CHAMBER MUSIC FROM MALTA
INTRODUCTION AND SURVEY

by

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Abstract

This thesis presents a historical account of chamber music in Malta and gives an insight into the styles, forms and compositional techniques used in chamber works by two generations of twentieth and twenty-first century Maltese composers. Different historical phases, such as when Malta was striving for independence and politicians and intellectuals became aware of the need to build a national identity, have overlapped, and not necessarily coincided, with the struggle of Maltese composers to release themselves from a colonial mentality, and find more freedom in the intimate field of chamber music. No direct parallel can be drawn between social and historical developments, on the one hand, and mutations in musical style, on the other. Some contemporary Maltese compositions contain nationalistic elements, while others suppress these tendencies. Based on written documentation and available scores, the first chapter of this study presents the historical context in which local composers turned their attention to chamber music. The subsequent chapters then provide analytical descriptions of selected chamber works that represent divergent musical ideologies and adopt different compositional approaches. Chapter 2 explores the interaction between vernacular and cosmopolitan musical elements, as featured in *Silent Spaces,* by the late Charles Camilleri. In the next chapter, an analysis of Pawlu Grech's *Five Events* uses set theory to interpret the work's purely instrumental dramatic scenarios. The fourth chapter focuses on how, in *Segments No. 1*, Joseph Vella develops twelve-tone serialism into a contrapuntal neoclassical style. Chapter 5 considers the narrative potential of Véronique Vella's *Gelsomina*, a work that recalls Italian cinematography and music of the mid twentieth century. The last chapter discusses the music composed by Mariella Cassar Cordina for the multidisciplinary *Ġgantija* project, which brings together minimalist techniques and electronically-generated sounds. The survey indicates how Maltese composers combine twentieth-century trends in composition with their personal musical languages.

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Music in Malta: The Historical Context

1.1 Introduction

The musical heritage of the Maltese Islands is inextricably linked to Malta's unique geographical location, which makes it liable to contacts with and exchanges between cultures that flourished on the shores of the sea that surrounds it, and the musical expressions of its several past foreign occupiers.[1] As it stands in isolation, at the centre of the Mediterranean and surrounded by the coasts of Europe, Asia and Africa, Malta was coveted, conquered and hence colonized by a series of rulers who shaped its long and chequered history. After the prehistoric phase, the Islands passed from one ruler to the next - the Phoenicians and the Carthaginians, the Roman Empire, the Byzantines, the Arabs, the Normans and other Mediterranean powers, the Knights of St John, the French, and the British.[2] It was a lengthy journey before Malta achieved independence in 1964. While the tiny island group bridged the East and the West and acted as a fortress or naval base, it has also been exposed to a rich variety of cultural trends in music, simultaneously present in its surrounding regions and beyond, which have been melded with indigenous traditions. It is with respect to these historical circumstances and musical developments in general that Maltese musical identity can be understood.

There have been a substantial number of initiatives in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries to document the history of music and musical venues in Malta, and the biographies of local composers. Such research projects are an essential point of reference for the Maltese people to apprehend their musical identity in terms of a balance between cultures that left their mark on their musical life and their own distinctive musical expressions. Notwithstanding the significant contributions that these studies have made to the realm of music in Malta, the tendency has been to provide a chronological historical overview with little or no in-depth analytical descriptions of compositions or discussions of compositional techniques. Moreover, the available research and published literature has been mostly directed towards particular composers or genres such as folk music, sacred music and opera, while references to chamber

[1] The Maltese archipelago consists of three main islands: Malta, Gozo and Comino, and a few other barren and uninhabited islets and rocks. Malta is the largest of the islands and is the hub of the administrative, commercial and cultural activities. The archipelago has a total area of 316 km^2 and an approximate population of 425 384. (NSO, 2015)

[2] A detailed study of the history of Malta is available in a set of three books *Storja ta' Malta* [History of Malta] (Valletta: Klabb Kotba Maltin, 1974-2004). The first two volumes were written by Andrew P. Vella and the third volume was completed by Henry Frendo after the demise of Vella.

music activity and the chamber repertoire are mostly scattered. Documentation on chamber music is perhaps comparatively limited because such works, especially before the twentieth century, were performed at private gatherings. These events were not publicly advertised and therefore were more difficult to know about. The aim of the first chapter of this dissertation is to put together the bits and pieces of evidence that are available about the history of chamber music in Malta, meanwhile providing the reader with a synopsis of the musical activity on the Islands throughout the centuries. An analytical survey of selected chamber pieces is then presented in Chapters 2 to 6 to acknowledge the input of contemporary composers with regard to enriching the local musical heritage and creating a Maltese musical identity.

At various points, the study seeks to offer an understanding of how and to what extent musical nationalism evolved in postcolonial Malta. Before the second half of the twentieth century, the urge of European composers to foster a national identity through music-making had an almost negligible influence on Maltese music. Despite the rise of musical nationalism in nineteenth-century Europe, Malta remained absorbed in an Italianized musical culture and offered few opportunities for its native composers to perform their works at the most prestigious music venues in their homeland, such that some of their work was never performed. Early attempts to construct a national identity through art music can be felt in a few works written in the 1930s and 1940s, based on folkloristic or historical themes. A more solid connection between nationalism and Maltese music began to emerge around the mid twentieth century, first through compositions with direct allusions to folksong. Later, a number of Maltese composers absorbed rhythms and contours of folk music, and blended them with other European and non-European influences, or referred to non-musical elements that are identifiably Maltese, such as legends, literature, folkloristic games, traditional trades, architectural structures and seascape. A few operas draw on Maltese historical themes, but the majority of works that promote nationalism are instrumental pieces, particularly because composers began to show interest in indigenous sources only in the post-war era, after the decline of opera. Given that Malta has only one national orchestra, chamber music became the ideal genre in which to compose music which precipitates national self-awareness. Other composers, however, showed a resistance to vernacular sources and turned to non-representational music.

The rest of this chapter first outlines ideas of nationalism in relation to music, and then presents a historical sketch of musical developments in Malta and the role of music in establishing and expressing national identity, to create a context in which the selected

contemporary chamber works by local composers, dealt with in the following chapters, can be meaningfully analysed.

1.2 Musical Nationalism and its Implications in a Postcolonial Context

Anthony D. Smith refers to 'the concept of *nationalism* as an ideological movement to attain and maintain autonomy, unity and identity or distinctiveness for a human population, some of whose members deem it to constitute an actual or potential "nation".'[3] The essence of this movement is thus to pursue the construction of a nation that has emerged and is being shaped by a unique community with a common past and purpose, homeland, traditions, beliefs, tales, economy, legal rights and duties. John Hutchinson divides nationalism into two camps, political nationalism and cultural nationalism. The former is founded upon the sharing of common law principles among citizens, and the entitlement to form a representative state for the community, whereas the notion of cultural nationalism emphasizes the moral regeneration of a distinctive civilization identified by its history, culture and geographic location.[4] In the process of nation building, composers of Western art music participated in cultural nationalism and played a formative role by portraying the nation according to their perceptions and by promoting their desired image of the nation among their audience. They took myths and legends, historic heroes and landscapes to represent them in different musical genres, such as instrumental music, orchestral tone poems and operas.[5]

In the imperial-colonial context of the nineteenth century, composers including Weber, Chopin and Glinka, and later Liszt, Borodin and d'Indy, followed by others, such as Vaughan Williams and Kodály in the early years of the subsequent century, aspired to write art music that drew onto ethnic idioms, folksong styles and dances, so as to develop and proclaim an autonomous, collective identity.[6] Such works laid the groundwork for the creation of high quality compositions based on folk music, and facilitated the process that rendered peasant culture as national culture. Alongside the intervention of high-art composers, the new technologies of printing and publishing, then the recording devices and the development of broadcasting,

[3] Anthony D. Smith, 'National Identity and Vernacular Mobilisation in Europe', *Nations and Nationalism* 17/2 (2011), 231.
[4] John Hutchinson, *Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism: The Gaelic Revival and the Creation of the Irish Nation State* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 12-13.
[5] Matthew Riley and Anthony D. Smith, *Nation and Classical Music: From Handel to Copland*, (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2016), 10-11.
[6] Ibid., 38-39.

boosted the nationalization of folk music.[7] The authenticity of national music and its sources has raised several discussions, but their efficacy in creating a distinctive national identity is undeniable. After all, the chief idea in presenting a perceived image of the nation and its culture in a musical composition 'is that the nation will recognize itself in its "own" artwork'.[8]

By the early twentieth century, the growing interest in folk music opened up a path to fresh ideas for the first modernist generation of composers and their musical languages. A number of composers even undertook research into folk music themselves in order to include indigenous material in their works. The influence of folklore-based music that was previously limited to evoking elements of vernacular ethnic music within a conventional style, could then be felt in a reformed style based on rhythmic patterns and modal structures inherited from these rural, or sometimes even urban, sources.[9] Modernism and folk music is coexistent in the musical works of key European figures like Stravinsky, Bartók, Janáček and Szymanowski, and the American composer Copland. In the modern and postmodern periods, the aim of art music composers to allude to 'other' musics, that is Western and non-Western folk, ethnic or urban popular musics, may not be to intentionally induce national awareness, but rather to enrich their compositional idiom and present a musical representation of difference.

Georgina Born refers to two compositional approaches that tend to emphasize difference in relation to the musical other. The first proposes a referential method, in which composers recognize difference in the musical sound of the other, and aesthetically incorporate it into their own music. It thus intends to reinvigorate the present by recalling earlier musical forms and principles, as in the neoclassical idiom, or, as described above, by drawing on other musics as sources of innovation. The second is a post-World War II approach concerned with serialism and absolute music. It negates representational music, applies a compositional technique that rejects pitch hierarchy and functional tonality, and asserts musical autonomy.[10] In the late 1950s and 1960s, attempts to free composers and performers from the exactness dictated by serialism and other formalized compositional techniques were manifested in compositions based on

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7 Philip V. Bohlman, *Focus: Music, Nationalism and the Making of the New Europe*, 2nd edn. (New York and London: Routledge, 2010), 65.

8 Benjamin Curtis, *Music Makes the Nation: Nationalist Composers and Nation Building in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Amherst NY: Cambria, 2008), 145.

9 Riley and Smith, *Nation and Classical Music*, 77.

10 Georgina Born, 'Musical Modernism, Postmodernism, and Others', in *Western Music and Its Others: Difference, Representation, and Appropriation in Music*, edited by Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000),16-17.

aleatoric or improvisatory principles.

The compositional strategies described by Born can be applied to a postcolonial context, marked by the collapse of colonial empires and the rise of new nation-states in the decades following World War II. Postcolonial composers often adopt the referential approach in an attempt to recover some fixed, undisputable cultural origins of their nation, in order to redress the impact of their former colonial masters. In so doing, they borrow from the indigenous music of the precolonial period, and incorporate it into their music, to arouse a positive idea of a nation and a national sentiment in their music. Bill Ashcroft refers to this common strategy as the recovering idea of postcolonialism.[11] National tendencies in music do not necessarily imply fear of openness or rejection of encounters with the rest of the world but they do challenge the universalizing claims of Western European musical traditions and the lack of equality between cultural expressions. Postcolonial composers often also assimilate musical elements from their European and non-European cosmopolitan circles, and fuse these ideas with other sources from their local cultures. The production of cosmopolitan music then serves as a way through which the postcolonial community repositions itself and asserts its cultural and national identity.[12]

The other postcolonial idea mentioned by Aschcroft is based on transformation and implies that resistance to the influences of the colonizer can only be effective when it creates rather than simply defends what has been recovered.[13] It thus conforms with the compositional strategies that show resistance to traditional musical principles and look forward to innovative methods. Serialism has often been regarded as self-contained, a symbol of creative freedom, and immune to extra-musical influence. As Taruskin explains, this artistic autonomy was then 'easily translated into personal and political autonomy–that is, individual integrity–in the minds of many who were emerging from decades of oppression'.[14] Thus, for some postcolonial composers, serialism and absolute music could signify a radical break from former colonial links.

Before going into further details about how and when these ideas of nationalism came to influence Maltese artists, however, this chapter will provide a historical overview of music in the Islands.

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11 Bill Ashcroft, *Post-Colonial Transformation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 4.

12 Imani Sanga, 'Postcolonial Cosmopolitan Music in Dar es Salaam: Dr. Remmy Ongola and the Traveling Sounds', *African Studies Review* 53/3 (2010), 64.

13 Ashcroft, *Post-Colonial Transformation*, 4-5.

14 Richard Taruskin, *Music in the Late Twentieth Century: The Oxford History of Western Music* (Oxford University Press, 2010), 17.

Looking deeper into the roots of musical traditions and an evolving musical culture will facilitate understanding of a national consciousness that was gradually formed along the years.

1.3 Early Evidence of Sacred and Secular Music in Malta

It is generally agreed that the first inhabitants came to the Islands in the Neolithic Age. The cultural characteristics of these earliest residents are known from the impressive architecture and artistic decorations of the stone temples that are scattered around Malta and Gozo. Dating back to around 3500 BC, the huge ancient buildings, which are believed to have been places of worship, are testimony that the dwellers were civilized. Since religious devotion and music making are usually linked, it can therefore be presumed that music was already existent in the form of singing and instrumental music to assist dance or communal religious activities. However, no recognizable musical instruments have been found in the prehistoric temples.[15] The intriguing past of these spaces and the supposed activities that could have taken place there are the subject of a number of twentieth century and twenty-first century music compositions including operas, vocal works and instrumental pieces, as we shall see later.

Again, historical evidence about music in medieval times is very scant. If there were any traditions related to the previous rulers, it is likely that the Arabs gradually substituted these with their own.[16] The long stay of the Arabs, which lasted for more than two hundred years, would undoubtedly have left some influence on the culture as well, but a permanent legacy of these rulers is the Maltese language.[17] Documents about musical activities during the Arabic occupation are not available. However, there are some who hold that this was the most favourable time for Maltese folk music to grow its roots.[18] Whatever the case, the Semitic language had a great impact on the sound of folk music.

Following the conquest of Sicily in 1090, the Normans took over the Maltese archipelago, and

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15 David H. Thrump and Daniel Cilia, *Malta: Prehistory and Temples*, 3rd ed. (Sta. Venera, Malta: Midsea Books, 2008), 110.

16 Godfrey Wettinger, 'The Arabs in Malta', in *Malta: Studies of its Heritage and History*, edited by Mid-Med Bank (Valletta: Mid-Med Bank, 1986), 87-104. In this book chapter, Wettinger writes about the Arabization of the Maltese Islands, after the invasion by the Arabs. This leaves no room to believe that the islanders would have continued with their own cultural life.

17 Ibid., 92.

18 Joseph Vella Bondin, *Il-Mużika ta' Malta sa l-Aħħar tas-Seklu Tmintax* [The Music of Malta Till the End of the Eighteenth Century] (Pietà, Malta: Publikazzjonijiet Indipendenza (PIN), 2000), 21.

it was subsequently subjected to the feudal system.[19] The residents of the Islands were free to hold onto their previous customs, laws and religion, but the rulers encouraged their own Catholic traditions. The earliest documented evidence of music in Malta goes back to this epoch, and is in fact related to the sacred music of the Roman Catholic Church. Ulderico Rolandi, who in 1932 published the first extensive study of music in Malta, entitled *Musica e Musicisti in Malta*, compiled a list of singers who gave service to the Church, from as early as the year 1112.[20] However, it is not clear which sources led him to these details. A more reliable indication, which goes back to the thirteenth century, is related to the Cathedral of Mdina, and again refers to a *cantor*, perhaps entrusted with the chanting of the Divine Office.[21] The next testimony comes a couple of centuries later, in the form of receipts for payments to the organist and choir master, who were many times also responsible for teaching organ playing and chant, and to the copyist for the transcription of liturgical books.[22]

If sources related to sacred music before the sixteenth century are fragmentary, the evidence of secular music is likewise limited. The earliest document which suggests the role of a group of people involved in secular musical activities refers to nine *juculari* (or *jongleurs*), usually entertainers, musicians and jugglers, who were employed in the militia of 1419/1420.[23] In medieval Europe, the custom of forming groups to entertain people during weddings, banquets, at the courts and other special festivities was common.[24] An interesting source related to this comes in 1467 in the form of a contract between two people to play music together in wedding ceremonies.[25] Sometimes, musicians were asked to provide music for funerals. The fact that this practice was halted in 1555 implies that it was existent even in Malta.[26] Another piece of

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19 Dennis Angelo Castillo, *The Maltese Cross: A Strategic History of Malta* (Westport CT: Praeger Security International, 2006), 30-31.

20 Ulderico Rolandi, *Musica e Musicisti in Malta: saggio di ricerche e di punti storici* (Livorno: Edizione dell' *Archivio storico di Malta*, R. Giusti, 1932), 41. The work of Rolandi owes much to the research material of Luigi Vella. The handwritten notes by Vella are held at the Cathedral Archives of Mdina.

21 Stanley Fiorini, 'Church Music and Musicians in Late Medieval Malta', *Melita Historica - Journal of the Malta Historical Society* 10/1 (1988), 1.

22 John Azzopardi, 'La Cappella Musicale della Cattedrale di Malta e i suoi Rapporti con la Sicilia', in *Musica sacra in Sicilia tra rinascimento e barocco: atti del convegno di Caltagirone, 10-12 dicembre 1985*, edited by Daniele Ficolo (Palermo: S.F. Flaccovio, 1988), 48.

23 Godfrey Wettinger, 'The Militia List of 1419/20: A new starting point for the study of Malta's population', *Melita Historica - Journal of the Malta Historical Society* 10/2 (1969), 84.

24 Maria Bendinelli Predelli, 'giullari', in *Medieval Italy: an encyclopedia*, vol. 1, edited by Christopher Kleinhennz (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), 430-431.

25 Godfrey Wettinger and Mikiel Fsadni, *L-Għanja ta' Pietru Caxaru: poeżija bil-Malti medjevali* (Malta: the authors, 1983), 36. Before this revised and updated version, in 1968, the authors published their work in English, with the title *Peter Caxaro's Cantilena: a poem in medieval Maltese*.

26 Joseph Vella Bondin, 'The Music of the Knights', *Melita Historica - Journal of the Malta Historical Society* 12/4 (1999), 376. In this article, Vella Bondin refers to a document dated 13 April 1555, which testifies that the Grandmaster Claudio de la Sengle banned chant and the playing of musical instruments during funerals.

evidence relates to Malta's sister island, Gozo. Before 1500, a cleric used to go out in the streets of Gozo with other youths, singing and improvising in *għana spirtu pront* (quick witted folksong).[27]

1.4 Maltese Folk Music

Writing about folk music in Malta, the folklorist Ġużè Cassar Pullicino states that 'to the vast majority of the people it provided a vehicle of expression for their joys and sorrows and aspirations, and in many ways it fulfilled a social need'.[28] Despite its significant roles, traditional folk singing, called *għana*, has generally been looked down upon by elite groups and regarded as a marginal form of cultural expression.[29] For multiple reasons, though there is enough evidence which shows that it already existed for centuries, *għana* was not appropriately documented or recorded before the twentieth century. The first account of written folk songs can be traced back to 1791, when Commander Françoise-Emmanuel Guignard de Saint-Priest included three songs in an anonymous publication entitled *Malte par un voyageur français*.[30] Other references to folk singing followed, until at the start of the twentieth century, Bertha Ilg collected a number of folk songs that were published in *Maltesische Volkslieder* by Professor H. Stumme in 1909.[31] The earliest sound recordings of Maltese folk singing were made available in the 1930s by local music agents, who recorded music in Tunisia and Italy.[32]

The lack of early substantial documentation and collection of folk music culture has led some to state that the widespread belief of *għana* as being the traditional Maltese music is not firmly grounded, since historical examples, especially music transcripts or recordings, are barely existent.[33] For the same reason, it is difficult to determine the authentic basis and what was

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27 Wettinger and Fsadni, *L-għanja ta' Pietru Caxaru*, 36.

28 Ġużè Cassar Pullicino, 'Song and Dance in Malta and Gozo', *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society* 9/2 (1961), 63.

29 Paul Sant Cassia, 'Exoticizing Discoveries and Extraordinary Experiences: "Traditional" Music, Modernity, and Nostalgia in Malta and Other Mediterranean Societies', *Ethnomusicology* 44/2 (2000), 285, 287. In another article, 'L-Għana: Bejn il-Folklor u l-Ħabi', [*Għana*: Between Folklore and Concealment], in *L-Identità Kulturali ta' Malta*, edited by Toni Cortis (Valletta: Dipartiment ta' l-Informazzjoni, 1989), 81-91, Sant Cassia expresses his opinion about why Maltese *għana* has been laid aside.

30 Ġużè Cassar Pullicino, 'Folk Research in Malta', *Folklore* 58/3 (1947), 329.

31 Ibid.

32 Andrew Alamango gives a detailed account of these recordings in the article 'Malta's Lost Voices: The early recording of Maltese Folk and Popular Music, 1931-32', *Journal of Maltese History* 2/2 (2011), 54-59. Recently, the recordings were released again in a double CD package. See: Andrew Alamango, *Malta's Lost Voices: 1931-1932 - Recordings of Maltese Music from the Early 1930s*, CD, Valletta: Filfla Records, © 2010.

33 Sant Cassia, 'Exoticizing Discoveries and Extraordinary Experiences', 288.

added later. Thus, there are contrasting viewpoints about the true origins of Maltese folk music. Joseph Vella Bondin holds that 'the glissandi, the micro-tones, the high-pitched singing, the narrow range of the melodic motifs and the variations in the tempi' are regular features of *għana* that clearly indicate North-African influences.[34] According to Cassar Pullicino, the accompanying music to the traditional four-line stanzas, known as quatrains, which are most often found in local folk songs, have an Oriental basis.[35] On the other hand, Joseph Vella claims that the instrumental accompaniment to folk songs, together with similar construction and performance characteristics, suggest that the roots of *għana* lie in traditional music from the South of Spain, that reached the Maltese Islands through Sicily.[36] The music created by two guitarists, with one using strict triadic chords and the other providing an accompaniment that flows freely, is for Charles Camilleri a mixture of the Northern and the quasi-Arabic styles, that gives Maltese *għana* a more comprehensive Mediterranean dimension.[37] Along the same lines, Paul Sant Cassia says that this style of singing also exists in other places in the Mediterranean area, including the islands of Crete, Sardinia and Cyprus.[38] These different standpoints on folk music left a mark on contemporary Maltese composers as well. While some attempt to suggest folk music by imitating a few of its structural and rhythmic aspects, and utilize these characteristics as a means to proclaim nationalism, others refrain from including any folk elements in their compositions, either because they believe that it is not genuinely Maltese or because they do not find any musical value in it.

The folk singing and music of Malta, which is mainly the work of musically illiterate or semi-literate and untrained singers and musicians, is generally classified into three main types: *spirtu pront*, *tal-fatt*, and *il-Bormliża*. The most popular form is *għana spirtu pront*, sung by two or more male singers, which encourages their creative and ingenious potential, while they sing on a chosen theme that is developed during the singing contest.[39] In improvised singing, each performer tries to surpass the other participants in wit, by singing subtle confrontational verses,

[34] Joseph Vella Bondin, 'Malta's Musical Heritage', in *Malta: Roots of a Nation - The Development of Malta from an Island People to an Island Nation*, edited by Kenneth Gambin (Sta. Venera, Malta: Midsea Books, 2004), 163.
[35] Cassar Pullicino, 'Folk Research in Malta', 330.
[36] Joseph Vella, 'Music', in *Malta, Culture and Identity*, edited by Henry Frendo and Oliver Friggieri (Malta: Ministry for Youth and the Arts, 1994), 160.
[37] Peter Serracino Inglott and Charles Camilleri, *Mediterranean Music* (Malta: The Foundation for International Studies, at the University of Malta, 1988), 33.
[38] Sant Cassia, 'L-Għana: Bejn il-Folklor u l-Ħabi', 87.
[39] Sant Cassia, 'Exoticizing Discoveries and Extraordinary Experiences', 282-283.

within a definite musical form.[40] *Għana tal-fatt* (*fatt* means fact) is related to factual events or fictitious stories taken from life or from literature. This style is often described as more westernized.[41] The lengthy pre-written narrative proceeds logically and linearly, with explicit and clearly expressed wording. Each *ottava rima* or pair of quatrains, whose metrical pattern and rhyme scheme (*abcb*) match those of *għana spirtu pront*, is usually followed by an interlude, known as *il-qalba*.[42] While the text is foreseen by the singer, the lead guitarist who plays the interlude is free to improvise his music.[43] The storyline of this folk-song poetry can be based on local tragic incidents, historical events, or contemporary social issues or occurrences. *Il-Bormliża* or *għana fil-għoli* (*Bormliża* refers to Bormla, a Maltese village also known as Cospicua, and *għana fil-għoli* stands for song in the high register) is one of the oldest forms of Maltese music. Norma McLeod and Marcia Herndon believe that due to its nature, this type of folk-singing possibly goes back to the Arab occupation. The foremost characteristics of *il-Bormliża* are the melismatic style, the generally falling melodic contour, and the lung power and breath control needed to produce a tight sound.[44] The distinctive aspects of this folk singing require a full voice that is capable of sustaining long phrases and careful attention to its intricate, unwritten rules. In contrast with the other types of folk songs, each song of *il-Bormliża* form is very short. The first part is often standard, while the second section, the *kadenza* varies according to the spontaneous lyrics of the solo or duet singers.[45]

Alongside singing, folk dancing and playing instruments were likewise popular as forms of leisure especially among peasant classes. Various lithographs, paintings and other art forms depict Maltese or Gozitan folk musicians, sometimes dancing to the rhythm of their own playing, or accompanied by dancers. In 1838, George Percy Badger wrote that the native band of the Maltese country people was made up of a tambourine, a kettledrum, a friction drum known as *rabbaba* or *żafżafa*, different shaped lyres with two to four strings, and the *żaqq* (*żaqq* literally means belly).[46] He proceeds to describe the latter as an instrument 'formed of an inflated dog skin, which is held under the left arm with the legs directed upwards, and having a

[40] Norma McLeod and Marcia Herndorn, 'The *Bormliża*: Maltese Folksong Style and Women', *The Journal of American Folklore* 88/347 (1975), 85.

[41] Sant Cassia, 'Exoticizing Discoveries and Extraordinary Experiences', 284; George Mifsud-Chircop, 'Malta's *Għana*: The Folk Music of the Maltese', in *Malta: Roots of a Nation - The Development of Malta from an Island People to an Island Nation*, edited by Kenneth Gambin (Sta. Venera, Malta: Midsea Books, 2004), 158.

[42] Anna Borg Cardona, *Musical Instruments of the Maltese Islands: history, folkways and traditions*. (Valletta: Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, 2012), 11; Mifsud-Chircop, 'Malta's *Għana*', 158.

[43] Mifsud-Chircop, 'Malta's *Għana*', 160.

[44] McLeod and Herndorn, 'The *Bormliża*', 87.

[45] Mifsud-Chircop, 'Malta's *Għana*', 159.

[46] George Percy Badger, *Description of Malta and Gozo* (Malta: 1838), 83.

mouth-piece by which the skin is filled and a flute or pipe played with both hands affixed to it.'[47] Badger's details match another description given by Andrew Bigelow after he travelled to Malta in 1827.[48] This primitive-looking aerophone has a number of characteristics that make it distinctive from any other bagpipe in the Mediterranean Basin.[49] Therefore, it can be regarded as the signature instrument of the Maltese Islands. Meticulous research about this indigenous instrument, which had long been ignored, was undertaken by J. K. Partridge and Frank Jeal in the 1970s, when there were still a few living *żaqq* players.[50]

1.5 The Knights of St John and Music in Malta Up to the End of the Eighteenth Century

In the medieval period, the standard of living in Malta was low and poverty was widespread, therefore the inhabitants could not meet the expensive demands of certain musical activities.[51] There was a considerable amount of musical activity taking place on the Maltese Islands, yet until then, the relationship with other countries had been limited and hence the islanders were prevented from getting in touch with contemporary artistic traditions elsewhere. Before the Knights of the Order of St John of Jerusalem took possession of the Islands, Malta lingered behind with respect to the musical developments experienced by the rest of Europe.[52] When the Hospitaller Order arrived in Malta, in 1530, their priorities were a defence strategy to protect them from their adversaries and planning for a proper town in which to settle.[53] Things changed considerably after the Knights defeated the Ottoman Empire in the siege of 1565. Increased prosperity brought structural changes, including developments in art, architecture and music, made possible through the Order's wealth and finances, the ongoing revenue generated from the Order's estates in Europe, and the personal income of the Knights.[54] After the Great Siege,

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47 Ibid.

48 Andrew Bigelow, *Travels to Malta and Sicily, with Sketches of Gibraltar, in 1827* (Boston: Carter, Hendee & Babcock, 1831), 178-179. Bigelow also writes that the instrument includes the head of the dog, but this detail is not stated elsewhere and does not appear in any pictures related to the *żaqq*.

49 Borg Cardona, *Musical Instruments of the Maltese Islands*, 192.

50 A detailed description of the *żaqq*, together with music transcripts for the instruments and the method of making the *żaqq* is available in the article by J. K. Partridge, Frank Jeal and P. R. Cooke, 'The Maltese *Żaqq*', *The Galpin Society Journal* 30 (1977), 112-144.

51 Vella Bondin, 'The Music of the Knights', 377.

52 Ibid., 376.

53 Quentin Hughes, 'The Architectural Development of Hospitaller Malta', in *Hospitaller Malta, 1530-1798: Studies on Early Modern Malta and the Order of St John of Jerusalem*, edited by Victor Mallia-Milanes (Malta: Mireva Publications, 1993), 485.

54 Victor Mallia-Milanes, 'Introduction to Hospitaller Malta', in *Hospitaller Malta, 1530-1798: Studies on Early Modern Malta and the Order of St John of Jerusalem*, edited by Victor Mallia-Milanes (Malta: Mireva Publications, 1993), 12.

the Order of the Knights undertook an ambitious project, to build a new fortified city for Malta on the peninsula known as Mount Sciberras. The foundation stone of Valletta, which later was to become a city of culture and the core of Malta's musical activity, was laid on 28 March 1566.[55]

When the Knights built the Conventual Church in Valletta, dedicated to their patron saint, one of their first considerations was the music for liturgical celebrations.[56] Given that they were a monastic community, the church of St John had to be the fulcrum around which the Fortress Convent revolved and therefore the music for the church had to be given appropriate prestige. Information about the early history of the *cappella* is scant. Yet, four years before the consecration of the Conventual Church in 1578, the General Chapter had already made plans about liturgical music and considered that for the special feasts, there should be good polyphonic music administered by a competent *maestro di cappella*.[57] To ensure the excellence of the musical chapel, the Knights hired the most talented people, usually musicians trained in conservatoires in Naples.[58] There is significant evidence to show that the *cappella* of the Order did not only include singers and an organist but also string and wind instrumentalists, some of whom were Maltese.[59] However, throughout the stay of the Knights, none of the chapel masters of St John's church was Maltese.

The reputable position of a chapel master was promised to Nicolò Isouard (1773-1818), a Maltese who was renowned for his musical ability and talent in composition. At a young age, in the year 1796, he was appointed as an organist, but he never acquired the position of a chapel master due to the dismantling of the *cappella*, when the French expelled the Knights of St John two years later.[60] All the sacred works that Isouard ever wrote were composed between 1794

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55 Carmelina Gugliuzzo, 'Building a Sense of Belonging. The Foundation of Valletta in Malta', in Intersections, vol. 22, *Foundation, Dedication and Consecration in Early Modern Europe*, edited by Maarten Delbeke and Minou Schraven, (Leiden, NLD: Brill, 2001), 217. Grand Master Jean Parisot de Valette, who commissioned the building of the new city which bears his name, died in 1568, when construction had been in progress for only two years. He is nowadays buried at the Co-Cathedral of St John.

56 The Knights of St John stayed in Malta between the years 1530 and 1798. The church of St John, in Valletta, was commissioned to be the Conventual Church of the Order in the year 1572. On 27 January 1816, it acquired the permanent title of Co-Cathedral.

57 Vella Bondin, *Il-Mużika ta' Malta sal-Aħħar tas-Seklu Tmintax*, 42.

58 Vella Bondin, 'The Music of the Knights', 380.

59 Rolandi, *Musica e Musicisti in Malta*, 49; Hannibal P. Scicluna, *La Chiesa di San Giovanni in Valletta: sua storia, architettura e monumenti storici; con una breve storia dell'Ordine di San Giovanni dagli inizi ai giorni nostri* (Roma: M. Danesi, 1955), 193-194; Vella Bondin, 'The Music of the Knights', 378-379; Joseph Vella Bondin, 'Nicolò Isouard: His Years in Malta', in *Nicolò Isouard de Malte*, edited by John Azzopardi (Mdina: Friends of the Cathedral Museum, 1991), 25.

60 Vella Bondin, 'Nicolò Isouard', 23.

and 1798, when he was dedicating much of his time for the composition and performance of sacred music for the Knights in their Conventual Church.[61] The only musical works written for the Order that are known to be still extant are in fact these, together with portions from operas by the same composer. The rest is all based on documentary evidence.[62]

While the *cappella musicale* of the Church of St John was rising to prestigious standards, likewise, the *cappella* of the Mdina Cathedral was making considerable progress. The year 1573 brings an indication that, for the first time, the Cathedral Chapter extended its teaching to include not only *canto fermo* (monophonic music) but also *canto figurato* (polyphonic music).[63] The responsibility to teach these two types of chant was given to Giulio Scala from Siena, who served as a *maestro di cappella* of the Cathedral for nine months, starting in October of the same year. In 1619, the Maltese Archbishop Fra Baldassare Cagliares facilitated the establishment of a permanent musical chapel at the Cathedral, and the *cappella* was allowed to use 1000 scudi annually to provide appropriate music during the divine office and other sacred rites.[64] From then onwards, the musical chapel of the Cathedral of St Paul searched locally and abroad for good chapel masters, singers and musicians, and purchased polyphonic music books and the required instruments.[65] In 1622, the Cathedral also bought six string instruments with their cases, arches and strings from Venice.[66] Therefore, by the early decades of the seventeenth century, ensemble music for liturgical purposes would have been properly organized at the Mdina Cathedral.

With respect to the *cappella musicale* of the Order of St John, much more is known about the *cappella* of the Cathedral, due to the sources available at the Mdina Cathedral Archives. Among the manuscripts and printed works at the archives, the oldest extinct compositions are those by the Bolzano brothers, both chapel masters of St Paul's Cathedral. The oldest musical piece is the motet *Beatus Vir*, inscribed and dated 'Giuseppe Bolzano 1652'. The next one is another

61 Richard Divall, 'The Complete Sacred Works of Nicolò Isouard (1773-1818) and Maltese Sacred Music for the Order of Malta in the Late Eighteenth Century' (Ph.D. diss., MCD University of Divinity, 2013), 2.
62 Vella Bondin, 'The Music of the Knights', 373; Copies of extant works by Isouard are held at the Cathedral Archives of Mdina. The original works are preserved at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.
63 Azzopardi, 'La Cappella Musicale', 48.
64 Joseph Vella Bondin, *The Great Maltese Composers - Historical Context, Lives, and Works* (Malta: APS Bank, 2016), 13-14.
65 Azzopardi, 'La Cappella Musicale', 51.
66 Ibid., 53.

motet *Venite Omnes* dated 1680 by his younger brother Domenico.[67] These are the oldest surviving not only in terms of sacred music but also as pieces written and signed by a Maltese composer. Catholicism was powerful and therefore it is not surprising that the majority of music still available is related to the church and held in parish and monastic archives.

Besides the significant advances in sacred music, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, secular music flourished in Malta, as a means of entertainment for the Knights, and sometimes also for the populace. It was an era in which various genres of music gained popularity, and new venues that hosted musical activities were built to delight the people.

1.5.1 Secular Music for Small Ensembles in the Private Residences of the Knights

By the sixteenth century, the custom of having small musical ensembles in a noble person's household to perform music for private entertainment was already widespread around Europe. At this early stage, however, the practice of domestic musical recitals, either in the private residences of the nobles or the Knights who were ruling over Malta, is not mentioned in any sources. A possible reason could be that this was a time when the Order of St John was trying to establish itself on their island bastion and therefore the Knights set their priorities on their naval and military obligations rather than on leisure interests. No knowledge about music-making has ever emerged from the houses of Mdina, where aristocratic families resided. Nevertheless, this is not sufficient evidence to conclude that such music did not exist.

The earliest mention of musical activities in the private palaces of the Knights goes back to the seventeenth century, and is related to theatrical productions. For the Carnival of 1631 the Knights of the Italian Tongue hosted a *dramma per musica* in their *Auberge,* prepared by Italian singers, actors and other artists, as an entertainment for the Knights and their friends.[68] Any additional information, including the title of this production, the writer of the libretto and the composer of this work, are not known. Similar entertaining productions continued to take place, from one year to the next, during Carnival days, and any expenses were paid by the Knights.[69] Not even the titles of these musical works for the stage are known. The first entitled work is

[67] John Azzopardi, 'The Musical Archives at the Cathedral Museum, Mdina-Malta: Their Content, Provenance and Study', in *Italian and Maltese Music in the Archives at the Cathedral Museum of Mdina*, edited by John Azzopardi and Matteo Sansone (Mdina: Cathedral Museum, 2001), 27.

[68] Alfred G. Miceli, *L-Istorja ta' l-Opra f'Malta (1631-1866)* [The History of Opera in Malta (1631-1866)] (Pietà, Malta: Publikazzjonijiet Indipendenza (PIN), 1999), 5.

[69] Ibid., 6.

Annibale in Capua, held in 1664, a *dramma lirico* with a libretto by Nicolò Beregon and music by Vincenzo Tozzi (c.1612-c.1675).[70] On another occasion, in 1697, some Maltese gentlemen presented a play, again at the Auberge d'Italie.[71] So far, according to extant documentation, the musical activities that took place in the homes of the Knights were related solely to theatrical presentations and instrumental music or vocal ensemble music with instruments was not yet common.

In the eighteenth century, when the emphasis of the Knights 'shifted gradually… to social manners, good tastes, and idle talk', further attention was given to the arts, including decorative Baroque buildings, paintings, theatre and music.[72] From then onwards, we come across more reliable sources that justify the claim that the Grand Master and the senior Knights maintained a group of musicians as an expression of their dignity and to contribute to their pleasure. Among the chamber musicians was the Venetian Angelo Nani (1751-1844) who in 1766 became Grand Master Manuel Pinto da Fonseca's *virtuoso di violino del Cammarier Magisteriale.*[73] Like Nani, these musicians may have also served in the *cappella musicale* of the Conventual church. Other musicians, who aspired to become members of the Order, defrayed the *passaggio,* an entry fee to join the Order, by giving musical service.[74] One of these was Tomaso Ponso from Messina, who was a violinist and served the *cappella* for six years.[75] Grand Master Emmanuel de Rohan de Polduc[76] followed Pinto in favouring theatrical and musical performances. To entertain him at luncheon and dinner, Rohan maintained an orchestra that he had formed from the Regiment of the Guard.[77]

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70 Vella Bondin, 'The Music of the Knights', 382. In *L-Istorja tal-Opra f'Malta (1631-1866),* 6, Alfred Miceli states that this *dramma lirico* was first presented in Naples, in 1663. Yet, according to the entry about Vincenzo Tozzi, written by Keith A. Larson in the *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (Oxford University Press), the first performance of *Annibale in Capua* took place in Malta, in 1664. In fact, some hold to this view and believe that this work was specifically written to be performed in Malta. Larson's entry is available at http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed 20 October 2015).

71 Victor F. Denaro, 'The Manoel Theatre', *Melita Historica - Journal of the Malta Historical Society* 3/1 (1960), 1. The Auberge d'Italie, that was the home of the Knights of the Italian *langue,* is situated in Merchant Street, Valletta, and at present it serves as the head office of the Malta Tourism Authority.

72 Mallia-Milanes, 'Introduction to Hospitaller Malta', 38.

73 Vella Bondin, 'The Music of the Knights', 385; Manuel Pinto was elected Grand Master of the Order of St John in 1741 and retained this position until his death in 1773.

74 The *passaggio* was an entrance fee that prospective candidates had to pay before joining the Order of St John. This could take several forms such as a payment of a sum of money, a donation of silver or other goods, or a work of art. For example, possibly, by painting the altarpiece of the Beheading of St John for the Conventual Church, Caravaggio paid his *passaggio*. For further information about the *passaggio,* refer to Emanuel Buttigieg, *Nobility, Faith and Masculinity: The Hospitaller Knights of Malta, c.1580-c.1700* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011), 30.

75 Divall, 'The Complete Sacred Works of Nicolò Isouard', 36.

76 Grand Master Emmanuel de Rohan was elected to the magistracy in 1775 and reigned for 22 years.

77 H.J.A. Sire, *The Knights of Malta* (New Haven: Yale U.P., 1994), 227.

The Neapolitan composer, musician and teacher Tommaso Prota (c.1727-c.1768), who was based in Malta in the 1750s, was among the composers who contributed to the repertoire for small ensembles. Richard Divall, the editor of some of his works, refers to him as 'a serious composer of chamber music'.[78] A few of the chamber works composed by Prota were meant to be performed in Malta during the era of the Order of St John. In a collection of musical pieces found in the municipal library of Châlons-en-Champagne in Champagne-Ardenne, a region in France, the oldest pieces are sonatas for two violins by Prota. The first one is dated Malta 1756, and is dedicated to the Knight Gaspard-Joseph de L'Estang de Parade, who was later a Commander of the Order.[79] François-Pierre Goy presumes that though the owner of the collection of these works is unknown, they probably belonged to a Knight of Malta, and a violinist.[80] More works by Tommaso Prota that were composed for Malta include his opera *L'abate ossia il poeta moderno* and a sacred cantata for the feast of the Guardian Angel, with a text by Gian Antonio Ciantar.[81] On the title page of the libretto of this cantata, Prota is described as a 'virtuoso del Signor Cav. Fra D. Giuseppe Caraffa dei Principi di Colubrano'.[82]

Other chamber works of Maltese composers who lived in the same century also survive. These include the six string quartets by Girolamo Abos (1715-1760)[83] that are possibly the earliest available chamber works by a Maltese composer. One other extant purely instrumental composition by Abos, for a small ensemble of two violins and *basso continuo*, is a *Sinfonia* (c.1735) in three movements. Joseph Vella Bondin describes this as:

> a short melodious work of a pleasing simplicity and takes the normal form of similar early eighteenth century preludial *sinfonie da chiesa*.[84]

[78] Ibid., 37. Divall edited Tommaso Prota's opus one consisting of a set of six trio sonatas, which were published in Paris in 1751 under the title *Premiere Livre de Trios pour les Violons, Flutes, et Hautbois*. He also edited the four trio sonatas for two flutes and continuo held in the Biblioteca comunale Luciano Benincasa, Ancona, Italy. Divall refers to these editions in his doctoral dissertation, 'The Complete Sacred Music of Nicolò Isouard (1773-1818) and Maltese Sacred Music for the Order of Malta in the Late Eighteenth Century', but the edited works have not been published.

[79] François-Pierre Goy, 'Bilan de l'inventaire des fonds musicaux anciens: Région Champagne-Ardenne', *Revue de Musicologie* 81/2 (1995), 279.

[80] Ibid., 278-279.

[81] Miceli, *L-Istorja ta' l-Opra f'Malta (1631-1866)*, 12; Vella Bondin, 'The Music of the Knights', 385.

[82] Vella Bondin, 'The Music of the Knights', 385.

[83] The original manuscripts of the six string quartets by Girolamo Abos are kept at Einsiedeln Abbey in Einsiedeln, Switzerland. According to RISM, one quartet is also available at St Andreas Benedictine Abbey in Sarnen, Switzerland.

[84] Joseph Vella Bondin, 'Girolamo Abos', in *Masters of Maltese Baroque Music*, edited by John Galea (Malta: APS Bank, 2002), 26.

Since this was probably intended to be performed before important liturgical services, the string quartets remain unique in their genre, among the rest of the works by Abos. At a young age, Abos, of French ancestry from Castellane, left Malta to study music in Naples.[85] Most of his life was spent in Italy and he travelled a lot, becoming well-known for his musical talent throughout Europe, but no evidence shows that he ever returned to his birthplace.[86] However, Abos never denied that he was from Malta, and maintained contact with his homeland, through his family and the Maltese students who attended the Neapolitan conservatoires, where he served as a teacher of singing and composition.[87] Abos wrote mainly Italian operas (*opera buffe* and *opera serie*), vocal works, and sacred music. Nothing indicates that during his lifetime any of his works were performed in Malta. Another Maltese-born composer who lived in the same century is Giuseppe Arena (1707-1784). The latter, whose father Matteo was an organist at the Conventual Church of St John for thirty-six years until his death in 1722, probably began his studies at the Conservatorio dei Poveri di Gesù Cristo in 1724.[88] Like Abos, he later had a remarkable career in music, primarily as a composer of operas commissioned by major theatres in Italy.[89] One of his extant works is *Sinfonia*, a trio in G major for two violins and bass.[90] However, since he lost musical contact with his native country, like his operas, this work was most likely never heard in Malta. Even during an epoch when musical culture in Malta was substantially rich, at least among the ruling class and their aristocratic friends, a number of Maltese-born musical artists had to leave their homeland in search of opportunities to display their talent and to advance their career, while musical activity in Malta often revolved around the performances of works by European foreign composers.

Michel'Angelo Vella (1710-1792) is probably the only composer of Maltese nationality who wrote purely instrumental music, to be performed by a small group of musicians, for the Knights of the Order of St John. After his studies and ordination in Naples,[91] Vella made his musical

[85] Girolamo Abos, *Stabat Mater*, edited by Joseph Vella Bondin (Middleton: A-R Editions, 2003), viii.
[86] Uwe Jens Rudolf and Warren G. Berg, 'Music', in *Historical Dictionary of Malta*, 2nd. ed., (Plymouth: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2010), 171.
[87] Abos, *Stabat Mater*, ix-x.
[88] Joseph Vella Bondin, 'Giuseppe Arena (1709-84)', in *Melitensium Amor: Festschrift in honour of Dun Ġwann Azzopardi*, edited by Toni Cortis, Thomas Freller and Lino Bugeja (Malta: the contributors, 2002), 392.
[89] Ibid., 394.
[90] The online music catalogue *Répertoire International des Sources Musicales* (RISM) indicates that this chamber work is available at Carolina Rediviva, Uppsala University Library, Uppsala, Sweden, https://opac.rism.info/metaopac/refineSearch.do?id=subject_facet&methodToCall=filterSearch&subval=Trios%28instr.%29 (accessed 3 January 2016).
[91] Joseph Vella Bondin, 'Maltese Composers of *Calendimaggio* Cantatas', *The Sunday Times* (Malta), 22 May 1994, 28.

career in Malta. Vella's secular chamber works are among his few compositions that are still extant. His set of *Sei Sonate a Tre Violini col Basso*, published in Paris in 1768, includes a dedication on the title page which reads, 'All'Illustrissimo Signore – Il Bailo di Wignacourt – Grande Priore di Sciampagna'.[92] This dedication to the Knight, a relative of the Grand Masters Alof and Adrien de Wignacourt, suggests that this music was written for chamber music gatherings that regularly entertained the Knight and his friends. To describe the chamber works, Richard Divall, the editor of these works, writes:

> These six works are a model of *galante* composition, in four movements and in a style that is a mixture of the German Enlightenment combined with French elements reminiscent of the works of Rameau, as well as the Italianate influences of Vella's teachers. They are modern for their time and of exquisite architecture and construction.[93]

Recently discovered, and also edited by Divall, is another set of twenty-four Sonatas for three transverse flutes without bass. It is not known when and where the pieces were performed, if ever.[94] In any case, these works make Vella the first Maltese composer and Maltese resident whose musical compositions were printed abroad, in this case, in Paris.[95] Documentation refers to other secular vocal works written for the Knights,[96] but these works are considered to be lost. Vella's surviving compositions also include his sacred compositions, some of which are archived at the Cospicua parish church of the Immaculate Conception, where he served as a *maestro di cappella* from 1762.[97]

1.5.2 Secular Cantatas for the Knights and the Populace

Cultural secular festivities were widely developed during the era of the Knights, both for entertainment purposes and sometimes also to serve as a public relations exercise between the sovereign and his subjects. One such festivity was Calendimaggio, to welcome the arrival of

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92 Michel'Angelo Vella, *Sei Sonate: a tre violini col basso*, (Paris: Hugard; Paris: Montassier, 1768), title page.

93 Michel'Angelo Vella, *24 Sonatas for 3 Transverse Flutes without Bass*, *Volume 1: Sonatas 1-6*, rev. ed., ed. Richard Divall (Europa: Lyrebird Press, 2009), 4. The second volume (*Volume 2: Sonatas 7-12*) was published in 2011, and the last two volumes (*Volume 3: Sonatas 13-18*; *Volume 4: Sonatas 19-24*) were both published in 2013, all by the same press.

94 As part of the first edition of the *Valletta International Baroque Festival*, held in January 2013, the New Century Baroque performed one of the newly edited sonatas for three violins and bass by Michel'Angelo Vella, on 18 January, at the Jesuit Church in Valletta.

95 Simon Mercieca, 'Michelangelo Vella's music "barely known"', *Times of Malta*, 28 February 2010.

96 Vincenzo Laurenza, 'Calendimaggio settecentesco a Malta', *Archivum Melitense* 2 (1913-1914), 197-198.

97 Vella Bondin, *Il-Mużika ta' Malta sa l-Aħħar tas-Seklu Tmintax*, 106-107.

spring. On the eve of the first day of May, celebrations including the *coccagna* and a musical drama were laid on in the main square in front of the Grand Master's Palace, in Valletta.[98] It is not precisely known when these forms of public entertainment started, but there is enough evidence to show that they were well-established traditions during the eighteenth century.[99] Victor Laurenza gives details about the *cantatas* for Calendimaggio, sometimes also referred to as *serenatas, componimento drammatico* or *dialogo musicale*. He lists 44 works, written between 1724 and 1777, the texts of which he found in the National Library of Malta,[100] which previously housed the Knights' library in Valletta. Other sources refer to *cantatas* that may have been performed even earlier.[101] These works were written as a form of praise to the Grand Master, with adaptations of classical mythological themes, historical allusions and references to spring. The majority of the texts, which are all in Italian, were prepared by Italian writers, but a few authors, like Giannicolò Muscat and Giovannantonio Ciantar, carry a Maltese surname. Some of them were set to music by the Maltese composers Fra Filippo Pizzuti and Don Michel'Angelo Vella.[102] Little is known about Pizzuti, who was born in Valletta in 1704.[103] The first musical links with the Knights go back to his young age when, after studying in Naples, he served as a tenor at the *cappella musicale* of the Conventual Church.[104] Any reference to his compositions, however, is limited to the *cantatas* for the eve of May Day that he wrote between 1734 and 1737. Nicolò Isouard is also cited as having composed *cantatas* on texts by Grand Master Emmanuel de Rohan de Polduc.[105] It is not clear whether these were written for Calendimaggio. The compositions could have been commissioned by the Order of the Knights to celebrate special occasions, to commemorate events, or to be performed on liturgical feast days.[106]

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98 The square in front of the Palace is today known as St George's Square. The *coccagna* was the custom of putting up a tree with objects hanging from it. The people climb it to get these goods.

99 William Zammit, '*Divertimento insieme, e Sollievo del Popolo*: The *Coccagna* as a manifestation of Benevolent Despotism in *Ancien Régime* Malta', in *Celebratio Amicitiae: essays in honour of Giovanni Bonello*, edited by M. Camilleri and T. Vella (Malta: Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, 2006), 70-71.

100 Laurenza, 'Calendimaggio settecentesco a Malta', 187.

101 In his dissertation 'The Complete Sacred Music of Nicolò Isouard (1773-1818) and Maltese Sacred Music for the Order of Malta in the Late Eighteenth Century', 38, Divall refers to a *cantata* libretto dated 1713, available at the National Library of Malta. In the essay '*Divertimento insieme, e sollievo del popolo*: The *Coccagna* as a manifestation of Benevolent Despotism in *Ancien Régime* Malta', 70, footnote 7, William Zammit states that the earliest reference to a *cantata* for Calendimaggio goes back to 1706, but he gives no further details about the original source.

