

Mirjana Veselinović-Hofman (Beograd)

# Tišina kot hermenevtična oaza glasbe

## Silence As a Hermeneutic Oasis of Music

**Ključne besede:** glasbena tišina, časovno-prostorska enovitost, fenomenologija prostora glasbe, hermenevtični »akord suspenza«

**Key words:** musical silence, temporal-spatial unity, phenomenology of the space of music, hermeneutic 'suspension chord'

IZVLEČEK

ABSTRACT

Besedilo želi prikazati možnost trenutkov glasbene tišine znotraj glasbenega toka in glasbenega zvoka, ki jih prikazuje kot specifične hermenevtične »oaze« glasbe.

Za glasbeno tišino štejejo predvsem kompozicijski dobljeni segmenti, kjer se tišina uteleša s sredstvi zvoka. In kjer umirjenost stanja zvoka glasbene tišine preskoči v neki drugi prostor: prostor neintencionalnega, ki dejansko spodbuja asociativne in kognitivne poti. Zadeva specifični »suspenz« prostora, ki ponuja »nekoliko več časa in prostora« za različne tokove emocij in misli, za njihovo »avtentifikacijo« in utemeljitev; za vzpostavitev in »opredelitev« naracij in celo njihovega opuščanja.

Ta teza se obravnava na primeru treh skladb srbske glasbe iz devetdesetih let 20. Stoletja. Gre za naslednja glasbena dela: *The Abnormal Beats of Dogon* za basklarinet, klavir, ustno harmoniko, tolkala in živo elektroniko (1991) ter *Nisam govorio* za altovski saksofon, basovsko ustno harmoniko, recitorja in mešani zbor (1995) Zorana Erića in *Nocturne of the Belgrade Spring 1999AD* za komorni ansambel, živo elektroniko in avdio trak (1999) Srdana Hofmana.

This text is an attempt to point to the possibility of the moments of musical silence in a music flow and musical sound, being presented as a specific hermeneutic 'oasis' of music.

Musical silence is considered here primarily as compositionally shaped segments where silence is embodied by means of sound. And where the stillness of the sound state of the musical silence breaks into another space: the space of the unintentional, which actually stimulates associative and cognitive paths. It concerns a specific 'suspension' space that offers 'some more time and place' for various streams of emotion and thoughts, for their 'authentication' and justification; for establishing and 'specifying' narratives, and even renouncing them.

This thesis is elaborated here on the basis of three compositions which belong to the Serbian music of the 1990s. These are: *The Abnormal Beats of Dogon* for bass clarinet, piano, mouth harmonica, percussion and live electronics (1991) and *I have not spoken* for alto saxophone, bass-mouth harmonica, actor-narrator and mixed choir (1995) by Zoran Erić and *Nocturne of the Belgrade Spring 1999 AD* for chamber ensemble, live electronics and audiotape (1999) by Srdan Hofman.

The phenomenology of the time of music, more precisely, the perception of musical unfolding<sup>1</sup> in real time, that is, the *being in a musicflow and its time*<sup>2</sup> whatever it is - whether the determined time of a piece of music or the undetermined time of an improvisation - also establishes the phenomenology of the space of that music. This phenomenon is to be seen in all musical styles, in a wide range of individual poetics within those styles and in differing degrees of intensity: sometimes, the phenomenology of the time 'retreats' from the phenomenology of the space.<sup>3</sup> This occurs within a music flow in which its musical sound<sup>4</sup> appears to be a spatial phenomenon. It is due to the material on which the flow is based, and the compositional technique and principles of orchestration, through which the flow is organized. However, it does not mean that in such segments of the musical unfolding its musical sound loses the temporal character; it only means that the musical sound predominantly reveals the spatial side of its temporal-spatial unity.<sup>5</sup>

The formulations *musical unfolding* and *musicflow* are used here as synonyms and are considered in the sense of a theory of form established by Berislav Popović. A music flow (unfolding) is defined as "the unit in which the combination of a whole series of chosen musical elements determines the choice of other musical elements", and which "regardless of its size (...) can be an independent whole and by virtue of the fact, can represent a complete musical work". (Berislav Popović. *Musical Form or Meaning in Music*, translated into English by Miloš Zatkalik. Belgrade, CLIO - Belgrade Culture Center, 1998, 15, 18)

More in: Roger Scruton. *The Aesthetics of Music*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997. - Berislav Popović. *Musical Form or Meaning in Music*. Op. cit. - Mirjana Veselinović-Hofman. *Pred muzičkim delom - Ogladi o međusobnim projekcijama estetike, poetike i stilistike muzike XX veka: jedna muzikološka vizura* [A Piece of Music in Display - Essays on Mutual Projections of Aesthetics, Poetics and Stylistic of the 20th Century Music: a Musicological Point of View]. Beograd, Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva, 2007.

Miško Šuvaković even claims that a long sustained tone or noise or silence "seem to expunge the time phenomenology of sound, presenting the sound as a spatial phenomenon". (Transl. M.V.H.) (Miško Šuvaković. 'Retorika i semiologija muzike - Neizvesna opšta pitanja' [Rhetoric and Semiology of Music - Doubtful General Questions]. In: Dragana Jeremić-Molnar and Ivana Stamatović (eds.), *Muzikološke i etnomuzikološke refleksije* [Musicological and Ethnomusicological Reflections], Beograd: Fakultet muzičke umetnosti, 2006, 30)

<sup>4</sup> Starting from Berislav Popović's theory of form, we use the term *musical sound* to designate music flow in real time, that is, music flow as an acoustic phenomenon.

