



július fujak

**various
comprovisations**

text on music
(and) semiotics

pdf book in CDextra
with audio music tracks

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FENNICA

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Acta Semiotica Fennica
Approaches to Musical Semiotics

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2015

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various improvisations
texts on music (and) semiotics

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Preface

The following texts and articles were written on various occasions, however, when I look back at them in spite of their dissimilarity they have something common – the way of improvised creation.

We all know it very well, it is our daily experience: there are so many things we plan in advance – work schedule, meetings, various projects, holidays, etc. – but when we try to make them real, so many unpredictable “surprises” pop out. We are forced to reject or incorporate them into our plans, and what comes out of this process is a “struggling” symbiosis of pre-composed and improvised “parts”... Being open to all unpredictable processes, being able to appropriate them can be enriching therefore final results of our effort, and these ultimate various improvisations can be sometimes much better, even more effective than we could have imagined before...

A new concept – *comprovisation* – emerged at the musical art scene at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, and it is an interesting coincidence that it parallels with the gradual disappearance of the “irreconcilable” antagonism between composed and improvised music. I wrote a detailed study on how I understand comprovisation in music a few years ago (*Why comprovisation? Notes to discussion on the validity of a notion*, see page 70). I emphasized in it that in my opinion, an appropriate and meaningful application of this term is possible in the space of consciously mixed, balanced combinations of pre-composed and free improvised approaches (primarily) in the field of unconventional music and its possible intermedia interferences. I also admitted that there are some contemporary musicians, musicologists and aesthetics scholars that dislike to use this rather recent neologism. They see there is a risk it may be misused outside of its specific context. They are afraid of institutionalisation and expansion of taxonomical redundancy, especially in the academic and critical environments. I am aware of this risk, and I share many understandable anxieties about the possibility of “comprovisation camouflage”. In my understanding, however, this term does not express only the specific quality and “suchness” of a special kind of music and intermedia arts I use and prefer, but also (and maybe first of all) “modus vivendi” – the way I work and live...

That is the reason why I use this notion more metaphorically as a title of this publication – *Various Comprovisations*. Its texts are divided in two parts: the

first group of texts includes theoretical studies on music semiotics – including thoughts on my alternative models of musical sign and semiosis, on the original thought of Slovak musicologist and semiotician Peter Faltin, on a book about rhetoric roots of the birth of opera in the period of Renaissance written by renown Slovak composer and theoretician Vladimír Godár, as well as on the “liquidness” of contemporary music-artistic intermediality. The second, more essayistic part is focused on the activities of the contemporary Slovak ensemble Quasars Ensemble, and on my reception of John Cage, and last but not least on the influence of music semiotics and aesthetics on my own music-intermedia projects. The final text/“codappendix” describes, and explores a new “prospect” scholarly discipline *pseudotics*.

The artistic part of the publication contains an audio CD of my music works such as acousmatic composition *Nitrian Atlantises*, two different improvisations created with my trio Ne:bo:daj (SK) & Amy Knoles (USA), digital percussionist and leader of legendary ensemble E.A.R. Unit, with electro-acoustic composer Ján Boleslav Kladio (SK), musical letters taken from non-verbal correspondence with graphic artist Ludivine Allegue (F) titled *Wordless*., and short piece *Pseudotic encore?* featuring great violinist and composer Jon Rose (UK/AUS) (for more details see the book and the booklet.). I would like to extend my sincerest thanks and appreciation to prof. Eero Tarasti, Ján Sudzina, prof. Ľubomír Chalupka, all musicians/improvisers I played with, and last but not least to my lovely wife Nadka, kids and family.

Alternative models of the musical sign and music semiosis

The traditional - abhidhammic – view is very close to the scientific and technical view of the world, in which to understand some phenomenon means to explain “how it works”... This understanding of the world misses one significant thing – the purpose of things – thanks to which they exist. ... It does not concern the issues related to their being.

Jakub Bartovský

The astronomers of the modern era and the 20th century sometimes viewed the limited scope of knowledge of the universe in the ancient times with disdain since with no telescopes and radiotelescopes, only 5% of the universe was observable from Earth. On the verge of the millennium, however, their colleagues agree that the situation today is very similar to the situation in the beginning of astronomical research – they acknowledge that all the material, energy-based and measurable things we have discovered in our universe represent, figuratively speaking, the said “5%”(!) of its volume. “One fifth” of it is represented by something with gravitational properties, but it is not manifested otherwise, and “the remaining three quarters” represent the type of existence we know nothing about, except for the fact that it exists. When examining the borderless universe of music, contemporary musicology and music aesthetics, and sometimes semiotics, find themselves in a similar position, which seemingly fuels the sceptics who argue that to talk and write about it is utterly impossible, or even undesirable, due to our inadequacy. In conformity with the Polish composer Witold Lutosławski, however, I think that it is not only possible but, for the sake of deeper understanding of it and ourselves, extremely necessary.

For example, try to listen to Bach's *Trauer Ode*, BWV 198, Part 1 (*Laß, Fürstin, laß noch einen Strahl*)...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1DA5mYizc20>

After listening, I can join you in asking: what was happening a little while ago? What happened in this dialog between a particular musical organism and your together-being with it? Using the terminology from aesthetic semiotics,

what kind and quality of semiosis do we deal with in this piece? Is it even possible to explain it with abstract semiotic models? Before attempting to find the possible answers to these questions, let us focus on the essential characteristics of specificity of what we call music.

1. MULTIPLE DUALITY OF MUSIC MEDIA

In the case of semiotic-aesthetic reflection of music as one of the focal points of European culture and tradition, we deal with a special and peculiar type of artistic medium which, at least since ancient times, is known for its multiple duality. The primary duality of the music medium can be characterized – in reference to the work of the Slovak music composer and theorist Vladimír Godár – by its natural potency for binding both to the numeric as well as semantic phenomena. Using the thinking of ancient Greece, one can talk about the Pythagorean-Plato view of symbolic-mimetic musical semiosis, i. e. the about correlational links of musical structures to the abstraction of numbers (or relations explicable by it; including the emanating transcendent idea) on the one hand, and the Aristotelian iconic-mimetic view associated with the links between the musical semiosis and the persuasive power of rhetorical statements on the other hand. Both of these views are not mutually exclusive in the music, on the contrary, they create a unique integral overlap (V. Godár). In the certain historical periods, the focus was sometimes put on one of the plates on these complementary “scales”: after maintaining their “balance” in ancient times, the medieval times accentuated the first of the said views – within its typical interpretation of the transcendental nature and mission of music (which was also demonstrated in its inclusion in the quadrivium disciplines) – whereby the Renaissance restored the Aristotelian view of iconicity in the spirit of overall rethorization of the musical media¹ (one of the cardinal revolutions in the history of music).

Another important bipolarity of the musical medium is its autonomy and (implicit, explicitly obvious) syncretic links to other artistic media. At this stage it is important to emphasize the dualism of the so-called abstract and

¹ In relation with the Renaissance music paradigm, let us for example mention the demands placed on the composers from the viewpoint of rhetorical virtues *energeia* – i.e. the ability of an illusive presentation of things without their visual presence – or the projection of the rhetorical discipline *dispositio* or the triad *docere* (teach), the cathartic *movere* (move) and *delectare* (delight) into the nature of a musical composition and its interpretation (the issue of musical rhetorics and musical-dramatic forms in the Renaissance was analyzed in detail by Vladimír Godár e.g. in his work *Zrod opery z ducha rétoriky* (*The birth of opera in the spirit of rhetoric*, 2012).

corporeal music, as characterized by the American composer Harry Partch in his book *Genesis of a music* (1949). Under abstract music, we generally mean (mainly in the Euro-Atlantic area) the music, which was gradually and autonomously becoming more and more independent (in other words, the so-called “absolute” music), while corporeal music – expressing the *corporal* (physical) unity of the word, sound and motion gestures in *real* time – is characterized by a correlation of music and the “sibling” artistic media, which is – by the way – the basic building block of all rituals in the ancient theater in different cultures – ranging from Antiquity, India, China to Japan. In the context of the musical corporeality, we have to mention the Old Greek term of trinitial *choreia* – expressing the integral link between music, dance gestures and words (incarnated inter alia in the principles of *arsis* and *thesis*) – as well as its persuasive effect on the current status (*páthé*) and character (*éthé*) of man. The dichotomy of the abstract and corporeal mode does not have to be contradictory – in an abstract music, the traces of corporeality are implicitly present, while the quality of abstract music processes enriches the quality of the second of the above modes.

The third of the dialectically related dualities in music is linked to the specificity of its temporal aspect: it is the parallelism of its temporally successive linear flow and at the same time the simultaneous layering of passing musical processes of varied length. Music sounds real in physically measurable linear time, however, this time is highly relativized mainly due to the coexistence of different durations, overlapping, and layered times (O. Messiaen), which inter alia results in the apparent differences in the psychological perception of time in the musical experience. In the context of the musical-aesthetic relations, it is possible to consider the application of the concept of the four temporal lines in the Marcel Proust’s novel *À la recherche du temps perdu* (In search of lost time) as described by Gilles Deleuze in his text *Pluralism of the sign system*²: time we are losing, the time we lost, the time we rediscover, and the rediscovered time. According to Deleuze, the signs in these time lines mutually interfere and increase the number of combinations, whereby the rediscovered time of art (such the highest class of signs) sur-

² This text comes from Deleuze’s book *Proust and signs* (1964), in which he specifically deals with the taxonomy and properties of signs and sign systems (mundane signs, signs of love and artistic signs). It is interesting that the prominent musical aestheticist and existential semiotician Eero Tarasti considers Marcel Proust (also referring to the said Deleuze’s work) to be a sophisticated “implicit semiotician of music.” Tarasti devotes one chapter in the book *Semiotics of classical music* (2012) to the analysis of his perception of the musical communication situation in *La prisonnière* – the first part of the said novel (1923).

rounds, layers and encompasses all other times, what can be also applied to the music.

2. METHODOLOGICAL OUTCOMES: EXISTENTIAL AESTHETICS

OF FRANTIŠEK MIKO AND MUSICAL SEMIOTICS OF PETER FALTIN

After characterizing the multiple bipolar nature of the music media, we can turn our attention to the basic methodological outcomes of my semiotic view on the specificity of music semiosis – it is the concept of the existential expressional aesthetics, and/or reception being of a work of art by František Miko (1920 – 2010), the founder and one of the key representatives of the so-called Nitra Semiotic School, and in a complementary way, the original music aesthetics and semiotics of musicologist Peter Faltin (1939 – 1981).

In an essential simplification of Miko's expressive-semiotic view, it can be stated that the meaning of the interrelated (musical) shapes is defined by (their) expression. Each expressional category of Miko's expressional framework is a kind of phenomenological "substratum" of a certain uniqueness in the work of art in its suchness – it is the verbal expression of the existential touch with it. The range of expressive categories basically confirms Miko's paradigmatically decisive concept of reception being/existence of the work of art, i.e. the real existence and accomplishment of the work of art, i.e. generating its meanings in the dialogic process of its conscious creative reception and/or the perception of the work of art in terms of its existential experiencing. Miko's various models of the expressional framework resound strongly in the context of language and literature, however, they also in principle relate to the expressionality of musical art and the creativity of its perception, i.e. the space with the otherwise uncommunicated expressive nuances, which are understood from the inside in other levels than ("only") the rational and verbal one. In the spirit of Miko's view, one could conclude that the expressive culture of musical work of art³³

³ I am aware of the fact that the traditional approach to a musical work of art within the bounds of semiotic modeling of musical communication and semiosis is currently vague and rather limited. Significant paradigmatic changes in the broad understanding of what is fully legitimized and established as the music in our culture since the mid-20th century – I mean the musical events, free non-idiomatic improvisation, (neo)flux events, musical and sonic environments, sonic art, sound art, audio arts etc. – relativized the Europe-centric eminence of compositions fixed in the scores. The narrow understanding of a musical work of art ultimately does not include the important phenomena of music-making, folk music and the many manifestations of non-European musical cultures. The Polish musical semiotician M. Jabłoński therefore proposes to replace it with the term "musical discourse" (Jabłoński 2010: 36). For the purposes of our interpretation, however, I will use

relies on own imaginative intelligence and emotional empathy of the listener, because it stems from them. According to Miko, the creative generation of meaning from the expression of correla(c)tive musical shapes transposes our perception into the dialogic musical contemplation, i.e., in essence, to a different mode of consciousness.

One of the few scholars of his time, Peter Faltin in his musical and semiotic research from the 1970-s did not rely on one of the two fundamental semiotic lines inspired by structural linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure and logical pragmatism of Charles Sanders Peirce, but primarily on the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein from the period of his masterpiece *Philosophical Investigations*, which had a major impact on a wide range of issues. By way of example, let us mention (along the lines of refuting the denotative fetishism) the principle of generating the meaning of the word in the so-called “language in use” by “living human being”, which Faltin specifies in relation to music: in terms of creating the meanings of musical signs, he talks about their manifestative nature and replaces the term “use” with the term “listening”. Faltin also exposes musical syntax to semiotic reflection, which he describes as the process of “attributing spiritual meaning”, which is finalized exclusively in the human consciousness in the process of listening to the “sounding logic of musical relations”. This is governed by certain categories of musical thinking, which are common to both the creator and the listener. Faltin justifies the unsustainability of semiotic-linguistic instrumentalisation of the musical phenomena that require a different semiotic and comprehensive approach equally involving the complementary of hermeneutics, reception aesthetics and analysis of musical and aesthetic structures and signs.

In this sense, one of the key assumptions in my reflections on the specificities of musical and artistic semiosis is Faltin’s conviction that the meaning of musical sign cannot be generated solely by their materiality or “use”, but it resides in their mutual correlation, i.e. relation of the structural character of the musical sign (morphology, syntax) and the pragmatic context of its perception (Žabka 2004a: 147).

3. CORRELA(C)TIVITY OF (UN)CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE WORK OF ART IN MUSIC SEMIOSIS

In view of the possible semiotic thoughts on the alternative models of musical and artistic semiosis from the viewpoint of the so-called existential semiot-

the term “musical work of art”, because I understand its ontological status as much broader, including the Faltin’s “transgressive” concept music as a totem.

ics, it is necessary to clarify the understanding of the very concept of consciousness used by František Miko and Peter Faltin in context of mutual correla(c)tions of consciousness and music. Based on the research presented in my books *Musical Correla(c)tivity* (2005) and *Hudobné korela(k)tivity* (2008), I concluded the existence of a multi-level nature of human consciousness, in which unconsciousness can be spontaneously activated, stimulated and substantiated through experiencing the musical work of art. Following the findings of Jung's psychoanalysis, transpersonal psychology, theory of chakras, Buddhist wisdom, which have for long been accentuated by Slovak composer Roman Berger, we can conclude that consciousness is not an undifferentiated totality, reducible to the mere rational functions of the brain, but one can distinguish several cooperating levels in it: sensory contact, emotional, discursively and intuitively distinctive, creative volitional, mentally intellectual and spiritual, which includes and coordinates all previous levels (L. A. Góvinda). When discussing the sensory level and the awareness of it, one cannot exclude corporality from the concept of consciousness, that is, the awareness of bodily sensations (which is apparent in the case of physiological and sensory effects of music).

However, in the second pole, the multi-level understanding of consciousness also includes (except the substantial presence of intuition in the background) the oscillating "leakage" of the levels of personal and collective unconsciousness – therefore, I resort to using the neologism *(un)consciousness* in my theory of music aesthetics. In intentional listening to the musical processes, the listener finds himself/herself in the changing modus and regime of the (un)consciousness. In a way, the listener nests into the space-time of a multi-dimensional musical "unraveling" of complementary functional melodic and harmonic, metro-rhythmic, dynamic and sonoristic processes. While "nesting", the often unpredictable and meta-sign associations of the different levels of (un)consciousness are activated – sometimes in very subtle way, but also in confrontation with extreme otherness of the musical work in sudden ruptures.⁴

I understand the relational correla(c)tions of (un)consciousness and the musical work of art in musical semiosis as a unique dialog between the phenomenality of multi-level (un)consciousness of human being(ness) and the multidimensional organism of the music piece (the simultaneous, more than three- or four-dimensional!/ processes in richly structured compositions was

⁴ In support of these arguments, we can mention the findings of Zuzana Martináková-Rendeková on the synergetic systemic theory on the analysis of music as a self-regulating and self-organizing system, which describes not only its causal processes, but also the non-linear and indeterministic patterns taking place at the unconscious level (Martináková-Rendeková 2012: 70).

already pointed out by Iannis Xenakis⁵). This is the encounter and a dialogic confrontation of the beings: the multi-level, specific and unique human being(ness) – conditioned and determined by the environment of specific cultural and social circumstances – and a uniquely other being of multidimensional reality embodied in the passing musical processes, whose meanings are generated and interpreted by this human being in its existential beingness.⁶

4. ALTERNATIVE MODELS OF THE MUSICAL SIGN AND MUSIC-ARTISTIC SEMIOSIS

A work of art (and particularly music) is not a system of signs in the conventional sense, but a specific kind of symbolism of a “precarious language game” (L. Wittgenstein). In this “game”, we are confronted with a complex sign-ostentatious system *sui generis*, “demonstrating” the newly created reality – under the conditions of granting the crucial role of *mimesis* as the creative principle of special kind of imitation in the understanding of signs in an artistic (musical) utterance, as well as in the verification of its value and quality. Vladimir Godár claims that the ancient understanding of *mimesis*, expressing a link between *physis* and *techné* is an overarching term, encompassing the various types of communication with artistic signs; in the case of (musical-)artistic semiosis, this means the unsustainability of “singular interpretation of the sign” and the need for its research “based on a complex cultural intentionality” because it is based on “contextual interpretative synthesis” (Godár 1998 and 2012).

Based on the aforementioned, it is clear that the models of a musical sign and music semiosis relying on a purely mechanical application of Saussure’s dy-

⁵ Paraphrasing Iannis Xenakis, music can be a structure of many co-existent layers, which surround the listener at the same time and at all times. We listen to the tone height, the temporal instances of the duration of time, the dynamics, phrases, themes, structural parts etc., even unconsciously. ... In music, we do not focus only on the spatial multidimensionality (five or even seven dimensions), but also on the much more complicated way of thinking, perhaps the most complicated in all of human creation (Xenakis 1993: 82). nájdí originál...

⁶ A note slightly beyond the scope of a clearly semiotic discourse: the musical thinking/feeling is a kind of symbiotic alchemy of IQ and EQ. But this statement, of course, cannot explain the correla(c)tivity of the multidimensional aspects of music and the multilevel (un)consciousness of man. In this symbiosis, however, it may be the dimensions existing inside and outside of us at the same time - that is, those that go beyond me not “only” in the otherness of the musical work of art, but also in the impassable mystery of being(ness) of another man and his/her (musical) thinking and feelings.

adic understanding of the linguistic sign⁷ and/or static understanding Peirce's triadic seem to be difficult or even inadequate. In this regard, what seems to be particularly productive is not only the above-mentioned Wittgensteinian music semiotic thinking of Peter Faltin, but also the contribution to music aesthetics by Susanne K. Langer in her work *Philosophy in a new key* (1941). In a heuristically innovative way, she analyzes the non-denotative nature of the non-verbal, non-discursive, untranslatable, implicit symbolism of music and its principle of the presentation as a other-being of the reality of specific sign nature⁸, whose primary role is not to represent a different reality, since it ostentatiously refers to itself (Guczalski 1999). When arguing in favor of the necessary need for another semiotic modeling of the musical sign, we can also rely, in the case of (musical) art, on the concepts of "autonomous sign" introduced by Jan Mukařovský or the "self-reflexive sign" of Umberto Eco, which cannot be reduced to semantic referencing to the type of operative verbal communication. In view of the above facts and circumstances, we must proceed to the innovation and/or modification of the established models of the musical sign and semiosis. Having regards to the above sources⁹, let me present my own innovative alternatives to certain models – primarily, to the well-known semiotic-referential triangle:

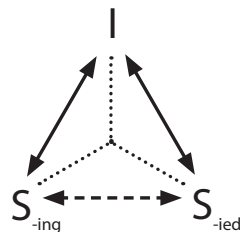
Option 1) I replace the usual letter "S" representing the sign, i.e. the material, sensuously perceptible entity (and/or the signifiant, sign-vehicle, representam-

⁷ According to M. Štúr, the Saussure's model of the linguistic sign is often misinterpreted by mistakenly replacing the *signifié* (mental concept corresponding to the meaning of the sound image) with denotatum. The sharp separation of the signifying and the signified can also be considered inadequate in the case of symbols and attribution of mimesis only to the first element in the pair. (Štúr 2012: 9).

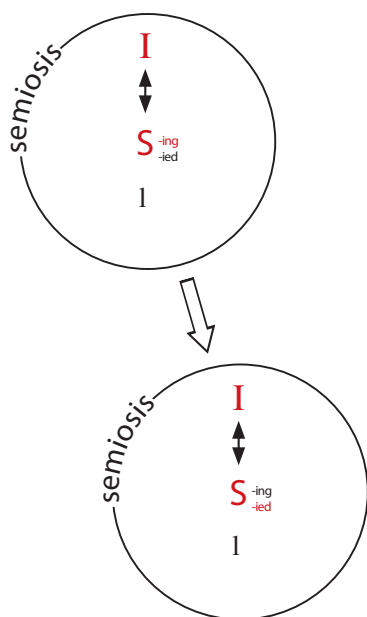
⁸ We can also introduce the specific case of the so-called potential contradictory character of the musical sign, that is, the possible simultaneity of the euphoric and dysphoric, which is analyzed by the musicologist Esti Sheinberg for example in connection with the works of Gustav Mahler, Dmitri Shostakovich and Leoš Janáček.

⁹ In addition to the aforementioned theories, let me also make a honorary mention of various semiotic models and concepts of artistic and/or music-artistic communication and semiosis, which had a direct or indirect effect on my contemplating their own specific nature: the model of artistic situation introduced by Zdeněk Mathaus-er (a semiotic triangle multiplied into four triangles, correlating references, genesis, ontology and morphology in one single square), the existential semiotic models of music semiosis by Eero Tarasti and Mark Ryebrouck, the musical and semiotic concepts by Maciej Jablonski, the theory of interpersonal hypotheses by Ferdinand Kobloch with the participation of Jarmila Doubravová, and some sub-themes in the musical thinking of postmodern philosophers and aestheticians such as Roland Barthes, Jean-Francois Lyotard, Jacques Attali and Jozef Cseres.

en, symbol) with the character “S_{-ing}” for “signifying” and, likewise, let me substitute the letter “O” representing the entity to which the sign refers (object, and/or signifié, designatum, referent) with the character “S_{-ied}” for “signified” (its referential meaning). The lines in the triangle – linking the top “I” (interpretant) with the extremes “S_{-ing}” and “S_{-ied}” – are replaced by bidirectional arrows (this variant is a kind of first step to the main model of the musical sign – Option 2):



Option 2) If we consequently accept the idea that a musical sign intentionally and self-reflectively points to and labels itself, and it includes the signified meaning, then the alternative model of a musical sign may be rendered by fully replacing the modified triangle with a circular disc. The “signified” is implicitly hidden in the “signifying”, whereby the environment of the pragmatic, existential context of the Wittgensteinian “using and treating”, and/or “listening” in the musical context – “I”, in which the process of attributing the meaning from “S_{-ing}” to “S_{-ied}” takes place, is symbolized by the circular area, which also includes the “I” linked with “S_{-ing}” and, particularly with “S_{-ied}”. In the process of perceiving and understanding the meaning of a musical sign, the “S_{-ied}”, which is initially backgrounded¹⁰ (including in the Figure), is subsequently foregrounded:



This interrelated model of the musical sign is applicable on the elementary level of the musical “atom” – that is, the interference relationship of a single musical interval and its

¹⁰ This model was inspired by the ideas of Miko’s successor Ľubomír Plesník, and in an independent way also by the Moravian artist Vladimír Kokolia in the second half of the 1990s, by the so-called “magic eye” as an aesthetic metaphor for understanding the work of art.

