

Finding a tangency

for ensemble
(2012)

If someone tries to outline the history of the various concepts of time which man has matured, overlapped and set up over the centuries, maybe they will be confronted by an inextricable tangle of straight lines and circumferences, symbols of the dynamic tendency to something or of a circular motionlessness invariable in its constant fixity.

Finding a Tangency is the exploration of these overlaps in which sometimes it seems that we can see for a moment the fractal structure of time, linear in its circularity and circular in its linearity, in a complex network of links and returns.

Finding a Tangency has been written for the Nieuw Ensemble Amsterdam and the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival.

In limine

for violin, cello and piano
(2013-14)

One of the most evident features of the occidental society of today is the excess and the speed of information. The continuous overlap of codes and messages saturates the space in which we move every day, making more and more difficult to perceive all the differences located on deeper levels and submerged by the chaos of our everyday lives. However, when not limited to an occasional parenthesis, the anachronistic isolation of musical composition and interpretation can be intended as a sort of 'white space', in which we can ideally making a clean sweep of the superfluous.

This desire for emptiness – nearly utopian essentiality – is the main idea of this work, precariously placed on the threshold referred to in the title, beyond which there is only what, in addition to the superfluous, has also lost its deeper identity. Between the harmonic echo of a page of Maderna, and the deconstructed skeleton of a classical formal articulation which of the history has nothing but the breath, parallel paths and contrasting presences are intertwined in a disconnected way, forced to live where the matter frays and the contours become uncertain, fading into the shadow.

The first version of this work was commissioned by Fondazione Teatro La Fenice (Venice) for the Ex Novo Ensemble.

Oltre | Stati di materia

for bass clarinet, cello and piano
(2014)

There are moments when perception, losing itself in the minutest detail, comes to lose sight of the overall dimension. Certain rough rocky surfaces, the remains of bark prematurely detached from the trunk, even – or perhaps especially – the carcass of an abandoned appliance can take on the appearance of improbable cities or organisms if viewed from the right perspective. This restless scrutiny of the topography of what increasingly appears to be an unknown land proceeds in layers, delving deep and, little by little, trying to make its way through its intricate geological formations. Implicit relationships, fields of force, and unpredictable consequences then begin to emerge, revealing an archaic and brutal vitality in the unstable subsoil of matter.

This work was written for the Ensemble Intercontemporain.

Innerspace

for soprano saxophone and piano
(2015, rev. 2023)

A body immersed in water loses full perception of its mass, of its existence as a body. It explores a state of suspension where every internal energy variation amplifies and every detail deforms accordingly, while the surrounding fluid space absorbs external disturbances, preserving this unreal isolation.

As if lying on an imaginary seabed, the two performers vastly expand their gestures, redefining their sonic continuities and discontinuities. The instruments interpenetrate, almost merging with each other, seeking those extreme zones of assimilability that can achieve the most complete fusion.

Touch, pressure, breath become hands, eyes, and mouths through which these body-instrument units explore themselves and each other, accessing an extreme, profound inner dimension, probed almost with the reverence of a ritual.

This work was written for and is dedicated to Massimiliano Girardi and Luca Lavuri.

Le pareti sottili

for string quartet
(2016)

The string quartet genre is a story of utopia. Four different identities try to find a balance, which gives them the illusion of having the same weight, the same nature. Nevertheless, if we look beyond the superficialities of common shape and varied proportion, we immediately perceive the unbridgeable distance that separates these micro-universes of movement and sound. In this sense, music becomes a metaphor of this utopia; how four different musical places can enter and explore each other, finding reciprocal contiguities. The fragile architecture of these four points gradually crumbles and the contours become less clear, reducing their separation to a point of annulment. Coexistence of time, space, and sound.

dove tutto è stato preso (Innerspace II)

for piano
(2016)

To dwell where everything was taken from might not help dividing the existing, showing its outline, its convergences; dimensions where light could illuminate (and scatter) what we [or it] can see. To convince oneself to expose its own ego, to compose it, bring it into focus - and thus burn it - often means nourishing its incompleteness: the "true lento" of the poem is therefore transformed into an acoustic dilatation, sign and proximity to isolation.

(D. Bellomi, Notes of Poetics to "Ripartizione della volta")

Each musical instrument is a museum of its past and present uses, the latent memory of the hands that have touched it throughout its surfaces and edges. To make an instrument resonate means to bring these reminiscences back to life, together with all the different meanings they carry along with them - a quote of a quote of a quote and so on... If music and literature somehow share a common linguistic dimension, perhaps the one that is the most evident of all is, in my opinion, that they are the squared palimpsest of themselves, the fact that they generate meanings through short-circuits and the exasperated consumption of its different meanings that build up in time as part of the sound itself.