Without any intention to deal here with various explanations of the phenomenon of time (and space) in music, we will just emphasize that there is a huge bibliography referring to this subject. There is not only musicological literature within this bibliography, but also literature belonging to the field of the cognitive psychology of music, psycho musicology and acoustics. Let us indicate a number of well known writings, according to a chronological order of their editions which we consulted here: Igor Stravinsky. *Poetics of Music in the form of six lessons*. New York: Vintage Books, 1947. - Gisèle Brelet. *Le Temps musical Essai d'une esthétique nouvelle de la musique*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1949. - Karlheinz Stockhausen, "'Momentform". Neue Zusammenhänge zwischen Aufführungsdauer, Werkdauer und Momentform'. In: Karlheinz Stockhausen, *Texte zur elektronischen und instrumentalen Musik*, Band I, Aufsätze 1952-1962 zur Theorie des Komponierens, (Herausgegeben und mit einem Nachwort versehen von Dieter Schnebel). Köln: Verlag M. DuMont Schauberg, 1963, 39-44. Karlheinz Stockhausen, 'Struktur und Erlebniszeit'. In: Karlheinz Stockhausen, *Texte zur elektronischen und instrumentalen Musik*, Band I, Aufsätze 1952-1995 zur Theorie des Komponierens, (Herausgegeben und mit einem Nachwort versehen von Dieter Schnebel). Köln: Verlag M. DuMont Schauberg, 1963, 86-98. - Karlheinz Stockhausen. '... wie die Zeit vergeht ...'. In: Karlheinz Stockhausen, *Texte zur elektronischen und instrumentalen Musik*, Band I, Aufsätze 1952-1962 zur Theorie des Komponierens, (Herausgegeben und mit einem Nachwort versehen von Dieter Schnebel). Köln: Verlag M. DuMont Schauberg, 1963, 99-139. - Kurt von Fischer. 'Das Zeitproblem in der Musik'. In: Rudolf W. Meyer (ed.), *Das Zeitproblem im 20. Jahrhundert*, Bern - München: Francke Verlag, 1964, 296-317. - Carl Dahlhaus. 'Zur Phänomenologie der Musik'. In: Carl Dahlhaus. *Musikästhetik*. Köln: Musikverlag Hans Gerig, 1967, 111-124. - La Monte Young / Marian Zazeta. *Selected Writings*. München: Heiner Friedrich, 1969. - Hermann Danuser. *Musikalische Prosa*. Regensburg: Bosse Verlag, 1975. - Zofia Lissa. 'Vremenska struktura i doživljaj vremena u glazbenom djelu'. In: Zofia Lissa, *Estetika glazbe (ogledi)*, (transl. Stanislav Tuksar), Zagreb: Naprijed, 1977, 47-67. - John Booth Davies. *The Psychology of Music*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1978. Ivanka Stoitianova. *Geste - Texte - Musique*. Paris: Inédit (Union Général d'Éditions), 1978. - John Cage. 'Ođbrana Satie', transl. by Filip Filipović. In: Karel Turza / Žarana Papić (eds.). *John Cage - radovi/tekstovi 1939-1979*. Beograd: Radionica SIC, 1981, 145-149. - Diana Deutsch (ed.). *The Psychology of Music*. New York: Academic Press (Press Series in Cognition and Perception), 1982. - Thomas Clifton. *Music as Heard. A Study in Applied Phenomenology*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983. - Hartmut Krones. 'Die Zeittheorie von Henri Bergson und der Parameter der Zeit in der Musik des 20. Jahrhunderts'. In: *Musikerziehung*, 37/2, 1984, 123-129. - Pierre Boulez. 'Time, Notation and Coding'. In: Jean-Jacques Nattiez (ed.), *Orientalions - Collected Writings - Pierre Boulez*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986, 84-89. - Wilhelm Seidel. *Werk und Werkbegriff in der Musikgeschichte*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1987. - Jonathan D. Kramer. *The Time of Music. New Meanings. New Temporalities. New Listening Strategies*. London: Schirmer Books, 1988. - Roman Ingalden. *Ontologija umetnosti*, transl. by Petar Vujić and Ljubica Rošić, ed. by Milan Uzelac. Novi Sad: Književna zajednica Novog Sada, 1991. - Nico Schüller. *Erkenntnistheorie, Musikwissenschaft, Künstliche Intelligenz und der Prozeß - Ein Gespräch mit Otto Laske*. Peenemünde, Dietrich, 1995. - Daniel Charles. 'De-Linearizing Musical Continuity'. In: Richard Kostelanetz (ed.). *Writings About John Cage*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999, 107-116. - Eric de Visser. 'There's no such a thing as silence ...: John Cage's Poetics of Silence'. In: Richard Kostelanetz (ed.), *Writings About John Cage*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999, 117-133. etc.

This unity is determined by all those categories and means whereby time and space are embodied in music. However, these means do not act separately either as bearers of time or space: neither do rhythm or duration feature components of time only, nor do movement or distance feature solely as components of space. They function in the sense of permeating each other: as, for example, in the form of a movement rhythmically articulated within a fixed tempo and duration, etc. From this aspect, every motive, theme, every musical entity is a kind of relationship and unity of the temporal and the spatial elements. That is why we can say that the phenomenology of the sound of music is also the phenomenology of the space of this music. But this space is not really three-dimensional, it is imaginary space.<sup>6</sup>

And it is within this space that the spatial and temporal categories of the musical unfolding interchange their temporal and spatial functions. So, rhythm as the main category of time can act as a 'pure' movement 'reinterpreting' itself into a dominantly spatial category. For example, the rhythmical configuration of Schönberg's monodrama *Erwartung*, precisely through its abundance, causes a transfer of its functional focus from a temporal to a spatial one. In fact, due to this abundance the rhythmical configuration of this composition renders its interval content, meaning, movements and 'gestures' more transparent and noticeable than the details of its rhythmical content. In this way, a general imbalance of movement is emphasized: there is a focus on abrupt 'gestures', a high frequency of leaps encompassing the registers of vocal and instrumental parts that are the farthest apart, etc. In other words, rhythm appears to be in the function of movement here; rhythm 'becomes' movement: time 'becomes' space.

From this aspect, the other musical parameters of the musical unfolding can 'become' dominantly spatial too. For example, not only can the musical time but also the musical space be extended through, let us say, the augmentation, internal or external extensions of some fragments of this unfolding, and/or the adding or lengthening of rests between (mostly equivalent) sound information within the unfolding. This impression of the extension of space - here, the impression refers to a growing distance - can be emphasized through the synchronized use of some additional means such as the decrease of dynamics, specific tone colour combinations (*tremolo* in *diminuendo*, then *con sordino* or *echo* effects, etc.) or *ritenuto*, for example. And *vice versa*. Individually or in their combinations, the following means such as diminution; the condensation of motives; the omission or the shortening of rests between (mostly equivalent)

<sup>6</sup> A quite acceptable elucidation of the specific nature of the musical space is given by Berislav Popović. He defines this space as "the totality of the parts of the composition (themes, specific structural or textural manifestations of differently outlined segments, variables which can be of thematic, tonal or structural provenance) among which relationships exist similar to the ordinary spatial relationships. If the given totality of form is regarded as space, it is abstracted from all other attributes of the composition. Hence the possibility of spatially modeling those concepts which are not spatial by nature" (Berislav Popović. *Music Form or Meaning in Music*. Op. cit., 65). This is exactly the reason why the vocabulary of space is used extensively in discourse on music. Quite naturally, this vocabulary also includes notions that signify movements, although in reality there is nothing in music which can move in whatever direction (upwards or downwards, forward or backwards) or stand anywhere in the three-dimensional environment.

Popović emphasizes that musical space is Euclidean space, which means that there is an inseparable unity between space and time. He also mentions that "of Euclidean space-time it might (...) be said that it is space-time in which the temporal position of an event is described by an imaginary temporal coordinate, i.e. that it is 'flat' space in which it is 'possible' to choose coordinates in which the *a priori* difference between temporal and spatial coordinates disappears". (Ibid., *fn. 9*, 67) "During the 20th century", Popović says, referring to current scientific findings, "time and space are interpreted as definite dynamic qualities, for according to the latest explanations, they influence everything that happens within them, but they are also influenced by these same events which take place within their framework". (Ibid., 67)

See also: Ivanka Stoianova, *Geste - Texte - Musique*. Op. cit.

sound information within a musical unfolding in an accelerating tempo; polyrhythmic ostinato layers in different colours exposed in a fast tempo; the increase of dynamics and the like, contribute to a condensation of the sound information, bringing about a spatial effect of 'getting closer', of a 'compression' of the space.

