COMPLEXITY ?   1989

Music is reflection on language.
Being forced to create by itself its linguistic assumptions the music, beautiful abstraction,
is art in which the syntactic aspect is absolutely fundamental.
But we can't pretend nevertheless that it would get exhausted in a grammatical
dimension, even if indispensable to its own existence.
   What is the role of the composer if not wondering and rewondering endlessly which
are the semantic borders of a figure or a "phonologic unit" , of a perceptive decoy, of a
historical sedimentation   and the "forbidden" inter-relations among these different
layers ?
Art is re-invention of the collective memory.
Where a historical perception modifies the sense of a figure?   When an archetypical
constant is so strong to overcome a historical abuse of the same archetype? Where the
violence or the reiteration of a figure creates a new perceptive landscape, even if the
figure is extremely well known?
All these border lands are, in my opinion, the raw material, the home-task of the
composer; together with a restless reflection on the syntaxis that organizes this game of
mirrors.
    Here is why perception,and composition, and language itself are like algorythms; a
system of systems.
This is the real complex situation our generation has to face now, with the greatest
lucidity.   In front of it a Stockhausen Klavierstucke of the 50es is a schoolgirl game. The
incredible acceleration we have had in the last twenty-thirty years has no precedents in
human hystory; and as we all know very well the development of technology, and media
particularly, is creating a mad overlapping of the furthest languages that chaotically
exchange signals at unbelievable speed, substantially ignoring themselves.
It is a vital matter now not to miss or forget the basic and deep values of our tradition but
we must be brave enough to throw them in the jungle of reality and see if they are still
able to elaborate a vision of world, accepting any important revision other interpretations
might suggest.
The planet is getting smaller and smaller: perhaps we could try to use this long
experience as a positive contribute   to a re-composition of inner unities, cultural and
musical we all need, sometimes desperately.
It is too easy to consider language as a linear phenomenon, with its teleology and its
"pureness", sort of dynamic/historical monolithicity, that confines it in the reassuring
borders of a unique code.
This is a conception tipycally eurocentric, whose crisis we have eventually to accept.
Perception too is a system of systems, therefore it is an illusion the pretence to rationalize
the implications of it in a single system of analysis.
And drawing consequently absolute principles of synthesis.
Perception escapes such a bridling, and will take its revenge.

On the other hand the metaphor, the allitteration, the most refined rethorical means are ancient systems to "play" with the diverse levels of perception, that is to say of sense. In fact music is fiction, is human, therefore any way arbitrary. Perhaps this is its deepest significance.

Well then there is a research not purely syntactic, articulated on different and interrelated layers .

That exceptional laboratory that is reality itself, continously demands attempts of synthesis, recomposition of "red threads" and interrupted paths. We can discern a sort of oblique crossing of different semanthic, perceptive and cultural layers.

A single point of view is not enough anymore: we risk to miss some important data and to misunderstand, miss the sync.

Beyond a counterpoint of notes, a counterpoint of counterpoints, a counterpoint of parameters I see now a counterpoint of codes.

But this means also a counterpoint of perceptive strata,of temporal levels, a counterpoint of processes, of different "times", maybe integrated in a single compositional work.

And this is very complex. These diverse interpretations of world are often bound to traditions and cultures different to the european's.

It's clear: like in a fugue, the counterpoint technique must be totally possessed,otherwise it is the chaos. In our case, definetely more risky, a solid handcraft is indispensable, but not enough.

We need powerful "mental" techniques to analyze and re-organize ,every time, phenomenons so different. And this is what, for example, can be provided by our culture. The cultured european music of this century and especially from the 50es on, has elaborated an extremely powerful corpus of mental techniques. We should now filter, curtail and use it.

This research not purely syntactic, this counterpoint of codes, is a research of the greatest engagement,which tries to yield in the reality the experiences, the discoveries of the "laboratories": trying in this sense to enrich the life of everybody with these experiences. But then the interesting thing is also that the experiences themselves bounce back, return in the laboratories enlivened, tested by the mercyless confrontation with reality.

