constituent relations of such a structure (contradiction, contrariety, implication) that the concept of seme can be determined and made operational (Greimas and Courtés 1982: 279).

Among the Greimasian semic categories, Grabócz selects two semantic groups of figures and symbols classified as *figurative semes* and *abstract semes*. The first ones are “entities corresponding to elements of the expression plane of the semiotics of the world, i.e., articulations of the sensory classes, perceptible qualities of the world” (ibid.), while the others are “content entities that refer to no exteriority, but which [...] are used to categorize the world and give it meaning: for example, the categories relation/term, object/process” (ibid.). Starting from these entities, the semiotician identifies four major kinds of semes in Liszt’s composition: pastoral semes, ‘storm’ semes, heroic semes of fanfare for fight, and macabre semes.

She accepts the traditional definition of *classemes* as recurrent contextual semes whose presence assures coherence to a text, though, to connect generativism to intonation theory, she underlines the importance of *semantemes* (specific semes), one of the three sub-categories that make up *sememes* together with *classemes* (generic terms) and *virtuemes* (connotative semes). *Semantemes* become a central category in Márta Grabócz’s analysis. In fact, Jiránek, starting from the theories of intonation by Asafiev and Ujfalussy on which she, as well, bases her study, classifies *intonation*⁶² as a

⁶² According to Ujfalussy (1978: 136-137) “the materialist tradition of musical aesthetics uses the term intonation for denoting the sound expressions of a social milieu, of a human attitude, of a type of man and of a definite situation. This term derives from vocal music [...]. In the current practice of musical aesthetics

semanteme, arguing that “in music the function of semantemes is fulfilled by a specific musical semantic unit: intonation, which can be defined as a plurality of the smallest concrete sound contexts” (Jiránek 1979: 154). Moreover, he identifies four main types of intonation: intonations of genre, that is to say codified musical forms used for ceremonies and rites (dance, march, religious music); intonations of instruments; intonations of musical styles; and tectonic intonations. Grabócz suggests that we could also add Tarasti’s mythical semes to these categories.

According to the Hungarian semiotician, classemes are the Greimasian concept that better represents intonation because they both conform to the level of themes. Classemes correspond to the level of the musical phrase and period, while intonation designates units with a precise musical meaning acquired throughout the centuries. Starting from this basic assumption, she has showed the existences of sixteen major types of classemes⁶³.

Nevertheless, it is on the level of isotopy that she identifies seven specific groups in Liszt’s piano compositions, choosing to refer to the definition of semantic isotopy - adopted also by Tarasti—that in music should be understood as “the categories of the signified comprising several classemes—intonations to put into relief an essential and recognizable semantic category, in several works and in different forms, with the help of intonations and different semes” (Grabócz 1996: 208). The first isotopy she identifies is

the category of intonation represents inflections of the spoken language rather than simple melodic and rhythmic imitation. In the present terminology of [Marxist] musical aesthetic intonation means formulaic types of specifically musical sounds that transmit a human-social message, that represent definite characters in the totality of a composition”.

⁶³ The sixteen major types of classemes she identifies are: *appassionato* – *agitato*; march; heroic; *scherzoso*; pastoral; “*religioso*”; “*folkloric*”; *bel canto* – singing; *bel canto* – declamatory; “*recitativo*”; lamenting, elegiac; citations; the “*grandioso*”, “*triumfando*” (going back to the heroic theme); the “*lugubrious*” type deriving at the same time from “*appassionato*” and “*lamentoso*” (“*lagrimoso*”); the “*pathetic*”, which is the exalted form of “*bel canto*”; the “*pantheistic*”, an amplified variant of either the pastoral theme or the religious type.

the macabre and sinister Faustian question about life, which is realized by funeral march, lamento-lagrimoso, recitativo, and lugubrious *classemes*-intonations. The *semes* used are, instead, figures of storm and macabre symbols in general. The second one is the pastoral isotopy that may appear in themes of “scherzo”, “folkloric”, “bel canto”, and in pantheistic figures. Heroic isotopy is instead presented through *classemes* like “agitato”, “marche”, “héroïque”, “recitativo”, “grandioso-triumfante”, and *semes* referred to as “tempestuoso-eroico” and “figures of fanfare for fight”. Then, there are religious isotopies realized through “religioso”, “bel canto”, “recitativo” *classemes* and pantheistic *semes*. Pantheistic isotopy appears, therefore, as an intensified form of the religious or pastoral one. The sixth one is isotopy of mourning that emerges from themes characterized by “marche funèbre”, “lugubrious”, “recitativo-parlant”, and macabre symbols in general. Finally, isotopy of the macabre fight: stormy, demoniac that appears in most of the works with heroic isotopy through the help of figures of storm and fanfare.

Although isotopy seems to be the core of the application of generative principles to music, Tarasti considers also a second group of approaches that are based on ‘iconicity’ because they do not try to reduce music to abstract categories or discourses external to music, but “seek musical universals in the actual sound patterns of music” (Tarasti 1994: 11).

The most significant theories of this group are the theory of repetition formulated by Nicolas Ruwet, and the neutral level identified by Jean-Jacques Nattiez that we have just seen in the previous chapters. If the former has started a scientific approach to musical semiotics with his analysis, the latter has based all his theory on the inner

iconicity of music, because musical expression already has in itself all the elements that are necessary to analyze its content.

In order to understand iconicity, we have to start from the traditional division of the sign into signifier and signified elaborated by Saussure and the arbitrary relationship existing between them. Nevertheless, while in any verbal language the same concept can be expressed in different ways, given the fact that there is no direct bound between a meaning and the concrete form (phonemes and graphemes) we can use to convey it, in music there is no arbitrary relation between content and expression, which are, on the contrary, intrinsically connected. Therefore, even the slightest variation of the musical flux, modifies the whole content. This is why, according to Tarasti, "the relation between signified and signifier should be viewed as iconic" (*ibid.*).

Starting from this assumption, a branch of traditional musicology has tried to create a universal musical lexicon based on the principle that, musical signs that have the same iconic nature should have also the same content, though belonging to different musical system. This conclusion is unacceptable because the values and the meanings existing in a given culture may have no correlative in another one. Ruwet (1972) has made a very similar mistake while formulating his 'theory of repetition'. His claim that musical signified can be explained only by considering the actual form of a composition, is quite limiting because it excludes all the hidden elements that are implied by those concretely present in it. Actually, these understated elements are as important as the other ones.

After considering the main semiotic approaches to musical discourse, Tarasti formulates his own theory moving from an intriguing interpretation of some principles elaborated by American philosopher Charles S. Peirce, and by French linguist Algirdas J. Greimas. The main difference between these two scholars is, according to the Finnish semiotician, their philosophic approach because, “if Peirce is a realist (since in any case the object, the reference to the external reality always exists there), then Greimas would be a typical nominalist (for whom everything is convention, discourse, and ‘language game’)” (Tarasti 1990: 135).

Tarasti tries to extend Peirce’s semiotic model to music applying the three sign categories together with their nine subcategories identified by the American scholar, that is to say signs in themselves (*legisigns*, *sinsigns*, *qualisigns*), signs in relation to an object (symbols, icons, indexes), and signs in relation to their interpretants (*rheme*, *dicent*, *argument*). Using the definitions of symbols, icons, and indexes given by Karbusicky⁶⁴, Tarasti tries to account for the musical counterparts to these linguistic concepts. He starts from *symbols*, which are signs able to convey some (abstract or concrete) meanings through the conventions of a given culture. The idea of triumph associated to trumpet sound or the hunting to horns are examples of musical symbols, which sometimes represent cultural values that go beyond music itself. *Indexes* are essentially related to the state of an object and, consequently, they belong to the surface of musical expression, or rather to dynamics and musical ‘color’ showing subtle emotions and spiritual states. Finally, *icons* are based on isomorphism, or rather on the similarity in form of different

⁶⁴ According to Karbusicky (1986), *indexes* refer to the state of the object; *icons* are understood on the basis of isomorphism, while *symbols* are symbols, which convey some meaning through a certain musical tradition.

elements. In music they are represented by the instrumental imitation of natural sounds, such as wind, thunder, raindrops, bird song, and so on.

All the other Peircean sign categories have not been studied enough by musical semiotics. Nevertheless, the hardest relation to define is the one between signs and their interpretants, because they are based on a process that takes place in the minds of the listener who decodes music according to his/her personal background. After studying it for several decades, Peirce defined the concept of *interpretant* as the “the sign that, in the mind of a person for whom something is a sign, becomes the equivalent of the object” (Nattiez 1990: 146). Therefore, a meaning is shaped by the sequence of interpretants that takes place in the mind of a person. Although we may accept that “la particularité de la musique réside justement dans le fait qu’elle est à la fois mystère profond [...] et au même temps complètement dépendant de la phénoménalité de ses réalisations sensibles”⁶⁵ (Tarasti 1985: 654), signs in themselves represent a fundamental dynamics of musical creation because based on another sign system already existing in a culture, that functions as a rule (that’s why they are called legisigns) to produce specific signs (sinsigns or single sings) and concrete realizations (qualisigns).

Musical meaning emerges from the interaction of all these elements that can be analyzed through *Three-Dimensional Model of Music Analysis* suggested by Tarasti (1990: 137). In this model, all the sign-relations function as tentacles or connectors through which a musical work “orients itself, reacts to its environment and receives ‘nourishment’” (Tarasti 1994: 55), becoming a real “musical ‘being’” (ibid.) that interacts with the outside world. As a matter of fact, this chain of indexes, icons, and symbols,

⁶⁵ “The peculiarity of music is based on the fact that music is deep mystery and, at the same time, is entirely depending on the phenomenality of its actual realizations”.

connects the musical universe to the complex net of codes that makes up the culture system of which music itself is part.

Although this approach accounts for the relations between musical discourse and a cultural system, it does not underline that a musical work is already an independent corpus that contains in itself different strata of signification. Thanks to this inner structure, music does not only function as 'communication', but also as 'communication of communication'. This implies that the sign categories identified by Peirce, can be "internalized into the musical discourse with all nine subclasses" (Tarasti 1985: 138), and, once in a musical composition, "signs start to form a purely inner network, their own 'language game', in which the outer reality little by little loses importance" (Tarasti 1994: 56). From this point of view, iconicity coincides with the similarities between different parts of the same composition, such as the variations of the same themes. Indexicality is related to the inner coherence of a composition while moving from one motif to another. It gives a musical piece the sense of flowing and tension towards a solution because any note following the first one, modifies its own meaning, redefining the inner structure of a composition.

The relations between musical structures and external systems are usually quite contradictory. For this reason, Tarasti formulates an hypothesis according to which "the more music functions as an outer sign, the less we experience its functioning as an inner sign" (1994: 57). In order to understand these two dimensions of the musical discourse, he introduces the distinction between *interoceptive* and *exteroceptive* signs. The former refer to relations within a musical piece, while the latter connect musical discourse to the outside cultural system. Thus, the three sign categories (symbols, icons, indexes) work at

two levels (inner/outer) in any composition. It is very difficult to analyze the ways they interrelate, although we can say that usually “the paradigmatic aspect of music represents interoceptive iconicity, while the syntagmatic one corresponds to a kind of interoceptive indexicality” (ibid.). As a matter of fact, in classical Western music it is possible to find some topoi (such as waltzes, chamber and sacred music, and so on) that function as exteroceptive indexes, icons, icons and symbols because they originate from socio-cultural practices that are ‘translated’ into a musical correlative.

Whenever these topics are combined into a musical piece, they move from the inner musical texture to echoes of the outside reality, giving life to a sign network that assures coherence to the whole composition because the interrelation between the two dimensions grant a double nature to the ‘musical being’. However, this constant overposition makes it difficult to define in a detailed way both exteroceptive and interoceptive elements. In general, we can say that interoceptive iconicity corresponds to similarity within a musical piece, while exteroceptive iconicity gives it a sense of continuity. Interoceptive symbols are even more problematic because they are based on abstract sign relations that refer more to concrete musical situations through the composition, than to any particular music substance (Tarasti 1994: 58).

Tarasti’s analysis of musical narrativity is for sure one of the most articulated semiotic systems elaborated in the last decade which shows the complexity of music and the endless levels of analysis of signification of this polymorphic sign system.