However, in the sphere of the musical sound, that is, the music flow as an acoustic phenomenon, the temporal-spatial unity necessarily includes the real space of the environment in which this musical sound is being performed. As for the *spatial* determinants of this unity, beside the entire time-space of the musical sound there is also the sound of the environment. Regarding the *temporal* determinants of the same unity, next to the duration of this musical sound there is also physical time. Therefore, we are taking four elements into consideration here, each of which happens to be in cross relations with the remaining three.

Additionally, in this 'external' temporal-spatial context of the musical unfolding each of the temporal or spatial categories implies the other one: the temporal category implies the spatial one and *vice versa*. They 'become' each other.

For example, the duration of a musical sound establishes a certain relationship - true, predominantly 'neutral' - with the sound of the environment in which this musical sound is heard. That is so because the sound becomes 'part' of both the sound and the time of the environment. The sound of the environment is, again, as the specific determinant of the environment of the musical sound, in existential 'collusion' with physical time. Therefore, this is a situation which shows that the components of time and space naturally overlap and mutually permeate each other also in the 'external' sphere of the musical sound.

Thus, the different sound contents that permeate their acoustic surroundings within which the musical sound is produced, coupled with the duration of this musical sound, embody a specific *temporality of space* and *spatial character of time*.

Ultimately, it refers to a relationship between the *time of the performance* of a music flow and the *time of the space* in which the flow is heard. In other words, it involves the relationship between the duration of a certain musical sound and the physical continuum of time. This continuum concerns time measured in minutes, days, centuries..., the time of which a segment 'overlaps' with the duration of this musical sound. At the same time, a relation is established between the 'pure' musical sounding and, in principle, the unpredictable 'global' sounding of an environment.

But this is also the relation that 'implies' that the space, which is external to the musical sound, meaning, the sound space of the environment (e. g. of the concert hall) should be prepared for the performance of the musical sound. In other words, this environment is supposed to provide the elementary condition for this sound: environmental silence as the necessary temporal-spatial setting in which this music will attain its right and its essential aim: to be heard. Finally, this means that the relationship through which the environmental space is 'reinterpreted' as time, is due to the environmental silence. As there is no total silence, according to Cage, the place of this 're-interpretation' is considered to be a specific temporal-spatial situation of 'two silences' overlapping: the silence of the physical *space-time* continuum - the silence of which the time is cosmic, unlimited and 'absolute'; and this same silence in its 'flow' through a

particular, environmental *space-time*. In addition, during the performance of a musical sound within this *space-time*, the *composed* silence of this sound also exists as its structural element, which is 'inscribed' in the environmental spatial-temporal unity.<sup>7</sup>

Metaphorically speaking, three 'layers' 'overlap' here, three 'strata' of silence. Each of them can be considered as a specific space of conceptual freedom. So, the **silence of physical time**, considered in the sense of a basic 'stratum' of silence, the silence of the 'absolute', could be understood as the 'ideal area' of limitless conceptual activity. This implies the development of any conceptual capacity, any thought or association, a variety of associative 'sparks' in reaction to any stimulus that might be inspired by this 'absolute'.

The **silence of a particular environment**, considered as a middle and measurable 'stratum' of silence, is established primarily in terms of the sound contents that fill this environment, defining this silence in the Cagean sense of the notion. In principle, conceptual freedom is boundless here too. More precisely, like a functionalized 'middle stratum' of physical *space-time*, the silence of a specific environment is considerably 'porous': it admits the conceptual freedom from the basic 'stratum'. At the same time, however, conceptual activity is decisively stimulated by the sound contents of the environment itself.

And when the performance of a musical sound is introduced in this concrete environment, the **silence of this musical sound** is 'imprinted' in the silence of the environment, as a kind of foreground. But musical silence is specific: it is structured, bearing a compound temporal-spatial, constitutive component of the musical unfolding.

As such, the **musical silence** is a constituent of both the musical unfolding and the musical sound whose phenomenology might stimulate conceptual understanding. From this aspect, more precisely from the aspect of narrative,<sup>8</sup> musical silence can be contemplated as the level of musical sound where the *being* in this silence does not solely refer to the *being in a structure*, that is, *listening to music with understanding*,<sup>9</sup> understanding music aesthetically ("ästhetisches Verstehen"),<sup>10</sup> but it also refers to a 'broadening' of the space of conceptual, epistemological understanding ("erkennendes Verstehen"),<sup>11</sup> to a certain 'suspension chord' in this space, where a more intense conceptual activity might occur.

<sup>7</sup> We should also take into consideration that the space of a specific environment can be compositionally adapted and created. Already quite a number of examples from the history of music can show this. They refer to those scores where precise requests are noted for the disposition or movements of performers on the stage (e.g. 'double scenes' in the genre of opera). The work with space as a structural means of music is possible because, from a psychoacoustic perspective and according to certain qualities of sound, one can identify the distance of the sound source and the kind of space in which sound waves spread (in the sense of its openness, of being small or huge, 'shallow' or 'deep', etc.). Therefore, it is possible to create the illusion of the existence of some *other* and *changeable* space by means of specific procedures in the field of the treatment of musical material and media, predominantly in the sphere of electronic music.

Elaborating the structural and expressive sense of the organization of the space, which is otherwise a *specificum* of an electronic piece of work, Srđan Hofman stresses that "a sound that is fixed according to its 'depth' in the sound field, or a sound that moves at a certain speed towards a listener or from him across this field, can be synthesized or modified through the coordination of: the features of intensity and the volume of sound information; the relation between the direct and reflected 'part' of sound in the information; the content of its colour and micro changes of pitch, all these synchronized with associations with one's already accumulated sound experience." (Transl. M.V.H.) (Srđan Hofman. *Osobenosti elektronske muzike* [Characteristics of Electronic Music]. Knjaževac: Nota, 1995, 36.)

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Christensen. 'Narrative Theory and Music Analysis'. In: Kathrin Eberl / Wolfgang Ruf (Eds.). *Musikkonzepte - Konzepte der Musikwissenschaft*. Bericht über den internationalen Kongress der Gesellschaft für Musikforschung Halle /Saale/ 1998, Band 1. Kassel, Basel, London, New York, Prag: Bärenreiter, 2000, 48-56.

<sup>9</sup> Roger Scruton. *The Aesthetics of Music*. Op. cit.

<sup>10</sup> Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht. *Musik verstehen*. München, Zürich: Piper, 1995.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

Therefore, we shall point to the possibility of the moments of musical silence<sup>12</sup> in a music flow and musical sound being presented as a specific hermeneutic 'oasis', as hermeneutic 'suspension chords' of the process of the *being in a structure*.

In so doing, we understand musical silence as compositionally shaped segments in which silence is functionalized as "the other form of the existence of sound",<sup>13</sup> the sound represented by 'its' silence, but also as the segments where silence is embodied by means of sound.<sup>14</sup> In both cases, the structuring implies a temporal-spatial unity.

