Dossier / Dosier / Dossiê
"Analysis beyond Notation in XXth and XXIst Century Music"
Alessandro Bratus and Marco Lutzu (Guest editors)

Introduction

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The present dossier collects contributions of scholars from various European countries who are interested in different aspects of XXth and XXIst century music. The starting point for the essays presented here was a session we organized during the Eight EuroMAC, entitled "Analysis beyond Notation in XXth and XXIst Century Music" (University of Leuven, 17-20 September 2014). Our aim was to present and to reflect on the different modes of graphic representation of sound phenomena without the use of staff notation which, particularly from the second half of the XXth century onwards, have been elaborated both for compositional and analytical aims. By gathering together popular music scholars, ethnomusicologists, and musicologists to discuss these matters from an interdisciplinary point of view, the dossier intends to set an agenda of shared problems and questions, as well as to propose strategies and techniques to address these issues across different repertoires and genres.

Ethnomusicologists were the first to problematize the use of the Western music notation system for analytical purposes. Since they basically use staff notation as a descriptive tool rather than a prescriptive one, scholars dealing with orally transmitted music soon recognized its unsuitableness for transcribing relevant aspects such as non-proportional rhythmic events, fluctuant intonations or the rich ornamentation of melodic lines (Bartók 1951, Seeger 1958). This awareness has led to a deep theoretical reflection on the limits of music transcription and to the elaboration of a large amount of different ways of visualizing music on paper (List 1974, Reid 1977, and Giuriati 1991).

In the first part of the present dossier, Enrique Cámara de Landa presents an overview of the most significant systems adopted by various ethnomusicologists to represent music beyond the staff in the last decades. He proposes a reflection on how these graphic solutions have been developed, both to better highlight particular aspects of music and also as an attempt to

conciliate the etic and emic points of view. In such a perspective, the ethnomusicological approach to music visualization can be understood as the effort to represent different kinds of music by taking into account the aspects emerging from the intercultural dialogue between researcher and musicians.

In recent years the approach of many scholars engaged in the study of music of the XXth and XXIst centuries has been characterized by a "performative turn", in which the emphasis is shifted from the meaning that is encoded in music to the meaning that is performed by it (Cook 2008). This has stimulated a debate which underlines the even less usefulness of the rigid conceptual boundaries between musicological subdisciplines, and moves toward new integrated music studies (Bohlman 1993, Cook and Everist 1999, and Born 2010). Since music performance is a central aspect in all music practices, it has been investigated from different standpoints, often adopting approaches that are at the intersection between various disciplines, such as ethnomusicology, historical musicology, and popular music studies, but also ethnography, sociology, psychology, and –quite obviously– performance studies. Musical performance has been intended in different ways according to the characteristics of the musical genre or repertoire, the theoretical framework, and the analytical interest of the scholars. Depending on the case, the analysis of musical performance has highlighted aspects as diverse as the interpretation of a score by the musicians, the interaction between the musicians –or between them and the audience–, the role played by the body, or even the relation with the new compositional languages developed in XXth century art music, to cite just a few examples (see Blacking and Kealiinohomoku 1979, Frith 1996, Rink 2002, Roy 2003, Cook and Pettengill 2013, and Clayton *et al.* 2013). In the majority of these cases, the performance-oriented approach has faced issues related to the visual representation of music phenomena.

In her investigation of these issues in experimental Western art music of the XXth century, Ingrid Pustijanac focuses on free improvisation, and how it can be analyzed, taking a recording of the Italian *Gruppo di Improvvisazione Nuova Consonanza* published in the late Sixties as a case study. Her research compares various graphic models for the analysis of improvised music in order to articulate an approach that highlights the relationships between structure, time, gestures, sound, and performance. Stefano Lombardi Vallauri explores the work of the Italian composer Dario Buccino, which is characterized by a hyper-performative dimension and a compositional language that prizes the gestural and physical action of the musicians. In Lombardi Vallauri's opinion, the analysis of the original notation system elaborated by Buccino is a way of rethinking the concept of "performative art" and of proposing an appropriate analytical approach for his music. A different perspective emerges from the article by Marco Lutzu, who investigates how musical performances have been represented in ethnomusicological studies. Lutzu states that mere observation of the graphic solutions adopted by various scholars over the last decades makes it possible to identify the three main trends that characterize the ethnomusicological approach: performance as structuring music, as body action/s, and as social/musical interactions. These can be considered as three possible approaches that are potentially applicable to different kinds of orally transmitted music. Another aspect that emerges from his contribution is the role played by technology in promoting new analytical approaches,

which leads to an "artisanal analytical methodology" due to the huge variety of music that is to be found in different cultures around the world.