102 Laurenza, 'Calendimaggio settecentesco a Malta', 196-203.

103 Vella Bondin, *Il-Mużika ta' Malta sa l-Aħħar tas-Seklu Tmintax*, 103.

104 Ibid., 104.

105 Matteo Sansone, 'Maltese Music: Italian Affiliation and Original Achievements', in *Italian and Maltese Music in the Archives at the Cathedral Museum of Mdina*, edited by John Azzopardi and Matteo Sansone (Mdina: Cathedral Museum, 2001), 116.

106 See Joseph Vella Bondin, *Il-Mużika ta' Malta sa l-Aħħar tas-Seklu Tmintax*, 99 for a list of commemorative *cantatas* and 'The Music of the Knights' by the same author, 385, footnote 87, for a reference to a sacred *cantata*.

A good number of the texts for Calendimaggio *cantatas* were printed in Malta. Basing his research on local prints from after 1757, William Zammit notes that an average of only 400 copies of each were printed. This may be an evidence that while the celebrations in the square, including the *coccagna* and the donations of money and food, were meant for the populace, the musical event was intended for a selected smaller group of educated elite and the privileged friends of the Grand Master.[107] Otherwise, it can simply imply that the text of the *cantata* was distributed only amongst a few spectators, as the majority of the people were illiterate.

Since none of the musical scores of these *cantatas* for Calendimaggio have survived, details about instrumentation and the style of musical accompaniment to the text is not known. However, given the influence of Italian music on the Maltese repertoire, it can be safely assumed that these should have mostly resembled the Italian *cantatas*, and perhaps more specifically the Neapolitan style. The *cantata* was the principal form of Italian chamber music from the early seventeenth century to the late eighteenth century.[108] Typically, it consisted of a poetic text for a vocal soloist accompanied by *basso continuo* and one or more *obbligato* instruments. The text for these vocal chamber pieces were often the work of aristocratic amateurs or literati, as in fact were the works of the writers for the Maltese pieces. The performance usually took place in the palaces of ruling families or high-ranking clergy in the Roman Catholic Church.[109] During the eighteenth century, Naples became a major centre for the *cantata*, and thus this explains why it also became a form of musical entertainment in Malta. As time went by, the Neapolitan *cantatas* gained more operatic features and grew into larger-scale works. Thus, they lost the characteristics of private chamber music and became public concert pieces with less emphasis on the text.[110] A *serenata* in fact is similar to a *cantata* but was performed outdoors. In the case of pieces written for Calendimaggio, these were performed in the square, with the Grand Master and other aristocrats in the overlooking balcony.[111] Thus the musical works that could have been written for a small group of instrumentalists and singers were presented in an open space and therefore available to a large audience.

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[107] Zammit, '*Divertimento insieme, e Sollievo del Popolo*', 71. Further details on the printing of librettos for Calendimaggio *cantatas* can be found in a book by the same author, 'L-Istorja ta' l-Istampa f'Malta' [The History of Printing in Malta] (Pietà, Malta: Publikazzjonijiet Indipendenza (PIN), 2006), 33-34, 100.

[108] Colin Timms, '*Cantata*', in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Dictionary Online* (Oxford University Press), http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed 20 October 2015).

[109] Mark A. Radice, *Chamber Music: an Essential History* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2012), 19.

[110] Colin Timms, '*Cantata*'.

[111] The title page of the libretto for the *serenata* performed in 1756 reads, 'De doversi cantare a dì 30. Aprile – dell'anno 1756. – In Malta nella Gran Piazza del Palazzo.'

1.5.3 Musical Activities in the Public Theatre

Theatrical works and operas were only performed in Malta in private gatherings, for at least a century, until Grand Master António Manoel de Vilhena commissioned and personally financed the building of a public theatre.[112] In ten months, the theatre was ready for use and on 19 January 1732, the Italian Knights presented the tragedy *Merope* by Scipione Maffei, at the Teatro Pubblico.[113] As the inscription in Latin above the main entrance still records, the public theatre was erected 'for the honest recreation of the people'.[114] Up to 1866, it remained the only regular theatre on the islands of Malta.

From its first decades, this theatre was a place for comedies, tragedies, operas, sacred operas, cantatas, oratorios, and also non-theatrical performances such as dances and masked balls. A good number of productions were prepared by the Knights themselves, but operas were regularly performed by visiting professionals, when the impresario engaged professional actors and Italian companies.[115] In the eighteenth century, this was one of the few places of entertainment to keep the Knights and the other few notables amused. The Teatro Pubblico soon gained a reputation across Europe and the Grand Master was frequently presented with petitions from individuals or companies to produce the latest operas and other theatrical or musical works at the theatre in Malta.[116] The stage of the Maltese public theatre was an experimental platform for novice performers and served as a stepping-stone for those artists who aimed to perform at the most high-esteemed theatres of Europe, such as Milan's La Scala and London's Covent Garden.

The public concert recital, then known as *academia*, was flourishing in theatres around Europe, with France and northern Italy having the first great venues to delight eighteenth-century audiences.[117] Thus it is supposed that such concerts were soon given even in Malta. Yet there is only one record of an *academia* that was held at the theatre, on Friday, 19 November 1790.[118] The programme included a mixture of vocal and instrumental music, which was very common at the time, since up to the first decade of the nineteenth century, as Richard Taruskin states,

[112] Victor Lewis, 'The Manoel Theatre', *The Malta Year Book* (1976), 421. This theatre is nowadays known as *Teatru Manoel* and is officially the national theatre of Malta.
[113] Paul Xuereb, *The Manoel Theatre: a Short History* (Valletta: Friends of the Manoel Theatre, 1994), 16.
[114] Miceli, *L-Istorja ta' l-Opra f'Malta (1631-1866)*, 6.
[115] Xuereb, *The Manoel Theatre: a Short History*, 19.
[116] Vella Bondin, 'The Music of the Knights', 385.
[117] Richard Taruskin, *Music in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: The Oxford History of Western Music*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 499.
[118] Xuereb, *The Manoel Theatre: a Short History*, 27.

there were no indoor all-instrumental concerts.[119] The concert was presented by the composer and virtuoso violinist Ferdinand Fränzl (1767-1833).[120] One of the works performed was Fränzl's *Sinfonia concertante a due Violini*, where the composer himself played, accompanied by the Maltese violinist Emanuele Nani (1769-1860), son of the aforementioned Angelo Nani.[121] The fact that the renowned German musician gave this concert in Malta while he was touring in other cities around Europe is another testimony that, during the period of the Knights, the public theatre in Malta offered musical performances that were comparable to the contemporary musical standards in other countries.

It was sixty years before the first operas by a Maltese composer were produced at the Teatro Pubblico. The earliest one could have been an opera in one act by Nicolò Isouard entitled *Casaciello, perseguitato da un mago*, performed in January 1793.[122] That was followed by a succession of other stage works written by the same composer.[123] Isouard left his homeland in 1800, when the French rulers were ousted, and never returned to his birthplace. He then continued with a successful career in Paris, as a prolific composer of *opéra comique.* The only musical works of a Maltese composer that were performed at this theatre during the long stay of the Knights are those by Isouard.

Except for a handful, Maltese composers had a marginal role in the widespread musical activities that took place during the era of the Knights. It was therefore difficult to cultivate a musical identity that could be described as distinctively Maltese, at such an early phase. Art music in Malta was based on standards imported from Western European culture, and reflected

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119 Taruskin, *Music in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, 498.

120 For more details about Ferdinand Fränzl refer to the entry in the *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (Oxford University Press), written by Roland Würtz. The entry is available at http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed 12 November 2015).

121 Xuereb, *The Manoel Theatre: a Short History*, 27. Plate 6 (in the coloured pages) shows the programme of this *academia*. The *Sinfonia concertante a due Violini* was dedicated to Ferdinand Fränzl's father. The first time it was performed, the father and his son performed the violin parts. Since this is the only *symphonie concertante* that Ferdinand Fräenzl composed, a copy of parts of this piece are those available at: http://imslp.org/wiki/Concerto_for_2_Violins_in_E_major,_Op.4_(Fr%C3%A4nzl,_Ferdinand) (accessed 12 October 2015). A list of Ferdinand Fränzl's works are availaible in a study by Susan Eileen Pickett, entitled 'Ferdinand Fraenzl's Symphonie Concertante, Opus 4: a performance edition with historical and editorial notes' (Ph.D. diss., Texas Tech University, 1981). Particular reference to this piece that was published in 1794, is given in pages 12-13. Ferdinand Fränzl was also a composer of string quartets.

122 Divall, 'The Complete Sacred Works of Nicolò Isouard', 338.

123 For a list of operas by Isouard that were performed in Malta, refer to: Vella Bondin, 'Nicolò Isouard: His Years in Malta', 24; Xuereb, *The Manoel Theatre: a Short History*, 30; Miceli, *L-Istorja ta' l-Opra f'Malta (1631-1866)*, 16-17; Vella Bondin, *Il-Mużika ta' Malta sa l-Aħħar tas-Seklu Tmintax*, 124, 156-157; Divall, 'The Complete Sacred Works of Nicolò Isouard', 338-342. These sources sometimes disagree on the year in which the operas were performed.

the countries or regions of origin of the noble Knights.

Almost nothing is known about other performances that took place at the public theatre during the French occupation. Yet, it is clear that the theatre continued to function. Isouard was appointed as commissioner of the theatre from September 1798, a few months after the Knights peacefully surrendered the Islands to Napoleon.[124] The Italian troupe of singers and musicians continued to work in Malta since they were not allowed to leave before 10 May 1800.[125]

1.6 Music in British Malta

Under British rule, particularly prior to World War II (1939-1945), opera remained the principal genre of secular music, and the Italian cultural influence continued to dominate the Maltese theatre such that in musical terms, Malta could be mistaken for a provincial city in southern Italy. Operatic companies that were regularly hired from Italy presented works by their native composers. Other operas by non-Italians were not received with great approval by theatregoers, and it was not until the late decades of the nineteenth century that operas by composers from other countries, mainly French or French-trained and to a lesser extent Austrian, became more frequently heard in Malta.[126]

From time to time, the public theatre in Valletta, which under the British took the name of Real Teatro or Theatre Royal, presented a few works by Maltese composers. These musical compositions, however, retained an Italian connection due to their style coupled with texts in Italian. Among the works by local composers presented at the Theatre Royal during the nineteenth century there are sacred oratorios, cantatas for special occasions, and a few operas. Concerts featuring purely instrumental music do not seem to have been popular among those who attended the theatre. The Theatre Royal, though, regularly held beneficiary concerts, generally comprising extracts from operas and instrumental pieces. One of the items in the programme presented on 1 March 1841, as a beneficiary for Giovanni Le Brun, was a symphony by Paolo Nani (1814-1904), originally written for the church.[127] Another secular work worth

[124] Vella Bondin, 'Nicolò Isouard: His Years in Malta', 25.
[125] Xuereb, *The Manoel Theatre: a Short History*, 37.
[126] Joseph Vella, 'L-Identità Kulturali ta' Malta - il-Mużika', in *L-Identità Kulturali ta' Malta* [The Cultural Identity of Malta], edited by Toni Cortis (Valletta: Dipartiment ta' l-Informazzjoni, 1989), 54-55.
[127] Vella Bondin, *Il-Mużika ta' Malta fis-Sekli Dsatax u Għoxrin* [The Music of Malta during the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries], (Pietà, Malta: Publikazzjonijiet Indipendenza (PIN), 2000), 92.

mentioning is a suite for orchestra in six sections composed by Alessandro Curmy (1801-1857), entitled *La Rivoluzione*, in relation to the 1848 revolution in France. It was performed at the Theatre Royal on 5 April 1850.[128] *La Rivoluzione* is the earliest orchestral suite among those written by Maltese composers, and perhaps one of the few such works performed at the Theatre Royal at that time.

Other venues, including the Auberge de Provence and the Casino Maltese also hosted *academias* and concerts. However, these musical gatherings were again heavily dominated by operatic works, or occasional representations of sacred compositions with strong operatic tendencies, accompanied by small instrumental ensembles.[129] The number of non-vocal pieces was very limited. Instrumental music concerts remained rare throughout the nineteenth century and are scarcely documented. In various ways, during the British occupation, Maltese music lost contact with musical developments in Europe, particularly the increasing emphasis on purely instrumental music and the growing sense of musical nationalism.

The populace was also entertained by groups of around five or six musicians who engaged with the audience in the streets or went from door to door with the hope of earning money to make a living.[130] These were usually companies of blind fiddlers.[131] *Il-Banda ta' Indri* is one of the groups that was still recalled decades after it ceased to function. It was set up by Indri Borg (1818-1903), a blind person from young age who knew how to play several instruments and was most fond of the clarinet.[132] His band was introduced in 1860 and this was probably the starting point that grew into the custom of having philharmonic bands in every village.[133] Otherwise, the common people who could not afford to visit the theatres could hear popular tunes on the *terramaxka*. In the late nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century, these barrel-organs decorated with puppets that dance round and round, roamed around the streets of Malta, playing melodies mostly from operas, operettas and classical music pieces.[134]

The Theatre Royal, which was earlier reserved for the nobility, became too small and ill-

[128] Vella Bondin, *The Great Maltese Composers*, 540-541.
[129] Miceli, *L-Istorja ta' l-Opra f'Malta (1631-1866)*, 147; Vella Bondin, *Il-Mużika ta' Malta fis-Sekli Dsatax u Għoxrin*, 92-93.
[130] Borg Cardona, *Musical Instruments of the Maltese Islands*, 12.
[131] Badger, *Description of Malta and Gozo*, 82.
[132] Borg Cardona, *Musical Instruments of the Maltese Islands*, 13.
[133] Vella Bondin, *Il-Mużika ta' Malta fis-Sekli Dsatax u Għoxrin*, 97.
[134] Cassar Pullicino, 'Song and Dance in Malta and Gozo', 67; Borg Cardona, *Musical Instruments of the Maltese Islands*, 14-15, 226-229.

equipped to serve the increasing demand for opera productions. Towards the end of the 1850s, plans for the building of another publicly owned theatre were underway, and thus the Theatre Royal was taken into private hands so that the new opera house could be built.[135] The magnificent Royal Opera House, designed by Edward Middleton Barry, was erected in Strada Reale, close to the main entrance to Valletta, and had its official opening in October 1866.[136] The importance of the old theatre, which then established its current name, Teatru Manoel [Manoel Theatre], deteriorated when the newly-built opera house opened its doors. Though the building of the latter replaced the older theatre, the situation did not improve much for the Maltese composers. Their compositions were rarely selected to be performed at the Royal Opera House. Thus, the Maltese composers were continuously prevented from presenting their works at the main theatres in their own homeland.

Prior to its destruction by fire, in 1873, no compositions written by Maltese composers were selected to be performed at the Royal Opera House.[137] While the restoration works of the ruined building were underway, the people returned to their old theatre.[138] *Zorilla* by Anton Nani (1842-1929), which was originally scheduled to be produced at the Royal Opera House, was instead held at Teatru Manoel, with exuberant success, for two consecutive seasons.[139] In four years, the opera house was ready to be used again. The first local opera to be presented there was *I Cavalieri di Malta* in the season 1879-1880. This composition, based on a Maltese historical theme, by Anton Nani, was also received with much enthusiasm by the audiences and highly acclaimed by the local press.[140] The third opera by Nani, *Agnese Visconti*, was premiered at the same venue in 1888-1889, thirteen years after it was composed.[141] Nani's operas, together with some of his sacred works, exemplify Maltese romanticism, which reflects the pervasive influence of musical trends in Italy. The next operatic work by a Maltese composer was *Francesca da Rimini*, by Paolino Vassallo (1856-1923), performed on 1 May 1888. A revised version of this work was staged again at the opera house as *Amore Fatale* in the 1897-1898 season.[142] The composer preceded the first act of his opera with the overture

135 Xuereb, *The Manoel Theatre: a Short History*, 83-84.
136 Joseph Bonnici and Michael Cassar, *The Royal Opera House, Malta*, (Malta: the authors, 1990), 11.
137 Ibid., 37.
138 Xuereb, *The Manoel Theatre: a Short History*, 93.
139 Vella Bondin, *Il-Mużika ta' Malta fis-Sekli Dsatax u Għoxrin*, 47.
140 Ibid., 49-50.
141 Alfred G. Miceli, *L-Istorja ta' l-Opra f'Malta (1866-2000)* [The History of Opera in Malta (1866-2000)] (Pietà, Malta: Publikazzjonijiet Indipendenza (PIN), 2001), 89.
142 Emy Scicluna and Christopher Muscat, 'Paolino Vassallo', *Musicalics - Compositeurs Classiques*, entry posted 6 July 2007, http://musicalics.com (accessed 7 November 2015).

Malta, a work which expresses his patriotism.[143] During the following season, Giuseppe Emmanuele Bonavia (1831-1897) presented *Ginevra di Monreale*, a *dramma lirico* in four acts.[144] Vassallo wrote two more operas, *Frazir* and *Miss Edith Cavel*, both premiered at the Royal Opera House. The former was presented nine times throughout the seasons 1904-1905, and *Miss Edith Cavell* received its world premiere on 21 March 1927, four years after the composer's demise.[145] The first representation of *Redenta*, an opera in two acts, by Carlo Fiamingo (1881-1961) was held on 23 March 1912.[146] One of the new works for the 1917-1918 season was the lyric melodrama *L'Alpino*, the only operatic work by Carlo Diacono (1876-1942), to a libretto by Ramiro Barbaro.[147]

The *Camera degli autori e compositori di musica Maltesi*, founded by Luigi Vella (1868-1950) in 1923, worked hard to promote the local musical talent.[148] As from the theatrical season 1923-1924, the impresario of the Royal Opera House was expected to hold a seasonal competition for works by Maltese composers, and then present the best piece at the theatre.[149] This contract clause was probably suggested by the *Camera*, whose members included most of the leading Maltese composers of the time.[150] For various reasons, the purpose of the competition for operas was never accomplished. The contest for orchestral works was held twice, but there were no submissions for the second competition. The winning composition, for the contest held in 1924-1925, was the symphonic poem by Josie Mallia Pulvirenti (1896-1964), *Impressionismo*, premiered on 6 April 1925.[151] Another piece by Mallia Pulvirenti, *Serata Romantica* for two sopranos, tenor and orchestra, was performed during an event held on 14 February 1938. The musical evening included two more works by Maltese composers, *Invocazione* by Giuseppe Camilleri (1903-1976) and the intermezzo of the lyric melodrama *L'Alpino* by Diacono.[152] Other works of Maltese composers were rarely presented at the opera theatre.

Even the titles of these compositions reveal that only a few works focus on a Maltese theme.

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143 Vella Bondin, *Il-Mużika ta' Malta fis-Sekli Dsatax u Għoxrin*, 149.
144 Miceli, *L-Istorja ta' l-Opra f'Malta (1866-2000)*, 92-93.
145 Scicluna and Muscat, 'Paolino Vassallo'.
146 Miceli, *L-Istorja ta' l-Opra f'Malta (1866-2000)*, 155-156.
147 Ibid., 168.
148 The *Camera degli autori e compositori di musica Maltesi* seems to have grown out of the *Unione musicale Maltese di mutuo soccorso*, of which Luigi Vella was president. The society for composers was first presided by Anton Nani and later by Carlo Fiamingo.
149 Bonnici and Cassar, *The Royal Opera House, Malta*, 64.
150 Rolandi, *Musica e Musicisti in Malta*, 51.
151 Vella Bondin, *Il-Mużika ta' Malta fis-Sekli Dsatax u Għoxrin*, 152-153.
152 Miceli, *L-Istorja ta' l-Opra f'Malta (1866-2000)*, 219.

While in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in other colonized countries there was great awareness of the need to create music that would be perceived as national, Maltese composers were still attached to imitating alternative European styles and trying to attract the attention of the impresarios of the most sought-after theatre in their native land, in order to get opportunities to showcase their talents. Perhaps the fear of being rejected by the middle-class theatre audience who were accustomed to an Italianized musical culture is one of the main reasons why, even in the first decades of the twentieth century, only a few composers wrote music that could be interpreted as expressing nationalism. For those who retained the Italian styles, however, their approach was in itself a form of resistance to the British colonizers and their culture.

During WWII, when Italian musicians were prevented from coming to Malta, local theatrical groups and musicians began to present operas and concerts at the Royal Opera House.[153] This initiative lasted for only a few years, until the theatre was deliberately bombed and demolished during an air raid by the German Luftwaffe on the evening of 7 April 1942.[154] The Valletta opera house has never been rebuilt. After numerous controversies, the site has been redeveloped into an open-air performance space to a design by Renzo Piano. The new theatre, Pjazza Teatru Rjal [Royal Theatre Square] was officially inaugurated on 8 August 2013.

For centuries, the institution that gave Maltese composers the best opportunity to develop their musical potential was the Catholic Church. In fact, most of the leading local composers were able to write music primarily due to their employment as *maestri di cappella*, and because parishes and religious orders commissioned their works. From the latter half of the nineteenth century, the *Cappella* Bugeja and the *Cappella* Nani dominated the musical scene in the churches. Though they both had their distinctive style of liturgical music, the operatic element was evident in the works of both. In several sacred genres, the theatrical form influenced music in churches, in so far as no distinction between the music played at the theatre and the music heard in church could be noticed, except for the text.[155] Thus, the solemnities of the church accompanied by music became an opportunity for people from the lower strata of society to listen to opera for free. This musical culture in the churches dwindled gradually after WWII,

[153] Vella Bondin, *Il-Mużika ta' Malta fis-Sekli Dsatax u Għoxrin*, 156.
[154] Bonnici and Cassar, *The Royal Opera House, Malta*, 79.
[155] Vella Bondin, *Il-Mużika ta' Malta fis-Sekli Dsatax u Għoxrin*, 9.

following several controversies, mainly about which styles of music were adequate for the liturgy, and ecclesiastical reforms.

1.6.1 Chamber Music by Maltese Composers in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

The changes of the nineteenth century did not favour chamber music. The eviction of the Order of St John from Malta brought an abrupt end to an epoch of Maltese history in which all art forms flourished. As a result of its new colonial status, Malta was excluded from the increasingly emancipated socio-cultural life in Europe. Moreover, in the period under consideration, the Maltese people persevered in absorbing the musical culture of provinces in southern Italy, which were also detached from the mainstream of instrumental musical developments.[156]

A few chamber works composed by the Nani dynasty of musicians[157] attest that though the custom of having private concerts at the residences of aristocratic patrons had decreased significantly, it was kept alive at least up to the first decades of the nineteenth century. Emanuele, the most gifted son of Angelo, composed a set of three *Duos Concertants*, dated 1837, for his patron Giuseppe Micallef. His younger brother Agostino (1782-1846), also a violinist and composer, wrote another *Tre Duetti per Violino* for his patron Francesco Xerri. Even if these are not considered major works, their mention is essential since the available purely instrumental chamber music by Maltese composers that dates back to the first half of the century is extremely restricted in number.

Later, Anton Nani wrote duets for violin and piano: *Fantasia*, *Melodia* and *Nocturne*. The latter, which is only a draft composition, bears the date 1864, and therefore is among Anton's first compositions. He wrote it when he was still in Malta, studying with Giuseppe Spiteri Fremond (1804-1878), who was considered among the finest local music teachers. Three years later, Anton went to continue his musical education with private tutors in Naples, and was more successful in opera and liturgical compositions.[158] His operatic tendencies are reflected in his *Fantasia*, an undated duet based on Verdi's operatic drama lirico *I Lombardi*.

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156 Massimo Mila, 'La Vita della Musica nell'Ottocento Italiano', *Belfagor* 12 (1957), 500.

157 The original scores of the Nani composers are available at the Mdina Cathedral archives and are cataloged in the book by John Azzopardi, Franco Bruni and Joseph Vella Bondin, *The Nani Composers (XVIII-XX cent.) - a historical assessment and a catalogue of their works* (Collegeville, Minn.: Hill Monastic Manuscript Library; Mdina: Cathedral Museum, 2007).

158 Vella Bondin, *Il-Mużika ta' Malta fis-Sekli Dsatax u Għoxrin*, 45.

Around the first decade of the twentieth century, Carlo Fiamingo had some of his secular works published by the companies Forlivesi & Co. and G. Venturini, both based in Florence.[159] His published instrumental chamber works, *Andante Appasionato*, *Barcarola*, *Gran Capriccio di Concerto* and *Pensiero Melanconico* are all for violin and piano. *Danse Infernale*, a *caprice fantastique*, is for violin and either orchestra or piano. The same duet combination also features in the works of Vittorio Scerri (1857-1942), *Filotèa* (1911) and *Notte sul Mare* (1915). His only other piece for a small chamber ensemble, entitled *Lusitania* (1915), is written for a quintet with a more unusual instrumental combination made up of a clarinet, violin, guitar, mandolin and piano. Paolino Vassallo added to the repertoire of chamber music centred on the violin and piano, and also composed pieces for string instruments alone: *Andante* for string quartet, and *Gavotta* for a combination of three mandolins, two guitars and string quartet.[160] In the 1920s and the 1930s, the music publishing company Carisch of Milan printed a number of works by Josie Mallia Pulvirenti, among them the melodrama *Lettera Africana* (1936), scored for harp, piano and string quintet, as background music to accompany a poem by Renzo Pezzani.[161]

1.6.2 Initiatives for Promoting Instrumental Music During and After World War II

Liturgical music and opera were the prevailing genres available to the public ear, and most of the audience at the Royal Opera House was presumably unaware of the emancipation of instrumental from vocal models in European classical music, at least up to the late 1930s. Moreover, the musical knowledge of theatregoers was restricted to works by Italian composers or those who made a name for themselves in the Italian musical life. More awareness about orchestral and chamber music took place later, as the mid twentieth century approached.

Concert life had been given a considerable boost when in 1936 Paul Nani (1906-1986) introduced a concert series of classical music. The first concerts were held at his own studio in South Street, Valletta and transmitted live on Rediffusion.[162] Some of them were later held at the Royal Opera House, and at the Auberge d'Aragon when it became the seat of the British

[159] Anna A. Mousù, *A Catalogue of Printed Works by Maltese Composers at the Music Library of the Cathedral Museum, Malta* (Valletta: The Foundation for International Studies, at the University of Malta, 1988), 15-16.

[160] Joseph Vella Bondin, 'Paolino Vassallo', in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (Oxford University Press), http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed 1 September 2015).

[161] Mousù, *A Catalogue of Printed Works by Maltese Composers*, 19.

[162] In 1935, radio broadcasting was introduced in Malta by a company called Rediffusion (Malta) Limited. The British government initially launched broadcasting to counter Fascist propaganda from Italy. Rediffusion had a monopoly on broadcasting news, features, music and entertainment in the Maltese Islands.

Institute.[163] As from 1939, the British Institute sponsored these musical events and Nani agreed to present twenty-two concerts annually, fourteen orchestral and eight instrumental.[164] The popularity of these concerts increased so much that the number of attendees usually went up to around eight hundred.[165] Nani's concerts featured secular works by renowned composers of British and other various European nationalities.[166] Among the items of the concert programmes were works by Maltese composers, including Josie Mallia Pulvirenti, Carlo Diacono, Carlo Fiamingo, Carmelo Pace and Paul Nani himself.[167] In order to give these concerts, Nani formed the Malta Symphony Orchestra, made up of fifty-five musicians including the most gifted Maltese artists of the time.[168] As an orchestral conductor, Nani is revered for his great talent and virtuosity. By promoting the work of native composers and musicians, Nani and his concerts enhanced and supported the musical culture and strengthened the nation's confidence in its people's talents. The concerts were not interrupted by the war, and they lasted till 1952.

A few years after the end of WWII, Gaston Tonna-Barthet (1905-1987) founded the Malta Cultural Institute (MCI), to assist the activities of the Maltese people who were trying to get their country back on its feet again.[169] The first meeting of the MCI was held on 2 January 1949, and the institute was officially inaugurated with a concert held on 15 February of the same year, at the Concert Hall of the Phoenicia Hotel, Floriana.[170] The programme featured orchestral works, instrumental solo pieces, songs and romanzas, by nineteenth and early twentieth century, male and female composers.[171] The last item in the concert was *Polonaise* (1930), a six-minute piece for pianoforte and chamber orchestra by the prolific Maltese composer Carmelo Pace

[163] The Auberge d'Aragon was made available to the British Institute in 1939. After Malta's independence in 1964, the building housed the Office of the Prime Minister, until 1972. Since then it has become the seat of various government ministries.

[164] Joseph Vella Bondin, 'The Nani Musicians, their Music and their *Cappella di Musica*', in *The Nani Composers (XVIII-XX cent.) - A Historical Assessment of their Works*, edited by John Azzopardi, Franco Bruni and Joseph Vella Bondin (Collegeville, Minn.: Hill Monastic Manuscript Library; Mdina: Cathedral Museum, 2007), 41.

[165] Ibid.

[166] As Vella Bondin writes, these composers included Gibbons, Chopin, Beethoven, Brahms, Coleridge-Taylor, Tchaikovsky, Walton, Debussy, Bach, Schubert, Vivaldi, Handel, Mozart, Smetana, Sibelius, Purcell, Wallace and Mendelssohn.

[167] Vella Bondin, *Il-Mużika ta' Malta fis-Sekli Dsatax u Għoxrin*, 163.

[168] Ibid.

[169] 'Malta Cultural Institute concert to mark 66th anniversary', *Malta Independent*, 2 February 2015.

[170] Malta Cultural Institute (MCI), http://maltaculturalinstitute.yolasite.com/resources/MCIPresentation.pdf (accessed 20 October 2015).

[171] The inaugural concert of the MCI included works by Wagner, Verdi, Gounod, Beethoven, Donizetti, Liszt, Debussy, Puccini, Mozart, Saint-Saëns, Chopin, Meyerbeer, Chaminade, Kreisler, Alfano, Dohnányi, Giordano, and Pace.

(1906-1993).[172] The MCI continued to organize monthly concerts at fine venues, such as at the Phoenicia Hotel and the Casino Maltese.[173] Between 1948 and 1987, the main organizer and consultant of the musical events was Carmelo Pace.[174] Presented in the concerts was a mixture of solo, chamber, vocal and orchestral music. A considerable number of works by Pace, mostly chamber music for various combinations of instruments, were first performed during these concerts, by freelance musicians.

Rediffusion Malta Limited played a major role in promoting local music in the 1950s, by organizing competitions that seem to have focused mainly on works for solo instruments and small ensembles. Documentation about the arrangements related to these competitions, the contestants and the prizewinning musical pieces is very patchy. As regards chamber music, in 1955, Carmelo Pace won the second prize of the Rediffusion Chamber Music Competition with *Sarabande and Gigue*, for violin and piano. This composition was then premiered during a concert featuring the prizewinning and highly commended works, held at the British Institute in Valletta, on 17 November 1955.[175] Two years later, the first prize for a chamber music entry was awarded to Joseph Fenech (1917-2010) for *Barcarolle and Tarantella Brillante*, written for violin, violoncello and piano.[176] That same year, two entries by Pace were given an Honourable Mention: *Sarabande and Gigue*, composed for piano and string quartet, and *Passacaglia e Furlana*, a work for piano, flute, clarinet and bassoon.[177] The works were performed during the concert held at the Phoenicia Hotel on 17 January 1958, and the winning composers were awarded with certificates and cash prizes.[178] Besides the chamber works, for these competitions Pace submitted and received other prizes for solo piano and vocal works.[179]

[172] *Polonaise* was performed by the Mozart Amateur String Orchestra, founded by Edward Naudi in 1917. The same work was later arranged for violoncello and orchestra.

[173] Vella Bondin, *Il-Mużika ta' Malta fis-Sekli Dsatax u Għoxrin*, 169.

[174] After Carmelo Pace, the organization was in the hands of Helen De Gabriele and Marcel De Gabriele, and in 1992, Marie Therese Vassallo took over. Nowadays, the MCI events are broadened to include all art forms.

[175] Marcel De Gabriele, Georgette Caffari and Carmelo Pace, *Carmelo Pace: a Maltese Composer: thematic, annotated and illustrated catalogue of works* (Mdina: Cathedral Museum, 1991), 224. Another work by Pace for piano, *La Vallée Solitaire* [The Lonely Valley], was awarded the first prize and *Three Maltese Pictures*, also for solo piano, achieved a Highly Commended mention.

[176] Joseph Vella Bondin, 'A tribute to the great Mro Joseph Fenech', *The Sunday Times*, 25 April 2010. *Barcarolle and Tarantella Brillante* is the only secular piece for a chamber ensemble written by Fenech. This composer's repertoire is mostly concentrated on sacred works.

[177] In that year's competitions, Pace won the first price for *Variations on a Theme of Nicolò Isouard*, as a concert piece for piano, and *Theme with Variations* for solo piano received an Honourable Mention.

[178] De Gabriele et al., *Carmelo Pace: a Maltese Composer*, 112-113.

[179] For vocal works by Pace that received an award in the Rediffusion music competitions, see De Gabriele et al., *Carmelo Pace: a Maltese Composer*, 294-295.

1.6.3 The Role of Culture and Music in Establishing a Maltese National Identity

The twentieth century saw the gradual assertion of a Maltese national identity that culminated in the country's independence from Britain. During the early decades, nationalism was enfolded into two different aspects that fed upon each other: political nationalism and cultural nationalism. Politically, the Maltese people were fighting for their political rights against their British rulers by insisting on self-government and resisting cultural assimilation with the British.[180] Cultural nationalism was inspired by the most educated Maltese who saw *italianità* as a sign of resistance to the colonizer's policies.[181] With this nationalistic sentiment in the background, a number of native artists and scholars were striving to create a Maltese identity independent from any foreign influence, through forms of literal, visual and performing arts.

Cultural awareness, for example, led to the setting up of the Valletta Museum in 1903, which was the first National Museum in Malta. This project could serve to enhance the appreciation of Maltese tangible cultural heritage. In a couple of years, the museum had a collection of items of historical interest, archaeological objects and a small art gallery.[182] Maltese literature was enriched especially through poetry, including the works of the national poet Dun Karm Psaila (1871-1961) who in 1912 wrote his first poem in Maltese, the verses with a strong patriotic sentiment in the poems of Rużar Briffa (1906-1963), and the poetry and prose of Ġuzè Muscat Azzopardi (1853-1927), particularly his novels, in which the nationalistic values stand out.[183] A qualitatively important step forward in the formation of a national identity occurred in 1934, when the Maltese language was recognized as the official language together with English, while Italian lost its official status.[184] The Maltese language, which has a Semitic origin and is written in a Latin alphabet, is perhaps the most idiosyncratic feature of the island's identity. The staging of theatrical performances in Maltese, produced by various theatre companies in different

[180] Gofrey Wettinger, 'The Nature of Maltese Politics: c. 870-1964', in *The British Colonial Experience, 1800-1964: The Impact on Maltese Society*, edited by Victor Mallia-Milanes (Malta: Mireva Publications, 1988), 20.

[181] Henry Frendo, 'Maltese Colonial Identity: Latin Mediterranean or British Empire?', in *The British Colonial Experience, 1800-1964: The Impact on Maltese Society*, edited by Victor Mallia-Milanes (Malta: Mireva Publications, 1988), 189.

[182] Romina Delia, 'National Museums in Malta', in *Building National Museums in Europe 1750-2010. Conference proceedings from EuNaMus, European National Museums: Identity Politics, the Uses of the Past and the European Citizen, Bologna 28-30 April 2011, EuNaMus Report No. 1*, edited by Peter Aronsson and Gabriella Elgenius (Linköping University Electronic Press), 577, http://www.ep.liu.se/ecp_home/index.en.aspx?issue=064 (accessed 5 December 2015).

[183] For biographical details about these personalities, refer to Michael J. Schiavone, *Dictionary of Maltese Biographies*, vols. 1-2 (Pietà, Malta: Publikazzjonijiet Indipendenza (PIN), 2009).

[184] Albert Borg, 'Maltese as a National Language', in *The Semitic Languages: an International Handbook*, ed. Stefan Weninger (Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2011),1039.

towns, villages and church parishes, was therefore in itself a nationalist statement.[185] Some of the theatrical works had styles and themes that are deliberately Maltese, such as the longest playing vernacular comedy *It-Tieġ ta' Karmena Abdilla* [The Wedding of Karmena Abdilla] (1957) by Charles Clews (1919-2009), and the dramatic poem *Il-Fidwa tal-Bdiewa* [The Ransom of the Peasants] (1913) by Ninu Cremona (1880-1972), which is based on a historical event, when the Maltese rose against their Spanish overlord in 1426.[186]

The early recordings of traditional music in the Maltese language date back to the inter-war period, when gramophones became more popular and accessible. In February 1931, Dr. Fortunato Habib, a Jewish businessman based in Malta, sent a group of Maltese singers and musicians to Tunisia, to record folk and lyrical music in vernacular language on the *Polyphon* series of red label discs.[187] That same year, Valletta's music agents P. Carabott Music Establishment of Merchant Street and Anthony D'Amato of St John Street contracted Maltese artists to record music on other international record labels. Louise Carabott of P. Carabott Music Establishment, published a catalogue of forty-eight new records, which were recorded in Malta and later in Tunis, under the *Odeon* label. Featuring in this catalogue, entitled *Dischi Maltin* [Maltese Songs], were different styles of music by the best Maltese artists, including various composers and conductors, solo musicians and orchestras, folk, operatic and lyrical singers, poets, and comic artists.[188] Anthony D'Amato, the agent and distributer of *His Master's Voice*, agreed with The Gramophone Company Ltd. to record Maltese music. After writing and rehearsing the music in Malta, the group of artists involved recorded a number of folk ballads, tangos, waltzes, foxtrots, lyrical songs, and also some comical stories and anecdotes, at the HMV studio in Milan, accompanied by the studio's ensemble.[189] These first recordings, reflecting Maltese society and culture, were valuable musical products, which changed the islanders' self-perception and gave them confidence in their native music.

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185 Vicki Ann Cremona, 'Politics and Identity in Maltese Theatre: Adaptation or Innovation?', *TDR: The Drama Review (1988-)* 52/4 (2008), 122-123.

186 Vicky Ann Cremona et al., 'Malta', in *The World Encyclopedia of Contemporary Theatre, vol. 1: Europe*, edited by Don Rubin, 584, 586 (1994; repr. London: Routledge, 2000). Scenes from *Il-Fidwa tal-Bdiewa* were staged at Teatru Manoel on 3 February 1923. In 1970, it was then performed in its entirety at Verdala Palace. Its script was first published in Maltese in 1936, and the English version was published in 1960.

187 Alamango, 'Malta's Lost Voices', 55.

188 Ibid., 57.

189 Ibid., 56. The group of artists that entered into the recording agreement with D'Amato were the Maltese composer Vincenzo Ciappara (1890-1979), the comic entertainer and owner of the humorous journal Dr. Brombos, Carlo Satariano, the bass singer Domenico Busuttil, the tenor Giuseppi Cefai, and the baritone singers Ruggieru Falzon and Michele Smith.

Titles of works in the musical repertoire of local composers reveal signs of nationalism in music. The choice of subjects for the two orchestra works by Paul Nani, composed in the 1940s, both relate to Malta. With *Maltese Christmas* (1943), dedicated to his son Mario on his birthday, Nani gives a musical portrait of the religious and folkloristic traditions at Christmas time.[190] *Malta War Symphony* (1944) is about the dramatic events of the time, and commemorates the many victims of WWII.[191] On a lighter note, carnival festivities are commemorated in a piece for small orchestra, *Il Carnevale di Malta* (1956).[192] It is the only musical work by Pawlu Grech (b. 1938), written in Italy during the first stage of his artistic formation, that draws upon Maltese folklore.

Carmelo Pace was a leading musical personality who expressed his patriotic feelings by zealously setting himself to compose music based on subjects related to the cultural heritage and traditional folk tunes. *Maltesina* is his first attempt to provide a collection of folk melodies. Pace wrote this fantasy for band in 1931, and later arranged it for orchestra. The band version was premiered in the same year at the Palace Square in Valletta. Marcel De Gabriele and Georgette Caffari explain that:

> This Fantasy contains nine different original Folk-tunes and each tune is given a number at the opening bar. A few bars of episodic material are introduced to connect the principal themes.[193]

One of Pace's well-known compositions is *L-Imnarja*, a six-minute choral work for an unaccompanied mixed choir, or with pianoforte accompaniment. Its title refers to the subject of the song, the feast of St Peter and St Paul, which falls on 29 June. Celebrations for *L-Imnarja* reach their climax in Buskett with servings of rabbit stew and folk-singing. In this choral work, written in the Maltese language, Pace mixes together parts of well-known traditional Maltese melodies and embellishes them with a polyphonic vocal texture. Since its year of completion, in 1960, *L-Imnarja* has been frequently performed and broadcast in Malta and overseas.[194] After Malta obtained its independence from Britain on 21 September 1964, Pace wrote several other works that bring to the fore his nationalistic identity. As an early Maltese collector of native

[190] Azzopardi, Bruni and Vella Bondin, *The Nani Composers*, 149.
[191] Ibid.
[192] Pawlu Grech, 'The Life and Work of Pawlu Grech - Maestro, Chevalier, Artist and Musician', http://www.pawlugrech.com/Compostions/compositions.htm (accessed 17 July 2015).
[193] De Gabriele et al., *Carmelo Pace: a Maltese Composer*, 184.
[194] Ibid., 333.

folk music, Pace also served as a model for his fellow contemporaries to follow in preserving and cultivating the national identity of Malta through music.[195]

Nationalistic elements are even more evident in the music of Charles Camilleri (1931-2010). During the last two decades of British rule, when Camilleri was still in his youth, his sensitivity towards his Maltese surroundings and the everyday life of the people could already be noted in a number of musical works for solo, chamber ensembles and orchestra. Among the works he composed in his teenage years is *Kleine Sonatinen* for violin and piano, broadcasted in 1946 on Rediffusion during a programme produced by the *Moviment tal-Malti* [Maltese Language Movement]. As Camilleri writes on the front page of his hand-written score, this piece is 'based on Maltese melodies'. Names of other early chamber works that imply folkloristic elements and the composer's fascination for the aesthetic characteristics of his native country are *Sonatine di Malte* (1947) for violin and piano, *Three Village Songs for Two Violins* (1947), *Xeni Maltin* [Maltese Scenes] (1948), a string quartet in three movements, and *Melita Dances* (1960) for horn and piano. Ever since he was a young boy, Camilleri was captivated by the sound of *għana*, and therefore he collected the repetitive motifs of these folk tunes and developed them so as to create his own musical works.[196] *Five Maltese Dances* (1960) and *Three Maltese Miniatures* (1960), both for solo piano, are constructed on a number of traditional melodies or children's tunes that arise during play. Christopher Palmer writes that *Ħemda* [Stillness] (1962), for piano, 'is the most subtle and concentratedly atmospheric of all Camilleri's several (implicit and explicit) evocations of the mystical stillness which pervades the Maltese landscape at the time of sunrise and sunsets.'[197] Folkloristic features are very vividly expressed in *Concertino No. 4: Summer Nights in Malta* (1962; rev. 1997) written for two pianos and string orchestra, yet Camilleri's most overtly nationalistic composition is the orchestral work *Malta Suite* (1947), which he wrote when he was fifteen, while on holiday in Gozo.[198] *Malta Suite* is divided into four movements, *Country Dance, Waltz, Nocturne* and *Village Feast*, whose melodic material has roots in *għana*, indigenous Maltese songs and band marches.

[195] Lydia Buttigieg, 'Maestro Carmelo Pace (1906-1993): a prolific twentieth-century composer, musician and music educator', *The Educator: A Journal of Educational Matters* 1 (2013), 54.
[196] Michael Bonello, ed., *The Piano Music of Charles Camilleri* (Valletta: Andrew Rupert Publishing, 1990), 7.
[197] Christopher Palmer, *The Music of Charles Camilleri: An Introduction* (Valletta: Midsea Publications, 1975), 20-21.
[198] Ibid., 7.

1.7 The Evolution of Music Education for Maltese Musicians

As pointed out previously, according to the available sources, in the late sixteenth century, the Cathedral Chapter already provided musical instruction for the requirements of the liturgy at the Mdina Cathedral. Soon after, the Neapolitan schools exerted a major influence on the musical life in Malta and on musical education. From as early as the eighteenth century, after learning the basic elements of music through private tuition in their own country, Maltese people who aimed for a prominent career in music usually furthered their studies at one of the prestigious conservatoires in Naples. Pietro Gristi (1696-1738), Michel'Angelo Vella, Girolamo Abos, Benigno Zerafa (1726-1804), Francesco Azopardi (1748-1809), Pietro Paolo Bugeja, Alessandro Curmy, Vincenzo Bugeja (1805-1860), Paolo Nani and Anton Nani, were among those who attended these conservatoires. Abos, who continued his career in Italy, took two teaching posts in Naples, at Poveri di Gesù Cristo and Sant'Onofrio, where he taught other Maltese students who attended these conservatoires.[199] After finishing their studies, these students engaged themselves in churches and orchestras in their homeland, and worked as teachers of music, by giving private tuition at their own homes or at their students' houses. This implied a circulation of musical material connected with their studies. One of the most influential teachers was the cleric Michel'Angelo Vella, who besides his contribution to composition, improved musical education such that it became attuned to the developments in Naples. Vella regarded the teaching of music as necessary to provide a holistic education.[200] Among the successful students who attended his first recorded private music school in Malta were Francesco Azopardi, Nicolò Isouard, Giuseppe Burlò (1772-1856) and Salvatore Magrin (1763-1848).[201]

As an aid for students, the prolific sacred-music composer and teacher Francesco Azopardi wrote *Il Musico Pratico*, a beginner's guide to the study of harmony and counterpoint, which brought him international fame. In 1786, this theoretical treatise was translated into French, without the author's knowledge and consent, by Nicholas Etienne Framéry, and published by Le Duc as *Le Musicien Pratique*. Framéry, who was a defender of the Italian musical language in the French-Italian confrontation about opera, published Azopardi's book to promote Italian

[199] Abos, *Stabat Mater*, ix.
[200] Vella Bondin, *Il-Mużika ta' Malta sal-Aħħar tas-Seklu Tmintax*, 105-106.
[201] Vella, 'Music and Musicians in 17th and 18th Century Malta', *The Manoel: Journal of the Teatru Manoel* 1/3, 63, edited by Paul Xuereb (Valletta: Manoel Theatre Committee, 1999-2000).

pedagogic techniques in music.[202] The same treatise was re-edited and published in 1824 by the French musicologist Alexandre Choron.[203]

While the majority of music teachers, such as Michel'Angelo Vella, Francesco Azopardi, Giuseppe Burlò, Emanuele Muscat and Paolino Vassallo, gave private tuition at their own homes or at their students' houses, other music teachers were also involved in orphanages, state schools and educational institutions run by religious orders.[204] Giuseppe Spiteri Fremond, a monk of the Augustinian Order, who was among the noted composers of the nineteenth century, used to teach music and singing at a free school for boys, which his Order set up in 1846 in its Valletta convent. Shortly afterwards, he formed a choir for the boys, and wrote several liturgical choral works for it.[205] Giuseppe Vella (1827-1912) was a teacher of music in church and state schools. He started his teaching profession in schools in 1854, when he was appointed at the nun's college of Sacro Cuor in Valletta. Later, he was involved in primary and secondary schools in Valletta, Floriana and the Three Cities, and in colleges. Vella also gave private tuition in theory, composition and piano performance.[206] His great competence in music teaching is clearly shown in the seven didactic treaties that he wrote.[207] The Philharmonic Societies, the majority of which were founded in the latter half of the nineteenth centuries, played an important role in engaging people in music and teaching musical instruments, especially providing service to the band club.[208]

Unlike the others, Paolino Vassallo continued his musical studies at the Conservatoire de Paris.[209] In fact, through Vassallo, we find the first attempts to break away from the Italian musical idiom. A few years after his return to his homeland from Paris in 1888, he set up a conservatoire of music, to provide cheap and easy theoretical and practical tuition to those who expressed an interest in music, so that they would be able to master the art of music in its various

[202] Matteo Sansone, 'Italian Baroque Music in Malta: A Madrigal from the Music Archives at the Cathedral Museum in Mdina', *California Italian Studies* 1/1 (2010), 10.
[203] More details about *Il Musico Pratico* can be found in Oliver Brantley Adams, 'Francesco Azopardi's "Il Musico Pratico": An Annotated Translation and Critical Study of its French Editions by Framery (1786) and Choron (1824)' (Ph.D. diss., University of Texas, 1991). And in Dione Buhagiar 'Il Musico Pratico by Francesco Azopardi (1748-1809)' (Ph.D. diss., Rutgers University, New Jersey, 2000).
[204] Rolandi, *Musica e Musicisti in Malta*, 41.
[205] Vella Bondin, liner notes to *Giuseppe Spiteri Fremond (1804-1878): Messa Grande*.
[206] Mifsud Bonnici, *Mużiċisti Kompożituri Maltin*, 24.
[207] Vella Bondin, *Il-Mużika ta' Malta fis-Sekli Dsatax u Għoxrin*, 84.
[208] *L-Istorja tal-Kazini tal-Baned f'Malta u Għawdex* [The History of Band Clubs in Malta and Gozo], in 3 volumes, edited by Michael J. Schiavone (Pietà: Pubblikazzjonijiet Indipendenza, 1997-1998) gives detailed descriptions about the establishment and expansion of band clubs in towns and villages around Malta and Gozo.
[209] Mifsud Bonnici, *Mużiċisti Kompożituri Maltin*, 33.

branches. Vassallo's institute offered courses in singing, solfeggio, piano, stringed instruments (violin, cello, double bass and harp), woodwind instruments (flute, clarinet, oboe and bassoon) and brass instruments (trumpet, horn and trombone), harmony and composition, choral training, orchestral training, and string quartet training. Classes, which contained only up to twelve pupils, were held twice a week, and the students were separated according to their level and gender.[210] The school soon attracted a large number of students and achieved a good reputation.[211] Undoubtedly, Vassallo was remarkably successful in the teaching of composition. Some of his students, including Giuseppe Caruana (1880-1931), Carlo Diacono, Domenico Anastasi (1886-1938) and Josie Mallia Pulvirenti, were among the leading Maltese composers who dominated the musical scene in the twentieth century, after their master's demise.

A proposal for a musical institute, in association with the Royal Opera House, was approved, when in 20 July 1923, the rules to administer the institute were published. The two principal aims of the institute were to provide education for those who aspired to work in the musical scene and enhance the public appreciation of music. The institute, which was expected to welcome Maltese students, could offer free courses for both sexes, either in a string instrument or in voice, with a curriculum that covered theory, solfeggio, musical pedagogy, history of music and musical instruments, and harmony. While the attending students could take part in a purposely organized orchestra and choir, or in concerts held at the theatre, highly promising students could even receive a grant to further their studies abroad.[212] When the guidelines for the proposed institute were published, there were still no adequate premises for this institute and it is unclear if the institute ever opened.[213]

Musical education took a significant step forward when in 1975, the state opened a school of music in Malta and later in Gozo.[214] A second important development was taken in 1988 when the Mediterranean Institute at the University of Malta started to offer a music studies programme at tertiary level, under the tutorship of leading Maltese musicians and composers.[215]

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[210] Scicluna and Muscat, 'Paolino Vassallo'.
[211] Rolandi, *Musica e Musicisti in Malta*, 41.
[212] Bonnici and Cassar, *The Royal Opera House*, 64, 67.
[213] Rolandi, in *Musica e Musicisti in Malta*, 41, states that the musical institute was open only for a short while between 1923 and 1927. In *L-Istorja L-Istorja ta' l-Opra f'Malta (1866-2000)*, Miceli, 64, gives the impression that it did open, at some point or another, but not as soon as the regulations were set up. Basing his argument on other writings, Vella Bondin, in *Il-Mużika ta' Malta fis-Sekli Dsatax u Għoxrin*, 150-151, writes that it never started to function.
[214] Vella Bondin, *Il-Mużika ta' Malta fis-Sekli Dsatax u Għoxrin*, 164.
[215] Ibid.