Ultimately, this unity is also what Eric de Visscher takes into consideration when elaborating the phases in the evolution of Cage's poetics of silence. De Visscher finds in this evolution "three main steps".<sup>15</sup>

The first step refers to "a *structural* conception of silence, in which silence is considered to be an absence of sounds", in which "the relation between sound and silence is first seen horizontally (...), then vertically".<sup>16</sup>

The second step regards "a *spatial* concept of silence", according to which "silence is made up of all surrounding sounds which together form a musical space".<sup>17</sup>

The third step implies "a (*non*)*intentional* vision of silence", which means that "what links all those sounds is the absence of intention".<sup>18</sup> Thus, the point is that all those sounds "do not possess any precise direction, determination, or meaning. This zero state (...) is a permanent opening to 'whatever happens next'".<sup>19</sup>

The second and the third item of this de Visscher's systematization, indirectly but importantly point to a latent freedom of conceptual space.

On the one hand, it is exactly the Cagean silence symbolized by his achievement *4'33" of silence for...*, which most obviously, manifestly demonstrates that silence in music is not 'defined' only by the intrusion of possible environmental sounds, but by the scope of cognitive understanding and conceptual elaboration. As a segment of the physical/environmental time which is fixed by the very title of this achievement, the silence of the achievement is the basic material and structural means. However, firstly, this silence is a *time-space* in which (of which) belonging to the genre of a musical composition is reached and justified exclusively at the conceptual level.<sup>20</sup>

This 'renaming' of the absence of musical sound into a musical entity is actually the final phase of the deconstructive relation between sound and silence in a musical unfolding, reached by the music during the process of its deconstructive 'reading' of itself.<sup>21</sup> From the aspect of this problem circle prior to this situation which exists at the

<sup>12</sup> МпјјаHa Bece`HHOBHh-Xo`MaH. `^HTaae »My3HKе TарnHHe« In: 36apHHK Mараe eпnCKe 3a eqeHCKe ymчoчoч h My3HKy [Mirjana Veselinović-Hofman. 'The Reading of «Silent Music». In: Matica Srpska Journal of Stage Art and Music] (22-23)1998, 117-124.

<sup>13</sup> Martin Zenck. 'Dal niente - Vom Verlöschen der Musik. Zum Paradigmenwechsel vom Klang zur Stille in der Musik des neunzehnten und zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts'. In: *MusikTexte*, 55 (1994), 16.

More in: МпјјаHa Bece`HHOBHh-Xo`MaH. `^HTaae »my3HKе ramHHe«. Op. cit.

Eric de Visscher. »There's no such thing as silence ...« John Cage's Poetics of Silence'. In: Richard Kostelanetz (ed.), *Writings About John Cage*. Op. cit., 129.

Ibid.

Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 130.

<sup>20</sup> МпјјаHa Bece`HHüBHh-Xo`MaH. `^Hra&e »My3HKе THmHHe«. Op. cit., 121.

<sup>21</sup> Mirjana Veselinović-Hofman. 'Music and Deconstruction (An Inscription on the Margins of Derrida's Theory)'. In: Miško Šuvaković (ed.), *Exclusivity and Coexistence*. Belgrade: Faculty of Music, 1997, 11-17.

very boundaries of music as structured sound and music as the concept, numerous examples occurred with which music did not conceptually and theoretically produce such a far-reaching result as with *4'33"*, but with which music did open the space of a specific 'transfer' from the sensual to the intellectual, from the aesthetical to the narrative.<sup>22</sup>

On the other hand, with the uncertainty of *what occurs next*, of direction of any kind, the nature of the *zero state* of the Cagean silence may be considered as a metaphor of the unlimited potential of conceptual activity, too. So, "a permanent opening to 'whatever happens next' " may also refer to the possibility that this "whatever" encompasses ramified narrative paths.

From this angle, those musical examples become more obvious where the sound has the sense of silence,<sup>23</sup> in which "silence (...) resonates in sound: sound is the echo of silence",<sup>24</sup> than those examples in which, let us say, silence is articulated in the form of rests bearing the function of the structurally fixed *absence* of a real sound functioning as 'unspoken' sound, inner sound, displaying those moments of a music flow or (meta)musical practice in which "sound resonates in silence".

In other words, we can identify musical silence as a hermeneutically latent oasis predominantly in those musical situations in which silence is 'made' by means of sound. Usually, they are situations in which the sound disperses, time extends, space 'stretches': in which the calmness of a captured state of sound is more 'eloquent' than the intensity of the flow of sound information, conceptually more extensive than the frequency of events and succession of scenes. These are situations in which, generally speaking, still sound pictures are more effective from the point of signification than dynamic ones, including here also a kind of stillness that can be produced by an abundance of movement and frequency of information.

In that way, by becoming its own intention, the stillness of the sound state of the musical silence breaks into another space: the space of the unintentional, which actually stimulates associative and cognitive paths; as the space which can be submitted to or through which the most different receptive resonances of the zero state of intentionality can just 'pass'. We would say that it concerns a specific 'suspension' space that offers 'some more time and place' for various streams of emotion and thoughts, for their 'authentication' and justification; for establishing and 'specifying' narratives, and even renouncing them.

We shall illustrate musical silence as a latent hermeneutic oasis, using as examples three compositions which belong to the Serbian music of the 1990s. These are: *The Abnormal Beats of Dogon* (1991) and *I Have not Spoken* (1995) by Zoran Erić and *Nocturne of the Belgrade Spring 1999AD* (1999) by Srđan Hofman.

*The Abnormal Beats of Dogon* for bass clarinet, piano, mouth harmonica, percussion and live electronics is the second of Erić's five compositions in the cycle *Images*

<sup>22</sup> The paradigm of this process, intensified in the sense of a "critical and subversive distance from the artistic aestheticism of pure sensuality in the name of an artistic conceptualism behind or on the boundaries of sensuality", Miško Šuvaković reveals in the 'anti-aestheticism' of Marcel Duchamp, which derives from the Dada movement of the period of the 1910-1920s". (Transl. M.V.H.) (Miško Šuvaković. *Diskurzivna analiza* [Discursive Analysis]. Beograd: Univerzitet umetnosti u Beogradu, 2006, 440.)

MnpjaHa Bece'HHOBHh-Xo'MaH. "Hra&e »My3HKe THHhHec. Op. cit., 119.

Eric de Visscher. „There's no such a thing as silence ...". Op. cit, 123.

of *Chaos* (1990-1997).<sup>25</sup> Their common features are extra-musical and compositional ideas as well as the aspect of their correlation.