Some parallels can also be found with the understanding of the artistic sign by Gilles Deleuze, namely with the process of its implication and explication – that is, “winding” of meaning in the sign and its development and “unwinding” in the course of its interpretation. Thus, Deleuze describes the process of finding and ultimately disclosing the meaning of the sign, to which the interpreting person must attain during his/her search.

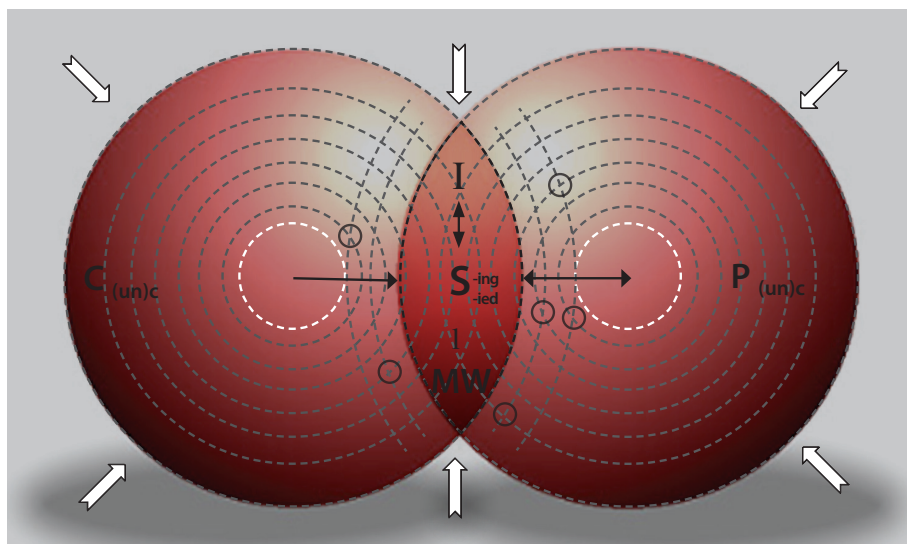
perception (which is inter alia evidenced by the fluxus minimalist compositions by La Monte Young, e.g. in his *Composition 1960, no. 7* with a resonance of a perfect fifth resounding for a long period of time) – but, with a certain degree of simplification, even on the whole musical work of art as a sign system.¹¹

If we managed in the above way to somehow recodify the semiotic model of the musical sign, we can proceed to a similar modification of the communication model in music-artistic semiosis. The conventional models of artistic communication, typical for their targeted monodirectionality from the author of the message to its recipient, who is positioned into the role of a passive decoder, are considered outdated in postmodern thinking. In context of existential music semiotics, what stands out as more appropriate is the dialogic variations of musical communication relying either on the above Miko's "modus vivendi" of the reality meant by the author, which is embodied into his/her work of art and its existence coming to life in the percipient's creative reception, or the famous "two-way" dialogic model introduced by Jean Molino & Jean-Jacques Nattiez.

The below alternative 3-D communication model of the music-artistic semiosis clarifies its dialogic nature in the spirit of musical correla(c)tivity, i.e. the mutual correlation of musical thinking in the multilevel (un)consciousness of the creator, incarnated in the multidimensional organism of the musical work of art and multilevel, meaning-generating (un)consciousness of the percipient/listener. The (un)consciousness of the creator " $C_{(un)c}$ " and the percipient " $P_{(un)c}$ " in this model is represented by two multilevel globes whose core symbolizes the levels of (personal and collective) unconsciousness. The three-dimensional "lens" in the overlapping section symbolizes the multidimensional sign system of musical work of art ("MW"). In addition to generating musical meanings in the bipolar interaction of these multi-level entities, metasign associations can be formed in unexpected moments, which, being an integral part of the existential experience of art, emerge from the deeper levels of (un)consciousness¹²:

¹¹ I presented both variations of the model of the musical sign and semiosis in the very early stages of research at the 11th International Congress on Musical Signification in Akademia Muzyczna in Cracow (2010) and published in the university textbook *Otázky hudobnej semiotiky a estetiky* (Question/Mark/s of music semiotics and aesthetics, 2010), as well as in the first volume of the proceedings of the said International Congress three years later (2013).

¹² Similar ideas are presented by Louise L. Anderson, who uses the term *sedimentation* of prior perception experiences - which allows each experience stored in the memory of the body, or (un)consciousness be part of the next one (Anderson 2008: 293). Thus, the listener does not only perceive the events in the musical structures, but also everything encircling and surrounding him/her in the existential environment



MW – music work of art

S-ing – signifying

S-ied – signified

I – interpretant

C(un)c – (un)consciousness of the creator

P(un)c – (un)consciousness of the percipient

I – listening

○ – meta-sign associations

⇒ – social influences and determinants

As each other model, even this iconic-symbolic one – accentuates only certain aspects of modeled the reality – is simplistic and incomplete. It does not claim to be exhaustive and comprehensive as maybe some of the other models by the aforementioned experts, focusing on different aspects of music-artistic communication and semiosis. It is an expression of efforts to clarify the mutually determining together-being of the multidimensional nature of a musical organism and the listening multi-level human (un)consciousness.

I hope that my explanation provided answers to some questions raised in the introduction of this text, which (I think) are linked by a single “unifying” motif - the motif of principled understanding of the notion “existentiality”. In this text, I would declare it inter alia by the continuous topicalization of the listener by means of the term “being(ness)”. I understand it as a human being in the concert, particular beingness in its experiencing, and I use it alongside the said alternative models of musical-sign situations not only for the bare “occurrence” of things, but mainly for the signification of their existence and the

of his/her experience – including the materialized and emerging metatransign associative parallels through the events in the conscious field of vision.

“worry of *dasein*” (Heidegger).¹³ Otherwise, in harmony with Merleau-Ponty, a deep internal need for coping with the world and oneself is manifested in the existentiality of music-artistic semiosis and himself through making music and listening to it. It is basically the musical search of homeostasis in knowing our internal contradictory beingness and the transcendence of my, your, our ultimate existence and *dasein* in this verbally incomprehensible world.

¹³ In relation to the actual predictive levels of musical semiotics, a completely separate study could be written on the area of ontological understanding of the artistic work presented by Martin Heidegger, who refuses aestheticism and psychologism connected existentialism. Heidegger understands the truth, which includes beauty, as a self-disclosure of being (*aletheia*), or as the unhidden being. Guido Morpurgo-Tagliabue interprets his view as follows: “*The illumination of the existence by being is nothing else but the meaning attributed by consciousness to what is hidden; it is the presence of the mystery, the religious meaning of infinity*” (Morpurgo-Tagliabue 1985: 415).

Being is thus manifested as a mystery in the process of uncovering, non-hiding and hiding, whereby art is the realization of this process. In Heidegger’s view, art is the shock of sudden disclosedness of being and, ever more so, the imposition, of its truth rather than the totally unbound, free creative act of the artist (Morpurgo-Tagliabue 1985). The alternative models of the musical sign (especially option 2) and music-artistic semiosis in this text should also be viewed in the context of these ideas.

Topicality of Peter Faltin's music semiotics

*The aesthetic signs speak to certain phenomena of consciousness
and set spiritual processes of creation of meanings.*

Peter Faltin

1

The admirably wide spectrum of work of Peter Faltin (1939 – 1981), a significant Slovak musicologist of the 20th century, is still very inspiring in its value of invention and in-depth acuity of his research in the fields of music historiography, interpretative analysis, music aesthetics and semiotics. We can mention his research initiatives such as search for the new ways of monographic and critical understanding of the composers' creative processes (e. g. Igor Stravinsky and the Slovak generation of Avant-garde '60), theoretical justification of gradual emancipation of the significance of the sonoric structure (and relevance of this concept) from impressionism to Edgard Varèse, characterization of ontological transformations of the new paradigm in the 1960s, as well as his active participation in the progressive music culture (International Seminars on New *Music* in Smolenice 1968, 1969). In all above activities, he always pointed to cardinal, neuralgic and problematic topoi. The following lines are focused on the motifs of Faltin's semiotics of music, which can change our view on the fundamental questions of music semiosis.

Peter Faltin, in his last pivotal work *Bedeutung ästhetischer Zeichen – Musik und Sprache* (Signification of aesthetic signs – Music and language)¹⁴, does not follow the beaten paths of modern semiology or semiotics – neither the one based on Ferdinand de Saussure's theory, which uses linguistics as a model

¹⁴ The translation of the second part of Faltin's work we quoted above was published in the Slovak musicological magazine *Slovenská hudba* 3/1992. The work was originally published after Faltin's death with title *Bedeutung ästhetischer Zeichen – Musik und Sprache* (Hrsg. von Christa Nauch-Börner, Aechener Studien zur Semiotik und Kommunikationsforschung, Band 1, Rader Verlag. Aachen 1985). In the first part *Problem of meaning*, the author focuses on several problems of aesthetics, semiotics of the aesthetic phenomena, meaning in semiotics and the specificity of the aesthetic sign. The third part *Language and utterance* deals with the aesthetic and philosophical lectures of Ludwig Wittgenstein and analyses the aesthetic-semiotic question whether music is a certain special kind of language.

paradigm of semiology, nor the other determined by the work of semioticians Charles Sanders Peirce and Charles William Morris. He found the source for appropriate semiotic reflection of music in the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein, especially in the period after his book *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*. Faltin considers his criticism of the confounding denotative fetishism of St. Augustine to be a “Copernican turn in the 20th century”. He interprets Wittgenstein’s well-known premise in *Philosophical Investigations* “the meaning of a word is its use in language” in the following way: “*a word has a meaning not because it is related to something that has meaning, but word can relate to something only because it has a meaning of it*” (Faltin 1992a: 314).¹⁵ Faltin appropriates Wittgenstein’s philosophical concept of “language games” and “the use of words in language”, of “treating them”, which indicates the primacy of the *pragmatic* generation of the meaning of sign in relation to the adjustment of syntax.

He applies this knowledge to the specific area of musical signification and also refuses the thought of doubling the meaning with a sign, expecting nothing “beside” or “behind” the sign. Within these intentions he attributes a qualitative label of intentionality to the musical sign – in accordance with Jan Mukařovský’s notion “autonomous sign” and Umberto Eco’s “self-reflexive sign”. He determines the artistic sign (including the musical one) as “*an articulatory form of specific aesthetic intention, id est of non-material projection or idea, which exists only in such type of sign and creates its singular meaning*” (Faltin 1992a: 300). He considers Wittgenstein’s “treatment” of the signs as listening to music itself in our consciousness, which plays a crucial role in the dialectics of the correlation between syntax and its pragmatic use.

In the context of Faltin’s thesis of mutual correlation of musical syntax and its pragmatic use, we should emphasize that listening to music is conveyed as a “treatment” of signs – it means that musical thoughts and imagination “*acquire their being and it is possible to hear them only as late as in the process of sounding*” (Faltin 1992a: 301). These assertions have a significant impact on the understanding of various semiotic issues concerning the specific nature of musical work of art, which can be theoretically reflected from the aesthetic point of view “*as late as on the base of analysis of observed experience caused by this work of art*” (Žabka 2004b: 497).

¹⁵ To illustrate his original way of thinking, we can introduce an extract from Faltin’s commentary on Wittgenstein’s thoughts: “(...)Wittgenstein’s sentence, degraded to aphorism, ‘Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent.’, does not say that the thing, we should be silent about, does not exist, but, just the opposite, it points to the fact that there exists something we cannot speak about, we can only pass in silence or rhapsodize. Ethical, aesthetic, mystical and religious phenomena are of this kind” (Faltin 1992a: 335).

2

Relying on these ideas, it is clear that the syntactic arrangement of intentional musical signs cannot be based only on the semantics of “assignation” anymore. Faltin also parts radically with the narrow concept of syntax as an instrument of modification of meaning – he interprets syntax differently, endowing it with the function of “spiritual bestowing of meanings”, which is concluded solely in the process of listening to “sonant logic of musical relations” (Faltin 1992a: 304). The adjective “spiritual” should be interpreted in the context of the comprehension of “sonant syntax operation as a phenomenon of consciousness” (Faltin 1992a: 334).

The otherness of musical syntax is related directly to the untranslatable otherness of musical thinking. The sonant musical process is autonomous and it exists only when making sense of listening to its unique musical logic. Faltin, inspired by Wittgenstein's thoughts, questions the very prerequisites and rules of musical syntax: *how* is it ever possible that musical tones or sounds create relations and also resultant meanings (Faltin 1992a: 306). It implies the indefensibility of extreme structuralism isolated from the pragmatic context, as well as of the belief in “self-redemptive” excessive reception (not only music) aesthetics, which derives everything from the context of perception and ignores the perceived musical structure in its happening. The equilibrium of the dialectics of correla(c)tive relations between the object – its use, the structure – function (projected to the many layers of Faltin's semiotics of music) determines their appropriate comprehension. The structural-pragmatic dialectic game of creating musical meaning is played according to the rules of “the categories of musical thinking” on the playground of our human consciousness – the mind of the composer as well as listener. It also casts a fundamentally different light on the theoretical efficiency of music-semiotic reflections:

A meaningful analysis is not an anatomy of structure, but it is phenomenology, which finally does not explain a structure, but searches for the arguments in the structure..., (which) explain why something was composed and heard in the way it was and not otherwise” (Faltin 1992a: 308).

3

In the 1970's, Peter Faltin simultaneously devoted his research to the insufficiency of explanation of the musical-aesthetic semiosis interpreted solely through its communicative dimension. In his opinion, there is an important type of communication, musical communication, which is not an announcement or statement. According to him, nothing is “announced” or “mediated” in musical communication – it is a kind of “utterance”. This is why he replaces

the notion of “message” with the notion of “utterance” in the “sender – message – receiver” pattern. The utterance is not a vehicle, mediator or a message of something else, but a self-expression, which articulates musical thoughts, images and ideas, which cannot be translated to any other code. Faltin finds the justification of this substitution in Husserl’s typology of signs, in which he differentiates “expression”, which does not double anything, but itself is the thought and the meaning of the sign. He also points to Russell’s notion of “ostension”, or Wittgenstein’s “hint explanations” (Faltin 1992a: 311).¹⁶

Faltin describes the situation of musical communication as a specific semiotic phenomenon, which contains meaning in absence of any mediation of the signified message (Faltin 1992a: 312), without “the presence of the denoted object” or other “visibly manifested form”. In music, we deal with a different case of communication – it cannot be reduced to interaction only; it can take a form of contemplation or sharing the spiritual musical ideas and their meaning generated in our consciousness (Faltin 1992a: 317).

4

As I mentioned, Faltin understands the notion of musical syntax as “a spiritual process of bestowing of meaning” and develops his own conception of “musical syntactic categories” and “principles of musical thinking”. They may concern – and it is important – the composer and listener as well. According to him, these categories are the “regulative principles of musical logic” and they belong to the “aesthetic circular flow of an era” and its cultural and aesthetic ideal. It is possible to express their potentialities only in a simplified way with the help of verbally abstract terms, e. g. “repetition”, “sequences”, “contrast”, “change”, “return”, “false finish”, etc., and they are inexhaustible:

No matter how paradoxical it sounds: the musical meaning of sounding relation is not derived from tones, but – totally in Kant’s course – from the signification of categories of musical thinking according to which tones are set in relations (Faltin 1992a: 329).

The apprehension of the intended meaning is directly dependent on the adequacy of categories of composer’s thinking in musical syntax and the categories

¹⁶ Peter Faltin focused on the notions and theories of special cases of verbal language, which are more adequate to the nature of aesthetic and artistic signs, e. g. in his text *Contradictions in Interpretation of Work of Art as a Sign* with the subtitle *Three Monistic Models for Explanation of Meaning of Music*. It was published in *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology* by the Zagreb Music Academy, 1972 (Faltin 1992b: 153 – 162).

of listener's perception. Faltin does not understand this dialogical correlativity as constant and given but as changing, varying continuously and dynamically in the context of historical, regional, mentally and socially conditioned changes (Faltin 1992a: 329).

5

Faltin's semiotic reflections in the complementary interdisciplinary approach were related to several fields – communication theories, music aesthetics, semiotics, psychology, sociology, historiography, etc. – the philosophical view including. They were connected with the so-called linguistic turn and pragmatics, represented by the works of Charles S. Peirce, Jan Mukařovský, Ludwig Wittgenstein, or Umberto Eco. Faltin sided with their notions also because the mentioned critics of the denotatum “fetishism” – namely the various theories based on it (Sausurre, Ogden, Richards, or Frege) consider the art of music as “non-semantic”, “non-meaningful” and they do not view music in the framework of research on meaning and communication at all. Faltin not only criticizes, but in the intention of non-denotative generation of meaning in the processes of syntagmatic-pragmatic dialectics and crucial role of the socio-cultural, living contexts, he articulates the following thesis:

Musical meaning is a product of individually conditioned mutual influence between syntactical rules and pragmatic givens of their treatment. This mutual influence is, in Wittgenstein's words “a life form” is itself a life attitude. Music becomes (...), what it is, thanks to its being a part of man's life-world (Faltin 1992a: 314).

In this framework, he interprets the sign as a certain kind of “mediator” of meaning, which is not only a thing we perceive, but primarily the *phenomenon of consciousness* we perceive as a thing. He emphasizes the arbitrary dimension of signs, justified and verified in practice, i. e. the life context of their treatment, and claims the following: “...*the meaning is an articulatory form of equality, culture, state of mind, situation – or, if we want – the spirit of times*” (Faltin 1992a: 316).

Faltin distilled the the aforesaid thoughts to the following theses:

- *Meaning takes priority over the denotatum.*
- *Meaning does not depend on the material or spiritual entity the signs are related to, but on the socio-cultural context, in which the sign meaning is generated.*
- *Even signs without denotatum acquire meaning when in the frame of socio-culturally determined groups, as the signs of cultural units (notion of*

Umberto Eco) *they mediate as the signs of collective phenomena of consciousness, the signs with zero-denotation.*

- *Communication originates even when no information is transferred from sender to recipient, but when ideas, thoughts and projections as products of certain spiritual context are articulated, and when they are perceived considering intended meaning in other spiritual context.*
- *Signs whatsoever, without reference to how they are intended, can acquire only meaning of the cultural unit, which is present in collective consciousness of certain group; signs do not mediate meaning to consciousness, but consciousness bestows meaning upon the sign, a meaning of present cultural unit.*
- *There is no thing which could be perceived without acquiring the meaning; in the constitution of meaning there is more concern for “the recipient” than “the sender”.*
- *Each perception constitutes meaning; and whatever behaviour – including a non-verbalizable one – has a meaning, the meaning of sign, which we perceive as something.*
- *Meaning “by itself” does not exist. There exists only meaning for somebody.* (Faltin 1992a: 316)

6

Faltin does not render a general but concrete interpretation of the correla(c) tive relation of musical syntax and human consciousness. In the third part of his above-mentioned last book, *Musical syntax*, he points to the otherness of aesthetic signs – their meanings (compared to the verbal signs) are not known “in advance”, but they are created and developed in a unique process, in which the concrete act of their reception happens in the human consciousness. The meaning of the (musical) aesthetic sign is a consequent, experienced quality of the mutually related, perceived (musical) syntactic shapes, which cannot be derived entirely from their “sum” (Faltin 1992a: 319).¹⁷

To be more specific, Faltin draws attention (in one note to final parts dedicated to musical syntax) to important matters related to the comprehension of a con-

¹⁷ Faltin verified his conclusions in this text – specifically in parts 3.1. – 3.5. using the method of musical-psychological experiment on concrete 8-bar-long examples – where he demonstrated the categorial principles of identity, similarity, contrast, non-similarity and variety – to test “the adequacy between intention and perception”.

crete function of the musical syntax category, which conforms to the unique principles of concrete, unique musical thinking of a particular composition:

(...) the musical meaning of a sonant sequence is not a meaning of a syntactic category, but it is an individually formed and indescribable process, which is enacted following this category. To conclude: the musical meaning of contrast is not contrast (...), but the music which is heard as a contrast" (Faltin 1992a: 339).

If a composition of a particular kind of music is "inaccessible" to somebody, it means that he/she does not have an equivalent resource of the music-syntactic categories at his disposal. The comprehension of intended meaning is connected directly with the adequacy of the categories of the composer's thinking in musical syntax and the categories of the listener's perception. Faltin does not interpret this dialogical correla(c)tivity as something constant, on the contrary, he views it as the permanently, dynamically changing phenomena in the context of historical and cultural transformations, conditioned by the regional, psychological and social determinants (Faltin 1992a: 329).

7

As mentioned above, at the time of the rise of the use of different semiotic models since the 1960s and 1970s, Peter Faltin relied on the philosophy of L. Wittgenstein, which had a material impact on a number of issues. His (not only in the context of Czechoslovak semiotics) unique and willful orientation on the "other" and, in a sense, more productive outcomes has not been fully appreciated to this day in my view. Faltin's testimony of the brilliant follow-up to Wittgenstein's thinking and original application of his premises on the specificity of generation of musical meaning and semiotic reflection of musical semiosis is presented in many texts and articles, as well as in his above-mentioned last work *Bedeutung ästhetischer Zeichen – Musik und Sprache*.¹⁸ Out of the prologomena, in which he copes with the general musical-semiotic and aesthetic problems, the paper titled *Protirečenia pri interpretácii umeleckého*

¹⁸ This important book, published four years after Faltin's death in 1985 in Germany, is unfortunately still not available in English to this day, which it would definitely deserve, despite the significant problems connected with the editing process carried out by Christa Naick-Börner who rewrote some sections of the text based on Faltin's notes with his approval. In addition to the comparison of her edits with other Faltin's topical texts from his last period, a knowledgeable editor would also appreciate the critical comments by Vladimír Karbusický, which is pointed out by Marek Žabka in the above study.

diela ako znaku (*Tri monistické modely na vysvetlenie významu hudby* (Contradictions in the interpretation of a work of art as a sign /Three monistic models for explanation of the meaning of music/, 1972) stands out in particular, addressing the issue of specificity of the sign situation in the case of art, following the ideas of Ján Mukařovský.

He sheds light on the the explication of the peculiarities of the “autonomous” artistic sign, which absolutely cannot be reduced to semantic referencing used in operative verbal communication – a work of art, in his view, does not represent a different reality, but rather reality of itself. For example, the “atopical” music and architecture are completely beyond the classical conception of the sign, so Faltin is trying to understand it differently as a specific type of utterance about the “indefinite” non-verbalisable reality linked with the “the total complex of the so-called social phenomena” and even the “collective consciousness” (J. Mukařovský). Therefore, a work of art (and particularly music) is not at all a system of signs in the conventional sense, but a specific kind of symbolism of a “precarious language game” of sorts (L. Wittgenstein), a special ostensive “showing off” of some newly-created reality.