In July 2012, the School of Performing Arts, within the University of Malta, was established to bring together the Music, Dance and Theatre Departments.[216] It offers undergraduate and postgraduate courses designed to provide knowledge and skills in research, composition and performance. The majority of native composers born after 1950 first graduated in music from the University of Malta and then chose to continue their studies either in English-speaking countries or in Italy.

1.8 Over Fifty Years of Musical Activity in Malta as an Independent State

The postcolonial period was an important phase that challenged the Maltese people to look to their own roots in order to retrieve their identity, and stimulated the artists to contribute to re-establishing a national culture through their creative products.

The Maltese musical heritage was profoundly enriched when, in 1968, a collection of manuscript and printed music was transferred from the Mdina Cathedral sacristies to the Old Seminary.[217] When the scores were re-classified, they were found to contain a musical wealth that shed light on completely forgotten Maltese composers, foreign musicians who contributed to musical activities in Malta, and the styles and forms of musical works that were performed on the Islands.[218] Since 2004, the Mdina Cathedral Archives has housed this invaluable collection.[219] Other sacred and secular musical scores of great interest are mainly held in smaller musical archives of parishes in Malta and Gozo, convents and band clubs, at the Mdina branch of the National Archives of Malta, and at the Wignacourt Museum in Rabat. To share part of this musical heritage with music listeners, from 2001 onwards, APS Bank has sponsored a collection of compact discs covering mostly sacred pieces by Maltese composers from the eighteenth century to the present, conducted by Maltese artists such as Joseph Vella (b. 1942), Dion Buhagiar (b. 1944) and John Galea (b. 1960).[220]

From time to time, Maltese folksong, which for a long time had been considered as not worthy

[216] University of Malta, 'School of Performing Arts', https://www.um.edu.mt/performingarts (accessed 4 January 2016).
[217] Azzopardi, 'The Musical Archives', 19.
[218] This work was carried out under the direction of Mgr. John Azzopardi. The Old Seminary is now the Mdina Cathedral Museum.
[219] The cathedral archives, including the music collection, are held at the Mdina Cathedral Archives, Ange's Palace, Villagaignon Str., Mdina.
[220] A description of the project and a list of compact discs released by APS Bank is available at https://www.apsbank.com.mt/en/music (accessed 2 December 2015).

of recording or salvaging, has aroused the interest of researchers and musicians to retrieve it. In the last decades, programmes on the media, evening performances organized in different towns and villages, and a national festival have restored the interest of younger generations in *għana*. The first *National Folk Singing Festival* was held in 1998 in Argotti Botanic Gardens, with the participation of local and foreign folk musicians and singers.[221] Ten years later, it was renamed *Għanafest*, but it retained its basic characteristic of featuring a mixture of Maltese and Mediterranean folk music, and continued to grow by including a wider repertoire and a diversity of musical genres.[222] Some have also incorporated *għana* into pop music and classical contemporary compositions.[223]

A number of local groups have played an important role in keeping the characteristics of folk music alive through their newly composed songs. The locally popular folk band *Greenfields*, which started writing music in the 1970's, released a number of songs encouraged by a nostalgic affection towards Maltese traditions, which can be considered as classical Maltese folk songs. In 2000, the folk ensemble *Etnika* embarked on a project of reviving the musical instruments that once were part of everyday music in Malta and of reinterpreting Maltese traditional songs and melodies.[224] This resulted in their album *Nafra*. Three years later, in 2003, the same group released the compilation CD *Etnika - Żifna* [*Etnika* - Dance]. In the recent evolution of modern folk music, a band worth mentioning is *Kantilena*, which in 2014, released its first album, *Senduq* [Chest], with songs reminiscent of folk rhythms, embellished with contemporary sounds.[225]

In post-independence Malta, the use of the vernacular became increasingly common also in pop music. Band groups, such as *The Tramps* and *New Cuorey* that were both set up towards the

[221] Mifsud-Chircop, 'Malta's *Għana*', 150.

[222] The originator and artistic director of the *National Folk Singing Festival* was George Mifsud-Chircop. Ruben Zahra (b. 1972) took over the artistic direction in 2008 after his predecessor passed away. *Għanafest* is one of the national music festivals organized annually by Arts Council Malta (ACM). For more details about *Għanafest* refer to its official webpage: http://www.maltafolkmusicfestival.org/ (accessed 1 December 2015).

[223] For example, the song *Tisimgħu Tissaħħar* [Listening to Him is Enchanting] combines elements of folk and pop music. It was the winning song of the contest of original songs in Maltese *L-Għanja tal-Poplu* [People's Ode Song Contest], 2001, composed by Frans Baldacchino 'il-Budaj' on words by Priscilla Psaila, and sung by both. For a composer like Charles Camilleri, the use of folk song as the basis for classical music is a common characteristic in his works.

[224] The four founder members of the group *Etnika* were the composer Ruben Zahra, the traditional instrument maker Ġużi Gatt, the researcher Steve Borg and the musician Andrew Alamango.

[225] The name of the band refers to Pietru Caxaro's *Cantilena*, the first Maltese writing that is on record. In *Senduq*, the main members of the band are James Baldacchino (violin and viola), Drina Camilleri (guitar and voice), Albert Garzia (accordion), and Alessandro Lia (piano and voice). The official website of *Kantilena* is http://kantilenamalta.com/ (accessed 7 December 2015).

end of the 1960s, wrote Maltese songs that tend to revolve around recurring themes such as love, nostalgia, and the landscape features of the Islands, whose tunes remain perennial favourites. In 1971, Mary Rose Mallia was the first Maltese singer to record an LP in her mother tongue.[226] The album *Songs from Malta* included songs with music composed by Charles Camilleri and lyrics by Joe Friggieri, some of which are still popular. Since its debut in 1973, the song contest *L-Għanja tal-Poplu* [People's Ode Song Contest], originally organized by Youth Travel Circle (YTC) for its singer-songwriter members, has been a main promoter of pop and contemporary folk songs written in the Maltese language. The festival, which has now become a firmly established national festival, is held annually with the aim of supporting purely Maltese elements.[227]

Opera, which for many years was the reigning genre of music in Malta, lost its popularity among the post-war generations, especially when cinema replaced it as another means of entertainment.[228] Nevertheless, between 1965 and 1976 Carmelo Pace wrote four operas, all of which were premiered at Teatru Manoel, with plots rooted in Malta's past events and folk legends.[229] Charles Camilleri went a step further when he composed two of his five operas, *Il-Wegħda* [The Vow] (1983) and *Il-Fidwa tal-Bdiewa* [The Ransom of the Peasants] (1984-85), not only against the ambience of his native land, but also set to Maltese librettos, by Joe Friggieri.[230]

A few years after its re-opening in 1960,[231] Malta's national theatre, Teatru Manoel, established its own orchestra, to perform a range of repertoire from symphonic concerts to opera. The Manoel Theatre Orchestra, which started to function on 1 April 1968, was predominantly

[226] Malta Music Memory Project, 'Mary Rose Mallia', http://www.m3p.com.mt (accessed 3 December 2015).

[227] L-Għanja tal-Poplu, http://www.ghanjafest.com/ (accessed 5 January 2016). *L-Għanja tal-Poplu* has at times been missed mainly because of lack of funds. From 2015, the organizing committee of *L-Għanja tal-Poplu* is preparing the festival in collaboration with St James Cavalier, and is being supported by ACM and Valletta 2018 Foundation.

[228] Carmel Cassar, 'Everyday Life in Malta', in *The British Colonial Experience, 1800-1964: The Impact on Maltese Society,* edited by Victor Mallia-Milanes (Malta: Mireva Publications, 1988), 111.

[229] A more detailed description of the plot and a brief analysis of the four operas composed by Carmelo Pace are available in De Gabriele et al., *Carmelo Pace: a Maltese Composer*, 1-37.

[230] *Il-Wegħda* had its first performance on 11 May 1984 at Teatru Manoel and was repeated three months later at San Anton Gardens, Balzan, during *Maltafest,* a summer festival of performing arts. In 2007, it was performed again at Teatru Manoel. The premiere of *Il-Fidwa tal-Bdiewa* was held on 5 August 1985, at San Anton Gardens, Balzan. More details are available at: Joseph Vella Bondin, 'Charles Camilleri', in *Grove Dictionary Online. Oxford Music Online* (Oxford University Press), and 'Charles Camilleri's "Il-Wegħda" at the Manoel Theatre', *Malta Independent*, 21 May 2007.

[231] In 1957, the Teatru Manoel was bought back by the Malta Government. After an extensive refurbishment, it reopened on 27 December 1960, with the production of Léo Delibes' Coppelia (1870) by the Ballet Rambert.

formed by a number of musicians who had previously been members of the chamber orchestra in the employment of the Commander in Chief of the Royal Navy (Malta), better known as the C-in-C Orchestra.[232] Until then, the few orchestras established in Malta were mainly formed by semi-professional musicians and amateur personnel. Joseph Sammut (b. 1926), who began his tenure as chief conductor of the C-in-C in 1952, retained his role with the theatre's orchestra until 1993.[233] In 1997, the orchestra became a private entity and was renamed the National Orchestra of Malta. It held its name until the latest transformation in 2008, when it became known as the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra (MPO).[234] It has performed under the baton of internationally renowned conductors and Maltese principal and resident conductors including Michael Laus (b. 1960) and Joseph Vella. Since September 2014, Brian Schembri (b. 1961) has been entrusted with the role of principal conductor and artistic director. Along with other orchestral engagements, the MPO has been the prime exponent of Maltese composers from different eras. Besides numerous other works by earlier Maltese composers, the MPO has performed twentieth-century orchestral works by Carmelo Pace, Mariella Cassar Cordina (née Cassar) (b. 1976), Karl Fiorini (b. 1979), Albert Garzia (b. 1977), and Véronique Vella (née Zammit) (b. 1979), and also recorded works by Charles Camilleri, Joseph Vella, Albert Pace (b. 1958), Christopher Muscat (b. 1977), Steven Psaila (b. 1984) and Paul Portelli (b. 1973). At the turn of the twenty-first century, a new orchestra was set up for student musicians, to give them a first-hand experience in orchestral performance. The Malta Youth Orchestra (MYO) made its debut in December 2004 at a concert held at the President's Palace in Valletta and was revived seven years later to give a concert at Sir Temi Zammit Hall, at the University of Malta.[235] The MYO meets on a regular basis, and from time to time it gives concerts in collaboration with the MPO.[236]

Down the years, various musical organizations, private entities and individuals have taken the initiative in organizing composition competitions and concerts featuring chamber works. Since the last decades of the twentieth century, Teatru Manoel has been a leading organizer of chamber music activities. For example, in the 1970s, the theatre's committee held chamber

[232] The Malta Philharmonic Orchestra, 'MPO History', http://www.maltaorchestra.com/mpo-history/ (accessed 29 November 2015).
[233] Lydia Buttigieg, 'Origins and Development of a Contemporary Maltese Orchestra: The Malta Philharmonic Orchestra', *Journal of Maltese History* 4/2 (2015), 44, 46.
[234] The Malta Philharmonic Orchestra, 'MPO History'.
[235] The Malta Philharmonic Orchestra, 'Malta Youth Orchestra', http://www.maltaorchestra.com/education-outreach/malta-youth-orchestra/ (accessed 29 November 2015).
[236] Lydia Buttigieg, 'Origins and Development of a Contemporary Maltese Orchestra', 48.

music contests,[237] and in 2008 it launched the New Composers series at Sala Isouard to promote chamber music by up-and-coming Maltese composers. By the late decades of the twentieth century, the expansion of educational opportunities in music had taken musical performances to a higher degree of artistry, and composers could have their written works professionally performed. In 2015, the MPO started a series of chamber music concerts covering a wide repertoire of works by international composers, at Robert Samut Hall, Floriana.[238] Meanwhile, on the initiative of the composers themselves, a number of musical scores have been published,[239] and recordings have been issued on compact discs. Freelance musicians and orchestra members have at times taken the initiative to form ensembles to perform chamber music and to record works by local composers. Worth mentioning is the compact disc *Premieres*, released in 2015, with the *Cosmos Wind Ensemble* featuring chamber music by Charles Camilleri and younger living Maltese composers Albert Garzia, Véronique Vella and Ruben Zahra. The uniqueness of the compact disc lies in displaying the distinctive characteristics of various local composers, through their recently written purely instrumental chamber works. Thus, it gives an overview of contemporary chamber music by the young generation of native Maltese composers.

In 1972, the Ministry of Education and Culture introduced the *International Malta Arts Festival* that helped to create an awareness of a wide range of musical styles and other performing arts. Eight years later, it developed into a more refined manifestation and was rebranded as *Maltafest*.[240] It was last held in 1998. Further opportunities have been made available since the beginning of the twenty-first century. A number of projects have been made possible through the support of the Malta Council for Culture and the Arts (MCCA), set up by parliamentary act in 2002,[241] which was accountable to distribute funds allocated by the government to sustain

[237] Documentary sources related to these competitions and concerts held by the Manoel Theatre Commitee is very limited. An evidence of the setting up of the contests are the prizes awarded to Carmelo Pace. In 1975, he won two prizes for his chamber works: the first prize for *Pianoforte Quartet No. 3* (1973) and a second award for *Trio for Pianoforte, Violin and Violoncello* (1975).

[238] During the concert season 2015-2016, the MPO organized three of these concerts, on 25 October 2015, 17 January 2016, and 3 April 2016.

[239] Due to the absence of music publishing houses in Malta, the publication of scores by local composers has remained difficult. A significant number of scores by the cosmopolitan composer Charles Camilleri, including solo, chamber, choral, and orchestral music, have been published by Novello & Co., Boosey and Hawkes, Lengnick, and Robertson. Published scores of twentieth-century works by other Maltese composers are only a handful.

[240] Vella Bondin, *Il-Mużika ta' Malta fis-Sekli Dsatax u Għoxrin*, 170. Addtional information about *Maltafest* was presented in an article by Joseph Vella Bondin, 'Maltafest - an expendable exercise in national culture', *The Sunday Times*, 28 April 1991, 39.

[241] The Malta Council for Culture and the Arts (MCCA) took over from what was previously known as the Department of Culture which was part of the Ministry for Culture.

the arts. After the year 2015, the MCCA became known as Arts Council Malta (ACM).[242] The Council is responsible for the organization of annual festivals[243] and to support groups or individuals to promote the arts, among other duties. Since Valletta was declared European Capital of Culture (ECoC) for 2018, the Valletta 2018 Foundation has been entrusted with the role of creating a cultural programme that encompasses a wide variety of artistic disciplines and creative initiatives ranging from performing and visual arts to science, sporting activities and other forms of human expression.[244]

More awareness about the musical heritage and the development of the local talent has led to an outburst of arts festivals. Among the annual festivals that enrich the local cultural calendar are the *Malta Arts Festival* initiated in 2006, the *International Spring Orchestra Festival* that first took place in 2007, the *Valletta International Baroque Festival* that was introduced in 2013 to celebrate the baroque identity of Valletta, and *The Three Palaces Festival*, also first held in 2013.[245] The festival's concerts, which present a wide range of repertoire including chamber music by foreign and local composers, take place in venues which have been long used to accommodate musical events, or in restored historical buildings around Valletta. Venues that play an important role in promoting the arts are Teatru Manoel, Pjazza Teatru Rjal, the Mediterranean Conference Centre (MCC), and St James Cavalier. St John's Co-Cathedral remained a central location for sacred music events, along with other smaller baroque churches or chapels, and the Anglican St Paul's Pro-Cathedral. More prestigious places with outstanding aesthetic and acoustic qualities, as well as public open spaces are being discovered as worthy of musical activity.

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[242] The Maltese Parliament approved a new legal structure for Arts Council Malta on 12 May 2015. Further information about the Council and its legal act is available from http://www.maltaculture.com.

[243] Currently, ACM organizes five annual festivals: *Karnival ta' Malta* [Malta Carnival], *Malta Jazz Festival*, *Malta Arts Festival*, *Notte Bianca*, *The Three Palaces Festival*, and *Għanafest*.

[244] The official website of *Valletta 2018 - European Capital of Culture* is http://valletta2018.org/ (accessed 28 December 2015).

[245] The *International Spring Orchestra Festival*, organized by the composer and artistic director Karl Fiorini, presents chamber music, solo recitals and orchestral works. Maltese composers have often been given the opportunity to premier their works during these concerts. The music festival also has an educational aspect. It organizes concerts for gifted children and master classes for students. For more details about the *International Spring Orchestra Festival*, refer to the website http://www.iso-festival.com/index.html (accessed 12 December 2015).
The official website of the *Valletta International Baroque Festival* is available at http://vallettabaroquefestival.com.mt/ (accessed 27 December 2015). It mostly concentrates on music, but occasionally it presents theatrical works and activities for children.
The *Malta Arts Festival* incorporates a wide variety of arts in addition to music, while *The Three Palaces Festival* focuses mostly on solo recitals, choral and chamber works. Both events are organized by ACM and therefore additional information is uploaded on http://www.maltaculture.com/ (accessed 12 November 2015).

1.9 A Selection of Chamber Music from Twentieth and Twenty-First Century Malta

Chamber music has frequently served as a genre suitable to experimentation with the compositional techniques and styles that began to emerge in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and which continued to develop alongside newer ones in the inter-war period.[246] These progressive musical idioms, however, are difficult to identify clearly in the isolated chamber pieces written by Maltese composers until the first half of the century. This is hardly surprising, given that Maltese composers often engaged with musical tendencies and styles that were developed some decades earlier by non-Maltese composers. A decisive departure from nineteenth-century trends in composition arrived with the post-tonal chamber works of Carmelo Pace, particularly some of his string quartets.[247] Pace did not find favourable conditions to bring forward his fresh musical ideas and, as a matter of fact, his finest works have never been presented to the general public, let alone gained popularity. To give an overview of newer methods in composition, with regards to chamber music in Malta, this study therefore analyses five works written during the latter decades of the twentieth century and the first years of the twenty-first. The choice of the pieces for analysis is based on multiple factors, including the composer's value as a national figure, the attempt at creating a national cultural identity through music, the impact of the composer on future generations, the popularity in terms of recorded works, published scores or works featured in concerts and on international broadcasting networks, and the diversity in instrumentation, compositional styles and methods.

Research into the music of previous eras has already been carried out by other scholars,[248] yet much remains to be discussed about the work of contemporary Maltese composers. All but one of the chamber music pieces selected to be analysed here are by living composers. Even though a substantial literature is available about him, the late Charles Camilleri could not be left out of this study due to his great contribution to music in Malta, the name he made for himself overseas, and the influence he exercised on the next generation of composers.[249] Historical

[246] Radice, *Chamber Music: an Essential History*, 2-3.

[247] These string quartets by Carmelo Pace were almost all written in the 1930s (see De Gabriele et al., *Carmelo Pace: a Maltese Composer*, 146-154). Lydia Buttigieg has carried out a doctoral study on the works of Pace and analysed some of these quartets. For further details, refer to 'Carmelo Pace (1906-1993): The career and creative achievement of a twentieth-century Maltese composer in social and cultural context' (Ph.D. diss., Music School, Durham University, 2014).

[248] John Azzopardi, Franco Bruni, Anna Borg Cardona, Stanley Fiorini, Alfred Miceli, Ulderico Rolandi, Joseph Vella and Joseph Vella Bondin, among others, have all written about different aspects of musical life in Malta through the ages. A list of their works is included in the Bibliography.

[249] The book *Charles Camilleri: Portrait of a Composer*, edited by Edwige Sapienza and Joe Attard (Valletta: Said International, 1988) gives information about the life of Camilleri. A general overview of the composer's

accounts of Maltese music give credit to the extensive service to music and the long musical careers of Joseph Vella and Pawlu Grech.[250] There again, analytical writings about their compositions are often general and brief. A comprehensive description and discussion of a selected chamber work by each of them will provide a thorough appraisal of their respective compositional techniques, as used in these pieces. Even less has been written about the works of the two younger composers, Véronique Vella and Mariella Cassar Cordina, which may point towards more recent approaches in composition, the notion of chamber music, and the reconstruction of national identity after independence.

The first three selected works, Charles Camilleri's *Silent Spaces* (1977), Pawlu Grech's *Five Events* (1984), and *Segments No. 1* (1998) by Joseph Vella, are by composers who were born in the 1930s and 1940s, just before or during WWII. This generation of composers experienced the crucial transitional phases in the Maltese political system, the instability of the economic situation, and the social unrest that followed the war, as well as the move towards independence and postcolonial developments. Such circumstances made a considerable impact on Maltese culture, and local artists from different artistic disciplines were either directly or indirectly influenced by these situations. During the post-WWII heavy migration period, Camilleri and Grech both left their homeland.[251] While they travelled and lived in foreign countries, the two composers maintained an active musical career and made great efforts to connect with the diverse musical languages that evolved in the twentieth century. Nonetheless, they took quite different paths with regards to their compositional styles. *Silent Spaces* and *Five Events* were written not long before Camilleri and Grech permanently moved back to Malta in 1983 and 1986, respectively. Meanwhile, the third composer, Joseph Vella, a Gozitan, enjoyed a thriving conducting and compositional career while remaining in the Maltese archipelago. *Segments No. 1* suggests a contemporary personal idiom which absorbs both classical forms

works is available in the article by Ateş Orga, 'Charles Camilleri in Conversation: including a chronology', *Music and Musicians International* 35/11 (1987), 33-36 and Christopher Palmer's, *The Music of Charles Camilleri: An Introduction* (Valletta: Midsea Publications, 1975). Other writings, such as *From Folk Music to the Cosmos: Form and Texture in the Music of Charles Camilleri* (Malta: CMC Publications, 2002), by Albert Pace and *Charles Camilleri: Ten Piano Sonatinas, Taqsim for Two Piano: A study on their Mediterranean Genetics* (Aylesbury: Roberton Publications, 2001), by John Galea, discuss his compositional styles as demonstrated in a number of his works. More literature about Camilleri is listed in the Bibliography of this thesis.

[250] Refer to Vella Bondin, *Il-Mużika ta' Malta fis-Sekli Dsatax u Għoxrin*, pages 172-173, for bibliographic information about Pawlu Grech, and pages 192-197 for an account of Joseph Vella's broad contribution to the Maltese musical field. *The Great Maltese Composers - Historical Context, Lives, and Works*, by the same author, gives further details about Vella and some of his work on pages 650-657.

[251] Charles Camilleri migrated to Toronto with his family in 1949. He later lived in New York and London. Pawlu Grech moved to Rome in 1953, after he was awarded a music scholarship. In 1964, he went to London to pursue his studies, and stayed there for another twenty years.

and twentieth-century atonal elements. Camilleri's chosen work is tied to nationalistic and Mediterranean aspects, alongside a mixture of musical structures that he derives from self-taught principles and the works of his contemporaries. *Five Events*, by Grech, reflects other modernistic techniques that stretch the capacities of the instruments and challenge the audience. The selection of these three pieces is based in an effort to provide a balance between music that overtly portrays a national character and other works that are detached from indigenous sources.

A younger generation of composers, born in the 1960s or later, began to present their works in the early years of the twenty-first century. The two works selected for analysis to represent the post-independence generation are both written by female composers. Existing music history books related to Malta contain only fleeting references to female composers and musicians. The gender barriers that hindered women composers in the Western world from contributing more fully to the repertoire of classical music,[252] could very probably be felt in Malta too. Véronique Vella's *Gelsomina*, with a title stemming from Italian cinema, shows that the influence of the Italian culture that goes back to at least the sixteenth century and brought about controversial disputes under the British rule, remains of central importance even in the present era. The flowing, melodious music of *Gelsomina* represents a stylistic quality often found in Vella's compositions. The other work, Mariella Cassar Cordina's *Ġgantija*, is based on a historical site in her native island, Gozo. This piece and *Silent Spaces* both take sites of national heritage as a subject, and are each an expression of national identity, through different musical languages. *Ġgantija* exemplifies how Cassar Cordina deals with music for interdisciplinary projects, and the way she blends acoustic instruments with electronic elements. The selected works of Vella and Cassar Cordina are quite contrasting in their styles, but the two are related to narrative, the first to the storyline of a film, the second to literary works.

By means of their contrasting and common elements, the works of the five composers give a comprehensive overview of the forms, styles and compositional techniques employed in the chamber works of Maltese composers during the latter half of the twentieth century and the first years of the twenty-first.

[252] Mary Frech McVicker, *Women Composers of Classical Music: 369 Biographies from 1550 into the 20th Century* (Jefferson NC: McFarland & Company Inc., 2011), 1-2.

Silent Spaces

String Quartet No. 2

Charles Camilleri

2.1 Introduction

> Imagine the sound of spaces which have been enclosed by monumental stone walls for more than 5,000 years…[1]

In the string quartet *Silent Spaces*, Charles Camilleri shares with listeners his interpretation of this sound. He converts into music the sounds that could have been heard down the years within the prehistoric temples of Malta, the natural sounds and silences in the open spaces, and the imagined sounds of these buildings as perceived by the human senses when they respond to such a mysterious environment.

The prehistoric temples are standing stone structures which were built with a sophisticated architecture at a time when no other earlier or concurrent civilization in the world was making similar constructions.[2] The huge blocks of stone with which the temples were built, the trilithon doorways leading to semi-circular chambers, the interior decorations including designs on slabs and statuettes, and the mysterious feeling of timelessness created by these ancient buildings, have been a direct source of inspiration for a number of literary and artistic works. Amongst them are poems with a prehistoric theme by the Maltese writer Ġorġ Pisani (1909-1999), and a watercolour painting entitled *Ħaġar Qim* by the well-known local artist Edward Caruana Dingli (1876-1950). Charles Camilleri experimented with the soundscape of Malta's prehistoric past more than once in his compositions. The string quartet *Silent Spaces*, which was composed in 1977, was followed by other works inspired by the prehistoric temples, including the cantata *Stone Island Within…* (1979) and the song-cycle *This Holy Earth* (1985), both in collaboration with his friend, the architect Richard England.[3] Another two short pieces for solo voice, entitled *Standing Stones* and *As Evening Falls*, provide complementary depictions of the temples in silence as they retell the happenings of the prehistoric era. Among his works for young people,

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1 Charles Camilleri, *Silent Spaces: String Quartet No. 2* (Belgium: Metropolis Music Publishers, n.d.), cover page.

2 David H. Thrump and Daniel Cilia, *Malta: Prehistory and Temples*, 3rd ed. (Sta. Venera, Malta: Midsea Books, 2008), 69-70.

3 Edwige Sapienza and Joe Attard, eds., *Charles Camilleri: Portrait of a Composer* (Valletta: Said International, 1988), 90. Note: This book has no printed page numbers.

Camilleri has five short pieces under the title *Music of the Temples of Malta*, to accompany a book for children. Musical works by other composers based on the same theme include the opera *Ipogeana* (1976) by Carmelo Pace, the ballet music for flute, oboe and percussion *Ħaġar Qim*, op. 25 (1978) by Joseph Vella, the sixth movement of *Heritage Suite* (2012) also entitled *Ħaġar Qim*, scored for full symphony orchestra by Joseph Sammut, and *Ġgantija 2013* (2013) and *Ġgantija II* (2014), part of an interdisciplinary project by Mariella Cassar Cordina. These works by Cassar Cordina will be dealt with later.

Camilleri wrote numerous works for various combinations of instruments, but only four string quartets. His second, *Silent Spaces*, gives a taste of Malta by combining the imaginary soundscape of its most ancient sites with a local and Mediterranean idiom. During his career as a composer, Camilleri attempted to establish a Maltese musical idiom that was either almost inexistent or had been suppressed and forgotten. He first followed the steps of Carmelo Pace, one of his early teachers, in trying to imitate folk music and integrate it with classical traditional methods. However, Camilleri developed distinctive musical characteristics that reveal his creative potential. During a more mature phase in his compositional career, he broadened his vision to include other regional and global musical features, and embarked on a mission to combine these three aspects within his musical language. This all-inclusive approach illustrates the composer's aspirations to universal communication in his music. As Camilleri himself states, the secret to this paradoxically lies in first going back to local roots:

> We can contemplate the prospect of a music universally accessible all over the planet by probing deeper into local well-springs... In searching for fresh openings, Western musicians often went chasing and hunting in the music of non-Western cultures. Few seem to have realized that in the matrix of their own ancient culture lurks the quarry they are pursuing, that in their own roots there is a storehouse of energy, a source of the sap that can give them a strength to transcend Western narrowness and the power to produce a music expressive of their newly acquired planetary consciousness.[4]

Camilleri's initiative to rediscover elements of indigenous music and introduce them into his musical compositions served as a potential tool to enhance a national identity through music, and to overcome the colonial mentality that remained strong among the Maltese people, even after Malta gained its independence. As discussed in the first chapter, during the several

[4] Peter Serracino Inglott and Charles Camilleri, *Mediterranean Music* (Malta: The Foundation for International Studies, at the University of Malta, 1988), 41-42.

centuries when the islands were run by foreign rulers and colonial masters, dramatic productions, chamber music and large-scale concerts, presented either in private households or public theatres, were often reserved for the ruling minority and elite groups, while the common people expressed themselves through folk music. Hence, folk music became a representation of the native population, and was usually looked down upon. Reproducing folk music could have served to emphasize the inferiority of the common people to their colonizers. Thus, by contrast, Camilleri borrowed the basic elements of Maltese folk music and blended them with cosmopolitan features, as a form of progressive nationalist approach. By rejecting exclusive dependence upon central and Western European musical traditions that were often embraced by the rulers of his homeland and his Maltese predecessors, and by amalgamating a wide range of musical styles into his compositional language, Camilleri's music offered a counterbalance to colonial ideologies. Through his musical techniques, Camilleri consolidated a Maltese musical character and at the same time moved beyond the restrictions of insularity, local political concerns and cultural issues of his country, which were intense in the second half of the twentieth century.

Silent Spaces is one of the works in which Camilleri uses Maltese national elements in a manner that moves away from simply reproducing the regional idiom, instead moulding the components of folk music into a transformed distinctive style. In this piece, as well as in other works by the same composer, the national quality is shaped not only by the infusion of folk elements, but also by other factors including the atmosphere, the aesthetic aspects and the cultural heritage of the composer's native country. *Silent Spaces* is a mixture of indigenous and non-indigenous factors, as Camilleri attempts to merge the non-Western with Western musical idioms. This piece becomes even more valuable when one considers that it was composed at a time when Camilleri's small native island sought to reinforce its national identity and likewise its musical expression.

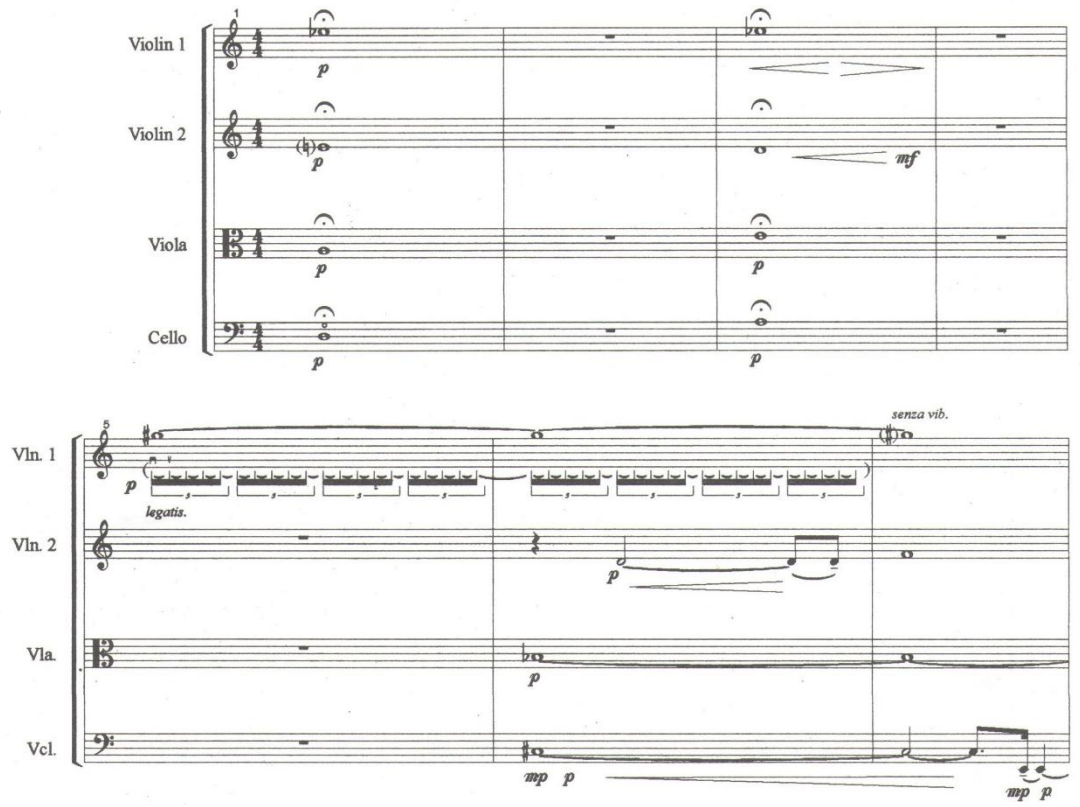
The string quartet consists of three self-contained movements, sometimes sharing similar features. The shape of the overall piece is determined by the juxtaposed musical styles and recurring motifs, rather than by the progressive growth of a theme. The leap from one brief musical idea to the next, without any smooth transition, equates to a montage of the folk-based elements, the musical expressions of the Mediterranean basin, the adopted techniques of influential composers and the application of philosophical ideas to music. The series of

opposing textures that reappear to give a ritualistic effect is a main compositional approach in this string quartet and other works by Camilleri.

2.2 The First Movement

Anyone who has visited the prehistoric temples of Malta, which date back to around 3500 BC and 2500 BC,[5] can probably associate the first movement of the string quartet *Silent Spaces* with the atmosphere that surrounds you as soon as you stand on the ground of these temples. In a short movement of 23 bars, predominantly split into chordal phrases separated by long rests, Camilleri attempts to create a sound that evokes the emotive ambience of the prehistoric buildings, using a texture that is representative of the open spaces enclosed by megalithic stones, and employing twentieth-century compositional techniques to emphasize the antiquity of the prehistoric structures to the contemporary listener. It is an introductory section: in the two succeeding movements, the composer portrays other characteristics of the Neolithic temples and Maltese cultural heritage.

The first movement mainly maintains a widely-spaced chordal texture. The series of chords with long note values or tied notes, and rests (Ex. 2.1) is interrupted only once by the first violin, which performs a passage of semiquaver and demisemiquaver notes against a sustained chord on the accompanying instruments (bars 15-19).



Example 2.1: *Silent Spaces*, first movement, bars 1-7.

[5] Thrump and Cilia, *Malta: Prehistory and Temples*, 69.

The pulse is generally slow, and the sound is soft, with occasional gradual changes in volume, to imitate the stillness and the tranquillity of the places that incited the composer to write this work. In the ancient world, time must have seemed longer in duration, or even non-existent. To enhance this impression, Camilleri uses a slow tempo to suspend the listener's sense of time.

As shown in the examples of the chords below (Ex. 2.2), the pitches of the first chord are well spaced out and the closing chord of the same movement is even more vertically spread. While the music proceeds, the range of pitches becomes wider, with higher notes in the second half of the first movement.

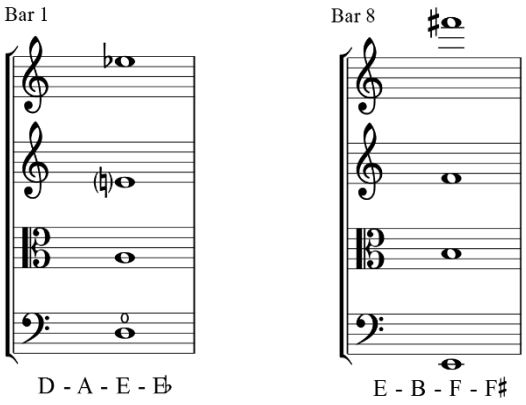
Example 2.2: The composite chords in the first and last bars of the first movement.

Complementing the wide range of pitches within each chord is the slow harmonic movement, often in semibreves, sometimes elongated with pauses, followed by a bar rest. So, through the distribution of the chords, Camilleri is creating horizontal and vertical spaces which give the feeling of a large, empty space. He is using sound to measure space.

In an analogy to the title of the piece, Camilleri leaves gaps of silence amid the vertically aligned parallel chords, using long-held notes and rests. The empty spaces here are as essential as the bars that are not silent. The complete absence of sound can be explained as an 'alternative sound' which combines the musical phrases into a complete piece, and thus, here, silence is also an aspect of texture. During these pauses, Camilleri gives the listener the opportunity to hear the muted sounds of these places which are still packed with secrets and unresolved questions. Like every other building, the prehistoric temples do not only have their 'characteristic form and space, psyche and soul, but also [their] particular sound'.[6]

[6] Richard England, 'Neolithic Architecture - Space and Sound', in *Archaeoacoustics: The Archaeology of Sound: Publication of Proceedings from the 2014 Conference in Malta*, edited by Linda C. Eneix (Florida: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014), 34.

Even if the chords are quite dispersed, because notes are played in different octaves, some notes within the chord still contain pitches that are very close to one another, just half a step apart. These dissonant intervals add a feeling of tension and an aura of the unexplained. The example below (Ex. 2.3) shows how the chords in bars 1 and 8, which both make up the same pitch-class set 4-6 [0 1 2 7], use space and tightness simultaneously. The chords that introduce the piece, in bars 1 and 3, both use the same pitches, yet are places in different positions for variety of colour. In bar 8, these pitch classes are then transposed upwards by a tone.

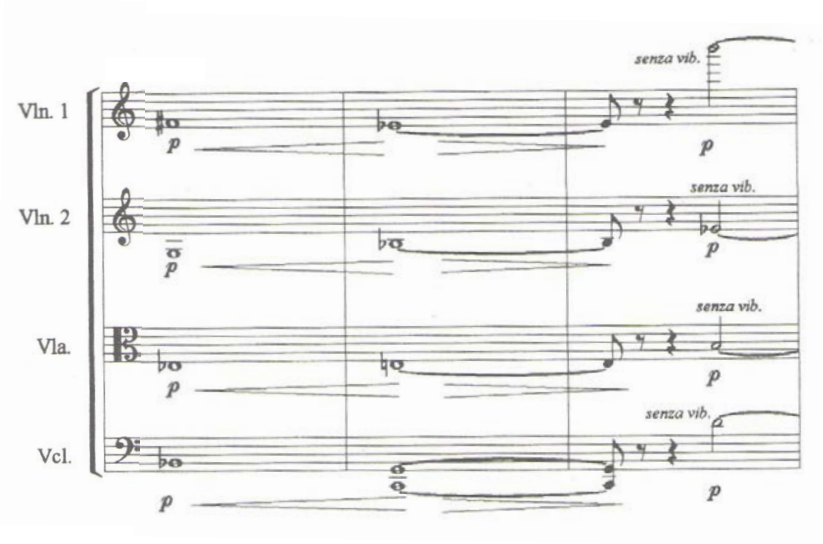


Example 2.3: Dissonant intervals in the spaced-out chords.

The long-held chords that take prominence throughout the first movement are all different. Camilleri uses chords whose structure is not determined by the rules of traditional harmony, and do not strictly adhere to a straightforward application of pitch-class set theory. Though the opening chords are equivalent and the same inversionally symmetrical set reappears a few bars later, as the music advances, the harmonic movement of the chordal progression becomes more unstable. Rather than following a logical sequence, the chords are mainly used to provide a colouristic harmony and attain a particular sonority that defines an inexplicable atmosphere. While the vertical alignment remains strong, the pitch irregularity also becomes a feature. In fact, the majority of chords are based on different pitch-class sets or more often inverted sets.

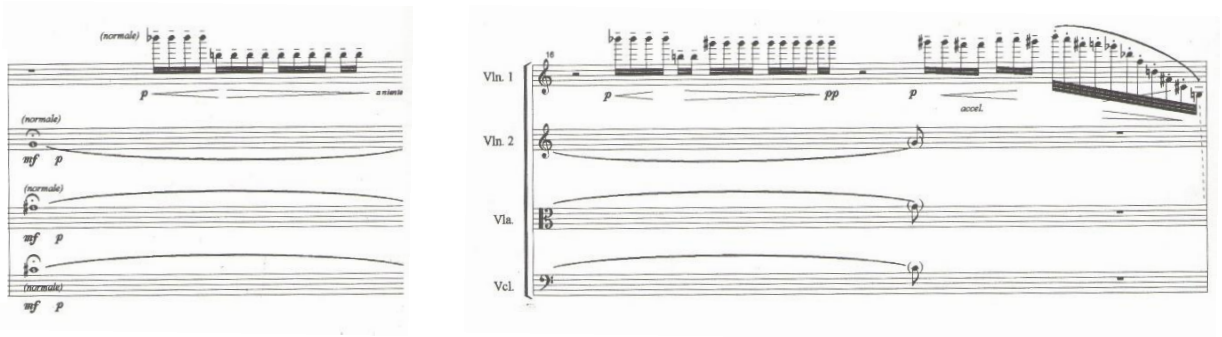
An interesting chordal progression is that used in bars 10-14 (Ex. 2.4). A tetrachord E♭-F♯-G-B♭, based on pitch-class set 4-17 [0 3 4 7], is first presented at bar 10. In the next bar, this chord is transposed (T_9) and expanded to include five notes C-E♭-E-G-B♭, thus forming a superset. Furthermore, these two chords are also related since they share three pitch classes. After being shifted (T_{11}) again, the chord is contracted, forming the trichord B-D-E♭, an inversion of set 3-

3 [0 1 4], which occurs in bars 12-14. Hence, though each chord is built on its own infrastructure and is autonomous, this does not imply that the chords are isolated entities. The composer looks attentively at the sound that comes before and after the chord, such that each of them is coherent with its surrounding.



Example 2.4: The progression of chords in bars 10-12.

In bars 15-19 (Ex. 2.5), Camilleri notates the music without bar lines. The 4/4 time signature used in the rest of the whole movement is left aside.



Example 2.5: Bars 15-19 (without bar lines) from the first movement.

The second violin, the viola and the violoncello present the trichord C♯-G♯-G, members of pitch-class set 3-5 [0 1 6], and a subset of the above mentioned set 4-6. This stationary sound accompanies a compact passage on the first violin. The series of rapid notes first proceeds with a symmetrical interval class content 1, 3, 2, 3, 1 and then continues with the interval succession 5, 5, 6. Each progression is repeated twice (Fig. 2.1). So the pitches first move by small gaps, but towards the end, the notes leap downwards by wider intervals, often by a perfect fourth but

sometimes also by a diminished fifth or an augmented fourth. Through the descending short notes, the first violin introduces the motif E♭-F-F♯ that is next heard as a chord that closes this movement, and later reappears a few times in the next movement. The rapid movements of high-pitched notes, that descend and come to rest on an F♯ trill performed by the viola, are in contrast with the rest of the slow tempo of this passage.

Pitch classes	B♭	B	G♯	F♯	A	G♯	B	A	F♯	F	E♭	B♭	F	B	F♯	C♯	G
	10	11	8	6	9	8	11	9	6	5	3	10	5	11	6	1	7
Unordered pitch-class intervals	1	3	2	3	1	3	2	3	1	2	5	5	6	5	5	6	

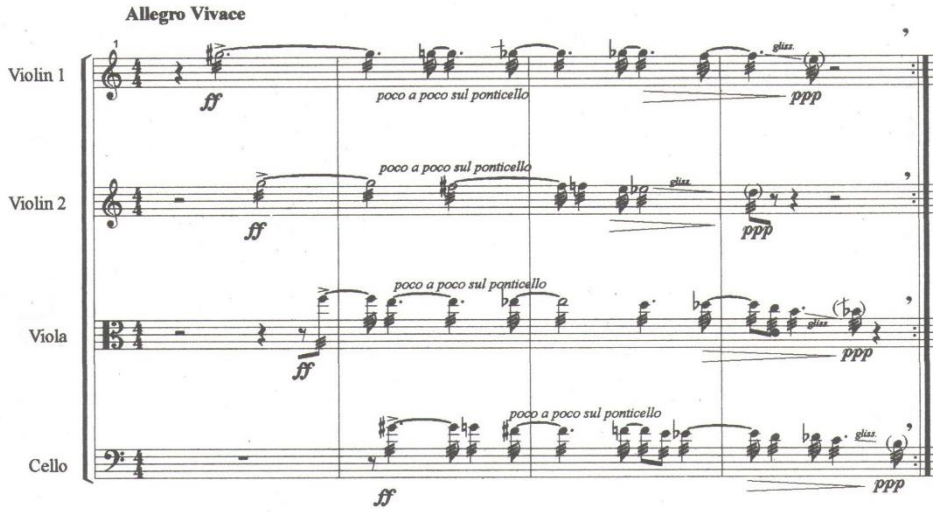
Figure 2.1: The interval class content in the first violin, bars 15-19.

The slow chords separated by silence return in the closing bars of the last movement. The ongoing sustained sound and muteness are perhaps a sonic representation of the prehistoric temples that seem to be detached from the passage of time. In the last chord, the first violin has a very high note ($F\#_7$), while the second violin has the same note three octaves lower *molto vib.*. Accompanied by the other two string instruments, they build up the intensity of a resonating sound which brings to mind the echoes created by the empty spaces wrapped among the high walls of the temples. Listening to this movement offers an encounter with the mysticism and power that emanate from the silence and bareness of these free-standing buildings in stone. Its dragging soft sounds, or even the temporary complete absence of sound, set the mood of an intense intimate setting and emphasize the intimate sonic features of a chamber piece.

2.3 The Second Movement

Principles of contrast are a striking feature in the second movement. Form is created by adjacent juxtaposed blocks of different textures and other contrasting materials, such as rhythms, pitch patterns and dynamics. This structural principle of placing static discrete sections side by side was innovatively applied by Stravinsky, and also used a great deal by Messiaen.[7] Each self-contained block in Camilleri's piece represents an aspect of national culture. Apart from the main theme of the Neolithic temples, encompassing their physical features and possible activity taking place at these sites, the composer also refers to the characteristics of folk music.

The menacing sound of *tremolo* strings opens the second movement and sets aside the calmer yet wary mood of the previous movement. In the first four bars (Ex. 2.6), all the instruments of the quartet imitate each other with a downward-moving phrase. The first violin initiates the passage, followed by the other instruments that enter one at a time with a slightly varied answer. Together, they perform a very loud passage that quickly fades out. Their captivating sonority is intensified by the articulation *poco a poco sul ponticello*. As the bow moves closer to the bridge of the string instrument, it creates more tension and amplifies the high harmonics, producing a sharper and glassy sound that slowly changes into a moan, creating the impression of a lamenting outcry as the pitches descend and gradually decrease in volume from *ff* to *ppp*. The repeated first bars are like a prelude to the next section where the music becomes more elaborate, and packed with sound.

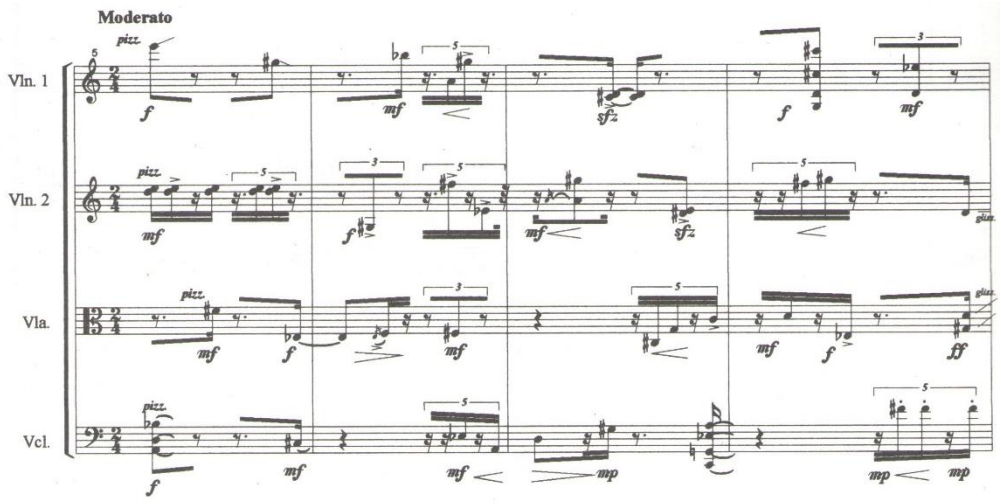


Example 2.6: Second movement, bars 1-4.

[7] In the book *Charles Camilleri: Portrait of a Composer*, Sapienza and Attard indicate that Camilleri's met Stravinsky and Messiaen, respectively, in 1962 and in 1975. (pp. 35, 61)

In bars 5-16, the rhythmic gestures become more agitated as each crotchet beat in the simple duple metre is fragmented into short duration notes and rests (Ex. 2.7). Camilleri refers to this texture as the 'atomization of the beat'.

> In this process the beat falls 'into self-contained units' which in themselves form part of the overall rhythmic and melodic form of the work involved. Small, innumerable, different (and yet alike = quick slow melodic figures, each with a life of its own) but at the same time part of the 'oneness' of the work may flow in a free (but highly structurised) improvisatory-like manner, while the metric pulse (beat) remains steady – thus shifting the accents beyond the confines of the imaginary bar-line.[8]



Example 2.7: The 'atomization of the beat' in bars 5-8.

The visual representation of this technique is not simple and requires quick reactions from the musicians, as well as creating an improvisatory sound. According to Camilleri, this texture stems from his interest in incorporating the folk music of his native country into his own music. The improvisatory nature of the Maltese *għana* is difficult to notate and thus he had to come up with his own notation of grouping notes.[9] However, this kind of rhythmic complexity and the superimposed rhythms, which appear frequently in the composer's repertoire under different forms, can also be compared to those presented by Elliot Carter, such as in his String Quartet no. 2 (1959). As in Carter's music, the time signature in this kind of notation is non-functional

[8] Bonello, *The Piano Music of Charles Camilleri*, 14.
[9] Ibid., 11.

since the structure of a regular beat is continuously being distorted.[10] A variety of the subdivisions of a crotchet beat, ranging between a simple grouping of two quavers to numerous patterns of quintuplets and sextuplets, shape the overall rhythmic characteristic in bars 5-16. These are then organized into a multilayered structure that results in an elaborate rhythmic arrangement.

While in the first movement, all the instruments often played the same rhythm using long chords, here, the small rhythmic fragments representing irregularly split crotchet beats allow the string instruments to move independently. Using this technique, Camilleri can vary the sound even if he repeatedly uses the same notes, such as when he presents the pitch motif B♭-A-G♯ or the same musical idea in reverse order, which meanders from one instrument to another throughout the passage. The irregularity of each beat is also accompanied by variations in dynamics and a wide range of performance techniques including *arco*, *pizzicato*, *staccato*, *glissando*, *marcato*, and snap *pizzicato*.

Camilleri's interest in investigating the traditional folk music of his country to intermingle it with modernist elements is much in line with Béla Bartók's compositional approach,[11] and other twentieth-century composers who followed comparable procedures, such as Falla, Casella and Stravinsky. As his career progressed, like Bartók who extended his research to incorporate traditional music from outside Europe, Camilleri also explored other musical cultures and therefore broadened his interest to contain the musical language of the Mediterranean, including North African and Eastern music. He states that one of the distinctive characteristics of Mediterranean folk-music is the 'sudden silent pauses that punctuate it'.[12] Camilleri hints at this feature in the concise musical gaps produced by the rests that hyphenate the hurried notes in each 'atomized' beat.