The title of the cycle suggests that Erić considers the *existence* of the world as a permanent *coming into being*; as a kind of distinctiveness within the similar, order within the system of disorder. "The world, according to him, is 'processed' through only a few phases which analogically link substance, the physical laws and the human mind: *Unawareness, Resistance, Anger, Wondering* and *Acceptance*. This 'cartography of the universe', the mythical mind and emotional life is also a general, formal map of all the compositions from the cycle *Images of Chaos*"<sup>26</sup> The established concordance of the poetical-philosophical with the specifically compositional leads Erić to a musical dramaturgy of coexistence rather than of dialectical opposition; to a postmodern play with metaphorical meanings rather than of modernistic 'finality'; to the spirit of improvisation, transparency and likeable discourse rather than of unintelligible utterances.

Within these common characteristics, every composition of *Images of Chaos* has its own, particular source of inspiration and its particular meaning. This meaning is mostly implied by segments of musical silence, and even explicitly expounded within them.

So, the first movement of *The Abnormal Beats of Dogon*, entitled *Unawareness*, is an example of an 'airy' and delicately produced musical silence with a very characteristic meaning. This silence is built up by means of pedal-tone patterns of the sampler II in a quiet dynamic, with which the whole composition starts and ends; samples of the sampler I, which begin to appear from the third bar; and the bass clarinet which perform multiphonics starting from bar no. 12 of the same time-axis.<sup>27</sup> Occasionally, instead of the multiphonics, the bass clarinet 'intrudes' into the described sound situation with two intervallic-rhythmic patterns which are re-exposed with a distance between them. The tremolo of the timpani joins in this entire sound picture: they 'signalize' the appearance of both patterns in the bass clarinet, 'measure' the distance between them and their repetition and, after the patterns 'disappear', the timpani 'draw' the silence under the threshold of the audible. See. **Example No. 1.**

<sup>25</sup> Other compositions of the cycle are: *The Great Red Spot of Jupiter* for amplified harpsichord, percussion and live electronics (1990); *Helium in a Small Box* for strings (1991); *I Have not Spoken* for alto saxophone, bass-mouth harmonica, actor-narrator and mixed choir (1995) and *Oberon Concerto* for flute and instrumental ensemble (1997). Zorica Premate. 'Zoran Erić: *Images of Chaos* I-V'. Booklet for CD SOKOJ 206 (translated by Branka Nikolić). - Zorica Premate (ed.), *Late 20th Century Serbian Music Series*. Belgrade: SOKOJ - MIC, 1998, 5-6.

<sup>27</sup> It is necessary to warn here that the performance of *The Abnormal Beats of Dogon* recorded on the CD differs in some details from the score. This is mostly due to the fact that this composition is based on the spirit of improvisation. In reference to this, let us mention that the composition is notated in two scores, one of which is just a list of patterns for the performers to improvise, in case that they decide to play the composition in the form of improvisation according to the composer's indicated instructions.





The samples used here originate from several examples taken from the musical practice of the Dogon people of Africa, who strongly believe in their tradition according to which their ancestors came to the Blue Planet from the star Sirius B.<sup>28</sup>

The Dogon built their own understanding of the world, space and time, the experience of the cosmic 'migration' and infinity, in their own social and spiritual order, wisdom and musical practice. Therefore, when Erić composes the musical silence of the *Unawareness* he respects these cosmic 'deposits' of the Dogon tradition creating the musical silence as a 'replica' of the silence of the 'absolute', its *zero*, *unintentional* state. He creates this 'replica' as an extended silence of the night, which seems as if it got stuck somewhere in the dawn of our civilization, strongly reminding us of the famous openings of the Stanley Kubrick film *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968).<sup>29</sup> Erić's musically composed silence implies 'ancient' sounds by which the silence of the 'absolute' actually turns into concrete silence: the silence of the open space of a plateau in Mali, inhabited by the Dogon today; and where, in the moonlight, till dawn, a voice from "another world" (maybe the one from their Star), announces a ritual ceremony.<sup>30</sup>

The used sounds by which Erić both recalls infinity and transforms the unintentional state of the continuum of silence into this environmental concretization, have the potential for such a function precisely because they are based on the indigenous musical practice of the Dogon people<sup>31</sup> and, in a way, also imply the 'tones of infinity'. Erić 'liberated' these tones through electronic means. In doing this, he actually 'liberated' the international musical potentials of the folklore materials he used, at the same time.<sup>32</sup>

The silence of the first movement of the composition also occupies its final movement - *Acceptance (with Wondering)*. In it, beside the analogous role of the bass clarinet, timpani, sampler I and sampler II, which mainly expose the same samples, the shaping of the silence includes a soft rhythmical flow of the piano, reduced to one tone which is occasionally 'disturbed' by a striking motive in the same part.

See **Example No. 2**.

<sup>28</sup> "They live in Mali (...). They inhabit a plateau, the slopes of a rocky escarpment and part of a plain which spreads at its foot. They live according to a social and religious system related to a vast cosmogony which inspires, directs and permeates all their activities. The purpose of their art, where music seems to occupy a preeminent place, is the portrayal of their beliefs, which are profound and often very secret." (Quoted after the note given in the score)

<sup>29</sup> The film "begins at dawn, in prehistoric Africa (...) and one step back in time"; and is marked by "fear, curiosity and courage" of *australopithecus afrensiensis* who, at the peak of its development into the species of *homo sapiens*, reaches the features of being "civilized, rational and scientific". (<http://www.kubrick2001.com>) Analogously but specifically, *homo sapiens* who 'inhabits' Erić's *The Abnormal Beats of Dogon* (and generally the whole cycle *Images of Chaos*) experiences, as we already stressed, the state of unawareness, resistance, anger, wondering and acceptance. These are articulated differently in every composition of the cycle; in *The Abnormal Beats of Dogon* like: *Unawareness, Resistance with Anger (The Song of Witchdoctors)* and *Acceptance with Wondering (Ia-Po Dogon's Greetings)*.

<sup>30</sup> "By the light of the Moon, until Dawn, the voice from another world announces the beginning of the Dama ceremony." (The motto of the first movement)

<sup>31</sup> Erić recorded folklore sound contents whose fragments served him as a basis for creating the patterns by means of predominantly inner acoustic changes of these contents. Then, the composer treats the patterns as the samples created by himself, and uses them as material for composing. (For more about this see: Mirjana Veselinović-Hofman. 'The Folklore Sample and its Relations with the Electronic Medium in Postmodern Music'. In: *Folklore and its Artistic Transposition*. Belgrade: Faculty of Music, 1991, 463-487)

Erić also made a list of samples which appear during the composition, named them and specified their order regarding their appearance in the parts of the ensemble. Thereby, he actually produced a score for an improvisational performance of the piece.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

Example No. 2: the last movement, the 1st page of the last movement.

The image displays a musical score for a string quartet, specifically the first page of the last movement. The score is written for four staves: Violin I (Vcl. I), Violin II (Vcl. II), Viola (Vcl. III), and Cello/Double Bass (Vcl. IV). The music is characterized by intricate rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and rests. Dynamic markings such as *pp* (pianissimo) and *p* (piano) are used throughout. The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 40, 50, and 60 on the left page, and 200, 210, and 220 on the right page. The right page concludes with the instruction "Finestra piala".