It is no coincidence that beyond J. Mukařovský, Faltin taps on the theories of G. Frege, B. Russell and, of course, L. Wittgenstein – he mentions their analyses of the specific cases of linguistic statements, metaphors, or full-meaning properties of proper names devoid of the denotative meaning, emphasizing the implication of the latter of the philosophers: “*The importance of the sign does not necessarily have to identify with the thing, it points to because the sign can be significant even if the designated thing does not exist at all*” (Faltin 1992b: 157). Faltin uses it as an argumentation for the defense of specificity of the musical sign, which in the traditional, narrow sense does not refer to anything (in a concrete and denotative way) and still has a meaning. He draws on the parallels with Russell’s so-called “ostensive” proper names or Wittgenstein’s “hint explanations” to defend the understanding of art (including music) as a complex, character-specific ostensive system sui generis:

The concept of a work of art as an ostensive testimony allows us to address the dichotomy associated with the concept of sign. The work of art as a sign itself becomes a matter of the statement and not an agent whose role is to indicate something else. ... The function of the colored areas and chords is ostensive: we understand them by watching and listening to them. There are no symbols of reality, which they are supposedly reflecting... (Faltin 1992b: 158).

At this point, it is worth considering whether it makes sense to restore symbolism in S. K. Langer's understanding as an implicit musical symbolism, which is not shallowly semantic, but attributes the term to the symbol of the musical work of art, which it embodies.

8

Faltin's thoughts in the field of musical semiotics have become more and more current and inspiring since verge of the 20th and 21st century. In the context of Slovak musicology, there are some "followers", who reflect on such original semiotic approach to various specific phenomena in the aesthetics of music. We can mention the significant musicologist Ľubomír Chalupka – the author of important texts about modern post-1945 Slovak music and the Avant-garde generation of Slovak composers in the 1960s (e.g. in his large book *Slovenská hudobná avantgarda*, 2011), who wrote also complex studies on Faltin's musicological evolution and various aspects of his theoretical innovations (among others as *pars pro toto* we would recommend his text *Pojem "zvukový ideál" v slovenskej muzikológii 60. rokov (Ku genéze a kontextom teoretickej práce Petra Faltina: "Funkcia zvuku v hudobnej štruktúre")* (The Notion "sonic ideal" in Slovak musicology in 1960s (On the genesis and context of Peter Faltin's theoretical work "The Function of sound in musical structure") – although it is not focused directly on music semiotics, it offers deep immersion into the process of Faltin's thinking (e. g. in comparison with his teacher Jozef Kresánek) and validity of his unique search of the new method of musicological research.

Marek Žabka, another Slovak musicologist who reflected on Faltin's works, wrote an important text titled *Avantgarda (autonomizácia hudobného materiálu)* (Avant-garde /Autonomisation of music material/, 2004). Let us stop at some of his analytical insight, clarifying Faltin's standpoints, positions and breakthroughs in the array of his major works from the 1960s to the latter works from the 1970s and 1980s. Žabka underlines the importance of innovation in the term *sonicity*, in particular its structural functional importance that Faltin attributes to it on the basis of evidence of a gradual increase in its importance the musical styles from the Renaissance to Impressionism, and/or the Avant-garde of the 20th century (culminating music-functional autonomy of the sonic structures of Edgard Varese, and/or the composers of the so-called timbre music). Žabka reminds us that in his two major works from the 1960s, *Predpoklady vzniku štruktúry novej hudby* (The Conditions for the formation of structure of newer music, 1965) a *Funkcia zvuku v hudobnej štruktúre* (The Function of sound in musical structure, 1966), Faltin inter alia addresses the degree and ratio of symbiosis of "sounding" and "function" of a musical

sound based on its three layers: physical-acoustic, psychological and aesthetic, whereby the musical meaning-creating sonicity springs from their relation with the accentuation of the musical aesthetic shape functionality (in a dialectical relation to the melodic-harmonic and metrorhythmical processes).¹⁹ However, Faltin does not reflect on the sonicity problem in “sterile laboratory” conditions of the musical structures themselves, but (as early as in this period) in the context of their perception and listening to where their non-verbalisable significance is *de facto* implemented and generated. When dealing with the rules of musical thinking and musical syntax, he always talks unanimously about the quality of their existence in listening. The musical work of art is interesting to him, and/or “he recognizes it based on the analysis of the observed existence caused by this work” (Žabka 2004a: 125), which he dedicated a great deal of his psychological and experimental research to. Apart from the still applicable understanding of the significant impact of specific sonicity in many kinds of contemporary music, Faltin’s anticipatory asset in the musical science is particularly the significant emphasis on the necessary complementarity of examining the syntactic-structural and experiential-pragmatic dimension of music (without any simplification on either side).²⁰

In the first part of the study, Žabka analyzes Faltin’s last coherent and authorized text *Phänomenologie der musikalischen Form* (*The phenomenology of musical form*) from 1979, where in addition to highlighting its synonymity of understanding of musical forms and aestheticity and the active role of temporality in the dynamism of the form, he also touches on one of Faltin’s cornerstone topics: categories of musical syntax. He compares the shift in the understanding of duality “sonicity – functionality” (in *Funkcia zvuku v hudobnej štruktúre*, 1966) and the conceptual pair “sonic material – music syntax” in that book and underlines in particular the decisive moment in his theoretical considerations – the paramount importance of the subject. Žabka notes that according to Faltin (in *Phänomenologie der musikalischen Form*, 1979):

...the patterns of relations are even partly generated only by the aesthetic subject itself and cannot be entirely read from the physical shape of the

¹⁹ In Faltin’s view, the first acoustic layer corresponds to frequency, amplitude and spectrum of tone, the second psycho-physiological layer corresponds to pitch, strength, timbre and, by their musical and aesthetic transposition, the third, aesthetic layer results in melos, dynamics and son(or)icity.

²⁰ The complementarity is also ultimately manifested in his mutually reinforcing research duality of the philosopher of music, aesthetician and semiotician on the one hand and a musical psychologist verifying the abstract findings directly in practice with artfully prepared experiments on the other (Žabka 2004a: 124).

work" (Žabka 2004a: 128), which is also underlined by his quote: "*The material object is not a custom field of realization of the musical form; rather, it is the aesthetic subject which, based on its external and internal assumptions, accepts or not the intended and materialized relationship as a musical sensual relationship*" (Faltin 1979: 6).

It seems we are dealing with an extremely receptionist aesthetic pragmatism, however, the opposite is true (we see a parallel with the reflections of the semiotic linguist František Miko, active in the same period): Faltin is very much aware that the starting point and the actual source of the sense in the musical and aesthetic meaning is the composer-created and composer-meant reality, materialized in the shape of resounding music, however, the substantiation of the musical meaning cannot happen without their real, correlative experience in the process of listening. After Žabka's description of the structure and implementation of a famous psychological experiment in the book, we finally arrive at the evidence of the "*form-establishing, aesthetic sense-generating function of syntax, which is implemented in the process of perception*" (Žabka 2004a: 137).

The value of the second part of Žabka's study lies *inter alia* in the attempt to reconstruct the said last core book on musical semiotics by Peter Faltin titled *Bedeutung ästhetischer Zeichen...* with respect to sometimes problematic changes implemented by the editor Christa Naick-Börner, and the underestimated benefits and important particularities of Faltin's musical semiotics. Among them, let us mention the already stated definitive rebuttal of the so-called denotative fetishism, or the generation of the sign meaning in the practice of its use (listening), but here *inter alia* in cooperation of the mutual relation of the triad: sign – subject – idea/intention. The additional theoretical initiatives that one can productively connect with even today in addition to the above are his semiotic analyses of the characteristic aspects and/or dimensions of the aesthetic sign, that is, the materiality, intentionality, privacy, procesual nature and alienation. Semiotic reflection is again exposed to the issue of music syntax, which is also present in the above Wittgensteinian contexts (he devoted a separate chapter to Wittgenstein's aesthetics). We will also encounter here the important considerations on the overlaps, but mainly the symptomatic distinctions in music and language²¹, which we use in justifying the definitive unsustainability of the semiotic-linguistic instrumentalisation of

²¹ Another Faltin's important contribution: he compiled with Hans Peter Reinecke one of the very first musical-semiotic anthologies in Europe *Musik und Verstehen* as early as in 1973(!). Even here already, Faltin formulates his basic positions rejecting the limiting, inadequate and semantic as well as the extremely pragmatic interpretation of musical meaning (Žabka 2004a: 143).

the musical phenomena requiring a radically different semiotic approach. In addition to the consequently accepted implications of Wittgenstein's aesthetics, Faltin accentuates the balanced complexity, comprising (in mutual complementarity) the hermeneutics, reception (we might add "existential" today) aesthetics and analysis of (musical) aesthetic structures/signs without favoring any member of this triad because, as he claims,

...the perceived meaning of these signs is generated not only by their materiality, not only exclusively by their use; the importance lies in the interactions between the structural nature of the sign, i.e. its morphology and syntax, and the pragmatic context in which the reception takes place (Žabka 2004a: 147).

I think that even today maybe nobody would better formulate the predictable, principally methodological standpoints of scientific research, which should be adequate to the nature of the examined subject, that is, the unique resounding music, listened to by a unique human being.

9

In 2009, the year of Faltin's 70 jubilee, the symposium *Otáz(ni)ky hudobnej semiotiky* (Question(Mark)s of musical semiotics), dedicated to him, was held at Faculty of Arts, Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra. It created the space for various themes within the wider range of contemporary semiotics and aesthetics, which developed "implicit", explicit and direct parallels with his research. The proceedings from the symposium were published in 2010 and extended with the papers on related aesthetic aspects of music. Within the framework of our commentary on some of the motifs of Faltin's music semiotics, I want to point out the following two papers at the minimum.

The article *The Historical roots of Peter Faltin's semiotics* by the well-known Czech musical semiotician Jarmila Doubravová (the Czech scholar of the early world International Congresses on Musical Signification – ICMS) describes the historical context in which Faltin wrote the previously mentioned book *Funkcia zvuku v hudobnej štruktúre* (Function of sound in musical structure) – she writes about his inspiration by the Slovak (J. Kresánek, M. Filip), Czech (J. Volek) and German (F. Winckel, W. Gurlitt, H. Lochmann, J. Rohwer) and French (the "father" of musique concrète Pierre Schaeffer) musicologists while reminding us that although Faltin's research was not explicitly semiotic since the beginning, but his way of thinking had semiotic intentions concerning the dialectic, syntactic and pragmatic dimension of musical semiosis. During his emigration to Germany in the 1970s, he was part of the Staatliches Institut

für Musikforschung Preussischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin, where he cooperated with Hans Peter Reinecke and supported his theories with the thoughts of Theodor W. Adorno, Carl Dalhaus and Ludwig Wittgenstein, which later appeared in his main and last semiotic work *Bedeutung ästhetischer Zeichen: Musik und Sprache* (1985), which is unfortunately still not completely translated into Slovak more than thirty years later.

The other text by the Slovak philosopher Klement Mitterpach *Communication, Insight and Exteriority* is focused on interesting parallels between Faltin and post-structuralists Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, between the “pragmatically revised semiotic theory of music listening” and “understanding of music as a radically self-deterritorializing process and their accentuation of the creativity of philosophy” (Mitterpach 2012: 130).

Mitterpach, in the context of Faltin's aesthetic and musical non-discursive communication, which can be understood as “insight”, refers to certain Deleuzian affinities. According to him, in Faltin's text *Pragmatics and musical meaning*, Faltin's listener is not a subject of representation, but of “realization” of the work of art. The idea resonates with the Deleuzian *becoming*²², or with the “happening, which is teleological when considered with regard to the work of art itself” (Mitterpach 2010: 125). In his interpretation of Faltin's concept of communication as contemplation, he adds: “it is obvious that communication is not interpreted as a causal mediation of a message, but as an insight, which is traditionally interpreted as a non-discursive ‘touch’ with intuited noemata” (Mitterpach 2010: 125). On the other hand, he reminds us of the significance of Faltin's thesis about the “ontologization” of music, which in his view represents an emphasis on two features – materialization and recontextualization. He assumes that “the materialization and recontextualization are not only indications of an ontologization of musical thinking, but also of the theoretical discourse about music”(!) (Mitterpach 2010: 125). Eventually, to consider the particularly significant item in his reflection:

The ontologization announces exteriority, which once again reminds us that art is no refuge, nostalgic home or utopian project of the future. Rather than utopon, it is atopon... Non-discursivity of music can be represented precisely by an interruption of discursivity, caused by the invasion of the concrete, which I am exposed to, confronted with, which can be provocatively demonstrated even by its absence. (Mitterpach 2010: 120)

²² It is important to quote Deleuze's & Guattari's understanding of the notion of becoming: “Becoming is always double, that which one becomes no less than the one that becomes – block is formed, essentially mobile, never in equilibrium” (Deleuze – Guattari 2004: 336).

The “exteriorization” itself, as it has already been mentioned, is not assigned only to music, but also to “*the categories of theoretical reflection of its onto-creative status*” (Mitterpach, 2010: 121), which in the context of judging the quality and actuality of Faltin’s thinking, can be viewed as a substantial observation.

10

In the last part of this text, I still want to touch on one Faltin’s article from 1969 titled *Ontologické transformácie v hudbe šesťdesiatych rokov* (Ontological transformations in the music of the sixties) which, despite the gap of more than four decades, can still provide us with productive tools for the understanding of paradigmatic otherness and uniqueness of extremely unconventional music not only in the 1960s but also nowadays. It is noteworthy that after the analytical reflections of the function/proportion of shape and sonicity in music from the time of the Renaissance to Impressionism and evidence of the prevalence and/or full emancipation-autonomy of the importance of sonic structures in the musical Avant-garde of the 20th century until E. Varèse, Faltin knowledgeably devoted himself (just a couple of years back) to the unconventional music of the 1960s, including the so-called improvised music.

Note that the very title of the article clearly articulates that this time it is not “only” the deep transformations of the aesthetically transposed parameters of the musical shaping, or the transformation of “composition techniques”, or an extensive “enrichment of the sonic material”, but a transformation of the ontological status of music! According to him, an important change occurred in the said period: “*the very concept has changed, and so did the meaning and function of music*” (Faltin 1992d: 175). After differentiating the solidified conservatism from the living tradition, he formulates the stances used for evaluating the vital “transgressive” shift in the non-conventional music of the 1960s, bridging the gap between the music work of art and the world, and/or the being, in an attempt to identify with them: “*The music wants to be – just like any human being – part of the world, and not just the testimony thereof –*” (ibid, 176). A blatant example of this identification is the above-mentioned freely improvised music (in reference to the progressive creations of C. Cardrew or V. Globokar) which, paraphrasing Faltin, replaces the hitherto “detachment from the material” with a strange kind of merger with it:

Improvised music is different from standard music not in its arbitrary nature, but because it is made fundamentally differently; the absence of music stands is not determinant – what matters is the fundamental change in musical thinking. Even the categories referred to as “natural”, seemingly

“innate” and “unchangeable”, such as the form, time and shape, are subject to change (ibid 176).

The endeavor to “sublimate” music from the state of a music work of art, being a testimony, to the state of overlap with the actual being in principle embodies the very other(ness), the different “ontological realism”, which requires different perceptual adjustment and, of course, a different musical-scientific approach.

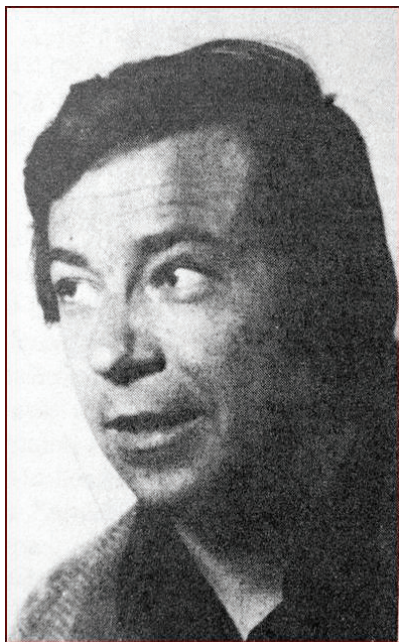
Faltin directly writes about “the conversion of the work of art as a depiction into the work of art as a totem” (!) – it is no longer the traditionally understood and interpreted sign system, but the demonstration of a being and “only” a utterance about it (ibid 177). If this is an indirect reference to the interpretation of the C. Lévi-Strauss’ totem as a materialization of a specific form of thinking and understanding of the world, and analogically, with E. Cassirer, as the indistinctness of the signifying and signified, i.e. the sign materiality and its spiritual meaning, then this confirms the ontological overlap of the new unconventional music and being, which was Faltin’s focus in his theoretical treatises. This totemic *“total identification with the sonic material”* was inter alia possible thanks to the acquired new soundness (with its source in the 20th century in the singled-out uniqueness of timbre as an acoustic parameter, in its aesthetic transposition, read: new music sonicity), as well as the radically different concept of processual nature and temporality, which are based on, as Peter Niklas Wilson says, the principle of “hear and now”. This also changes the role and position of the listener, who directly participates in this “sublimation” and identification with the being:

The work of art used to be a statement of man to the world, however, these days it becomes a statement of the world to man. It does not aspire at beauty – it does not want to adapt the world to man – and it does not want to be the “message” – that is, man’s adaptation to the world, but rather the creation of man and the world (ibid 179).

If that claim sounds “pathetic” or suspicious to someone, Faltin immediately subjects it to relativization by pointing out the risks and dangers connected with this very different type of artistic creation (not only improvised music and free jazz, but also the fluxus, musical happenings, performances or sound and interactive installations). In particular, the possible threats to the “artistic status” (“denatured by the material reality”) and reinstatement of the duality “work of art – reality” by showing the “raw” material, which can be confusing

to somebody. At the end of the article, Faltin responds to these “reservations” by turning to the ontology of the work of art in asking the fundamental Socratic question – since the aforementioned risks and their perception are directly linked to it – “*What signification do we attribute to art?*” (ibid 179).²³

Truly so, if we today consider the variety of unconventional musical and artistic expressions from a different paradigm – neofluxus, conceptual art, sound art, audialia art, music and intermedia improvisations and events – from the perspective of a non-matching ontological status and disregard their principal “transgression” of this model (applicable only to certain kinds of music), then they may seem incomprehensible to us. However, just like Peter Faltin, if we understand the decisive shift and significant transformations of their otherness and ontological foundation, we will be able to answer even the Socratic question...



Peter Faltin (photo: archive of Slovenská hudba)

²³ We can make similar rhetorical questions in connection with the ontological status of art and music and/or their transformations: should they be a mere “wrestling” of our emotions, or a place of a real dialogical conflict with the cathartic, shattering, reducible-to-nothing otherness, by which I get to know and recognize the world and “reconcile” with it and myself? This question, however, relates to both ontological statuses of music as a work of art and music as being.

Correlat(c)ivity of liquid musical-artistic intermediality

*The age of specialisation has given us art of sound
that denies sound, and a science of sound that denies art...
a music drama that denies drama, and a drama that – contrary
to the practice of all other people of the world – denies music.*

Harry Partch (*Bitter Music*)

1

The artistic intermedia ways of expression are rooted in the pre-ancient age. They are related directly to the original syncretism of different (lately separated) artistic media – to *corporeality* of artistic expression. Corporeality is a term coined by American unconventional music composer Harry Partch in his book *Genesis Of Music* (1947). It expresses *corporeal* unity of verbal, sound and moving gesture in *real* time. Corporeal wholeness of artistic intermediality is fundamentally characteristic for all ancient theatre rituals of different world cultures (Chinese, Indian or Japanese theatre Nô, theatre of Grecian Antiquity, etc.). As we know, the reincarnation of the principle of wholeness of mixed media artistic gesture appeared in the Renaissance (the original motivations for the birth of opera) and it is not accidental that this principle became topical at the millennium break of 20th and 21st centuries. Nowadays we are confronted with the process of gradual fading of “the Gutenbergian civilisation” (focused primarily on a written word) and the rise of a complex (sensory multimedia) paradigm of perception (Miroslav Petříček, jr.), which can be in some way interpreted in connection with archetypal corporeality.

At this point developing Partch’s approach I can mention different revitalising reflections of the category of corporeality in musical aesthetics and semiotics. Body can be understood namely as an “embodied metaphor” for the wholeness of complementary senses (of seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting). It is a source of natural need for (sensually) complex multidimensional artistic intermediality – while at the same time the category of corporeality is not comprehended separately from the multidimensional (un)consciousness of the human. The phenomena of corporeality and body is one of the central themes in the research of Gino Stefani and Stefania Guerra Lisi – “‘body’

as a structure of codes in the globality of languages” is dealt with at levels of psychosomatic unity, stratification of memories, synaesthesia, emo-tono-fono symbolic process, bio-energetic structure and organism (Stefani and Lisi 2008: 535) – an approach that Eero Tarasti applies as well. According to them the human body can be understood as an interpretant, a remarkable signalling and perceiving semiotic phenomena and a net of multidimensional interpretative processes.

One of the central motives of the interpretation of corporeality is the notion of “gesture”. Italian semiotician and one of the greatest contemporary trombone players Michele Lomuto in his lecture *Listening to Gesture* (presented at 9th ICMS in Roma, 2006) in a direct reference to Husserl’s phenomenology interprets the expressive understanding of the notion of “gesture” through the example of Cézanne’s painting: his creative gesture dwells not in the representation and portrayal of an apple as a thing, however, in the expression of his *experience* of the unique presence of the apple. Drawing the analogy it can be said that while perceiving the works of intermedia art we perceive expressively saturated utterance through direct, significance-generating (non-translatable) experience of a specific reality of otherness.

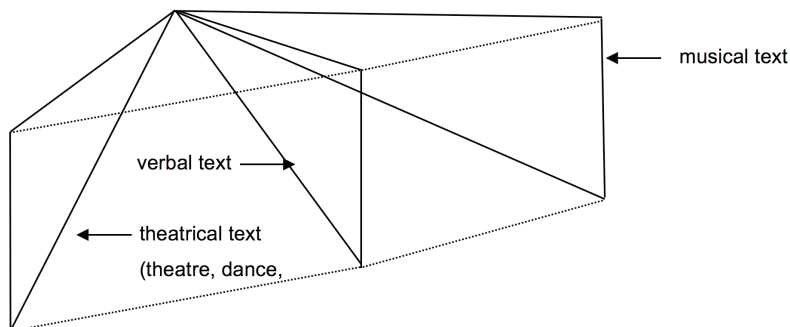
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It is possible to illustrate this process as an event of mutual correlation of expressive gestures of music and other artistic media by the multi/application of Jan Mukařovský’s model of significance structure of an utterance, taken from his lecture *Pojem celku v teorii umění* (Notion of the whole in theory of art, 1945). It demonstrates the expressive effect of the succession and simultaneousness of verbal text and the augmentation of its meanings (Mukařovský 1971: 88).