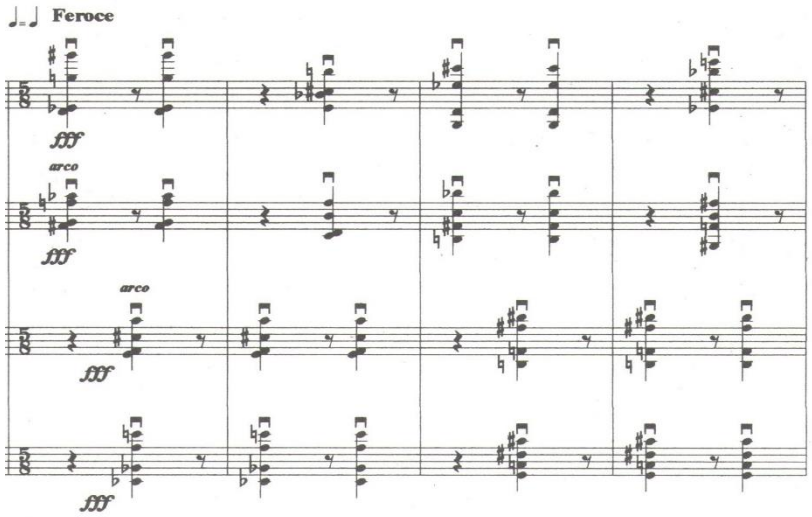
After the twelve bars that are dominated by the 'atomization of the beat' technique, the music continues with a complete change in texture. Bars 17-26 consist of a succession of *Feroce* chords in which both violins alternate with the viola and the cello. The pairs of instruments take turns to play the chords using one of two constant rhythmic patterns: crotchet - quaver rest -

[10] Tiina Coivisto, 'Multilayered Rhythms, Meter, and Notated Meter: Temporal Processes in Elliott Carter's Second String Quartet', *Theory and Practice* 34 (2009), 142.

[11] Dániel Péter Biró and Harald Krebs eds., *The String Quartets of Béla Bartók: Tradition and Legacy in Analytical Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 5-6.

[12] Serracino Inglott and Camilleri, *Mediterranean Music*, 34.

crotchet or crotchet rest - crotchet - quaver rest (Ex. 2.8). At each chord the bows should be placed afresh to produce a down-bow and enable the performers to exert more force. The aggressive attitude in this passage is much like the dissonant, brutal and violent music of Bartók.[13] Camilleri uses a similar strategy, a repetitive rhythm that is to be played exaggeratedly loud and with fierce, merciless attacks, perhaps to suggest a sacrifice taking place at the prehistoric temples.



Example 2.8: The pattern of chords in bars 17-20.

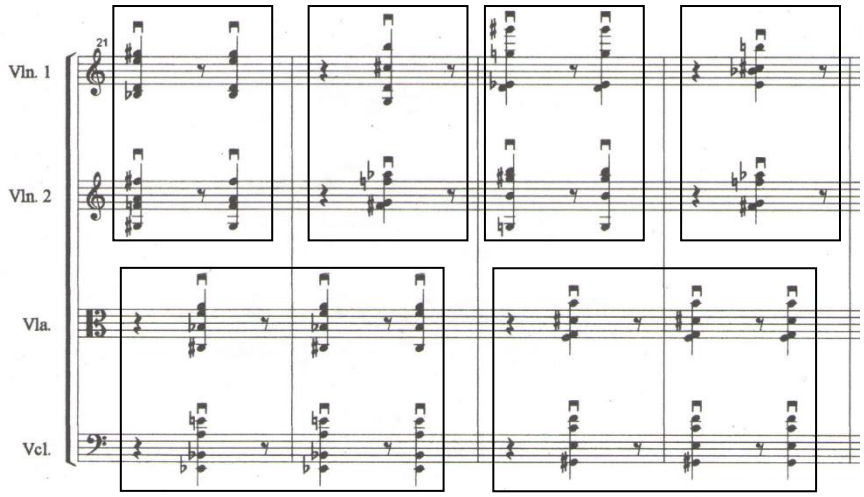
The chords are all distributed over a span of more than one octave. However, within each chord, the augmented unison (G-G♯; B♭-B; C-C♯) and the minor second interval (D-E♭; A-B♭; F♯-G) are frequent, and are sometimes contained in the same chord. Moreover, the different trichords based on multiple pitch-class sets are spaced out in such a way that various levels of tension are produced. This is one of the features that Camilleri uses intentionally, since for him, music 'is a matter of relaxation and tension' as long as the latter does not become stress.[14] Within the chord itself, tension and relaxation are needed for contrast. While tension is produced through a dense texture, relaxation is the result of a more open texture. Depending on its position, the chord may have inner tension or tension at its peripherals.[15]

[13] Judit Frigyesi, 'How Barbaric Is Bartók's Forte?', in *The String Quartets of Béla Bartók: Tradition and Legacy in Analytical Perspective*, edited by Dániel Péter Biró and Harald Krebs (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 202.

[14] Guy Protheroe and Charles Camilleri, 'Soundscapes. The Maltese Composer Charles Camilleri, Now 60, Has a Special Place in World Music', *The Musical Times* 133/1790 (1992), 168.

[15] Ateş Orga, 'Charles Camilleri in Conversation: including a chronology', *Music and Musicians International* 35/11 (1987), 35.

Looking closely at the score, one can see that these chords are written as if in blocks (Ex. 2.9), which might perhaps refer to the huge blocks of stones with which the temples are built (Figs. 2.2 and 2.3). The harsh and heavy sound of these chords also adds to the idea of the massive stones, which are the most prominent feature of these temples.



Example 2.9: Bars 21-24 distributed into blocks of chords.

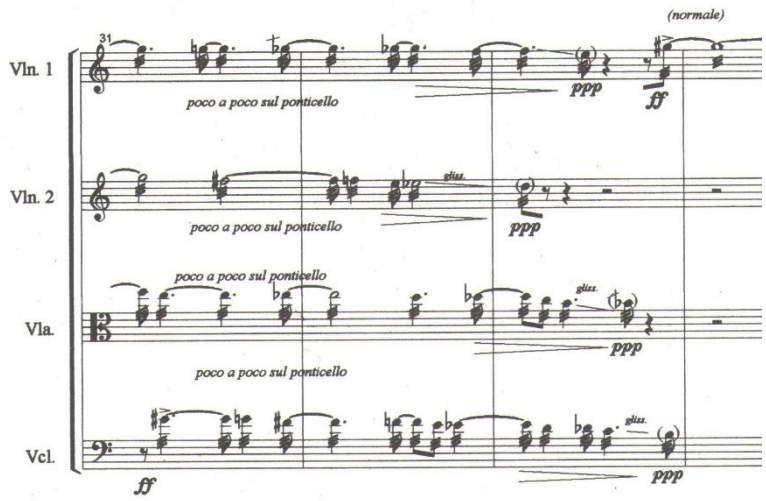
Figure 2.2: Megaliths at the temple of Ħaġar Qim, Malta.

Figure 2.3: A trilithon structure consisting of two large vertical stones capped by a horizontal stone, and a doorway at Ħaġar Qim, Malta.

While playing this succession of chords the string instruments create a percussive sound. It is most likely that the people that lived during the Temple Period used instruments, though none of the instruments survived.[16] Thus the regular rhythmic pattern of the chords could be an allusion to some primitive instrument on which they could have drummed, to assist a dance or serve a communal religious activity.

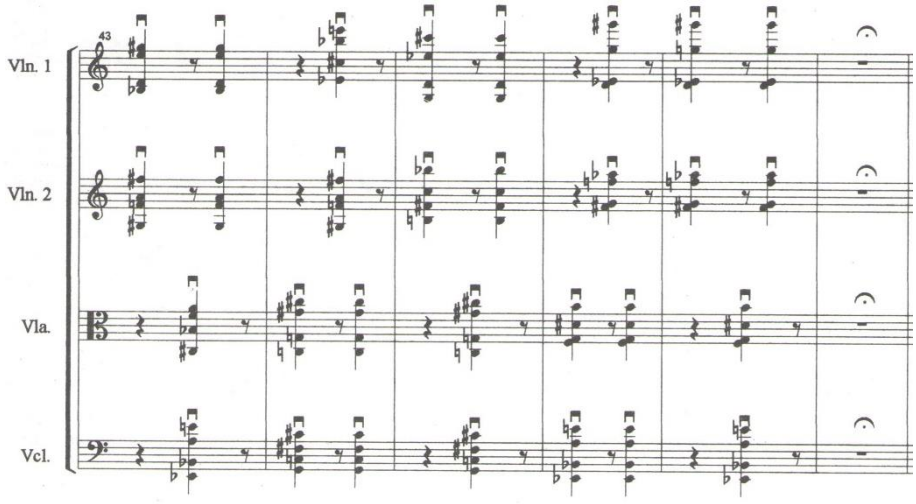
The material used in the first four bars of this movement appears again after the consecutive chords, and is extended. Bars 27-33 present the downwards chromatic movement again, and bars 34-37 are a replica of the opening bars. The descending passages (Ex. 2.10) become ultra-chromatic when some of the intervals are reduced further by microtones and the glissando technique. Here, the four sting instruments are using a spare restrained texture consisting of independent superimposed layers of linear music. Though they are assigned with very similar lines, at the same time they never play the same music together, thus emphasizing their solistic role within a chamber ensemble.

[16] Thrump and Cilia, *Malta: Prehistory and Temples*, 110.



Example 2.10: A descending movement that is regularly used in the string quartet.

The following ten bars are for the second time packed with the pattern of chords, in quintuple time. More precisely, this section is made up of the same chords used in bars 17-26, performed in reverse order. Hence, the middle part of the piece produces an arch form with the descending movement at the apex of the arch. The return of previously used material offers unity and balance to the music.

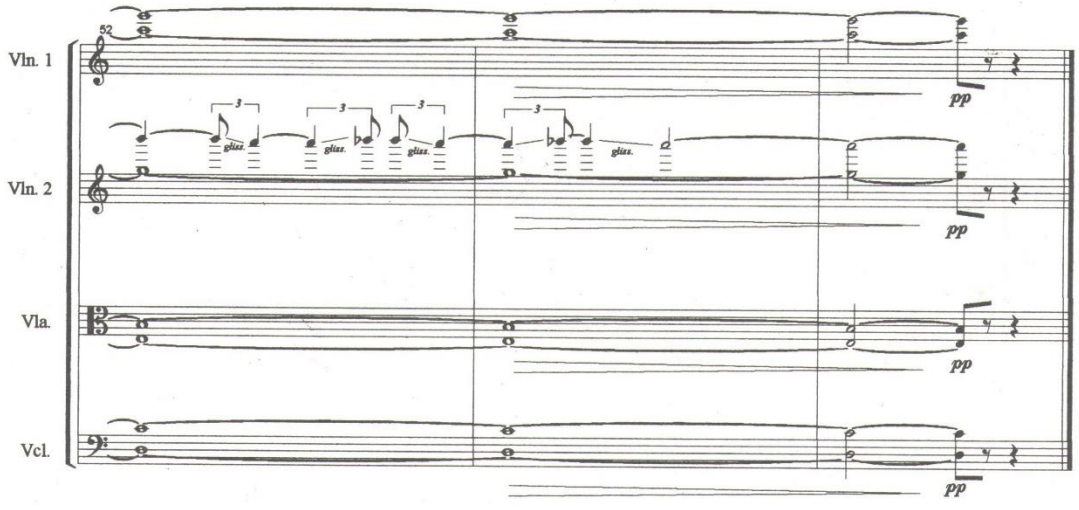


Example 2.11: Second movement, bars 43-48.

For Camilleri, using the same procedure with a few adjustments does not show lack of creativity but is rather a method of imitating *għana*. As a young boy, he was fascinated by the way in which the singers and musicians repeated the same idea, and yet by improvising, they gave it a

different shape each time.[17] Camilleri allows the iteration of the same theme so that he can blend the elements of traditional folk music with his own ideas. Thus, his method of creating a national idiom is not restricted to imitating the tunes of traditional songs, but includes structural features that recall indigenous music. In *Silent Spaces*, repetition is first presented in terms of similar pitch contents, contours, rhythms and textures, but is then broadened to contain entire sections. The repetition of the sections creates a ritualistic effect and brings to mind the performance of religious rites that used to take place in the prehistoric buildings.

A short pause at bar 48 separates these vivid sections from the last passage of the middle movement. In the last few bars (bars 49-54) which are marked *Molto Andante - calmo*, the second violin appears in the limelight as the other string instruments accompany it with a long drone that is stretched to the end of the second movement (Ex. 2.12). The continuous sound of a drone is found in several areas of the Mediterranean region, under different forms.[18] In his compositions, Camilleri exhibits the versatility of this technique. Here, he makes use of a five-note chord as a stationary sound against which the second violin only swaps between two very high-pitched notes. However, the repeated use of glissando gives the violin the opportunity to go through all the intermediate pitches between A_5 and $B♭_5$.



Example 2.12: The closing bars of the second movement.

[17] Bonello, *The Piano Music of Charles Camilleri*, 7.
[18] Serracino Inglott and Camilleri, *Mediterranean Music*, 34.

In summary, the basic contrasting textures placed next to each other in the second movement can be illustrated in the following table (Fig. 2.4).

Section 1	Section 2	Section 3	Section 4	Section 5		Section 6
bars 1-4 (4 repeated bars)	bars 5-16 (12 bars)	bars 17-26 (10 bars)	bars 27-37 (11 bars)	bars 38-47 (10 bars)	bar 48 (bar rest)	bar 49-54 (6 bars)
descending movement	'atomization of the beat' technique	blocks of percussive chords	similar to section 1	section 3 in reverse order		glissando technique accompanied by a drone

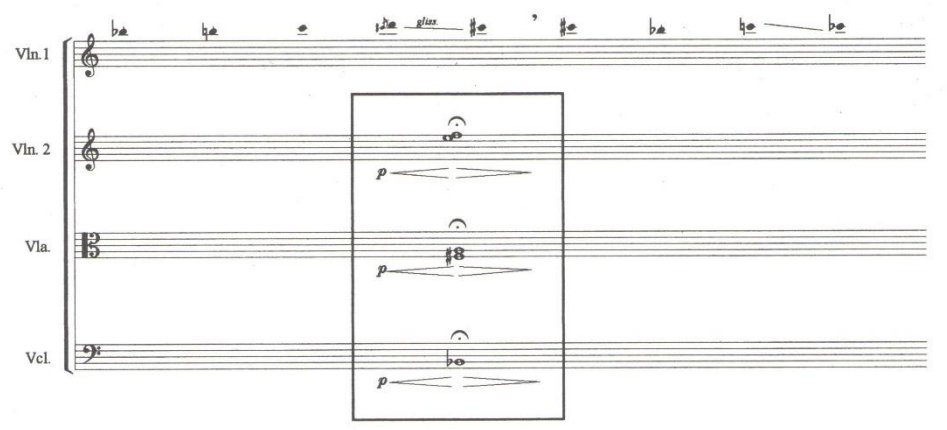
Figure 2.4: Table showing dissimilar and repeated sections in the middle movement.

The music presented within each section moves but at the same time remains static, giving the same sort of effect throughout. With reference to Camilleri's title, the music accentuates the ritualistic function of the temples and their virtually unchanging features that are still preserved after thousands of years. The roughness of the material presented in the juxtaposed blocks imply the irregularly cut heavy stones of the megalithic constructions. Regular rests therefore possibly allude to the wide joints between the stones.

2.4 The Third Movement

The openness of the composer to a broad spectrum of writing styles stemming from musics of rural cultures, combined with art music, is again highlighted in this movement. While the composer recycles previously used materials, he puts them alongside new musical elements drawn from the Mediterranean area, to give his birthplace a sense of belonging to this region and to remind listeners of the strategic significance of the Maltese islands that were often occupied and ruled by foreign powers. To create more interest and give a broader dimension to his music, Camilleri also employs musical features derived from his other non-musical interests.

The opening of the third movement is a clear demonstration of Camilleri's attempt to free himself from the traditional musical notation that originated in the European countries. Throughout his compositional career, and as already hinted in the previous movements, he detaches himself from the restrictions created by this tradition, mainly its narrowly defined scales, rhythmic simplicity and use of bar lines.[19] Thus, the first section of the movement is not restricted by any key or time signatures, and the performers are expected to employ a method of controlled improvisation. This semi-aleatoric section (Ex. 2.13) is marked as *Libero spaziale*, with an added note saying that the chords can be played *ad libitum* and the melody line for the first violin can be repeated if necessary. Moreover, it gives the first violin the possibility to choose the rhythm with which to play the melody, while suggesting the musical character *lontano - molto espressivo*. By using this semi-aleatoric technique, Camilleri can regulate the relationship between the group of performers who are improvising at the same time.



Example 2.13: The semi-aleatoric technique used in the first part of the third movement.

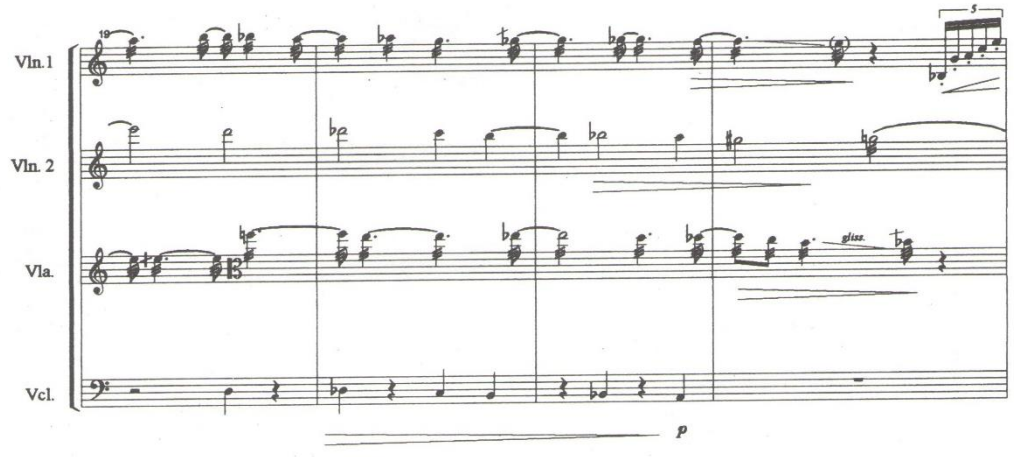
[19] Orga, 'Charles Camilleri', 518.

The shared musical spontaneity is a characteristic of musical performances in the Mediterranean region, which automatically leads to lack of synchronization between the instruments. Camilleri states that this style of ensemble playing produces a special unity between the performers and the listeners. It is not a oneness that revolves around the practical interpretation of the melody, but a solidarity attained on a psychological basis.[20] The performance of this controlled aleatory provides a sense of involvement for the musicians and closeness between them, which are eventually reflected to the listeners, thus creating the perfect atmosphere for chamber music.

The basis of the next section lies in the semitone descending progressions introduced in the middle movement. However, this time, the material is prolonged and developed further. As in the previous similar parts, this section is in simple quadruple metre and is marked *Allegro Vivace*. To emphasize the recurring pattern, in bars 7-11 the second violin, the viola and the cello each produce chromatic scales by interchanging between two strings. Thus, though the pulse is slower, compared to earlier appearances of this movement, the music sounds fuller and more confusing. To make a contrast with the other instruments, after a five-bar pause, the first violin re-enters with four sets of accented sextuplets, gradually rising in pitch. A minimal accompaniment assists in giving more prominence to this passage (Ex. 2.14). Subsequently, the first violin proceeds in conformity with the other string instruments. The motivic arrangement of notes, transposed and with different time values, appears continuously throughout the passage (Ex. 2.15). In bars 7-28, the descending semitones are only interrupted by occasional crotchet beats fragmented into a pattern of semiquaver *staccato* or *staccatissimo* notes that mark the beginning of yet another chromatic entry.

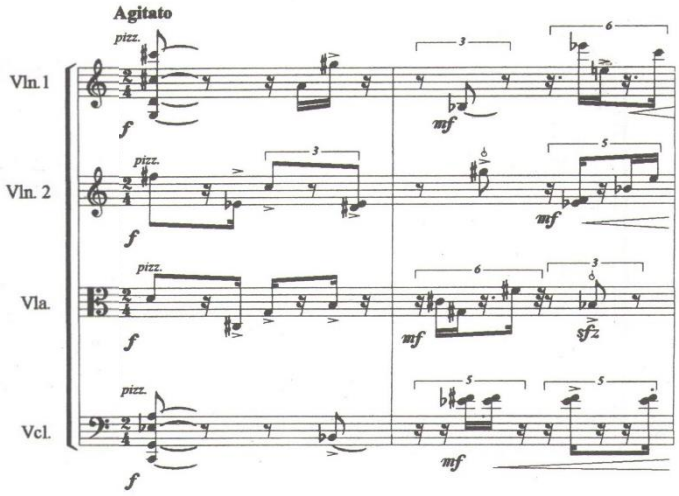
Example 2.14: The first violin part in bars 12-13.

[20] Serracino Inglott and Camilleri, *Mediterranean Music*, 38-39.



Example 2.15: Third movement, bars 19-22 showing a different arrangement of the frequent half-tone descending movement.

The next three bars are a brief reminder of the *Agitato* passage in the second movement, where the multiple divisions of the beat are reshaped for every crotchet beat, producing unpredictable patterns and an irregular pulse (Ex. 2.16). This familiar technique in Camilleri's repertoire is perhaps a result of his notion that everything exists in chaos. He reckons that the role of the artist is to discover the order which is already present in disorder.[21] Camilleri was almost obsessed with the cosmos, and fascinated with the galaxies which exist in chaos and yet follow a certain order. Deeply influenced by the philosophical concepts of the French Jesuit Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, he held fast to the idea that unity exists even in fragments.[22]



Example 2.16: Third movement bars 29-30, reproducing a style from the second movement.

[21] Sapienza and Attard, *Charles Camilleri: Portrait of a Composer*, 10.
[22] Protheroe and Camilleri, 'Soundscapes', 166.

This movement is a résumé of the multiple structures used in the other two movements. Yet the composer skilfully retouches and embellishes the sections in as many ways as possible. The chordal texture that was initially implemented in the first movement becomes denser, sometimes containing even six different pitch classes, as it accompanies the line of the first violin. The simultaneous descending chromatic lines here increase the harmonic tension as the string instruments play on more than one string at a time. Even the rhythmic structure is intensified when Camilleri makes uses of sextuplet groupings more often. To add to the dynamism of his work, in the third movement the composer exploits the sonorous qualities of the string instruments through frequent alterations between different bow strokes (such as *sul ponticello*, *tremolo*, *staccato*) and *pizzicato* techniques (including the traditional *pizzicato* and the Bartók *pizzicato*). The sundry timbres create contrasting levels of uneasiness and tranquillity.

The last part of the string quartet is similar to the dragging notes at the beginning of the first movement. The sustained chords, along with the performance direction *Lento* again imply timelessness. While the two violins hold the same notes for five whole bars, the viola and the cello sometimes vary their notes by switching between two half-step apart notes, or even by sliding between them.

The final gesture of the first violin is a glissando illustrated by a graphic representation (Ex. 2.17). The use of graphic notation evolved and became fairly common in the 1960s. Most often independently, composers from different backgrounds such as György Ligeti, Luciano Berio, Earle Brown, Karlheinz Stockhausen, and Krzysztof Penderecki experimented with these new symbols and used them in combinations with traditional music notation.

Example 2.17: The last bar of *Silent Spaces* with a graphical notation to explain the glissando.

The starting note of the glissando is indicated but there is no clear sign for its finishing. The sloping line rises towards the top of the page, giving the impression of a never ending glissando. As the music of the string instruments fades out completely, the listener is left to contemplate the thousands of years that have elapsed but that are brought to life again in the *silent spaces*.

As in many of his works, in *Silent Spaces*, Camilleri employs musical material previously used in other compositions. Yet he has the ability to look at them from a different perspective and thus modify them to fit into new contexts.[23] In this chamber work, in a simple yet intriguing way, he adjusts the distinctive features of his music, including patterns of chords, chromatically inflected passages, 'atomized' beats, fast rhythms and silent bars, to discover the sounds and uncover the silences that are excavated in the Maltese prehistoric sites.

The postcolonial progressive element of Camilleri's music can be felt in the way he produces a vernacular-cosmopolitan idiom. He does not just delve into the roots of Maltese culture and brings it to life, but transforms this indigenous culture in terms of contemporary compositional styles, such that what was forgotten or hidden in the past can still be perceived as relevant. Furthermore, the composer merges local features with techniques from the musics of other cultures, such that his music is not only faithful to tradition but also universally appealing. National themes, folk elements, Mediterranean aspects, non-Western influences and philosophical thoughts all come together in *Silent Spaces*, and are integrated with early twentieth-century tendencies as well as techniques employed by Camilleri's contemporaries, including dissonant harmony, block-juxtaposition form, layered rhythmic groupings and semi-aleatoric methods. The string quartet exemplifies a fundamental feature in Camilleri's compositional approach, where he borrows cosmopolitan ideas and contemporary techniques, and creatively portrays them as a representation of the aesthetic features, the cultural heritage and the soundscape of his native island, with the aim of establishing a national musical style.

[23] Peter Farrugia, 'The Maltese folk hero', *The Sunday Times* (Malta), 26 June 2011.

Five Events

Pawlu Grech

3.1 Introduction

Five Events (1984), for clarinet and piano, is the last work completed by the Maltese composer Pawlu Grech, before he returned to his homeland in 1986, after spending much of his active career in Rome and London. Since then, Grech has written only one other piece, a solo work for flute entitled *Sequel* (1996).

Grech started his musical training in Malta, and at the age of fifteen was awarded a scholarship to further his studies in Italy. When he moved to London in 1964, he attended orchestral conducting courses, and between 1968 and 1971 studied modern compositional techniques under the guidance of the music critic Hans Keller. Being a pianist, the first piece that he ever wrote was a solo work for piano, *Fantasia*, which dates from 1949. Thus, his compositional career lasted for 47 years. Thereafter, he has dedicated his years in Malta mostly to painting, to teaching music at School of Music, Valletta, and to giving private tuition in most branches and fields of music including pianoforte, music theory, conducting, classical and contemporary composition, and also in painting. Grech's list of compositions includes 31 pieces, most of them for solo piano or small ensembles including duets.

Like several other compositions by Pawlu Grech, *Five Events* does not seem to have a representational meaning, and thus should be appreciated for its intrinsic musical value. In this work, Grech supports Stravinsky's idea that music is self-contained and therefore cannot be regarded as suggestive or as a means of emotional expression.[1] Their common viewpoints can be attributed to the fact that Grech met the Russian composer in the 1957, and this encounter left a considerable impact on the Maltese composer and his musical development.[2] In holding to this stance of aesthetic autonomy, the music of Grech is unlike the majority of musical works written by other Maltese composers in the same era. As noted earlier, in the second half of the twentieth century, Maltese composers, namely Carmelo Pace and Charles Camilleri, who intended to develop a Maltese musical identity, based some of their musical works on characteristics related to Malta and wrote music that recalls traditional folk tunes. In contrast, Grech's music does not

1 Igor Stravinsky, *Stravinsky: An Autobiography* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1936), 83-84, 256-257.
2 Nicholas Vella Laurenti, 'Pawlu Grech: A Life in Art', http://www.pawlugrech.com/CV/curriculum_vitae.htm (accessed 5 March 2015).

focus on cultural connotations or national symbolism, but finds its meaning in itself. Yet, throughout his musical and artistic career, Grech was still influenced by the customs, the cultural heritage and the features of his native country. One of his early works *Il Carnevale di Malta* (1956) for small orchestra and some of his paintings such as *Prehistoric Painting* (1965) and *Sea, Rock and Sky* (1998) verify that Grech remained tied to his Maltese origins.[3]

Grech's approach in his artistic works can also be compared to how he looks at musical composition. One painting that can might be associated with his *Five Events* is *Composition 88* (1966).[4] In this watercolour, the several colours are put together without being restricted by borderlines. The fading and stronger colours blend into each other to give a harmonious picture. Likewise, in *Five Events*, Grech uses multiple techniques, and intermingles them by regularly infusing mutual features, such that they produce a cohesive piece, and make his work an admirable synthesis.

Figure 3.1: Pawlu Grech, *Composition 88* (1966), watercolour, 26 × 36 cm.

Five Events is an adaptation of the second part of a triptych, entitled *Duo II* (1979), for flutes played by one instrumentalist and piano. As the name itself indicates, the work for clarinet and piano is split into five movements. While the music remains practically the same as in *Duo II*, very minimal alterations are made to the ending of the first three movements, to give the idea

[3] Emmanuel Fiorentino, *Pawlu Grech: The Visual Artist* (Attard, Malta: Amanda Tabone, 2005), 15, 21, 63.
[4] Ibid., 42.

of closure. According to the note on the cover page of the score, the first three *Events* '"end" in the listeners' reflections on them'. The gaps between one movement and the next then allow for a reflective pause and serve as a respite to the listeners as they adjust to the sounds of the different natures of the *Events*. The note 'V follows without interruption' confirms that there is no transition between the fourth and the fifth movements, and the music continues exactly as it appears in the central part of the triptych.

Even if the work of Pawlu Grech can be related to a number of methods introduced by earlier composers or by influential contemporaries, his approach remains identifiable. Without limiting himself to a particular approach, he borrows established techniques for every *Event* and mingles them in order to produce his own distinctive style and musical identity.

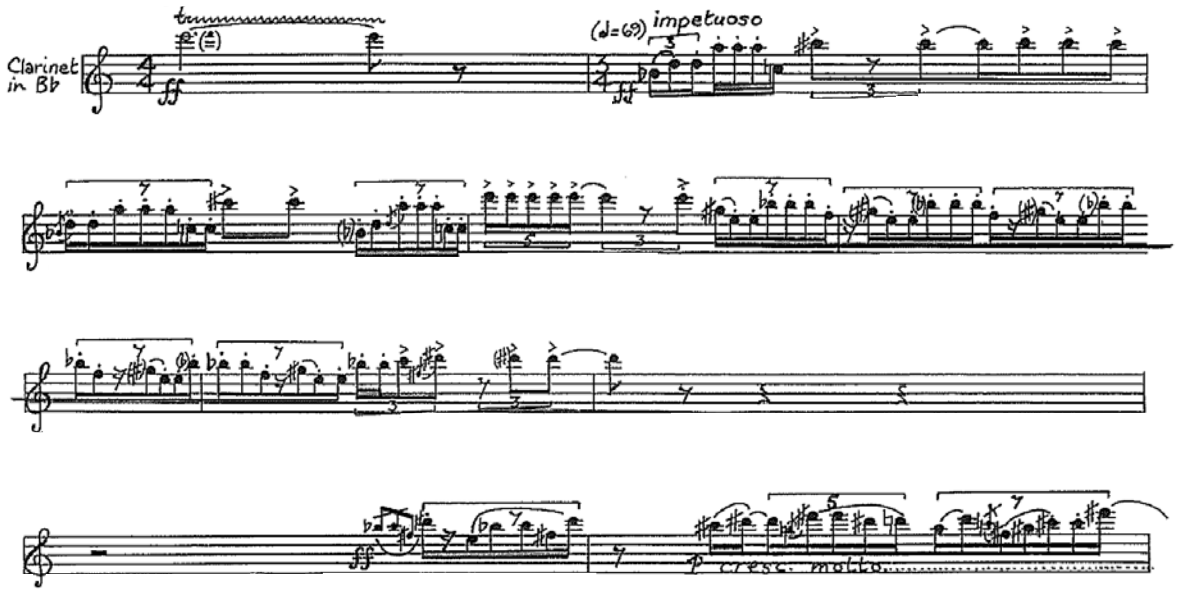
3.2 Event I

A penetrating *fortissimo* trill in the high register of the clarinet in B♭ introduces the piece. Immediately after, the piano joins in to accompany the trill with *sforzando* notes. Within the first bar only, ascending notes on the piano with wide intervals between them spread across more than six octaves. This is the only bar written in simple quadruple time. From bar 2, the music gets faster by shifting into a simple triple time signature and by increasing the tempo from 50 to 69 crotchet beats per minute.

The different pitches played both on the clarinet and the piano at the very beginning of the piece already indicate that the twelve notes of the chromatic scale are equally important. Throughout the piece, though, it becomes increasingly clear that even if Grech's music moves away from tonality and is mainly inclined to the techniques of atonal serialism, he does not restrict himself rigorously to the twelve-note method. The same pitches are sometimes repeated, while others are temporarily omitted. Thus, all the twelve notes are used freely, but within a controlled structure, such that the most significant goal remains that of producing the desired sound. Grech adopts the methods of serialism, which were primarily introduced by Arnold Schoenberg, and then develops his own techniques, without being restrained by laws imposed by this system.

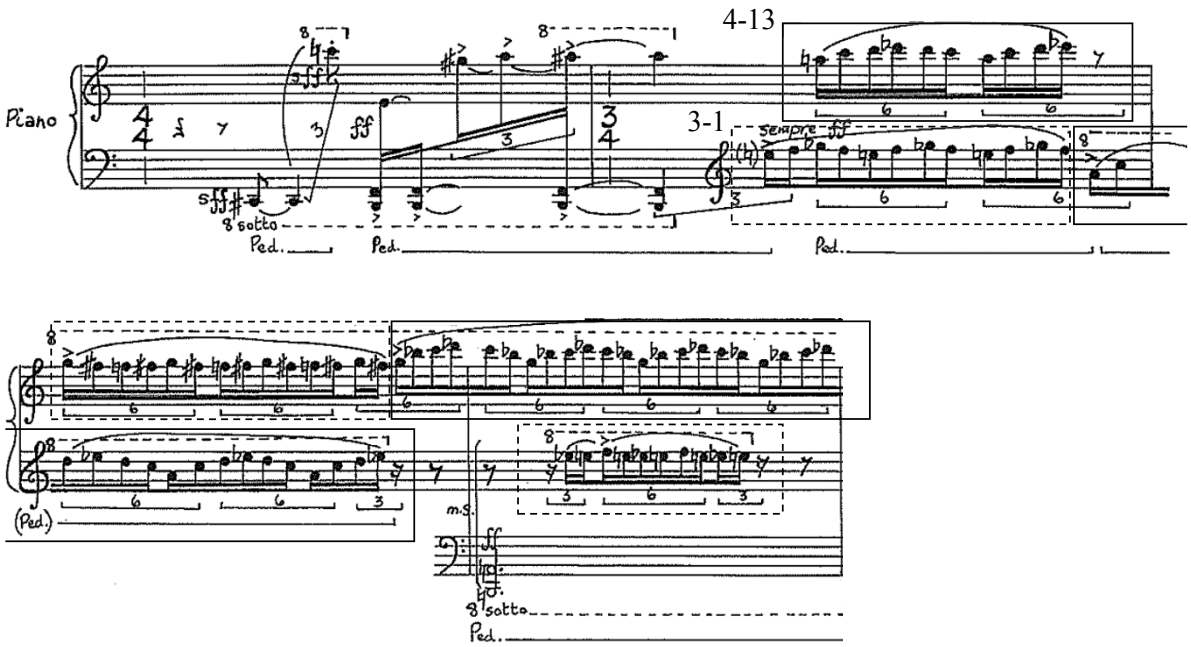
The first *Event* is subdivided into short passages, carefully designed with recognizable elements, which together make up a larger musical unit. In the first subsection, both clarinet and piano parts use repeated cells of varying durations that are either identical or similar in their rhythmic and intervallic structures. With regards to pitch content, these cells can be categorized into pitch-class sets, as suggested in the theories of Allen Forte. At bars 2-9, which bear the performance indication *impetuoso,* the music is regulated by only a few pitch-class sets. After the opening trill, the clarinet repeats the notes G♯-C-G-B♭-B, forming the set 5-3 [0 1 2 4 5]. The only alteration in pitches occurs in the third repeated entry when the last note B moves up six half steps to F, thus leading to the subsequent pitch-class set 5-23 [0 2 3 5 7]. Though the notes generally remain the same, the rhythm is slightly altered so as not to make the music fully predictable. *Fortissimo* quavers, semiquavers and demisemiquavers are embellished with grace notes, articulations such as *staccato* dots and accents, and different groupings of triplets, quintuplets or sextuplets to add interest to the repetitive passage. From the third crotchet beat in bar 4, the notes on the clarinet form pitch-class set 4-Z15 [0 1 4 6]. The cell with notes F♯-D-A♭-E♭ is repeated several times until halfway through bar 6. It is then followed by a new

tetrachord 4-27 [0 2 5 8] with pitch classes A♭-B♭-E-C♯. In bar 8, the same pitches are again expressed differently in terms of rhythm. After that, the clarinet proceeds to a freer passage.



Example 3.1: The clarinet part in *Event I*, bars 1-9.

Meanwhile, the piano part is based only on two pitch-class sets, 4-13 [0 1 3 6] and 3-1 [0 1 2]. Initially, the right-hand and left-hand parts of the piano swap between the two sets. Then, the right hand uses just the set 4-13, and the left hand sticks to the trichord. In the second bar, the right hand introduces the tetrachord 4-13, using the pitch classes A-C-D-E♭. Soon after, the same motif is performed by the other hand. Back again in the right (bars 3-6), it is repeated several times, first in a transposed version as G-B♭-C-D♭ and then with even higher pitches as it is once more shifted upwards by five half steps to C-E♭-F-G♭ (bars 6-7). In a similar manner, related cells based on pitch-class set 3-1 move from one hand to the other. The first trichord E-F-G♭, which is also first heard at bar 2, is transposed several times, and is rhythmically altered particularly in bar 7. The three-note cells take other varied forms in relation to their contour. At times, the notes rise and then fall chromatically, while at other instances, they first descend and then go up. The half-step movement, however, remains a common factor between them. Even if the grouped notes, which are generally arranged into sextuplets or triplets, repeat the same intervallic content and thus give the impression of an economical style of writing, the cells are not identical and the music is continuously renewing itself. The following extract (Ex. 3.2) shows the recurring cells in the piano, which overlap and follow each other.



Example 3.2: *Event I*, bars 1-4 showing the distribution of pitch-class sets in the piano part.

In bars 2-9, each of the aforementioned sets is immediately followed by its retrograde and therefore the cells are presented in a vertically symmetrical structure, with the last note of the cell also introducing the next repeated cell. The grouped notes then imitate each other throughout the section and serve as an ostinato accompaniment to the clarinet part. The method of using symmetrical imitative cells brings to mind the approaches of Schoenberg and Webern, who attempted to reconstruct traditional concepts in their post-tonal compositions, especially by 'contrapuntal textures and symmetrical forms'.[5] In fact, as Hans Keller also confirms, 'the mirror forms are old, primarily contrapuntal devises of thematic economy'.[6] Therefore, their use is not solely a characteristic of serialism.

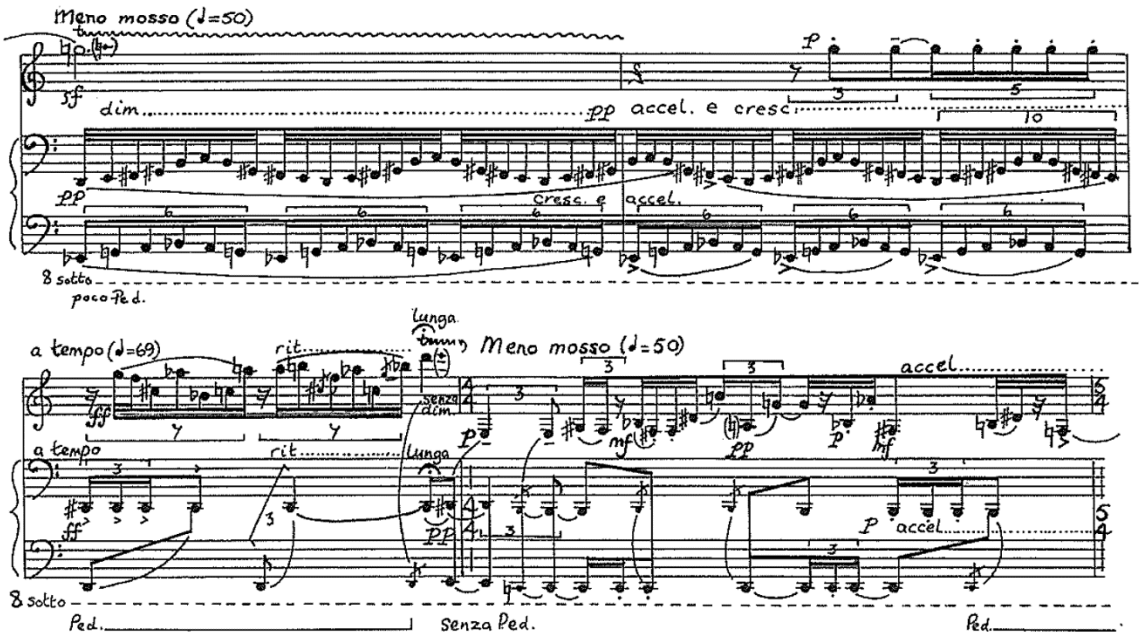
Cells are transposed and transferred to different octaves such that the whole keyboard is being exploited. At the beginning of the piece, the piano gives a taste of its lower octaves, and then concentrates on its high notes, in collaboration with the clarinet that uses its clarino or upper register. Then, up to bar 9, the piano generally uses the treble clef. Only the repeated *fortissimo* dyad of B and A tones is performed in the bass section of the keyboard. The other quick notes in the piano part are only briefly released to give space to the accompaniment of these two notes

[5] Arnold Whittall, *Musical Composition in the Twentieth Century* (1999; repr., New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 201.
[6] Hans Keller, 'Strict Serial Technique in Classical Music', in *Tempo*, New Series, 37 (1955), 12.

acting as a pedal tone. The low pitches B_2 and A_3, expressed as long-sustained notes or accented quavers, are moreover held by the piano pedal to emphasize their deep sound and lengthen their effect.

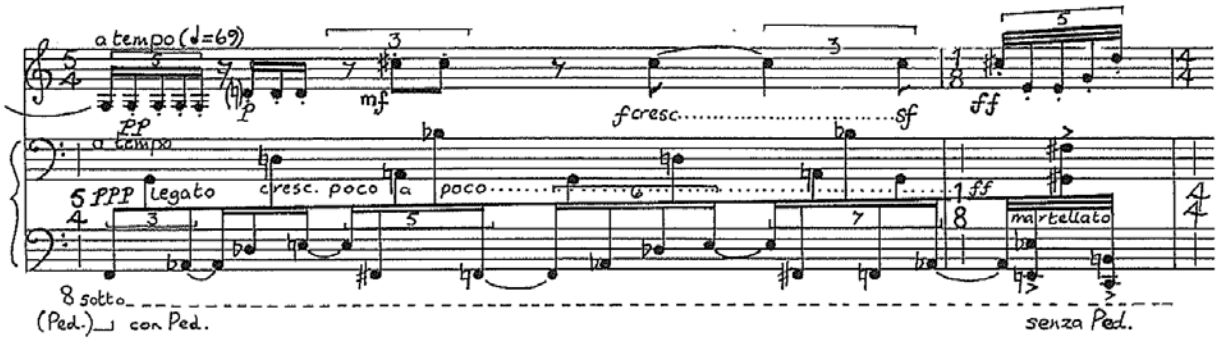
Throughout the first part, the piano and the clarinet move independently and have different functions. However, the material presented by both instruments has a common feature, that is, repetition. The similar sets on the piano are the main unifying factor of the *Event*. The clarinet flows more freely using different pitch-class sets, and tends to be more melodic in its content. It uses cells that are sometimes reiterated exactly or slightly modified, and often retains common pitches even between different sets.

In bars 10-15, the music becomes gradually more unstable, as it is marked by variations in tempo that continuously alternates between *meno mosso* (♩ = 50) and *a tempo* (♩ = 69), frequent changes in time signature, and contrasting dynamics ranging between *ppp* to *ff*. In contrast to the earlier bars, the piano part now shifts to the other far end of the keyboard to play low notes. The music in bars 10-11 remains quick, with the piano playing very soft sextuplet semiquavers against a group of eight demisemiquaver notes or even a decuplet. Meanwhile, to ensure stability, the piano once more uses just a couple of pitch-class sets and the clarinet performs a one-bar F-G trill followed by other short duration F notes. The piano keeps the same characteristic of using a different pitch-class set for each hand. The right hand persistently performs D-E-F♯-G♯-B-C, all members of pitch-class set 6-34 [0 1 3 5 7 9], and the left hand works with one of its subsets 4-Z29 [0 1 3 7] using pitches E♭-G-A-B♭. Thus, in one crotchet beat, ten different pitch classes are used by the piano. The omitted pitch class F is instead heard repeatedly in the clarinet, and the other missing pitch class C♯ immediately follows this sequence of quick notes in the left hand of the piano, in bar 13.



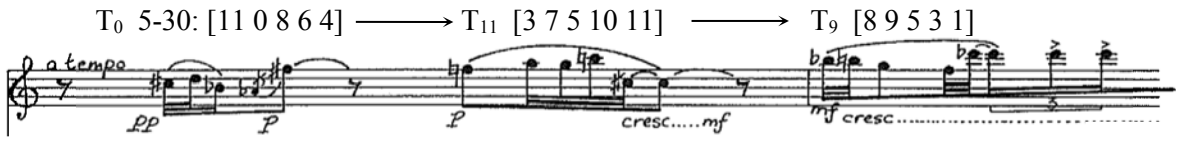
Example 3.3: *Event I*, bars 10-13.

The overall dense texture that characterizes this first *Event* becomes lighter when the clarinet part is minimized to a few repeated single notes that are only altered rhythmically, through articulations such as *staccato*, *marcato* and *tenuto*, or trills, and when the piano is entrusted with one line shared between the hands. In bar 14, two new pitch-class sets, 4-14 and its superset 5-11 interlock to form a single line for the piano. Whereas so far the pitches forming the piano part have usually comprised small intervals, a distinctive element in this short passage is the wide gaps between the notes. However, using a different set for each hand remains a common feature. As the two hands on the piano collaborate, nine different pitches are used, G-D-A-B♭ in the right and F-A♭-D♭-E-F♯ in the left. Once more, the missing pitch classes C, D♯, B are heard in the clarinet. Therefore, though the two instruments seem to be working independently, they are complimenting each other in terms of pitch to make use of all the twelve pitch classes (Ex. 3.4). Short rests, longer notes and the reiteration of the same pitches on the clarinet allow the piano to take a more significant role, and share some of the prominence that was earlier taken up by the woodwind instrument. While the character of the music changes, cells that were used earlier appear again to guarantee musical unity. In bar 15, the clarinet presents pitch-class set 4-13, a set reiterated several times earlier by the piano.



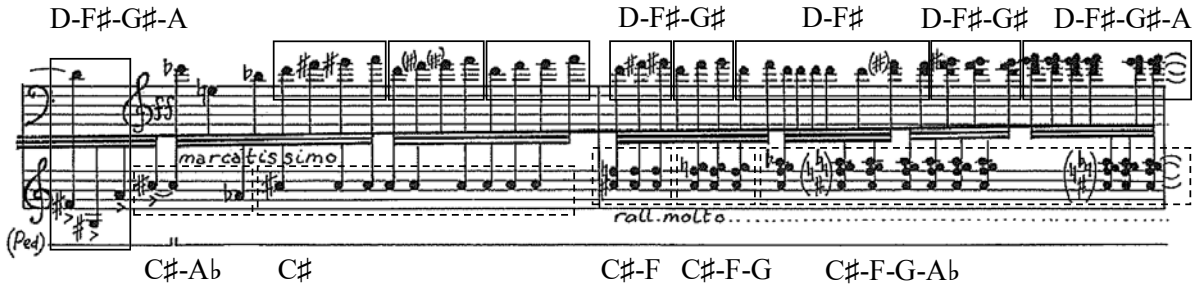
Example 3.4: Bars 14-15 with a lighter texture and the use of the complete twelve-tone aggregate.

Written in 1/8 time, bar 15 is the shortest bar, and it also marks the midpoint of the first *Event*. In terms of pitches, the next three bars are almost identical to bars 10-11. In fact, the clarinet part is loaded with trills from F to G, and the piano creates different motifs but keeps pitch-class sets 6-34 and 4-Z29 as their basis. However, a new cell D-C♯-B, often notated as a triplet, is added to the right-hand part of the piano. Pitch-class set 4-Z29 is only interrupted by set 4-2 towards the end of bar 18, but reappears several times again in the following bars, thus ensuring continuity. The correlation between bars 14 and 19 is quite evident due to the same style adopted by the piano. Moreover, the first five pitches F-G-A♭-D♭-D, which in bar 14 were shared between the two hands, are instead spread out horizontally in bars 19-20 and assigned solely to the right hand. Meanwhile, the clarinet presents an ascending passage based on pitch-class set 5-30 [0 1 4 6 8]. Three different forms of the same five-note collection follow each other, separated by a quaver rest, each time creating a different contour (Ex. 3.5). Though the cells are related by transposition, they vary in both rhythm and register. Pitches B-C-A♭-G♭-E are first displaced downwards by one semitone and reordered to E♭-G-F-B♭-B. Soon after, at the beginning of bar 20, they are transposed again to two semitones lower.



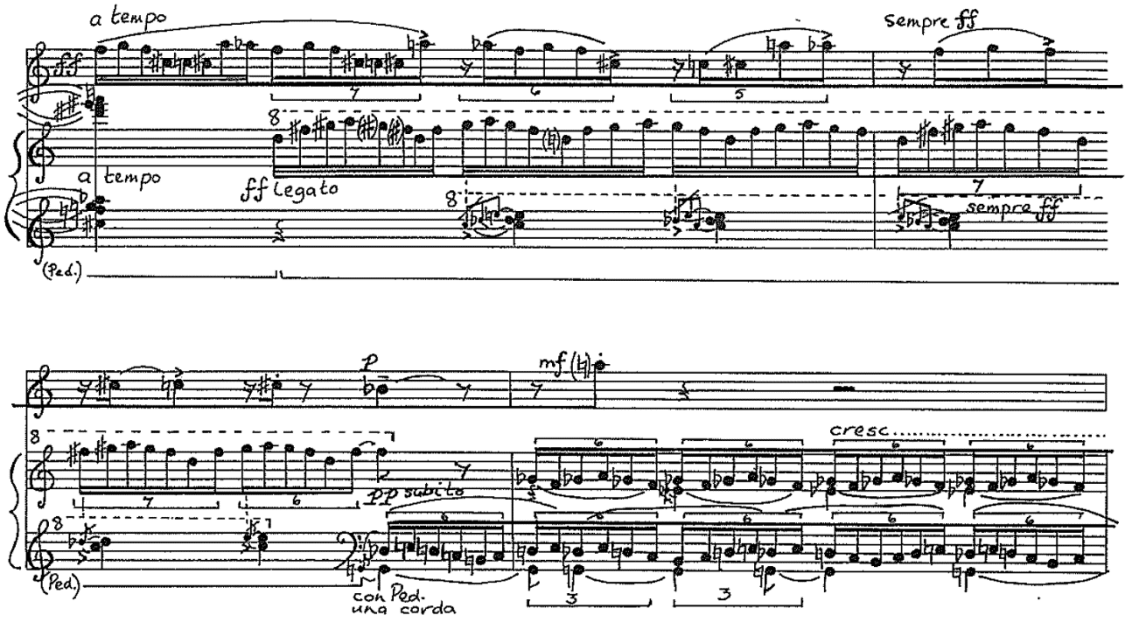
Example 3.5: The clarinet part using equivalent cells under transposition, in bars 19-(20).

In bars 19-21, whilst the music becomes gradually louder, the notes in the piano part rapidly ascend into the middle and upper registers. As the texture in the piano becomes denser, the clarinet reduces its versatility and then stops completely at bar 21. The piano part becomes particularly remarkable when dealing with a couple of four-note cells. In the right hand, the pitches D-F♯-G♯-A, once more forming set 4-Z29, are repeated, until the set is fragmented, each time leaving out one of its members. The same pitches then mount on each other, again one by one, to form chords. The left-hand part follows the same procedure of adding pitches in succession, with another cell C♯-F-G-A♭, a transposed version of that used by the other hand, until both cells produce one chord mainly consisting of neighbouring notes (Ex. 3.6).



Example 3.6: Pitch-class set 4-Z29 as used by the piano in bars (20)-21.

The procedure of working with different combinations of the same pitches continues to be used in the next bars (Ex. 3.7). Notes based on the pitch-class set 3-3 [0 1 4] are played quickly, as multiple grace notes C-D♭-E, and immediately after combined to form a dense chord, in the left-hand piano part. Each time, the three pitches are reordered or grouped in twos to form dyads. Meanwhile, up to bar 23 the right hand continues to emphasize set 4-Z29. The clarinet repeatedly works with pitch-class set 6-16 [0 1 4 5 6 8], each time elongating the notes to produce a slower rhythm, until it stops for three bars. In the last few bars of the first *Event*, while the clarinet is at rest, the repeated symmetrical cells on the piano stand out again. The left-hand part is based on the pitch-class set 6-Z40 [0 1 2 3 5 8], and is aligned with the right hand which uses pitch-class set 4-12 [0 2 3 6]. However, the different lengths of the sets make the left-hand and right-hand cells unsynchronized. Therefore, they produce different sounds within a common framework.