Legend:

- Acc. (Accents)
- Tr. (Trills)
- Do. (Dotted)
- Gr. (Grace notes)
- Acc. (Accents)
- Acc. (Accents)
- Acc. (Accents)
- Acc. (Accents)
- Acc. (Accents)

Legend:

- Viol. I (Violin I)
- Viol. II (Violin II)
- Viola (Viola)
- Vcl. IV (Cello/Double Bass)

It is characteristic that the pedal-texture of the sampler II is sustained in this movement, as well, as it actually is in the whole composition. However, in its middle movement, *Resistance with Anger (The Song of Witchdoctors)*, this pedal-texture changes its sample and 'branches' into a two-part texture. But it reestablishes its initial form immediately after the interruption occurring at the very beginning of the final movement. (See **Example No. 2.**)

Therefore, regarding the dramaturgy of the work as a whole, the presence of the samples in the sampler II acts as a signifier of the unintentional cosmic continuum. And yet, this function is not denied by the interruptions of the pedal-texture. We would say that it is exactly due to them that the pedal-texture psychologically becomes even more conspicuous because it confronts us more drastically with those - to paraphrase Erić's metaphoric claim from the closure of his piece *I have not spoken* - two or three or ... daily rhythms of ours, the Dogon, no matter whose, which desperately remain in the "time-isolation" of humanity.

*I have not spoken* for alto saxophone, bass-mouth harmonica, actor-narrator and mixed choir is the fourth part of Erić's cycle *Images of Chaos*. We consider it to be the specific manifesto of the signifying latency of silence within a musical dramaturgy, and Erić's in particular.

The initial tempo of this composition, "Very calm, like at a Beginning", indirectly points to the fact that it is the author's consciousness of the silence of the 'absolute', which directly precedes the composition. What immediately follows is an embodiment of this silence, reached through a *composed* silence with which the piece actually begins. So, already in its first bar, the *composed* silence becomes the focus of the musical unfolding. This silence is created by a harsh second of the bass-mouth harmonica, which is repeated four times. During every appearance it is reduced to one tone. After its third appearance this second lasts parallel with the spread 'drop' of the motive consisting of the horizontal 'step' of the second. This motive produces a softer, almost vocal nuance with which it mollifies the 'inorganic', sawtooth-like harshness of the bass-mouth harmonica.<sup>33</sup> This is also a sound situation in which the melodic line of the alto saxophone arises from the initial silence (bar no. 5). Through its urban sensibility, extensive inner space and an improvisational echo built in the very musical content that the alto saxophone exposes and on which it later improvises, the alto saxophone appears here and acts throughout the composition as an 'independent' signifier of the urban. The alto saxophone is not part of the composed silence, but is its parallel plan.<sup>34</sup> See **Example No. 3.**

However, the initial silence resumes its flow, only a vocal layer joins it. Firstly, female voices appear in a quiet dynamic and low register (bar no. 12), after which other choir parts (bar no. 18) display the verbal content. The way it is exposed, this content is deprived of its sense. Here, it is another way of symbolizing the world of urban and modern civilization in general: if the alto saxophone symbolizes this civilization through behaving as an 'independent' signifier, the *composed* silence symbolizes this civilization from the aspect of one of its crucial problems.

<sup>33</sup> Also in the case of this composition, the performance recorded on the CD slightly differs from the score. It is likely that we analyzed a more recent version of the score.

<sup>34</sup> In her elucidation of the composition *I have not spoken*, Z. Premate describes the alto saxophone as "an agent of urban jazz images and at the same time their interpreter, assuming as far as the form is concerned the role of the 'refrain', of short episodes of relaxation". (Zorica Premate. 'On Being Silent'. In: International Magazine for Music *New Sound*, 7(1996), 34.)

Example No. 3: the first movement, the 1st line on the first page of the score.

Very calm, like at a Beginning  $\text{♩} = 66$  Belgrade, March 1995

Actor-Narrator

**Teh Too Teh Sah**  
**Teh Nee Teh Behz**

Choir:

Teh Too Teh Sah Teh Nee Teh Behz Teh Too Teh Sah Teh Nee Teh

As we already hinted, the verbal content of the piece is quite specific. It consists of short syllables that are particle words in the Serbian language, such as pronouns, conjunctions, adverbs, adjectives, etc.<sup>35</sup> This content is not treated semantically, so it becomes a metaphor of one of the most prevalent features of modern times: the impossibility of true communication, which is, paradoxically, actually caused by the epoch of communication and mass media.<sup>36</sup> This non-semantic verbal content acts as the signifier of a social situation in which what is said is neither heard nor listened to. In other words, whatever is said even if it were heard, would be qualified *a priori* as senseless and unimportant, as something that should not even be allowed to take part in any further conceptual and contextual collocations.

So, the particles used here are treated as syllables without any sense; moreover, as particles that can result in a certain conceptual 'distortion'. This means that Erić uses the selected particles to build artificial and non-semantic collocations of syllables, through which he actually plays an ironical game of dismantling language as the means of communication.<sup>37</sup> Part of the same game also bears a sound picture resulting from the articulation of the syllables in such a way that it conveys the impression of reading a text written in Latin. This suggests that even the general sound of one of the two basic languages of European civilization, the Latin language, remains without language: without meaning, without any possibility of conveying sense. So: Latin is dead; language is dead.

Not only are we concerned here with a postmodern irony referring to general non-communication as a paradox of the epoch of communication but also with a game just for the sake of playing, more precisely, because of the remedial optimism of playing. However, at the same time, this is a game played from an almost Adornian angle, on which Erić cynically focuses and with Adornian negativity sharpens the problem of the neglect and destruction of the need to understand the *other*.

Of course, the syllables used are not senseless in themselves, but each of them is 'closed' within itself, within its own meaning: like a word taken from a dictionary, which is exposed in a way that leaves it isolated from the numerous possibilities of its grammatical and syntactical use. Therefore, the verbal material chosen by the composer is semantic according to its primary nature. That is exactly why during the non-semantic treatment of this material its strong inner need for conceptual materialization is revealed: the syllables catch up with each other and become intensely condensed, but they do not attain a new quality: they do not reach any sense. The attempts at formulation are disrupted, prevented from any conceptual articulation and hence end up in the realm of non-speaking: in silence.

For example: "te" (meaning: "you" as the accusative); "ti" (meaning: "you" as the nominative); "sa" meaning: "with"; "pa": "well"; "bez": "without"; "pod": "under", "floor"; and the like.

<sup>36</sup> "The more we talk, the less we understand each other in a sea of messages; the more comprehensive the space of communication, the fewer the relations which imply true understanding and acceptance. We live immersed in communication which *does not communicate*: it neither announces, nor can it achieve 'comprehension'. Perhaps only the 'acceptance' of the incomprehensible." (Zorica Premate. 'On Being Silent'. Op. cit., 33)

<sup>37</sup> Although predominantly aimed at helping possible non-Serbian performers, that is, done for purely practical reasons, an Anglicization of the orthography of the particles might also be considered metaphorically: as a certain dismantlement of the Serbian language. For example: "te" is spelled like "Teh"; "ti" like "Tee"; "sa" like "Sah"; "pa" like "Pah"; "bez" like "Behz", "pod" like "Pod" (with capital "P"), etc.