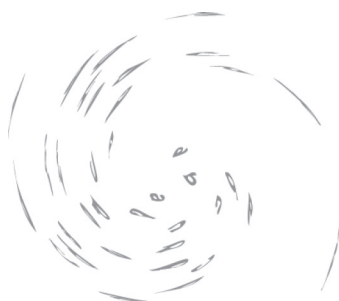
a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
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Vertical rows represent what is happening in our consciousness while perceiving the single elements gradually. In the end of speech “the things we perceived gradually are accumulated retrospectively in one dynamic whole” (Plešník 1999: 55). It is also possible to apply the mentioned model to the course

of generation of musical processes²⁴ and the generation of meanings in our consciousness as well as to other artistic media with linear temporality. The resulting accumulation of mutually enriching verbal, musical and theatre texts can be expressed by the following scheme of pyramid: “peacock” fan:



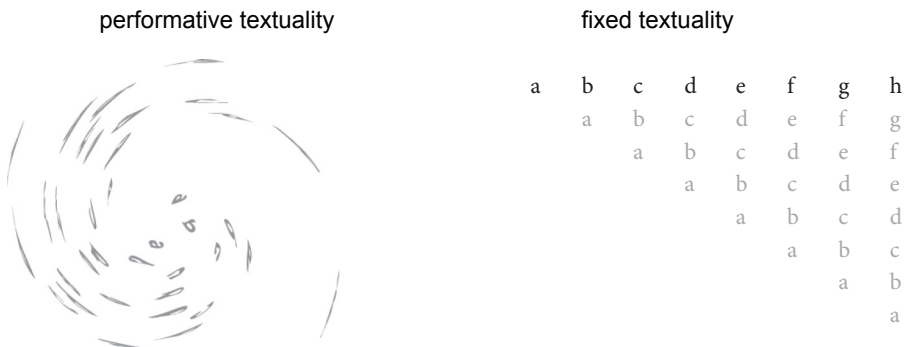
The space between the flats of the texts of artistic media expresses the Pythagorean correlative result of “the third quality”, which is a consequence of their interactive correlation – the perceived correlated result “we transpose to the meaning-generating relationships” (P. Faltin). In the case of fine arts with different type of temporality we can/have to transform Mukařovský’s model into the shape of a static spiral, which is not unfolding in a linear way, but is a symbol of flat (the painting) or spatial (sculpture) characteristics when everything is spread in front of the perceiving person “at once”:



²⁴ While listening to musical work of art we are confronted with multidimensional reality and coexistence of synchronous processes (acting sometimes on many temporal levels). To apply Mukařovský’s model to e. g. melodic course of polyphony means to create one flat model for each melodic line. If we want to express also the dynamic, rhythmical, sonoristic or tectonic music processes then we should expand the original model into space (for each process one flat) – the resulting scheme of accumulation of all flats would obtain the shape of a cone. In the main text we use a simple shape of a model of musical text to explain the interaction of music and other artistic media.

In this context we can mention Aage A. Hansen-Löve's distinction of artistic media (from the beginning of the 1980s), which comes from Lessing's *Laocoon* (temporal and spatial media). He differentiates artistic media with performative textuality and fixed textuality following the point of their temporal realization:

- *performative textuality* – successiveness of realization in linear time (literature, music, dance, theatre, performance, happening, etc.);
- *fixed textuality* – simultaneousness of realization in time (fine arts, architecture, visual dimension of graphic poetry, etc.).



3

Nowadays we can ask how contemporary interferential progressive intermedia art changes and what is specific and different in its character. Since the half of 20th century we have been witnesses of a gradual tendency to overlap the conventional borders of artistic media. Paraphrasing the words of Hansen-Löve or Ute Raßloff, the (temporally linear) artistic media with performative textuality have had the tendency to appropriate the qualities of (spatial) media with fixed textuality and vice versa. There is tendency to appropriate the missed qualities, which our “mother” media do not provide. Some musical composers try to escape the limitations of linear temporality by repetition of the same sonic sample (principle of minimalism, experimental sampling), some fine artists make the limits of spatial art relative by visualization of the event of creation and material duration process of the work of art, or by challenging the perceivers' participation e. g. in the paradigm of (post)fluxus, etc.



The convergent and correla(c)tive interference of intermedia art comes implicitly from the fact that no artistic media is „pure“. The Slovak aesthetician and experimental intermedia artist Jozef Cseres (known also as He^{ye}rme^{ar}s) argues conclusively in favour of mixmedia interpretation of arts. In his study *Noise and Tone, Voice and Speech-Sound, Language and Talk, Text and Work of Art... in Short the Music* he writes that expressive quality of “clear” painting is the result of processes of laying colours, gestures, motion of artist’s thoughts, etc., and that can be applied to the music or various artistic media:

(...) every media are mixed because they combine different codes, discursive conventions, channels, manners of perception and observation. Derrida points out that writing not only makes language visible but first of all it de-constructs the possibility of a clear picture or text” (Cseres 1999: 88).

The confrontation of artistic media with temporally different kinds of textuality tests as well as makes the motion of “differ^{an}ce” present. So the temporal-spatial frames of them become “liquid”.²⁵

Different regimes of consciousness are activated by multimedia shows (TV programs or non-inventive concerts of pop music). Another, different mode of consciousness is stimulated by contemporary, progressive and provoking artistic intermediality. If certain simplification can be accepted, it can be said that in the first case (quantitative, passive multiplication of media) the sensual levels of consciousness are attacked primarily, in the other one (correla(c)tive multiplication of unexpected interaction), the deeper contents of it can be “awakened”. A man actively perceiving the new music-intermedia art can be confronted with a work of art *sui generis* – with dialogical exponentiation of qualities of mutually “leaking” characteristics of performative and fixed textualities. That is why it is possible to talk about *liquid music-artistic intermediality* today.

²⁵ Jozef Cseres writes on the changing textualities of different works of art in the text *Site & room* and says that contemporary artists attack even the ontological substance of media, their spatial-temporal coordination and limits. According to him musical works of art are not limited by time frame of repetitions of live performances or mechanical-electronic reproductions anymore, and the architectonical space does not have to be three-dimensional or even real (Cseres 2004: 46).

4

I use the notion *correlac(t)ivity* mostly in connection with music²⁶, but it is possible to apply this term also to different artistic media as well as on the situation of their intermedia interconnections. The notion can be used in following meanings:

1) *Correlac(t)ivity of artistic media*

– correla(c)tive relationships of (eventually metamorphosing) mutual artistic media (scheme of multi-application of Jan Mukařovský's model involving the spiral version for spatial arts with fixed textuality);

2) *Correlac(t)ivity of artistic intermediality and human (un)consciousness*

– correla(c)tive, mutual relationships of interconnected (liquid) intermediality and multidimensional (un)consciousness perceiving it. This mutual impact can cause qualitative change of modes of (un)consciousness.

Point 1) makes sense only in connection with point 2), but both can be/are a subject of independent research.

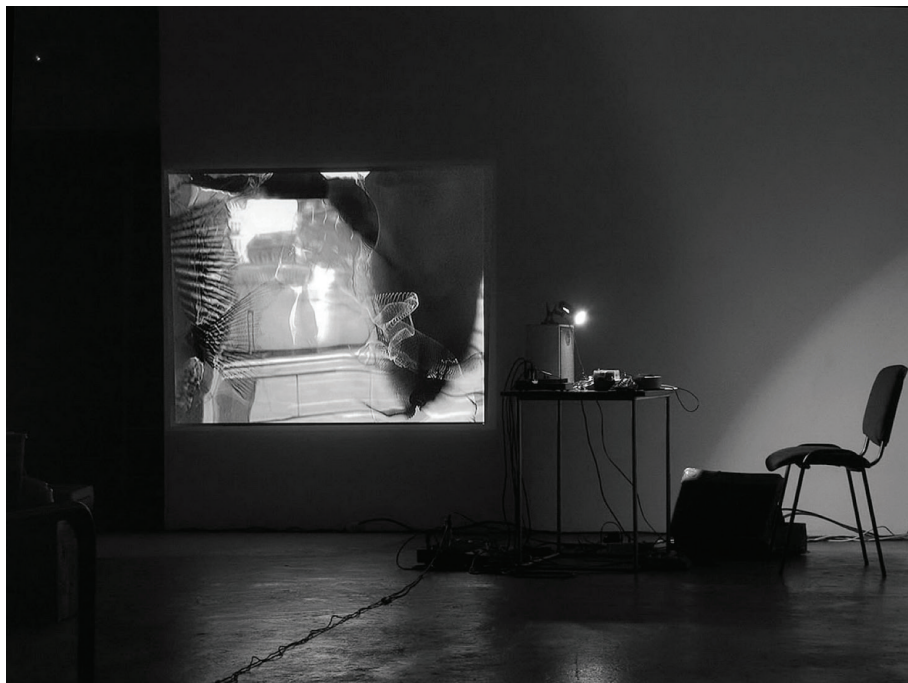
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To demonstrate the thoughts above, I would like to mention - among a variety of very interesting contemporary liquid correla(c)tive intermedia artworks at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries – *pars pro toto* the work of two artists.

Czech architect and “site specific” sonic artist Ivan Palacký is one of the most interesting representatives of the unconventional Moravian music scene in Brno. A member of the alternative rock group Výkřiky břich (Shouts of stomachs) in the 1980s, Sledě, živé sledě (Silds, living silds) in the 1990s, he decided to create his own radically experimental version of live electronics and “musique concrète”. He as a sonic bricoleur combines the play with mini-recorders, CD players, contact microphones on sonic objects and manipulation with the records of “sonic postcards”, with prepared guitar or half parts of amplified weaving machine Dopleta 160. One of his late interesting projects is the intermedia piece *Carpets, Curtains* (2004-2006) created together with VJ artist Věra Lukášová (pseudonym

²⁶ In the context of my music-semiotic research of music perception I use the terms *correlac(t)ive* or *correlac(t)ivity* in the sense of mutual contingency of music shape and the creative process of listening to it. The notion correla(c)tivity expresses the fact that creativity of music listening is activated by correlative energy of musical shapes as well as that relation of mutual dependence between sounding shapes and the creative potential of a listener. Musically meaningful semiosis is based on their interactive symbiosis. Author's intention is embodied and articulated by sonant sounds – their accurate comprehension is a matter of listener's listening consciousness generating music meanings.

of Filip Čenek). This intermedia work of art, which is “woven” in three parts *Shanghai*, *Yesnoyesno* and *Untitled*, is an explicit example of melting the strict borders of textualities and the revaluation of possibilities of the unconventional dialogue of both. They confront (mini)aura of any concrete (min)sound with surprising impressive fragments of flowing, leaking or static images in the specific poetic space which is permanently opened to many unexpected fusions.



*Taken from the piece Yesnoyesno of Ivan Palacký and VJ Lukášová
(photo: archive of the author)*

6

The significance of new correla(c)tivity of liquid interferential artistic media is connected with its valuable ability to p r e s e n t a transient moment (the principle of “here and now”). Meredith Monk, an American composer, singer, director/choreographic artist, author of extraordinarily specific type of opera, music theatre or “interdisciplinary performances”, sees the usefulness of the whole artistic gesture (of music, poetry, detail choreography of motions) in the facts that:

(...) it affirms the imagination, mental freedom, creativity, and following your own path. (...) I think that what art can do is to slow you down enough

so that you really become more aware of reality. So that you actually wake up to look at the moment, what's going on in the moment. In that sense, art becomes a prototype or template for the richness of experience in the world that we're living in. And I think emotionally, because of the overload of speed and the kind of fragmentation that we live with and the density of information, I think that our nervous systems start numbing out (Monk 2002: 2).

The corporeal wholeness of the contemporary correla(c)tive intermedia artistic gesture can be comprehended as an homeostatic “healing” alternative in the environment full of information smog, high speed chasing and fragmentary ways of living, mass media simulacra and all other forms of public or private hidden manipulations of our lives.

Vladimír Godár's book on the birth of the opera from rhetoric

Vladimír Godár, one of the most renowned Slovak composers who, among other music-related activities, is also involved in the resurrection of the forgotten and/or unknown Slovak music, is also an important semiotic-archaeological musical theorist. After his previously published specialized texts and books titled *Kacírske quodlibety* (Heretical quodlibets 1992/1998), *Luk a lýra* (Bow and lyre, 2001), *Rozhovory a úvahy* (Dialogues and considerations, 2006) and the doctoral work *Battaglia and mimesis* (1992), he published his other essential work *Prerequisites for the formation of opera* (1991) after more than twenty years with the aptly modified title *The Birth of the opera from the spirit of rhetoric* (AEPress 2012) – it can be described as groundbreaking in the context of musicological literature (not only) in Slovakia.

The subject of this book is the interdisciplinary heuristic mapping of the genesis of musical drama in the light of – according to Godár – a single cardinal revolution in European music (peaking in the 16th and 17th century), which was triggered by the poeticisation and internal rhetorization of the musical medium with all the repercussions, whose effects were also felt in the later centuries, including in the present. From the prism of knowledge that rhetoric was *de facto* a universal theory of art in the 16th and 17th century, the author's argumentative attention is logically focused primarily on the ancient world, which was appropriately refreshed by the Renaissance – not only by initiating the early opera genre. In reference to the founding thought of the ancient Greece – the Pythagorean-Platonic vision of the symbolic-mimetic semiosis (correlative bond of musical structures to the abstraction of numbers, and/or the emanating transcendent idea) and the Aristotelian iconic-mimetic vision (link to the rhetorical-persuasive power of the uttered word) – Godár points out the potency of music to bind to both of the above views as their unique intersection. The middle ages, which the author of the work dedicates ample space to, accentuates the first of the said views and diverts and dissociates itself from the second in the interpretation of the transcendental nature of the intention and nature of music. The Renaissance, however, rehabilitates the iconic view in complementarity with the purpose of the rhetorical virtues (Chapter *The birth of Renaissance and the establishment of iconic paradigm*). The nature of the Renaissance transformation is explained by the equivalence of music

and words and the postulate of the rhetoric dominance of the second of the members in this pair (which, as reiterated by Godár, was verbalized for the first time by Thomas More in his *Utopia* of 1516).

It should be noted that even in this work, the author refutes the fatuous superstition about the delay of musical art in comparison with other species of Renaissance art with his highly sensible and eloquent argumentation (which was ongoing – including the *Battaglie and mimesis*). Inter alia, he points out the deep-seated prejudice that the early operatic creations are a continuation of the ancient tragedy – he proves that its motivation and nature, related to more than a hundred years of tradition of the so-called intermedia (as well as the favola genre), show more internal similarity with the largely unpreserved satyr games.

What provides Godár with the key to such revelations and what constitutes the revolutionary nature of his method? It is the distinctive historiographic approach with the primary application of *semiotic thinking*, which allows him to see and name the apparent analogies and semantic transfers of rhetoric in the pragmatics of music and the musical-cultural practice of the said period. This aesthetic-semiotic optics flows through – whether explicitly or implicitly – the various meanders of the individual chapters (*Rhetorical virtue energeia, musica reservata and musical theater, Battaglia a lamento - Hommage à Claudio Monteverdi* or *Word and music in the light of the dialog between Renaissance and Antiquity*). It is precisely by and through it – within the lines of the meticulous and in-depth interpretation of the philosophical-aesthetic concepts of Plato, Aristotle, Horatio, Dionysius of Halicarnassus and/or, Quintilian, Cicero or Pseudo-Demetrios and their relations with the theorists of “Proto Renaissance” such as Pietro Bembo, Gian Giorgio Trissino and others – sheds light on the causes of changes and transformations in the development of the musical-dramatic bodies in the 14th to 17th century. For example, Godár analyzes in detail the said rhetorical virtue *energeia*, or the ability of the illusive presence of things without its visual presence, the rhetorical discipline *dispositio*, or the triad *docere* (teach), the cathartic *movere* (move) and *delectare* (delight) and find their projections in the contemporary music, musical theater and theoretical literature, which reflects them.

The first printed edition of the work is expanded to include the new important section on the relevance and quality of the chorus, i.e. the role of the chorus in the musical-dramatic productions of the early and late Renaissance within the bounds of their Aristotelian iconic-rhetorical interpretation (section *Chorus*, subsection *Favola rappresentativa and chorus*). Space was also provided to – in my view – extremely interesting topics beyond the framework of opera – musical interpretation and instrumentation (in the Chapter *Iconic*

instrumentation in the music of the 16th and 17th century). Godár justifies the critical projection of iconicity and the rhetorically named attributes of memorization and immersion soliloquy into the nature and nuances of the musical-interpretative performance, into the method of instrumentation (where one can find a direct, non-random reference on the emergence of the basso continuum and in essence also the beginning of the history of orchestras) and – what is essential — into the principles and motivations of the certain actual music composition mode(!). Elsewhere, the author analyzes the ancient understanding of the concept of ethos in relation to the theory of rhetorics and stylistics in parallel with the theories of the theater and music, and/or the concept of pathos in the correlations with the doctrine of the soul and ethics in the coordinates of the poetics of musical drama (section *Ars persuadendi*). The key topic of persuasion, which is analyzed in six subsections in the in-depth analysis of the period from Antiquity (paraphrasing the author's statement: modern psychology of art did not attain results comparable with the level of ancient theories of persuasion) through the Middle Ages down to the Cinquecento, concludes the whole work.

The book is also valuable for other reasons. Just as Renaissance in visual arts cannot be reduced to Donatello, Buonarrotti, da Vinci and Raffaello because it grew out of the works of di Buoninsegna, della Francesca or Giotto, even Godár's work recalls that the plastic image of the genesis of a Renaissance musical-dramatic medium reaches all the way to, for example, Poliziano, Giulio Caccini and their contemporaries and followers whose work connects to both Jacopo Peri and the brilliant Claudio Monteverdi. Godár's theoretical work is characterized by a deep knowledge of the ancient, medieval and Renaissance diligence in poetics, rhetoric, stylistics, philosophy and aesthetics, which directly or (seemingly) indirectly relates to opera – anything that relates to it from an interdisciplinary perspective in musicology. Its mutual complementary semiotic-aesthetic and musical-historical analyses are concise and very heuristic. Using these, he reveals the substantial aspects of the opera genre in Renaissance and early Baroque (can the dividing lines ever be identified between them?), which, being linked to rhetoric as the universal theory of art, materialized in a palimpsest also in other genres in the following periods. (According to the author, even in Beethoven's *Eroica* and Mozart's *Jupiter symphony*. Speaking for myself, I would like to enrich the above argumentative examples pars pro toto with a motion from Mozart's "Spatzenmesse" KV 220, in which the "music decorating the word" caused "emotional storms, cleansing catharsis and new quality of inner life" (V. Godár) in me even without any knowledge of Latin. (Apropo, on the quality of implementation of the first edition: the precise editorial work of his wife also deserves high credit.)

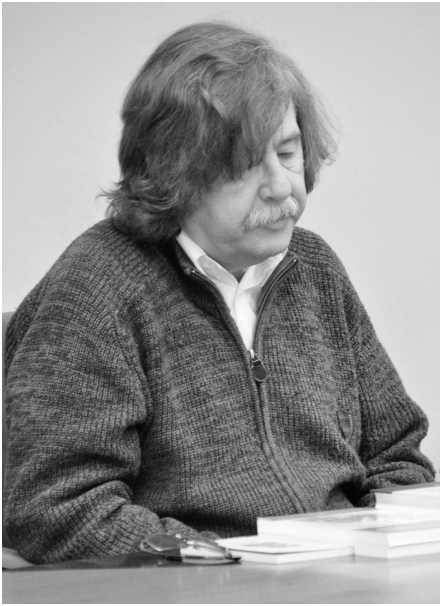
Note: This article, which is actually a transcription of my “baptism” speech of Godár’s book after a concert portraying his work by the Quasars Ensemble in the Nitra Gallery on May 17, 2012, could touch only some of its essential aspects in the given extent. You can learn more about the other dimensions through your own concerted reading of this unique book, which, I believe, will be equally as adventurous and fascinating as it was to me.

Zrod opery z ducha rétoriky

Vladimír
Godár



AEPress



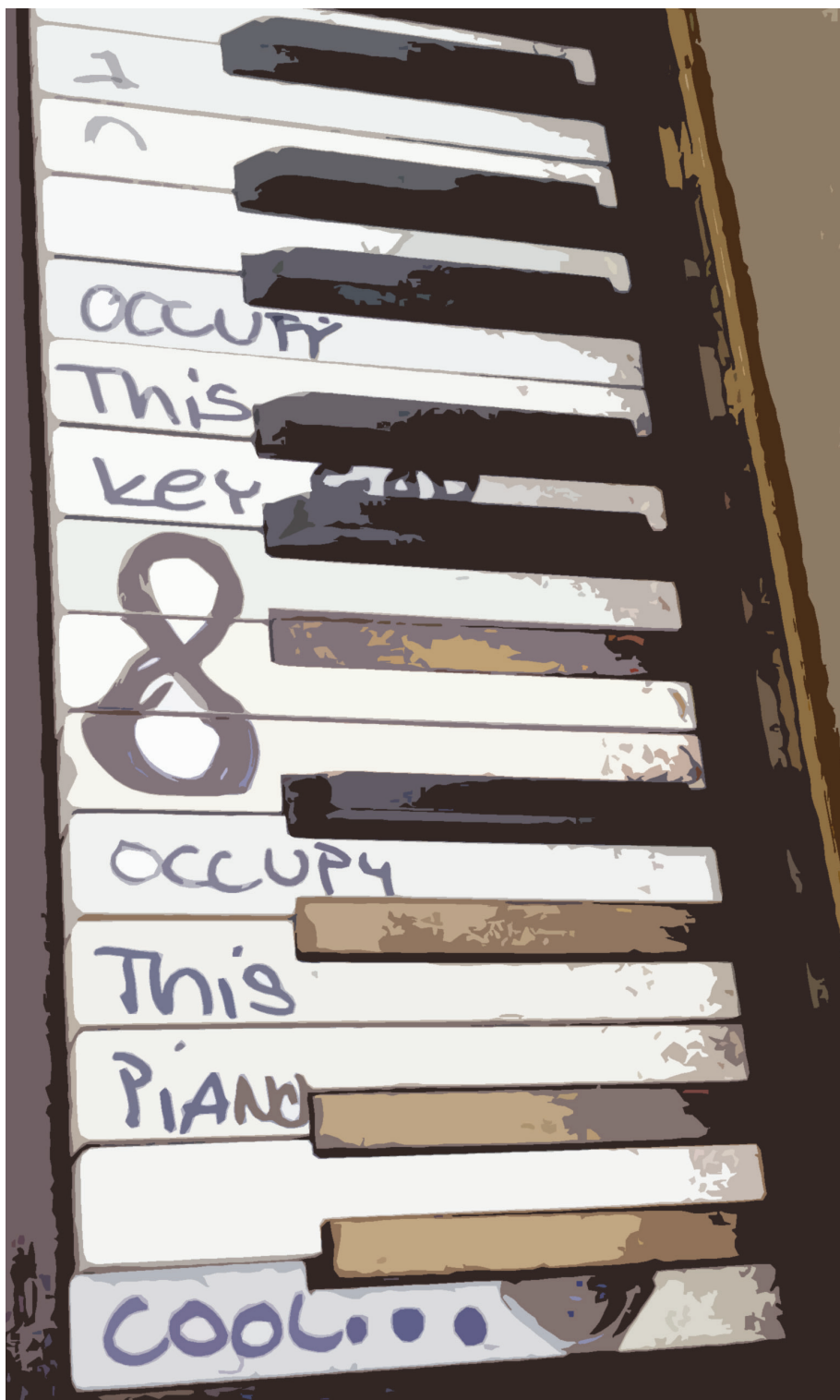
Vladimír Godár (photo: R. Bezvoda)

http://www.vladimirgodar.wz.cz/text_en.htm

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RkCTkRAc6m8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2lkvEKPT8o>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PC2_fEKE6c8



On some Quasars Ensemble projects

The rumors about the qualities of this renowned Slovak musical ensemble representing (post)modern classical music of Ivan Buffa got to me some time ago, but I only had the chance to experience them live in the fall 2010 during the Festival of Convergence in the Košice's Kulturpark. Ján Sudzina, the spiritus agens of Hevhetia records, recommended me the concert as one of the highlights of the event, and he was spot on. The Quasars Ensemble literally enchanted me with the demureness, precision and suggestive interpretation of works such as Luciano Berio's *Oh, King*, Paul Hindemith's *Kammermusik*, op. 24, no. 1, Yevgeniy Irshai's *Kyrie eleison* and *Rapsodie nègre*, op. 1 by Francis Poulenc. When I found out a couple of months later that Hevhetia publishes the first profile album of this chamber ensemble, I was curious to see whether everything left in me from that evening made it to the first digital disc in the recording studio. I was not disappointed this time either. The Quasars Ensemble confirmed its reputation: interesting and varied dramaturgic strategy, ability to change the sensitive interpretive approaches serving the intentions of the authors, as well as an emphasis on the plasticity of each and every detail and the quality of its sound and expressive tenor - the album was recorded in the recording studio of the Portuguese University of Aveiro, supervised by composers such as Ruia Penh, João Pedro Oliveira and Petra Bachratá.

