

In 1999 the Florentine contemporary music association G.A.M.O (Gruppo Aperto Musica Oggi) celebrated 20 years of activity, both performance and didactic, centered around contemporary music. In preparing for this year, it immediately appeared to me that one of the most stimulating themes connected with this celebration could be the localization of a common thread which, over these years, has united - though with decidedly different results - the artistic developments of four Florentine composers: Daniele Lombardi, Giancarlo Cardini, Sylvano Bussotti and Giuseppe Chiari - composers who have also in varying degrees all been active performing their own music as pianists.

Briefly said, this common thread, consists in passing beyond the boundaries of the purely acoustic realm into the mixed territory characterized by new and daring interactions between sound, sign, image, gesture and performance.

It is this thought, then, which was at the origin of this concert which was realized in collaboration with the "L. Cherubini Conservatory" located in Florence and which took place in the auditorium, "Sala del Buonumore", of the same institution.

Giancarlo Cardini

Daniele Lombardi

Mitologia 2 (1999)

Mythology 2 evokes mythologies, both near and distant in time, as memory trails, using groups of sounds ("sound atmospheres") as metaphors for space. The form and the movement within it privilege the sense of energy and its transformation in time.

Daniele Lombardi

Giancarlo Cardini

Paesaggio marino al tramonto, con barca e grande nuvola nera (1998)

A photograph by Enzo Della Monica set for piano and slide projection

History has shown us that the compositional impulse is not always independent of extra-musical influences. In this case, the beautiful photograph by Enzo Della Monica (one of many) captured a magical moment - what I would term a "daily contemplation" - which moved me considerably and which triggered within me the process of translating this image into sound. I would further add that it has always pleased me to use titles which associate sounds with situations, objects, and memories of our everyday life.

From "Tre Danze" (1997)

Bossa Nova - Vecchio Slow

Looking back upon the disappeared century, it seems increasingly clear to those who are aware, that the critical thesis derived from Adorno's thought regarding modern music, which located "progressive" in the atonal avant-garde movement and the conservative in all attempts to use musical materials - purported to be out dated - such as tonality, neo-tonality, formal and structural conventions, etc., was deeply misguided. Such a diagnosis, short sighted and fanatic, designated tonal composers, both classic and popular, as nostalgic latecomers, the last bards of a language which was inevitably destined to extinction. Yet such a thing did not happen. We need only think of the impressive number of masterworks created in the first and second part of the twentieth century which re-used certain pillars of the tradition. Pillars upon which were erected the unlimited and wondrous territory of twentieth century popular music - a music to which I am deeply indebted for the infinite joy it has given me. "Tre Danze" (1997), for piano, is related to this world. Written in a style which closely echoes the spirit of the original sources, it intends to recreate the sonic atmosphere and the form of the dance music of today.

Giancarlo Cardini

Sylvano Bussotti

Impromptu Cloarec - Claviers poétiques (1999)

Immediacy of the image. In photography this is called a snapshot.

Immediacy of the improvised gesture. If musical, taking place on an instrument, one hears sounds springing forth while the performer's hands, with their unmistakable and unique touch, create total illusion as they respond obediently to a dream's command. The keys, that force of the piano, at once meandering, poetic and narrative, know how to give sense to the dreamer's soliloquy, to a free and limitless journey which resembles those excursions which depart from the beaten path, abandoning inhabited areas, in order to chance upon the shadows of ruins from time immemorial and savor nature's caprices to the core. When the snapshot catches you under the drill wing of that object which the whirling wind seems to be reproaching, the photographer Jacques Cloarec takes the figure (moving joyfully within the autumnal landscape of the past) by surprise, fixing the idea of the simple act in movement and awakening within us a desire to know its harmonies. Images, paintings, places and characters - abstractions - have always suggested sonorous equivalents embodying, almost, the very idea of what is conceived as musical inspiration. The only other requirement is the concert hall, with pianos which rest like ponds or woods in an imaginary valley.

The hall within the Florentine conservatory where Grossi, Pietro Grossi, laid the cornerstone (also for me) of the new musical knowledge - still vital today - symbolizes a mental space capable of reading, with fantasy, to what degree images are concealed within the sound, and verse and verb through man's touch and gesture.

Sylvano Bussotti - Milan, October 3, 1999

Giuseppe Chiari

Gesti sul piano (1963-1999) *per la mano destra*

Winter 1969-1970. I heard and saw Giuseppe Chiari for the first time in concerts held at the mythical Beat 72 in Rome. He was performing on the keyboard of a piano and on several objects (I believe these were some dry leaves and chestnuts.) Up till then I had not understood that one could use objects as though they were instruments. Chiari touched them with great delicacy, concentration and always with humility. He played as a child might have played. Later, having in the meantime become aware of contemporary scores which used a variety of objects in the percussion section (Cage, Schnebel, Antunes, etc.), I understood an important point.

Chiari did not treat objects as percussion instruments upon which to perform rhythms, but rather as organisms which were left free to express their intrinsic essence. Other composers, instead, used them in order to perform precise rhythmic figures rather than to enjoy their sound.

Subsequently I performed Chiari's pieces for objects (such as "Romperè", "La mano mangia il foglio", "Pezzo per custodia di termometro"). These pieces played a pedagogical role for me since they sharpened my perceptive capacities acoustically, focusing my attention on details of everyday life which would otherwise have passed unnoticed.

With regard to Chiari's piano techniques, I approached his music first through his gestural works and then his purely acoustical works. His gestural music - exemplified in works such as "Gesti sul piano" (which originally was a treatise on how to play the piano) and "Espressione" - relegates to parenthesis, or perhaps even better, cancels traditional piano technique based on the precise relation of finger and key in favor of another technique which permits the hand to express itself creatively when striking the keyboard, either in response to a prescribed gestural figuration (as in "Gesti sul piano") or in the creation of a series of gestures suggested by a verbal text (as in "Espressione"). The sound is of relative importance, instead the value is placed on the manner in which the sound is produced, a manner in which the performer, as Chiari says "must act like a three year old child, eliminating any idea of harmony or melody or of the keyboard as a musical scale. He must imagine having a paper underhand - a paper which can only be folded and wrinkled by the grip and weight of the fingers".

Giancarlo Cardini