Now, like at the beginning of the composition and all through it, the silence is created by the same 'protagonists'. The bass-mouth harmonica and choir parts in their pedal point endurance, synchronized with 'patches' of non-retrograde rhythmic motives in the tenors and the first part of the basses, followed by the contraltos and the tenors, with the parallel reiteration of the conjunction "a" on one and the same tone in the sopranos followed by the contraltos, build the musical silence, which now not only has a metaphorical meaning, but becomes a significant hermeneutical field, too. Moreover, this is the field where Eric explicitly verbalizes the meaning, which was latent until this moment, entrusting this verbalization to the actor-narrator. See **Example No. 4: pages Nos. 8, 9 and 10 of the score.**

*Example No. 4: page 8.*

mp

Tah Tau Tah Tah Tah

Nur Tah Tah Bah

Tah Tau Tah Tah Tah

Nur Tah Tah Bah

mp

Actor-Narrator: **This is a Stable Chaos**

Nur Tah Bah

Tah Tau Tah Tah Tah

Example No. 4: page 9.

if*		r	
, 2			
[Ifc]iStir-Origin	king System	It oses Order from the Sea of Disorder	
f	ij > ij=3		
to		* . . . JLvLi * ' kt	
f J-_____J> f			

		j-I	
		=	
		mp	
No Daylight	No Temperature Change	No clocks and	
y . — <sup>m</sup> ~ <sup>m</sup> * " "r_?_* * * * *		**J"	X =
t			
v rr.	• " i - ' - ' l ' ' =f=		j
±			
9-			

In other words, until reverting into silence, speaking was impossible not because it was without any cognitive potential but because it was prevented from any development. That is why non-speaking is actually very 'eloquent': musical silence is a potential of the narrative.

And yet, the only thing that one can say is that it is impossible to say anything. Everything else is left to the strength and scope of the metaphor and one's (serious) game. The game is the way to survive. Because, where we are and where we live is "(...) Stable Chaos. It is a Self-organizing System.





A similar space of meaning is implied by the treatment of silence in Srđan Hofman's *Nocturne of the Belgrade Spring 1999 AD* for chamber ensemble, live electronics and audiotape. The composition is founded on the 'processing' of all three 'layers' of silence, described here. One 'layer' is the silence of the 'absolute', which, embodied as a *coloured* silence, carries the second 'layer' of silence at the same time: a silence which 'makes' physical time audible. The third 'layer' is a *composed* silence, treated as part of the musical contents extending along the *coloured* silence. It is precisely this *coloured* silence that occurs both at the opening and the end of the composition.

In other words, the *Nocturne* starts with a segment in which the silence of the 'absolute' crosses the threshold of audibility, and ends up with a segment in which there is a reversal from this threshold to the silence of the 'absolute'. Besides, this *coloured* silence exists throughout the composition as its initial and basic layer, its inevitable temporal 'throb' and spatial frame, its continuum, fundamental, *cantus firmus*. Therefore, not only does the *coloured* silence appear as the foreground of the beginning and the end of the piece, but also of all those parts of the music flow where parts of the ensemble and live electronics 'rest',<sup>39</sup> as well as in all those moments in which they have a low dynamic. In the other segments of the piece, however, the *coloured* silence is "masked by directly produced sounds".<sup>40</sup> Ultimately, this means that whenever it functions as a structural component of the flow of these sounds, more precisely of the content of the foreground of the musical unfolding, the silence also carries the 'foreground layer' of the silence of the environment. Hence, the musical silence that appears in the musical stratum 'at the forefront' of the *coloured* silence, gives substance to the silence of physical space-time, in the sense of a 'secondary level'.

The *coloured* silence is realized here by means of an audiotape (CD), the emission of which is uninterrupted throughout the entire performance of the composition. The contents of this silence are the sounds recorded during the spring nights in Belgrade, in 1999. So, these sounds convey their own environmental, chronological and historical reference,<sup>41</sup> which is why they irrefutably destroy the very Romantic code of the genre of nocturne. "The nocturne does not actually occur; it is its meanings that Hofman utilizes as proof for the metamusical mediation of the sound phenomenon itself, the sensuous impression and the culturological premises of listening to the *silence and sounds of a suburban night*"<sup>42</sup> in the spring of 1999."<sup>43</sup>

So, the reveries and the melancholy, the softness and lyrical feelings featuring in this composition do not appear to be in concordance either with the Romantic 'definition' of the nocturnal or the romantic in general. They are rather in concordance with the experience of a concrete situation in European civilization at the end of the last decade of the 20th century: the reveries and the melancholy are here under oppression, under the threat of being destroyed. So, the reveries and the melancholy are negatively signifying in Hofman's *Nocturne*, and treated without any illusion or attempt at simulation. How-

<sup>39</sup> These situations are marked with "G.P." in the score.

<sup>40</sup> Quoted from the author's explanations enclosed by the score.

<sup>41</sup> Between the 24th of March and the 10th of June in 1999, Belgrade was regularly and increasingly bombed every day by the NATO forces.

<sup>42</sup> "From the author's comment on the work, published in the First Bulletin of the IX International Review of Composers".

<sup>43</sup> Bojana Cvejić. 'Near and Far': In: International Magazine for Music *New Sound*, 17 (2001), 58.

ever, precisely as such, the reveries and the melancholy have a crucial role in the author's ironical, postmodern metaphorical game of 'testing' and 'Romantic immortalizing'.

This game already starts with the initial idea of forming the musical contents of the electronic part. According to this idea, the contents derive from the intervallic 'translations' of the phone numbers of those of Hofman's friends with whom he communicated most frequently during those dangerous Belgrade nights. The numbers entered into the musical material of the composition, the applied compositional process, the system and the very substance of the composition. This is due to the complex intervallic procedure through which six basic patterns were shaped and supposed to be 'triggered' by the MIDI keyboard. So, when a certain tone on the MIDI keyboard is pressed exactly at the moment determined in the score by the Time-line, a command is immediately sent to the computer to activate from a keyboard player an 'autonomous' process of displaying these patterns, their varied repetitions and transformations, which are uncontrollable and inevitable. This is produced according to a pre-processed program, which is 'assigned' by algorithms created on the basis of the computer program MAX. A significant metaphor is implied by this compositional procedure: the 'autonomy' of the way in which the patterns appear, which concerns the independence of these patterns from the keyboard player, is considered by the author as the signifier of the current position of the individuality, the intellectual oppressed and incapacitated by the strongly coordinated mechanism of force. See **Example No. 5: patterns**.

### Example 5-1

Impulses for the interval-rhythmic patterns are distributed in the following way:



Patterns:

## Example 5-2

The image shows three musical staves. The top-left staff is labeled 'F' and contains a melodic line with two circled segments. The top-right staff is labeled 'E' and contains a melodic line with a circled segment and a '4x' repeat sign. The bottom staff is labeled 'G' and contains a more complex rhythmic pattern with a circled segment and a '4x' repeat sign. The score includes dynamic markings like 'f' and 'ff', and repeat signs with '4x' and '2x'.