The dramaturgy of the CD *Contemporary reflections* (Hevhetia 2011) relies on the compositions of the conductor, composer, pianist and spiritus agens of the ensemble, Ivan Buffa, *Locatelli Caprice* in the post-modern "hedonistic" instrumental reinterpretation, and *Caprice* for solo violin, both impressively rendered by the virtuoso violinist Marek Zwiebel, the sonorically impressive *Quintettino No. 1* by Salvatore Sciarrino, the impressively bizarre *Assonance VI* by Michael Jarrell, five beautiful miniatures by Bent Sørensen *The Lady and the lark* for the viola and ensemble, or the above-mentioned Berio's vocal-instrumental piece *Oh, King* written a year after the death of Martin Luther King, which eventually became the second part of his famous *Sinfonia*. The mezzo-soprano was sung (just like at the concert) by Petra Noskaiová. The whole CD is concluded by a great "fresco" for two pianos called *Pyramids* by João Pedro Oliveira, inspired by the structure of fractals, and the "savagely"

polyvalent chamber song *Eyes wide shut* by his wife Petra Bachratá, dedicated to Quasars Ensemble.

Similar chamber orchestras, intently and continually dedicated to the challenging but captivating repertoire of the 20th century and the present in its unusual poetics (and are not just an ad-hoc conglomerate of different artists) – are sure quite fecund. In Slovakia, however, such an ensemble is genuinely unique, moreover, from the inception, it set the bar very high and it is continuously pushing the envelope, which is also confirmed by this premiere CD (its quality is also attested by the concise booklet and cover). Quasars Ensemble is simply a fresh breeze of healthy self esteem, but also some kind of “synergy of the intellect, musicality, detachment and humility” (Buffa’s quote from the text in CD booklet describing the interpretative performance of M. Zwiebel in his second composition). I have no doubts about the generous gesture by Slovak great composer Roman Berger, who magnanimously donated the full amount of the financial reward within the Ján Levoslav Bell’s Music Fund Award for Lifetime Achievements to this amiable ensemble.

Almost a century ago, at the end of World War I in 1918, Arnold Schönberg founded the Verein für musikalische Privataufführungen (Society for the private performing of music) in Vienna, in which, after some transcription adjustments, modernist musical compositions were staged, because at public concerts and with the then bourgeois audience, these only begged for scandals... Half a century later in the Bratislava apartment owned by Professor Ján Albrecht, something like a “private Conservatory of music” was founded – a place for casual live music-playing and relentless disputation which, in stark contrast with the suffocating climate of the so-called normalization of real socialism, created an environment for the emergence and growth of ensembles such as Musica Aeterna and personalities such as Vladimír Godár, Miloš Valent, Ingeborg Šišková, Zuzana Martináková-Rendeková, among many others. Why I am writing this in the context of another album created by chamber ensemble Quasars Ensemble? Not only because the creation of a similar asylum for the current alienated non-conventional music in the environment of the ever-present mass-media idioticism would be handy in Slovakia even now, but mainly because the conductor and head of this ensemble Ivan Buffa has decided to introduce some of the key works from the turn of the 19th and 20th century in the “restored” chamber shape the Schönberg’s society. He picked the works by Claude Debussy, Gustav Mahler, Alexander Albrecht (father of the said Professor Ján Albrecht) and Francis Poulenc.

Emblematic work of musical impressionism (or impressionist symbolism?) *Prelude to the afternoon of a Faun* (1894) by Claude Debussy, in the sensitive chamber adaptation by A. Schönberg and B. Sachse, and played by Quasars Ensemble, sounds full-bloodedly and intimately transparently – the plasticity of details in the overall expression is surely appreciated by every attentive listener and musical theorist immersed into the staff sheets. The transcription, particularly in the case musical-impressionist works, is always a problem because we are dealing with a complete emancipation of the sonoric elements – the transformation into another collection of instruments is linked with the risk of their depletion (while Beethoven's orchestral masterpieces were quite forgiving to Liszt's patulous piano transcriptions, since Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*, it is no longer possible). However, despite the fact that the harmonium imitates the wind instruments and piano imitates harp – there is no apparent flattening. On the contrary, this chamber version of the *Preludium* (by the way, the number of bars in the Debussy's works is equal to the number of verses in Mallarmé's poem) can possibly uncover those folds that would otherwise remain secluded in a large orchestral sound.

Mahler's *Songs of a wayfarer* (1883) are played here again in Schönberg's instrumentation by the whole ensemble and Petra Noskaiová's mezzo-soprano. They are extremely mature despite the fact that he was only 23 years old when he wrote them, but well tested by the twists of life (similarly to F. Schubert in the chamber context), who during his entire life semantically linked his own song-writing with the "abstraction" of orchestral music. Mahler, being an early-expressionist to existential composer at the times of *Songs of a wayfarer* masterfully handled the art of musical-lyrical rendition of text, which he often expressly addressed with contradictory successive and simultaneous procedures (in Mahler's case, the British musicologist Esti Sheinberg describes them as a latent expressive duality of the musical sign, being euphoric and dysphoric at the same time). In her interpretation of the contrasting songs, Petra Noskaiová (except for one German folk poem, Mahler is the author of all remaining texts) is genuinely captivating in the nuance creation of the musical tone and internalized sensibility. Even in this position, the Quasars Ensemble, being fully in her "services", remains soberly precise.

The third author whose works were selected by Buffa is a prominent Slovak cosmopolitan composer, pianist and conductor Alexander Albrecht, albeit unbeknownst to the broader public – without him one cannot imagine the beginnings of the Slovak musical modernism in the 1920s. He is the author of some of the key and pioneering modernist piano and chamber compositions, which are on par with the then European scene, including his friend Béla Bartók and early Schönberg and Mahler. They also include his songs, some of which,

originally composed for the piano and voice to the poetry of German poets (B. Natteroth, R. Volker, H. Hesse, A. Albrecht-Messer etc.), were edited by I. Buffa, by the way, also an excellent pianist and unique composer, for his chamber orchestra. And, one must add, quite artfully. Noskaiová's mezzo-soprano has sufficient space to play out the required stylish-expressive variability in harmony with the chamber orchestra, which, however, does not play a secondary role. On the contrary, the "mystery" of Albrecht's piano piece is multiplied by the ensemble arrangement...

The whole project of returning to the sprouts of musical modernism is concluded by an opus by the self-taught Francis Poulenc *Rhapsody nègre* (1917), forecasting the advent of the *Les Six*, which would not be complete without it. Today, we can hardly imagine that this lush, poetic, slightly exotic and wanton work triggered a real scandal upon release. It was not only caused by the bizarre "African" text, but also by the bitonality, the first signs of clusters and "barbaric" style, which the Paris audience clearly refused to put up with even four years after the premiere of Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps*.

A century ago, in many ways and initiatives, the Avant-garde modernism in visual arts took the path of an extremely courageous and revolting reevaluation of the substrata, limits and conventions of the contemporary social, cultural and artistic canon, posing the questions of legitimization and validity of art, whose sense it refused to view in the narrow "neoromantic" expectations of the "inspiring caprice" of bourgeoisies. Let us just mention, for example, the Picasso's shocking *Les Femmes d'Alger*, which according to Michel Foucault, disturbingly allegorized the abnormality of the given epistemy (R. Appignanesi) by including the excluded, or the "proto-conceptual" visions of the supremacists or constructivists depicting the hitherto undepicted. As was the case in other epochs, music did not lag behind other artistic media – its major revolt against the continued existence in the experienced and unsustainable was typical for the discovery, or even creation of unprecedented new worlds, as well as revitalization and transformation of some features of music. The commemorative eruptions of radical otherness in the works of Stravinsky, Janáček, Bartók, Schönberg, Ives or Varèse were frequent, however, they were accompanied by the extremely rare cases of certain hard-to-define sobriety and the so-called new "dispassionateness". These were not part of the radical breaks or ruptures, but rather a manifestation of some kind of bridging of the past, the then present and (contemporary) future – these also included the chamber symphonies of three authors, which were chosen for the another CD project (Hevhetia 2013) by the chamber ensemble Quasars Ensemble.

It is namely *Kammersymphonie Nr. 1 E-major*, op. 9 of the above-mentioned Arnold Schönberg (1906/1924), *Sonatina for 11 instruments*, by Alexander Albrecht (1925) and the *Kammermusik Nr. 1, op. 24* by Paul Hindemith (1922).

Apart from the fact that all three compositions come from approximately the same period of the 1920s (Schönberg revised his older composition in 1924), they also have other common attributes. They are written in an unusual genre in every aspects (harmonic, rhythmic, sonoric, instrumental, tectonic ones) in the groundbreaking “chamber symphony”, whereby all instruments are composed as solo instruments(!) (15 instruments in the first case, 11 in the second case, and 12 in the third case). At the same time – as already mentioned – they stand out for their dialogic poetics dating back to the inspirations of the past, which are transposed into the new and in many ways bold modernist solutions. I cannot delve into a more detailed analysis of these works in this paper – it would be even redundant in the view of the excellent musical-theoretical description by Ivan Buffa in the CD booklet – therefore, only a few notes on their character from a listener’s perspective:

Schoenberg’s *Kammersymphonie Nr. 1* will surely surprise anyone who registers him as an atonal, and later an uncompromising dodecaphonist not just because the work comes from his earlier periods. It excites us with its mature search and discovery of musical-structural innovations (e.g. specific using of perfect fourth, strange correlational introduction of 19 themes within the scope of a single section composition), as well as the famously brilliant instrumentation defining modernism. Even here, he asserts he is no composer of the “school blackboard”, applying his “utopian” theories – as he is sometimes wrongly labeled – but a full-fetched and original musical thinker. The work has rightly deserved admiration and even a few adjustments by his followers Alban Berg and Anton Webern.

We can be pleased and amazed by the fact that the Slovak composer Alexander Albrecht kept up with the era and composed a relevant and quality composition in this genre when compared to other composers. Alongside his piano compositions and the song cycle *Das Marienleben*, the *Sonatina for 11 instruments* is de facto a fundamental pillar of Slovak musical modernism. I heard this piece for the first time in an archive recording of the first concert of the Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra in 1950 under the baton of the legendary Václav Talich who pushed this composition into such an important event, which was not very easy during the introduction of (in music utterly meaningless) ideological doctrines of socialist realism... Albrecht proves here that in the spirit of the said soberly Avant-garde materiality, he is a unique creator moving in the range of the sovereign adoption of the “cubist” multi-layered harmonic modulations to the cultivated “frivolity” and distinctive esprit (Part

II. *Menuet, Trio - Dialog in the window alcove*). After the recent confrontation with similar Mahler's and Poulenc's works (CD Hevhetia 2011), the Quasars Ensemble was also able to declare the high quality of music making even in Albrecht, a composer relatively unknown and unappreciated to the general public. By the way, the entire CD project is somewhat in the spirit of renewal of relationship with this personality (and implicitly with his son Ján Albrecht) through the perpetuation of their decaying house in Bratislava, which is being continuously reconstructed (a voluntary collection can be found at www.albrechtforum.eu and/or through the concerts organized to support the renovation process, including the performances by Quasars).

The contrastingly unique expressive work of Paul Hindemith *Kammermusik Nr. 1, op. 24* should be well known to every young composer, so he/she does not have to "reinvent the wheel". When listening to, for example, the first and fourth part, I wonder whether Frank Zappa heard it, too... The combinations of the chamber (multiple soloist) instruments with the garlands of xylophone licks actually anticipate (froty years ahead of the time!) the musical works of this American composer. *Kammermusik Nr. 1* consists of four distinct parts, which constitute a compelling whole, and bear witness to Hindemith's talent manifested in this opus (just at the age of 27).

The whole Quasars Ensemble CD can be viewed as very successful: the design, production and interpretation – the ensemble gives us a precise, professional, yet musically sympathetic and passionate performance. From the viewpoint of sound recording and processing, the recording was made at the highest level (Budapest studio Pannonia, directed by sound engineer Viktor Szabó), the comprehensive booklet is well-made, explaining the different contexts and background works, the artwork is dominated by Koloman Sokol's *Musicians* (1983) (although perhaps the reprints of historic photos and documents could be bigger). It is clear that this is not just a museum-like feat trying to convey to us the forgotten works from musical history, but a recovery of the timeliness of this artistic expression. Inter alia, their timeliness lies in the fact that in today's volatile, postmodern "surfing" age of iPods, we are again and anew asked the questions about the meaning, quality and "suchness" of our listening to this kind of unique music events.



Quasars Ensemble (photo: www.quasarsensemble.sk)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pCCrppUQ_aM

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EPz24T7OncQ>

Influence of music semiotics and aesthetics on my music-intermedia arts

I usually write theoretical papers as an aesthetician and semiotic musicologist. This text is, however, written from a different perspective, from my point of view of a musical composer (or “comproviser”) who deal with the semiotic, aesthetic, and philosophical dimensions of musical phenomena. Therefore this text is in some way connected with the specific artistic, music-intermedia projects I have (co-)created.

I am convinced that the regimes of consciousness writing theoretical articles and creating music are different and they involve distinct practices, however, it does not mean that they cannot affect one another. In my approach to theoretical thinking on music, several theoretical approaches have played a crucial role including certain concepts of the Nitra Semiotic School (e. g. František Miko’s linguistic theory) and importantly the music semiotics and aesthetics of Slovak theoreticians Peter Faltin (1939 – 1981) and Jozef Cseres (b. 1961). They have both impacted also my style of creating music-intermedia artworks.

I would like to write on some selected motifs of their theories and then I would describe selected works of art I created, which were influenced by them or also by other artists (such as John Cage, Marcel Duchamp) or eventually by other theoreticians (Roland Barthes).

ON THE MARGIN OF PETER FALTIN

Peter Faltin is one of the most significant Slovak musicologists of the 20th century: his works importantly contributed to scientific research of the significance of sonori(sti)c structure in modern music produced from the late 19th century till the second half of 20th century. He was one of the first scholars in Slovakia, who recognized and characterized the ontological transformations of a new paradigm in music since the 1960s. He was also a very active reviewer of the Slovak avant-garde music scene as well as the main organizer of “Darmstadtian” gatherings that were held in Slovakia in the late 1960s²⁷,

²⁷ See more Lubomír Chalupka: *Slovenská hudobná avantgarda* (Slovak music avant-garde; published in Comenius University, Bratislava, 2011, ISBN 978-80-223-3115-9)

called Seminars in Smolenice where Slovak and foreign (post)modern composers (K.-H. Stockhausen, G. Ligeti, W. Lutoslawski, M. Kagel, P. Kotík) and musicologists (U. Dibelius, H. Dahlhaus, P. Reinecke, J. Patkowski, E. Herzog, V. Lébl, among many others) exchanged their ideas. After Faltin emigrated to Germany in the 1970s he started to focus on the semiotics of music primarily at its links with the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein – we can see this influence in his last book on music semiotics and aesthetics *Die Bedeutung ästhetischer Kategorien zwischen – Musik und Sprache* (*Signification of aesthetic signs – Music and language*) that was published four years after his death. The second part of this publication, *Meaning in music*, caused the fundamental “u turn” in my understanding of the questions of musical semiosis.

Peter Faltin was also connected with the linguistic turn and pragmatics represented by the works of Charles S. Peirce, Jan Mukařovský, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and Umberto Eco. He gravitated towards their ideas because of their criticism of the denotatum “fetishism”. Faltin argues for the non-denotative formation of meaning in the processes of syntagmatic and pragmatic dialectics and also for the crucial role of socio-cultural, living contexts. He articulates the following thesis:

Musical meaning is a product of individually conditioned mutual influence between syntactical rules and pragmatic givenness of their treatment. This mutual influence is, in Wittgenstein's words “a life form”, it is itself a life attitude. Music becomes..., what it is, thanks to its being a part of man's life-world (Faltin 1992: 314).

In this frame he interprets sign as a certain kind of “mediator” of meaning, which is not only a thing we perceive, but primarily the *phenomenon of consciousness* that we perceive as a thing. He emphasizes the arbitrary dimension of signs justified and verified by praxis, i. e. life context of their treatment, and he claims that “...the meaning is an articulatory form of equality, culture, state of mind, situation – or, if we want – the spirit of times” (Faltin 1992a: 316).

I would like to finish this part on Faltin by his quote where he discusses the significance of rational analysis of a musical work of art and the significance of listening to it. This thought bears a special meaning for me:

The condition of understanding a work of art is not inevitably a rational comprehension of the things, which are results of its reduction to rational elements. ...Stockhausen's music cannot be comprehended after analysis of his works or by reading his texts, but rather through repeated listenings. In this course it is necessary to understand Wittgensteinian notion of “use” in the

aesthetics. We do not want to assert of course, that analyses are meaningless; they can contribute to understanding, though they cannot be considered to be the most important. The most important is listening. (Faltin 1992c: 167).

ON THE MARGIN OF JOZEF CSERES

Jozef Cseres is a conceptual artist known also as HE^{ve}RME^{ar}S, who balances on the boundary of discursive and nondiscursive symbolism, and he is also a curator and recognised theoretician of contemporary music-intermedia arts in Slovakia and central Europe. He is the author of a monograph *Hudobné simulakrá* (*Musical simulacra*; 2001) and also published many important studies, papers and articles, and he has influenced my thinking about music in many directions. Cseres has examined structural relations between music and myth and the problem of artistic representation in the arts, especially in the taxonomically problematic space of contemporary, non-conventional artistic media. He also writes about changing textualities of different works of post-modern art: according to him, contemporary artists attack even the ontological substance of media, their spatial-temporal coordination, limitations. He claims that the musical works of art are no longer restricted by the temporal frame of repetitions of live performances or mechanical-electronic reproductions anymore (Cseres 2004: 46).

He is aware of a very important role that music plays in the (post)structuralistic discourse. He aptly interconnects the theoretical thought of C. Lévi-Strauss, J. Attali, R. Barthes or G. Deleuze & F. Guattari (concepts of music, silence, noise, rhythm, refrain, language, code, and meaning).²⁸ Cseres describes the features of qualitative shifts in the postmodern contemporaneity in the booklet of the CD project *MountWind* (K2IC, 2011) created by Jean-Michel Van Schouwburg (voice) and Lawrence Casserley (signal processing instruments):

In current music and sound poetry, everything (the sounds) happens (becomes) multi-linearly and transversally. The sounds are not isolated expressions, operations and events. They are “sound blocks” without stable and well identifiable starting points, planes and coordinates, occurring in the space of in-between – in-between more decisions, in-between more

²⁸ More details can be found in paper Cseres, Jozef: *Hudba, Etnológ, Ekonóm, Semiológ a Pojmotvorci* (z cyklu μεταξυ) (*Music, Ethnologist, Economist, Semiotologist, and Conceptmakers /from the series μεταξυ/*). In: Fujak, J. (ed.): *Otáz(ni)ky hudobnej semiotiky a estetiky* (*Question/Mark/s of musical semiotics and aesthetics*). - Nitra : UKF, 2010, pp. 107 – 118, ISBN 978-80-8094-693-7.

sounds situations, in-between more acoustic orbits. Between the flash of mind and a sound reaction to it, a lot can happen, and so voices do not have the ambition to tell or memorize a story, rather they are trying to articulate the interactions between the sound events (Cseres 2011: 3).

Cseres writes on multi-linear and transversal nature of current music, audio and sonic art in the spaces of “in-between” – while he resigns on telling the story or having some “meta-message” –, he, however, develops his thoughts even further on:

They are simply intermezzi and it was not a poet or musician who named them “intermezzi”, but a philosopher: ‘The sound block is the intermezzo. It is a body without organs, an anti-memory pervading musical organization, and is all the sonorous’ (Deleuze & Guattari). These voices do not declaim the messages for potential interpretations but they have the ambition to open the alternative spaces of perception. They are more interested in flexible matter from which a particular work of art (or a text) is woven. These are more than “words-in-freedom”, these are the interactive rules of new, unrepeatable grammar and syntax (Cseres 2011: 3).

Cseres’ approach to the understanding the contemporary musical or music-intermedia works is very innovative and inspiring. He exceeds, as well as transgresses, the usual ways of semiotic or aesthetic and philosophical thinking on music and new intermedia arts. It is therefore not surprising that he has influenced not only my theoretical way of thinking, but also some aspects of my artistic, non-conventional musical works of art.

There may not be often explicit references to these theoreticians in the projects I have accomplished, but their influences can certainly be found there – at least in the selection and comprehension of certain themes, and in creative appropriation of particular contexts. I am sure that without knowledge of various semiotic and philosophical thoughts and ideas not one of my artistic projects listed here would exist, not with the depth that they currently display. A few examples will suffice here.

***Hy-ph-ol-op-ho-ny* (2002)**

Jozef Cseres was one of the main organisers of the unique international festival/exhibition SOUND OFF series in different towns in Slovakia (Bratislava,

Šamorín, Nové Zámky, Nitra), which was focused on non-conventional music, performance, sonic art and intermedia arts between 1995 and 2002.²⁹ The last edition of the event was titled *Typewriting Aloud – Typoxxs Allowed*. I was asked to create an experimental musical composition for the CD, which he released with his label and the accompanying booklet was published in the form of a special mini catalogue. I prepared an acoustic collage titled *Hy-ph-ol-op-ho-ny* inspired by a section of Csereš' book *Hudobné simulakrá* (Musical simulacra). He writes there that Roland Barthes suggested renaming the text theory and calling it *hyphology*, since *hyphos* in Ancient Greek meant 'woven net', 'cloth', 'jacket' or 'texture' – in which case one could consider the semiotics as a science of hyphology. I recorded a sample of live "comprovisation" performed by my trio thEoRy Of Shake in the club Skleněná louka (Glass Meadow) in Brno (David Šubík – hyphosonic sampler, DJ Fero – turntable, and myself – bowed bassguitar, semi-prepared piano, octopad sampler, sonic toys). I added sounds of the letters H, Y, P, H, O, L, O, P, H, O, N, Y written on an old Underwood typewriter while whispering them separately. In addition, I whispered words "Abvun" (the Lord/God in Aramaic language) and "Nemesis" (old Egyptian Goddess). According to an ancient Egyptian myth, weaving Nemesis created the world, while (that is just my fictitious idea) Abvun as God dictated to her.³⁰



Hy-ph-ol-op-ho-ny: Abvun and Nemesis

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YKVGKSOZHVg>

²⁹ We cooperated on the theme and the organisation of already mentioned festival SOUND OFF – Pupanimart 2000 in Old (Puppet) Theatre, Nitra.