1.6 Conclusion

In this first part, we have discussed some of the main methodological problems of musical semiotics in the last decades. First of all, we have offered an historical survey of

this science to show the rapid evolution undergone by this new field. Secondly, we have examined the work of some of the most important musical semioticians in order to describe their application of linguistic principles.

We have also provided the reader with some important analytical procedures and tools that will be the starting point of the analyses offered in the second part of this work. We have consequently explored some semiotic methodological issues starting from the principle of repetition in Ruwet's model that, even though limited and dated, witnesses the concern for scientific musical methods that characterizes most musical semioticians in reaction to the arbitrariness that still pervades most traditional musicology. Then, we have discussed the problem of interpretation of the musical object in Nattiez, who defines it as a procedure *ad infinitum* where the traditional model of interpretation is no longer univocal but the result of a tripartite process open in any direction (composer, performer, listener).

With Stefani, we have instead explored the idea of music as a 'social fact' through his Model of Musical Competence, one of the most complete procedure that accounts for music not just as a mere acoustic event but as a socio-cultural codified event and practice articulated on five progressive levels of meaning and competence. Finally, we have explored the complex model formulated by Tarasti who has borrowed important linguistic notions from Greimas and Peirce in order to show the possibility of creating a theory of musical narrativity.

PART II: HUMOR IN MUSIC

II.1 Introduction

In the second part of this work, we will survey the use of humor in vocal and instrumental music in order to see if and how the *General Theory of Verbal Humor* (GTVH) can be applied to analyze musical compositions.

First of all, we will describe the three main groups of theories of humor, focusing on the *Semantic Script Theory of Humor* (SSTH) formulated by Victor Raskin in 1985 and on the innovations introduced by Salvatore Attardo's *General Theory of Verbal Humor* in the 1990s.

Secondly, we will start from the semiotic Model of Musical Competence (MMC) discussed in chapter five of the first part to show how music is a codified cultural sign system that, although able to activate many codices on different levels, is perceived as a coherent whole.

Since the meanings of a 'musical fact' are always produced in and by a given socio-cultural system and understood according to the conventions of that network, we will apply the five interrelated levels of competence of the MMC in order to demonstrate how certain musical mechanisms can produce humorous effects by violating the principles of communication and giving life to 'musical incongruity'. Thus, we will analyze several musical compositions of vocal and instrumental music in order to account for the functioning of this musical incongruity and try to draw a possible comparison with verbal incongruity, focusing above all on the mechanisms of the GTVH.

II. 2 From Verbal to Musical Incongruity

In verbal language, humor is based on a violation of the traditional rules of conversation, that is to say of the set of conventions governing language use that preserves its integrity by requiring us, among the other things, to be honest in its use, to have evidence for what we say, and to make what we say relevant to the speech context.

In the 1960s, philosopher H. P. Grice introduced the *Cooperative Principle* to describe the rules we should follow in order to fulfill the goals of our conversation. It goes without saying that the requirements may be slightly different according to the different types of conversations. The cooperative principle consists of four sub-principles, also called maxims:

1. *Maxims of Quality:*

- a. Do not say what you believe to be false.
- b. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

2. *Maxims of Quantity:*

- a. Make your contribution as informative as required.
- b. Do not make your contribution more informative than required.

3. *Maxim of Relation or Relevance:*

- a. Make your contribution relevant.

This maxim is also defined as 'the super maxim' because it is extremely important in establishing the content of a conversation by setting precise limits and in helping to draw conversational inferences.

4. *Maxims of Manner:*

- a. Avoid obscurity of expression.

- b. Avoid ambiguity.
- c. Be brief.
- d. Be orderly.

The respect of these principles makes conversation easier and successful. Nevertheless, they may sometimes be violated on purpose. The three main cases of violation of one or more maxims constituting the cooperative principle are represented by jokes, lies and the language of advertisement.

Musical discourse, too, is based on the idea of an inner coherence that makes it possible to convey certain meanings to listeners. According to the MMC, these meanings vary according to the competence that the listener/performer is able to apply to the codes activated at the five different levels mentioned by Stefani. However, the main element that should be transmitted in order to fulfill the goal of 'musical communication' is the central theme(s) on which a composition is based, that is to say the central idea around which the entire piece is organized.

According to London (1996: 59), although "pieces of music are not conversations but thoughtfully composed artworks", we may find in them some intentional violations of the cooperative principle. Actually, we may have musical themes that are too long or too short described in terms of overstatements or understatement because they violate the maxim of quantity; melodic or harmonic non sequiturs like a 'deceptive' cadence are violations of the maxim of relevance because they mislead the listener who tries to follow the linear development of the theme; (tonal) ambiguity, rhythmic chaos, and excessively dense musical textures violate the maxim of manner.

As we have already underlined, jokes in general do not respect the basic rules of conversation because they violate some of the maxims set by Grice: they may state falsehood, provide irrelevant or insufficient information, or, as it happens in most cases, make use of ambiguous and incongruous elements.

Incongruity has a central role in humor theory. In his classification of humor theory, Raskin (1985) identifies three main groups: *incongruity theories*, *hostility theories* and *release theories*.

In the first one, humor is based on the perception of an incongruity between expectations and actual perception. This is a concept that goes back to Aristotle and has been extensively analyzed by important philosophers like Kant and Shopenhauer. Whereas Kant defines laughter as “an affection arising from sudden transformation of a strained expectation into nothing” (Kant 1790 quoted in Morreall 1987: 47), Shopenhauer refers directly to incongruity when he describes laughter as the direct consequence of “the sudden perception of the incongruity between a concept and the real objects which have been thought through it in some relation, and laughter itself is just the expression of this incongruity” (Shopenhauer 1819 quoted in Morreall 1987: 52). According to Attardo, these theories can be regarded as “direct ancestors of ‘cognitive’ theories” (1994: 48) because they are originated by “the mismatch between two ideas in the broadest possible sense” (ibid.). Moreover, since “they are conceptually closer to linguistic theories of structuralist descent because they are essentialist” (ibid. 49), they have often been associated with linguistic theories. It is indeed true that they account above all for cognitive features of humor rather than for psychological or interpersonal aspects and, in general, are based on the opposition of two sets of ideas—that we could also define as

concepts, scripts, frames—which are in contradiction with each other. It is on this category that we want to focus in order to identify possible uses of humor in music.

The second group is represented by hostility theories in which humor arises from a feeling of superiority and triumph over somebody or something, or of aggressiveness and overcoming a target. Known also as derision, aggression, disparagement of disposition theories, they are very ancient because philosophers like Plato and Aristotle described the functioning of this kind of humor in comedy. Also Hobbes concentrated on it, elaborating “the idea that laughter arises from a sense of superiority of the laughter toward some object” (Attardo 1994: 49). At the turn of the twentieth century, Bergson (1899) was the most influential supporter of the idea of aggressive humor as a social corrective of deviant behavior, a notion that has had a large influence on sociolinguistic studies throughout the last century. In general, most contemporary researchers recognize the importance of feelings of superiority in humor analysis, even though there is also a large tradition of jokes based on absurd, grotesque, nonsensical elements that do not involve any feeling of superiority. These jokes seem to put under question the importance of hostility in humor, given that we should always start from the assumption that “there are cases of both humorous and nonhumorous laughter that do not involve feelings of superiority” (Morreall 1983: 24), as well as cases entirely based on hostility towards someone or something.

In release theories, humor would instead let individuals free themselves of some constraints or of oppressing psychic energy. Freud (1905) has had a fundamental role in the development of release-based theories of humor with his work on interpretation of jokes. As a matter of fact, in *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious* he introduces

the difference between tendentious and abstract humor. Tendentious forms of humor represent the core of release theories because they are characterized by the satisfaction of a suppressed desire (this is for instance the basic mechanisms of obscene jokes), while abstract humor is based on free playful motivation that is more difficult to grasp.

Freud also surveys the techniques of jokes, starting a first classification of humor mechanisms. He identifies twenty different types of jokes that can be divided into two main groups: condensation and displacement. In the former case, jokes are based on one signifier that enhances several meanings at a time, while the latter is based on “the diversion of the mental path” (Freud 1905: 75) that leads us to view an actual meaning in a perspective different from its original content.

One of the most influential theories of humor formulated in the last decades is the *Semantic Script Theory* (SSTH) by Raskin in 1985. This theory is based on the concept of semantic *script*, a notion that, first elaborated in psychology, has come into linguistics through studies in Artificial Intelligence. According to Attardo, “a script is an organized chunk of information about something (in the broader sense). It is a cognitive structure internalized by the speaker which provides the speaker with information on how things are done, organized, etc.” (1994: 198). Thus, it is a frame that helps the speaker to focus and select meaningful information. This theory is both semantic and pragmatic. In fact, according to Raskin “no operational boundary could be identified between the strictly semantic (lexical) and the pragmatic (encyclopedic information), thus pre-empting claims that the SSTH was a purely semantic theory. The SSTH does in fact incorporate a very significant component, which sees humor as a violation of Grice’s cooperative principle” (Attardo 2001: 5)

Usually, scripts can be activated either by *grammatical triggers* (pronouns or deictic elements) or by *lexical triggers*, that is to say by the new information we can elicit by the lexical meaning. These elements activate first, our lexical competence and, then, our personal knowledge of the world through which we start mapping the possible content of the information. Therefore, scripts are originated by a sequence of stimuli that move from the lexical input to the network of meanings we can assign them. Similar scripts can be chronologically organized in macro-scripts or in related complex-scripts.

According to Raskin, there are two fundamental conditions that a text must satisfy in order to be humorous: “i) The text is compatible, fully or in part, with two different scripts; ii) The two scripts with which the text is compatible are opposite” (Raskin 1985: 99). The oppositeness of the scripts is based, on an abstract level, on the opposition between the domains of Real vs. Unreal, which can more specifically be divided into three types of oppositions: Possible vs. Impossible, Normal vs. Abnormal, and Actual vs. Non-Actual. In the analysis of scripts, they are translated into a wide range of oppositions, for instance: Known vs. Unknown, Good vs. Bad, Obscene vs. Non-Obscene, and so on.

In jokes, scripts are usually made evident by the closing punch line, which may introduce the idea of *ambiguity* or *contradiction*. In the former case, we can give a double interpretation to an event; in the latter, we have instead a second retroactive interpretation of the text.

The most important evolution of SSTH has been introduced by the GTVH presented by Attardo and Raskin in “Script Theory Revis(it)ed: Similarity and Joke Representation Model” (1991), and more extensively expanded by Attardo in *Linguistic*

Theories of Humor (1994), "The Semantic Foundation of Cognitive Theory of Humor" (1997), and *Humorous Texts: A Semantic and Pragmatic Analysis* (2001).

The main innovation introduced by GTVH compared to SSTH, is on the methodological approach. As a matter of fact, while SSTH focuses just on a semantic approach, GTVH is a broader linguistic theory that deals not just with semantics and pragmatics, but also with narratology and other linguistic fields. Moreover, GTVH introduces a complete analysis of humor based on the following six Knowledge Resources (KR):

1. Script Opposition
2. Logical Mechanism
3. Situation
4. Target
5. Narrative Strategies
6. Language

The Script Opposition (SO) is the fundamental opposition of the meanings of the two scripts introduced by SSTH, on which the humorous effect of a joke or text relies. Logical Mechanism (LM) is instead the logic that allows the disambiguation of a humorous text because it clarifies the nature of the opposition contained in the script. The Situation (SI) accounts for the implicit and the explicit context and background of a joke, which does not need to be necessarily funny, while the (TA) represents the butt of the joke, that is to say the intended victims of the joke, which is not always present and/or relevant. However, the most frequent targets are ethnic and political groups, or individuals representing a group, associated with fictional stereotyped contexts. Narrative

Strategies (NS) refers to the genre of jokes (riddles, question and answer, 1-2-3 jokes, and so on). Finally, Language (LA) includes “all choices at the phonetic, phonologic, morphologic, lexical, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic levels of language” (Attardo and Raskin 1991: 298) through which the joke is built.

Given the interrelated content of the KRs, there is a strong hierarchical dependence across the resources. Nevertheless, SO and LM are the most important because they unveil the incongruity on which a humorous text is based.