The piano, because of its multi-faceted geography, overpopulated by memories, represents a perfect example of a land which is no longer virgin, a space where each key, string, metal bar or wood part inevitably recalls the innumerable pencils that have already and variously trapped that sound on a piece of paper. Each movement reminisces similar past ones, dissolved in time along with the dying resonance of the strings. But what would happen if such resonance was abruptly enlarged to the point where it reveals the hidden turns through which we can catch a glimpse of its possible becomings? Time, as a non-existing entity, although always clearly perceivable, becomes fluid and its passing uncertain, discontinuous. The almost surreal acoustic dilatation and the sudden temporal jumps lead us to rediscover relationships between spaces and sounds we wouldn't have known how to name. Sound transforms itself, dissolves and thickens, takes shape until new shreds of memory emerge, and it is only at this point that all of a sudden we realize that that very same keyboard from which everything started is still there, even though it is lost in the void of its endless resonance of resonances.

This work was commissioned by Yvar Mikashoff Trust for New Music of Buffalo (NY) and is dedicated to Anna D'Errico.

Geometrie nelle mani

for amplified guitar
(2016)

Let's imagine freely exploring the various parts of a guitar with our hands. Trying not to pay too much attention to instrumental technique, let's instead focus on the relationship between sound and movement, movement and sound. Foreground components can recede into the background with simple changes in gesture, and by focusing on these changes, we can identify unexpected relationships between different vibrations, gestures, and areas of the surface. We can perceive a

network of relationships, from identity to otherness, that connect each element to another in a potentially continuous transformation of sound and its components: an unstable connection between space, movement, and energy.

This network of relationships between gesture and sound reveals the existence of corresponding regions on the surface of the instrument, each characterized by different elements and potential developments. In this sense, the surface of the instrument ends up becoming an imaginary territory, inhabited by vibrations due to its particular morphology (nut, bridge, metal or nylon strings, wood, etc.), to be explored aurally, visually, and formally through music.

Geometrie nelle mani (lit. "Geometries in the Hands") is a personal attempt to delve into these aspects – a sort of small private laboratory – study after study: from the simplicity of the first, in which the exploration of the sixth string describes an arched form directly connected with the movement of the left hand, to the last piece, in which the increasing destabilization of the point of contact between the right hand and the instrument seeks to utopically approach the unstable nature of sound. A nature perhaps not very different from that of the unsettling spaces-matter that separate palm and object in Giuseppe Penone's sculptures of the same cycle.

This work was written for and is dedicated to Ruben Mattia Santorsa.

Concetto di aura

for amplified paetzold contrabass flute
(2016)

What remains of an instrument's soundscape if we deprive it of its most known center in order to concentrate on the outskirts of its re-sonating? Suspended between what is still attributable to the instrument and what is not, here lays the aura of sound, its boundary. It is a contradictory state of presence/absence, which contemporarily remarks the presence of the emanating body (a cause...) and the absence of its ordinary way of being (...that doesn't cause anymore). The aura is the evidence of a potential being, sighted through the traces of its removal, the most subtle essence of the individuality of the swarming constellation of emissions that all together make up the sound of an instrument. Perception, focusing on new, different details, recognizes new centers and new outskirts. Thus the instrument's geography is modified, and its obviousness jeopardized. Aura as matter of/with another time, space, form.

This work was written for and is dedicated to Antonio Politano.

Wasteland_almost a landscape

for amplified violin, viola and ensemble
(2015-16)

There are places that bear the indelible mark of those who inhabited, exploited, and abandoned them. Tattered rags, plastics, and shards of uncertain shape surface from the earth. Though at times the natural element seems to regain the upper hand, every effort it makes must contend with what artificiality has scattered across the terrain – remnants of corresponding absences. The trace left behind by those who imprinted it and the slow roots breaking through the cracks in the asphalt

signal to us the presence of a shadowy area, suspended between a "no longer" and a "not yet", laden with expectations and underground ferment.