³⁰ See more *Typewriting aloud – typoxxs allowed* (CD & catalogue, HE^{ye}RME^{ar}S Discorbie, 2002).

transPOPpositions! – intermedia wrestling (2005)

This piece is based on the confrontation of contemporary non-conventional music and pop video-clips with the interludes containing the sentences taken from Roland Barthes' well-known text *Wrestling*, projected onto a video screen. The first, and the shorter, version was premiered in Nitra (Slovakia) by a trio thEoRy Of Shake in 2003. The second, revised, enlarged, and final version was performed two years later by the prominent chamber ensemble The California EAR Unit with me at the Red Cat Theatre in Los Angeles (USA).³¹ The first idea to play experimental music together with pop video-clips with a radically different aesthetics originally came from the Moravian intermedia music composer and director Zdeněk Plachý a few years ago in the house of contemporary arts Skleněná louka in Brno, in the city of Leoš Janáček. Plachý briefly mentioned this idea, which immediately attracted my attention. So I subsequently developed it within the project *transPOPpositions!* as a special (inter)semiotic game – a kind of bizarre “fighting” dialogue in the form of an intermedia wrestling, a match between pop (visual) culture and mutations of contemporary improvised and composed (comprovised) music.

Roland Barthes' thoughts on the semiotics of wrestling used in the interludes between the parts developed the idea of the piece further on. For example, between the clips of Robbie Williams, Michael Jackson and Eminem, accompanied by our musically controversial commentary, one could read the following lines:

³¹ The more extensive final American version of *transPOPpositions!* was realized and performed in an inspiring cooperation with The California EAR Unit as a part of my artistic-scholarly residence in Los Angeles in the early autumn of 2005. I was also invited to lead intermedia presentations and lectures on the semiotics of contemporary unconventional music at the Schönberg Institute at the University of Southern California as well as at the California Institute of Arts (In particular Stephen L. Mosko's class of composers). The entire concert evening on the 28th September 2005 at the Red Cat Theatre – which was also the whole titled *transPOPpositions* – included compositions by Daniel Bernard Roumain, Jacob Gotlib and Shaun Naidoo, was dedicated to the memory of Amy Knoles' mother who died just a few days before.

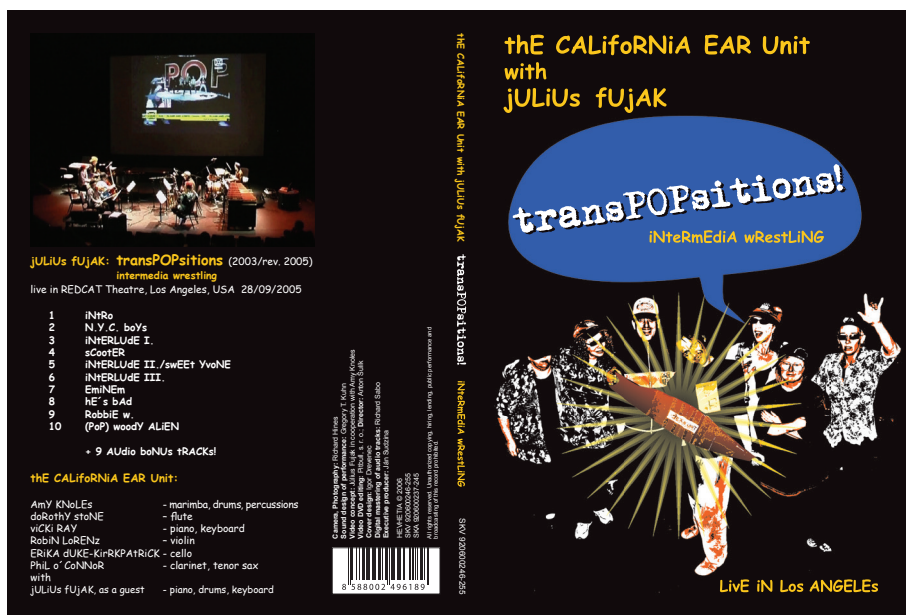
Two months later, at the end of November 2005, EAR Unit and composer Shaun Naidoo visited Nitra for a week of successful artistic residency in the series Hermes' Ear. We repeated a shorter version of the piece also in Brno. Unfortunately, Stephen L. Mosko died the very next month, and his wife, the great flutist of EAR Unit Dorothy Stone, followed him just two years later. Shaun Naidoo also left us tragically via a misadventure in 2012. I dedicated the published DVD *transPOPpositions! – intermedia wrestling* from the event in L. A. (with the entire performance and audio bonus tracks; label Hevhetia 2006) to the memory of all these great people and admirable artists whom we miss so much.

Wrestling is like a diacritic writing: above the fundamental meaning of his body, the wrestler arranges comments, which are episodic but always opportune, and constantly help the reading of the fight by means of gestures, attitudes and mimicry, which make the intention utterly obvious (Barthes 2004: 16).

What the public wants is the image of passion, not passion itself. (...) This emptying out of interiority to the benefit of its exterior signs, this exhaustion of content by the form, is the very principle of triumphant classical art (Barthes 2004: 18).

What is thus displayed for the public is the great spectacle of Suffering, Defeat, and Justice (Barthes 2004: 17).

The method of playing music alongside and against these active images is reminiscent of an old tradition of musicianship, that of accompanying the comic grotesques, expressionist and naturalistic black and white silent movies in early cinemas. Today the challenge to create musical shapes with moving pictures of clips, which represent a kind of visual score is quite different⁷ – in fact, we experience a different kind of tragicomic “grotesques”...



Cover of DVD Julius Fujak & The California EAR Unit: *transPOPsitions!*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qPJjsnQge_Y&feature=youtu.be

Wordless: (2008/2009)

I met the French fine artist/video artist/aesthetician Ludivine Allegue during 9th International Congress of Musical Signification in Rome in 2006. Fascinated by her lecture on the sufi whirling dance *sama*, as well as her video documentary of it, I invited her to present both (the film and the lecture) at our international symposium *Convergences and divergences of existential semiotics* in Nitra 2007.³² One year later she invited me to collaborate on an artistic project based completely on non-verbal communication – we exchanged musical and painted letters and postcards through the traditional mail delivery service for almost an entire year. Musical pieces with improvised tones and sounds played on semi-prepared piano, recorded on couple of CDs I had sent, were my responses to the painted textures, abstract colour shapes on intentionally perforated canvas that she had sent in packages to me. We titled the project simply *Wordless*. In 2009, we presented our private non-verbal correspondence to public in exhibitions in Rome (Slovak Culture Institute in Italy; curated by Arianna Callocchia), Nitra and Topoľčany in Slovakia (curated by Marta Hučková in Nitra Gallery, and City Gallery Topoľčany).³³

This return to the classical postal delivery modus, slow communication through large letters and postcards based on the non-verbal medium of music and fine art, opened – especially in the era of the internet and digital media – many questions on the form, content, and semiotic “suchness” of our recent communication. Slovak musicologist Valér Miko in his review of our project (*(Non)Celebration of experiment*) writes:

It differs from the usual letter communication by the fact that both artists, even in the initial phases of the creation of the letters, have consciously substituted the reference “meaning – form” (sign) by the reference “meaning – power” (power as an expression). This is needed as a “sacrifice” to start the “expedition” towards the fragments of inner rules of human culture in letters of the other. In this way the primordial sense of human communication is barred, it is hidden in the dialogue of man with the Other – here it exists in the form of dialogical scrutiny with the complexity of inner rules of human cultures (V. Miko 2009: 134).

³² Ludivine Allegue’s study *Sama: the video document as a way of generating knowledge* can be found in: Fujak, J. (ed.): *Convergences and divergences of existential semiotic. Proceedings from International Symposium of Constantine the Philosopher University, April 12th 2007. Nitra: UKF, 2007, pp. 125 – 138, ISBN 978-80-8094-241-0.*

³³ A part of the project was also presented at the larger exhibition of Allegue’s works in Granada, 2011.

It is both interesting and important to me that Valér Miko makes a remark as well as refers to other possible interpretation of *Wordless*;, especially in the world contaminated by various visible or hidden forms of ideologisations:

Creative activities of experimental artists appear when there is a need to bypass some transitive period in culture and thus to access new “orbit” in it. This was in the past also the case of the Hellenistic epoch in which logos began to substitute the reason by complexity of myth. Today’s experimental artists participate in the creation of an alternative to the complexity of existing ideologies. In this context we can consider their works of art as real symbols of our time. This can be said also about the letters of Ludivine Allegue and Július Fújak (V. Miko 2009: 135).



Part of the exhibition WORDLESS: in Nitra Synagogue (2009).

Listen to audio tracks 5, 6 on CD.

Nitrian Atlantises (2013)

When I was commissioned to create a larger acousmatic composition for the premiere edition of the Czech Radio program rAdioCUSTICA in 2013 by experimental composer Ladislav Železný, I decided to dedicate it to a very interesting part of the preancient local history of Nitra – the town that I live in – as well as to certain semantic parallels of this period manifested in the contemporary life of the city. Why such an apocalyptic title *Nitrian Atlantises*? I do not wish to speculate about all the things that Atlantis was or might have been, however, for me at least, the word has more than just a catastrophic meaning; evoking neither an ideal (or naively idealized) lost “Eden” nor some lost “Golden Age”. If anything, it evokes within me an image of a remarkable, bizarre, self-contradictory, and vital unknown culture that had to come to an end in one way or another... I spent the past twenty years living in the town of Nitra, where I experienced my own personal “Atlantises” and where I also spent a long time not knowing at all that one real Atlantis actually existed in this region...

Some time ago in a bookshop, I began reading the first volume of the book *Traces of the Ancient Past* by Slovak historian Pavel Dvořák. There I came across a chapter entitled *The Ruin of the Nitrian Atlantis*, that focused on an ancient “proto-civilization” existing in the warm valley of the Nitra River during the Stone Age some 3,000 years BC. Its traces can be found in southern Slovakia, in the village of Nitriansky Hrádok. Here, at a site known as Zámeček, researchers found the oldest Neolithic sculpture in Slovakia – the so-called seated Venus of Nitra.³⁴ This society’s peak came later – at some point during the Bronze Age (from the mid-17th to mid-15th century BC), an area of several dozen kilometres experienced a boom of activities, its inhabitants developed numerous trades, planted various crops and adopted pagan myths and rituals. Nobody knows what happened to this advanced, admirable society – it disappeared suddenly and mysteriously. It is possible that, following a long period of drought, it “evaporated” along with the life-giving water. Or maybe it was afflicted by a different catastrophe. Nobody knows.

³⁴ The archeologists also found there very special, strange sophisticated pottery, antler tools with beautifully worked Mycenaean(!) ornamentation, as well as all manner of tools, rings, and even several bone ice skates. We still don’t know much about this culture, but it has left us fortifications, burial mounds, immense bulwarks, the ruins of structures built in rows resembling city streets, and signs of deep moats that formed a network of small islands. Elsewhere, there are mass graves, in one of which the people’s faces had been ritually seared with fire (older periods show signs of anthropophagy).

The existence of this unknown Nitrian Atlantis fascinated and inspired me to engage in this acousmatic experiment/acoustic collage, whose first part is called *After...* At the end of that summer, my wife Nadka and I traveled to Nitriansky Hrádok, where I made some field recordings at Zámeček near the Nitra River. We found almost nothing there except for low grass-and-brush-covered little hills and one weathered billboard showing the seated Venus. But for me, the place possesses an indescribably magical *genius loci*... These recorded samples create the axis for the entire first section of the piece. Later, I recorded an audio collage – consisting of the sonic environment of that mysterious place, and I added different sounds of wooden sonic objects, bone ocarina, copy of an anthropomorphic 4500-year-old urn, black volcanic sand from the „real“ Atlantis from the Island of Santorini, small percussions, female voice, my whispering, and bass bagpipes. I did not want to “reconstruct” the sounds and music of this lost culture, I aimed to find the symbolical form to express the interplay between the past and present as well as the “flashes” of the ancient and mysterious place’s space-time in contextual similarities with contemporary life.



Detail of a weathered billboard showing the seated Venus “touched” in by local „street artist“.

The second part, entitled *Before...*, is about today’s urban postmodern civilization in Nitra. The sonic recordings were made on August 8, 2013 – a tropical day, perhaps the hottest in the city’s history (nearly 40 degrees in the shade) – coincidentally after more than three weeks of sweltering heat and an unprecedented dry spell. These audio postcards were made in various places in the town and served as main promenades between the hot noontime and early evening; in the big shopping center, at the main intersection in front of the Tesco hypermarket, on the road to the hospital (where you can hear women talking in the maternity and gynaecology ward), from the evening pub behind an indoor swimming pool, and by the new bridge above the Nitra River.

All other electronic sounds, spoken word, fragments and acoustic instruments form a kind of commentary onto unique recorded situations of this one day in the life of another potential Nitrian “Atlantis”...³⁵

³⁵ I would like to express my thanks to the following musicians: members of NE:BO:DAJ Jana Ambrózová (violin improvisations and female voice), Andrej Pleštinský (Italian bayan), and Jean-Michel van Schouwburg (voice), Zuzana Hanusová (bodhran), Martin Štourač (trumpet), Monika Štrbová (tenor sax), Tomáš Obola (trombone), Juraj Dufek (bass bagpipes), my brother Eduard Fuják and Ondrej Veselý (acoustic guitars), sound engineer Pavol Brezina, editor of the program rAdioCUSTICA Ladislav Železný, and last but not least to my wife Naďa and son Dominik (not only for their spoken words and whispers). My *Nitrian Atlantises* would never appear without their contributions and help.

Another my acousmatic composition *Pentrophony* commissioned by rAdioCUSTICA in 2010:

http://www.rozhlas.cz/radiocustica_english/project/_zprava/738452

Why comprovisation? Notes to discussion on the validity of a notion

More than twenty five years ago, in the period of socialism, I did not like when various Slovak progressive rock music bands were all titled as “alternative”. I use the notion “alternative” only in plural as “musical alternatives” to various music genres and styles. Therefore, my recent effort to demark the understanding of the new taxonomic neologism might look strange. This inclination is not motivated by purely theoretical reasons, but also by my experience as a musician who has created non-conventional experimental music, which is often based on testing the possibilities of hybridizing the rationally prepared processes with the unpredictable ones connected with the accentuation of intuition. I have recorded the results of this testing many times (influence, which the sound recording has on ontology of music work of art in 20th century, is still not appreciated enough in Slovakia), and the listeners could realize that an impressive and persuasive quality of these musical mutations has reached the level usually attributed to musical composition in Euro-Atlantic culture.

Nothing new under the sun in the context and territory of obscure transitions from improvisation to composition, let us mention the works of modern jazz, aleatory music, Frank Zappa’s methods in the 1980s (transformations of some of his guitar improvisations to compositions for synclavier). However, why has the new term “comprovisation” appeared at all in different discourses since the beginning of the 21st century, why is it so hybrid and why does it have such inner tension? Is it contradictory only because of the combination of two notions (*composition* and *improvisation*) expressing such different principles that some people consider their conjunction impossible? Is it ever possible to use this notion correctly and if it is, in what specific way?

The first time I met with this neologism was in the texts of the Slovak aesthetician, Jozef Cseres, more than five years ago. He used it as a stylistic expression to describe the poetics of certain works of contemporary experimental music. I admit that I liked it immediately, also in direct connection to some of my musical artistic activities. I can mention the projects of my chamber non-conventional ensemble “thEoRy Of Shake” in the first half of the last decade (*Puppet regime of sound*, 2000; live music to horror *Nosferatu*, 2002; live music to the

first silent Slovak movie *Jánošík* we created with legendary Czech musicians Vladimír Merta and Jana Lewitová, 2004). Not being familiar with the notion “comprovisation”, at that time we described our approach as a mutation of composed and intuitive music applied to Slavonic “trans-modality”. Simply, I used the principles of comprovisation in many, many intermedia-musical works (including those other ones I describe in this publication). It is interesting that this new notion appeared at the scene of the musical culture at the break of the 20th and 21st century and is parallel to the gradual disappearance of the “irreconcilable” antagonism between composed and improvised music.³⁶

Nowadays, you can find the term “comprovisation” in titles of CD projects or musical pieces. Pianist Philip Thomas titled his album “solo compositions reflected improvisation” of J. Cage, P. Obermayer, Ch. Burn, M. Beck, M. Finnjissy, S. H. Fell just *Comprovisation* (2006). According to him:

(...) comprovisation is a celebration and exploration of the interface where composition and improvisation meet. Central to the project is a number of works composed by musicians who are associated with the world of improvised music“ (Thomas 2006: 3).

We can also mention the piano duo of Thollem McDonas & Nicola Guazzaloca and their piece *Noble art – Comprovisation concert for two pianos* (2009), as well as holonomic-fractal music created by the music semiotician Eufrazio Prates, or non-conventional percussionist Celio Vasconcellos. They also describe the specificity of their works by the term comprovisation. Gradually it has become the subject of theoretical reflection – e.g. in the texts of Richard Dudas (Hanyang University School of Music Composition, Seoul) “*Comprovisation*”: *the various facets of composed improvisation within interactive performance systems*, or Michael Francis Hannan (Southern Cross University, Australia) *Interrogating comprovisation as practice-led research*. They also both reflect their own experience from composing, which deals with improvised music in various contexts:

Richard Dudas is interested in the balance between composition and improvisation in interactive performances with electronic and computer-based

³⁶ In 2000, at the festival Evenings of New Music in Bratislava, the Japanese composer and experimental musician, Otomo Yoshihide, answered my questions about his attitude towards the discussion regarding the traditional opposition of composition and improvisation in the way that it formed a Euro-Atlantic dichotomy. He along with his musicians simply did not solve this problem in their music at all.

music systems. Using his experiences in this field, he is focused on the general trends in “composed improvisation” within the electronic and computer music, with the special tendency

(...) to uncover the limits and limitations of improvisation and its relationship to both composition and “composed instruments” within the world of interactive electronic musical performance“ (Dudas 2010: 30).

According to Michael Francis Hannan, comprovisation is a term used “to describe his practice of making new compositions from recordings of improvised material” (either performed by himself or by other musicians under his direction). He thinks this word can help not only to understand the making of new compositions from recordings of improvised material, but it also

(...) interrogates its validity within the debate about creative practice as research. Although the comprovisation practice has random and intuitive elements, I conclude that it is likely to produce new knowledge through its strongly experimental approach, and that it is grounded in the tacit knowledge of professional compositional craft (Hannan, 2011 : 3)

M. F. Hannan also devotes his attention to the relation between improvised techniques and unconventional types of scores.

It is obvious that the neologism has emerged in similar relations. So, we can ask again: is “the issue of comprovisation” only the case of stylistic terminological play, or does it express something more? Can it be employed in certain meaningful circumstances? In what boundaries can it work as a relevant taxonomic term in the context of a specific kind of music, eventually in the context of its symbiotic being within the intermedia environment? Obviously, its unlimited application and interpretation could become useless. Before looking for the answers to these questions, let us look briefly at our understanding of the notions of composition and improvisation.

The well-known Slovak contemporary composer and important theoretician, Vladimír Godár, devoted his attention to the fundamental characteristics of the notion “composition” in his books *Kacírske quodlibety* (Heretical quodlibets), *Battaglia a mimesis*, *Luk a lýra* (Long-bow and lyre). He points to the relation between the motivation of the origin, the genesis of notation, the music inscription (of the need to make it more simple, transparent and more complex as well) and the measure of rational correction and control of movements of the musical process, and the influence of musical notation to

the origin of organized polyphony. He observes a direct connection between the potential of the specific written signs and the definition and quality of musical thinking, which is characterized by the cultivation of coordination and synchronisation of more complicated, simultaneous and successive processes. Godár also stresses the important role of the rhetorization of the music media since the Renaissance (its persuasive impact compared with the characteristics of rhetoric speech verified in “theory and praxis” of the Ancient Greek orators and thinkers, or of the Protestant preachers), in baroque (J. S. Bach’s fugue as polyphonic “utterance” phased and synchronized in time) and Romanticism. In the 20th century, there are new, different aspirations – to control the creation of musical works of art within the maximal possible degree of involvement of rationality (dodecaphony and postwebernism). At this point, Morton Feldman referred to Pierre Boulez’ surrealistic compositions as the final edge, which cannot be exceeded. But, as other Slovak composer Roman Berger says (and not only him), there is no composition without elements of improvisation (Berger 2011: 2).³⁷

Improvisation (*improvisus*, lat. – unpredicted, unsuspected, unexpected) is based on spontaneous intuitiveness, the opposite of predictable certainty and advantages of possible reversal correction of musical shapes and details in concentrated composition. In fact, the majority of the world’s musical cultures have always been connected to various types, degrees and “likeness” of improvisation, which is often related to the phenomenon of musicianship (still insufficiently valued in music scholarship). We can mention folklore (an improvisation as a part of limited variations of traditional models), jazz (different levels and kinds of improvisation from dixieland through swing to modern jazz, bebop, cool jazz, west coast, fusion to almost unlimited improvisational forms in free jazz). However, in this chapter I have oriented towards paradigmatically different, free improvised music, which has no direct relations to idioms of musical styles and genres in historical situations after the emancipation and establishment of aleatory music, music of sonic environments of John Cage or Morton Feldman. Their conscious resignation to the omniscient and detailed control of a musical organism and their explicit intention to have no intention (to involve the unpredictable accident and to let the music-sonic processes “speak” for themselves) are also very inspiring to the concept of comprovisation. Even if the neologism contains certain inner tension and friction, it

³⁷ Czech musicologist Jan Václav Sýkora adds: “*There is complicated correlative relation between composition and improvisation. Improvisation is usually the kind of pre-degree of compositional work*” (Sýkora 1966 : 11), which is not valid, of course, for all kinds of compositional music activities.

expresses the result of the confrontation of different, but mutually “permeable” kinds of processes. It expresses their possible dialogical, reciprocally enriching mutation and (perhaps despite certain strangeness) it is comprehensible.

The dialectics of musical determinism and indeterminism, their mutual proportion, level, kind, function and enrichment, can be traced all the way through music history. In music modernism, after Erik Satie, it was accentuated by e. g. Charles Ives, Henry Cowell, Witold Lutoslawski, and at the same time the emancipation of meaningful capacity of sonoristic structures played an important role since the impressionism until Edgard Varese (P. Faltin), György Ligeti and Polish sonorism, electro-acoustic music, including also the music *concrète* (the acceptance of any sonic sources as proto-musical shapes). The qualitative shifts in the postmodern presence are connected also with the paradigmatically different understanding of the contemporary, multi-linear and transversal musical or music-intermedia improvisations. It is clear that the need to introduce the term “improvisation” is right on the side of contemporary artists using different improvisation vocabularies³ – they use and verify them consciously in “not verified” situations of their possible symbiosis with composed principles and processes in various interactive proportions. The result of this symbiosis can become an achievement of the new, unimagined quality.

We can find a lot of examples of this approach in musical works of art in the late 20th century, e. g. *Voyager* (1993) of the composer and trombonist George Lewis, in the piece *What is the difference between stripping and playing the violin?* (1997) of the laser koto player and intermedia, body-artist Miya Masaoka, in *The Perks* (1996) or *The Fence* (1998) of the composer and violinist Jon Rose, in *Verbatim* (1996) by the electronic music composer Bob Ostertag and his ensemble Say No More, or in *Revolutionary Pekinese opera* (1995) created by the group Ground Zero of a bizarre composer and musician Otomo Yoshihide. Let us also mention some improvised initiatives in Slovakia: Marián Varga’s solo piano concerts in 1990s, experimental pieces of composers Peter Machajdík, Martin Burtas, his cooperation with Ján Boleslav Kládvo and Daniel Matej on the project *Over4tea*, the musical pieces on limited sheets of Juraj Vajo, my duo Xafoo with a legendary Czech alternative saxophone and guitar player Mikoláš Chadima, or the recent non-conventional projects of Miroslav Tóth.