Attardo introduces also a detailed taxonomy of puns, phenomena that have been for a long time regarded as “the object of significant amounts of research in the structuralist framework [because] they were seen as the only legitimate field for the interdisciplinary contacts between linguistics and humor studies” (Attardo 1994: 108). However, since punning phenomena are still “uncharted” (ibid.), Attardo has introduced a new extensive taxonomy of puns offering and a complete account of their main features that we will briefly summarize.

First of all, puns are non-casual forms of speech intrinsically related to the surface structure of language (signifier) and, more in general, of any semiotic system. As we will see, it is possible to find also musical puns. Secondly, punning phenomena “invoke the presence of (minimally) two senses, but need not involve two ‘words’, the two senses can come about via the interpretation of any string and can come about as a result of syntactic ambiguity, as well as morphological (lexical ambiguity falls in this last category)” (Attardo 2001: 4). Alliterative puns are a particular kinds of punning phenomena based on the repetition of a given phoneme or sequence of phonemes throughout a text. Yet, not any ambiguous string is a pun. Semantic and pragmatic processes of disambiguation

solve the ambiguity of a pun. Since puns are originated by the presence of at least two interpretations, they can only exist in context, where their different senses become meaningful. These two interpretations may either coexist or be hierarchically organized, in the sense that the first one may make the second one possible or vice versa. The lexical unit in which the two meanings coexist is called *connector*, while the unit that introduces the presence of the second sense is called *disjuncter*. These two elements may be different and be found in two different entities or be contained in the same unit.

In general, all humor is founded on three sets of laws: semantic laws, according to which all humor is based on a semantic opposition between two concepts; pragmatic laws, stating that humor involves a violation of some rules of communication; semiotic laws, according to which the signified never varies and the only differences we may have are limited to the signifier(s). According to Attardo, the GTVH accounts for “the semantic aspect of humor as well as all its other linguistic (and certain non-linguistic features” (1994: 229).

Since a musical composition creates expectations in the listeners/performers at different levels that are organized around the structuring theme, whenever the thematic idea is presented in an ambiguous way or the musical devices on which the composition is based are used in an incongruous way, we may have some humorous effects that we can compare to verbal humor. As Casablancas Domingo points out:

en la música, como en el lenguaje, el humor representa una transgression de aquello que—presuponiendo el conocimiento por parte del receptor de los justos términos de una situación determinada y el normal desarrollo de la misma—resulta más lógico y previsible, y que, como consecuencia de dicha operación, justamente se enmascara, es violentado o llega incluso a

omitirse, todo ello con voluntad jocosa, no siempre explícita en cuanto tal⁶⁶ (2000: 1).

In her essay on *Musical and Linguistic Speech Acts* (1996), Justin London tries for instance to explain the reason why the well-known last measures (m. 171-172) of Joseph Haydn's *String Quartet in E-flat op. 33, no.2* are considered a musical joke and why this joke is actually funny from a musical viewpoint. As she points out quoting Bonds, in these closing measures

Haydn violates the conventions of musical closure in such a way that only the initiated listener can be certain at just what moment the piece actually ends. [...] What had first functioned as an opening antecedent phrase now serves as the final cadence of the work, and the rhythmic play on the conventions of closure makes the listener all the more conscious of those very conventions! (Bonds 1991 in London 1996: 70-71).

Starting from the assumption that Western listeners tend to consider music as a particular sort of language because of the encultured belief with which we grow up—which influences not only our way of describing music but also our way of listening to it—London bases her analysis on the level of speech act theory. Thus, she gives a complete account of the musical ending and of the musical context that we will here briefly summarize (London 1996: 53).

The movement has the structure of the rondo form (ABACA) until m. 140 where, instead of starting a new section as all the elements make us predict, we have:

- a. the insertion of an 'adagio' at m. 149;
- b. a fragmented repeat of the opening theme at mm. 153-156;
- c. a pause at mm. 167-170 and then, suddenly, mm. 171-172, which can be

⁶⁶ "In music, as well as in language, humor represents a transgression of what—assuming that the listener knows the correct terms of a given situation and its normal development—seems more logical and expected and, as the result of this process, is intentionally disguised, violated, or even omitted, all with a playful intent which is not always as such made explicit".

interpreted as a sort of exclamation point.

The adagio prepares the dismembered presentation of the main theme and final '!'. Following the stuttering and fragmented presentation of the rondo theme, we have a completely implausible presentation of mm. 171-172 introduced by the adagio passage and the short pedal (mm.153-166) that slow down the rhythm in order to reinforce the surprise effect of mm. 171-172. The 'exclamation-point effect' represents here the punch line of the musical joke because it suggests the incongruous idea that the finale of the piece is its beginning.

If we apply the knowledge resources of GTVH to this joke composed by Haydn on purpose in order to create this incongruous effect and to surprise the listener, we get the following analysis:

S.O.: end/beginning

L.M.: role reversal

S.I.: end of a rondo movement

T.A.: listener

N.S.: irrelevant

L.A.: irrelevant

According to London (ibid. 54), this situation "is precisely analogous to a situation in which a speaker does not literally mean what he says in a certain context, and thus the hearer is forced to pursue the speaker's meaning [...] in order to make sense of the situation". Since the listener's expectations are violated, it is a perfect case of incongruity.

Now, we will try to analyze some early Renaissance frottole, madrigals, and Baroque pieces that have a humorous content and form in order to see how and where humorous mechanisms can be identified. However, we can already anticipate that most of these compositions are based on *puns* that are, from a linguistic and semiotic point of view, “phenomena which involve the *significant* facet of the sign of which they are part in a relevant sense” (Attardo 1994: 109).

II.2 Analysis of humor in music

In this chapter we will try to survey the humorous effects of vocal and instrumental compositions in order to identify the main mechanisms on which they are built. Starting from the semiotic MMC by Stefani, we will focus on the Opera level (Op.) in order to describe how incongruity and the resources of verbal humor may function in the specific idiolect of a given work.

The pieces selected here are mainly examples of Renaissance and Baroque instrumental and opera music, although we have also included compositions representative of the twentieth century. The compositions we will examine are:

1. *Un sonar de piva in fachinesco: Lirum bilirirum* by Rossino Mantovano
2. *La bella Franceschina* by Anon.
3. *Cucú, cucú* by Juan del Encina
4. *Fair Phyllis* by John Farmer
5. *Who made thee, Hob, Forsake the Plough?* by William Byrd
6. *Cérémonie Turque* and *Air du Muphti et Choeur* by Jean-Baptiste Lully
7. *Le Tableau de l'Opération de la Taille* by Marin Marais

II.2.1 Un sonar de piva in fachinesco: Lirum Bililirim

This song is one of the five frottole composed by Rossino Mantovano, an Italian composer and singer who worked as a male contralto and director of the choir of the Cathedral of Mantua from 1509 to 1511. It is particularly interesting because it is “a parodic serenade sung beneath a woman’s window in Bergamasque dialect and to the accompaniment of bagpipes rather than lute” (“Rossino Mantovano”: New Grove Dictionary 2002 on line).

As a musical genre, *frottola* is a secular song of the Italian Renaissance embracing a variety of poetic forms. It became very popular at the turn of the sixteenth century and was the most important stylistic development leading to the madrigal. ‘Frottola’ is a noun coming from the Medieval Latin ‘frocta’, a conglomeration of random thoughts, and requires both a generic and a specific definition. Generically, the term covers the full range of secular polyphonic types that flourished in Italy from 1470 to 1530. Therefore, settings of odes, sonnets, strambotti, capitoli, canzoni and other forms related to them, are all considered kinds of frottola. More specifically, the term refers to a particular type, the frottola proper or, as it is often called in contemporary writings, the barzelletta. Usually, it is performed by one, two or three voices accompanied by lute or another instrument, and tends to have a homophonic texture. Poetry and music relate closely in the coordination of verse and phrase lengths, of rhymes and musical repeats, and of verbal accentuation and rhythms.

Even though this musical form arose from popular improvised performing practice, which was very widespread during the fifteenth century, it started to be cultivated by composers working for the richest Italian aristocratic courts and commons, above all in Florence and Mantua.

Dealing with popular as well as with classical themes, these pieces started to be written in vernacular language deriving from Latin. The major sources of frottola are the eleven books printed by Ottaviano Petrucci from 1504 to 1514.

Un sonar de piva in fachinesco: Lirum Bilirirum (1505-1511)

by Rossino Mantovano

Lirum bilirirum, li-rum,
Deh, si soni la *sordina*.
Tu m'intendi beh, *Pedrina*,
Ma non già per il *dovirum*.
Lirum, bilirirum, li-rum,
Deh, si soni la *sordina*,
Deh, si soni la *sordina*.

Le ses an che t'vo mi ben
E che t'son bon servidor,
Ma t'aspet che l'so ben
Ch'al fin sclopi per amor.
Deh, non da plu tat dolor,
Tu sa be che dig il *virum*.*

Lirum bilirirum, li-rum, lirum, lirum.
Deh, si soni la *sordina*.
Deh, si soni la *sordina*.
Tu m'intendi beh, *Pedrina*.

*[Sono sei anni che ti voglio bene
e che ti sono fedele servitore
ma ti aspetto qui lo so bene
e alla fine scoppierò per amore.
Forza, non darmi più tanto dolore,
Sai bene che dico il vero.]

Lirum bilirirum, li-rum,
Ah, play the muted strings.
You hear me well, Pedrina
-and not just out of duty.
Lirum bilirirum, lirum, li-rum.
Ah, play the muted strings,
Ah, play the muted strings.

For six years I have loved you
and been your faithful servant,
but I'm still waiting for you
and I shall surely burst with love.
Ah, don't give me more grief,
You know very well that I speak the truth.

Lirum bilirirum, li-rum, lirum, lirum.
Ah, play the muted strings.
Ah, play the muted strings.
You hear me well, Pedrina

If we apply the five levels of MMC by Stefani to describe the different levels of signification of this frottola, we get the following analysis:

-GC: like most popular song forms, frottola has a circular and repetitive structure that recalls the cyclic circle of life and death and in general makes it very singable and easy to follow. Here we perceive a sad but also playful serenade based on the use of different languages that, more than the idea of sufferance of the lover, conveys an almost comic effect.

-SP: it is a serenade, a codified social practice in which a lover stands beneath a woman's (Pedrina) balcony singing her his love and asking her to accept it after six years of faithful devotion;

-MT: typical structure of a four-voice frottola with a rather homophonic texture. Even though accompanied by lute, the melody tries to give the drone effect of the *piva*, a bagpipe. This is very unusual and intentionally thought to produce a parodic effect, as the first part of the title—*Un sonar de piva in fachinesco*—underlines. The text is divided into two stanzas of seven and eight verses each. Poetry and music relate closely in the coordination of verse. The verse-refrain scheme of the frottola has here frequently used repetitions;

-St: typical early Renaissance profane music with a well built polyphonic vocal structure characterized by a considerable homogeneity.

-Op.: the main trait of this composition is the high level of language incongruity not underlined by particular musical structures. It is on this level of competence concerning the idiolect of the composition that we can include the analysis of the use of humorous elements in music.

Now, we will here attempt to offer an account how certain resources typical of verbal humor are here exploited to convey the intended parodic effect of this frottola. Thus, we will view if and how it is possible to establish a relationship between the humor in the text and in the musical structure. In order to do so, we will start by analyzing the verbal text and then will focus on the musical score.

Lirum Bililirum is a frottola of two stanzas of four and five verses each based with a ripresa at the beginning of each stanza according to the following metrical scheme: ABBA ABB CDCDD ABB. All the verses are made up of eight syllables in trochaic meter with the exception of the long verse (“Lirum, bililirum, li-lirum, lirum, lirum”) of twelve syllables at mm. 36-40.

The first linguistic incongruity of the text is represented by the fact that it is based on the use of three different languages: Latin, Italian and Bergamasque dialect. Secondly, these languages are mixed together in a macaronic way to produce a humorous effect.