Like fossilized remnants of long ago, the prepared violin and viola seem to harness their sonic possibilities to the utmost. However, physical movement, as well as their position distanced from the rest of the ensemble, would suggest a soloistic character if not promptly contradicted by their elusive, undefinable acoustic outcome. Almost like a background becoming the subject, the two bows sketch an uncertain horizon upon which the other instruments gradually proliferate, occasionally tearing through its irregular surface. Dirty, devastated, nameless sound. Sound that speaks of infinite layers laden with memories lost in an inextricable multiplicity. Perhaps losing oneself in its flow is also a way of knowing, of exploring.

This work was written for Lorenzo Gentili-Tedeschi, Paolo Fumagalli and the mdi ensemble, and is dedicated to them.

Wasteland_apparent emptiness

for amplified ensemble
(2016-17)

Approaching the matter until the borders disappear is like going into a continuum that seems not to know anymore (or yet) distinctions, separations. In the vertigo of indistinctness, hands, eyes and ears strive to identify relations in order to divide the matter and bring it back to a more human, finite dimension.

Touching, seeing, listening become the way to know and recognize at the same time, to give a name and a place to things. But these things change for constant interaction, so the attempt to frame the universe around us becomes imposition of form, establishment of relations.

Musical form as the process of its own creation.

This work was commissioned by Ensemble Proton Bern.

Each mirror infects itself

for violin and live electronics
(2017)

Fractals seem to have the unique capacity to contemporarily lure and unsettle us, with their relentless proliferating at every scale of magnitude, each unit exactly alike the other. It might be the vertigo that the idea of double has always conveyed, yet the cold precision of the unceasingly reiterated replica have a somehow monstrous, inhuman dimension that only the contemporary age was capable of understanding.

An object amidst two mirrors, as if lost between two opposite voids that endlessly refract it, has the same disquieting hypnotic quality as fractals. The refraction game in fact makes us lose perception little by little of what is on this or that side of the mirror, of what is real and what is not, until we are utterly incapable of distinguishing individuality among the multitude of replica. This work arises from the sound produced by this wholesome. It is a work whose form was thought of as a journey of contamination, erosion, implosion and lastly as a run to find once more the centre between two imaginary mirrors.

This work, which is part of *Diptych #1*, was written for and is dedicated to Lorenzo Derinni and Davide Gagliardi.

Of other spaces

for five spatialized instruments
(2017)

Mon corps, en fait, il est toujours ailleurs, il est lié à tous les ailleurs du monde, et à vrai dire il est ailleurs que dans le monde. Car c'est autour de lui que les choses sont disposées, c'est par rapport à lui [...]. Le corps est le point zéro du monde, là où les chemins et les espaces viennent se croiser le corps n'est nulle part : il est au cœur du monde ce petit noyau utopique à partir duquel je rêve, je parle, j'avance, j'imagine, je perçois les choses en leur place et je les nie aussi par le pouvoir indéfini des utopies que j'imagine. Mon corps est comme la Cité du Soleil, il n'a pas de lieu, mais c'est de lui que sortent et que rayonnent tous les lieux possibles, réels ou utopiques.

(M. Foucault, *le Corps utopique*, conférence radiofonica, 1966)

For several years now, the focus of my work has primarily been the exploration of space in its various dimensions. Conceived as aspects of listening in reciprocal metaphorical relationship, gestural space (the hand flowing over the instrument), performative space (the placement of various sound sources), and psychological-virtual space (how I perceive the vast/narrow, near/far aspects of what I hear) have each been placed at the core of a musical discourse aimed at penetrating their most remote corners. This discourse challenges the very ability to define space, as it is destabilized by an unstable continuum that inherently opposes any attempt at taxonomic discretization.

It all began almost by chance, with a hand gliding over the neck of a guitar, exploring the acoustic properties of the instrument in relation to its surface. After various partial attempts, the concept of space returned on a larger scale in the first chapters of *Wastelands*, imposing a sort of global stability to every movement within the cycle. Now, in *Of other spaces*, every spatial aspect is explored simultaneously in its unstable evolution, restlessly generating form and provoking reactions/consequences at every scale – from the dual relationship between instrument and musician to the entire area where the audience is located.

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Everything begins at the center, between itself and itself. Like a small pulsating heart – a micro-universe contrasting with the vast space of the surrounding hall – two bodies in contact breathe in the same vibration, in unison. The peripheries of this resonance, their emergence from the reverberation of the space, almost like the final flicker of a sound now extinguished in silence, activate distant resonances located at the most remote borders, corresponding to equally distant spaces, to equal possibilities of contact, vibration. The definition of space wavers, becomes fluid, and the boundaries suggested by physics dissolve into an elastic geography where here and there become relative notions, particular moments of an unstable flow that breathes, generates time, and expands that initial center that now includes us, making us part of itself.