If I turn back now to the introductory questions and doubts about the sense or boundaries of the term improvisation, I think that an appropriate, meaningful application is possible in the space of *consciously* mixed, balanced combinations of pre-composed and free improvised approaches in the field of unconventional music and its possible intermedia interferences. It is a matter of

open discussion if this notion could also be used – while being aware of its limitations and risks – outside the context of experimental music (e. g. since the beginnings of modern jazz, *pars pro toto*: comprovised dimension of bebop solo parts of Charlie Parker), or even in other art media with temporarily performative textuality (conceptual art performance, happening, theatre, fine arts, etc.). In 2010, the symposium *Comprovisations: improvisation systems in performing arts and technologies*, organised in Baden-Baden, was focused on the fact that:

(...) over the past decades, the performing arts have been moving away from the interpretation of fixed notations and repetitive, rehearsed performances. This shift has been intensified by increasingly reactive stage and music technologies. (...)

The symposium represented an attempt to refute the cultural prejudices connected with “comprovised arts” and was also devoted to the difficulty of analyzing and theorizing about “ephemeral artmaking practices” that do not utterly rely on linear “scripts” or “scores”.³⁸ The organisers of this event stressed that there was no such thing as a “pure” improvisation, and so they also dealt with the recent modernist approaches (especially North-American) to improvisation, which:

*(...) have emphasized a purportedly “free play” largely unfettered by explicit rules, while at the same time stressing the importance of social and consensual aesthetics and establishing close-knit communities of performers and audiences.*³⁹

In the contemporary Slovak artistic scene, at the beginning of 2011, there appeared the proclamation *Compro.sk11*. This was signed by eleven artists (including the author of this paper), and it introduces the term comprovisation into realms which overlap the narrow music-theoretical context. It does not announce the birth of an artistic group. The signatories just want to point at a more existential contemporary understanding of this notion:

³⁸ In this context we can mention Chris Cutler’s study *Plunderphonia*, which also deals with the copyright, which even today, more than one century after the discovery and the usage of sound recording media, and a half-century of established free improvisation, is absurdly based on the superiority of music written in score.

³⁹ The symposium was a part of The 22nd International Conference on Systems Research, Informatics and Cybernetics. <http://eamlibrarian.blogspot.com/2010/02/call-for-papers-comprovisations.html>

compro.sk11

We are interested in the emancipation and validity of autonomy of comprovisation as:

...the principle articulated in methods and transversal “suchness” of recent unconventional arts in analogical reference to transparently basal modus of life situations (these are results of what is planned in vain beforehand and of what necessarily becomes the subject of unpredictable change we are forced to react to in an operative and creative way);

... a conscious choice of transformative mutation of pre-composed process-es, principles, outlines and situational improvisation in the context of contemporary music-intermedia intertextuality;

...a notion, which expresses the process of becoming oneself (W. Welsh) in together-being with a creative act, artistic gesture and their perception;

...the process of inestimable artistic re-de-territorialisation (G. Deleuze) and in the frame of it also as the existential confrontation with the fact who / with what / in what and how we are;

...something that we can find in the slippage of liquid space between the different art media in the time of fading-out postmodernism (which has rejected prejudices about “pureness” and separateness of them), between music, fine arts, film, dance, theatre, performance, happening, literature, photography, video-art, etc. in their interferential net conjunction;

...something which co-defines the recent tolerant, open, but in unconventional option also radical, co-ordinates of contemporary music-intermedia art, in the sense of a metaphor of the sound-image & gesture-text;

... one of the possibilities of the continuity of the transgression of the ama-sphere (ama – acoustic, musical and audiovisual) in poetics of configurations Transmusic Comp., Society of Non-conventional Music, Lesní Spe-váci (Forest Singers), which – without any claim of presenting ourselves as aesthete comprovisors – can be re-actualized peculiarly in Slovakia at the beginning of the second decade of this century.

Signatories: Julo Fujak, Martin Burlas, Juraj Vajo, Miro Tóth, Ján Boleslav Kladivo, Valér Miko, Boris Vaitovič, Peter Katina, Robo Roth, József R. Juhász, Attila Tverďák ⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Responses to the proclamation ranged, as usual, from affirmative to hesitant and critical or declinatory (from the side of the members of Transmusic Comp. and Society of Non-conventional Music). They denied the application of the term “comprovisation” in the function of signifying a genre or a platform. They also envision a certain risk of its abuse outside the restricted context, of institutionalisation and

“The case of comprovisation” as a way of expressing the dialectic mutation of pre-composed and improvised approaches and its balance still remains open. The practice will show if it is just a blind taxonomic street or direction label, which points to a specific kind of meaningful “crossbreeding” of composed and improvised processes. The fruits of it, as *Compro.sk11* indicates⁴¹, can get over the fence of its narrow academic interpretation.

Well, why coprovisation? And why not?

expansion of taxonomical redundancy, especially on academic and curator scenes. I am aware of this risk, and I agree with many understandable anxieties facing the possibility of “camouflage” by comprovisation. My thoughts deal “only” with some of the basic demarcation lines, and they can become subject to polemics. However, as it is written in the introduction, I think this neologism can be used accurately to characterize one of the important attributes of my intermedia musical projects, at least.

⁴¹ The result of their cooperation was CD extra *Compro.sk11* (published in 2012 by label Vlنا) with different improvised musical and video tracks (created by M. Burlas, J. B. Kladivo, J. Fujak with The California EAR UNIT, and his Ne:bo:daj, J. Vajo, P. Katina, A. Tverďák, M. Tóth and his duo Shibuya Motors) and special texts/studies (written by V. Miko and J. Fujak).



Cover of music-intermedia project Compro.sk11 (CDextra, published by Vlna, 2012)

**4 and ½ pages of silence for John Cage
(1 page = 1 minute)**

PERSONAL NOTES

- ¹ Listening to the lectures of Milan Adamčiak in the middle of the 1980s at the Department of Musicology at Comenius University in Bratislava I heard about John Cage for the first time – he opened the doors for us to know him as well as musique concrete or electro-acoustic music. Two years after finishing my studies I had already worked as a teacher of music in the village of Skalité (near the Polish border), but coincidentally, I was in Bratislava again just the day Cage visited it – unfortunately I did not meet or see him then. When he died that summer I had opened the school year with the announcement written on the green board with white note staves: *“Today, 5th September 1992 is the 80th anniversary of great composer John Cage’s birth, who died last month, so today you have a day off”* and I let the kids to listen to sounds outside. I clipped on a noticeboard one of his well-known photo portraits with a big smile and his words quoted below: *“I am not afraid of the future of music – the sounds will sound even after my death”*.
- ² I admit that I comprehended Cage’s poetics much better later as a result of my experiences with original intermedia events performed by Zdenek Plachý and Josef Daněk in the centre of contemporary arts Skleněná louka (Glass Meadow) in Brno in the half of 1990s. I participated in some of them, for example in *Těžké doby bez taktu* (Hard times without bars) or

Doprovodní soubor (*Accompany ensemble*) and met also Slovak representatives of SNEH (Society for Non-conventional Music) – namely Milan Adamčiak, Jozef Cseres and Michal Murin. These meetings were for me kind of “U turn” from the “exhausted” line of alternative rock I produced that time. Since 1996 I have worked at the Institute of Literary and Artistic Communication in Nitra, where I “staged” with my students during the seminars some extracts from Cage’s book *The Silence*. To be inspired by it as well by the spirit of Moravian non-conventional events I created with students similar transmedia sketch *St(r)ihomam* (introduced also at the international festival of performance art TransArt CommunicaTION 1998 in Nové Zámky).

- ³ The title of my concert study of music-intermedia usage of puppet and black puppet theatre *Animation of Silence (in music) of puppets* in interpretation of ensemble thEoRy Of Shake (festival Sound Off 2000, Nitra) was linked not only to Cage’s *The Silence*, but also to the “Ticho” journal (*The Silence*) produced by artists from Skleňená louka – after four minutes and thirty three seconds of “overture” of rather loud parallel noise of videoclips from MTV and various pop song from CDs, I introduced the piece 4’33’’ by John Cage interpreted just by wooden puppets “playing”, performing it on musical instruments. This musical piece was followed by *Sculpture musicale* (1913) of Marcel Duchamp using the same amplified puppets and Cage’s recorded voice, where he reads the mesostics from this conceptual piece – they were at the same time projected on the silver screen. A few years later in a symbolic way I re-opened the then devastated Concert Hall of a Regional house in Nitra performing Cage’s 4’33’’ in a different way. I was standing in the middle of the ruined space, holding in my hands a white lily and paperboard with the inscription *O-tvor 4’33’’* (2005). On another occasion I organized a happening together with my students. We let sound both pieces by Duchamp and Cage using sonic qualities of a room in the Nitra Gallery, including its walls, door-posts, space heaters, etc.

Nevertheless, Cage’s 4’33’’ and Duchamp’s *Sculpture musicale* are quite distinct. In the first case an interval of “silence” is precisely temporally delineated. The quotation marks are significant here, because as Cage found out there is no absolute silence, even in anechoic chamber of sonic vacuum – in such specific conditions a man can hear the sounds of nerve system and blood circulation. The performative character of a piece, the live interpretation of the piece by the musician(s), is very important (it consists of three parts in duration 33’’, 2’40’’ and 1’20’’ divided by tacets). In the case of Duchamp it is only one sentence written on a piece of paper. It says “*Sons durant et partant de différents points et formant une sculpture sonore qui dure*”. Cage pointed out several times that Duchamp may be the first one

in history who had thought about music in spatial co-ordinates exclusively (talking on sonic sculpture) not in temporal measures.

I did not know for a long time why I wanted to juxtapose these two diverse pieces on different occasions. I felt in some way that if we perform them and let them sound despite the disparity of those significant artistic gestures – embodied in “four minutes and thirty three seconds of silent sounds” and in “musical, or sonic sculpture which lasts” – then there is a close affinity between the experience resulting from the perception of those unpredictably sounding sounds. Certain centripetency between 4’33’’ a *Sculpture Musicale* occurred to me and transposed the way the perception of my sonic universe is structured. It happened unexpectedly and spontaneously while I was recovering from an illness in the summer of 2011 – and I think that also everything that I have ever received from Cage and Duchamp – and my (un)consciousness has changed and been “re-structured” in a certain way. Since then I have started to recognize specific acting sounds of specific environment as a unique, complex, unexpectedly suggestive music *sui generis* (with no need to record it in any sonic medium, because it would not be able to reproduce the quality of such processes of sounds as they appear and disappear in all directions).

- ⁴ The significance of Cage’s music and his aesthetics is notable also for the way it transforms the sonority of contemporary improvised music. There is an analogy between changes of timbre music (sonoricism) at the break of the 1950s and 1960s connected with electro-acoustic music, music concrete or Cage’s sonic events, and the impact of the development of digital technologies as well as of the legitimacy of musical qualities of sonic environments on sonic articulate vocabulary of improvised musicians at the break of 20th and 21st centuries (examples from my collaborations: *Live in Brussels*, Studio Odeon 120, 2011 with quarter-tone trumpet player Franz Hautzinger and sonic “bricolé” Zsolt Sörös; or project *XAFOO* with saxophonist and guitarist Mikoláš Chadima, both projects were published by label Hevhetia, 2012, 2013).
- ⁵ At the end of the latest decade Zbyněk Prokop, a renowned artist and former member of legendary Slovak groups Lesní speváci (Forrrest Singers) and Transmusic Comp., invited me to create a piece for the exhibition in Košice dedicated to the theme “cage” (2009). We decided to put small pieces of black paper together with white letters bearing John Cage’s thought: “Get out whatever cage you happen to be in” into a bird cage. People could take the pieces of papers from the open cage. During the preparation, however, I could not remember the sentence precisely. I called to Zbyněk by mistake something else: “Get out whatever cage you are” and it was printed on some

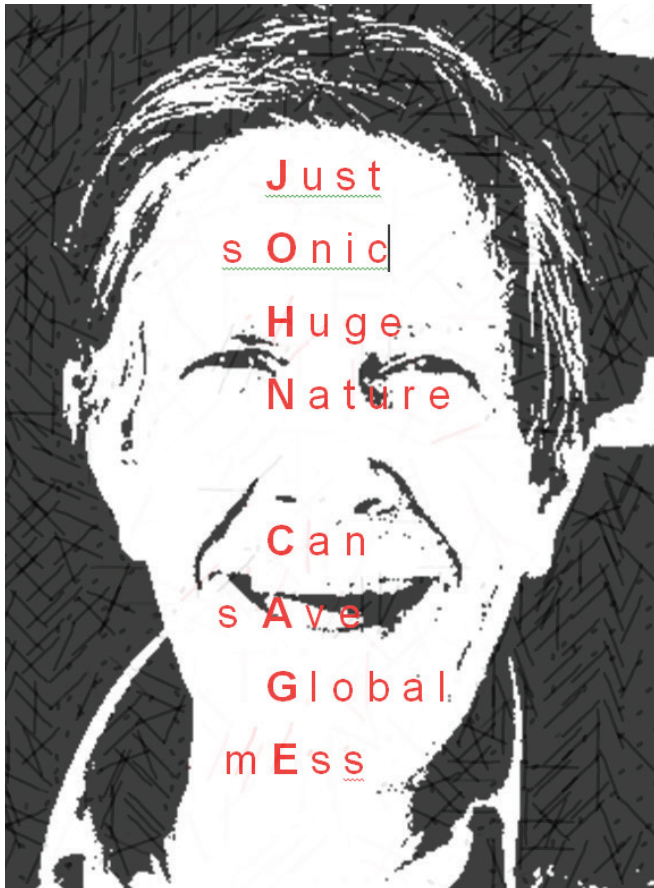
pieces of paper. I formulated unintentionally the sentence, which said more than I had expected...

- ⁶ In 2012 (100th anniversary of the birth of Cage and 20th anniversary of his death), Slovak magazine .týždeň (.week) requested me to contribute with “about 300 words” to a thematic issue on John Cage. So I did it, I wrote exactly 300 words, but they published a shorter version of it without a mesostic at the end. I would like to finish my personal notes to my *4 and ½ pages of silence for John Cage* with the unabridged version of the text:

300 words on Cage

Ludwig Wittgenstein's sentence “Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent” retains us as if in absolute silence in front of everything, what exceeds our verbal abilities. John Cage, one of the most liberating personalities in 20th century, who discovered that absolute silence did not exist (even in anechoic chamber we can hear the sounds of our living bodies – of nerve activity and blood circulation) and that behind boundaries of language there is the space of unlimited possibilities for a paradigmatically other music transposed by sounds of non-tone nature. Cage inspired by Marcel Duchamp, Henry Cowell, Erik Satie, or Suzuki ingeniously linked artistic “Chance” and zen, indeterminism and the wisdom of koan not only in musical gesture, in which any sound is “pregnant” by other than conventional meaning, but he helped us to open the ears of our (un)consciousness, metaphorically speaking, and listen to the world around us in its suchness. He still remains a challenge – in the artistic world, culturally and socially as well, especially at present, in the era of camouflage, agony of systems, but also maturing change.

His piece *4'33''* is sometimes compared to Buddha's silent gesture with a white lily. His friend Steve Lucky Mosko claims, however, that it is related to the essay Cage wrote when he was fourteen. There he writes that if people on the Earth would stop the same moment just for a minute and listen to the sounds around, the world might change. I listened to the recording of Cage reading his essay when he was almost 80 years old – it was fascinating... Therefore I would like to finish three hundreds words on him by a form he preferred – a mesostic I wrote based on chance and intuition:



John Cage about the silence:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pcHnL7aS64Y>

A few words on pseudototics

1

I was expected to write something on the topic of “pseudo” (for the Slovak magazine on contemporary art and culture *Vlna*) in a way that what I write would not be pseudo itself, but rather a meaningful contribution to scientific “pseudototics”, whose subject is everything that falls within this category. The “pseudo” and its *modus* have much in common with the principles of camouflage, deceit or pretense of any kind and attitudes or approaches that can be quite accurately described in language: “just as if”, “so-so”, “not really”, or “to keep goodwill”. In some contexts, we highlight it with the quotation marks, which are materialized using the famous dual synchronous movement of the index and middle fingers of both hands in the air. The “pseudo” surrounds us overtly or covertly here and there, it “lurks” almost everywhere and it is able to act as a substitute for the real deal and pretend it is no “pseudo” at all, which is augmented by omnipresent virtualization processes:

- instead of human relationships, we very often deal with pseudo-relationships (and I don’t only mean the social networks),
- training and education is replaced by pseudo-education,
- real work is simulated by pseudo-work,
- real science is replaced by pseudo-science (and its bureaucratic virtual reporting),
- the cathartic, thought-provoking art is replaced by quasi-aesthetic pseudo-art,
- mutually rewarding dialog and meaningful debate is replaced by pseudo-communication,
- participatory democracy is substituted by pseudo-democracy manipulated by oligarchy and transnational corporations,
- healthy eating is substituted by chemical pseudo-foods and pseudo-drinks,
- traditional folk healing and medicine is eliminated by commercial pseudo-healthcare,
- pseudoquality pretends to be the real quality, etc.

I think that in the social micro-and macrospace, we should consider everything we are coming into contact with depending on the extent to which it allows the “pseudo” to flourish. The quality of anyone or anything should be judged by whether or not it creates the conditions for the cultivation of pseudo, or let develop unobstructed, even in places where it was unimaginable just a while ago.

2

Chris Cutler, legendary experimental musician, poet and activist of the movement of Rock in Opposition, thinks that we have reached the state of the so-called *zombie culture*. Thanks to the transfer and extension of our lives into the virtual technologies and digital media (Internet, smartphones and tablets), we are *de facto* becoming the “undead and soulless” – we are gradually but surely losing the ability to experience the immediate reality with all its bliss and fears. We resort to the (self)voyeuristic digital hyper-reality, which we are losing control of. We in fact consider it to be more important than the reality itself, we are becoming morbidly dependent on it, which ultimately (de)forms our perceptions and somehow changes the “grammar” of our consciousness. So much so, sometimes we are not able to cope with the real situations where there is no risk-free “sign out” or “delete”. The urgency of this impasse and the experience of an irreplaceable loss or actual suffering, however, make deep ruptures into the zombie pseudo-life – unexpectedly and without a warning.

3

I recall that as a child, I once cut myself and asked: what I am feeling right now is what we call pain... Or is it something else? And what hurts and itches me in the wound is only “pseudo-pain”, which I am imagining?

4

The sudden shock and horror of meeting the terrifying, decaying, killing zombies on screen – just like with the undead vampire in Murnau’s *Nosferatu* – may cause a “serious accident” of the all-questioning and shattering realization that my/your life was not lived for real, but rather in a “fake” mode, i.e. by inertial pseudo-living. As if this existential shock (as a foreboding of the final settlement at the “final stop”, facing death) revealed the “true nature of things?!”, including the metastases of the pseudo, protruding from the surface into the depth.

5

In his extremely penetrating and thoughtful book *Beckett and zen*, Al Foster points out the parallels between the unprecedented (programmatically anti-esthete) literary dissection of the human mind in his novels and challenges of the Zen Buddhist wisdom, and also describes our chronic escapism. Our fear of emptiness is filled with busy lifestyle, that is, according to him, self-centered escapes into various mental and physical (often pseudo-)activities and actions. Our talkative and volatile, or in the words of a Buddhist, “monkey” mind constantly leaping “from branch to branch” (by the way: try to stop it in the state of insomnia ...) distracts us from the real search of inner freedom and, in order to saturate its (often pseudo) desires, it brings about constant dissatisfaction.

6

At a recent funeral of a bizarrely rustic Kysuce artist Rudolf Dička in Turzovka who got a stroke at the local railway station on St. John's Day 2014, the priest used the following impersonal farewell address. In his formal sermon, unaware of Dička's lifelong personal ambivalence, he used a passage from the *New Testament*, which attracted so much the above-mentioned Beckett. It is the well-known situation in which Jesus, hanging on the cross, paradoxically gives mercy only to one of the villains hanging on the sides – the one who stood up for him while the other mocked him...

http://www.stanica.sk/starastranka/main.php?page=GALLERY-ARCHIVE_rudo_dicka&lang=SK

The very next day, I was invited to an admission panel in science of art – a stark contrast of a story of harsh but non-compromising life of this artist on the one hand and the pseudo-problems of some members of the academia on the other hand – still haunts me to this day.

7

It is not only the explicit, but also the latent presence of hidden ideology (of any kind) in music that devalues and debases it to the role of a servant, because it transforms it to its own image, that is, sometimes to very strange pseudo-music.

8

With all eligible post-structuralist relativism of notions “I” and “subject”: am I not by any chance (and sometimes even) what I am trying to (non-)deliberately get rid of myself? Can't I be characterized by my very attitude to what disturbs me in my complacency and “mundaneness”, by what I choose not to understand, what I shun and push out of my dark corner since it does not fit

into my world and world-view? What mode affects my subjectivization, individualization and self-identification, what do I want and choose to associate my identity with, what do I choose to be connected with through my being(ness), especially if there are things that I repeatedly consider to be normal, but later they turn out to be pseudonormal?

9

At the beginning of the 1980's, Frank Zappa mentions the concept of "stress fun" in the accompanying text on his record *You Are What You Is*, and in one pseudopop song, he claims: „Beauty knows no pain“. Try to guess why...(?)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V3xQCMO-Fyo>

10

As stated by Gilles Deleuze in connection with the Sartre's theory of insincerity, our consciousness is capable of playing out a double, parallel ability: not to be what it is and to be what it isn't. Therefore, under all circumstances, one needs to be capable of the Foucault's *parrhésia* toward him/herself, and come to the realization that "the king is naked...". Man as a human being has to find the courage to *metanoia* and subsequently to real act of Levinasian "transcending" in (favor of) other human being.

11

The "Pseudo" is not mystification, mystification is not mythologization, and mythologization is not legitimization. However, in the name of "means justifying the ends", we can witness pseudo-mystification, pseudo-mythologization and pseudo-legitimization.

Slovak intermedia artist *sui generis* Milan Adamčiak likes mystifying and (sometimes involuntarily self-)mythologizing, but never in a purposeless way, to the detriment of the pseudo. If he suspects this, he finishes his sentence abruptly: "*howgh!*".

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F3TXannks4I>

12

What is the difference between the term and pseudo-term, sense and pseudo-sense, and value and pseudo-value? And why do we so often and willingly tolerate the blurring of the borders between the above?

13

Among other things, pseudototics deals with "the pseudo-problems", or better, what lies behind them, triggers them, generates them, causes them and nour-

ishes them. As an interdisciplinary discipline, it overlaps with pataphysics, fakeology, pseudontology of the pseudo itself, its aesthetics and “ethics”, semi-otics of the simulacra and camouflage, psychoanalysis of hypocrisy and other related fields in the humanities and sciences reflecting on everything ostensible. Of course, it has its basic and applied pseudotic research in the field of civil and military life (just compare the famous Sun-c’ and his ancient teaching of the *art of war* with the pseudo-strategies of the post-modern generals with devastating effects), as well as its specific pseudotical methodology, heuristics and evaluation of results of investigation of all sorts of pseudo-phenomena. It is quite plausible that someone will establish the RIP (Research Institute for Pseudotics) and IAPS (International Association of Pseudotic Studies).

14

Finally, it would be worth the effort to single out the subject-matter of the investigation in pseudotics even in *per negationem*: for example, through the phenomenon of real suffering, irreversibility of a tragic crime, or a really (not virtually) gentle touch, wisdom of absurd humor, spontaneous children’s laughter, or unselfish self-sacrifice. In addition to the previous seemingly unconnected notes, other research incentives and motivations can be found wherever (in whatever) you are...