Ajdio tape, Wit and SaferLefEL files are available at:  
 faculty of Music Institute Studio  
 Kralja Milana 50  
 11000 Beograd, Yugoslavia

However, the musical contents played by the chamber ensemble represent a free rhetoric within the same system. And it is exactly this rhetoric through which and within which the *composed* musical silence of the piece is also created.

Several segments from the beginning of the *Nocturne* will exemplify this. Their mutual relationships are characteristic of the whole piece both from the formal aspect and from the aspect of meaning. We would say that the three forms of silence that exist in these segments and are compositionally elaborated, establish the most general hermeneutical frame of the piece, acting like a stimulus for the potential *conceptual* elucidation.

As already emphasized, the beginning of the *Nocturne*<sup>44</sup> 'belongs' to the *coloured* silence. In the very next step, with the activation of the Time-line,<sup>45</sup> the *composed* silence starts to flow along with the *coloured* silence (formal segment "a"). The *composed* silence is created by a sliding change from the vertically displayed sixth to the fifth and *vice versa*, in the *senza arco* tremolo of the cellos, within a low/the lowest dynamic. From the second bar of the Time-line a *glissando* of the harp and a motive in the electronics join in this sound picture. Part of this motive is replicated by the first trumpet, which is immediately followed by the second one (see **Example No. 6**: the first 2 pages of the score). An important feature of both the motive and its replica

<sup>44</sup> From a formal-analytical point of view this can be marked as section "a".

<sup>45</sup> In the score marked with START MAX Time-line.

are the rests, which seem to increase the distance among the tones. In this way, the musical space expands and becomes more 'airy'. Coupled with the low dynamic, the *composed* silence gradually retreats, leaving the sound space and reducing it to a new segment of the audibility of the pedal texture of the *coloured* silence (formal segment "a"). Between this segment and the very next state of its audibility (again "a"), the third of altogether six created intervallic-rhythmic patterns, marked with **A#**, is activated in the electronic part (**Example No. 7**: page 9 of the score).

This pattern firstly appears like a kind of intrusion in the pedal-texture of the *coloured* silence, producing an "a-A#-a" formal succession; then, the pattern occurs again, after the segment "a2" pours into "a". Here, it represents a directly preceding stimulus for the appearance of a new formal segment ("b") (**Example No. 8**: page 12 of the score). Its tension leads directly into a new situation of *composed* silence (segment "c"). This time, the composed silence is embodied by the mezzo-soprano without any text, the harp, the electronic part and the cellos (**Example No. 9 a+b**: page Nos. 13, 14 of the score).

Example No. 6.

### Nokturno

Srdan Hofman

The musical score for 'Nokturno' by Srdan Hofman, Example No. 6, is presented for a full orchestra and includes a MIDI keyboard part. The score is divided into systems for Trumpet 1, Trumpet 2, piano, mezzo-soprano, violoncello 1, violoncello 2, harp, and Midi Keyboard. The score features various dynamics such as *pp* and *ppp*, and articulations like *acc. arco* and *arco*. The harp part includes a *gliss.* instruction and a note to 'play the strings with key'. The Midi Keyboard part has a 'START MAX Time-line 00.00' and 'MIDI OUT: Pt. 1' label. The score is marked 'S 3' at the bottom left.



Example No. 8.

Musical score for Example No. 8. The score includes vocal parts (V1, V2), piano (pno), and microphone (MKB) parts. The tempo is marked '♩ = 180'. The score includes dynamic markings such as *ff* and *mp*, and a rehearsal mark **B1**. The vocal parts have lyrics in Slovenian: "aracija sovščina".

EB

Example 9-1

	A	A
	<i>nhfh</i> • <i>ff</i>   HLtiU. — <i>ff</i> <i>ff</i> <i>f</i>	
	L j j • d- . . . * 'Tj * « * '	
	j — r - n \ j i i i — i =	

S 3

## Example 9-2

The image displays a musical score for a chamber ensemble. The score is arranged in a vertical stack of staves. From top to bottom, the staves are labeled: vi 1, vi 2, pno, string quartet (vi 1, vi 2), hp, MIDI OUT: P. 2 (MKb), and MKb. The vocal parts (vi 1 and vi 2) feature melodic lines with various ornaments and dynamics. The piano part (pno) has a complex rhythmic texture with triplets and sixteenth notes. The string quartet (vi 1, vi 2) and harp (hp) parts provide harmonic support. The MIDI OUT: P. 2 (MKb) part shows a series of sustained notes with a dynamic marking of *pp*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Consistently adhering to the explained principle, the formal dramaturgy of the *Nocturne* is created as the dramaturgy of a possible listening to silence: listening that is not solely listening to, but is also hearing and perceiving and reacting, meaning and a message.

From this aspect, the female voice, deprived of any verbal utterance, is symbolic in *Nocturne*; more precisely, it is signifying. On the one hand, as an element of the *composed* silence, the voice seems to 'invite' the listener to a free game of adding a text and his possible explanations (see **Example No. 9**). On the other hand, however, it is not likely that the non-verbal feature of the voice might have any alternative. Because, this feature embodies the opposition of the human to the mechanical; of the cognitive to pure power; of the meditative-lyrical to the brutal and the threatening.

Therefore, the voice is the signifying opposite of the *coloured* silence. As such, it tries to break this silence by fighting a battle inside it. The voice tries to disturb the silence by making abrupt forays into and sudden exits from it; and when flooded by it, the voice as the human aspect attempts to confront and challenge the silence.

All the other parts of the chamber ensemble are treated in the same ('vocal') sense and meaning. In such a way, the dramaturgical and signifying role of the voice is multiplied in its resistance to comply with the *coloured* silence as the signifier of this concrete, imposed nocturne and, generally, such a nocturnal atmosphere as something at all possible.



This is why we would assert that the composition flows through the friction between the signifiers. The friction is deliberate and harsh in its attempts. However, the *coloured* silence remains unaffected. It remains stable enough since it is nothing but "Stable Chaos". It destroys the sense and breaks the resistance. It is mechanical. It is more powerful.

Together with the silence of *The Abnormal Beats of Dogon* and *I Have not Spoken*, the silence of *Nocturne* points to the same phenomenon: to the huge hermeneutical capacity of the field of musical silence. So, within this hermeneutical sphere of musical silence, acting from the same standpoint towards the current crisis of humanity, next to the 'planetary' silence of *The Abnormal Beats of Dogon* and the 'silence manifesto' of *I Have not Spoken*, the silence of *Nocturne* reveals a highly consistent, rather pessimistic but still very sarcastic 'inscription':

I *have* spoken... What about you?\*

\* The text was written as a study from the project at Matica srpska: *Aspekti muzičke tišine u srpskoj postmodernoj muzici* (Aspects of musical silence in Serbian postmodern music).