This is visible from the Latin-like title of frottola, *Lirum Bililirum*, built on the Latin genitive suffix *-um* that in the first part (‘lirum’) seems to have a specific meaning (‘of the lyric) introducing a classic topos, but this is immediately deconstructed by the redundant repetition of the second part (‘bililirum’) where the same term is repeated with the addition of the prefix *bili-* which suggests a sense of hyperbolic exaggeration, creating a word which does not exist in Latin. The same mechanism is used in other parts of the frottola, giving life to three puns.

The use of Bergamasque dialect, too, is extremely interesting not just because of the inappropriate use of its harsh sounds in a serenade⁶⁷ or because this is one of the few examples of use of this dialect in Renaissance musical compositions⁶⁸, but above all because Mantovano associates metonymically the content of this popular dance with its name. As a matter of fact, the *Bergamasca* or *Bergomask* is

a tune widely used for instrumental variations and contrapuntal fantasias in the late sixteenth century and the seventeenth. It was probably based on a folksong and folkdance, and its name suggests connection with the district of Bergamo in northern Italy. The tune was usually associated with the recurring harmonic scheme I—IV—V—I (Hedson, Gerbino and Silbiger 2002 in New Grove Dictionary on line).

Actually, the singable refrain of Mantovano's frottola follows this rhythmic and harmonic pattern (see mm. 1-4). However, we should not exclude the parodic intent of the use of this language due to local contrasts and rivalry between Mantua, where the composer was working, and Bergamo, a district that is geographically very close to Mantua.

If we go back to logical mechanisms (LM), one of the six fundamental knowledge resources used by the GTVH to account for the resolution of the script opposition (SO) producing humor, here we could say that the SO is originated by the overposition of the concrete and abstract meaning of 'Bergamasque', based on an implicit parallelism. Therefore, we have the following analysis:

SO: name of the dance vs. name of a language;

⁶⁷ The harshness of Bergamasque, the dialect spoken in the district of Bergamo, in Northern Italy was known since the Middle Ages. As a matter of fact, Dante Alighieri talks about it in *De Vulgari Eloquentia* (1309), while analyzing the structure of the main Italian dialects in order to find the most suitable to become the official language of the Italian peninsula.

⁶⁸ According to *Il Nuovo Vogel. Bibliografia della musica italiana profana* (1977), Andrea Gabrieli wrote several pieces in Bergamasque. In *Mascherate di Adrea Gabrieli et altri autori eccellentissimi a tre, quattro, cinque, sei, et otto voci novamente stampate, et date alla luce* printed in 1601 in Venice, there are three masquerades in this dialect: *Nu sem da Berghem tug' dottur valet; Provem dunqu'a canta per zendilezza; Cantom insembra tuch perque el ne caro.*

LM: implicit parallelism

SI: serenade

TA: lover

LA: macaronic mix of Latin, vernacular Italian and Bergamasque dialect.

This incongruity produces effects on the linguistic, musical and contextual levels all at once, because it underlines the vicissitudes of a lover who will never conquer the heart of his beloved.

Besides the use of Bergamasque dialect, the linguistic complexity of this composition also produces three puns based on interesting mechanisms. The first one is 'sordina', the last word of the second line, which is repeated also in lines 6, 7, 14, 15. This very word can in fact be interpreted as the name of a musical instrument and as the Italian adjective meaning 'someone who cannot hear', which is here particularly meaningful because it describes very well Petrina's attitude toward her lover. The entire line contributes to this double interpretation and makes it possible for the two meanings to coexist. Thus, "Deh, si soni la sordina" may either be read as "Ah, play the muted strings" or "Ah, let's make that deaf woman hear".

If we want to look at their relationship and the process of disambiguation of puns, we can say that the first hypothesis formulated about a pun, may be based on three different processes:

- a. it may be rejected because inadequate;
- b. it may work better than the second sense and be consequently accepted as the appropriate one;

- c. it may be in between the other two cases because the two interpretations may somehow coexist and related to each other.

Guiraud (1976) has analyzed the possible differences between the first sense (*ludant* or player) sense and the second sense (*ludé* or played) based on “an a priori distinction between the expected, ‘normal’ sense (*ludé*), and the unexpected, extraordinary sense (*ludant*)” (Attardo 1994: 136). Attardo criticizes this distinction as being too weak and general, although he accepts the second distinction suggested by Guiraud between the sense given in the text and the latent ones, which however introduces just a new terminology to refer to the traditional function of puns:

any pun will first introduce one sense (S1) to the text, and then a second one (S2) [...]. The two senses of the text come into contact in the ambiguous element, which permits their copresence in the text itself, and that the nature of the semantic relations between the two senses must be that of antonymy (ibid.).

There are at least four possible ways the two senses may relate to each other. First of all, they may have nothing in common and therefore there is no possible connotation; secondly, the two senses may coexist on the same level and the text can be read in both ways. Thirdly, S2 may influence S1 and determine the meaning of the first one. Finally, the pun may work in the opposite way, that is to say S1 forces connote S2. Nevertheless, it is true that “the determinant of the dominating sense is probably the presence in the general knowledge of speakers of a ready-made phrase” (ibid. 138). A pun is realized by a linguistic entity that may connect or separate the two senses. The one that connects them, it is called ‘connector’; the one that separates them, it is called ‘disjunctor’. The same linguistic unit may realize both these elements or not. In the first case, they are defined ‘non-distinct’, while in the second one ‘distinct’.

If we go back to the pun based on 'sordina', we can classify it under the case in which the two meanings coexist and are realized by the same linguistic unit. Actually, 'sordina' is the name of a small bowed unfretted fiddle, generally with four strings, made in a great variety of shapes that was played from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth, above all to accompany vocal music. Although this instrument is here very pertinent and may represent in generic terms the accompanying instrument, we know from the title that the frottola attempts to imitate the drone effect of a *piva*, a bagpipe, and has actually an unusual "accompaniment of bagpipes rather than lute" (Prizer 2002, New Grove Dictionary on line). It is only when the listener thinks of the second sense of the Italian word "deaf" by relating it to the context that the pun becomes meaningful. This second sense is reinforced by the rhyme with the following line, where the name of Pedrina significantly appears at the end of the verse. In the rhyme 'sordina/Pedrina' it becomes evident that Pedrina is the young woman who does not want to listen to/answer the man serenading, as the entire line "Tu m'intendi beh, Pedrina" ('You hear me well, Pedrina') underlines. It is not surprising that the entire piece ends with this very sentence. It is interesting to note that the English translation of 'sordina' as 'muted strings' suggested by Bartlett (1984: 15) perfectly conveys this idea.

At this point we should introduce the use of rhyme as a possible source of humor that we will better explore in the following compositions. In general, we can say that rhyme is always a very complex device based on the ability of the speaker to perceive the repetition of sounds from the main accent. Actually, rhyme is not a mere phonological process because "sound correspondences [in rhyme, alliteration, and metrical parallelism] become evaluated with regard to the closeness or remoteness of meaning between the

morphemes and richer entities to which the sound belong” (Jakobson and Waugh 1979 in Attardo 1994:161). Rhyme has also a semantic content as demonstrated by two fundamental ideas: first of all “a word cannot rhyme with itself [...], and second, the rhyme effect is stronger the more semantically distant the two rhyming words are” (ibid.). However, there is an inversely proportional relation between sound and sense in a rhyme: the more distant the meaning of two words, the largest their chance of rhyming. Thus, the traditional Saussurian union of signified and signifier is no longer enough to account for the meaning of words because we have to consider also the relations between sound and sense.

The example of pun we have just analyzed in *Lirum Bililirum* seems also to follow this rule. As a matter of fact, the word ‘sordina’ rhymes very well with ‘Pedrina’ because their meanings are very distant and hardly related.

Going back to the analysis of the puns used in the composition by Rossino Mantovano, we have to say that the last two examples are related to each other because they are partially organized around the same idea. The first one, ‘dovirum’, is found in the fourth line. In the classification offered by Guiraud, it would be regarded as a case in which the first sense connotes the second one. In fact, this Latin-like word can be etymologically interpreted as ‘duty’ (S1) or decomposed in ‘do-virum’, putting emphasis on the second part ‘toward a man’. This interpretation is justified by the context in which the term is found and by the subtle linguistic ambiguity generated by the over-position of Latin and vulgar Italian. If it is true that “all words are ambiguous, vague, or unspecified if they are not taken in context” (Attardo 1992: 133), then here we understand that the

deceived lover urges Pedrina to her 'dovirum', her 'duty' (here listen to him), which is also her duty 'toward a man'.

The same idea is proposed again in line thirteen with the word 'virum' at the end of the second stanza. In this case the use of Latin and Bergamasque dialect produces a really hilarious effect because the pun we get with this word is based on the first intended meaning of 'truth' suggested by the dialectal term, and the second one coming from the genitive form of the Latin word 'vir' (man), meaning here 'of the man', or rather in this case 'as a man'. It is again a case of coexisting senses, because the word can be read using both interpretations. However, here we have also to take into consideration the position of the word, which concludes the second stanza of the piece, acquiring extra-meaning. Thus, the final line offers this double interpretation 'you know that I speak the truth' or 'you know that I speak as a man'. This pun underlines once more the parodic intent that pervades the entire piece, which depicts the hopeless request of a man who has faithfully been waiting for an answer for six years and is not going to get an answer by means of this serenade. Given the frustration of the lover, we could also add that the humorous content of this piece can be viewed according to the principles of Release Theories of humor because it would allow the lover to make fun of his lover and his love.

If we go back to Guiraud's classification, in this case we have an example of different meaning coexisting in the same word. According to Attardo (1994: 138), although dated, Guiraud's analysis is still one of the most successful attempts to account for two elusive notions like the quality and the meaning of puns. If we accept this position, we attempt a classification of puns and claim that "the best [ones] are those in which either the two senses coexist in a difficult balance, or in which the connoting sense

brings a meaningful contribution to the global senses of the text" (ibid.). This is exactly the function of the three puns identified in *Lirum Bililurum*, which stand out as keywords that guide the listener to understand the expected as well as the latent meanings of the frottola.

Also, the musical structure of the composition confirms this hypothesis. Based on a basic I-IV-I-V-I harmonic pattern, this ambiguous serenade has a homogenous structure in the first stanza, which is quite melodic, with only one shift of pitch center from C to F, one of his candential tones, in correspondence with the word 'dovirum' (line 4). Thus, a musical device is intentionally exploited to accompany and emphasize the functioning of the pun. The same thing happens with the following puns. In line 6, besides helping the pun on the word 'sordina', the modulation announces the beginning of the new stanza.

The higher level of ambiguity of this second part due to the use of Bergamasque dialect is marked from a musical point of view by a quicker rhythmical structure and a higher register, which seems also to stress and to parodize the harsh sounds of the dialect. The final verbal pun is accompanied by a shift to F and by the rapid introduction of the final refrain.

XXXII

Rossinus Mantuanus
Un sonar de pissa in fachineser (Trasovic, Raffaele Monterosso)

di - ma in in pissa di L. rum L. rum L. rum L. rum L. rum L. rum L. rum L. rum

di - ma in in pissa di L. rum L. rum L. rum L. rum L. rum L. rum L. rum L. rum

li. rum bi. li. li. rum li. rum De si so. ni le sor.

li. ma De si so. ni le sor. di. na. le sup rap les ho
 Ma t'aplet chal so

France

ben le sup bon bon ser. ni. da De non da ple tat do. sor
 ben chal fin scarp per a. mor

Pa de la de dij il ni. rum) le rum bi. li. li. rum li. rum li. rum

De si so. ni le sor. di. na De si so. ni le sor. di. na

II.2.2 La bella Franceschina by Anon.

La bella Franceschina, ninina, bufina, la
fili bustachina
Che la vorria mari,, nini la fini
bustacchini.

Lovely little Frances, ninina, bufina,
La fili bustachina,
Would like a husband, nini
bustacchini.

La suo padre alla finestra, ninestra,
bufestra, la fili bustachestra,
Ascoltar quel che da di, nini la fili
bustacchi.

Her father is at the window, ninestra,
bufestra, la fili bustachestra,
Listening to what she says, nini la fili
bustacchi.

Tasi, tasi Franceschina, ninina ...
che te daro mari, nini...

"Hush, hush, little Frances", ninina ...
"for I shall give you a husband", nini...