Július Fújak: Occupy the piano!

(This picture – on next page 93 – was taken from a public piano near by Cathedral of Saint Paul in London 2012, a few days before the Occupy movement was scattered by police.)



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Summary

The publication *Various comprovisations – Texts on music (and) semiotics* (CDextra, 2015) consists of studies, articles and essays written during the last seven years. The author – a music semiotician and composer/comproviser of contemporary un-conventional music divided the textual volume in two sections – theoretical and essayistic. In the first part he deals with the following topics:

Alternative models of the musical sign and music semiosis. The specific quality of music opens up a number of questions and challenges that have been addressed by various thinkers since Antiquity. Its multiple duplicity (potential linkage to both the numerical and semantic phenomena /V. Godár/, abstractness and corporeality /H. Partch/, or temporal parallelism of the successive passage of time and simultaneous layering of musical processes of different length /O. Messiaen/) is the subject of analysis even in contemporary semiotics. Building on the original theory of existential expressive aesthetics by František Miko (1920-2010) and music semiotics of Peter Faltin (1939-1981), the paper inter alia focuses on the correlation between the multilevel human (un)consciousness and the multidimensional nature of musical works. With respect to certain limits in the traditional sign models, the author, building on the above concepts and his own research of musical aesthetics, puts forward an alternative model of a musical sign and the 3-D communication model of musical and artistic semiosis.

Topicality of Peter Faltin's music semiotics. The study is focused on certain motifs in Faltin's semiotics of music that can change our view on fundamental questions of music semiosis. Peter Faltin, in his last pivotal work *Bedeutung ästhetischer Zeichen – Musik und Sprache* (Signification of Aesthetic Signs – Music and Language), does not follow the beaten paths of modern semiology or semiotics – neither the one based on Ferdinand de Saussure's theory, which uses linguistics as a model paradigm of semiology, nor the other determined by the work of semioticians Charles Sanders Peirce and Charles William Morris. He found the source for the appropriate semiotic reflection of music in the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein, especially in his second period (after *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*). According to him, the otherness of musical syntax

is related directly to the untranslatable otherness of musical thinking. The sonant musical process is autonomous and it exists only in so far one listens to its unique musical logic. Faltin, inspired by Wittgenstein's thoughts, questions the very prerequisites and rules of musical syntax: *how* it is ever possible that musical tones or sounds create relations and also resultant meanings. It implies the indefensibility of extreme structuralism isolated from the pragmatic context, as well as of the belief in "self-redemptive" excessive reception (not only music) aesthetics, which derives everything from the context of perception and ignores the perceived musical structure in its happening. The equilibrium of the dialectics of correla(c)tive relations between the object – its use, the structure – function (projected to many layers of Faltin's semiotics of music) determines their appropriate comprehension. The structural-pragmatic dialectic game of creating musical meaning is played according to the rules of "the categories of musical thinking" on the playground of our human consciousness – the mind of a composer as well as listener. The paper also reflects on other texts written on Faltin's theories by Slovak and Czech musicologists, semioticians and philosophers such as L. Chalupka, J. Doubravová, M. Žabka, K. Mitterpach and the author's own ones in the last two decades. The very last part of the study is concerned with an important Faltin's article from 1969 titled *Ontologické transformácie v hudbe šesťdesiatych rokov* (Ontological transformations in the music of the sixties). Despite the gap of more than four decades it still provides productive tools to understand paradigmatic otherness and uniqueness of extremely unconventional music not only in the 1960s but also nowadays.

Vladimír Godár's book *on the birth of the opera from rhetoric*. The subject of Vladimír Godár's book *The Birth of the opera from the spirit of rhetoric* (2012) is the interdisciplinary heuristic mapping of the genesis of musical drama in the light of – according to him – a single cardinal revolution in European music (peaking in the 16th and 17th century) triggered by the poeticisation and internal *rhetorization* of the musical medium with all the repercussions. The consequences of these processes were also felt in the following centuries, including the present. From the prism of knowledge that rhetoric was *de facto* a universal theory of art in the 16th and 17th century, the author's argumentative attention is logically focused primarily on the ancient world, appropriately revived by the Renaissance. Slovak composer and musicologist Godár, for example, analyzes in detail the rhetorical virtue *energeia*, or the ability of the illusive presence of things without their visual presence, the rhetorical discipline *dispositio*, or the triad *docere* (teach), the cathartic *movere* (move) and *delectare* (delight) and finds their projections in the contemporary music, musical theater and theoretical literature.

Godár, with strong, rational, and eloquent arguments, also refutes the fatuous superstition about the lower status and “lag” of musical art in comparison to other forms of Renaissance art. Inter alia, he undermines the strongly held prejudice that the early opera genres are a continuation of the ancient tragedy – he proves that their motivation and nature were related to more than a hundred years of tradition of the so-called intermedia (as well as the favola genre), show more internal similarity with the largely unpreserved satyr games.

Correlativity of liquid music-artistic intermediality. The introduction contains notes on integral interaction of music, word and gesture based on the concept of *corporeality* of artistic expression developed by American composer and music-intermedia bricoleur Harry Partch, which interprets mutual relation of music and various art media from a point of view of their genuine syncretism. Following the research of Jan Mukařovský, the study applies “the multiplication” of his model of semantic structure of utterance to other arts. Artistic media are defined by different kinds of temporal being, realization in time – temporally performative textuality and fixed textuality (Aage Hansen-Löve) and since the beginning of the second half of 20th century they are combined in unexpected, unconventional fusions. Therefore, the contribution is focused on the problems of specific character of their correlativity – mutual relationship of artistic media today as well as on correlativity relationship of actual forms of intermediality and changes of human consciousness in the process of its perception. The ideas are demonstrated by the example of contemporary music-intermedia works of art *Carpets and curtains* by Czech artists Ivan Palacký and VJ Lukášová.

The second part is dedicated to following themes:

On some Quasars Ensemble projects. The article discusses the activities of a unique Slovak chamber orchestra Quasars Ensembles, intently and continually dedicated to challenge and captivate its audience through the 20th and 21st centuries with its unusual poetics. The author analyses and interprets in various contexts music works of art recorded by this ensemble (published by label Hevhetia in 2011-2013), created by composers Ivan Buffa, director and conductor of this orchestra (*Locatelli caprice* and *Caprice for solo violin*), Salvatore Sciarrino (*Quintettino N.1*), Michael Jarrell (*Assonance VI*), Bent Sørensen (*The Lady and the lark*), Lucian Berio (*Oh, King* written a year after the death of Martin Luther King, a piece that eventually became the second part of his famous *Sinfonia*), João Pedro Oliveira (*Pyramids*) and his wife Petra Bachratá (*Eyes wide shut*). Quasars Ensemble always plays and records the music works in a certain conceptual frame, e. g. emblematic works of modernism in cham-

ber instrumentation based on A. Schönberg's orchestration: Claude Debussy's *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*, G. Mahler's *Songs of a wayfarer* (1883), Slovak cosmopolitan composer Alexander Albrecht's songs to the poetry of German poets (B. Natteroth, R. Volker, H. Hesse, A. Albrecht-Messer etc.) edited by I. Buffa for his orchestra, and Francis Poulenc's *Rhapsody nègre* (1917), forecasting the advent of the *Les Six*. The other Quasars Ensemble projects included the special chamber symphonies of the authors written in the 1920s, namely *Kammersymphonie Nr. 1 E-major*, op. 9 of the above-mentioned A. Schoenberg, *Sonatina for 11 instruments* by A. Albrecht (1925) and the *Kammermusik Nr. 1, op. 24* by P. Hindemith.

Influence of music semiotics and aesthetics on my music-intermedia arts. The paper deals with the phenomena of music semiosis from the perspective of Slovak theoreticians Peter Faltin; his original semiotic theories in the 1970s, including his last work *Signification of Aesthetic Signs – Music and Language* and post-structuralist aesthetician Jozef Cseres at the turn of the 1990s/2000s. Following theme, the paper focuses on the aesthetic interpretation of author's various contemporary, experimental music-intermedia projects from the beginning of 21st century – created in cooperation with artists from musical ensembles thEoRy Of Shake (SK/CZ), The California EAR Unit (USA), and fine artist Ludvine Allegue (F), among others –, being influenced by his experience with the semiotic theoretical comprehension of music.

Why comprovisation? Notes to discussion on the validity of a notion. The hybrid term "comprovisation", which is based on the mutation of terms composition and improvisation, emerged in various discourses since the break of the 20th and 21st centuries. These terms express different principles accessing musical material, having a tension and a certain contradiction. Comprovisation is used for bringing closer the poetics of some contemporary experimental music, where the author of the composition uses (pre-)composed principles in the context of improvised music. This term can be found e. g. in some projects of the pianist Philip Thomas, who says that comprovisation is "a celebration and exploration of the interface where composition and improvisation meet". The author is looking for the place in historical development for comprovisation to be found. He also talks about the existence of the Slovak alternative scene of comprovisation and its possible application in intermedia context.

4 and ½ pages of silence for John Cage. The conceptual article, dedicated to John Cage, is created in the form of 4 and ½ pages of silent text (1 page = 1 minute, therefore it can be viewed as a "version" of his 4'33''). This almost "empty" space is followed by author's personal notes describing the importance of Cage's poetics for his life and artistic projects. Cage's piece 4'33'' is compared also to *Sculpture musicale* by Marcel Duchamp. The article

discusses the significance of Cage's music in the context of improvised music sonority. The very last note contains a short text entitled *300 words on Cage*.

A few words on pseudotics. The concluding article introduces, describes and explicates a new prospect scholarly discipline "pseudotics".

The artistic, audio part of the CDextra publication contains music works of the author *Nitrian Atlantises* (commissioned by Czech radio Vltava 3 in Prague, 2013), nonverbal musical letters taken from project *Wordless*; improvisations *Gun man (We eavesdrop on fruits from paradise trees)* created with composer Ján Boleslav Kládivo (2014), and trio Ne:bo:daj & Amy Knoles (2015), and *Pseudotic encore* with great violinist and composer Jon Rose (2009/2014).

Bibliographic note

The texts in this publication are adapted, enlarged, and redacted versions of the following papers, articles and essays:

The paper/inaugural lecture *Alternative models of musical sign and music semiosis* was published (in Slovak original version with title *Alternatívne modely hudobného znaku a semiózy*) in: Slovenská hudba: revue pre hudobnú kultúru (Slovenská hudobná únia, Bratislava), 2014, vol. 40, no. 1, pp. 7-17. ISSN 1335-2458.

The paper *The Topicality of Peter Faltin's semiotics of music* was published (in Slovak original version with title *Aktuálnosť hudobno-semiotickej koncepcie Petra Faltina*) in: Jozef Kresánek – osobnosť slovenskej hudobnej kultúry 20. storočia. Ružomberok : Verbum, 2014, pp. 202-215, and it is based also on the study *The commentary to some motifs of Peter Faltin's semiotics of music* published in: Interdisciplinary Studies in Musicology (Department of Musicology, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań), 2014, vol. 23, no. 14, pp. 96-107, ISSN 1734-2406.

The paper *Correlativity of liquid music-artistic intermediality* was published in: Proceedings of the 10th International Congress on Musical Signification 2008: Before And After Music. Vilnius, 21st – 25th October 2008. Vilnius : International Semiotics Institute, 2010, pp. 136-145. ISBN 978-9986-503-93-4.

The review *Vladimír Godár's book on the birth of the opera from the rhetoric* was published (in Slovak language *Ku knihe Vladimíra Godára "Zrod opery z ducha rétoriky"*) in: Fujak, Július: Margonálie. Levoča/Nitra : Modrý Peter/ Department of Cultural Studies, Faculty of Arts, Constantine the Philosopher University, 2013, 126 p. ISBN 978-80-89545-18-6.

The paper *On some Quasars Ensemble projects* is based on redacted versions of the reviews published (in Slovak language) in: Vlna, 2012, vol. 14, no. 50, pp. 125-126, 2014; vol. 16, no. 59, pp. 133-135, ISSN 1335-969X.

The paper *Influence of music semiotics and aesthetics on my music-intermedia arts* was published (with original title *Influence of musical semiotics and aesthetics on music-intermedia arts. Examples from personal practice*) in: Performance – The Artist Researcher: journal of research creation on performing and spectacular art (Sorbonne Paris 1 University, ESPAS Research Department), 2014, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 31-40, ISSN 2426-3893.

The paper *Why comprovisation? Notes to discussion on the validity of a notion* was published in enlarged version (with original title *Comprovisation – Notes to discussion on the validity of a notion*) in: Filozofické koncepcie v hudbe a umení. Banská Štiavnica : Hudobná a umelecká akadémia Jana Albrechta,

2012, pp. 25-30, ISBN 978-80-970754-4-6; and also as an article *Comprovisation: Notes pour une discussion sur la validité de la notion* in: Improjazz, 2012, vol. 14, no. 182, pp. 31 – 35, ISSN 1269-6501.

The essay *4 and ½ pages of silence for John Cage* was published (in Slovak language *4 a pol strany textu ticha Johnovi Cageovi*) in: Fujak, Július: Margonálie. Levoča/Nitra : Modrý Peter/Department of Cultural Studies, Faculty of Arts, Constantine the Philosopher University, 2013, 126 p. ISBN 978-80-89545-18-6, and also (in English with the title */Sonic/ Notes of improviser on J. C.*) in: John Cage: Człowiek – Dzieło – Paradoks (Man – Work – Paradox). Krakow : Akademia Muzyczna, 2014, pp. 87-106, ISBN 978-83-62743-32-2.

The essay *Encore: A few words on pseudotics* was published (in Slovak language *Zopár poznámok k pseudotike*) in: Vlna, 2014, vol. 16., no. 59, pp. 14-17 ISSN 1335-969X.

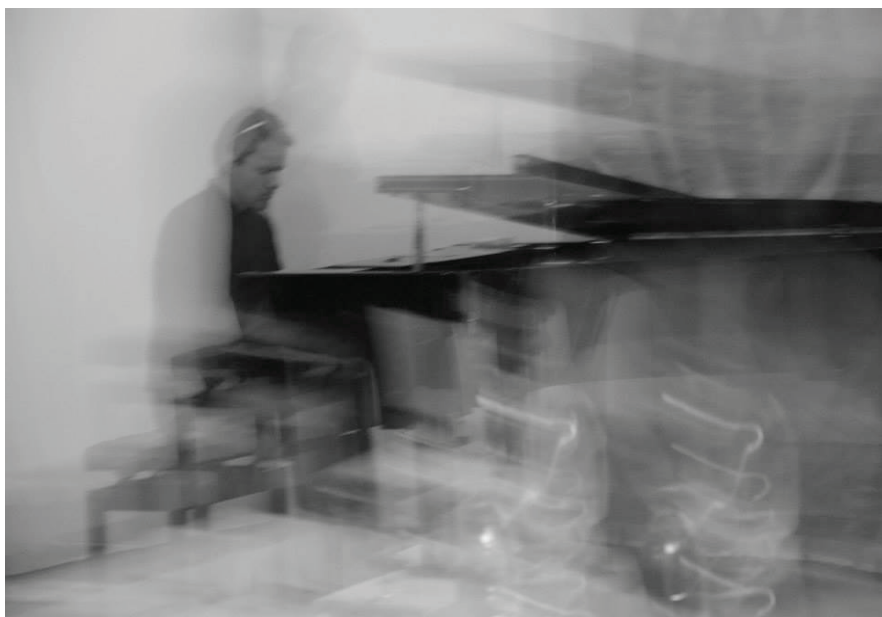
július fujak (*1966)

photo: Lucia Miklošková

Aesthetic scholar a semiotician of music, experimental composer, comproviser, multi-instrumentalist, organiser of unconventional intermedia events;

- graduated at Faculty of Arts, Comenium University, Bratislava (aesthetics and musical science in 1990); he was teacher of music at a Primary music school in the village Skalité, and Čadca in the Slovak region Kysuce (1991-1996), then he became a researcher at the Institute of Literary and Artistic Communication in Nitra (1996-2007); currently, he lectures at the Department of Cultural Studies at the Faculty of Arts, Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra (since 2007);
- founder and member of Slovak alternative rock groups *Teória Odrazu* and *Otras* (1988-1998), ensemble of comprovised music *tEóRia OtráSu* (thEo-Ry Of Shake; 2000-2010), and acoustic trio *Ne:bo:daj* (since 2011);
- his compositions and intermedia projects were performed and broadcasted in many countries of Europe, USA, and China; he cooperated with ensembles *The California EAR Unit* (USA), *Palinckx* (NL/UK), *The Earthieves* (CZ), with *Jon Rose* (AUS), *Veryan Weston* (UK), *Ludivine Allegue* (F), *Isabelle Duthoit* (F), *Zsolt Söres* (H), *Franz Hautzinger* (A), *Vladimír Merta*, *Jana Lewitová*, *Zdenek Plachý*, *David Šubík*, *Jan Kavan*, *Mikoláš Chadima* (all CZ), *Jozef Lupták*, *Marián Varga*, *J. B. Kladio* (all SK), among many others;

- he performed at the festivals and stages as Red Cat Theatre (Los Angeles), Barbican (London), Akademia Muzyczna, and Audio Art (Krakow), Odeon 120 (Brussels), Sound Bridges (Wien), Big Ear and /Cross/Hearing (both in Budapest), Slovak Institute (Roma), Alternativa (Prague), Janáček Academy and Skleněná louka, and Glass Meadows (both in Brno), Bludný kámen (Opava), Evenings of New Music, Euroart (Bratislava), etc.
- curator and organiser of international series of contemporary unconventional music *Hermes' Ear in Nitra* (1999-2007), and international festival of intermedia arts *PostmutArt (sound/image – gesture/text)* (since 2008);

Books

- Július Fujak: *Tvorivosť v načúvaní hudobnému tvaru* (Creativity of listening to musical shape; Nitra : ÚLUK FF UKF, 2000. ISBN 80-8050-364-8)
- Július Fujak: *Musical correla(c)tivity* (Nitra : Institute of Literary and Artistic Communication, Faculty of Arts, Constantine the Philosopher University, 2005. ISBN 80-8050-870-4)
- Július Fujak, et al.: *Slovenské hudobné alternatívy* (Slovak music alternatives; Nitra : ÚLUK FF UKF, 2006. ISBN 80-8050-944-1)
- Július Fujak (ed.): *Convergences and divergences of existential semiotics* (Nitra : Institute of Literary and Artistic Communication, Faculty of Arts, Constantine the Philosopher University, 2007.)
- Július Fujak: *Hudobné korela(k)tivity* (Musical correla(c)tivities). Nitra : Katedra kulturológie FF UKF, 2008. ISBN 978-80-8094-365-3)
- Július Fujak (ed.): *Otáz(ni)ky hudobnej semiotiky a estetiky* (Question(mark)s of music semiotics and aesthetics; Nitra : Katedra kulturológie FF UKF, 2010. ISBN 978-80-8094-693-7)
- Július Fujak: *Margonálie* (Marginalia; Levoča/Nitra : Modrý Peter/ Katedra kulturológie FF UKF, 2013. ISBN 978-80-89545-18-6)
- Július Fujak & Martin Štúr (eds.): *Acta Nitriensiae 16: Interdisciplinárne dialógy* (Interdisciplinary dialogues). Nitra : Faculty of Arts, Constantine the Philosopher University, 2014. ISBN 978-80-558-0696-9.

Selected discography

- Teória Odrazu. (LP, Globus International, 1991; CD reedition Hevhetia 2011)
- Otras: *Kysucký postindustriál.* (CD, y.f.w., 1998)
- Fujak, Macsovszky, Varso: *Trojcolo: beh fiktivity* (CD, Animartis, 2000)
- tEóRia OtraSu: *Bábkový režim zvuku/Puppet regime of sound* (CD, Animartis, 2002)
- Julius Fujak & The California E.A.R. Unit: *transPOPpositions! – intermedia wrestling.* (DVD, Hevhetia, 2006)
- tEóRia OtraSu, Jana Lewitová, Vladimír Merta: *Jánošík.* (CD extra, Hevhetia, 2007)
- Ján Boleslav Kladivo, Julo Fujak: *Fluff modulation* (DVD, Vlna 2008)

Julo Fujak: *Úchytom/Cursorily* (Hevhetia, 2008)

Julo Fujak: *Konvergenie do vrecka/Pocket convergences* (Hevhetia, 2010)

Mikoláš Chadima & Julo Fujak: *XAFOO* (Hevhetia 2012)

Ne:bo:daj (Azyl 2012)

Franz Hautzinger, Julo Fujak, Zsolt Sörös: *Live in Brussels* (Hevhetia, 2013)

Ne:bo:daj : *Leter tu develoter* (Hevhetia, 2015)

Addenda

Audio CD

július fujak
various improvisations

section A

nitrianske atlantídy (nitrian atlantises) (j. fujak, 2013)

1 after...

2 before...

See details in book, page 67

Július Fujak – bone ocarina, duplicate of anthropomorphic, 4500 years old urn, black volcanic sand from Atlantis (island Santorini), sonic objects, percussions, semi-prepared piano, synthesiser, voice, landscape recordings

Jana Ambrózová – violin improvisations and voice

Jean-Michel van Schouwburg – voice

Andrej Pleštinský – Italian bayan

Zuzana Hanusová – bodhran

Trio from brass section of Swingless Orchestra: Martin Štourač – trumpet, Monika Štrbová – tenor sax, Tomáš Obola – trombone

Juraj Dufek – bass bagpipes

Eduard Fujak and Ondrej Veselý – acoustic guitars

Nadka & Dominik Fujak – replicas and whisper

sound engineer: Pavol Brezina

mixing: Július Fujak and Pavol Brezina

mastering: Richard Sabo

Recorded in hot summer 2013 in Nitra and Nitriansky Hrádok (and Brussels: Schouwburg).

Section B

3 **oxoxoxo** (ne:bo:daj & a. knoles, 2015)

Amy Knoles – digital percussions, laptop

trio NE:BO:DAJ

Jana Ambrózová – violin

Július Fujak – piano

Andrej Pleštinský – Italian bayan

sound engineer: René Bošela, Amy Knoles

mastering: Richard Sabo

Recorded in Concert hall, Nitra and Amy' s studio, Castaic (L. A.).

4 **pištolník – ovocie rajských stromov špehujeme**

(gun man – we eavesdrop on fruits from paradise trees)

(j. b. kladivo & j. fujak, 2014)

Ján Boleslav Kladivo – electronics

Július Fujak – semiprepared piano, apple

sound engineer, mix and mastering: Richard Sabo

Recorded in Kladivo' s flat/studio, Bratislava, August 2014.

Section C

wordless:

5 (by my blood) (j. fujak, 2010)

6 (it' s all about water) (j. fujak, 2010/2015)

See details in book, page 65

Július Fujak – semiprepared piano, cimbalom, stones, private recording

Nadka and Johanka Fujaková – voices

sound engineers and mix: Ján Sikora, Pavol Brezina

mastering: Richard Sabo

Recorded in Nitra: Klokočina (2010) and Chrenová 1 (2015).

7 **pseudotic encore** (j. fujak & j. rose, 2009/2014)

See details in book, page 88

Jon Rose – violin, electronics

Július Fujak – semi-prepared piano and radio voice

sound engineer: Július Fujak, Juraj Ďuriš

mix and mastering: Richard Sabo

Recorded live in Nitra Gallery, Nitra (2009) and Radio Devín, Bratislava (2014).

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Project head: prof. PhDr. Ľubomír Chalupka, PhD. – Pedagogická fakulta,
Katolícka Univerzita v Ružomberku

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