This work was written for and is dedicated to the Ensemble Fractales of Brussels.

Where the here and now of nowhere is

for cello, resonators, dancers and live electronics
(2018)

The musician and his instrument at the center. Around them, two suspended metallic bodies – the resonators – and two standing human bodies, waiting.

At first, we are simultaneously outside and inside this center. In the distance, we see hands exploring the surface of the instrument, tracing fluid movements, almost as if testing centers and peripheries through this initial and elementary form of contact. At the same time, this exploration generates a disproportionate sound, filling the hall and multiplying, projecting us into a paradoxical space where the acoustic proximity of the bow hairs' traced contours contradicts the physical distance separating us from the scene. Meanwhile, the dancers silently extend this distant movement, while the resonators, in their immobility, slowly come to life as the sound of the cello passes through them, then pouring into an increasingly crowded acoustic space of distorted, ambiguous reflections – other territories, other hands.

Like an organism in motion slowly moving between two mirrors, the initial center disappears into the multitude of images that multiply it. Its extensions, complementary and opposite to each other – the dancers and the resonators – acquire their own identity that goes beyond their subordinate roles to find a new equilibrium.

In this work, I have sought to closely observe how the exploration of different forms of contact between these two opposite poles and the center from which they branch out evolves over time. This work, written during the Cursus d'informatique musicale at IRCAM, is dedicated to Thierry De Mey.

Monochrome

for string trio
(2018)

Some music is made to dilatate space-time, others to curtail it; sometimes it simply fills it in. Rarely does one find oneself within a listening experience which can affect space-time's flowing as far as transforming it into something absolutely ungraspable, indefinable. Such was the case for me when, a few years ago, I casually discovered *#Untitled 1* by Sigur Ros. The switch sound that starts the track like the beginning of a studio-rehearsal, the voice refusing to articulate proper words in order to remain pure sound, the unusual acoustic that with much effort achieves the fullness of live-concert then slowly empties out until only the resonance of the piano remains, resonance that gets abruptly interrupted, almost by mistake; all these elements have been stuck in my mind for a long time. Since all these elements are usually related to a rather private dimension of performance, that one plays to oneself, it unfolds a deeply expressive anti-rhetoric, where the song's genre gets completely rid of its most stereotypical features and transfigures itself into the exploration of a sound landscape born with the spontaneity that only improvisation can achieve. The piece therefore becomes a window ajar, half-open on a space of personal research, necessarily incomplete and sketchy; it's delimited only by the action of someone taking one's own instrument to create a contact, to generate a vibration.

In this work I have tried to probe in between the negative of such contact, imagining a space which is complementary to it.

This work was written for mdi ensemble and commissioned by Fondazione "I Teatri" di Reggio Emilia.

Aria(e). Tre studi sull'aura

for voice, percussion and electro-acoustic device
(2018)

Each instrument has its own aura, a combination of intrinsic acoustic characteristics that remain well perceptible even when venturing in the furthest outskirts of its resonance. Voice is no exception, and it remarkably presents some interesting contact points with certain percussion instruments. These are hereby recalled as the voice's timbric and spatial extension: other voices - or maybe the very same one - originating in other spaces. The voice-percussion-percussionist hyperinstrument is the lens we use to focus three textual elements, the three questions "chi?", "quoi?" and "where?". They are dilated, disintegrated and de-structured up to their pure signifier/acoustic core. Each of these three studies presents itself as a sort of sonic exploration aiming at answering such questions through the components of this ritual (but we may also call it theatre), thus redefining its role along different formal patterns and temporalities.

This work was written for Anna Piroli.

Tutte le estensioni dell'aura

for saxophone, percussion and electro-acoustic device
(2019)

To find the balance between two entities means to smoothen the edges at such a degree that the single drop ceases to exist in the flowing of the river. In my music this smoothening becomes equivalent to striping it down to the core. It means eliminating anything unnecessary that weakens a too precarious equilibrium. It's a quest to find the essence of each sound, to find its aura. These are the instances from which this work is born.

Four sound sources are mixed to the point of merging into perfect symbiosis. The performers' corporeality vanishes into the slow flowing of the ever-changing sounds. Sound turns into time, unstably occupying space. Every once in a while, its sudden expansions and contractions cause different elements to emerge, almost by mistake. Inner voices occasionally take over to lead the stream.