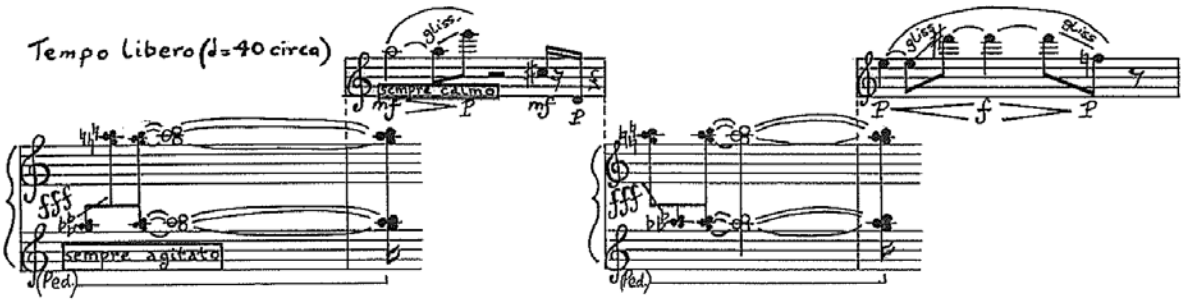
Example 3.7: *Event I*, bars 22-24.

The absence of the clarinet in bars 24-26 corresponds with the break allowed for the flautist, in *Duo II*, to change between the piccolo and the flute. So while in *Five Events*, the end of a movement is more clearly indicated, often by the use of a much lighter texture or a chord, in the second part of the triptych, it is suggested by a change in instrument. The last three bars of the first *Event* are altered and contain quick inserts by the clarinet, to mark the closure of the first movement, even if the ending still remains very abrupt.

3.3 Event II

The second of the *Five Events* is marked with a relatively slow tempo (♩ = 40 circa) but the time signature is not indicated. The bars are of unequal lengths, mainly depending on the duration of each entry by one of the alternating instruments. In contrast to the previous movement, the piano and the clarinet are now given their own sonic space, since they often perform separately. As the music proceeds, the two instruments then overlap more frequently. Such mixture of brief solo parts and occasional duets provides more contrast and allows for a variety in tone colours.

In this *Event*, the instruments seem to be treated as characters in a dramatic scenario, with each of them being consistently assigned a particular type of material, and waiting for its turn to perform the entry. This approach seems to invite a dramatic interpretation of the piece, and therefore gives more significance to the title of this work. Structurally, *Five Events* consists of disparate sketches, on the model of short scenes, which come together to form a complete musical work suggestive of a theatrical production. The concept of music drama was central in the works of Polish composers such as Lutosławski and his contemporaries in the 1970s. For example, in the *Cello Concerto* (1969-1970), Lutosławski presents his instrumental music as a sequence of dramatic events in which the cello and the orchestra cue each other's entrances.[7] In Grech's second *Event*, the dramatic opposition between the two instruments is specifically indicated by the different performance directions given at the very beginning of the *Event* (Ex. 3.8). While the piano part should be performed in a restless, agitated style, the clarinet is instructed to be constantly calm. The pitches assigned to each part continue to distinguish the two instruments.



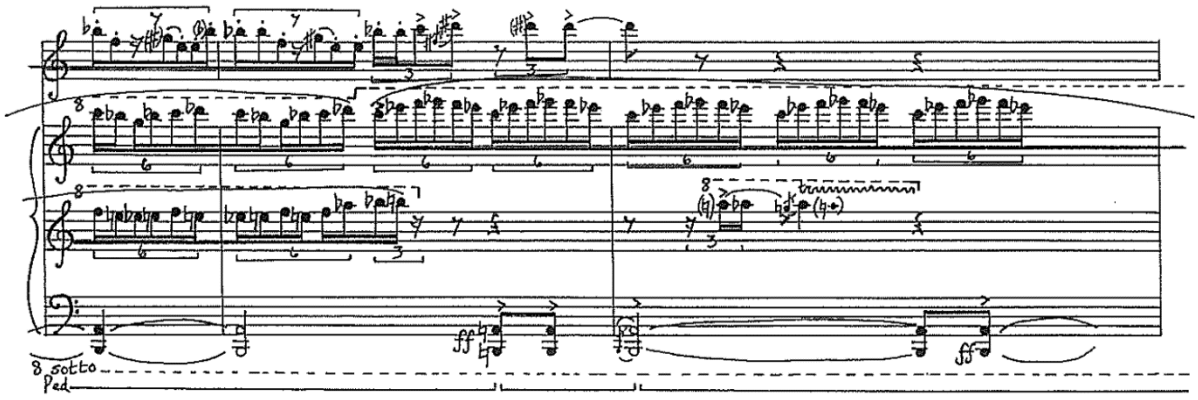
Example 3.8: The opening bars of *Event II.*

[7] Steven Stucky, *Lutosławski and his Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 172.

Up to bar 10, the piano constantly reiterates six neighbouring pitch classes and moves more freely only towards the end of the movement, but the clarinet part is less restricted and uses the whole twelve-tone scale, with no emphasis on specific pitches. The pedalled dissonant chords or single line of notes (G♭-A♭-B♭ or G-A-B) on the piano, at the beginning of the movement, create a disruptive sound, which is then neutralized by the octave glissandos on the clarinet.

Throughout this *Event*, the dynamic levels change continuously and vary from *fff* to *ppp*. The first chromatic entries of the piano, which are marked extremely loud, are then immediately followed by the much softer entries of the clarinet. Conversely, when the piano reduces its volume drastically (bar 7), the clarinet responds with a louder tone (bar 8). A more balanced approach is attained towards the end of this movement, when the piano part becomes more tranquil, and the two instruments accompany each other again.

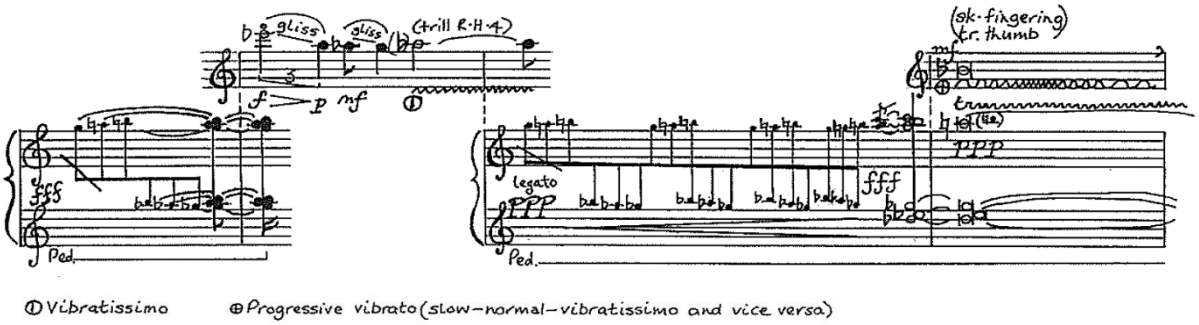
A noticeable feature in this work is the various roles given to the piano pedal. Different pedal functions have already been employed in the first *Event*. In the opening nine bars of the piece, the pedal was primarily used to allow some tones to vibrate, while the fingers are used to play other notes (Ex. 3.9).[8] The pedal makes it possible for the lower tones B and A to continue vibrating such that the left hand is free to perform semiquaver notes that are around four octaves higher and so cannot be reached altogether by the same hand. The perpetual motion of unceasing semiquavers in both hands at the higher registers of the piano is therefore enhanced, and in the meantime it is supported by a simultaneous third line consisting of a repeated chord at the furthest lower register of the keyboard, whose effect mainly depends on the use of the pedal.



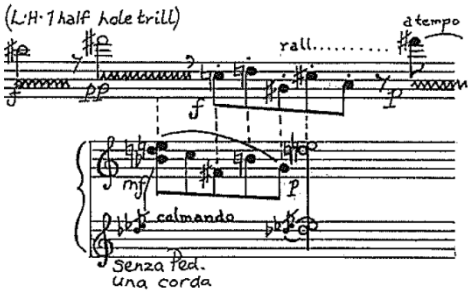
Example 3.9: An extract from *Event I*, bars (5)-7.

[8] Joseph Banowetz and Brian Mann, ed. *The Art of Piano Pedaling: Two Classical Guides; Anton Rubinstein and Teresa Carreño* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2003), 11.

In the second *Event*, the role of the pedal is to maintain the *legato* between the quick notes or chords, and to create full and rich tones (Ex. 3.10).[9] It makes it possible for the closely grouped repeated notes to produce additional powerful sonorities, when the use of the wrist movement or the weight of the whole hand alone are not enough to obtain the required loudness. Throughout this *Event*, the piano is expected to vibrate fairly constantly, such that the pedalled sound becomes the basic keyboard sonority. Then, when the pedalling is removed for only a short instance, the sonority becomes almost a special effect. At bar 12, the non-pedalling alongside the performance direction *calmando* should therefore be conceived as an intentional change in tone colour (Ex. 3.11).



Example 3.10: An extract from *Event II*, bars 5-8.

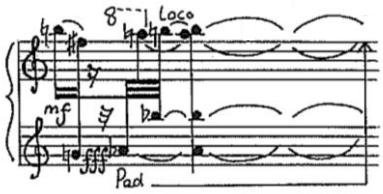


Example 3.11: *Event II*, bars (11)-12.

Nearly all the entries of the piano are based on pitch-class set 3-6 [0 2 4]. The same three-note set is used in both hands with the right hand playing all pitches transposed a half-step above. Together, the two cells G♭-A♭-B♭ and G-A-B form adjacent notes that make up the set 6-1. The combination of the principal pitch classes is then presented in various forms and rhythms, such that identity and difference come together to produce coherence throughout the *Event*. A change

[9] Ibid., 14.

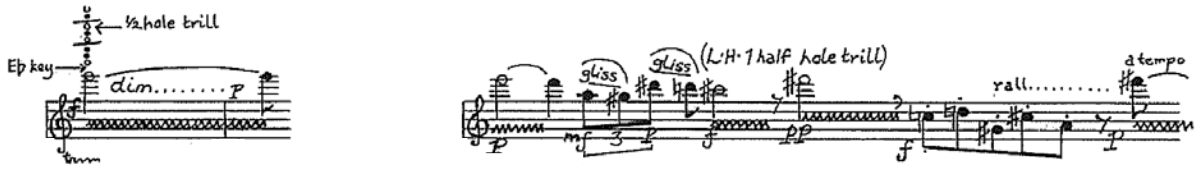
in pitches comes at the last chord of bar 7 when the piano makes use of pitch-class set 6-Z45 [0 2 3 4 6 9], with the chord D♭-E♭-G♭ in the left hand, against A-B-C in the other hand. Therefore, three out of the six pitch classes still remain unchanged. In the next bar, the trichord in the right hand is followed by an A-B trill that lasts for longer than a whole bar, bringing back to mind the emphasis already exerted on the same pitches in the first *Event* through the repeated dyad on the piano. Even though bar 10 again restates the prevailing set 6-1, the same pitch classes are presented differently. Instead of the repetitive patterns of falling and rising quaver notes, or chords that appear in the previous bars, the pitches are now arranged in a different rhythm and contour, with notes of different values, and with larger gaps between them due to octave changes (Ex. 3.12).



Example 3.12: The piano part in *Event II*, bar 10.

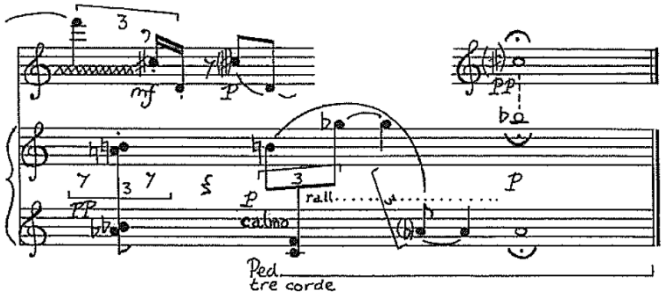
As in the first *Event*, the clarinet part is more free, but with some frequently occurring characteristics. One of the features that stands out in the second *Event* is the use of unconventional performance methods. Grech's work was perhaps influenced by the innovative procedures of Bruno Bartolozzi who published his pioneering work on extended techniques of performing for woodwind instruments in 1967, in his book *New Sounds for Woodwinds*. He developed four systems: timbral variations, quartertones, harmonics, and multiphonics. In *Five Events*, the Maltese composer adopts some of these techniques alongside more traditional ones so as to enrich the clarinet line, to allow for more changes in tone colour, and to produce a wide selection of unusual and interesting sounds. Trills are very common in this movement, but each of them is different so as to add to the expressive quality of the music. As in bars 11 and 12, the number of waggles denoting a trill gives a partial indication of its length. More detailed instructions on some other trills show the flexible speed or the kind of vibrato with which they are intended to be performed in order to create the desired effect. Grech sometimes even uses drawings, denotes the fingerings, and writes short notes to instruct the clarinettist on how to perform the different extended techniques. The trill on B♭ in bar 6 should be played *vibratissimo*. A couple of bars later, the A♭ trill that appears on its own in the clarinet part is to

be played with *progressive vibrato* that starts slowly and accelerates gradually, until little by little it goes back again to its initial pace. In bars 9 and 11, the clarinet is then assigned half-hole trills, where the performer needs to partially cover a tone hole with one finger to produce quarter tones. The more traditional glissandos are likewise often used throughout the second event. The smooth sliding between notes sometimes covers a whole octave, while at other instances it only ascends or descends between two adjacent pitches.



Example 3.13: Part of the clarinet line that requires the use of extended techniques.

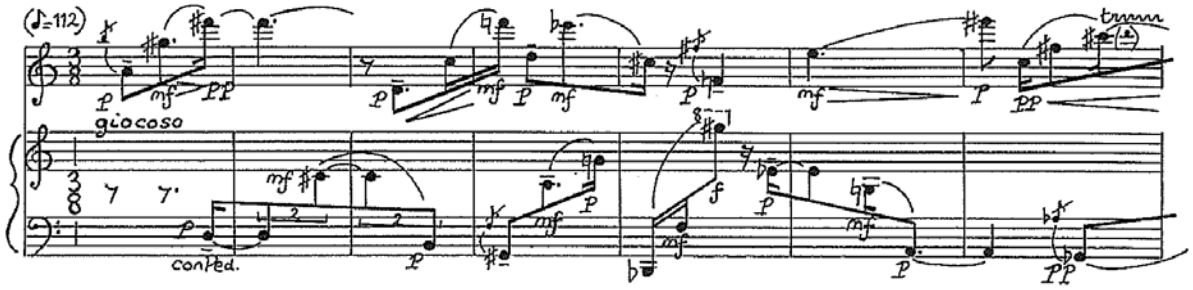
Halfway through the *Event*, the piano part becomes less inclined to repeated sets, and is fully exposed to all the pitches of the twelve-tone scale. After a passage comprising small intervals and a narrow pitch range, the music changes into a relatively freer part with wider interval leaps. At bar 12, the two instrumental characters, previously indifferent towards each other, come together for a brief passage. Both instruments repeat the same quaver notes B♭-C-F♯-B-G, but the piano is two quaver beats behind. Towards the end (Ex. 3.14), the rapid grace notes, or notes of short values, the *staccatos*, and the trills, gradually fade out. The texture becomes sparse and the pace of the music slows down, such that a milder sound is produced.



Example 3.14: The closing bars of *Event II*.

3.4 Event III

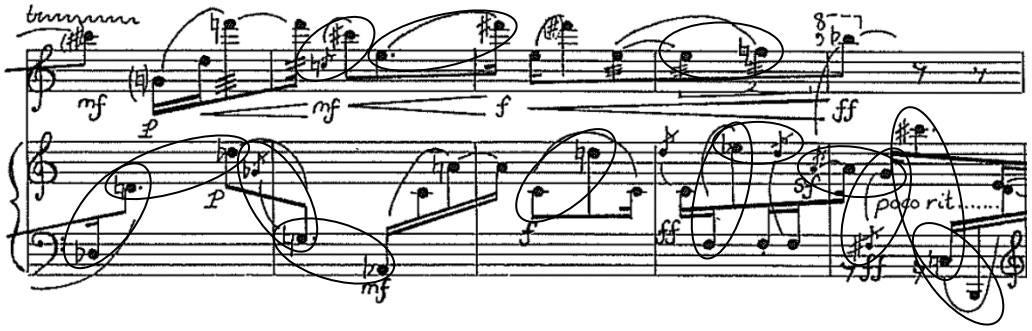
In the previous two *Events*, while the clarinet often follows a free-atonal style, the piano part is more structured since it is based upon related cells and repeated rhythmic patterns. The material in both instruments, however, is more free in the third *Event*. In the first thirty-one bars, the pianist and the clarinettist seem more like two soloists performing at the same time, rather than forming a homogeneous duet. To complement the freedom in pitches, the music is also ametrical (Ex. 3.15). The uneven grouped notes that stand out as the main characteristic of this *giocoso* movement are quite rhythmically innovative. Throughout the asymmetrical 3/8 metre, Grech dissects the quavers in different ways, such that the groups usually leap over the bar lines. In the piano and the clarinet parts alike, the groups contain notes of short duration, ranging from a dotted quaver to a demisemiquaver. Yet, the note values are interchanged and therefore make each group unique. It seems likely that in his attempt to combine the twelve-tone technique with independent rhythmic structures, Grech was particularly influenced by an early work of Pierre Boulez, the *Sonatine* (1946) for flute and piano. In fact, the freedom and flexibility in using the twelve-note method, the wide intervals between pitches, the irregular rhythmic structures, the note groupings that extend over the bar lines, the texture in the piano, the lack of connection between the two instruments, and the continuous changes in dynamics, are all common features between the two works.



Example 3.15: *Event III*, bars 1-7, featuring free atonality and uneven rhythmic groupings.

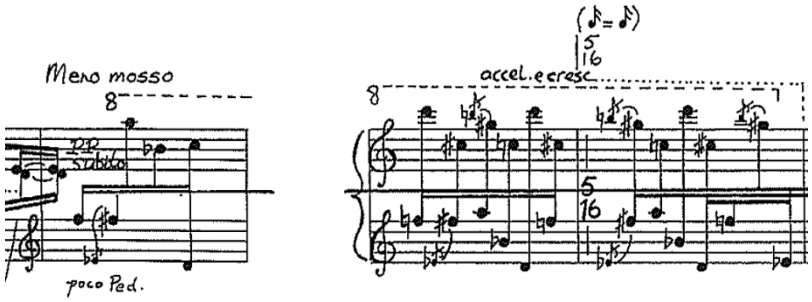
The piano part, in which the same line is divided between both hands, shares textural similarities with bars 14 and 19-20 in the first *Event*. However, in this section, the line does not comply to pitch-class set theory. Instead, it fluctuates randomly up or down, and creates large intervals between notes. The music is so unpredictable that it almost sounds like an improvisatory passage. Nevertheless, even though the notes are dispersed in different registers, they are still often at close distances, assuming octave equivalence. For example, the first bars are loaded

with small unordered pitch-class intervals, but the notes are separated by wide gaps due to the octave shifts (Ex. 3.16). While working with pitch classes that are close to each other, Grech is moving between the different registers of the piano and the clarinet, and showing virtuosity in the use of timbres.



Example 3.16: Interval classes 1 and 2 as used in bars 8-12.

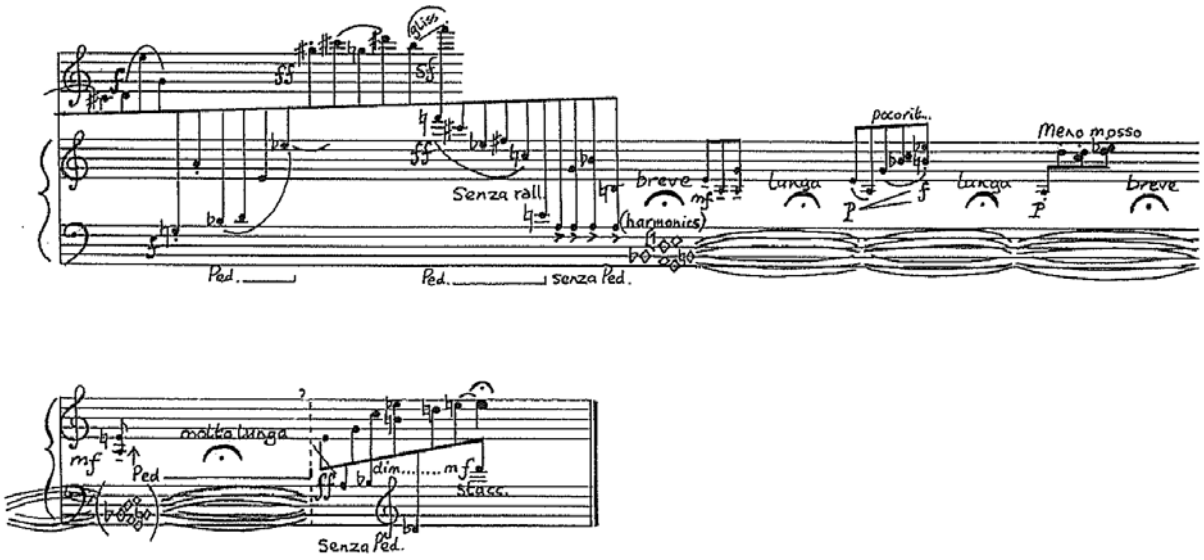
The playful manner in which the piano and the clarinet fit into each other is partially altered when the piano is unaccompanied and again performs repeated cells that are comparable to those that were common in the first *Event*. In bars 13-15 (Ex. 3.17), the left hand and the right hand that were previously using an alternating-hand technique on the piano, join to present a pair of Z-related pitch-class sets: 6-Z13 and 5-Z37. Initially, the set with pitches F-E♭-F♯-A-B♭-D is divided between the two hands, thus retaining the same texture. The last note in bar 13 then introduces the pentachord C-E-C♯-B-G♯, which is thenceforth entrusted to the right hand. In the next two bars, both sets are played simultaneously in the form of semiquaver dyads with occasional grace notes and demisemiquavers, combining contrasting sonorities from the middle and high registers of the piano. For a single bar only, at bar 14, the time signature changes to 5/16, until it goes back to the previous 3/8 metre, but in a quicker tempo.



Example 3.17: *Event III*, bars 13-15.

As from bar 16, along with the faster pace that changes from ♪ = 112 to ♪ = 120, the texture also becomes denser, with an increase in the triplet rhythms, the use of abrupt grace notes, and notes of shorter duration. Otherwise, the style remains constant up to the last part of this third *Event*.

A substantial change occurs at bar 32, when the music for both instruments is organized into a single line. The wide leaps remain a common feature throughout this passage as well. While they take turns, the clarinet and the separate hands of the piano perform a very quick succession of notes with frequent dynamic changes. No time signature or bar lines are provided for this *velocissimo* part and therefore the music should be regulated by the performers. As the annotation on the score explains, it is most important that there are no gaps between the entries of each instrument. To achieve a legato between the widespread hurried notes, the sustain piano pedal is frequently used. At the same time, the frequent change from pedal to no pedal creates variations in the sonority. The last part of this *Event* is more tranquil (Ex. 3.18). Following a rising glissando, the clarinet comes to an abrupt halt. Detached groups of quaver notes in the right hand of the piano are accompanied by harmonics produced by the silently pressed keys. The hollow sounds are then enhanced further by the pedal.



Example 3.18: An extract from the last part of *Event III*.

Despite the seemingly unrestricted approach, the music still follows a number of qualities that keep the whole *Event* together, such as the common short note values, the disjunct motion, the syncopated rhythms, the similar groupings of three to six quavers, and the way in which the

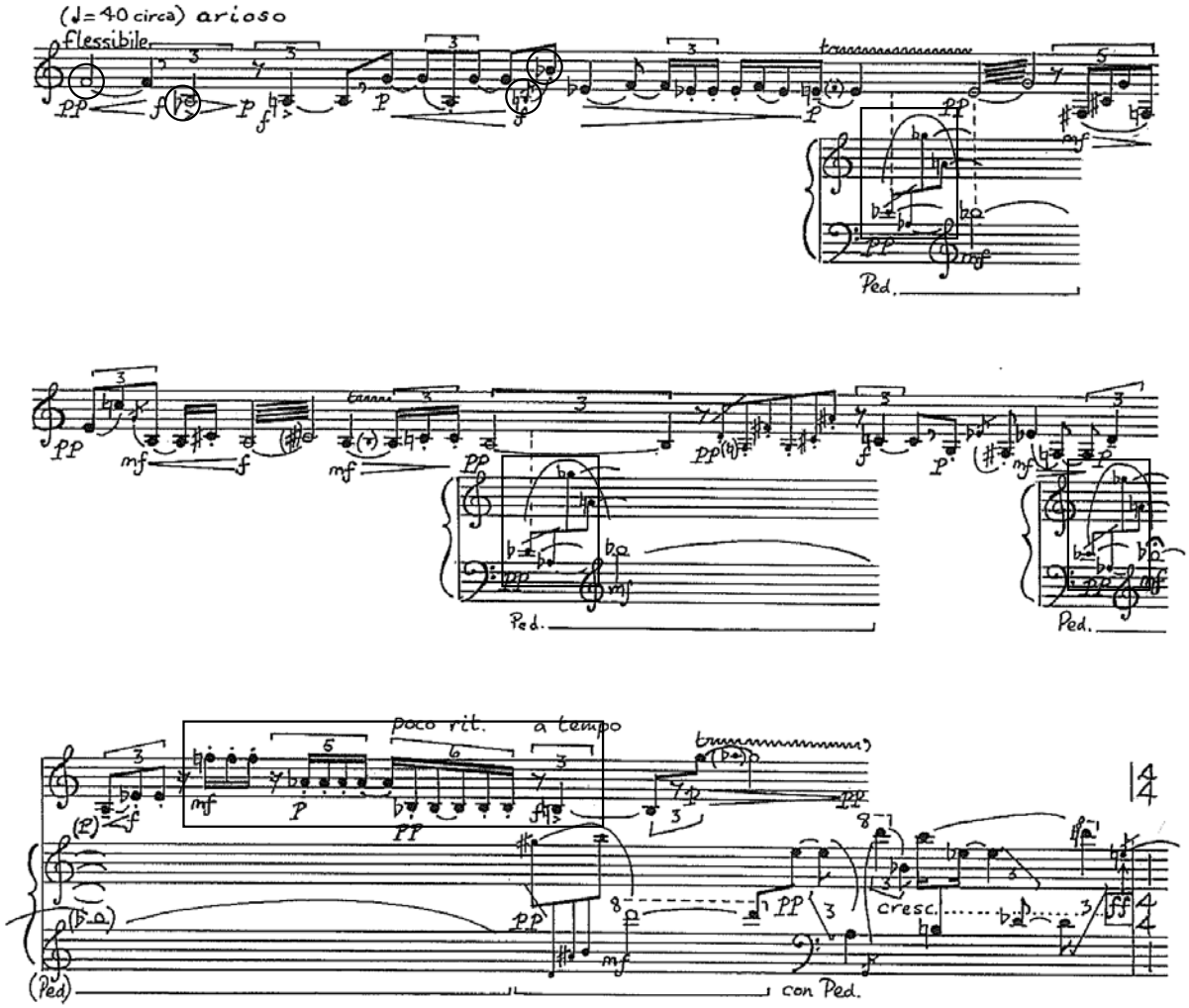
piano and the clarinet work together so that there are no moments of silence in the music. Furthermore, as shown earlier, while this piece continuously develops into something new, at times, it restates a technique that was previously used. Such elements or short phrases account for the integrity of the whole *Event*.

3.5 Event IV

The clarinet begins the fourth *Event* on its own to compensate for its absence in the final passage of the previous movement. After the first phrases, the piano enters again, first with concise cells on a single line, which reappear at irregular intervals, and later with an increasingly denser texture. *Event IV* initially presents a passage marked *flessibile* and without a time signature, to match the free timing in the closing section of the third *Event*. However, there are other features, including tempo, rhythm, texture and pitches, which produce a markedly different musical character. The tempo for the fourth *Event* is set to approximately 40 crotchet beats to the minute, and therefore is considerably slower than that indicated in *Event III*. While the steady pace is retained until the end of *Event IV*, there is greater variety in note values and more flexibility in rhythm. Irregular subdivisions, along with *tremolos* and trills are quite frequent, and remain common in the whole movement. With regards to the texture, while the last part of the previous movement consisted of an unbroken single line joining the two instruments, here the clarinet becomes the main protagonist, and though the piano assists the melodic line, it produces a different style.

In order to extend the brief solo passages that introduce the *Event*, additional notes for the chalumeau register are inserted to replace the long vibrato notes presented in *Duo II*. Generally, the clarinet maintains a free-atonal style, even if some pitch-class sets appear more than once. As indicated by the performance direction at the beginning of the *Event*, the clarinet takes the lead with an 'arioso' character. It presents a melodic passage, using a pleasant singing tone, at first accompanied by identical pitch and rhythmic cells on the piano. The latter first accompanies the melody line with short entries of very quick grace notes E♭-A♭-G♭-A, succeeded by a long high B♭. After three entries, a similar cell with different pitches is used, but the same method of using abrupt notes that settle on a sustained note is retained (see the piano part in Ex. 3.19). This characteristic of urgency and repose lasts until the piano performs a short passage on its own and then continues with its full participation. The technique used in these identical entrances of the piano is much like the initial part of the second *Event* where a motif with same pitches was used continuously. Together with the same slow tempo, it gives a hint of symmetry to the whole piece. The semi-symmetric structure of *Five Events* will be enhanced further in the last part of the fifth *Event*.

The repeated motivic cell E♭-G♭-A-A♭, forming pitch-class set 4-13 [0 1 3 6], is primarily sung by the clarinet at the very beginning of the *Event*, with other notes added in between, and then is restated by the piano in a slightly reordered version, often during the longer notes of the clarinet. It takes an even more prominent role when it is transferred again into the clarinet part and unfolds into a longer phrase that becomes part of the melody, using the same pitches but presented with a different rhythm mainly consisting of *staccato* groupings (Ex. 3.19).

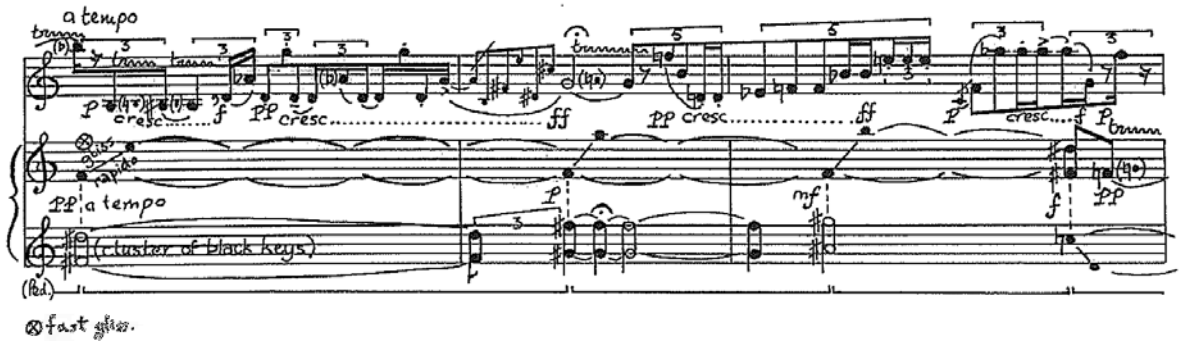


Example 3.19: The development of a motivic cell based on set 4-13 in the first part of *Event IV*.

A number of other repeated cells, sometimes appearing in different orders, also move between the two instruments. Pitch-class set 4-5 [0 1 2 6] is heard twice in the clarinet line, first with pitches E-B-F-D♯ and shortly after in its reordered version D♯-E-F-B. Another tetrachord F-D♭-E-E♭, based on pitch-class set 4-2 [0 1 2 4] is also first introduced by the clarinet, and then inverted and transposed to D-A♯-B-C to be played twice by the piano, towards the end of the

unmetered section. The same combination of pitches is presented in different orders and with varied rhythmic arrangements. The unaccompanied parts for the clarinet and the piano which are scattered throughout the *Event* emphasize the independence of the two instruments, but on the other hand, the same sets that are used in the melody and the accompanying part, together with the way in which the instruments respond to each other's material creates a balance between individuality and interdependence.

When the simple quadruple metre is added, noticeable changes occur in the texture. At first, the versatility of the clarinet is accompanied by two-note or three-note chords on the piano, all different from each other and not easily related. Later, the sound of the piano becomes much thicker (Ex. 3.20), as Grech adopts Henry Cowell's technique of 'tone clusters'.[10] Three times, the right hand glides quickly over the white keys. Though the glissandos all have the same bass note F_4, they span a larger range every time they are repeated. In the meantime, the clusters of black keys are held down simultaneously at length by the right hand, and sustained by the pedal. These densely packed dissonant chords remain equally distributed as they shift gradually to higher pitches and become louder. To mark the closure of this technique, a glissando goes back down the keys.



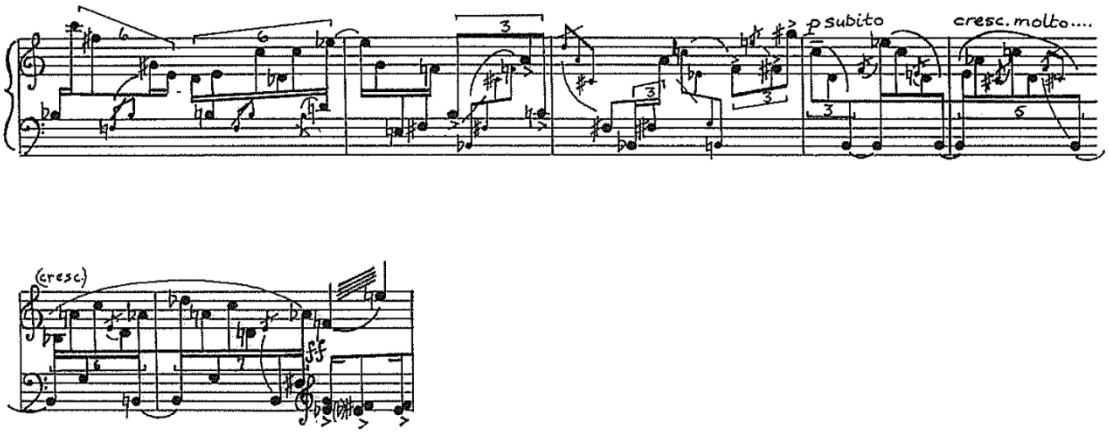
Example 3.20: The dense texture created by the tone clusters on the piano.

Meanwhile, the clarinet continues with an uninterrupted melodic line marked with diverging dynamic levels ranging between *pp* and *ff*. In the last three bars, the piano adopts the *tremolos* and the trills that have been a common technique in the clarinet throughout the movement. The *Event* closes with *staccato* notes of short duration, first on the clarinet and subsequently by the piano. The music then flows into the last *Event* without a pause.

[10] A more detailed description of 'tone clusters' can be found in Michael Hicks, 'Cowell's Clusters', *Musical Quarterly* 77/3 (1993), 428-58.

3.6 Event V

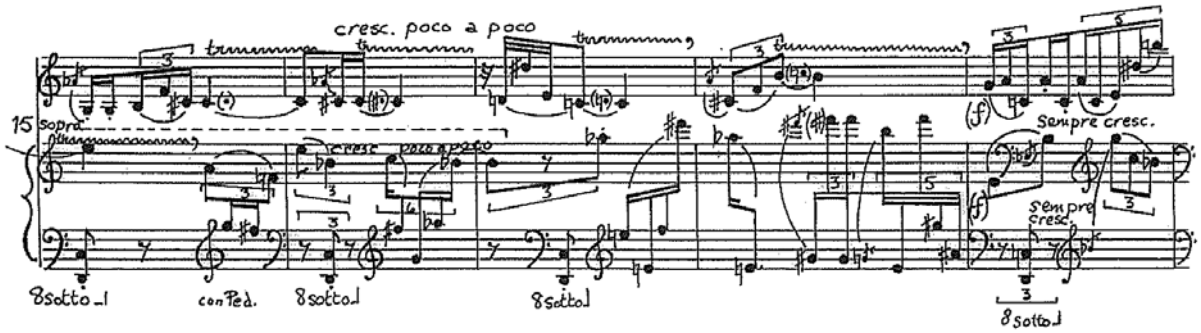
The final movement of *Five Events* is marked *energetico* and is in 2/4 time with a metronome marking of ♩ = 60. Its opening provides a respite after the numerous trills and the dense textures presented in the fourth *Event*. The solo piano returns to a thinner and lighter texture by using the earlier technique, most effectively employed in the third *Event*, of exchanging the hands to play a single line of music mainly made up quavers and semiquavers. In the first bars, the music is mostly confined to the middle octaves of the piano. Though all the twelve pitches are being used, up to bar 7, some selected pitch classes are emphasized. The right hand regularly repeats the cell C-D-E-G♯, members of pitch-class set 4-24 [0 2 4 8], whereas in the left hand the notes B_3 and B_2 feature as the most prominently (Ex. 3.21). In bars 7-8, overlapping dense chords and *tremolos* complete this passage, which is then followed by other contrasting techniques.



Example 3.21: *Event V*, bars 2-6.

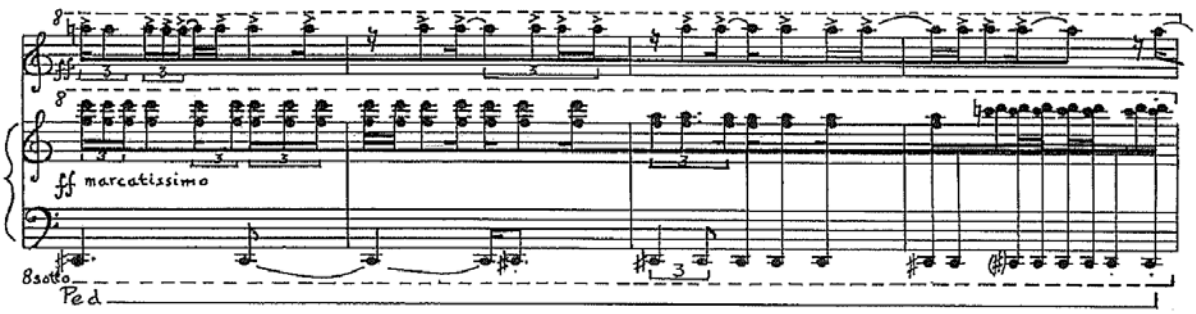
The clarinet enters at bar 8 with a group of extremely loud demisemiquaver notes, and proceeds with very soft irregular rhythmic patterns. In two crotchet beats, the clarinet and the piano perform all the twelve notes of the chromatic scale. Yet, the flexibility of both instruments does not limit itself to the unrestricted use of all the twelve pitches, but also extends itself to include varied rhythmic groupings, continuously changing dynamic markings, and the use of different registers of the instruments. As the clarinet goes up and down to reach very distant pitches, the piano also shifts to the highest and lowest registers of the keyboard. The freedom to exploit all the possible registers of the two instruments creates distinct tone colours. While the individual qualities of the clarinet's four registers flow into each other, the robust sound of the low keys

of the piano is combined with a glistening sound, to produce extremely varied timbres. Such contradictory sonorities make the whole piece even more intriguing.



Example 3.22: An extract from *Event V*, bars 10-14.

Among the wide-ranging techniques, the composer retains some recognizable strategies, for example, when in bars 9-17 he repeatedly uses the dyad D-C in the bass of the piano, as a reminder of the pedal notes B and A in bars 4-8 of the first *Event*. Towards the end of the piece, the music limits itself to a string of fast repeated notes. To maintain another familiar technique, the penetrating sound of accented notes on the clarinet is supported by the infrequently changed white-note *marcatissimo* chords in the right hand of the piano, and balanced by a low pedal note C♯ in the left (Ex. 3.23). Though both instruments play very similar patterns, each line of music is structured with different rhythmic subdivisions. This passage constitutes a sort of recapitulation of bars 20-21 in *Event I*, retaining the same style but altering some of the pitches.



Example 3.23: Bars 18-21 in *Event V*.

From bar 22 to the end, the music softens and returns to the lighter texture, in preparation for the close. Before delivering the final sound, the music stops for a few seconds. Then, the piano

performs a very abrupt and expansive sound, against the long, sustained note on the clarinet, which dies away very slowly.

Five Events compresses within its short span some of the most characteristic musical achievements that the twentieth century had to offer, including radically new modes of pitch organization, rhythmic structuring, and performance technique. The compositional style and language adopted by Pawlu Grech draws from multiple modernistic ideas, predominantly those brought forward by European composers. It is quite clear that the composer is attempting to distance himself from earlier musical methods. Instead, he adopts an atonal technique, largely based on free atonality and unstrict serialism, to write non-referential music with the aim of surpassing any boundaries that can link him to the traditional past or to any extramusical expressivity. Though Grech's composition style involves a fusion of existing methods, he does not actually adopt other composers' techniques in their original form, but transforms them into an identifiable personal idiom, full of compact and abstract sounds, that is undoubtedly an example of the modernistic musical world.

Chamber music, for Pawlu Grech, is the genre that enables him to compose in the most detailed manner, requiring careful listening from the performers and also close attention by the listeners. The way in which the composer deals with the instruments is fundamental in this duet. He carefully balances the autonomy of each instrument and their dependence on each other to produce a cohesive ensemble sound. At no point is the self-sufficiency of either of the two instruments detrimental to the significance of the other. The material presented by the clarinet and the piano encompasses co-existing solo parts, shared single musical lines, a dramatic dialogic representation, and intertwined complementary passages. In *Five Events,* Grech gives particular attention to the timbres in the different registers of the instruments and to the use of extended techniques in order to create a broad spectrum of colouristic effects that come together to produce compatible or conflicting sounds. The wide-ranging approach to instrumentation is a proof of the composer's versatility in this regard.

In his works, Grech seeks to be musically autonomous. He conceals older forms and techniques, and shows no recognition of the Maltese character, as if out of fear of contamination by the political interests and social forces that prevailed in Malta during the twentieth century. As such, he emancipates himself from the cultural debate over whether to create a national identity or hold onto a colonial mentality that perceived the works of foreign artists as superior to the

local talent. Grech might have felt artistically restricted by the limited opportunities of self-expression in his native island. The unsettling conditions that lingered for decades during the post-war imperial days and were carried over into the post-independence period were not favourable either. In response to this, Grech not only emigrated physically from Malta, but also artistically, by adopting a musical idiom that detaches him from his birthplace and its culture, but not from contemporary European compositional conventions.

Segments

No. 1 op. 93

Joseph Vella

4.1 Introduction

Segments No. 1 is the first in a set of three compositions that use the same title. Joseph Vella wrote the first of these in 1998, for flute, violin, and piano. This twelve-note composition was premiered the following year, on 21 August, at The Stables Theatre and Art Gallery, in Hastings, UK, by the musicians Natascha Chircop (flute), Tatjana Chircop (violin) and Marco Rivoltini (piano), to whom the piece is dedicated. The other two works, *Segments No. 2*, scored for string quartet, and *Segments No. 3*, a duo for clarinet and piano, were both composed and performed for the first time in 1999, in Italy and Malta, respectively.

The trio is a serial composition that turns away from the four basic row forms (original, retrograde, inversion and retrograde inversion) towards a freer and more personal idiom. Instead, Vella uses a number of newly formed rows, all systematically constructed from the original twelve-tone row.[1] In this work, it is noteworthy how much the composer strives to create a balance between his individual ideas of musical techniques and existing trends in music. The compositional techniques used in *Segments No. 1* demonstrate the composer's inclination towards twentieth-century neoclassicism and his predilection for contrapuntal writing. Other works using a similar technique include *Canti*, op. 88 (1997) for clarinet, cello and piano, and *Karba*, op. 102 (2002) scored for clarinet in B♭, bass clarinet and piano.

Throughout his compositional career, Vella has explored a considerable number of styles, yet his works often lean towards a contemporary musical language with a recourse to classical styles and forms. The stylistic features of *Segments No. 1* reveal that Vella was touched by the works of Schoenberg, especially those of the 1920s and early 1930s, which are characterized by the development of his twelve-note system, and the methods by which he endeavoured to unite baroque and classical forms with contemporary idioms. As a consequence of his neoclassical style, Vella never consciously attempts in his works (comprising one hundred and fifty-two with opus numbers, and other unclassified works) to write nationalistic music,[2] and

[1] In the liner notes of the CD *Chamber Music (vol. 1)*, the composer gives a clue about how he controls the pitches in this piece, by forming new note-rows from the original row.

[2] Joseph Vella, 'Joseph Vella: Biography', http://josephvella.com.mt/biography/ (accessed 16 December 2016).

his musical language moves away from the folkloristic elements of his local contemporaries. Links between his music and his native country, however, do emerge in some of his works based on Maltese literature, and when he chooses scenes from his country's history, life or heritage.

In the brief discussion of folk music, in Chapter 1, it was noted that in his writings about music in Malta, Vella claims that the accompanying rhythms to Maltese folksongs are similar to traditional music from Southern Spain, and therefore, contrary to the beliefs of some other composers and researchers, do not necessarily have any links to North-African music. Furthermore, Vella holds that in folksong, literary value, based on rhyming verses relating improvised or pre-known stories, significantly surpasses musical worth.[3] This gives a reasonable indication of why in his compositions Vella refrains from including elements of Maltese folk music or musical characteristics that emerged from Southern Mediterranean cultures. Instead, as in *Segments No. 1*, he resorts to imitating classical forms and styles from European musical traditions. This might be due to the fact that Vella tends to believe that throughout the long history of Maltese musical culture, the native people were regularly exposed to music that was professionally written and fervently presented in the churches for free, and thus became too passive to develop a musical culture that was rich in indigenous folk music.[4] According to this line of thought then, music in Malta was primarily shaped by the art music of Western Europe. These diverging views about the roots of the characteristics of Maltese music led native composers to express themselves and reach out to listeners through contrasting compositional languages.

Segments No. 1 shows how Vella relies on a conventional framework on which to demonstrate his innovative compositional skills, in the light of contemporaneity. The neoclassical style of the composer revives musical styles and forms from past eras, and therefore satisfies the listening aptitude of those who are mostly exposed to classical repertoire, and simultaneously produces contemporary sounds through pitch structures to make the music relevant for its own time. A prominent feature of this chamber work is the way in which the contrapuntal texture of the past intermingles with a modernist atonal technique. The quasi-imitative style is due to the related twelve-note rows, which all emerge from the original row stated in the first phrase. Even

[3] Joseph Vella, 'L-Identita` Kulturali ta' Malta – Il-Mużika', in *L-Identita` Kulturali ta' Malta* [The Cultural Identity of Malta], edited by Toni Cortis, (Valletta: Dipartiment tal-Informazzjoni), 38.
[4] Ibid., 37.

though all the segments in this piece conform to the same pitch structure, the other elements of music interact to produce a different sound and mood for each section. Sometimes, the same row bridges two segments such that a change in segment is barely noticeable in terms of pitch. However, the beginning of a new section becomes obvious as a result of variations in melody, tempo, rhythm and texture. Owing to the similar row forms employed in the piece, when the character of the music varies significantly, the listener can still perceive details of melody and harmony that are present in all the six segments that make up the whole work.

4.2 The First Segment

Vella's *Segments No. 1* opens with a section marked *Un Poco Lento*, or quite slow, with the metronome marking (♩ = 56), which presents a fundamental pitch structure that will be laid out differently in each segment of this work. The piece is introduced by the flute, which performs a melodic phrase that spans two octaves, consisting of a set of twelve pitches, such that all pitch classes are stated once, but the final F♯ is emphasized by an elongated note and *tenuto* accent. This first entry is the basic tone row that will be altered throughout the seventeen-bar section, to generate the music for all three instruments. The entire section is mainly a coordinated duet between flute and violin, which take turns to play the subsequent tone rows, supported by piano accompaniment. The successive entries of the flute and violin, which are each independent in rhythm and contour, follow each other to create a contrapuntal texture.

Following the initial statement of the flute, the violin plays the next row, which takes the seventh pitch class of the original row as its starting point. The row progresses by selecting the neighbouring pitch classes on either side, moving first backwards and then forwards, until a new twelve-note row is formed (Fig. 4.1). All the other note rows are formed using the same structure (Fig. 4.2).[5] Altogether, ten different rows of twelve notes are serially presented horizontally between the melodic lines of the wind and the string instruments (Ex. 4.1). To mark the closure of the first segment, the flute again performs a melody that is equivalent to its opening statement, but with altered rhythmic values and once more an elongated last note F♯. As the music proceeds, it becomes more clear that the composer occasionally uses registral invariance, longer note values, or sudden loud dynamics to provide momentary emphasis on pitch class F♯. The first segment thus already indicates that while Vella adopts atonal elements, his work points towards a fundamental note.

[5] In the 1940s and 1950s, Ernst Krenek also used a method of permutation, with pitches changing their position according to a predetermined plan, to derive a number of note-rows from the basic row. This concept of Krenek's exercised considerable influence on Stravinsky's late works and his rotational arrays. See Elliott Antokoletz, *A History of Twentieth Century Music in a Theoretic-Analytical Context* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 288-290; and Joseph N. Straus, *Stravinsky's Late Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 26-33.

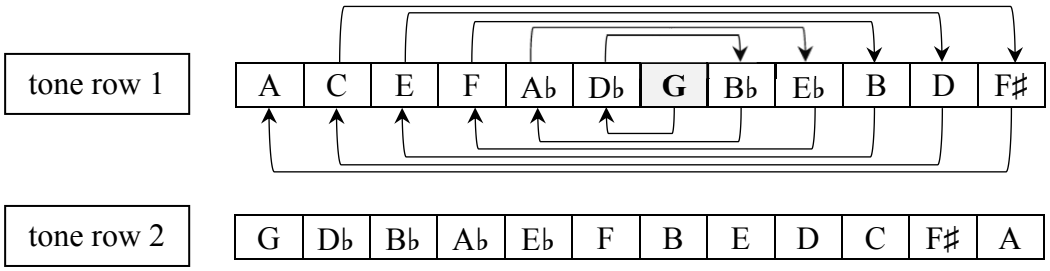
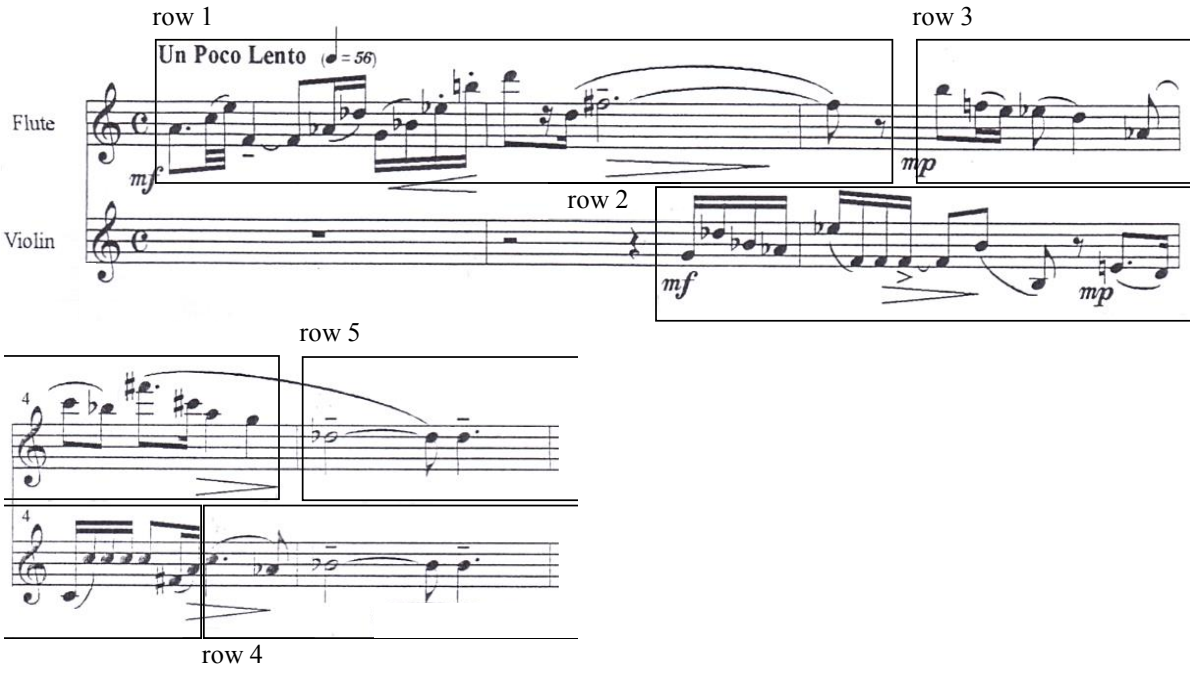


Figure 4.1: The diagram shows how the second row is formed from the primary twelve-tone row.