Te darogio lo fio del conte, ninonte
bufonte, la fili bustachonte
Del conte constanti, nini ...

"I shall give you the Count's son", ninonte,
bufonte, bustachonte,
"the son of the Count Constanti", nini ...

E no vogio lo fio del conte, ninonte,
bufonte, la fini bustachonte
Del conte constanti, nini ...

"But I don't want the Count's son",
ninonte, bufonte, bustachonte,
"the son of the Count Constanti", nini ...

Che voglio quel giovinetto, ninetto,
bufetto, la fili bustachetto,
Che sta in prigion per mi, nin la fili
bustacchini...

"For I want that young man", ninetto,
bufetto, bustachetto,
"who is in prison because of me", nini
bustacchini...

La bella Franceschina is another typical example of Renaissance frottola. It is essentially a very simple popular song based on the traditional theme of the contrasted love of a girl who wants to get married to the man she is in love with, and not with the one chosen by her father. The MMC analysis we suggest here is the following:

-GC: popular song very easy to understand and sing because based on a kind of circular varied model typical of early Renaissance music;

-SP: popular song based on a traditional theme referring to the members of lower classes probably sung during carnival processions or games;

-MT: four-voice song with a simple rhythmic structure based on the constant repetition of the same verses slightly varied. The piece has a dialogic structure that can be divided into

three parts:

1. the narrating voice setting the scene;
2. the father announcing to Franceschina that she will get married to Count Constanti;
3. Franceschina complaining about her father's will and declaring her love for a young man in prison.

These parts are preceded and followed by a part in which the four voices just improvise using a sequence of nonsensical sounds, on the melody played by the accompanying instrument.

-St: simple polyphonic repetition based on variation;

-Op: simply structured language based on alternation of nonsense syllable whose vowels vary according to the vowel that appears in the central word introduced in each part.

On the level of text, the humorous effect is here related to this nonsensical repetition of nouns based on alliteration, first to address Franceschina, and then to refer to all the other characters/objects mentioned.

This frottola allows us to continue the analysis of puns based on alliteration, which are one of the few types of puns not based on the connector/disjunctive opposition mentioned in the previous analysis. Attardo (1994: 139) classifies them as "diffused" because they are characterized by the repetition of simple sounds or groups of sounds in a humorous text. Usually, after the third repetition of a sound, we can identify a pattern in which the reiterated sound functions as a connector, although it is impossible to find a disjunctive. The alliteration generates in the text an incongruous effect that may be reinforced by variations in the pattern identified. Although some linguists like Ferro-

Luzzi (1990) has denied the incongruity of alliterative humor, Attardo points out that intentional repetition has value and it is used to create specific effects because it leads speakers to relate it to certain elements. The aesthetic use of alliteration in poetry is probably the most convincing example of the value of this sound device.

In verbal language, there are two kinds of puns based on alliteration: “either the alliterative sequence is associated with an effect which is incongruous to the content of the text in which the alliteration occurs, or the alliteration is not associated with any effect, and so the hearer is deceived in his/her expectations” (ibid.). In both cases alliteration generates incongruity.

The humorous effect produced by *La bella Franceschina* is entirely based on a use of alliteration introducing light variations of meaning that remembers the playful effect of some popular children tunes based on the varied repetition of the sentence or verse⁶⁹. Different patterns of sounds are presented on each stanza to modify the vowel sounds of the same sequence constantly re-proposed in the text. The alliteration is set on the seventh syllable of the first line of each stanza and it corresponds to modifying Italian suffixes that bring to light nuances of meaning in the line. The patterns identifiable in the text are:

La bella Franceschina, ninina,
 bufina, la fili bustachina
 Che la vorria mari, nini la fini bustacchini.

La suo padre alla finestra, ninestra,
 bufestra, la fili bustachestra,

⁶⁹*Garibaldi fu ferito...* is one of the most popular Italian tunes based on this changement of vowel. It is based on a simple text of four lines: “Garibaldi fu ferito/fu ferito ad una gamba/Garibaldi che comanda/ Che comanda i suoi solda”. It is constantly repeated replacing all the original vowels with one of the seven Italian vowels at a time producing hilarious effects. Thus, if we start for example by inserting the vowel ‘a’, we get the “Garabalda fa farata/ fa farata ad ana gamab/garabalda ca camanda/ ca camanda a saa salda”.

Tasi, tasi Franceschina, ninina ...
 che te daro mari, nini...
 Te darogio lo fio del conte, ninonte
 bufonte, la fili bustachonte...
 E no voggio lo fio del conte, ninonte,
 bufonte, la fini bustachonte...

Che voglio quel giovinetto, ninetto,
 bufetto, la fili bustachetto, ...

In the first and third stanzas, we have the repetition of *-ina*, starting from *Franceschina*, a suffix that usually means 'little/young'. In this case it may be seen in relation to the innocence of this young woman by the narrative voice starting to set the story. In general, all the suffixes are repeated at least four times in each stanza. In the second one, the *-estra* suffix does not have any particular meaning, while the fourth and fifth stanzas are built on the alliteration of the suffix *-one*, which in Italian has an enlarging value. This is opposed to the suffix *-etto* in the last part of the song, which has instead a diminutive value. This juxtaposition is here particularly meaningful because it underlines the distinction between the rich count whom Franceschina's father wants her to marry, and the poor young man the girl would like to marry. The other type of alliteration in this text is represented by the repetition of "...nini la fili Bustacchi(ni)" that appears in the final part of each stanza with little variations. Moreover, we should also mention that the actual text of the song is preceded and followed by a free meaningless improvised sequence of simple sounds ('lala', 'lili',) following the melody of the accompanying musical instrument.

The opposition between the 'value' of Franceschina's two possible future husbands introduces what could be seen as the punch line of the text: Franceschina wants to marry a man in prison not just to oppose her father's will, but because she knows that,

by marrying the man chosen by her father, she would metaphorically end up in prison (=marriage) for the rest of her life. Consequently, we would get the following analysis:

SO: freedom vs. marriage

LM: figure-ground reversal

SI: girl opposing to a pre-arranged marriage

TA: the father

NS: irrelevant

LA: wide use of alliteration.

As far as the musical structure of the composition, we notice that the music tends to be very rhythmical in order to emphasize the effect of alliteration. Secondly, it is quite imitative because while the baritone representing the father uses an authoritative timbre, the alto imitating Franceschina's voice uses as a soft feminine timbre. Some singers underline the emotional content of the exchange between the two characters with more or less emphatic tone according to the content conveyed by the text.

The use of alliteration is a well-known device in music. We can find many examples throughout Western vocalic music, from Banchieri's madrigals based on the imitation of animal voices to *La Cenerentola* and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* by Rossini, just to quote some of the most popular.

II.2.3Cucú, cucú, cucucú by Juan del Encina (1496)

¡Cucú, cucú, cucucú!
Guarda no lo seas tú.

Cuckoo, cuckoo, cuckuckoo!
Watch out you don't become one too!

Compadre, debes saber
Que la más Buena mujer
Rabia siemprehi por deser
Harta bien la tuya tú.

My friend, you should know
That even the best of women
Are always dying to be done.
Make sure you satisfy your wife.

¡Cucú, cucú, cucucú!
Guarda no lo seas tú.
Compadre, has de guardar
Para nunca encornudar;
Si tu mujer sale a mear,
Sal junto con ella tú.

Cuckoo, cuckoo, cuckuckoo!
Watch out you don't become one too!
My friend, you must be on your guard
Against being cuckolded at all times;
If your wife goes out to the loo,
Go out with her too.

¡Cucú, cucú, cucucú!
Guarda no lo seas tú.

Cuckoo, cuckoo, cuckuckoo!
Watch out you don't become one too!

Since the fifteenth century, the term 'villancico' (from the Spanish diminutive of *villano*, 'peasant') has been used to refer to vernacular musical and poetic forms made up of several stanzas (*coplas*) framed by a refrain (*estribillo*) at the beginning and end, giving an overall ABA structure. Originally derived from a medieval dance lyric of the *virelai* or *ballata* type and associated with rustic or popular themes, the villancico became very popular between the fifteenth and the second half of the sixteenth centuries, when it started to be used also in devotional and religious compositions. In the seventeenth century it became more important in Spain than the Latin motet, and although its artistic quality rapidly declined after the eighteenth century, it remained popular in both Spain and Latin America. Since then 'villancico' has come to mean simply 'Christmas carol'.

Juan del Encina (1468-1529) is a significant author of villancicos, many of which are collected in the *Cancionero de Palacio* that he published in Salamanca in 1496, which is "la primera collección completa de la obra de un poeta moderno que se

imprimió en España”⁷⁰ (Jones and Lee 1972: 17). *Cucú, cucú, cucucú* is one of the best-known villancicos of the collection.

In *Cucú, cucú, cucucú* the incongruity of the text is entirely originated by the pun based on the word ‘Cucú’ (Cuckoo) that, on one hand, recalls the voice of this bird, on the other, the idea of being cuckolded. Actually, the piece is based on the advice given to a man in order to avoid being cuckolded by his wife. The MMC analysis is:

-GC: joyful song based on a the imitation of the sound of a bird but referring to the theme of cheating in marriage;

-SP: Spanish villancico based on popular structure and theme;

-MT: four-voice texture with a regular structure based on the alternation of a simple refrain and two stanzas with clearly defined musical phrases for each line of text, which is set essentially syllabically and homophonically, with only the briefest of melismas on the penultimate syllable and a limited amount of independent movement between the voices in preparation for cadence points. The varied and flexible rhythms are patterned on the accents of the verse and make the song texts clearly audible and easy to follow, while harmonic progressions are simple and strong. The structure of the piece is extremely regular because it is made up of two stanzas preceded and followed by the refrain. From the metrical viewpoint, we have lines of seven and eight syllables following the this pattern: AA BBBA AA CCCA AA. The entire piece is built around F tonality without any significant modulation.

-St: typically lively and well organized Spanish villancico based on the regular form codified by Encina, which has not extensively been studied so far. Usually, the songs by this composer show a spontaneous, quasi-improvised character that witness their

⁷⁰ “The first complete collection of the work of a modern poet published in Spain”.

development from an unwritten, popular musical tradition that he codified for court consumption, just as most of his poems draw on popular, or popular-style, refrains which are then elaborated in the manner of the courtly love lyric.

-Op: as we have just seen, this piece is entirely organized around the pun on the word 'Cucú' that suggests a double interpretation supported by the verbal context and the musical content that produce hilarious effects.

If we take into consideration Guiraud, here we have a pun in which both senses coexist. Nevertheless, it is interesting to notice how the close relationships between verbal and musical elements seem to create a different hierarchy of perception of the two senses. As a matter of fact, if we move from the verbal to the musical text, we would first perceived 'cucú' as 'cuckolded' and then think about the bird's sound imitation. If instead we focus first on the musical performance, we would think first of all about the voice the bird underlined by the forth interval between A and F, followed by a pause and repeated three times with a little variation in the third repetition, where A is divided into to octaves increasing the rhythm of the refrain. Only when we get to the second line of the refrain would we become aware of the second sense of the pun thanks to the rhyme between 'cucú' and 'tú'. As Attardo (1994) points out, cratyism (pun) and rhyme are usually compatible phenomena cooperating in order to create different meanings in the mind of the reader/listener as it actually happens in this piece. However, since this villancico should represent the advice given by a man to his friend in order to teach him how to control his wife, it is usually performed as a sequence of pianos and fortes to stress meaningful sentences (line 2, 6, 11, 12) of this almost secret discourse between men, though the musical dynamics of piano and forte are not indicated in the manuscript.

Jones and Lee (1972), Poesía Lírica y Cancionero Musical, Editorial Castalia: 293

CANCIONERO MUSICAL

12 (112)

Cucú, cucú, cucucú

CMP f.60

3 [d.d.] s

1. ¡Cu - - cú cu - - cú cu - - cú! Guarda no lo

1 (Contra) Cu

[Tenor] Cu

Cu

Fin 10

se - as tú

2. Com - pa - dre, de - bes sa - - ber

3. que la mds bue - na mu - - jer

4. ra - ble siem - pre por ho - - der

i) p. p.