Suspended amidst vibrant bodies of flesh, metal and wood, sound expands to acquire volume and plasticity. Sound becomes volume, space that marks time.

This work was written for and dedicated to Duo Dubois (Alberto Cavallaro and Federico Tramontana).

dove tutto è stato preso II

for harp and electronics
(2019)

Every musical instrument is a museum of its past and present uses, a latent memory of the hands that have touched its surfaces and edges. Setting an instrument in vibration means bringing these reminiscences back to life, along with all the layers of meaning they carry – citations of citations of citations...

From this perspective, with its ancient and transcultural history, perhaps the harp is the instrument that can be most defined as a place "where everything has been taken." However, if hands alone struggle to carve a path among the myriad voices inhabiting it, using objects as prosthetics to mediate the harpist's action on the instrument's body might offer other possibilities. Here, saturation was attempted, seeking a way to implode all these memories that encrust the sound and consume it together. Perhaps not surprisingly, the strange presences that arise from this operation sometimes resemble certain interferences encountered in the gaps between different transmissions of a poorly tuned radio – unsettling acoustic non-places that, like this harp constantly ensnared in its own memory-laden distortions, speak to us of distance, of absence.

This work, commissioned by the Venice Biennale, was written for and is dedicated to Emanuela Battigelli.

Breaking walls down

for orchestra
(2019)

Walls are more or less discreet elements that silently delimit our existences. Describing a demarcation line between here and there, inside and outside, they are perhaps one of the oldest ways humans have devised to order their view of things, not just through language. The wall marks a difference and the need to highlight it. It serves to separate us from the other, to protect us, and this function often inevitably ends up highlighting the true reason for its existence: the fear that the other might blend in with us, erasing our individuality.

Cyclically, every civilization has felt the need for walls, and not coincidentally, this need has always been felt in moments of weakness, often coinciding with the first signs of a slow but inexorable decline that clumsily sought to be remedied through isolation. It is precisely in those contexts, however, that the curious phenomenon of walls arises, which from the very moment of their construction seem to invite the subversive act of demolishing them, if only to reclaim the freedom to choose one's own destiny by clearing the horizon of suffocating barriers.

This work, commissioned by Fondazione Teatro La Fenice di Venezia and destined by a curious coincidence to be performed for the first time exactly thirty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, speaks of this and other walls, of their fall and the need to break them down.

Extended

for bass flute, Paetzold contrabass flute, harp and live electronics
(2019)

Extended is a series of works where the form and materials of pre-existing solo pieces undergo various types of extension - in material, temporality, space, and sound evolution - with the aim of observing how these changes deform the originals, often leading them far from their original trajectory.

Where any trivial attempt at transcription would be senseless given the specificity of the materials used, the grafting of foreign elements causes destabilizations and adaptations that require different times and spaces to find new forms of equilibrium, much like in a living organism. From negligible efflorescences to articulated ramifications that deform the territory, making it unrecognizable, the phenomena generated by these induced mutations reveal aspects of the original sound material that remained unexplored and call into question its potentialities.

Thus, the events acquire new meanings and perspectives, while the form becomes the space in which to observe the adaptation processes of this music-organism to the prostheses imposed upon it.

Extended, written for Airborne Extended and Tempo Reale Festival, reworks and amplifies the materials and form of *dove tutto è stato preso II* for harp and electronics by introducing an organic intrusion of a bass flute and a Paetzold contrabass flute.

di maree, anatomia

for voice, polystyrene boxes and elettro-acoustic device
(2019-20)

The birth as a moment of traumatic detachment is an ancient theme. In Daniele Bellomi's poetry, which gives title and words to this work, the violence of this event is multiplied a hundredfold in the myriad of images incessantly evoked by an extremely dense, at times hermetic language, where sound and meaning interpenetrate without ever yielding to narration or univocality of perspective. The voice neither narrates nor acts: it is merely an attempt to identify possible glimpses from which to observe fragments of the world. Like the tides that sometimes return in Bellomi's texts, the flow of words drags reminiscences ashore that short-circuit among themselves, vortices of meaning that have suggested the rhythm and formal breath of this work, where the disparate dimensions of the human voice, the sound of polystyrene vibrating under the fluid movement of a bow, and electronics filtered through this acoustically distorting material collide, repel, and then interpenetrate in an imaginary acoustic dilation of that cry just hinted at in the last verse.

This work was commissioned by Alda Caiello, to whom it is dedicated, with the support of SIAE – Classici di Oggi.