Instrument	Bars	Row No.	Pitch Content of the Twelve-Tone Row											
flute	1-3;13-17	1	A	C	E	F	Ab	Db	G	Bb	Eb	B	D	F#
violin	2-4	2	G	Db	Bb	Ab	Eb	F	B	E	D	C	F#	A
flute	3-4	3	B	F	E	Eb	D	Ab	C	Bb	F#	C#	A	G
violin	4-8	4	C	Ab	Bb	D	F#	D#	C#	E	A	F	G	B
flute	5-8	5	Db	Eb	E	F#	A	D	F	Bb	G	Ab	B	C
violin	8-9	6	F	D	Bb	A	G	F#	G#	E	B	Eb	C	Db
flute	8-10	7	Ab	F#	E	G	B	A	Eb	Bb	C	D	Db	F
violin	9-11	8	Eb	*Ab	Bb	B	C	G	D	E	C#	F#	F	G#
flute	10-12	9	D	G	E	C	Db	B	F#	Bb	F	A	Ab	*E
violin	12-17	10	F#	B	Bb	Db	F	C	*C	E	Ab	G	Eb	D

Figure 4.2: The ten twelve-tone rows as they appear in flute and violin, in the first segment. (Any variations in the rows are marked with an asterisk.)



Example 4.1: The flute and the violin parts in bars 1-4, showing the opening statements based on tone rows.

It turns out that the source row on which the melody of the piece is developed is made up of four fragments with related sets that give a symmetrical feature to the row. The first and last groups form the set [0 3 7] and the second and third groups both belong to the set [0 4 7]. The row thus consists of minor triads at the far ends and a couple of major triads at the central part. With traditional triadic content that partitions the serial twelve tone set, the music implies a return to classical material. The first triad in A minor is followed by its flattened subdominant major triad of D♭ major. This hexachord is then transposed a major second upwards to give the second half of the row (Fig. 4.3). A similar approach was famously employed by Alban Berg in one of his last compositions, the *Violin Concerto* (1935). This work is based on a note-row with similar triadic references.[6]

Symmetry is strongly present in the first row of *Segments No. 1*, but later it is often destroyed by Vella's permutations. Likewise, the traditional triadic structure that is evident in the primary tone row is distorted in the subsequent rows, and the music is then constructed by means of a more unconventional serial technique, gradually exposing the listener to a modernist sonic experience.

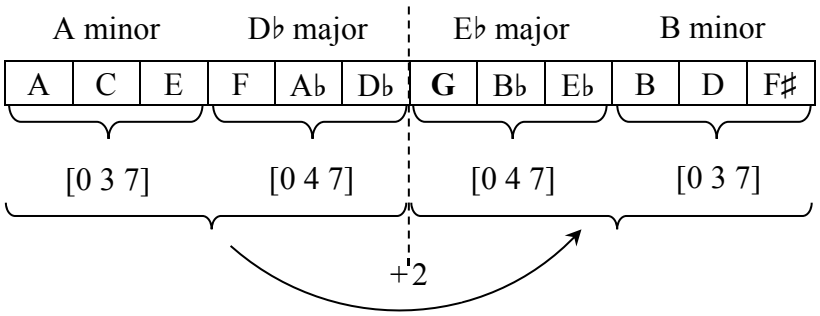
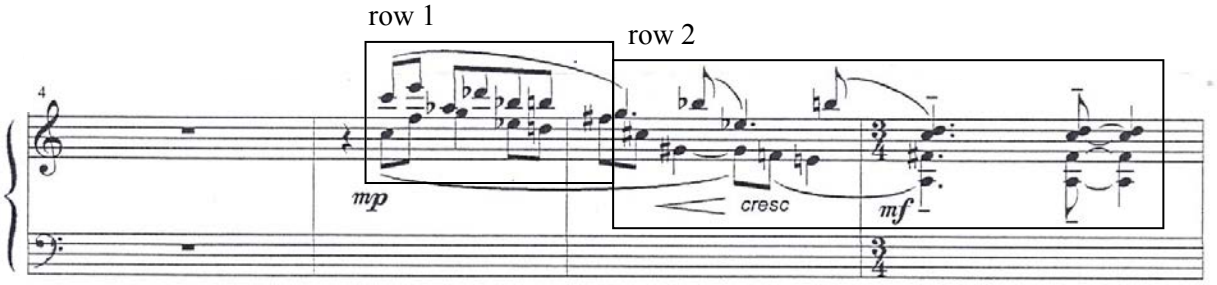


Figure 4.3: Four fragments with related sets having a triadic quality and a symmetrical structure in row 1.

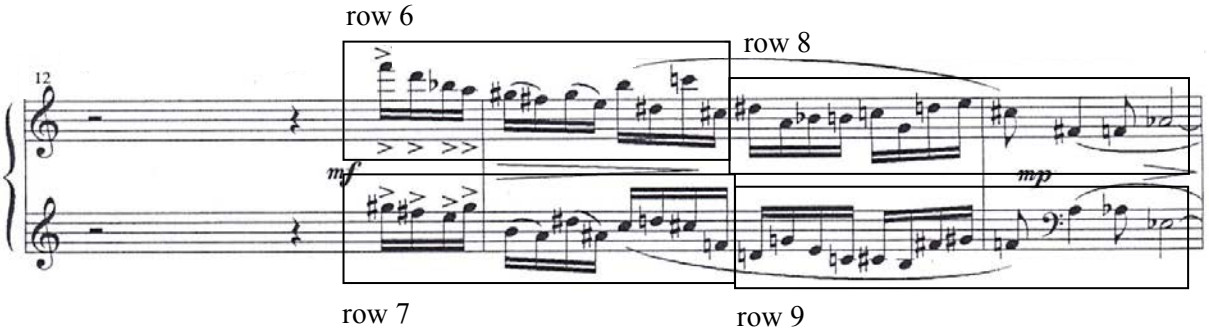
When, in bar 5, the piano makes its first appearance, both the flute and the violin step into the background for a couple of bars, playing notes of longer duration. Like the other two instruments, the piano makes use of the aforementioned tone rows. It starts off with the sequence of pitch classes in the principal row, presented in the form of dyads. The next tone

[6] David Beard and Kenneth Gloag, *Musicology: The Key Concepts* (London: Routledge, 2005), 69. For a detailed figure showing the basic row with triadic implications used in Berg's *Violin Concerto* see Carlota Somões, 'Mathematical Aspects in the Second Viennese School of Music', in *Mathematics and Art: Mathematical Visualization in Art and Education*, edited by Claude P. Bruter, (Berlin: Springer, 2002), 113-114.

rows are performed one after each other, throughout the segment, independently from the lines of the flute and the violin. Due to the versatility of the keyboard instrument, the rows are arranged in different ways that produce varying accompaniment styles and textures. The piano part is first presented in two lines in the right-hand stave. It then becomes more dense as both hands develop a chordal structure. Towards the end of the section, the left and the right hands, which earlier shared pitches from a same row, now move separately to play a single line in descending motion, using pitches from consecutive rows. The examples below (Ex. 4.2 and 4.3) illustrate different presentations of the rows in the piano part.



Example 4.2: The first and second tone rows as presented in bars 5-7 in the piano part.



Example 4.3: The piano part in bars 12-14 as it presents rows 6 to 9.

The last chord on the piano in bar 7 is a D7 chord [D-F♯-A-C]. Its third and seventh notes are implicitly resolved to G-B, the next two pitches in the melody of the violin, giving the impression that the music is moving to the key of G major. This progression suggests a tonal quality amidst the serially constructed rows, once more combining tonal with atonal structures. In the primary row, pitch class G already has a prominent role since it is the pitch around which the permutations used to form the second row are worked out. In this regard, the function of the emphasized F♯ is clearly understood, since it repeatedly points out the key signature of G major.

Connections to this key are not clear throughout the segment though, which is hardly surprising given the serial character of the piece.

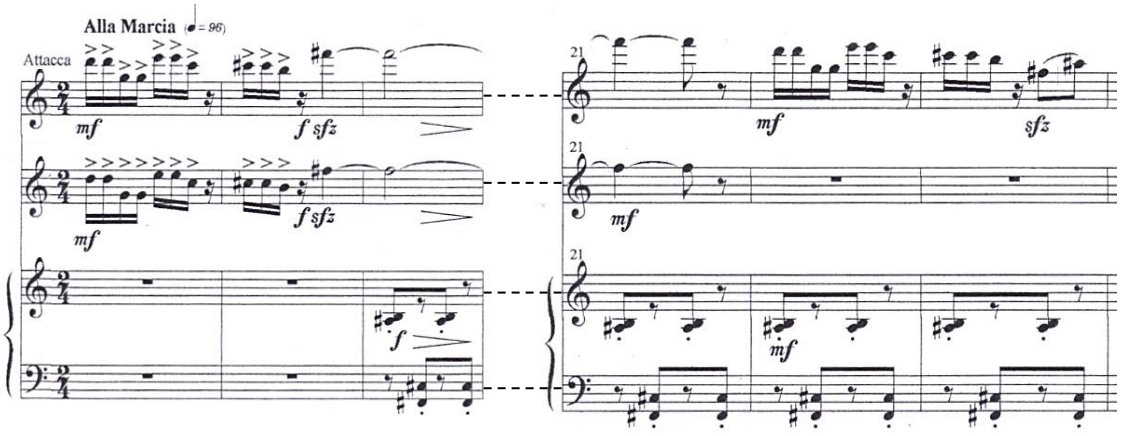
The melody that is shared between the two treble instruments covers a range of three octaves, from G_3 in the violin part, to $F\sharp_6$ in the flute. The former usually performs the lower notes, while the flute shifts between its middle and higher registers that give a brighter and more vibrant tone quality. For the most part, the piano writing is also shifted towards the treble half of the keyboard, and therefore limits itself to the same registers of the other instruments. In fact, it sometimes oversteps the flute and the violin, as in bars 10-11, where the right-hand part is given the highest notes in the passage.

A rhythmic feature that stands out throughout the first segment is the use of notes of short duration. Brief figures, which occur in a different order or with a different amount of space between them, are grouped to constitute a crotchet beat. Common crotchet groupings include two quavers, four semiquavers, a quaver and two semiquavers, a dotted quaver followed by a semiquaver, or the same combinations in reverse order. The whole section, which is organized in simple common time, and one bar of simple triple time, is rhythmically a collage of subdivided crotchet beats. Occasionally, the use of longer rests and notes, in the flute and the violin parts, such as in bars 5-6, 10 and 13, enable the piano to come to the fore. While the melodic instruments generally follow a different, though similar, rhythm throughout the first segment, both hands of the piano are often rhythmically together. The flute and the violin join the piano and all play in unison only towards the end of the section.

4.3 The Second Segment

In the second segment the metre contracts to simple duple, and the tempo of 96 crotchet beats per minute is almost twice as rapid as that in the previous segment. This *Alla Marcia* section spans sixty-four bars of lively and playful music, symmetrically constructed, with an ABA` pattern. The first section, presented in bars 18-47, mainly comprises repeated notes and rhythms in the flute and violin parts, accompanied by a lower ostinato rhythm highlighting the marching style. In the last part of the segment, bars 66-81, the same style reappears in a modified and contracted form. The two linked sections of the ternary form are separated by a passage characterized by rich dissonances spiked with a glowing sonority produced by the high tessitura of the flute. The ten twelve-tone rows introduced earlier remain a unifying factor, and again determine the musical material throughout the whole section. The flute and the violin both perform their respective rows, as in the first segment, but in reverse order. Meanwhile, the piano maintains a steady rhythm that also uses all the tone rows, again in reverse order.

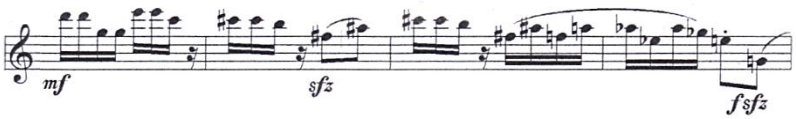
The flute and the violin enter together, playing accented semiquaver notes, an octave apart. They both state the first part of the ninth row, and then sustain the *forte* with *sforzando* F♯s (F♯$_5$ and F♯$_6$). More attention to the same pitch class reasserts a stable pitch centre for the piece. As soon as the piano joins in at bar 20, the tone is gradually diminished to *mf*. Changes between the dynamic markings *forte*, *sforzando*, and *mezzo forte*, are quite common in this section. The piano provides a marching rhythm with *staccato* double quaver notes, alternating between the left and right hands, typical of a neoclassical pulsating ostinato style. In the flute and the violin parts, groups of four semiquavers, with a downward leap between the two pairs of identical notes, are a recurring feature. The last note in these groups is regularly replaced by a rest.



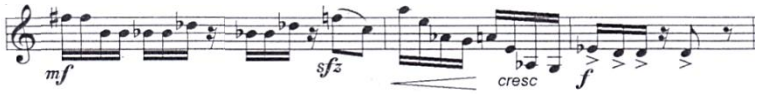
Example 4.4: The rhythmic structure in the opening bars of the second segment.

The thematic material is initially developed by the flute alone, supported by the constant rhythmic pattern of the piano. At bars 31-34, the violin has a similar theme with an almost identical rhythm but different pitches, such that the two instruments answer one another before they unite again in bar 35.

flute bars 21-25

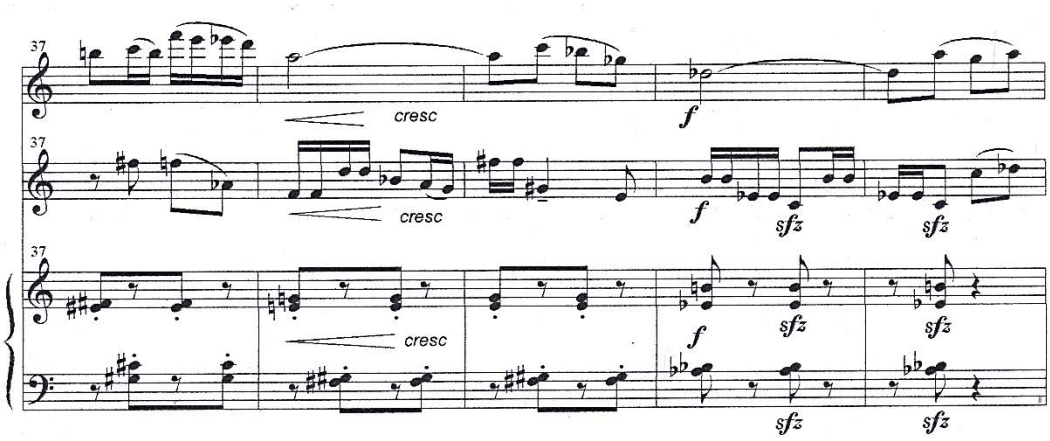


violin bars 31-34



Example 4.5: The imitative melodies in the flute and the violin.

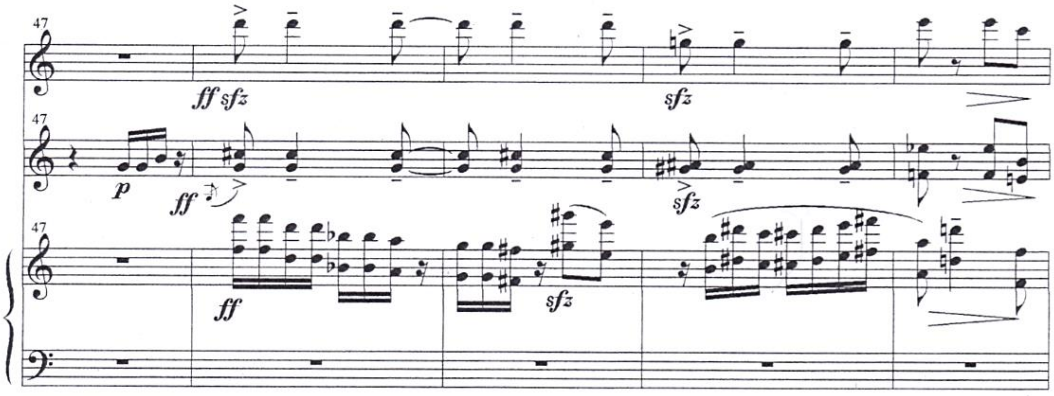
As the violin then proceeds with patterns that are comparable to this thematic material, the flute line becomes less crowded and repetitive. Since the flute performs pitches that are higher than those of the violin, at times, its melodic statements tend to overshadow the violin, such that the latter assumes momentarily the role of an additional accompanying instrument, alongside the piano. For example, in bars 37-45, while the flute plays notes in its upper register and produces a bright, metallic colour, the background spaces are filled in with a rhythm of semiquaver notes in the violin (Ex. 4.6). Bars 46-47 act as a short break, with a repeated three-semiquaver motif in the violin solo, before a new part within this section starts.



Example 4.6: Bars 37-41 from the first section of the second segment.

To mark the beginning of a different musical idea, in bar 48, all the three instruments start a fresh tone row: the flute performs row 9 in rhythmic unison with row 2 on the violin, and the

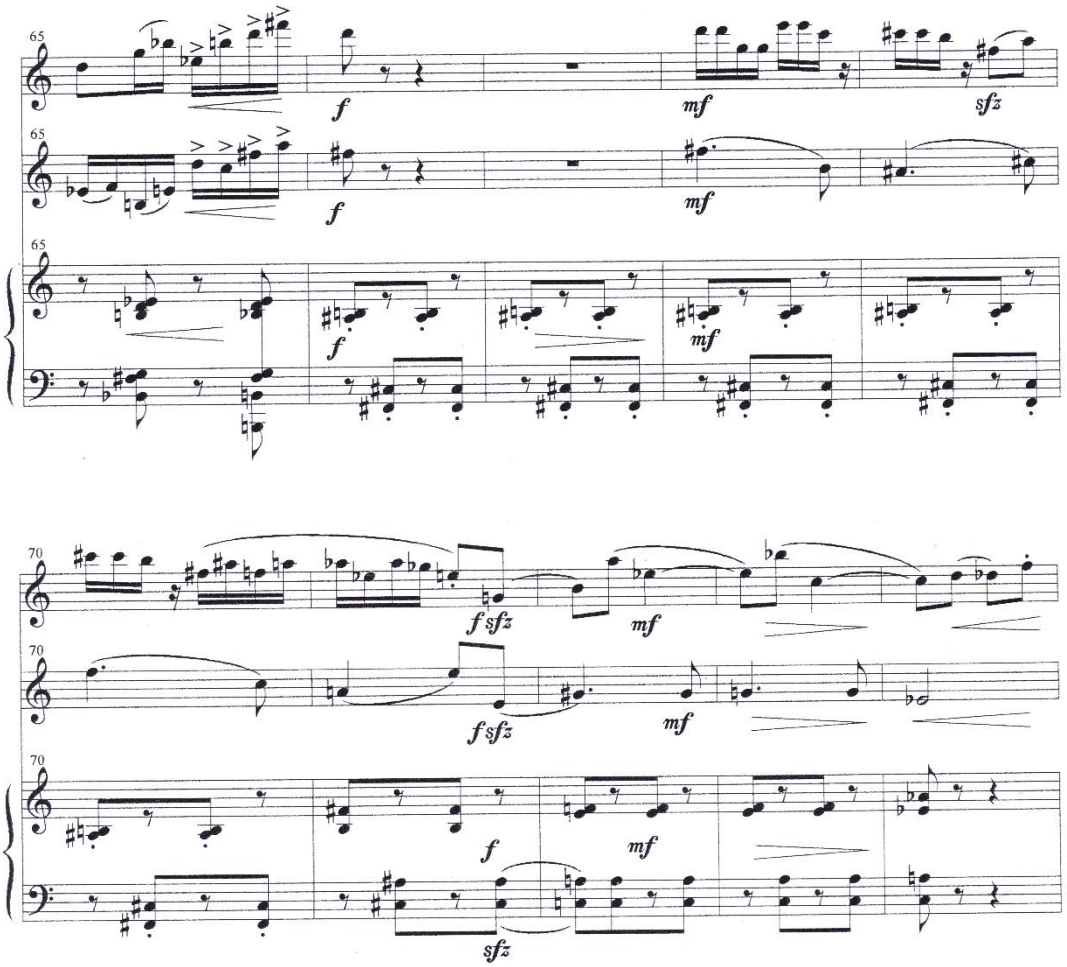
piano presents the sixth row with semiquaver or quaver octaves and rests. The music here is even quicker, with peaks of turbulent sounds. Sudden *sforzando* instances turn out to be more frequent. *Marcato*, *tenuto*, and *staccato* notes in the treble instruments are accompanied by notes of short duration on the piano, imitating the rhythmic material originally introduced by the other two instruments.



Example 4.7: Repeated accented notes in the flute and the violin accompanied by the piano with a rhythm borrowed from the other two instruments.

The texture of the piano now becomes more versatile. It starts with octaves in the treble, develops into running semiquaver notes with a wavy contour, and then spreads itself onto the middle range of the keyboard until it switches to dense chords, in which the tone rows are verticalized and therefore more compact. Nevertheless, the grouping of four semiquaver notes or three semiquavers and a rest can still be traced in all the three musical lines as a unifying factor of the whole segment, and also between the three instruments.

The third part, starting in bar 66, is a restatement of the first phrases of this section, presented in an abridged version. Such a structure gives the second segment the shape of the classical ternary form comprising of a march-trio-march. The piano leads into the final section with another two transitional bars that again present the previous rhythm of *staccato* quavers. The flute and piano parts in bars 68-74 are identical to bars 22-28, except for the piano accompaniment which towards the end removes the *staccato* effects, and uses softer dynamics. Both changes are part of a gradual scaling down of the intensity of the music.



Example 4.8: Bars 65-75 showing the transition into the last section of segment three and the return to a previously used style.

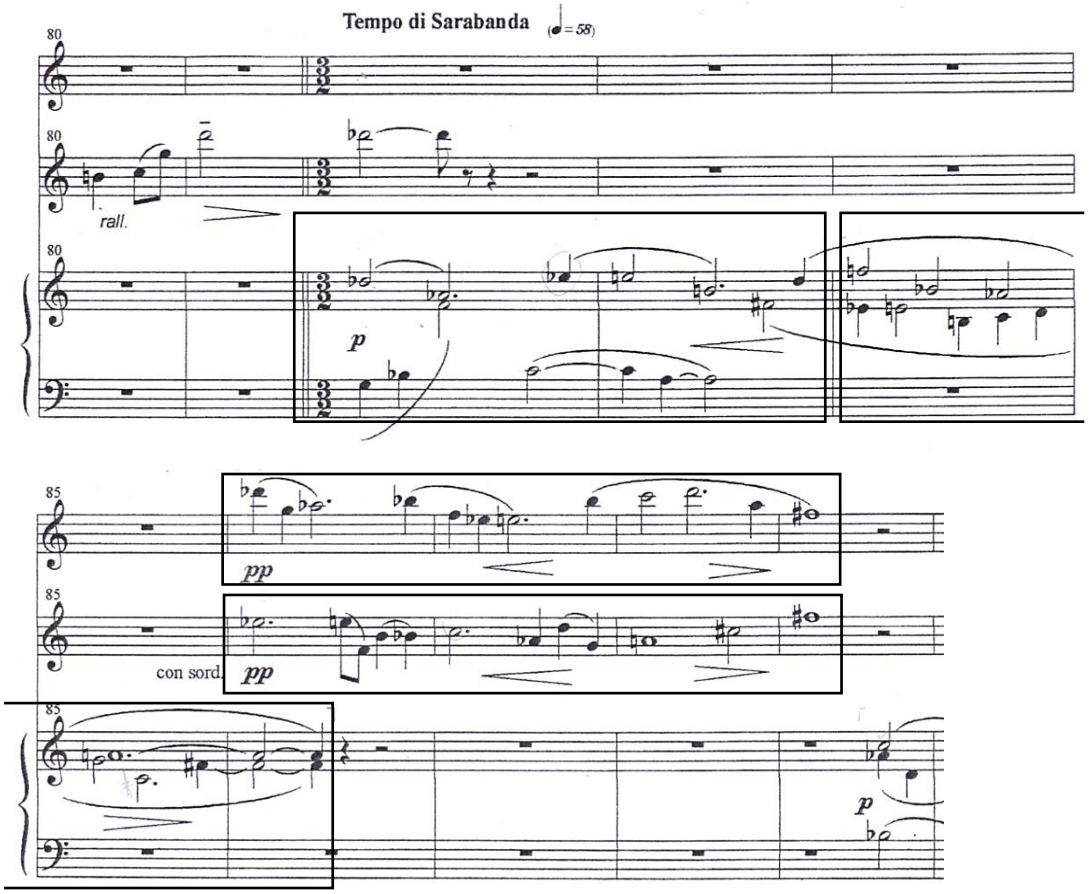
The tone row, used by the violin in bars 31-34 (refer to Ex. 4.5) to create a dialogue with the flute, is now (in bars 68-78) combined with the other instruments, but it is presented in a different and spaced-out rhythm. While the piano proceeds with its steady accompaniment, the flute and violin play sustained notes of more than four bars in duration. In the last three bars, soft, *rallentando* rising notes in the string instrument bring this second section to a serene ending, and hint at the next segment.

4.4 The Third Segment

After a quick and spirited section, the character of the piece changes to something more solemn, typical of a sarabande. The metrical structure, including the slow tempo (♩ = 58), the 3/2 metre, and the regular use of long notes, all assume a slower pace and therefore contribute to producing a reflective mood. The flute and the violin generally present *cantabile* melodic entries with a gentle melancholic tone, which towards the end of the segment become imitative, reminiscent of the fugal style, while the piano creates a backdrop with chords harmonically constructed on the same rows used by the other two instruments.

In its first bars, the third segment creates another musical dialogue between the piano and the other two instruments. To emphasize a meditative atmosphere, all the entries are played with soft dynamics, either *piano* or *pianissimo*, and the violin part is to be played *con sordino*. Though all entries are apparently diverse, a closer look at each of them shows that the rhythmic content is relatively similar and the pitch-class sequences are either equivalent or closely related.

The new twelve-tone row that constitutes the first part of the piano's leading entry is later repeated by the flute in bars 86-89, while the second row, which completes the piano part, is restated in the violin line (Ex. 4.9). Such a structure is utilized throughout the entire segment, using a number of correlated rows, so that each row is first presented in the piano and then repeated in either of the other two instruments. The dialogue in the first bars of this segment thus relies not only on the alternating pattern formed by the entries of the piano and the other two treble instruments, but also on the corresponding common rows employed. In this regard, the echoing of the same rows is related to the form as it contributes to the imitative style of this segment. The uniqueness of each statement is then dependent on the different textures, being either chord-based or linear, as well as the diverse rhythms. Rows are applied in a freer manner in the piano, often to produce a two-part or three-part texture, and denser parallel chords later on. The twelve-tone organization is therefore more clearly set up in the single horizontal lines of the flute and the violin. As a general overview, the initial bars of the third segment already reveal that there is constant correlation between the rows employed, the texture, and the form.



Example 4.9: Twelve-tone rows that first appear in the piano and then are restated in the flute and the violin.

The arrangements of pitch classes used in this segment form a second collection of rows that again regulate both melody and accompaniment. Their structure, though, is very similar to the tone rows outlined earlier. The central pitch is the sixth in the row. The composer takes this note and moves sideways, first forwards and then backwards, to create the next row. Thus, the sixth pitch class in a row becomes the first in the next twelve-tone row (Fig. 4.4). What is interesting here is that the last pitch in each row is always an F♯. The emphasis on pitch class F♯ that was already noted in the first two segments is perhaps even stronger here. Its position at the end of every row makes it more convenient for the composer to highlight the prominence of this specific pitch class.

As indicated in the table below, the flute plays the odd-numbered rows and the violin holds onto the even-numbered pitch sequences. Due to its denser texture, the piano makes use of all the ten rows.

Instrument	Bars	Row No.	Pitch Content of the Twelve-Tone Row											
flute	82; 86-89	1	D♭	G	A♭	B♭	F	E♭	E	B	C	D	A	F♯
violin	86-89	2	E♭	E	F	B	B♭	C	A♭	D	G	A	C♯	F♯
flute	93-101	3	C	A♭	B♭	D	B	G	F	A	E	C♯	D♯	F♯
violin	94-97	4	G	F	B	A	D	E	B♭	D♭	A♭	E♭	C	F♯
flute	102-105	5	E	A♯	D	C♯	A	G♯	B	D♯	F	C	G	F♯
violin	97-102	6	G♯	B	A	D♯	C♯	F	D	C	B♭	G	E	F♯
flute	106-110	7	F	D	D♭	C	E♭	B♭	A	G	B	E	G♯	F♯
violin	104-110	8	B♭	A	E♭	G	C	B	C♯	E	D	A♭	F	F♯
flute	111-116	9	B	C♯	C	E	G	D	E♭	A♭	A	F	A♯	F♯
violin	110-117	10	D	E♭	G	A♭	E	A	C	F	C♯	A♯	B	F♯

Figure 4.4: A collection of twelve-tone rows as presented in the flute and the violin, in the third segment.

The first tone row listed above is not an original, however. It is again based on the principal row that opens this chamber work, with the sixth pitch being the central note, as illustrated below (Fig. 4.5).

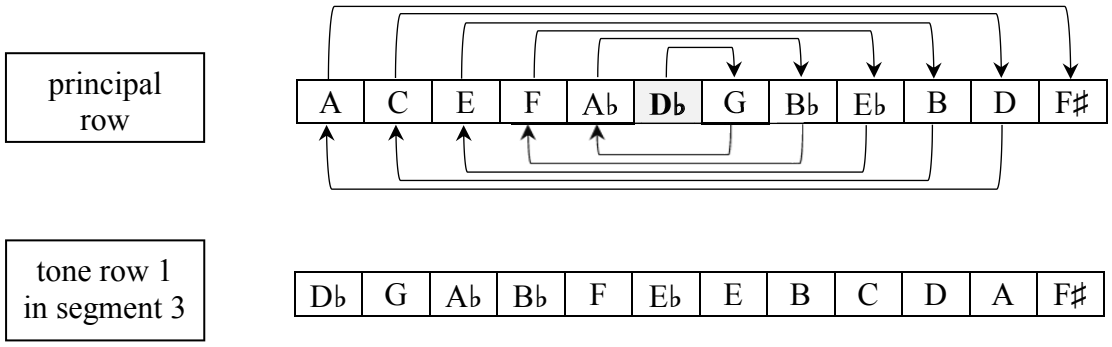
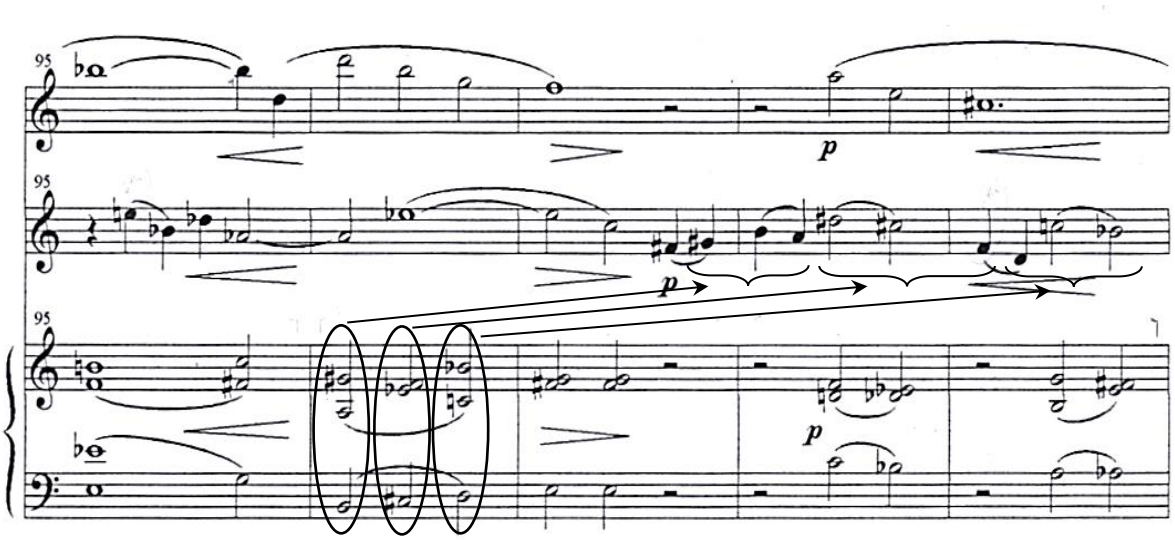


Figure 4.5: The relationship between the principal row and the first row in the third segment.

As in the first set of rows, although the principal one from which all others are formed is based on triadic elements, the links to tonality are soon set aside in the derived rows. Only a few triads resurface in the organized pitch sequences used in this segment. At bar 83, the piano part gives a tonal allusion with the last trichord of row 1 suggesting a D major chord. Shortly after, at bars 85-86, the piano indicates an F♯ minor chord, which is restated in the flute and violin at bars 88-89 (see Ex. 4.9). Inclinations to tonality remain discrete but are enough to demonstrate Vella's intention to create a relationship between modernism and the past.

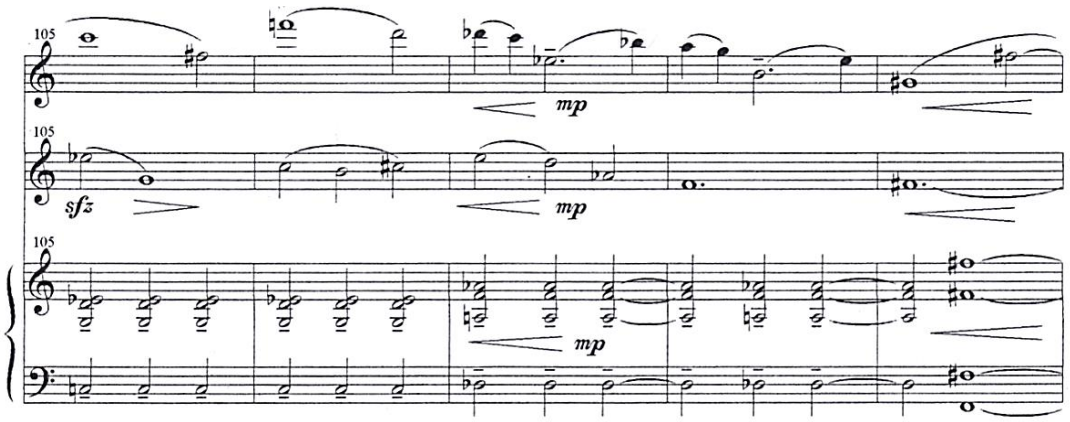
From bar 93 onwards, the whole ensemble comes together. Still though, the cantabile lines of the flute and violin set these instruments apart from the piano. The textural dialogue now becomes more subtle, and occurs only between the flute and the violin. Notes of long duration and rests make the melodic lines looser and create quiet or silent breaks. The flute and the violin fill in each other's gaps such that the music sounds like a continuous conversation between the two. The piano sometimes also participates in this dialogue by means of a cellular structure in which the three-note chords in the piano predict the pitch content of the melodic line of the violin. This arises through the instruments sharing the same rows. The example below (Ex. 4.10) illustrates how the sixth row that is first compactly used in a chordal texture by the piano is transformed into a linear melody on the violin in the next bars. Vella implements this strategy such that the set of pitch-rows and their application contribute to the imitative form that defines this work.



Example 4.10: The textural dialogue between the flute and the violin, alongside the pitch-based imitation between the piano and the violin.

In the next bars, the fugal style of the flute and violin comes more to the fore, whereas the piano fades into the background and provides a repetitive chordal accompaniment. Overall, the piano follows a systematic pattern, consisting of a single note in the bass and a chord with two or three pitches in the right hand, each time played together, to delineate every minim beat. The ostinato-type accompaniment later tends to become hypnotic, as some chords are repeated over and over again, such that a twelve-tone row which was earlier organized into two to three bars now stretches itself to cover a relatively longer span (Ex. 4.11). The distribution of the rows

that are here presented vertically reconfirms that the pre-planned pitch structures satisfy the textural needs.

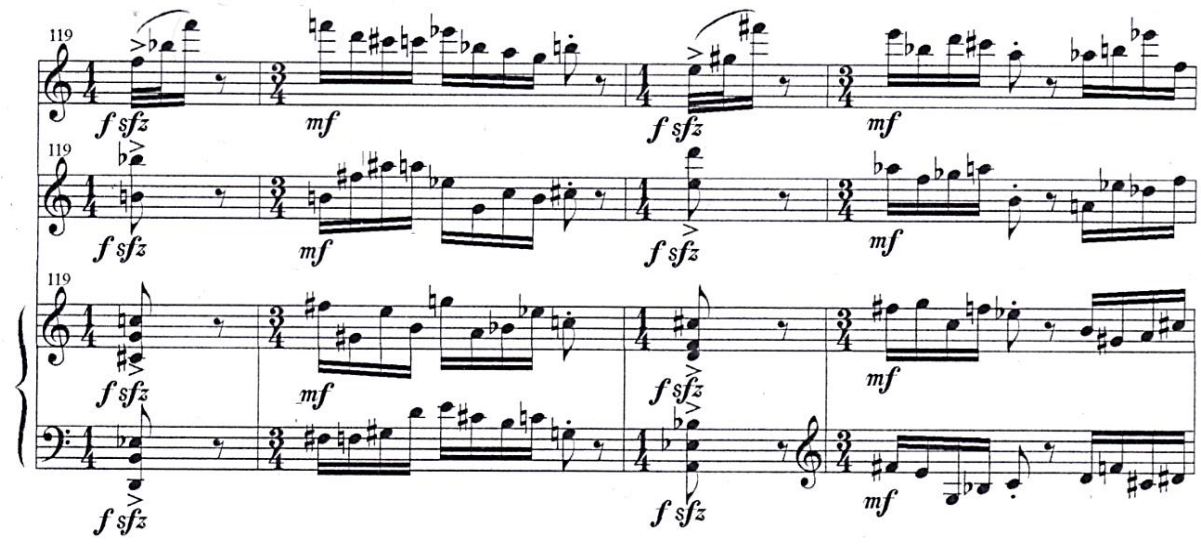


Example 4.11: An ostinato-type chordal accompaniment that sustains the melodic lines of the flute and the violin.

While the flute proceeds with its own melody, the violin and the piano come together in bar 110, as they both perform the tenth row, most often in octaves. The third segment dies away as *decrescendo* long notes come to a standstill at a *pianissimo* chord with pause.

4.5 The Fourth Segment

An unexpected outburst of rapidly played notes marks the opening of the fourth section. The first eight bars present two contrasting musical ideas. Their rhythmic structure alternates between running semiquavers instantly halted by *staccato* quavers, and quaver chords accompanied by a three-element pattern in the flute. A shift between the rhythmic motifs is marked by a brief rest. Even though the three instruments work rhythmically together, the irregular contours and the clashing pitches create a hostile sound. Changes in time signatures, from 3/4 to 1/4, are supplemented by abrupt changes in dynamic levels, between *mezzo forte* and *forte sforzando*. In the shorter bars, the flute plays a quick ascending anapaest, with wide gaps between the notes. The greater emphasis falls on the last note, not only because of its longer value, but also due to its penetrating, high-pitched sound. These three-note figures are accompanied by a dissonant chord of eight notes, shared between the violin and the piano, containing multiple semitone clashes. The chord is followed by another quaver rest, which acts as a short respite amidst the hectic musical passage.

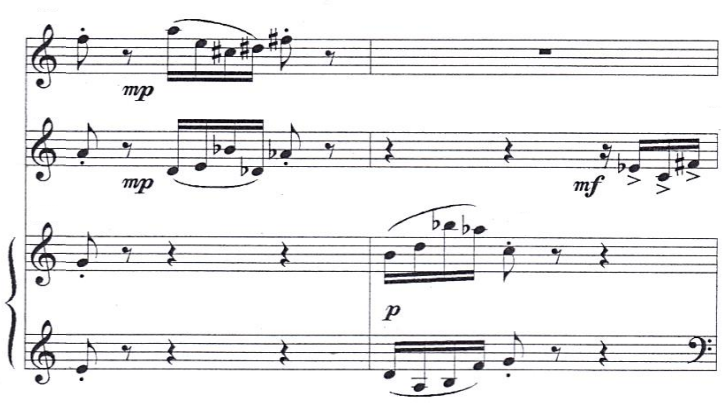


Example 4.12: Bars 119-122 showing two contrasting ideas juxtaposed.

In terms of pitch classes, the four musical layers are based on the tone rows introduced in the third segment. Once more, the flute and violin retain their own pitch-class sequences. However, their order is switched over, such that the last tone row becomes the first, the one before the last follows it, and so on. This procedure is the same as the one used in the second segment. The piano employs a diverse method, even if it is still based on the same rows. The musical line in the upper register of the piano uses the pitch retrogrades of the flute's tone rows, while the

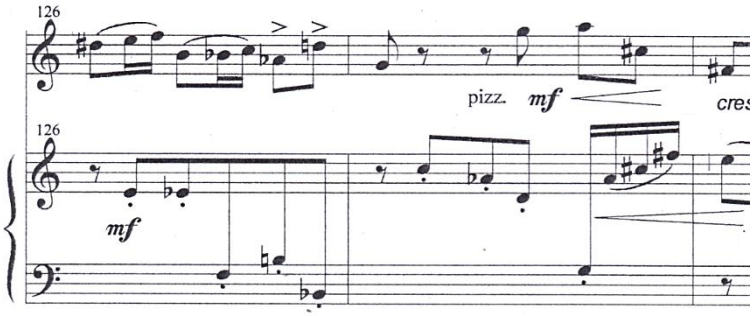
lower register plays each row of the violin in reverse order. Thus, any F♯ that is heard on the piano indicates the beginning of a new row.

Softer dynamics and a thinner texture in bars 124-125 indicate that this subsection will shortly come to an end. The flute and the violin present a motif, based on the familiar rhythmic arrangement of four semiquavers and a *staccato* quaver, which is soon followed by a matching response in the piano. Each of the paired entries has arching shapes facing in opposite directions. The brief entry of the flute that has a convex contour (falling followed by rising) is accompanied by an imprecise concave-shaped (rising followed by falling) motif in the violin; the treble part of the piano has a rising and falling movement, simultaneously played with bass pitches forming a convex contour (Ex. 4.13).



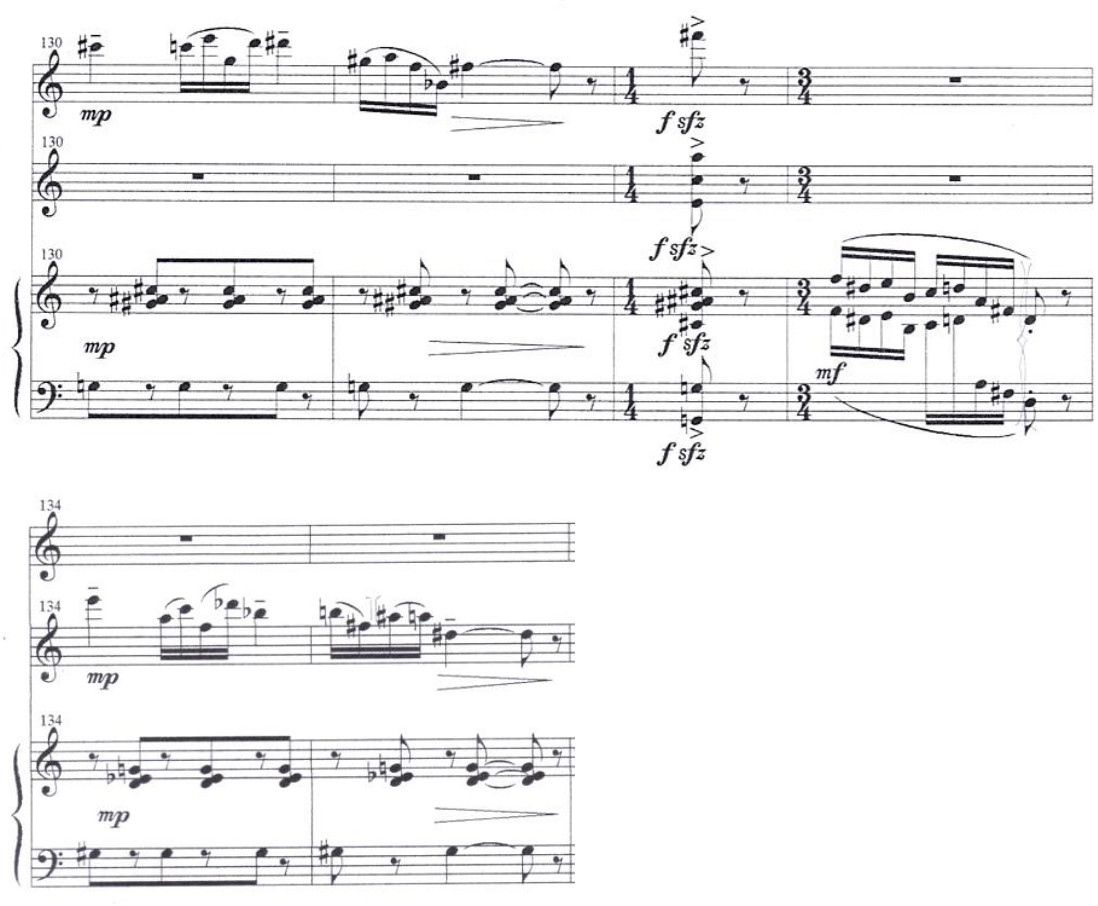
Example 4.13: The rhythmic motif in bars 124-125 in the fourth segment.

The concise call-and-response pattern precedes louder imitative entries that are rhythmically different and more melodic. To accompany the first two entries, both hands on the piano join to play a single row, now in its proper order, switching only the first two pitch classes. So, in bars 126-127, the violin and the piano both perform the same row, using a different rhythm.



Example 4.14: Different rhythmic structures in the violin and the piano parts, both presenting row 2.

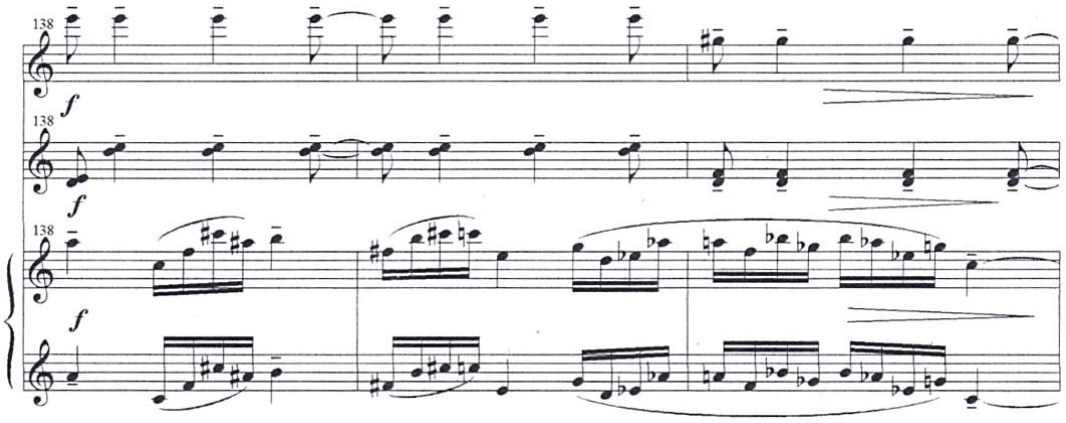
A quick *crescendo* to *fortissimo* then leads to another familiar accompaniment (from bar 129), similar to the one used earlier in the march-like section, but without *staccato*. The repetitive rhythm supports a particularly tuneful line in the flute. This is yet another motif that moves from one instrument to the other, transforming itself according to the various tone rows and rhythmic adjustments. The previous grouping of semiquavers followed by a *staccato* quaver and rest is slightly altered, such that the semiquavers pause on a crotchet note instead. Therefore, the same musical material is being recycled to produce more vivid sounds. In the meantime, the original rhythmic motif, including the *staccato* quaver, shows up again in bar 133, as a link to the opening part of this segment. Every so often, the 1/4 bars act as a semicolon between different subsections. These bars are now slightly altered such that they only contain a condensed quaver chord followed by a rest.



Example 4.15: Bars 130-135 in the fourth segment.

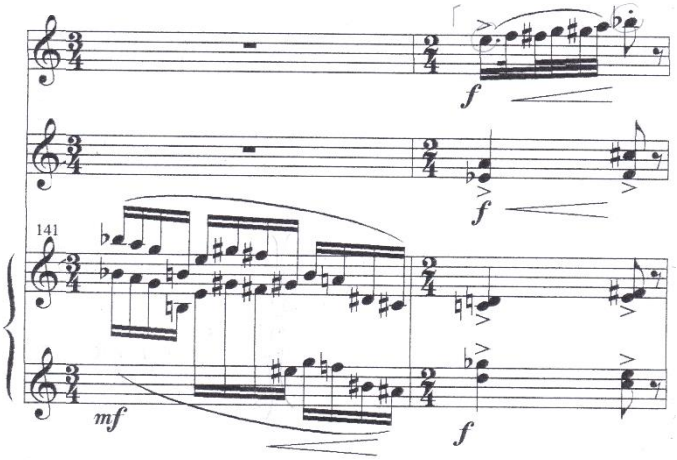
In bar 137, the last crotchet beat in the flute part is divided into a group of seven ascending notes with equal durations. The *crescendo* on the septuplet, leads to a *forte* E_6, that recurs for two bars of syncopated crotchet beats, accompanied by an identical rhythmic pattern in the

violin. Likewise, the next couple of bars proceed with the same rhythm, but the flute goes down to G♯ in a lower octave, and joins the violin to form a three-note chord, in minor thirds. The successive notes or chords are all marked with a *tenuto* articulation, to indicate that each of them should be sustained for its full length and performed with a light stress. This is reminiscent of the flute and the violin part in bars 48-53, in the second segment (refer to Ex. 4.7 above). While the flute and the violin take an accompanying role, both hands on the piano, move in octaves on the treble side of the keyboard, and lead the playful, rhythmic pattern.



Example 4.16: Bars 138-140, with the flute and the violin using a previously used pattern.

After a short interruption by the frequently occurring bar in 1/4 meter, the music goes back to the simple triple time and presents a phrase by the solo piano, consisting of three groups of falling semiquavers. The descending movement is immediately followed by a rapid series of ascending semitones in the flute, crammed into a single bar with two crotchet beats, and supported by chords in the other two instruments. These two bars act as a bridge between this musical part and the next one (Ex. 4.17).



Example 4.17: The fourth segment, bars 143-144.

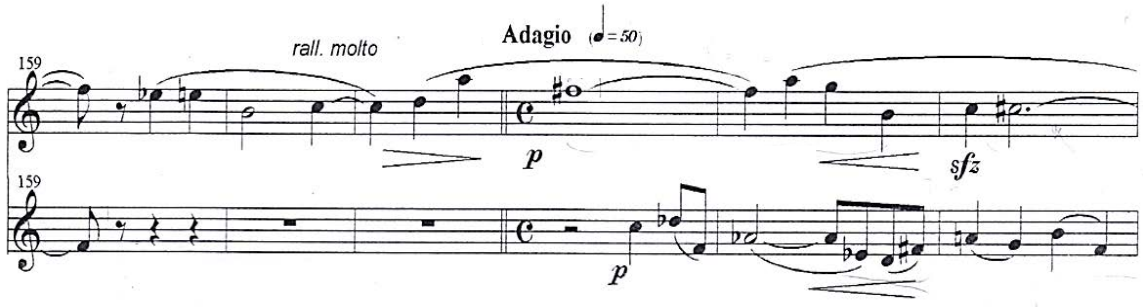
The last few bars within the *Deciso* section are a reprise of previously used material. The bouncy rhythm of the piano, with a *sforzando* marking on every last quaver beat, accompanies the imitative dialogue between the flute and the violin. Concurrently, the two treble instruments perform the rhythmic motif introduced in bar 130. As the music proceeds with exact repeats of pitches and rhythm in the piano, the melodic lines suddenly become looser, with longer note values. For much of the time the flute and the violin play together in rhythmic unison, up to the last three measures of this segment, when the flute plays a solo melodic fragment that blends into the fifth section.