15 ac

5. Har - ta bien la tu - - ya tú

i) p. p.

1) CMP: fa superior blanca, fa inferior negra.

II.2.4 Two English Madrigals: “Fair Phillys” and “Who Made Thee, Hob, Forsake the Plough? A Dialogue Between Two Shepherds”

Madrigal is a poetic and musical form of the fourteenth century Italian tradition and then which became a term in general use during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to refer to musical settings of various types and forms of secular verse throughout Europe. There is no connection between the fourteenth and the sixteenth century madrigal other than that of name because the former passed out of fashion a century before the term was revived. It set the pace for stylistic developments that culminated in the Baroque period, particularly those involving the expressive relationship between text and music.

In the early sixteenth century, the new use of Petrarchan and Petrarchistic texts called for musical forms as free as the verse, and for a fully vocal, declamatory polyphonic texture as serious as the melancholy love-poems again in fashion. The madrigal slowly replaced the frottola. Since the madrigal is usually the setting of a one-stanza poem or of a single stanza from a canzone, ballata, sestina or poem in ottava rima, it lacks the verse-refrain scheme of the frottola, but it frequently uses repetitions. Since the repetitions are often the setting of rhymed couplets that might occur anywhere in a madrigal or canzone stanza, they are less predictable than those of the frottola. The musical repetition so common at the end of madrigals, however, is often a reiteration of the final line rather than the setting of a couplet.

As English poets adopted the Italian sonnet, “so the composers of England adopted the Italian Madrigal and developed it into a native art form” (Machlis and Forney 1995: 343), preferring simpler texts and a wider use of humor.

Fair Phyllis by John Farmer (1599)

Fair Phyllis I saw sitting all alone,
 Feeding her flock near to the mountainside.
 The shepherds knew not whither she was gone,
 But after her lover Amyntas hide.
 Up and down he wandered, whilst she was missing,
 When he found her, oh then they fell a-kissing.

This composition is characteristic of the English madrigal in its pastoral text and gay mood. After being composed and published by John Farmer (1591-1601) in his collection of four-part madrigals, it became very popular in London in the late sixteenth century. The MMC analysis of the piece is the following:

-GC: description of a shepherd in love looking for his beloved woman; general idea of the power of human love.

-SC: typical English pastoral madrigal describing an Arcadia of innocent shepherds in love surrounded by nature. It is a typical example of the musical and poetical ideals dominating English Renaissance models.

-MT & St: it is a four-voice madrigal of six lines of ten or eleven syllables each following the metrical scheme: ABABCC. It is characterized by repeated sections, fragments of contrapuntal imitation overlapping and obscuring the underlying meter, changes from homophonic to polyphonic texture, and cadences on the weaker pulse of the measure. In the last line there are two chords with a change to triple meter.

-Op: this madrigal is characterized by the use of the 'word-painting' technique borrowed from Italian madrigalists. This is based on the idea that musical motives should be able to describe the images of the story. In *Plain and Easy Introduction to Practical Music* (1597)—one of the most important musical treatises that give a clear portrait of the lively musical life in England during the reign of Elizabeth I—Thomas Morley extensively

describes the rules to compose music according to the content of the words accompanying it: "if you have a grave matter, [you must] apply a grave kind of music to it; if a merry subject you must make music also merry, for it will be a great absurdity to use a sad harmony to a merry matter or a merry harmony to a sad, lamentable, or tragical ditty" (Morley 1973: 290). He actually continues to list all the possible cases known at that time (ibid. 290-292). In this madrigal, the lines depicting the scene are sung by a single voice, while in the lines describing the shepherd wandering up and down the mountains are rendered musically by a quick "downward movements of the notes, which is repeated at various pitch levels and imitated in all the parts" (Machlis and Forney 1995: 344). This descriptive technique creates an enjoyable humorous effect that pervades the whole piece. This is based on the incongruous effect conveyed by the sudden and exaggerated range changes to portray the lover's desperation. Moreover, we could also read the last two lines as a punch line because it accounts for all the fear and the hurry of the young man to look for his friend as underlined by the fact that it is repeated four times when performed. This repetition of the rhyme between 'missing' and 'akissing' introduces an opposition that, on one hand accounts for the story told in the text and, on the other, for the hidden sexual reference, which becomes evident only when we related the verbal text to the floating rhythmical structure of the piece.

Who Made Thee, Hob, Forsake the Plough? A Dialogue Between Two Shepherds

by William Byrd (1543-1623)

2. Who made thee, Hob, forsake the plough and fall in love?

1. Sweet beauty which hath power to bow the gods above.

2. What, dost thou serve a shepherdess?

1. Ay such as hath no peer I guess

2. What is her name who bears thy heart within her breast?

1. Sylvana fair of high desert whom I love best.

2.O Hob, I fear she looks too high.
1.Yet love I must or else die

This is another typical example of English madrigal. Compared to the Italian madrigal, the English one was less long-lived and often used in the form of a consort song: solo voice with viol accompaniment. Byrd was one of the masters of this style. This piece is a dialogue between two shepherds that, like *Lirum Bililirum*, is just a parody of rustic and frustrated love. The MMC analysis suggested here is:

-GC: dialogue between two shepherds in a pastoral setting discussing love;

-SP: English madrigal based on a conversation about love that is in reality a parody of the innocent love of this rustic man who has probably fallen in love with a woman who looks down on him;

-MT: madrigal with a dialogical structure of two voices with viol accompaniment;

-St: simple structure of English madrigal based on a traditional pastoral test;

-Op: the dialogue between the two shepherds is full of pathos that makes us understand the intended humorous effect chosen by Byrd. As a matter of fact, the last two lines may be seen as a punch line because they show that the woman will never love the shepherd because "she looks too high". The incongruity emerges here from the name of the woman, *Sylvana*, which is here a pun because it can be read as the real name of a woman or, more generally and here more pertinently if related to the pastoral context, as the woods/Nature surrounding the shepherd. Thus, if we analyze the resources exploited here, we have:

SO: high vs. low; man vs. nature

TA: shepherd in love

LM: pun

NS: irrelevant

SI: dialogue between shepherds

LA: irrelevant

Of 4. voyces.

XV.

CANTVS.

F Aire Phyllis I saw fitting all alone feeding her focke neere to the
 mountaine fide, faire Phyllis I saw fit- ting all alone feeding her focke neere
 to the mountaine fide: the shepherds knewe not they knewe not
 whither shee was gone, but after her lo-uer, her loue, but after her loue
 Amyn- tas hied vp and downe hee wandred vp ij vp ij
 vp and down hee wandred, vp and down hee wandred, whilst
 shee was mifsing, whē he found her, oh thē they fell a kifsing a kifsing, oh
 then they fell a kifsing, vp & down he wandred, vp ij
 vp ij vp ij vp and downe hee wan- dred
 whilst she was mifsing, when he found her, oh then they fell a kifsing a
 kifsing, oh then they fell a kifsing.

NO. 41. WHO MADE THEE HOB FORSAKE.

A Dialogue between two Sheperds.

Very fast.

VOICE. (SUPERIUS.)

VOICE. (TERTIUS.)

VIOLA (MEDIUS.) *mf*

VIOLA (TENOR.) *mf*

VIOLA (TENOR.) *mf*

VIOLA (BASSUS.) *mf*

PIANOFORTE. *mf*
(when strings are not available.)

The musical score consists of seven staves. The top two staves are for voices: 'VOICE. (SUPERIUS.)' and 'VOICE. (TERTIUS.)'. The next four staves are for violas: 'VIOLA (MEDIUS.)', 'VIOLA (TENOR.)', 'VIOLA (TENOR.)', and 'VIOLA (BASSUS.)'. The bottom staff is for 'PIANOFORTE.' with a note '(when strings are not available.)'. The tempo is marked 'Very fast.' at the beginning. Dynamics include 'mf' (mezzo-forte) for the violas and piano. The score shows a dialogue between the two voices, with the piano accompaniment providing harmonic support.

If strings are not available for accompaniment these parts, originally intended for viols, may be played on the pianoforte. The short score edition forms no part of the original text. An occasional rhythm of three semibreves in a phrase must be observed in this song. The beat should be treated as having the value of a modern crotchet and a brisk tempo adopted.

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S & B 5207

mf

Who made thee Hob for - sake the Plough, and
 What is her name who bears thy heart with.

f

sweet beau - ty which hath power to bow the
 Syl - va - na fair of high de - sert whom

fall in love?
 - in her breast?

f

gods a - bove,
I love best,

What, dost thou serve a shep - herd - ess?
Oh Hob, I fear she looks too high.

Ay, such as hath no peer I guess.
yet love I must or else I

upper D is to be sung in the repeat which is printed out in the original editions.
bars rest missing in the original editions

2

die. *p* > > yet love

mf > > Oh Hob, I fear she looks too high, *p* > > yet love

dim. *mf* *p*

dim. *mf*

dim. *p*

dim. *mf* *p*

mf *p*

f > > I must or else I die, I die, or else I die, I die.

f > > I must or else I die, I die, or else I die, I die.

f

p *f*

f

f

II.2.5 Le Tableau de l'Opération de la Taille and La Cérémonie Turque

Marin Marais (1656-1728) was one of the most active composers and bass viol players at the court of Louis XIV. After studying with Sainte-Colombe and Jean-Baptiste Lully, he became a central figure in the French school that flourished around the bass viol in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. As a matter of fact, bass viol was considered as the most distinguished of the stringed instruments during those years in France because it was the virtuoso solo instrument par excellence⁷¹. Its dramatic intensity was particularly suitable to the Baroque music cultivated at the French court, where Marais spent almost his entire life. First appointed as Ordinaire de la Musique de la Chambre du Roi in 1685, he maintained this position throughout the reign of Louis XIV and, from 1715 to 1725, under the Regency and the reign of Louis XV.

His contemporaries recognized his ability as a performer and his works were known all over Europe. His popularity is underlined by the extensive account of his life and works provided by Titon du Tillet in *Le Parnasse françois* (1732), a book dedicated to the king, in which the author described an imaginary Parnassus of poetry and music ruled by Louis XIV. The leading poets and musicians were given places around the king according to their fame at that time. The fact that Marais was sitting next to the king

⁷¹ The viola da gamba or viol appeared in the late 1500s and was a standard instrument in Renaissance and early Baroque ensembles. This instrument has an exceptional resonance compared to the cello. Moreover, the bow and bowing technique are different from those used for the more popular cello. The viol bow is in fact convex and arched and, according to an early musical treatise of viol technique, it was supposed to express all the human passions. Originally, this instrument came in three sizes or voices—treble, tenor and bass—which were played in viol 'consorts'. However, as musical styles changed during the seventeenth century, the tenor and treble viols disappeared and were replaced by the violin, which had a brighter tone. The bass viol became a very fashionable instrument in aristocratic circles, especially in France, where it survived longer than in the rest of Europe as the dominating solo instrument. As a matter of fact, while in Italy, Austria and Germany the violin replaced it as the virtuoso instrument in the early eighteenth century, in France it remained very popular throughout the first part of that century as solo instrument, paired with the theorbo or harpsichord to provide the supporting bass line in ensembles, or trios with the violin and the harpsichord. The viola da gamba fell into disuse during the second half of the eighteenth century, when instruments like the cello and the bass were refined and composers like Haydn and Mozart wrote for them.

together with his master Lully, underlines the central role of this composer in the musical life of the Versailles court. According to W. Thomson, "Marais was recognized as the greatest performer on the bass viol of his era. Hubert le Blanc reported that he played viol "like an angel", and Johann Gottfried Walther called him "an incomparable violdigambist"" (1960: 4).

As a matter of fact, Marais is the most prolific composer of viol music. His most important compositional works were published in five books between 1686 and 1725. These collections contain more than five hundred compositions for one, two or three viols and figured bass. The vastness of this accomplishment is emphasized by the large range of variety, originality, and artistic expression of the compositions therein.