The central role of different forms of mediation (including those provided by notation and the body of the performer) as a constituent part of any musical experience, is a relevant issue for any reflection on music analysis, as well as a revealing part of the underlying conception of music. The very fact that the dualism between the un-mediated perception of music and its mediated essence in an object can be reconciled under the paradigm of "technicity" (Gallope 2011) is an opposition that is aesthetically inherent to our conception of music as something ephemeral and short-lived. However, it is pragmatically contradicted by its widespread commodification in the last centuries, in the context of mass produced industrial forms of entertainment. The transformation of music into an object suitable for commercial distribution was, first of all, a consequence of the rise of music publishing, which used notation as a set of instructions for performance, but it then became more immediately and more widely exploitable with sound recording. For musicians, performers, composers, this technological advancement provided a way of preserving the performing qualities of the musical object that were impossible to grasp with notation-based forms of annotation. For example, as regards the temporal organization of musical events, Anna Danielsen's introduction to the collection *Musical Rhythm in the Age of Digital Reproduction,* lists the three main features that were affected by the fact that sound could be recorded and replayed: the sub-syntax level of expression, the timbric and dynamic aspects of rhythm, and the response of the audience to the micro-rhythmic organization of sound events (2010: 9). Since these are embedded in the body of the performers, such qualities appealed to the audience precisely because they promise a contact with the "reality" of the performance, and at the same time capitalize on its uniqueness as the unmistakable product of the action of a specific performer which creates a relationship –on record– with his/her listeners through the construction of a shared space (Moore 2001, Doyle 2005, Moylan 2012, Tagg 2012).

Right from its start as an academic field of study, the analysis of popular music acknowledged the need to expand the forms of graphical representation of music in order to deal with those aspects of musical experience that are most significant for the experience of listening. This struggle to actually use notation, instead of "being used" by it and, consequently, being subjected to its biased history in terms of the analytical musicological tradition, is the main rationale behind the contributions in this dossier that use visual means to gain critical interpretative perspectives on music making and reception in the realm of recorded music. The use of notation in conjunction with other forms of sound representation is used by Errico Pavese to explain how the identity of a specific recorded persona is shaped by the choices related to sound production and its unique performative characteristics constructed in the studio. Arguing that the genre known in Italy as *canzone d'autore* is strongly connected to a recognizable sound and rhythmic feel, he uses spectrograms, waveforms, and soundbox analysis to highlight some defining features of the style of two of the most important Italian *cantautori*, Fabrizio De André and Ivano Fossati. Black Key's "Lonely Boy" provides Alessandro Bratus with the opportunity to devise a framework to discuss the formal definition of the popular song as the result of four

underlying principles: multimediality, layering, repetition, and modularity. By delving into the clustering of meaning, structural and aural organization in popular song, the essay shows how these different organizational forces can be best understood by means of different forms of graphical representation, and by the fact that their interaction affords different readings of the song within a specific range of possibilities. The multifarious interpretations and possible representations of recorded tracks by people that can read and/or write musical notation and "non-musos" is the starting point for the article by Freya Jarman. Reporting on her teaching experience at the University of Liverpool on a compulsory first-year course entitled "Music as sound", her contribution reflects on the strategies used by students to solve the problem of representing sound on paper. These practices can be inspirational for musicologists who aim to bridge the gap between musical illiterates and literates, in order to make knowledge and reflection about music more accessible and worthwhile for society at large.

The nexus between structure and meaning is another central issue touched on by the graphic representation of musical objects, especially when it is connected to the effect of the sound and compositional parameters that are usually described by means of qualitative indications (e.g. dynamics, timbre, density, instrumentation). Especially in XXth- and XXIst- century music, the development of digital tools that use graphical interfaces of different sorts instead of standard notation also mirrors the fact that a hierarchical distinction between the different categories of musical elements (particularly those based on binary dichotomies such as primary/secondary, syntactical/statistical, structural/non-structural)[1] is no longer adequate. Furthermore by virtue of the limits of the previously mentioned score notation, the digital era has seen the use of a number of computer-based tools in the field of music consumption and analysis. On the one hand, digital technology could affect our perception of music as a temporal phenomenon, since it provides interactive interfaces to recompose the sounds of the past in real time. On the other hand, the rapid and widespread diffusion of technology provides the opportunity to analyze a number of music aspects with a previously unthinkable accuracy. Moreover, digital tools allow music to be visualized in new ways, which promotes the birth of new questions, approaches, and fields of research. In some cases, software created for other purposes has been adapted for musicological aims. Paolo Bravi adopted *Praat*, the software developed for phonetic studies by Paul Boersma and David Weenink (2015), for the annotation and analysis of the singing voice. After showing the numerous opportunities offered by the digital analysis of a vocal recording for the study of scales, intervals and ornamentation, Bravi proposes a reflection on the relationship between acoustic data and subjective musical interpretations and their relevance in analytic and perceptual investigations.