This whole segment is mainly a patchwork of juxtaposed styles already presented in this work, but with considerable modifications that make them sound new. In the first three segments, there was a fair degree of stylistic or textural consistency. Here however, different textures borrowed from previously used material placed next to each other determine the form of the segment. A formal structure based solely on contrasting textures yields four different sections, sometimes with transitional bars that separate them and avoid clear-cut boundaries. The opening bars are similar in texture to bar 13 in the first segment, with four lines performing different rows at the same time, and the rhythmic grouping of four semiquavers. At bars 126-127, the flute and the violin recall the style of imitative entries mostly used in the third segment. Midway through the fourth segment, in bars 138-141, the flute and violin use repeated notes with *tenuto* markings, which are a reminder of a passage in the second segment, in bars 48-50. The marching rhythm that first appears in this segment at bar 129, but becomes more frequently used later on, is reminiscent of the piano accompaniment style extensively used in the second segment. At the surface of this collage, the flute introduces a melodic motif (bars 130-131) that is also shared with the violin (bars 134-135) and restated again with a few adjustments (bars 147-148) to refine the disparities between the contrasting styles and create a more cohesive structure.

4.6 The Fifth Segment

The last notes in the fourth segment, which gradually decrease in speed and volume, indicate what comes next. The fifth section is given the tempo marking *Adagio* (♩ = 50), and thus is the slowest in the entire piece. To intensify the more tender and tranquil character of this passage, the composer uses softer dynamics, ranging from *mezzo piano* to *pianissimo*, which are frequently shaded by the delicacy of the graduated effects of *crescendo* and *diminuendo*, and a few *sforzando* markings to indicate accent. The main feature of this short segment, consisting of just seventeen bars, is the call-and-response pattern. At the forefront of the dialogue are the flute and the violin, with melodic phrases predominantly based on the same succession of pitches. Halfway through the segment, the piano joins in again, keeping a relatively marginal position throughout its participation in the dialogue.

The transition between the fourth and fifth segments is quite smooth, mainly due to overlapping phrases, and similarities between the first violin entry in the current segment and the last phrase of the flute in the preceding section. The melodic phrase in the flute is extended into the slower section, such that the last note is elongated and accompanies the first notes of the violin. Pitches from the flute part are also repeated a third down in the violin so as to intensify the sometimes poignant dialogue between the instruments. Even though an extra note is inserted, the connection between the two entries remains evident, also due to the corresponding note durations.



Example 4.18: The flute and the violin lines in the opening bars of the fifth segment and the final bars of its preceding section.

In contrast with all the other previous sections, the pitches in this segment are restricted to one specific ordering of a twelve-tone row. This is formed by the seventh notes of each row in the first set of ten, starting from the seventh note of the tenth row, next the seventh note of the first row, and then continues accordingly. This also expains why the remaining two pitch classes (E

and B♭) are usually left out of the tone row, as shown below. The given row diverges from its quasi-symmetric structure only towards the end. It makes uses of pitch-class sets 3-6 [0 2 4], 3-4 [0 1 5], and 3-8 [0 2 6] (Fig. 4.6).

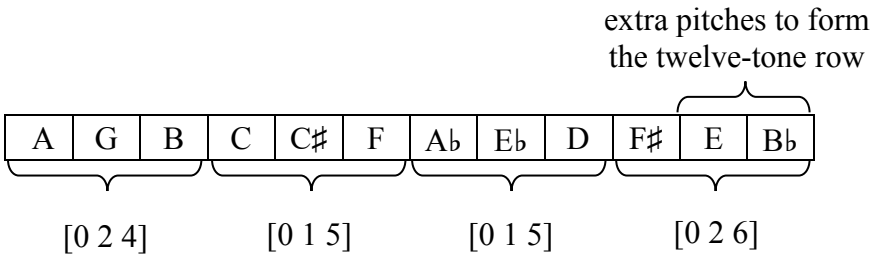
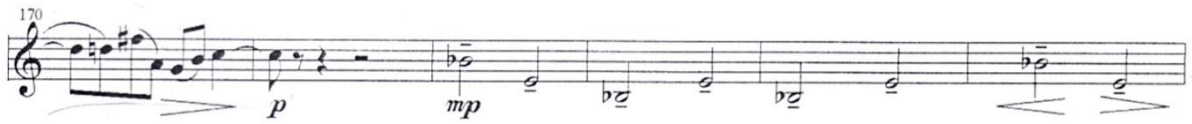


Figure 4.6: The row that makes up the melodic material of the fifth section.

The same row is repeated by all the three instrument parts. Limiting pitches to only one row ordering for all the ensemble outlines and facilitates the call-and-response style, making it more comprehensible to the listener. Moreover, the consistency in pitches together with the relatively sparse horizontal layers of music emphasizes the placid mood. The individuality of each musical line depends more on other factors including the rhythm, the contour, the texture and the tone colour of the instrument, rather than on the use of different row forms as seen in the previous segments.

In the first twelve bars, the music is shared between the flute and the violin. The contrapuntal texture based on the same tone row but with varied rhythms, stands out again. On its first entry, the violin states only part of the row. In bars 163-166, the flute gives its response by performing the row in full. The flute and the violin work so closely together, such that in bar 164, though the C and C♯ are stated only by the flute, they form part of two simultaneous rows. A few alterations are at times applied to the row for more variety. In bars 167-168, after presenting the whole row, the flute repeats the last two pitches, E and B♭. After that, these two pitch classes are almost always missing, such that the row usually works with ten different pitch classes instead of twelve. To make up for the incomplete rows, later on, E and B♭ are repeated for several times in the violin, at bars 172-177 (Ex. 4.19), and in the piano, at bars 178-179, as a line of minims, or as chords. In bars 168-173, the flute first performs the second hexachord of the row, and then proceeds with the first six pitches. Likewise, in bars 170-172, the violin presents only the first five pitches, before it moves on to the six bars of repeated long notes.

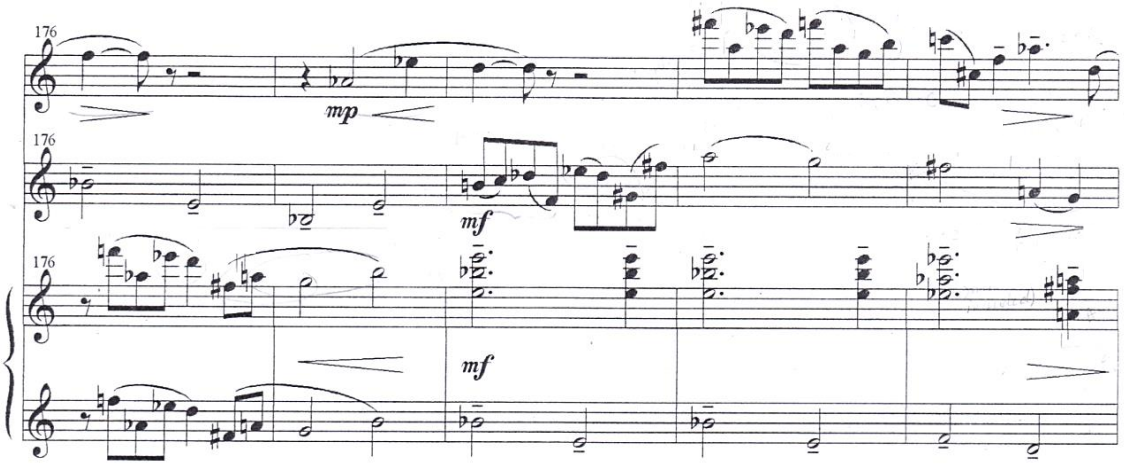


Example 4.19: The emphasis on pitches E and B♭ in the violin part.

Even though the same row is being continuously repeated by the two instruments, the alternating entries in the musical dialogue have varying contours and rhythmic groupings. The regular use of long notes make way for the melodic fragments that alternate between the flute and the violin, and therefore bring out the conversational nature of the music. The distinct, but complimentary tone colours of the flute and the violin, generally balance each other and create a mellow sound. Occasionally, however, the flute still dominates the music due to the assertive sound produced by its high-pitched notes.

At bar 174, the dialogue between the flute and the violin is halted, and the piano presents its first response. The short and infrequent melodic phrases of the piano are all played in octaves. Besides that, the chordal texture remains the most common characteristic in the piano accompaniment. Neighbouring pitches in the tone row are piled up to form the chords. Almost all the piano part, except for the last three bars, employs the treble register even in the left hand. In fact, in this segment, the piano performs higher pitches, up to F_6, with a relatively bright tone.

The row that starts on the last quaver of bar 176 is soon interrupted by two bars (bars 178-179) that restrict the music of the piano to only two pitch classes, E and B♭. Thus, altogether, these pitch classes run through eight consecutive bars. After being released from the repeated notes, the violin then takes up the same row in bar 178. Likewise, the piano resumes its tone row at bar 180. Again, as in bar 164 (see Ex. 4.18), C and C♯ are only heard in the flute part. The music becomes more intriguing when melodic embellishments are added to the flute part. In bar 180, four high-pitched notes (E♭-D-F-A) are inserted between A and G, the first two pitches of the tone row. Meanwhile, the violin holds the A and G in minims, such that the music is not diverted from the main tone row.



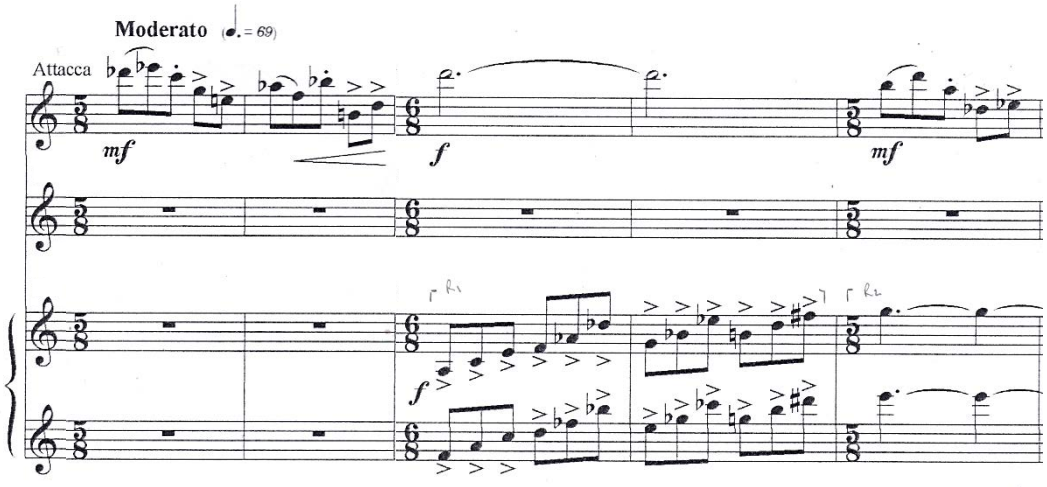
Example 4.20: The same tone row as it crosses from one instrument to another, sometimes altered or embellished.

In bars 182-184, the music is mainly entrusted to the piano. When this section gets closer to its end, the chords on the keyboard shift to a lower pitch level, where the tone quality of the instrument is warmer. Meanwhile, the energetic rhythm in the other two instruments slows down as they play long notes, an octave apart. The last two chords in the piano restate all the first ten pitches of the tone row. The former chord of the pair is formed by the pitches at the edges of the row (A-G-D-F♯), while the final chord contains the remaining pitches that lie at the central part of the row. Toward the end, the music gradually dies as it softens from *piano* to *pianissimo.*

4.7 The Sixth Segment

A more vivid and joyful section brings Vella's work to a close. The flute and violin are often entrusted with diverse melodic phrases, which are either played in unison or take the form of a dialogue. Once more, the piano is treated as an accompanying instrument that keeps the flow going, with versatile passages characterized by fast and regular rhythmic patterns, sometimes taking the form of rhythmic or melodic ostinatos. The liveliness of the music can be attributed to the metronome mark *Moderato* ♩. = 69, the use of short note values in fast passages, the vibrant rhythms, the articulation markings, and the frequent melodic fragments.

The sixth segment starts with a melodic motif in the flute, based on a row of ten pitches. The row is constructed upon the first pitch of each of the ten tone rows originally stated in the third segment (see Fig. 4.4). Eight bars are divided into two identical rhythmic phrases, with varied pitches, yet according to the tone row. The melody halts on D, the tenth pitch in the melodic phrase, which is played in two different octaves. After the octave rise, from D_5 to D_6, the higher pitched note is held for two slurred dotted minims. The motif is repeated, beginning with B-D, the last two pitches of the row, followed by an added pitch A, and resuming from the first pitch of the same tone row. Meanwhile, the piano accompanies the melodies with rising *marcato* quaver notes, which present the source row of the whole piece (Ex. 4.21).

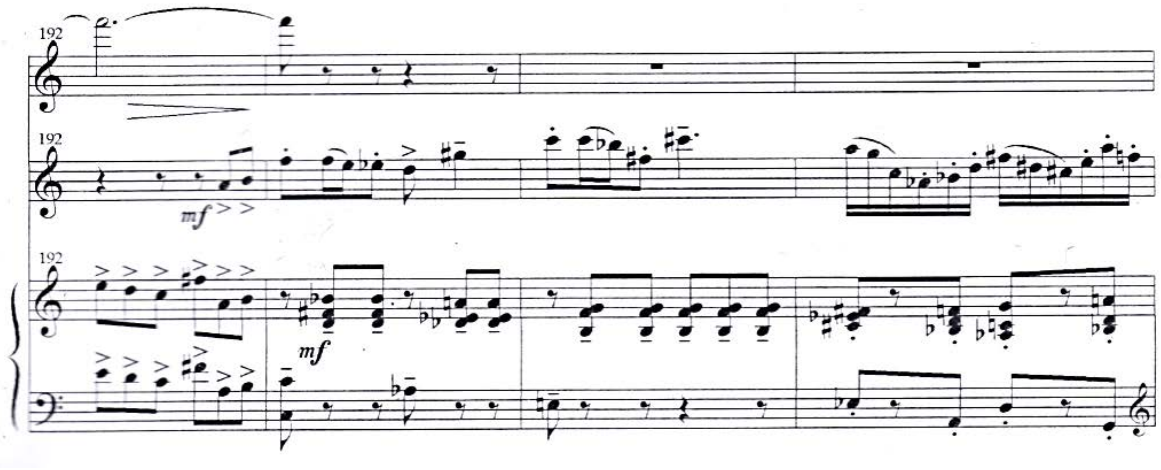


Example 4.21: The first bars of the sixth segment.

The rest of the musical material in this section is in fact based on the ten tone rows initially introduced in the first segment (see Fig. 4.2). Reverting back to the original set of twelve-tone rows provides a link with the first two segments, such that though the overall material can be

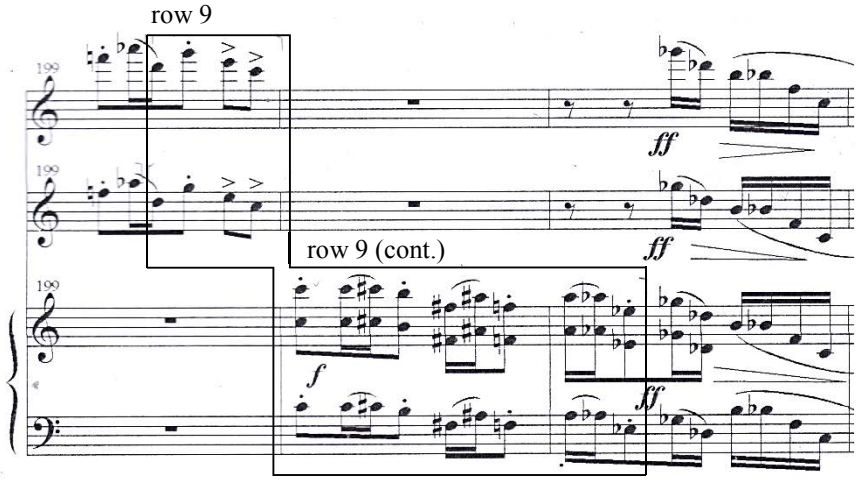
perceived as new, the listener can still make connections to sounds presented earlier. A similar approach has already been indicated in the fourth segment, concerning the recycling of textural material. Here, the principle of musical economy is perhaps less overtly employed as the composer reuses the same pitch-rows alongside altered textures and rhythms, such that the music sounds new and familiar at the same time. In both cases, economy in musical material, being either textural or pitch-based, helps give a sense of unity to the score.

In bar 189, the piano moves on to the second row, by first prolonging the starting note of the row, to direct the emphasis towards the melodic line of the flute. It then continues with another set of quaver octaves, mainly connected with a wavy contour. The last pitch of the second tone row in the piano also initiates the violin line, which immediately proceeds with the third and subsequent rows. From bar 193, the texture changes to violin melody over *tenuto* or *staccato* chords in the piano. The combination of different articulations (*staccato*, *marcato*, *tenuto* and *legato*) imparts vivacity and adds interest to this musical passage (Ex. 4.22). Also, the few high notes on the violin, which are a rare occurrence in this piece, are an opportunity for the instrument to express its varied tone qualities.



Example 4.22: The various articulations in bars 192-195 that make the music more interesting.

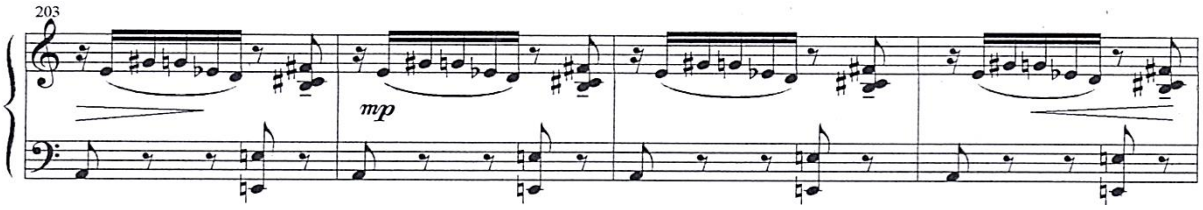
Thereafter, the violin and the piano switch roles such that the running quavers are entrusted to the latter, and the violin performs *marcato* dotted crotchet chords. Halfway through bar 197, the flute joins the ensemble again. Simultaneously, all the instruments first produce row 8, and then move on to the next tone rows, sometimes leaving gaps of rests in order to retain the dialogue element. In bars 199-201, the flute and violin introduce the ninth row, and then pass on the tone row to the piano (Ex. 4.23).



Example 4.23: The same row shared between the instruments, in bars 199-201.

This method recalls a feature already used in the previous segment at bars 176-178, where the piano initiated the tone row by playing its first three pitches in octaves, and then handed over the row to the violin (see Ex. 4.20). On the third beat of bar 201, in the sixth segment, row 10 is intentionally slightly altered, such that it produces a descending motion. The dynamic markings, which suggest a gradual decrease in volume, enhance the falling contour. Such movement tends to imply closure and in fact it splits this segment into subsections.

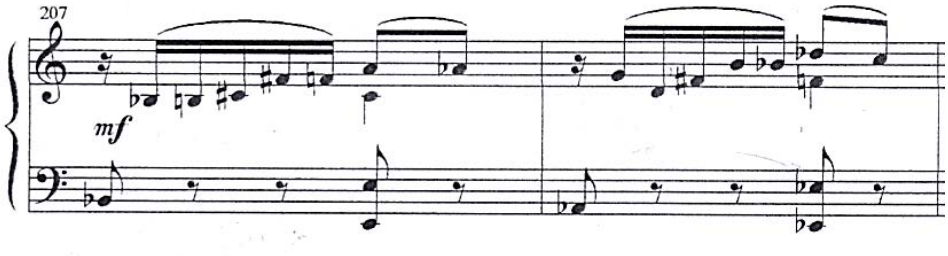
The same row stays in the accompanying part of the piano for almost twelve bars, mostly due to the motif in bar 202 that takes the role of an ostinato pattern. Thus, in this passage, the laying out of the tone row in the piano is subordinate to the repetitive technique used.



Example 4.24: Repeated bars in the piano part, forming an ostinato pattern.

Occasionally, the composer deviates from a rigid adherence to this row. The piano part in bars 207-208 shows a few changes in row ordering. Its first pitch is heard in the bass part to indicate a new representation of the tone row. Semiquavers in the right hand then use the first five pitches, starting from the third instead of the first pitch. A known procedure is applied here: a

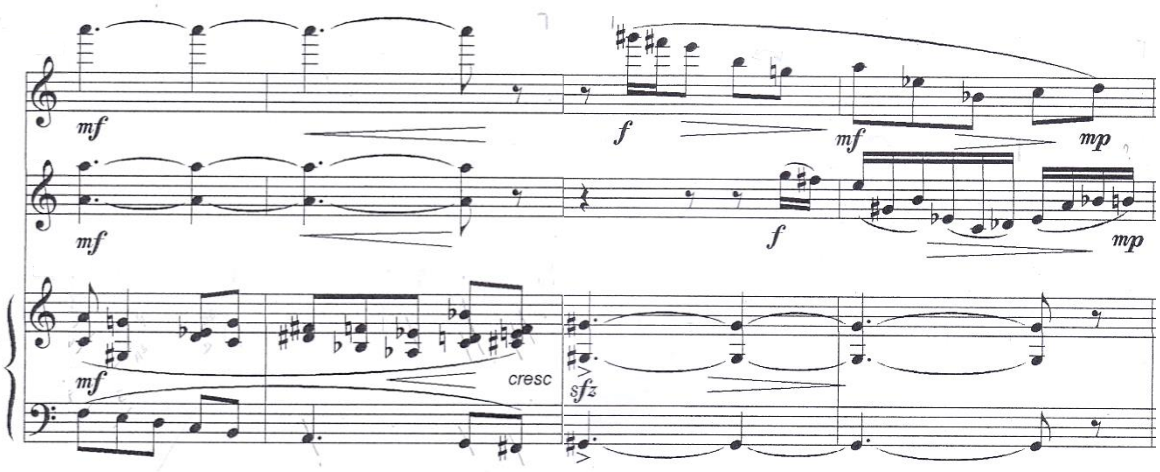
tone is chosen from each side, starting from the left. Therefore, the ordering F♯-B-B♭-C♯-F becomes B♭-B-C♯-F♯-F. The next three pitches of the tone row form a split chord C-A-E-A♭. The following bar then includes the remaining pitches, with the penultimate one an octave dyad, in the lower register of the piano.



Example 4.25: Alterations to row 10, as presented in the piano part.

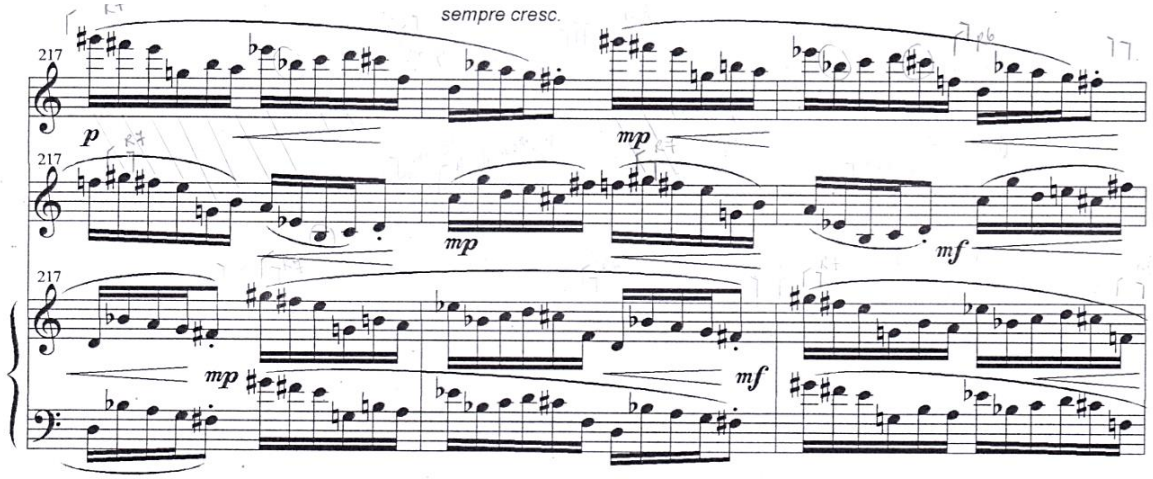
In the meantime, the flute and the violin resume with melodic lines. The wind instrument often takes the leading musical content, which is once more constructed from the first tone rows. High notes, and *tenuto* crotchets and quavers provide a more penetrating sound on the flute. To bring out some contrast, notes in the violin are generally of shorter duration and lower in pitch. These act as fillers against the sustained notes and the descending crotchets in the flute. Combinations of rhythmic elements, containing semiquavers, quavers, or a mixture of both, are kept regularly to ensure coherence between the two lines. In bar 211, the violin makes a brief transition to the last part of the piece by performing unaccompanied *crescendo* semiquavers with a wavy contour and *marcato* markings.

Notes from the same pitch class A, occurring in different registers, are presented in unison by the flute and violin, to give a fuller sound. As a supplement to the long tied notes, the piano presents three consecutive rows, all crammed into a two-bar phrase. However, the piano part loosens again in bar 214, in order to give more space to the other instruments. The short passage in the flute and the violin, produces an arch that falls progressively and rises again slightly towards the end.



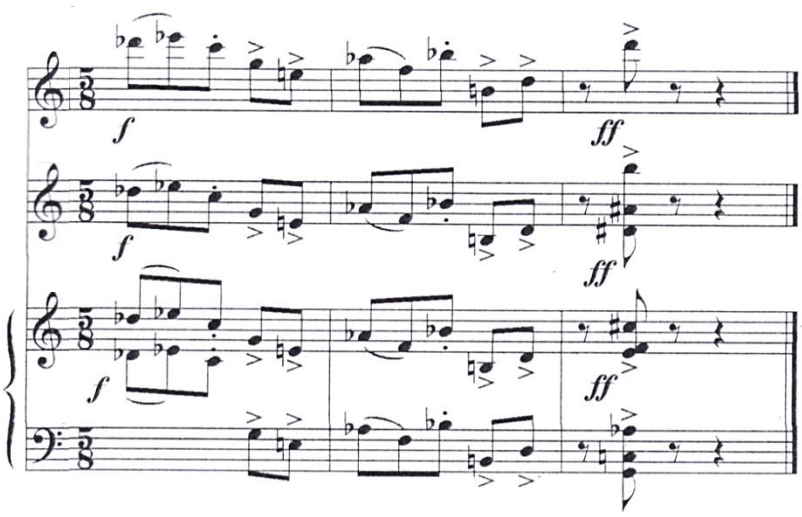
Example 4.26: The sixth segment, bars 212-215.

Bars 216-219 are replete with quasi-imitative progressions that pursue each other and develop a *crescendo* action (Ex. 4.27). All the instruments in the ensemble are rhythmically together, performing running semiquavers based on tone rows 6, 7, and 8. The volume escalates constantly, from *piano* to *forte*, thus increasing the intensity of the vibrant and hurried music.



Example 4.27: Repeated tone rows in rhythmic unison, organized in equal groups of semiquaver notes.

The closing bars, again in 5/8 time, reiterate the opening phrase of this *Moderato* section. The instruments continue to proceed in unison, now sharing the motif of the flute, without any changes, except for the last *fortissimo* quaver chord that brings the piece to an abrupt ending.



Example 4.28: The closing bars of *Segments No. 1*, repeating a motif from the first bars of segment six.

In *Segments No. 1*, the neoclassical style is predominantly characterized by a combination of contrapuntal techniques and twelve-tone principles. The contrapuntal textures employed in this chamber work take different forms, including melodies succeeding each other by imitation or interwoven lines interacting with each other, suggesting a fugal style, and also freer forms comprising of simultaneous melodic phrases accompanied by a chordal support or an ostinato pattern, reminiscent of the continuo part in baroque music. Vella's method combines adherence to these traditional forms and styles of composition with modern pitch material, using a serial approach based on sets of rows, each containing the twelve pitch classes. Row structures are nevertheless correlated to the form and textures. This relationship makes the return to established formal principles an integral component of the modern atonal principles applied in this piece. To preserve some conventional tonal methods of the classical period, though, the composer still attempts to occasionally apply a few triadic elements and regularly creates links to a central pitch class.

For Vella, the journey from a specified past to an emerging present is different from that taken by Camilleri. Instead of evoking a national past, by referring to cultural places or folk elements, Vella awakens musical traditions by combining twentieth-century procedures, particularly those developed in the first half of the century, with styles inherited from earlier Western European masters. Like Vella, Grech also focuses on European compositional trends and excludes any overt links with nationhood, but a main distinction between the two composers lies in the fact that while Grech emphasizes the modernist developments in music, brought

about in the latter decades of the century and available during his compositional career, Vella embraces techniques that were more popular in the inter-war period.

Vella's passion to explore earlier principles can perhaps be partially attributed to his familiarity with the musical documents preserved at the Cathedral Museum of Mdina as he worked on the arrangement of several pieces from earlier centuries, making them available again to contemporary listeners. Prior to independence, generations of Maltese art music composers drew their inspirations from traditional Western European music or musical thought, at least to a certain degree. To some extent, this is due to the strategic position of the islands, but also because Malta has been occupied and ruled by major European powers since the sixteenth century, and a number of Maltese musicians studied abroad, mainly in Italy and later also in France, as discussed in the first chapter. The works they created were therefore theoretically based on thoroughly learned European classical pieces and their compositional idioms. Hence, though Vella's approach in imitating earlier European musical models might be interpreted as an assertion of Malta's cultural dependence on foreign traditions or as conforming to colonial ideologies, in doing so, Vella ultimately preserves the attitude of his Maltese predecessors.

Gelsomina

Véronique Vella

5.1 Introduction

On reading the title of the flute quintet *Gelsomina*, the film *La Strada* [The Road] (1954) is probably the first thing that springs to mind, especially among those who are familiar with Italian cinema. Gelsomina is the main protagonist of this film, directed by Federico Fellini. As with many other films, Nino Rota collaborated with Fellini to provide the music for *La Strada*.[1] Fifty-two years after the release of the award-winning film, Véronique Vella (née Zammit) wrote this chamber work in memory of her father François Zammit.

The piece, as Vella affirms, pays tribute to the influence of Italy and Sicily on the Maltese Islands.[2] As with many other cultural aspects, the cinematographic experience of the Maltese people, especially in the second half of the twentieth century, was largely based on the works of Italian producers, owing to television transmissions from Italy to Malta. In 1957, Malta received its first ever television broadcast via the Italian state-owned company *Radio Televisione Italiana* (RAI).[3] Before the broadcasting act, enacted in 1991, the Maltese, including Vella during her childhood and youth, were mostly exposed to Italian television programmes.[4]

In this chamber work, the composer reawakens the emotions conveyed by an old movie. The postmodernist attitude stands out in *Gelsomina* as Vella presents something 'new' in the form of a pastiche, in order to create a nostalgic feeling[5] and establish a relationship with the past. The return to tonality, is evident throughout this work, and is sometimes extended to include polytonal passages as well. While the three works already discussed in the previous chapters all emphasize the different potentials of atonality, Vella's *Gelsomina* represents a renewed approach towards tonal language.

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1 Richard Dyer, *Nino Rota: Music, Film and Feeling* (London: Palgrave Macmillan on behalf of the British Film institute, 2010), 159.

2 Véronique Zammit, 'Towards a Notion of Cultural Soundscape as an Informant to Original Music Composition with particular reference to that of the Maltese Islands' (Ph.D. diss., Edinburgh Napier University, Edinburgh, 2008), 65.

3 Tony C. Cutajar, *Ix-Xandir f'Malta* [Broadcasting in Malta] (Pietà, Malta: Publikazzjonijiet Indipendenza (PIN), 2001), 51.

4 Further information about the 1990 *White Paper*, in relation to broadcasting in Malta, can be found in Cutajar's *Ix-Xandir f'Malta*, 83-88.

5 Fredric Jameson, *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern 1983-1998* (London and New York: Verso, 1998), 8.

Without copying Rota's themes, Vella remains loyal to some characteristics of his music, especially in the way she develops her motifs. In a similar way, she uses melodic motifs that generate other motifs, and reappear from time to time in her work. Vella's music also sounds very close to the 1930s and early 1940s works of Gian Francesco Malipiero (1882-1973), which are characterized by an expressive lyrical style with a serene melodic and harmonic treatment.[6] When Nino Rota (1911-1979) wrote the score to *La Strada*, he was still stylistically close to Malipiero. Before finding his own musical style, Rota, who had great admiration for Malipiero, had imitated his methods explicitly.[7] For Vella, this throwback to the past is a means of communicating through her music with listeners of different ages. Since it is related to a movie from the 1950s, *Gelsomina* draws the attention of those who remember *La Strada* in the earlier years of its release and long to experience that again, while it provides a more direct experience to the younger generations through hints of contemporary features.

Gelsomina I and *Gelsomina II* suggest the main themes of the movie, without strictly following the order of the story line of *La Strada*. To imitate the film in its structure, the composer divides the musical piece into two distinctive but complementary pieces, each roughly five minutes long. Italian films, including Fellini's, are generally screened in two parts - 'Prima Parte' and 'Seconda Parte'.[8] The form of both pieces is fundamentally sectional, with each section labelled by letters of the alphabet, a different one for each section that has distinguishing content. *Gelsomina I* is divided into six main sections, with rehearsal letters A to F, and *Gelsomina II* consists of four, marked A to D. The beginnings of new sections are often marked by a change in time signature. Some of them are further split into short passages without being labelled by an additional letter, and therefore significant changes in texture, technique, and motifs disclose the beginning of a new subdivision. Every section is built upon its own short musical ideas, which allude to particular aspects addressed in the movie. Repetition occurs within individual sections as motifs imitate each other, but the same material does not recur in different sections except in a few instances when main motifs are developed and referred to over and over again. Hence, there is also an evolutionary element in the design. Most often, the music in each section flows into the succeeding section without any pauses or big announcements of a new theme.

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6 James L. McHard, *The Future of Modern Music: A vibrant new modernism in music for the future* (Livonia, MI: Iconic Press, 2006), 77.

7 Francesco Lombardi, ed., *Nino Rota: Un Timido Protagonista del Novecento Musicale* (Torino: EDT, 2012), 44-45.

8 Richard Dyer, 'Side by Side', in *'Beyond the Soundtrack: Representing Music in Cinema*, edited by Daniel Goldmark, et al. (Berkeley, LA: University of California Press, 2007), 252.

Thus, successive sections are not always clearly offset. Instead, they give the idea of an episodic montage. A similar structure can be seen in the works of Malipiero, which he composed in the early 1920s, such as *Rispetti e Strambotti* (1920). This string quartet consists of a series of brief, contrasting passages, each expressing a musical idea with folkloristic features, which give an episodic effect.[9]

In the first part of *La Strada*, Gelsomina, a young woman of child-like innocence, is sold by her mother for a small sum of money to a travelling circus performer, Zampanò. Together, they travel in a ramshackle caravan driven by a motorcycle to perform in Italian village squares. Dressed in a clown costume, Gelsomina introduces Zampanò's one-man circus shows by performing a simple drum beat as she cries out 'È arrivato Zampanò' [Zampanò has arrived]. His never-changing shows are an exhibition of his strength: he wraps a chain around himself, inflates his chest and bursts the chain. At first, Gelsomina finds these new experiences very amusing, but Zampanò treats her very badly and so she runs away. After being taken back against her will by Zampanò, the strongman signs up with a travelling circus, where a high-wire artist and old rival of Zampanò, *il Matto* [the Fool], is already employed. The Fool irritates Zampanò by his mocking gaiety and the latter attacks him in a rage. This incident results in Zampanò being taken away by the police.

The beginning of the second part of the movie shows Gelsomina mesmerized by the Fool playing a tune on his fiddle. Seeing her interest, he teaches her to play his tune on the trumpet. The Fool and Gelsomina get into a deep conversation that changes the way she looks at herself. Gelsomina, who feels that she is unworthy, learns from the Fool that she has an irreplaceable role in the world. During one of their journeys, Gelsomina and Zampanò again meet the aerial acrobat performer who is stranded with a flat tyre, and the brutish man beats him to death. The incident leads Gelsomina into depression and brings about the end of her relationship with Zampanò. He abandons her, leaving only a few belongings and the trumpet. Years later, Zampanò hears a woman singing Gelsomina's tune and comes to know from her that the young lady who used to play this tune on her trumpet, had died. After hearing the sad news of Gelsomina's untimely death, Zampanò realizes that with his bitterness he had only brought misery upon himself. The depth of his grief is shown when he falls on his knees at the seashore and sobs out loudly, clutching the sand.

[9] John C. G. Waterhouse, *Gian Francesco Malipiero (1882-1973): The Life, Times and Music of a Wayward Genius* (1999; repr. Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 141.

This analysis of Vella's *Gelsomina* takes into account the narrative capacity of the two pieces and investigates the manner in which certain elements constitute narrativity. Ideas about the relationship between music and narrativity have been developed by a number of scholars, and are subject to debate. Those who question the application of narrative concepts to music primarily focus on narrative models in literature and attempt to adapt their structure or other elements, such as verb tense, gender and the narrator's voice, to music, concluding that music lacks a number of literary qualities. Other narrative theorists acknowledge that literary and musical works have confluent and disparate qualities, yet pay detailed attention to distinctive elements of music that generate a narrative meaning.

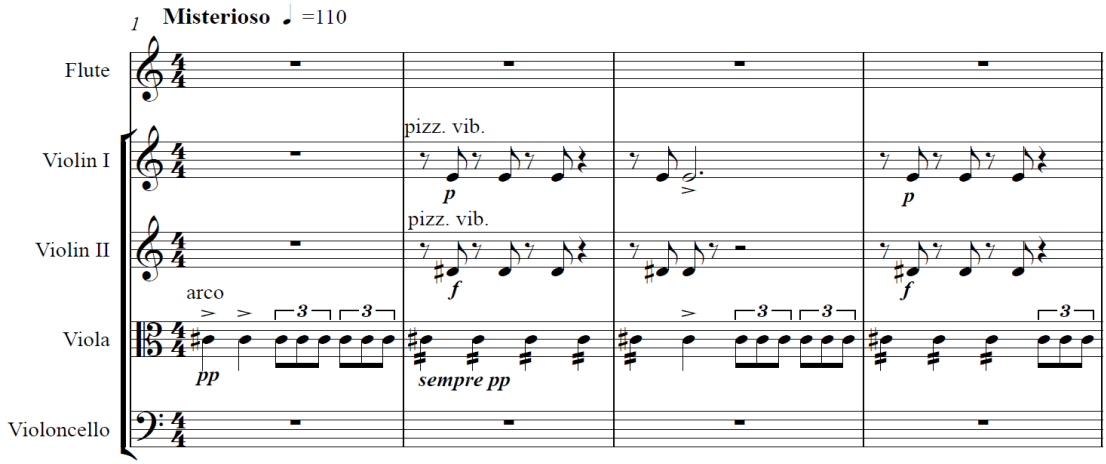
The narrative aspect of this chamber work makes reference to the plot of the film but goes beyond the mere description of a succession of events. The music attempts to express the atmospheric ambience of the film by using diverse sonorous qualities that allude to circus performances, a physical journey, the grotesque characteristics and the brutish behaviour of Zampanò, the introspective personality of the Fool, and the comic aspect of the film, as against the tragic fate of Gelsomina, and her emotions as she goes along her life's journey. Again, this corresponds with the movie's approach, which explores dimensions that are related to personal aspects of the characters. Though *La Strada* was released when Italian neorealism was exploding onto cinema screens, Fellini's film detaches itself from social and political issues, and mainly explores individual and emotional reactions, personal relationships, internal struggles, and the theme of solitude.[10]

Vella divides her musical narrative into sections that are well organized and identifiable. In both parts of *Gelsomina*, distinctive motifs define each particular section, but at the same time, variations of the same central motifs return frequently to keep the whole piece together. As in a classical story, the chamber work has an introductory part, the presentation of new ideas as it goes along, recapitulations of previously used material, climaxes and falling actions in which conflicts begin to resolve.

[10] Peter Bondanella, 'La Strada: The Cinema of Poetry and the Road beyond Neorealism', in *The Films of Federico Fellini* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 43-44; 53.

5.2 Gelsomina I

The first four bars of the piece (Ex. 5.1), though very minimal in their content, introduce central musical ideas that will be reused and developed in the succeeding sections. As the music proceeds, the rhythmic characteristics presented here, such as the use of triplets and the alternating quaver notes and rests, will be heard frequently to suggest different moods. Here, they create an allegorical rhythm of a stroll: the constant pattern of plucked repeated short notes separated by rests, against accented or subdivided crotchets, most likely represent the initial steps of a mysterious unforeseen journey. Marked with the performance direction *Misterioso*, the motif provides a sonorous ambience that conjures up images of Gelsomina's departure as she sets off on an adventure with Zampanò, and announces the beginning of her internal voyage. Aided by the string technique *pizz. vib.* on both violins, against *arco* on the viola, together with a contrast in dynamics, these rhythms create a sense of curiosity and uneasiness. With regards to pitches, the opening bars are based on a set of three elements C♯-D♯-E, with each instrument focusing only on one and the same note, such that the whole set will be sounded together.

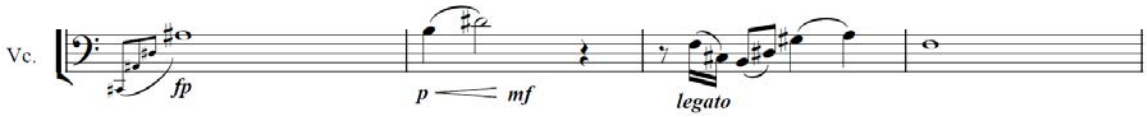


Example 5.1: Bars 1-4 from *Gelsomina I*.

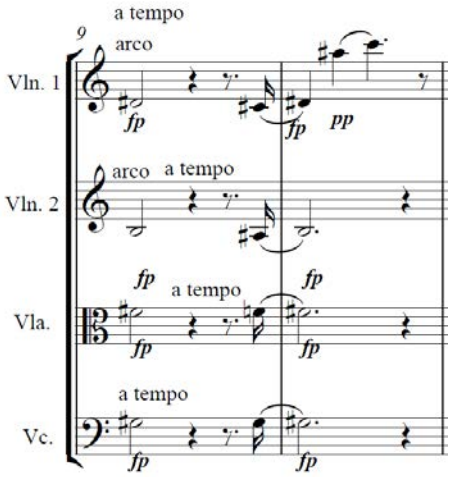
Section A

The beginning of section A is marked with the modest but effective entrance of the violoncello which performs a free part against the unchanged rhythmic textures of the other three stringed instruments (Ex. 5.2). While the viola fills in the gaps between the separate quaver notes on the violins, the cello draws attention to itself by producing a melody. The latter is soon interrupted

in bar 9 when the instruments come together rhythmically to perform a supertonic seventh in F♯. The presence of this tonality is now reinforced, after its tonic has been maintained throughout by the viola (Ex. 5.3). In these first bars, the particular rhythms used, especially the bouncy rhythm in the violins, seem to allude to a journey, which is the principal theme of the film *La Strada*, as the title itself implies. The *forte piano* chords, in bars 9-10, indicate the closure of this first segment.



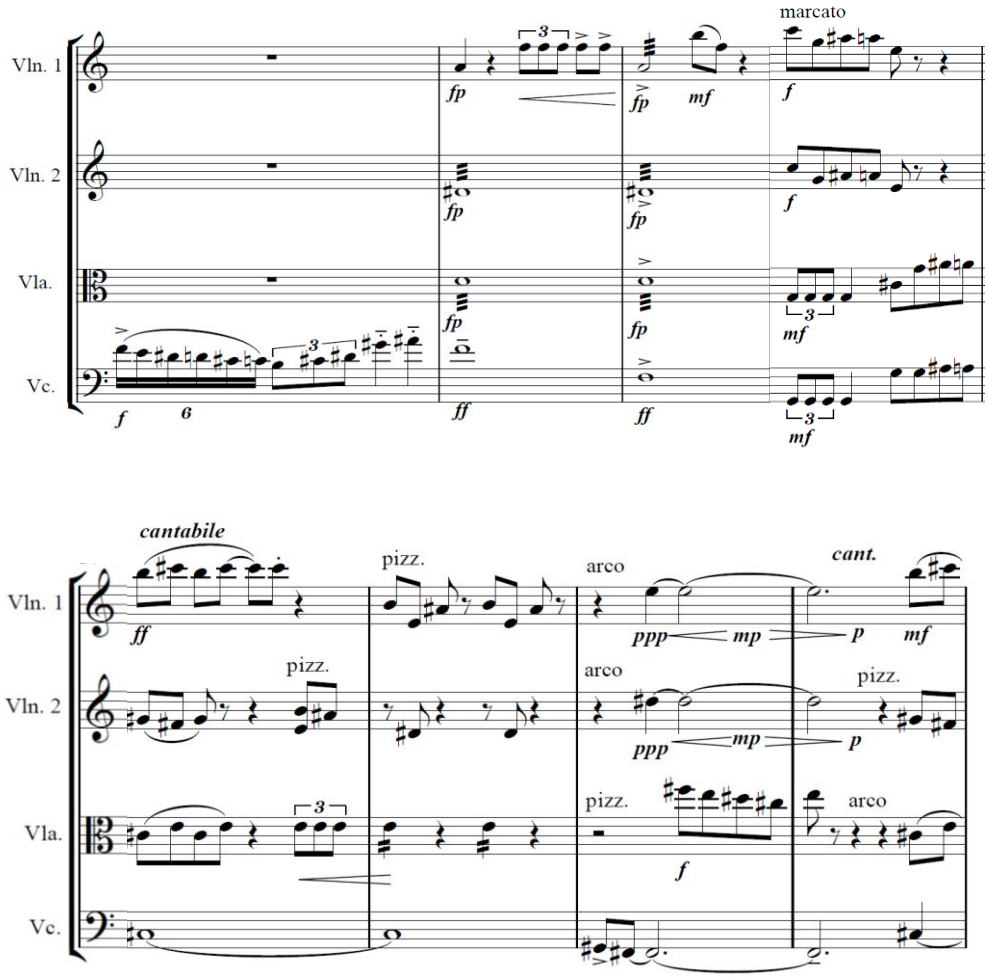
Example 5.2: The cello part in *Gelsomina I*, bars 5-8.



Example 5.3: The II7th chord of F♯ in the strings, bars 9-10.

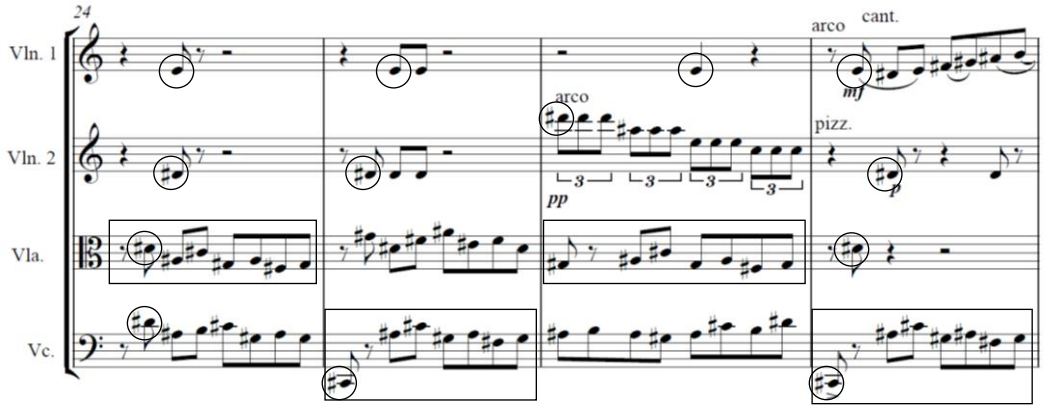
In bar 11, attention turns back, for a short while, to the cello. This time, it performs an unaccompanied descending and ascending movement, with frequent leaps of semitones or tones. As the music progresses, it becomes louder and more agitated. *Tremolos* are added to semibreve and minim notes in the violins and viola, and the attachment to the basic set C♯-D♯-E is suspended. The texture of the music gets thicker as the use of long notes and rests is minimized, and grouped quavers become more common. In bar 14, the entries at the octave in the violins are immediately imitated by similar entries on the viola and the cello, and as from bar 15, the common rhythms that were used earlier, such as the quaver triplets, and the quaver notes and rests that respond to *tremolo* crotchets, are combined with the new entries. Along with these, the ties to the three-note set reappear. However, even though the same techniques

are constantly being applied, they become loosely employed, and thus leave the foreground and function as a musical backdrop. The emphasis on the alternating long notes C♯ and F♯ in the cello throughout bars 15-22 give rise to a sense of harmonic ambivalence that perhaps alludes to the instability of Gelsomina as she finds herself in new and odd circumstances after leaving home.



Example 5.4: *Gelsomina I*, bars 11-18.

The musical direction *poco più mosso* marks a second subsection within section A. Bar 23 introduces a pentatonic *pizzicato* motif that sometimes appears fragmented, in the viola and cello (Ex. 5.5). As the musical idea persists in the lower instruments, its first pitch changes between C♯ and D♯ in order to maintain its link with the set. The only exception occurs at bar 26, where the first pitch of the motif is a G♯ instead of an expected C♯. Meanwhile, the first violin repeats the remaining third note E. As shown in the example below, at the beginning of each bar, the string instruments reiterate the same trichord.



Example 5.5: The trichord C♯-D♯-E (encircled) and the imitation of the same motif (in boxes) in bars 24-27.

At bars 27-28, the first violin introduces another motif, which reappears an octave higher at bars 31-32. These recurring musical fragments are based on notes from the B major scale. While the motifs are melodious, this passage is still harsh due to the vertical strong dissonances (major and minor second intervals) within the three-note set C♯-D♯-E. The second violin is the only instrument that withdraws from using a motif and limits itself to repeating notes sparingly from the widespread trichord. Along with the set C♯-D♯-E, the common rhythmic elements are also carried forward in these bars, and therefore they serve as unifying factors for this section.

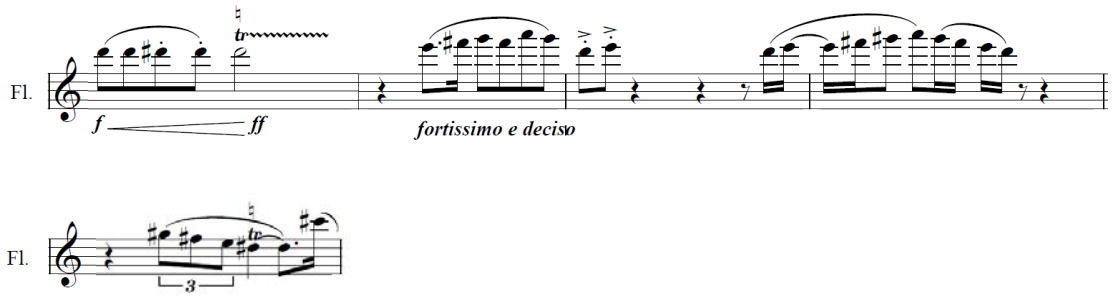
In relation to *La Strada*, the cantabile motifs that veil the dissonance bring forward the confrontation between comedy and tragedy in the film. The comic element, represented by Gelsomina and her circus shows with Zampanò, continuously attempts to hide the tragic aspect that will reach a climax towards the end of the film. Narrativity, as created by Vella's work, does not necessarily entail music that impersonates the characters and retells the plot, but can take the form of a combination of sounds that becomes a sonic metaphor of the main aspects presented in the story, and provides listeners with the same emotional experiences created by the visual images and the sonic expressions of the movie.