Le Tableau de l'Opération de la Taille is undoubtedly one of the most original pieces ever composed by Marais because it depicts a gallstone operation and the patient's later recovery. This is a very unusual theme that critics have not been able to explain so far. However, if we consider the large number of people dying at that time on such operations accomplished by self-taught doctors formulating absurd theories about how to treat the strangest human diseases, the parodic intent of the piece becomes clear. Moreover, the composer belonged to that group of artists that, even though working to entertain the king and his entourage, were watching and indirectly criticizing the bad habits of the court. For this reason, we could say that Marais, just as Molière and Lully had done in *Le malade imaginaire* (16..), was parodying the rather empiric medical practices of his time as well as the blind faith that people had in them, as the frivolous and humorous content of the piece underlines.

Le Tableau de l'Opération de la Taille is an early example of program music, that is to say of music of a narrative or descriptive kind that tries to represent extra-musical concepts without resort to sung words. In the first part of the composition, a narrator accompanies and describes the different phases of the kidneystone removal. Without these remarks the composition would never achieve the hilarious effects that we are here going to analyze.

In general, this piece is made up by three main parts: *Le Tableau de l'Opération de la Taille*, which describes the operation; *Les Relevailles*, which is a joyful musical *bourré* ironically depicting the 'convalescence' of this patient who survived the surgery, together with the two final *Suite* that conclude the composition. Here we will focus on the first part where the operation is described.

In the first part the listener almost finds himself at a medical lecture in an anatomic theater, a very popular sixteenth century practice described by many scientists and engraved by artists like Vasarius. From their sites, the spectators are directed throughout the surgery by someone introducing what is going to be performed. Yet, in m. 33 there is an unexpected shift in the narration introduced by the verbal explanation of the scene: "Icy l'on vous transporte dans le lit"⁷². Thus, the spectator is suddenly brought into the scene and realizes that s/he is actually the patient.

However, instead of having visual images, in this tableau we have 'musical scenes' that achieve their descriptive intent very well. As a matter of fact, we can easily divide the operation into a seventeen different parts, each accompanied by a sentence explaining its content. Given their humorous content, these could be considered as the

⁷² "Here, we take you into bed".

cartoons of a comic strip, where musical, verbal, and visual codes strictly cooperate. The fifteen scenes are (for the score, see Appendix at page:

1. L'aspect de l'appareil (mm. 1-3)
2. Fremissement en le voyant (mm. 4, 5)
3. Resolution pour y monter (m. 6)
4. Parvenu jusqu'au hault (m.7, 8)
5. Descente dudit appareil (mm.9-11)
6. Reflexions serieuses (mm. 12-14)
7. Entrelassement des soyes entre les bras et les jams (mm.15-20)
8. Icy se fait l'incision (mm. 21, 22)
9. Introduction de la tenette (mm. 23, 24)
10. Icy l'on tire la pierre (m. 24)
11. Icy l'on perd quasi la voix (m. 25)
12. Ecoulement du sang (m. 26-29)
13. Icy l'on oste les soyes (m. 30-33)
14. Icy l'on vous transporte dans le lit (mm. 33-36)
15. Les Relevailles (mm. 1-34)
16. Suite I
17. Suite II

If we analyze these fragments according to principles of the GTVH, we can say that, in general, the entire piece is based on the exaggeration of the feelings of the patient as well as the strictly medical procedures. The verbal description sets the context of each moment and the music vividly accounts for it, reproducing the concrete and abstract

feelings of the patient and of the surgeon's work through the insistent repetition of a sound (like in the second, tenth, and eleventh fragments), and descendant or ascendant sequence of notes that convey the physical movement depicted. This is what happens while describing the "Tying Down of Arms and Legs with Silk Cloths" (mm. 15-20), and the bleeding (mm. 26-29).

This musical repetition is extremely interesting because, besides stressing the exaggerated effect of the medical operation, it can be compared with the humorous effects produced by the use of verbal alliteration surveyed in other pieces examined before. By repeating the same sound either varied or not, the musical event originates an incongruous effect that, thanks to the verbal explanation of the narrator, becomes meaningful and makes the humorous effect clear.

II.4 Conclusion

In this second part we have verified how humor can be analyzed in music. For this reason, we have surveyed the main theories of humor and decide to examine some Renaissance and Baroque compositions applying the principle of the GTVH.

The six-knowledge resources and the taxonomy of puns on which GTVH is based proved to be useful also in musical analysis. In fact, for almost all the chosen pieces, we could find that humor in vocal and instrumental music is often produced by linguistic and musical puns or repetitions.

CONCLUSION

In this work we have attempted to discuss some of the main methodological problems of musical semiotics and to survey the possible functioning of humor in music according to the principles of the GTVH.

First of all, we have provided an extensive overview of the semiotic values of music in order to show its role as an important sign cultural system. For this reason, we offered an extensive overview of musical semiotics. We examined the methodological innovations introduced by Ruwet with his principle of repetition, the complex process of (re)creation activated by musical objects, which are never perceived as such, but through the mediation of the endless sequence of interpretants any listeners can apply on them according to Nattiez. The MMC by Stefani has proven to be one of the most useful musical semiotic theory because it accounts for a musical event on five levels that are based on different degree of competence that a listener may have.

Secondly, we have analyzed the main features of ambiguity in some Renaissance and Baroque vocal and instrumental music to explore its mechanisms. Through the application of the MMC and the GTVH we have seen that, in most cases, humor is based on punning phenomena and on repetitions that exploit verbal, musical and, sometimes, gestural elements. As a matter of fact, the musical melodic, harmonic and lively rhythmical patterns usually tend to stress the humorous content of words or of the context.

APPENDIX

Le Tableau de l'Operation de la Taille 108.

L'aspect de l'appareil.

Fremissement en le voyant.

Lentem.

Op. 108

Parvenu jusqu'au haut.

descente d'ucht aparail.

Resolution pour y monter.

Respirations Seriesas.

Grandement des Joyz entre les bras et les jambes.

Joy se fait

L'incision.

Introduction de la tenette.

Joy lon tirs la pierre.

Fine.

Joy lon par P Croisement du sang quat le voie.

Joy lon aux les Joyas.

The musical score is written on a grand staff with a treble clef and a common time signature (C). It features a variety of note values, including minims, crotchets, and quavers, often beamed together. There are several dynamic markings such as 'Lentem.', 'p', and 'F'. The score includes numerous slurs and phrasing marks. Annotations in French describe the surgical procedure, such as 'L'aspect de l'appareil' (appearance of the instrument), 'Fremissement en le voyant' (trembling when seen), 'Parvenu jusqu'au haut' (arrived up high), 'descente d'ucht aparail' (descent of the instrument), 'Resolution pour y monter' (resolution to go up), 'Respirations Seriesas' (breathings series), 'Grandement des Joyz entre les bras et les jambes' (greatly with the joy between the arms and legs), 'Joy se fait' (joy is made), 'L'incision' (the incision), 'Introduction de la tenette' (introduction of the forceps), 'Joy lon tirs la pierre' (joy you pull the stone), 'Fine' (end), 'Joy lon par P Croisement du sang quat le voie' (joy you pull by P crossing the blood when the way), and 'Joy lon aux les Joyas' (joy you pull to the joys).

102

Les Relevailles
 No. 109. Gay.

*Joy l'on
 vous transporte dans le lie.*

mf *p* *mf* *p*

Tournez pour la suite.



103. Suite. 110.

104. Suite. 111.

Differents passages pour la 2^e fois.

Petite reprise pour la 2^e fois.

Pour la 3^e fois.

Pour la 4^e fois.

111. Suite. 111.

N° 9.
CERÉMONIE TURQUE
MARCHE

Moderato. ($\text{♩} = 66$)

PIANO. *p*

gym

f

p

(♩ = 72) *p* Voix de femmes.

cresc

Al - lah, Al - lah, Al - lah, Al - lah, Al -

1^{er} Ténors. *p*

cresc

Al - lah, Al - lah, Al - lah, Al - lah, Al -

2^d Ténors. *p*

cresc

Al - lah, Al - lah, Al - lah, Al - lah, Al -

Basses. *p*

cresc

Al - lah, Al - lah, Al - lah, Al - lah, Al -

pp *cresc poco*

poco a poco.

- lah, Al - lah, Al - lah, Al - lah, Al - lah, Al -

poco a poco.

- lah, Al - lah, Al - lah, Al - lah, Al - lah, Al -

poco a poco.

- lah, Al - lah, Al - lah, Al - lah, Al - lah, Al -

poco a poco.

- lah, Al - lah, Al - lah, Al - lah, Al - lah, Al -

a poco.

decrease. *p*
 -lah, Al-lah, Al-lah, eck-ber
decrease. *p*
 -lah, Al-lah, Al-lah, eck-ber
decrease. *p*
 -lah, Al-lah, Al-lah, eck-ber
decrease. *p*
 -lah, Al-lah, Al-lah, eck-ber

LE MUPHTI. (♩ = 104)

Se ti sa-bir, Ti respon-dir, Se
p

ti sa-bir, Ti respon-dir, Ti respon-

M
 - dir; Se non sa - bir, Ta - zir, ta - zir;

M
 Se non sa - bir, Ta - zir, ta - zir, ta -

(PARLÉ) Dice, Turque, qui starquista?
 Anabatista? Anabatista? Anabatista? Zvinglista? Coffita?

M
 - zir, ta - zir!

Dessus. (Ils font signe que non)
f ioc, ioc,

1^{rs} Ténors.
f ioc, ioc,

2^{ds} Ténors.
f ioc, ioc,

Basses.
f ioc, ioc,

Mouv! ad lib

Hussita? Morisla?
Fronista? *(les imitant)* ioc, ioc, ioc,
star pagana? Luterana? Puritana?

1.
M.

ioc, ioc, ioc, ioc, ioc, ioc,

ioc, ioc, ioc, ioc, ioc, ioc,

ioc, ioc, ioc, ioc, ioc, ioc,

ioc, ioc, ioc, ioc, ioc, ioc,

Bramina?
Moffina? Zurina? ioc, ioc, ioc,
Mahometana? Mahometana? *Allegretto.*
(♩ = 104).

1.
M.

ioc, ioc, ioc, ioc, *f* Ei Val_

ioc, ioc, ioc, ioc, *f* Ei Val_

ioc, ioc, ioc, ioc, *f* Ei Val_

ioc, ioc, ioc, ioc, *f* Ei Val_

- lah, ei Val - lah, ei Val - lah, Vallah, Val - lah, Ei Val -
 - lah, ei Val - lah, ei Val - lah, Vallah, Val - lah, Ei Val -
 - lah, ei Val - lah, ei Val - lah, Vallah, Val - lah, Ei Val -
 - lah, ei Val - lah, ei Val - lah, Vallah, Val - lah, Ei Val -

(Parti'). Come Chandra?

- lah, ei Val - lah, ei Val - lah, Val - lah, Val - lah!
 - lah, ei Val - lah, ei Val - lah, Val - lah, Val - lah.
 - lah, ei Val - lah, ei Val - lah, Val - lah, Val - lah.
 - lah, ei Val - lah, ei Val - lah, Val - lah, Val - lah.

le M. Come chamara? Giourdina? Giourli-

Sempre Allegretto.

f Giour - di - na, Giour - di - na, Giour - di - na,

f Giour - di - na, Giour - di - na, Giour - di - na,

f Giour - di - na, Giour - di - na, Giour - di - na,

f Giour - di - na, Giour - di - na, Giour - di - na,

- na, Giourdina, Giourdina!

le M.

Giour - dina, Giour - dina, Giour - di - na.

Giour - dina, Giour - dina, Giour - di - na.

Giour - dina, Giour - dina, Giour - di - na.

Giour - dina, Giour - dina, Giour - di - na.

AIR DU MUPHTI.

Aud^{mo} con moto (♩ = 78).

Mahomet, per Giordina Mi pregar, sera e ma -

The first system of the musical score consists of a vocal line in bass clef and a piano accompaniment in grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The vocal line begins with a fermata on the first note, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the right hand and a steady bass line in the left hand. Dynamics markings 'f' and 'p' are present in the piano part.

1.
M. - ti - na. Vole - far un Pa - la - di - na De Giordina, de Giordina -

The second system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line has a fermata on the first note of the second phrase. The piano accompaniment maintains the same rhythmic structure as the first system.

1.
M. - di - na, Dar tur - ban - ta, e dar - scar - ri - na, Con ga - le - ra e bri - gau -

The third system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line has a fermata on the first note of the second phrase. The piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic pattern.