Hamlet tried to explain to Horace that there are many more things beetween earth and sky than in all his phylosophy.

Everywhere we rest our gaze,on reality, it is a striking sworming of particulars,stratification of activitities correlated or apparently casual, restless articulations of epiphenomenons,subphenomenons often around centers we can't discern.

But is it possible to "reproduce" the complexity of a living organism or the functioning of human brain or the incredible quantity of informations it elaborates every second of our dayly life? or better, does it make any sense an attempt in this direction?

The central idea of '900 has been the awaited liberation from the umbilical cord of naturalism, of descriptivism: the tension towards a finally mature being, capable of self-determinating his own perceptive horizon, able of grasping values and limits of his judgement. The interpretation of world as an assumption of responsability . Art gives man the chance to take an "intuitive" leap instead of merely imitative, of the complexity of Real. And exactly here lies invention.

The quality of this interpretation ,and consequently the weight of the responsability, is measured with the capacity of creating a positive fluxus of deep communication beetween men. There is an ethic aspect, propositive, active, hopefull which is deeply human.The "becoming" as tale, as an attempt to feel the others:
< here we are, we are still here, together.>
There is an evident difference about perception and conditioned reflections, obviously : this the difference beetween communication and hypocrisy,for instance in neo-tonalism. It must be indeed, a necessary liberty.
So complexity is always a qualitative matter, never a quantity. Transparency in a global density is what really counts. This means I have to use a very articulated syntaxis only if I really need it, that is to say if I have articulated things to say. Otherwise it is academy, or fashion.
In fact it is not enough to make "difficult" things to gain a license of elusiveness for a work of art.
The "elusiveness" of art cannot be guaranteed "a priori" by behaviour rules.
It is much more..... elusive!
It is the ambiguity itself, the non-being and being at the same time, mirror of human essence.
Even more: it is exactly upon what for a moment appears catchable (in various senses) , that perception can "think" of dwelling. To be soon disavowed, of course. Here starts the game.
The wave too, offers a shape of its that we continously have the feeling to catch: and it is exactly the impossibility of "retaining" this known form that creates the magic.
On the other hand the perception of this shape exists absolutely clear; even if illusion.
The Human is, after all, accepting these limits and plays on them and with them. The exercise of ambiguity and irony is a supreme law of wisdom....
Hamlet is always there.
Perhaps from this point of view Ferneyhough's music has a
" defect" : it is too simple, even if extremely articulated and deep.
For example Kagel's music is more difficult, more evasive and escaping in a way. Maybe more disturbing. Nothing is explainable within a single code, our points of references are wiped out; it is not ,or better doesn't want, to be "pure" . It forces us to look for a solution for a happy end of our evening.
I'm not saying it is "beautiful".
Neither it is "interesting" (an insult in this century).   But that it is music: not consolatory, not cerebral. But ambiguous. Which is a good compliment for a human product.
This problem of pureness and impurity of "syntacticity" in musical language is of course a central point.
Ferneyhough's work on the other hand is fundamental: necessary, brave and probably, due also to his restless search of that purity, more beautiful (dangerous word isn't it?). I like it more, I feel more confortable with it; it is part of myself. Nevertheless I have to go beyond. I have to listen to the thousands voices speaking inside me.
I hope at this point it is clear that these ideas of mine have nothing to do with

"quotations" at all, neither with "stylistic decoys".That is to say neither with any "post-modernism" . It must be an absolutely organic work, an attempt of new synthesis, where there are no single "ingredients" to be recalled but a new organism totally indipendent and self-standing, first of all syntactically. I give this for granted.

On the other hand anything we do recalls, or gains sense in relation to something else. It undergoes, in a way, a perceptive destiny that has a historical determination. Whether we want it or not.

The longing to non-being, to pure transparency, unfortunetely is not enough by itself for not appearing.

It is perhaps better to keep in count this percetion problem from the beginning and consider it as one of the many compositional parameters.

This function of memory and its relationship with folk and popular music inside us is an open problem, of course. And I say it is important that it becomes a further level of "semanthic action" in our work.

This is really fascinating, in my opinion.

And quite complex too.

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