Furthermore, digital tools promise to bridge the boundaries between analysis and composition, thus reconciling the practices of what Pierre Boulez called "creative" and "sterile analysis" (1989); they can be used as mediators between complex thoughts and instrumental realization, while simultaneously becoming instruments for analysis and composition (Mazzola

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[1] The basic reference for such terminology is the writings of Leonard B. Meyer (1989 and 1998), although the presence of such opposing categories is widespread in many traditions of music studies and sub-disciplines.

et al. 2011). Visualization of aural phenomena on a screen allows the analyst and composer to rethink the centrality of specific parameters, and to arrange the representation of musical facts accordingly, in order to develop the best path to conceptualize and design the acoustical reality at the center of their specific interests. Such developments are especially relevant in terms of the future of music studies, in which the closer integration between theoretical, compositional and performative perspectives is bound to deeply influence not only the dynamics at play in the (already) but growingly blurred genre distinction between highbrow and lowbrow, popular and unpopular, globally- and locally-produced and distributed forms of musical expression, but also the divide between research and creative practices.

In the contribution by Mario Baroni, Roberto Caterina and Fabio Regazzi, instead of tackling the analysis of timbre from an acoustical perspective, the authors have attempted to develop a method to address this parameter of sound organization from the point of view of the listener. Their aim is to gain some insight into what happens "beyond the score", when music is experienced by its listeners, at the convergence of the fields of musical analysis, cognitive science, and statistical methods of clustering and analyzing data. For their experiment on this topic, they used a short excerpt from a recording of Luciano Berio's *Laborintus II,* which was electronically manipulated in different ways so as to modulate its spectral content. The response they collected from an audience of both musical experts and "non-musos" raises some relevant questions, and draws attention to the significant fact that, when dealing with avant-garde music, the traditional division between expert and non-expert listeners partially loses its relevance. As convenors of the session from which the present dossier was assembled, the afore-mentioned conclusion provided us with the missing link in the connection between the different musical practices the contributors deal with in their individual papers. What we have learned from this exchange between different disciplinary perspectives and traditions of music studies is that it is more rewarding to work along the lines of specific themes and to cross the established boundaries imposed by academic politics and subjective aesthetical judgments, rather than trying to develop genre-specific theoretical frameworks and analytical approaches. Although it is not our aim to advocate an all-purpose approach to music studies which runs the risk of erasing cultural differences and their specific values, we could instead conclude this introduction with the wish that a growing awareness of the shared questions at the core of different avenues of research might be the main drive for the next developments in our disciplines.

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Biography / Biografía / Biografia

Alessandro Bratus received his Ph.D in Musicology in 2009 from the University of Pavia, where he is currently a Research fellow. His teaching and research focus on analytical approaches to music and the media in Anglo-American and Italian popular culture since the 1960s. He has published on musical and media experimentation in popular music, on the structural relationship between form and meaning, and on the trope of authenticity in contemporary media in *XXth Centry Music*, *IASPM@Journal*, *Rivista di Analisi e Teoria Musicale, Comunicazioni Sociali, Philomusica on-line* and other scientific journals and books.

In 2008 he received a grant from the European Network for Musicological Research (hosted by Royal Holloway, University of London) for the research project "The London Underground Scene through the Press". He has lectured on popular music history and analysis at several Italian universities (Calabria, Salerno, Pisa, Pavia-Cremona, Venezia) since 2009. In 2015 he was Visiting fellow at the Music Department of Tufts University (Boston), for a learning and research project on the digital humanities' approaches to recorded performing arts. He currently serves as a member of the Advisory Board of GATM (Study Group for Analysis and Music Theory) and is the editor of *Analitica: Online Journal of Music Studies*.

Marco Lutzu, ethnomusicologist, gained his PhD in Storia e Analisi delle Culture Musicali (History and Analysis of Musical Cultures) at the University of Rome "La Sapienza". In 2014 he has been postdoc researcher at the University of Venice "Ca' Foscari". He is Teaching Assistant at the Universities of Cagliari and Venice "Ca' Foscari", and Adjunct Professor at the Conservatory of Cagliari "G. P. da Palestrina" and at the University of Florence. He is currently serving as a member of the Scientific Committee for the Italian Study Group on Music Theory and Analysis (GATM). He is Coordinating Editor of the online journal Analitica: Rivista Online di Studi Musicali (http://www.gatm.it/analiticaojs). He carried out fieldwork in Sardinia and Cuba. His main research interests are in vocal and instrumental Sardinian traditional music, Afro-Cuban religious music, music and religion, performance analysis, rhythm, and rap music. He presented papers at the meetings of the most important world ethnomusicological societies (ICTM, ESEM). His publications include books, articles, CDs, and ethnographic documentaries; in 2012 edited the Enciclopedia della Musica Sarda (L'Unione Sarda), a multimedia encyclopedia in 16 volumes.

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