1.
M. - ti - na, Per def - fen - der Pa - les - ti - na, Dar tur - ban - ta, e dar - scar -

The fourth system concludes the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line has a fermata on the first note of the second phrase. The piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic pattern.

le
M. *ri - na, Con ga - le - ra e bri - gan - ti - na, Per def - fen - der Pa - les -*

le
M. *- ti - na. Maho - me - ta, per Giour - di - na Mi pre - gar - sera e ma -*

le
M. *- ti - na, Maho - me - ta, Per Giour - di - na Mi pre - gar Sera e ma -*

le
M. *- ti - na. Star bon Tur - ca, Giour - di - na?*

f *Hi Val -*

f *Hi Val -*

f *Hi Val -*

f *Hi Val -*

1^o
M.

Star bon Tur-ca, Giour-di-na, Giour-di-na?

- la, hi Val - la. *f* Hi Val -

- la, hi Val - la. *f* Hi Val -

- la, hi Val - la. *f* Hi Val -

- la, hi Val - la. *f* Hi Val -

The first system of music features a vocal line in the bass clef and four vocal lines in the treble clef. The lyrics are "Star bon Tur-ca, Giour-di-na, Giour-di-na?" followed by "- la, hi Val - la." in each line. The piano accompaniment is shown in a grand staff at the bottom of the system. A dynamic marking of *f* (forte) is present in the vocal lines.

1^o
M.

Ha-la - ba, ba-la - chou, ba-la - ba, ba-la -

- la, hi Val - la!

- la, hi Val - la!

- la, hi Val - la!

- la, hi Val - la!

- la, hi Val - la!

The second system of music features a vocal line in the bass clef and four vocal lines in the treble clef. The lyrics are "Ha-la - ba, ba-la - chou, ba-la - ba, ba-la -" followed by "- la, hi Val - la!" in each line. The piano accompaniment is shown in a grand staff at the bottom of the system. A dynamic marking of *p* (piano) is present in the piano accompaniment.

1^a M.
- da, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la -

The first system consists of a vocal line (bass clef) and piano accompaniment (grand staff). The vocal line has lyrics: "- da, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la -". The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes.

1^a M.
- chou, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da.

f Ha_la - ba, ba_la - chou, ba_la - ba, ba_la -
f Ha_la - ba, ba_la - chou, ba_la - ba, ba_la -
f Ha_la - ba, ba_la - chou, ba_la - ba, ba_la -
f Ha_la - ba, ba_la - chou, ba_la - ba, ba_la -

The second system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. It includes three vocal parts (bass, tenor, and soprano) and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "- chou, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da." followed by three lines of lyrics for different vocal parts: "*f* Ha_la - ba, ba_la - chou, ba_la - ba, ba_la -", "*f* Ha_la - ba, ba_la - chou, ba_la - ba, ba_la -", and "*f* Ha_la - ba, ba_la - chou, ba_la - ba, ba_la -". The piano accompaniment includes a section marked *f* (forte).

- da, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la -
 - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la -
 - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la -
 - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la -

The third system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. It features four vocal parts (bass, tenor, soprano, and alto) and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "- da, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la -", "- da, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la -", "- da, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la -", and "- da, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la -". The piano accompaniment includes a section marked *f* (forte).

-chou, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la - chou, ba_la - ba, ba_la -
 -chou, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la - chou, ba_la - ba, ba_la -
 -chou, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la - chou, ba_la - ba, ba_la -
 -chou, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la - chou, ba_la - ba, ba_la -

The first system consists of five staves. The top four staves are vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) with lyrics. The fifth staff is a grand staff for piano accompaniment, with a treble and bass clef.

- da, ba_la - ba, ba_la - chou, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la -
 - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la - chou, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la -
 - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la - chou, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la -
 - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la - chou, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la -

The second system also consists of five staves, continuing the vocal and piano parts from the first system. The piano accompaniment features a steady rhythmic pattern in the bass line and chords in the treble.

- chou, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la -

- chou, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la -

- chou, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la -

- chou, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la -

The first system consists of four vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The vocal parts are in a B-flat major key and 4/4 time. The lyrics are: - chou, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - ba, ba_la -

- da ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - chou, ba_la - da

- da ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - chou, ba_la - da

- da ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - chou, ba_la - da

- da ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - chou, ba_la - da

The second system continues the musical piece with four vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: - da ba_la - ba, ba_la - da, ba_la - chou, ba_la - da

2^e ENTRÉE DE BALLET (*)

Tures dansants.

All^o mod^o

PIANO.

And^o quasi All^o
Voix de femmes.

(*) Le Muphti rentre, coiffé de son turban de cérémonie, garni de bougies allumées. On fait agenouiller M^r Jourdain; son dos sert de pupitre à Palcoran, dont le Muphti tourne les feuilles avec précipitation.

hou, hou, hou, hou, hou, hou,

hou, hou, hou, hou, hou, hou,

hou, hou, hou, hou, hou, hou,

hou, hou, hou, hou, hou, hou,

LE MUPHTI. *Un peu plus vite.*

f Ti non star furba?

hou, hou, Al-lah eck-ber. *f* No, no, no,

hou, hou, Al-lah eck-ber. *f* No, no, no,

hou, hou, Al-lah eck-ber. *f* No, no, no,

hou, hou, Al-lah eck-ber. *f* No, no, no,

mf *ff*

1.
M.

Non star for_fan - ta? Non star forfan - ta?

No, no, no, No, no, no,

No, no, no, No, no, no,

No, no, no, No, no, no,

No, no, no, No, no, no,

mf *ff* *mf* *ff*

1.
M.

Donar turban_ta, do_nar: turban - ta; Donar turban_ta, do_nar turban - ta.

mf

Ti non star fur - ba? no, no, no, Ti non star fur - ba, no, no, no,

Ti non star fur - ba? no, no, no, Ti non star fur - ba, no, no, no,

Ti non star fur - ba? no, no, no, Ti non star fur - ba, no, no, no,

Ti non star fur - ba? no, no, no, Ti non star fur - ba, no, no, no,

ff *ff*

Non star for-fan-ta, no, no, no, Donar turban-ta, do-nar turban-ta,

Non star for-fan-ta, no, no, no, Donar turban-ta, do-nar turban-ta,

Non star for-fan-ta, no, no, no, Donar turban-ta, do-nar turban-ta,

Non star for-fan-ta, no, no, no, Donar turban-ta, do-nar turban-ta,

ff

do-nar turban-ta, do-nar turban-ta, do-nar turban-ta!

do-nar turban-ta, do-nar turban-ta, do-nar turban-ta!

do-nar turban-ta, do-nar turban-ta, do-nar turban-ta!

do-nar turban-ta, do-nar turban-ta, do-nar turban-ta!

3^e ENTRÉE. DE BALLET.Les Turcs dansants mettent le turban sur la tête de M^r Jourdain.

Allegro.

PIANO.

The first system of music is a piano accompaniment in 4/4 time, marked 'Allegro' and 'PIANO.' It begins with a forte dynamic 'f'. The right hand features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand provides a steady bass line with quarter and eighth notes.

The second system continues the piano accompaniment. A handwritten number '9' is written above the first measure. The musical notation shows a continuation of the melodic and harmonic patterns established in the first system.

The third system of the piano accompaniment, showing further development of the musical themes. The right hand has more complex rhythmic patterns, including some triplets and sixteenth-note runs.

The fourth system of the piano accompaniment, maintaining the 'Allegro' tempo and 'PIANO' dynamic. The melodic lines in both hands continue to evolve.

The fifth and final system of the piano accompaniment on this page. It concludes with a double bar line and repeat signs. The music ends with a final chord in the right hand and a sustained note in the left hand.

Con moto.

le M. *le M.*

Ti star no - bile, non star fab - bola, non star fab - bola, non star

le M. *le M.*

fab - bola, Pigliar schiabbola, pigliar schiabbola, pigliar schiabbola, pigliar

le M. *le M.*

schiab - bo - la, pigliar schiab - bo - la!

f Ti star no - bi - le, non star

f Ti - star no - bi - le, non star

f Ti star no - bi - le, non star

f Ti star no - bi - le, non star

f

fab - bo_la, ti star no - bi_le, non star fab - bola, Pigliar schiabbola, pigliar

fab - bo_la, ti star no - bi_le, non star fab - bola, Pigliar schiabbola, pigliar

fab - bo_la, ti star no - bi_le, non star fab - bola, Pigliar schiabbola, pigliar

fab - bo_la, ti star no - bi_le, non star fab - bola, Pigliar schiabbola, pigliar

The piano accompaniment consists of a treble and bass staff with chords and moving lines.

schiab - bo_la, pigliar schiab - bo_la, pigliar schiab - bo_la, pigliar

schiab - bo_la, pigliar schiab - bo_la, pigliar schiab - bo_la, pigliar

schiab - bo_la, pigliar schiab - bo_la, pigliar schiab - bo_la, pigliar

schiab - bo_la, pigliar schiab - bo_la, pigliar schiab - bo_la, pigliar

The piano accompaniment continues with chords and moving lines.

schiab_bo_la, pigliar schiab_bo_la, pigliar schiab_bo_la, pigliar
 schiab_bo_la, pigliar schiab_bo_la, pigliar schiab_bo_la, pigliar
 schiab_bo_la, pigliar schiab_bo_la, pigliar schiab_bo_la, pigliar
 schiab_bo_la, pigliar schiab_bo_la, pigliar schiab_bo_la, pigliar

schiab - bo_la, pi_gliar schiab - bo_la, pi_gliar schiab - bo_la.
 schiab - bo_la, pi_gliar schiab - bo_la, pi_gliar schiab - bo_la.
 schiab - bo_la, pi_gliar schiab - bo_la, pi_gliar schiab - bo_la.
 schiab - bo_la, pi_gliar schiab - bo_la, pi_gliar schiab - bo_la.

4^e ENTRÉE DE BALLET.Les Fures dansants donnent en cadence plusieurs coups de sabre à M^r Jourdain.

En poco All^{to}

PIANO.

f

p

LE MOPHTI.

Dara, da - ra, Baston -

f

p

M

- na - ra, da - ra, da - ra Bas - ton - na - ra.

f Dara, da - ra Baston -

f Dara, da - ra Baston -

f Dara, da - ra Baston -

f Dara, da - ra Baston -

in poco rall.

Non te-ner hon - ta,
 - na - ra, Dara, da - ra Bas - ton - na - ra.
 - na - ra, Dara, da - ra Bas - ton - na - ra.
 - na - ra, Dara, da - ra Bas - ton - na - ra.
 - na - ra, Dara, da - ra Bas - ton - na - ra.

p

non te-ner hon - ta, Ques - ta star _____ l'ul - tima af - fron - ta.

f
 Non tener hon - ta, non tener hon - ta, Ques - ta star _____ l'ul - tima af -
 Non tener hon - ta, non tener hon - ta, Ques - ta star _____ l'ul - tima af -
 Non tener hon - ta, non tener hon - ta, Ques - ta star _____ l'ul - tima af -
 Non tener hon - ta, non tener hon - ta, Ques - ta star _____ l'ul - tima af -

- fron - ta, Ques.ta star — l'ul.tima af_fron - ta, non te_ner hon - ta,
 - fron - ta, Ques.ta star — l'ul.tima af_fron - ta, non te_ner hon - ta,
 - fron - ta, Ques.ta star — l'ul.tima af_fron - ta, non te_ner hon - ta,
 - - fron - ta, Ques.ta star — l'ul.tima af_fron - ta, non te_ner hon - ta,

très rallenti.

Non tener hon - ta, Ques.ta star — l'ul.tima af_fron - ta.
 Non tener hon - ta, Ques.ta star — l'ul.tima af_fron - ta.
 Non tener hon - ta, Ques.ta star — l'ul.tima af_fron - ta.
 Non tener hon - ta, Ques.ta star — l'ul.tima af_fron - ta.

très rallenti.

D'après la parti-
 tion originale, on
 doit reprendre ici
 STAR BON TURCA
 (page 55) et finir
 avec la Marche qui
 sert d'introduc-
 tion à la CÉRÉ-
 MONIE TURQUE.

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