Section B

The transition between one section and the next is quite smooth. While the soft dynamics over a few bars mark the end of the first section, the second one starts with a motif that has been previously used. The pairing of the strings, most notably, the rhythmic unison between the

violins, and the tie between the viola and cello, which first occurred in section A, bar 14, and became more evident in bars 23-25, remains a characteristic also in this section. This appears along with regular reminders of the journeying motif in the loose quaver notes. Distinctive musical features, however, make each segment different.

The first entry of the flute at bar 39 (Ex. 5.6) is especially prominent. The markings *f crescendo* to *ff* are applied to the penetrating sounds of D_6 to $D\sharp_6$, followed by a trill and a *fortissimo e deciso* high-registered melody.



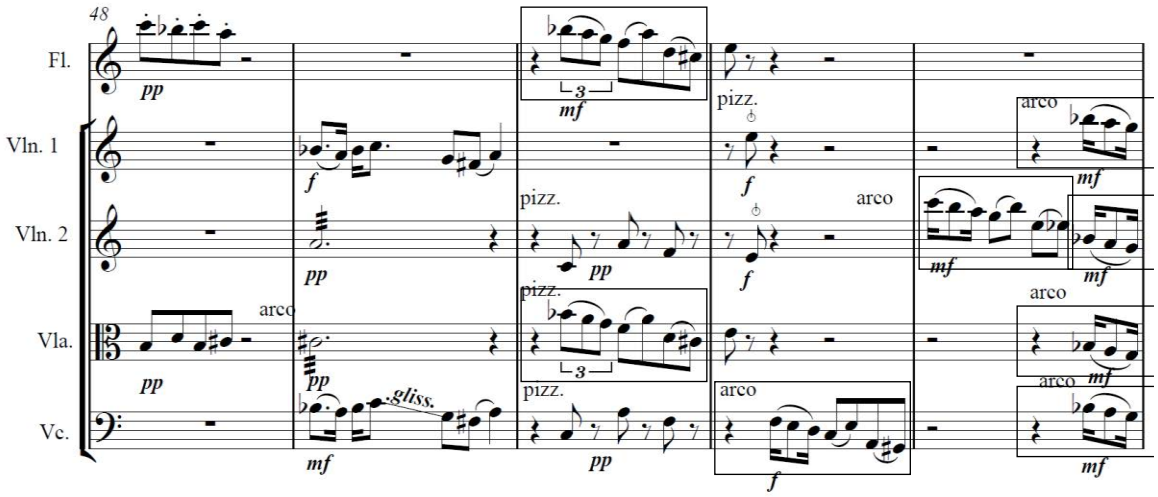
Example 5.6: The flute part in bars 39-43.

When the flute is introduced, it immediately establishes an identity that is distinguishable from that of the strings. It is clear that, throughout the piece, the flute will frequently represent Gelsomina. Meanwhile, the string quartet takes the role of the ambience which, or the people who, will influence her behaviour and feelings. As Vella states in her own account of *Gelsomina*, 'the piece attempts to create a metaphor for the individual's struggle - here represented by the flute part - against an oppressive society'.[11] Thus, Vella goes beyond the idea of the instruments as a representation of Gelsomina and her world, and personifies the flute and the string quartet such that they allude to every human being in relation to life's challenging experiences.

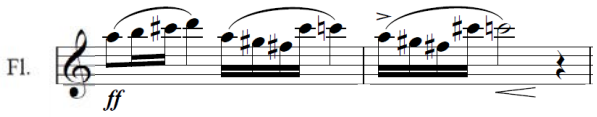
Since Gelsomina's emotions are a response to the situation around her, the flute retains its individuality but does not isolate itself from the rest of the ensemble. In the dialogue initiated by the first violin and cello at bar 49, the melody of the flute is sometimes heard in unison with another instrument or is handed over to the strings, such as in bars 50-52 (Ex. 5.7). However, the motif that first appears at bar 50 is sometimes modified not only as a result of a shift in

[11] Zammit, 'Towards a Notion of Cultural Soundscape', 66.

pitches by an octave or a third, but also due to slight differences in rhythm. In the following extract from *Gelsomina*, the triplet notes in the first beat of the motif are later changed into a new way of dividing the beat, consisting of syncopated semiquaver-quaver-semiquaver rhythm. This rhythmic pattern becomes widespread in the different sections of this chamber work. The same motif enters on different beats, often on an off-beat but also on the strong first beat at bar 52, such that the accent continuously shifts. Due to the variation in rhythm and the accentual shifts, the rhythmic feature of the motif is distorted, while its pitch intervals remain consistent. The unstable quality of the tuneful motif can be read as an indication of the cheerful but distressing nature of this musical narrative. Immediately after, this image can be confirmed by the unaccompanied call of the flute, symbolizing the lonely nagging outcry of Gelsomina (Ex. 5.8).



Example 5.7: The motif that is introduced by the flute and imitated in the string instruments.

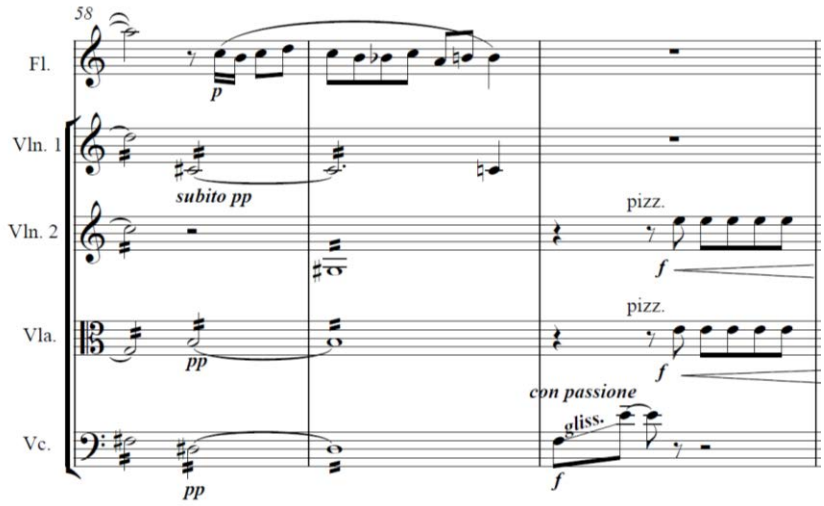


Example 5.8: The flute part in bars 54-55.

Overall, the flute part consists of different melodic motifs that are consecutively reiterated at least twice. In the extract shown above, repetition has a clear purpose. It underlines the significance of the motif, which sounds like a continuous penetrating lament and alludes to the permeating theme of solitude presented in the film. A similar strategy is used in other parts of

the piece to create resemblances with scenes or personalities from the film *La Strada*. The process of repetition is likewise evident in the movie especially in Gelsomina's actions. Her role is to do only repetitive tasks, mainly because, as her mother says, she does what she's told, and came out a little strange,[12] which implies that she is naïve. One of Gelsomina's unvarying responsibilities is to introduce her companion Zampanò by banging on the drum and crying out 'È arrivato Zampanò!' every time he takes part in a carnival show. Yet, her expressive and charming clownish face makes each of her announcements uniquely captivating.

Another component that exhibits the distinctive yet complementary features of the flute and the string quartet is the timbre. The timbral capabilities of the flute are generally related to the changes of register and the continuous variations in dynamics. The strings offer a greater variety of sonorous qualities, which go beyond the ordinary bowing, and include techniques such as *staccato*, *glissando*, *pizzicato*, *punta d'arco* and Bartók *pizzicato*. The contrast between the flute and the string instruments is particularly effective in bars 56-59 (Ex. 5.9), where the flute performs a new motif against the darker colour of the strings that is produced by playing *tremolo* chords. This incongruity brings to mind the simplistic yet cheerful attitude of Gelsomina as compared to the agitated and irritable behaviour of Zampanò.



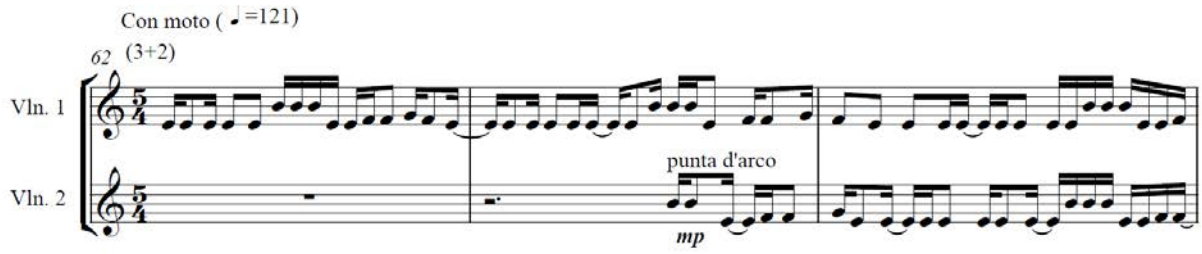
Example 5.9: *Gelsomina I*, bars 58-60.

[12] Peter Bondanella and Manuela Gieri, eds. *La Strada: Federico Fellini, director* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1987), 36.

Section C

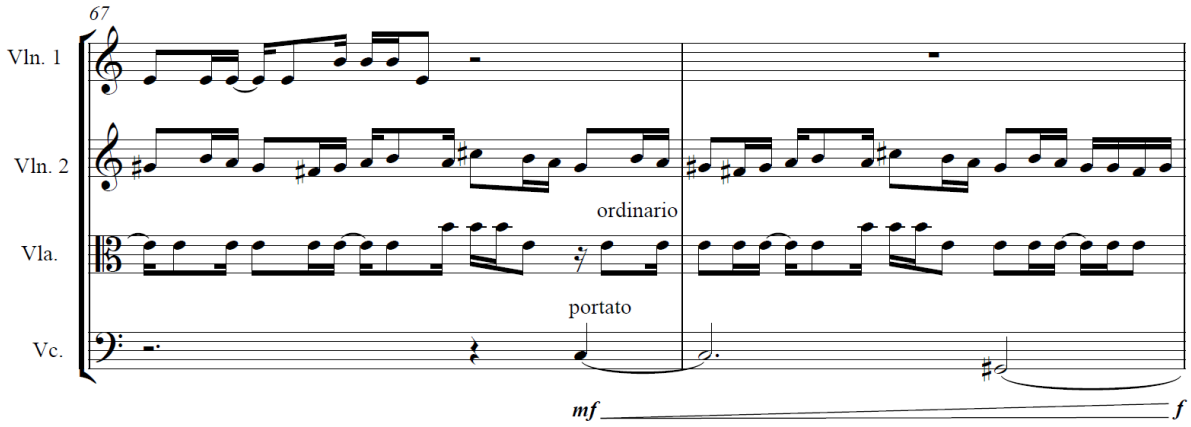
The simple quadruple time that is widely used in the first two sections of this chamber work, now changes to an asymmetrical time signature. The 5/4 timing and the suggested performance direction *con moto* with a metronome marking of ♩ = 121, speed up the tempo for the third section.

As shown in the example below (Ex. 5.10), the first violin introduces section C with a rhythmic phrase of quavers and semiquavers that limits itself only to the pitches E-B-F-G. While the first violin continuously repeats the same pattern, the other violin follows it with a matching entry.



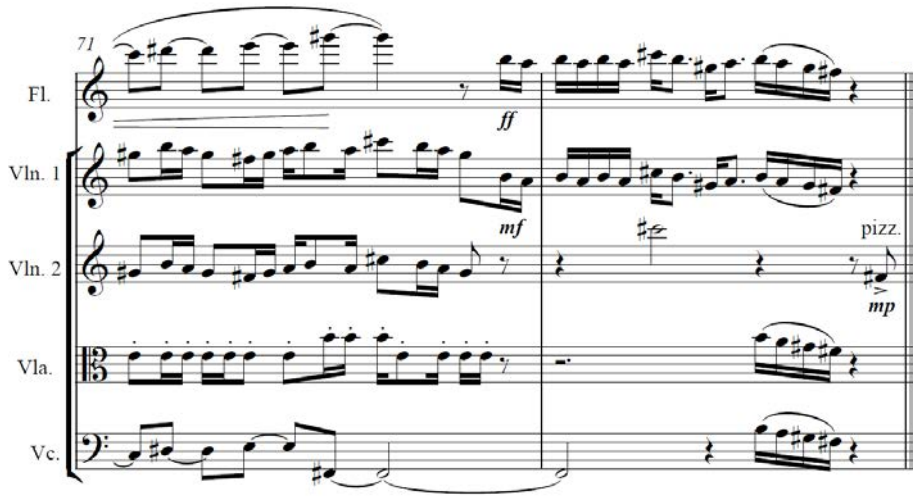
Example 5.10: The similar entries of the violins in bars 62-64.

Then it is the viola's turn to join in with a related rhythm that uses the same set of pitches. This combination of the three *punta d'arco* entries produce a light but quick-paced and jaunty sound. To enrich the tuneful dialogue, in bar 66, the entry of the second violin then changes to a different musical idea with a wavy contour, which is played with the normal bowing. This is later echoed an octave higher by the first violin. The new E major rhythmic pattern is therefore played alongside the natural pitches of the other accompanying instruments. Thus, it creates instability in contradiction with the steady repetitive patterns. Another contrasting effect is produced when the cello then starts off with long *portato* notes (Ex. 5.11). Together with the simultaneous use of different keys and rhythms, there is a combination of bowing techniques as well.



Example 5.11: The resemblances and contrasts in the string parts, at bars 67-68.

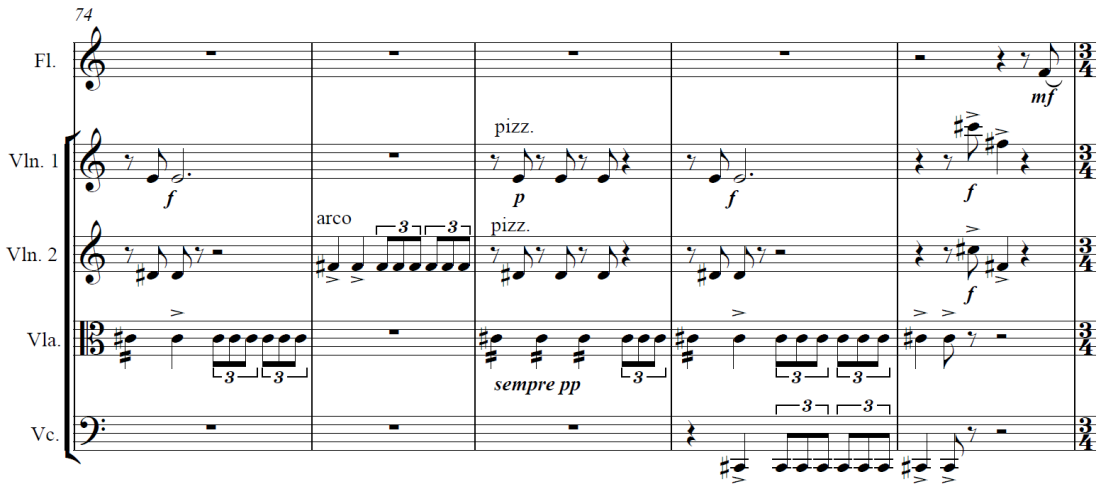
After a passage dominated by the rhythmic and melodic ostinato patterns on the violins and the viola, the flute reappears in bar 69. Its brief but significant entry starts off mainly in rhythmic unison with the violoncello. As the music of the flute gradually gets louder and the whole quintet plays together to produce a thicker texture, the music loses its gaiety and becomes almost disturbing. The short *fortissimo* passage of the flute, which starts at bar 71, is sustained by the first violin, an octave lower and at a softer dynamic. Then, on the fourth beat of the next bar, all the instruments, except for the viola, produce descending semiquavers on different octaves, implying a scale fragment in F♯ minor, followed by a plucked F♯ on the viola, to mark the end of this 5/4 passage (Ex. 5.12).



Example 5.12: A passage expressing turbulence and agitation at bars 71-72.

This section can be interpreted by reference to what Byron Almén sees as the opposition between 'order' and 'transgression', which he says is a necessary perspective for understanding a musical narrative.[13] The precise 'order' set up at the beginning of section C, with a repetitive set of pitches and rhythm, is destroyed and turned into a 'transgression' as soon as the second violin presents a new key signature, creating chromatic clashes with the natural notes in the other string instrument parts. Furthermore, the entrance of the cello with a dark coloured timbre and the *crescendo* to *forte* markings, together with the melody in the flute that escalates to *ff* and produces an aggressive sound, build up more tension in the music. The unsettling sounds of this passage are perhaps an allusion to the uneasiness that shows up in several scenes from *La Strada* and the lives of the protagonists. The most agitating scenes in the movie are generally dominated by the repulsive personality of Zampanò, his rough attitude, his robust frame, his physically, verbally and emotionally abusive behaviour, as well as his interior state of mind.

The last few bars of section C are a replica of the opening bars of this piece, as a reminder of the theme of the journey that runs through the film. They retain the same texture, tempo, rhythm and set of pitches, and only include some variations that are often related to the bowing techniques (Ex. 5.13).

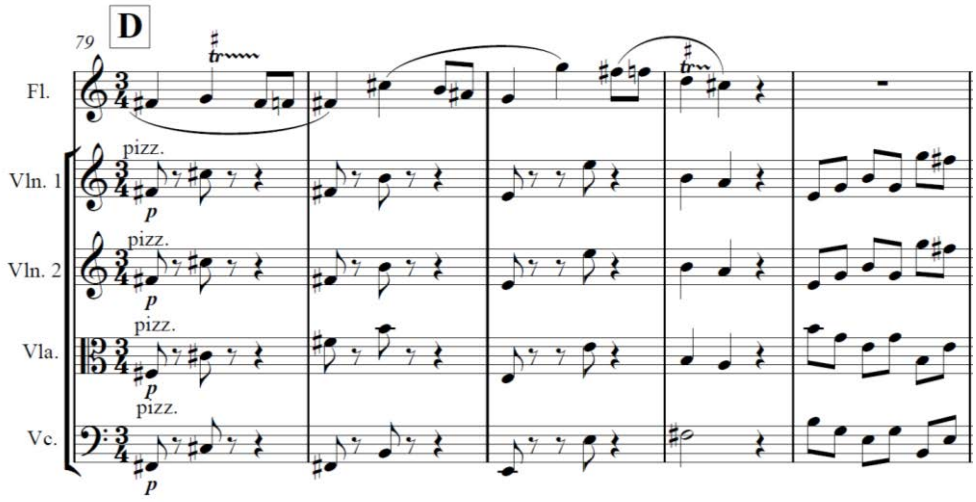


Example 5.13: The closing bars of section C in *Gelsomina I.*

[13] Byron Almén, 'Narrative Archetypes: A Critique, Theory, and Method of Narrative Analysis', *Journal of Music Theory* 47/1 (2003), 12. In a response to Almén's later book, Arnold Whittall criticizes the use of the word 'transgression' stating that it 'immediately creates the impression that all kinds of contrasts and tensions in music are subversive, negative factors, if not downright sinful, rather than unity-enhancing'. For further details see Arnold Whittall, 'A Theory of Musical Narrative by Byron Almén', *Music & Letters* 91/2 (2010), 300.

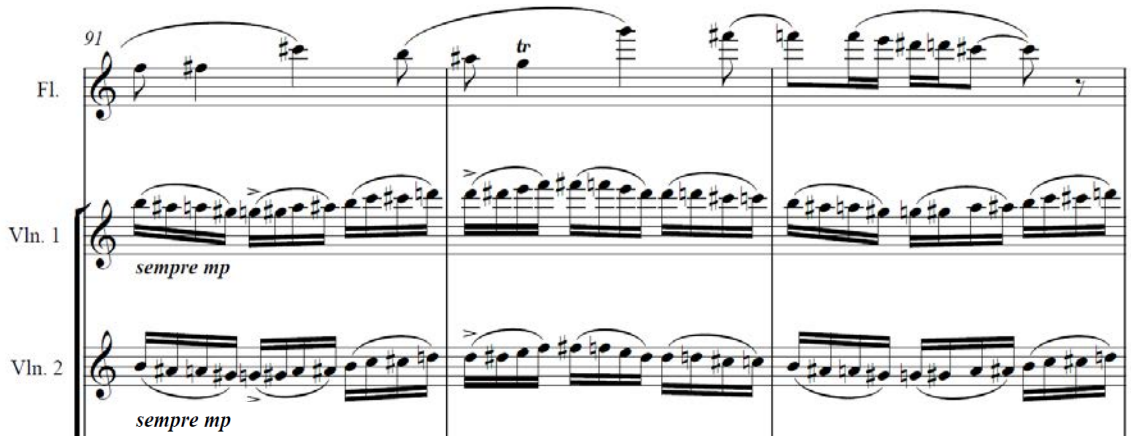
Section D

The commonly used texture with *pizzicato* quaver notes prevails again in the strings at the beginning of section D. However, the separate quavers are now shifted onto different beats and the pitches are adjusted according to the new key signature (Ex. 5.14). The emphasis on F♯, together with the leading note E♯, enharmonically notated as F, indicate that the central key here is F♯ minor. This rhythmic pattern on the string instruments accompanies a light melodious motif on the flute. Following the repetition of bars 79-83, this motif is reiterated an octave higher.



Example 5.14: A motif on the flute accompanied by a light-textured passage on the strings.

From bar 90 onwards, the viola moves in parallel motion with the flute, and shares the same musical idea two octaves below. In the meantime, the upper strings also perform in octaves. The violins present a different motif that is vertically symmetrical (Ex. 5.15). All the twelve pitches of the chromatic scale first descend and then rise. A similar progression is also found in the flute's melody, when it goes down chromatically from G to C♯. A layout of successive neighbouring pitches within a symmetrical arrangement has already been presented earlier by the cello at bar 11 but it is now further highlighted and more vivid.



Example 5.15: The ascending and descending chromatic movements in the flute and the violins.

According to the composer, the continuous, falling and rising chromatic arrangement, which takes a cyclic shape, is a representation of the street circuses and the fairgrounds,[14] where Zampanò, aided by Gelsomina, puts on shows in order to make a living. The circus as a metaphor for life is a prevalent theme in the films of Fellini that were scored by Rota.[15] Helen Stoddart explains how in *La Strada*, the circus metaphor is particularly telling since the main protagonists themselves form a circus.[16] As an itinerant showman, Zampanò is part of the metaphor itself and urges the audience to compare the journey of life to that of a travelling circus. However, when he tries to join a troupe, Zampanò is soon rejected, since he does not really belong to the world of a circus. On the other hand, the Fool, a long-time enemy of Zampanò and an inspiring personality to Gelsomina, possesses the true characteristics of a clown-artist. Moreover, Gelsomina is a natural clown, with clownish attributes and an inborn talent to entertain, who does not need to be trained for the role, thus, she 'is' the circus.

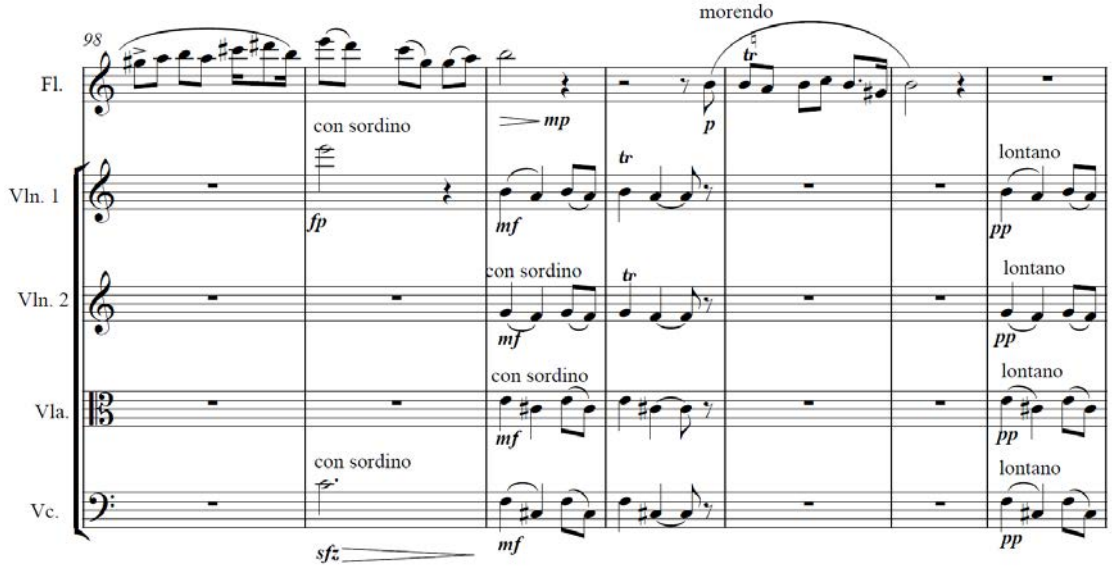
Listeners, especially those who are not familiar with *La Strada*, might not hear the imagery described above. Researchers who oppose the view that music can be regarded as a narrative argue that there is no precise way of representing characters and a plot in music. Jean-Jacques Nattiez clearly states that when deprived of linguistic support, music cannot be regarded as a

[14] Zammit, 'Towards a Notion of Cultural Soundscape', 71.
[15] Richard Dyer, *Nino Rota: Music, Film and Feeling*, 159.
[16] Helen Stoddart, 'Subtle Wasted Traces: Fellini and the Circus', in *Federico Fellini: Contemporary Perspectives*, edited by Frank Burke and Marguerite R. Waller (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 49-50.

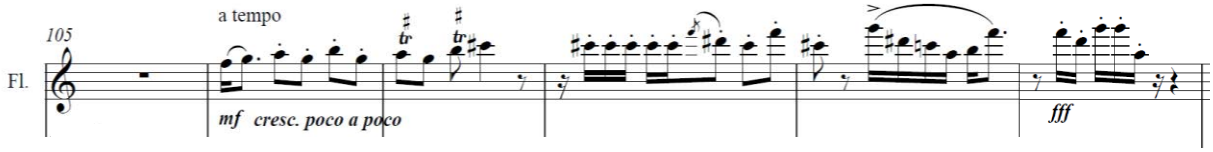
narrative, but is simply 'able to *imitate* the intonation contour of a narrative.'[17] This view holds onto the fact that words are a prerequisite for the telling of a story. However, one should respect the differences between verbal and musical narratives. In the latter case, as Michael Klein puts it, a musical piece may be based on 'expressive states whose arrangement follows a narrative logic'.[18] The expressive qualities of Vella's *Gelsomina* can still motivate listeners who cannot make links with the film to uncover and appreciate the messages of this musical narrative.

Starting on the third beat of bar 94, the first violin becomes the leading instrument with another musical phrase in which symmetrical features show up again, but here the pitches often move in tones. The agitated musical fragment of the first violin in bars 94-97 is an imitation of the second violin at bars 66-67, presented an octave above. The prominent position of the violin lasts only for a short while before the flute returns with a tuneful melody. The wind instrument and the string quartet engage in a dialogue. The former is entrusted with the melodic line, whereas the muted strings swap between a couple of dissonant chords, which they play in rhythmic unison. After the strings' response at bars 100-101, the flute changes its mood from *cantabile* to *morendo* (Ex. 5.16). With reference to Vella's interpretation, this passage would seem to represent Gelsomina's hesitation over whether she should stay with Zampanò or leave him.[19] This passage thus suggests her engagement in difficult relationships, another theme that is strongly apparent in the film. She finally decides to move away and feels the freedom that she was aspiring for. To express this autonomy, and Gelsomina's sense of self-worth, the melody mainly comprises of high-pitched notes[20] (Ex. 5.17) that reach a climax in the last bar of this section, bar 110, and are emphasized furthermore by the dynamic *fff*.

[17] Jean-Jacques Nattiez, 'The Narrativization of Music. Music: Narrative or Proto-Narrative', *Human and Social Studies. Research and Practice* 2/2 (2013), 64-65.
[18] Michael Klein, 'Chopin's Fourth Ballade as Musical Narrative', *Music Theory Spectrum* 26/1 (2004), 25.
[19] Zammit, 'Towards a Notion of Cultural Soundscape', 72.
[20] Ibid., 72-73.



Example 5.16: *Gelsomina I,* bars 98-104.



Example 5.17: The flute part in bars 105-110.

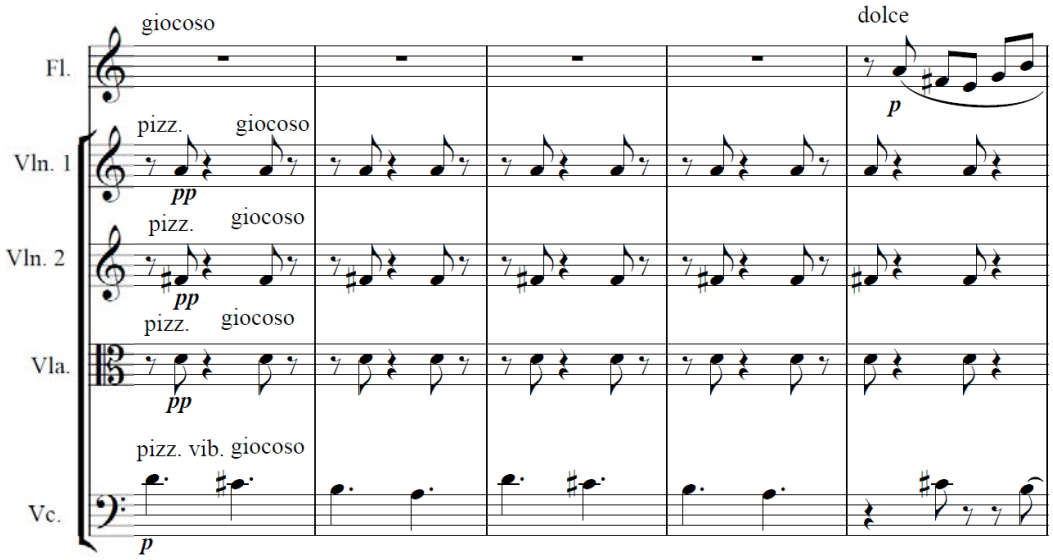
Section E

The prominent rhythmic pattern related to the idea of a journey appears once again, marked *giocoso*, to open section E (Ex. 5.18). The lively spirit that the music elicits here differs from the peaceful backdrop for the flute, which the same motif presents at the beginning of the previous section, at bars 79-87 (see Ex. 5.14). By presenting tonally modified versions of the same musical idea, together with different performance directions, in order to portray varying moods, Vella adopts a strategy already used in the music of the film. In *La Strada*, Rota uses a number of musical themes[21] and disperses them through the movie such that the same thematic material conveys a different meaning each time it is heard.

Very softly, the two violins and the viola repeatedly perform a D major triad. As is common

[21] Claudia Gorbman, 'Music as Salvation', *Film Quarterly* 28/2 (1974), 18.

in this piece, the cello moves independently from the other instruments. Yet, it still performs an unvarying sequence of pitches, this time a descending progression of dotted crotchets, sometimes including the seventh note of the prolonged D major chord. The texture, which is again a reminder of the motif at the very beginning of the piece, here serves as a 'vamp-till-ready', played between the cello and the rest of the string instruments, while the flute prepares for the next entry at bar 115.

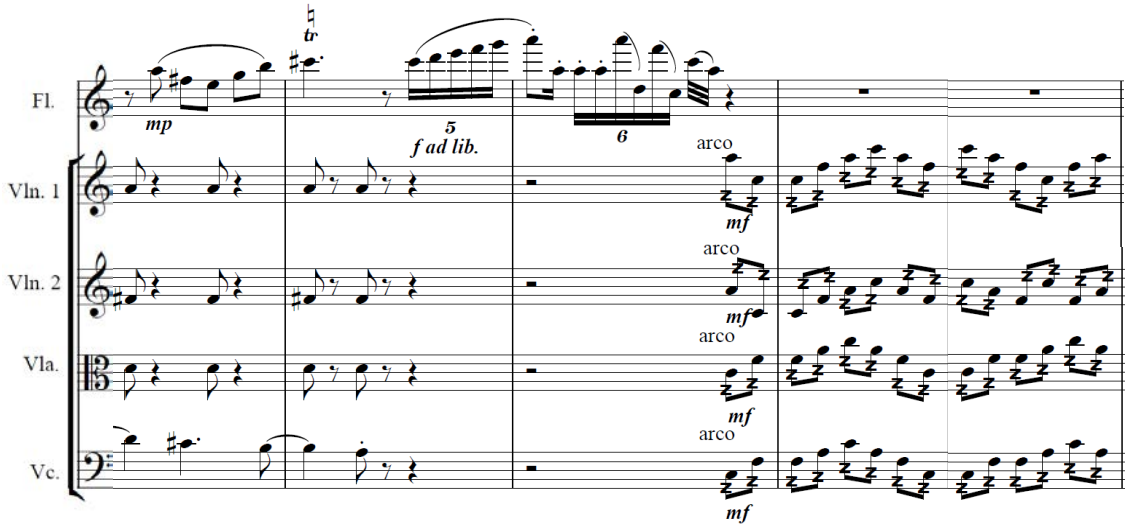


Example 5.18: The rhythmic motif denoting the journey, as presented in bars 111-115.

The flute presents a short pleasant musical idea, marked as *dolce*. The second playing of this motif, in an octave higher, is followed by another brief syncopated passage in a high tessitura. Its pitches go up as high as A_6 and then instantly fall and rise up again, producing large gaps between the notes. At the last beat of bar 119, the strings intervene with a quick *tremolo* section, using the same pitches F-A-C, throughout. The violins mainly move in contrary motion with the lower strings, and at times allow the second violin and the viola to cross each other (Ex. 5.19). When the flute comes in again, its motif is slightly varied, and louder to accentuate its powerful presence.

Expression marks that suggest the style of the music, dynamic marks, and performance techniques, altogether contribute to a richer narrative, and hopefully to a better understanding of its message for the listener. In this short section, Vella uses stylistic indications, such as *giocoso* and *dolce*, which provide guidance regarding the sound that the performers should aim to produce, a wide range of dynamics to boost the dramatic potential of the score, and a variety

of performance directions, including *pizzicato*, *arco* and *tremolo*, to achieve delicate and gloomy colouristic effects side by side. Assuming a direct correlation to *La Strada*, the contrasting features between the more appealing melody in the flute part and the *tremolo* quavers in the string parts possibly refer to a subject addressed throughout this movie: the goodness of an individual within an oppressive society. Gelsomina, portrayed by Fellini as an angelic young woman, is labelled by society as simple-minded and is continuously ill-treated by her male companion.

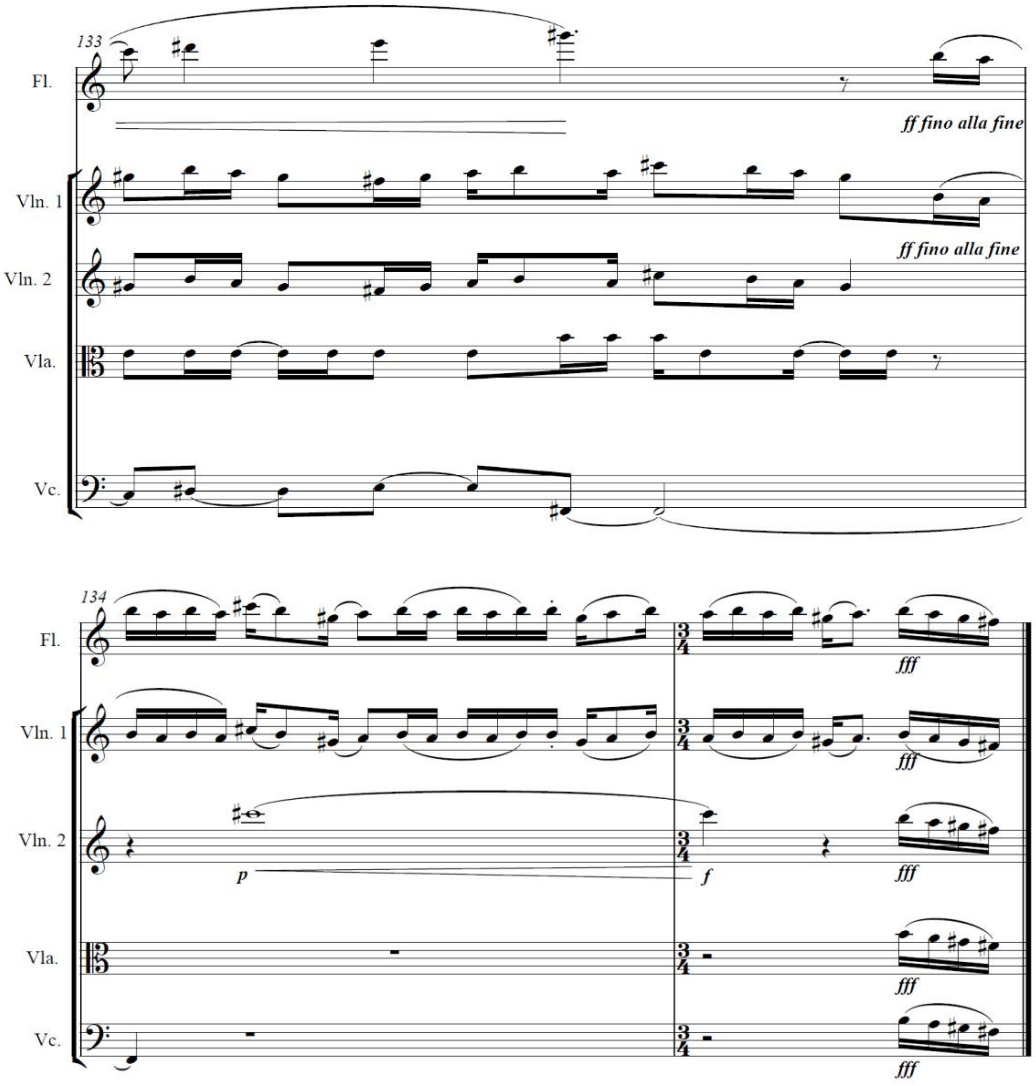


Example 5.19: *Gelsomina I*, 117-121.

Section F

Section F is a recapitulation of the third section. From time to time, a few things are altered or simplified, such as in bar 126, where the violins miss some of the notes played earlier, or when there are minimal differences in the rhythm, for example on the last beat of bars 127 and 129, in the first violin and viola parts, respectively. In this final section, while the viola delays its entry, the flute entry occurs a bit earlier, when compared to section C. The wind instrument regularly performs *staccato* and *legato* ascending phrases. There are also infrequent changes in ornaments or performance techniques, like the added *tremolos* on the violoncello, the *legato* notes of the viola, and the flute trill in bar 131. The minimal modifications however do not change the meaning of the passage. It is still a section that brings to mind the involvement of Gelsomina and her patron in the dazzling spectacles of the circus.

In relation to the earlier section, bar 134 shows further changes that are related to rhythm, and additional beats. The latter make up for the beats that are missed in the last bar, due to a change from 5/4 to a simple triple time. The music ends abruptly in bar 135 (Ex. 5.20), with all instruments performing extremely loud descending semiquavers, in octaves. The sudden interruption alludes to the fact that at this point Gelsomina's tragic fate remains unpredictable.[22] A particular episode that leads Gelsomina into further unstable conditions is the argument between Zampanò and the Fool, during the last circus show that closes the *Prima Parte* of the movie.

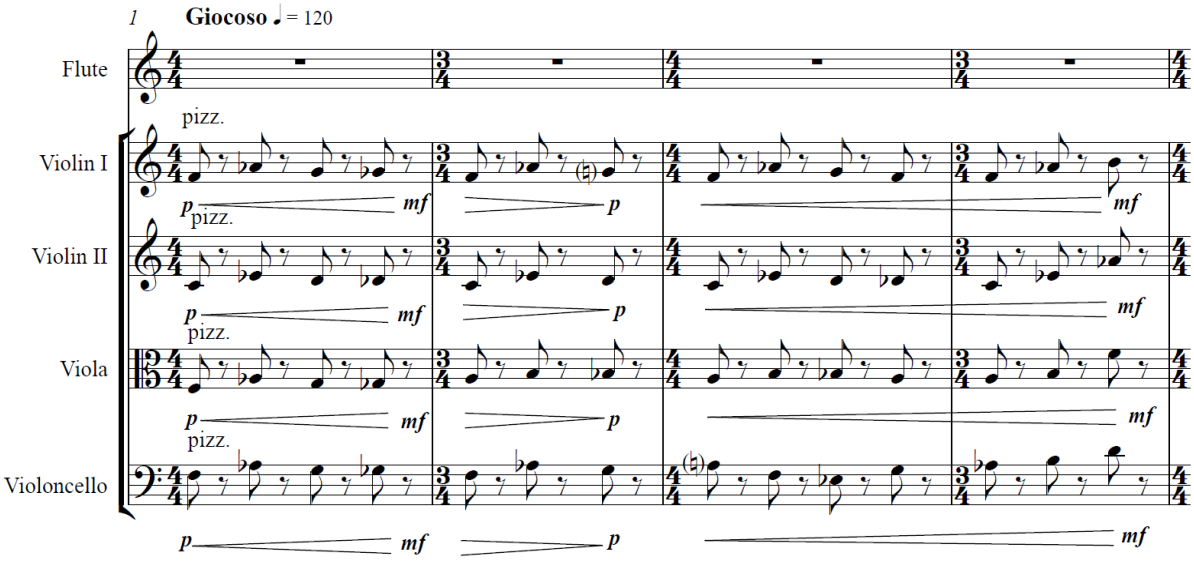


Example 5.20: The closing bars in *Gelsomina I.*

[22] Zammit, 'Towards a Notion of Cultural Soundscape', 74.

5.3 Gelsomina II

The second part of *Gelsomina* is divided into four sections, which sometimes adopt features introduced in the first part, thus helping to give a sense of continuity and wholeness to the narrative aspect of this chamber work. The first indication of this strategy lies in the opening bars (Ex. 5.21), which use the hopping rhythm made up of quaver notes and rests that was previously connected to the representation of the protagonist's voyage.



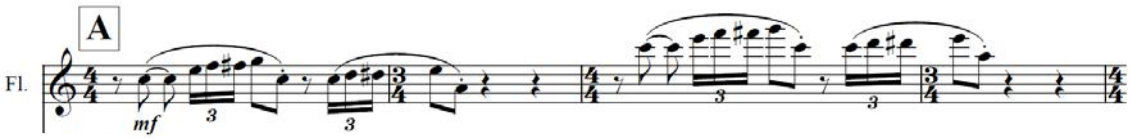
Example 5.21: The opening bars of *Gelsomina II*.

In contrast to the first bars of part one, the time signature here changes very often, sometimes at each bar, between simple triple and simple quadruple time. Also, the pitches are now much more varied. While the opening of the first part is based on a three-note set, here, almost all the twelve chromatic notes are used. Yet, there is an evolving pattern on which the quaver chords are constructed. The respective beats of the opening bars are linked to each other and the chords at each beat evolve by eliminating repeated pitches and adding new ones as the music proceeds. Referring to the first beat, in bar 1 the chord includes the pitches F-C, but then it is expanded to F-A-C in the next bar, and later to F-A-A♭-C. The subsequent beats work in a similar way, except for the fourth which is the most noncompliant to this structure. In the introductory bars, and likewise in section A, the frequent changes in both timing and pitches, as well as the ambiguous key signature, make the music unstable and create suspense.

To build stronger relationships with the film, Vella sometimes follows Rota's approach to the thematic material composed for *La Strada*, without overtly imitating his musical ideas. In his scores for Fellini's movies, Rota makes use of the same musical themes to serve as a common ambience for the different incidents of the film, in order to bind the scenes together. The several themes are gradually introduced and then undergo several changes, but remain recognizable because of the clarity of the melodies. One of the musical themes used by Rota in *La Strada* is the nondiegetic *La Strada Theme*. This tune is heard during shots of Zampanò travelling with Gelsomina in a caravan pulled by a motorcycle, and gives a sense of picaresque adventure.[23] In a similar manner, Vella develops an original idea that through its consistent rhythmic pattern and texture becomes associated with Gelsomina's journey. This motif, originally stated in the first bars of *Gelsomina I*, is exploited in the first part of the chamber work, mainly reappearing in each section, and hinted again in *Gelsomina II*. It therefore indicates a connection between the sections that convey different moods and serves as an underlying factor that often resurfaces throughout the piece.

Section A

Throughout section A, the string quartet supplements the flute's melody. The first four bars are in essence a duplicate of the previous bars, with the addition of a jovial tune on the flute (Ex. 5.22). As in other sections in the first part of the piece, a second playing of the melody is performed in a higher register to produce a brighter and more penetrating timbre.



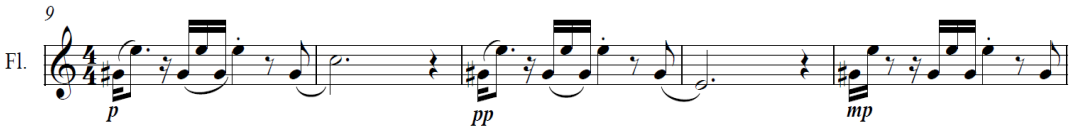
Example 5.22: A melodic passage in the flute part in *Gelsomina II*, bars 5-8.

From bar 9, the texture changes immediately, and the music expresses a different mood. The flute presents a calming and serene soft motif that predominantly involves unvarying widely spaced pitches (Ex. 5.23), before it reverts back to a melody that has a rising pitch contour, with regular leaps of a semitone or tone. In bars 16 and 17 (Ex. 5.25), the vivid running notes once

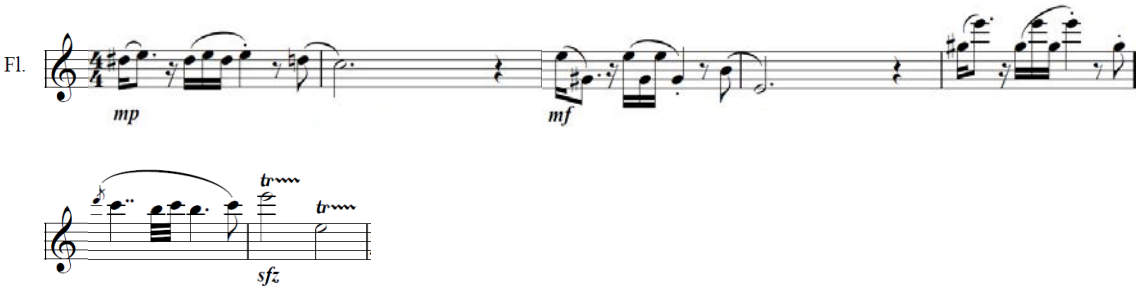
[23] Thomas Van Order, *Listening to Fellini: Music and Meaning in Black and White* (Madison, WI: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2009), 54.

more create a cheerful and light-hearted tone, that might suggest the comic behaviour or the clown-like features of Gelsomina. Among these quick notes are ascending leaps of a tone, which are a contracted version of some scattered entries in the first violin. The first motif of the flute is developed further (Ex. 5.24) when it comes back with different pitches, an octave above, inverted, or embellished with an added acciaccatura and trills following it.

The melody in this section predominantly consists of short motifs, often repeated in succession with slight but perceptible changes. Each time a motif is varied, it leads to the gradual unfolding of a message, thus complying with the narrative dimension of the piece.

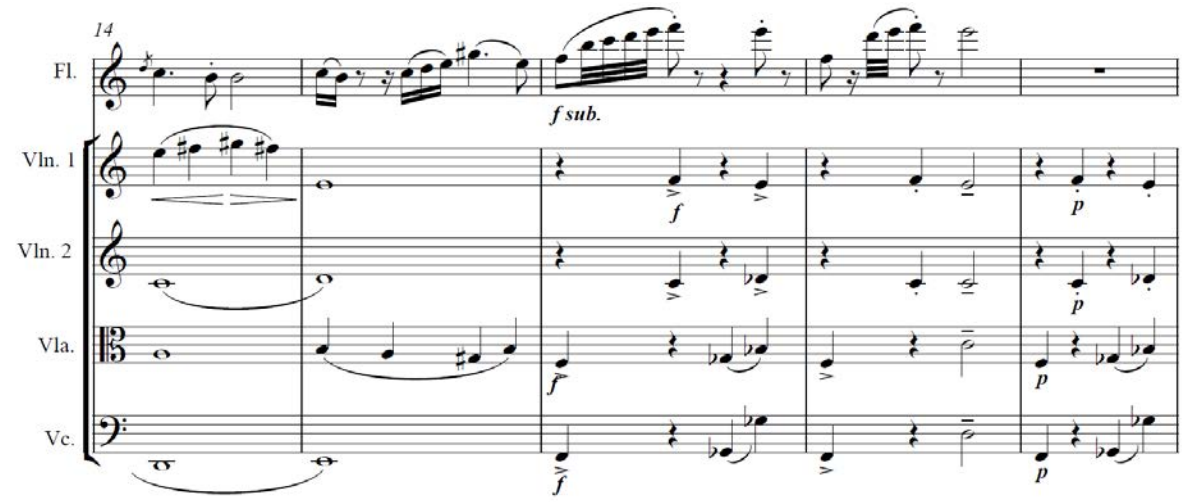


Example 5.23: The motif of the flute part in section A of *Gelsomina II*.



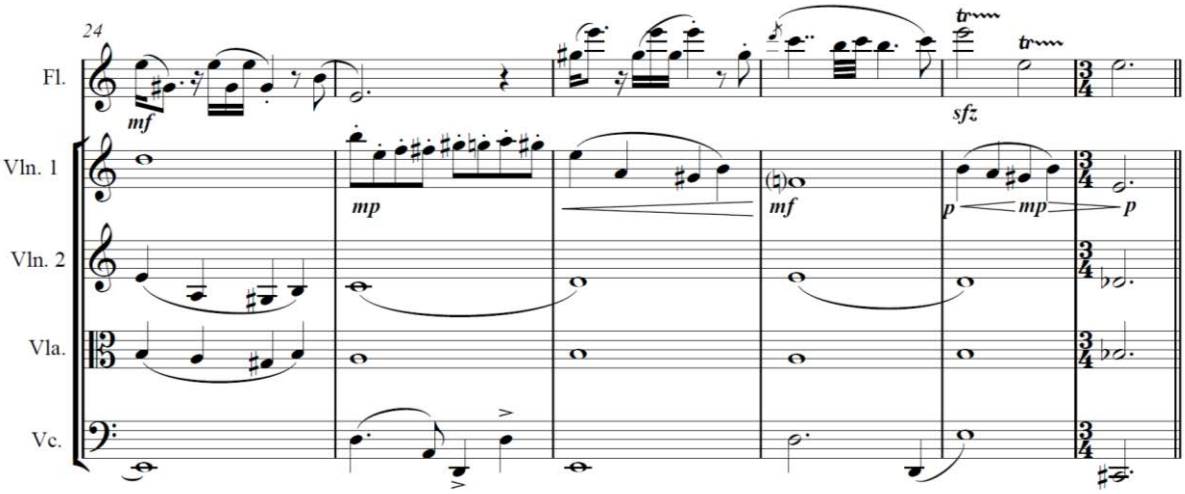
Example 5.24: The altered motif of the flute in bars 22-28.

To assist the melody line, the strings predominantly play long-held notes that are at times interrupted by a group of four crotchets that passes on from one string instrument to the next. Though the arrangement of the crotchet notes varies, they still can be identified by their common arched contour. Amidst this recurring pattern, in bars 16-18, the strings perform *marcato*, *tenuto* and *staccato* crotchets and minims, separated by rests, as a reminder of the rhythmic motif of the journey (Ex. 5.25).



Example 5.25: Bars 14-18 from *Gelsomina II*.

Later on, the occasional *staccato* quaver notes in the first violin help to make the music more vibrant, while the changes between the *arco* and *pizzicato* techniques in the viola and cello create more colourful sounds. Towards the end of the section (Ex. 5.26), long trills that come after the last motif of the flute prolong the music and create suspense. The general mood of the first section is then suddenly opposed by the dissonance of the chord that follows. With this final chord, the time signature is changed to 3/4, in preparation for the next section. The new time signature and the sharply contrasting chord separate section A from the one that follows, and the disparity between these two sections correlates to the announcement of a different message.

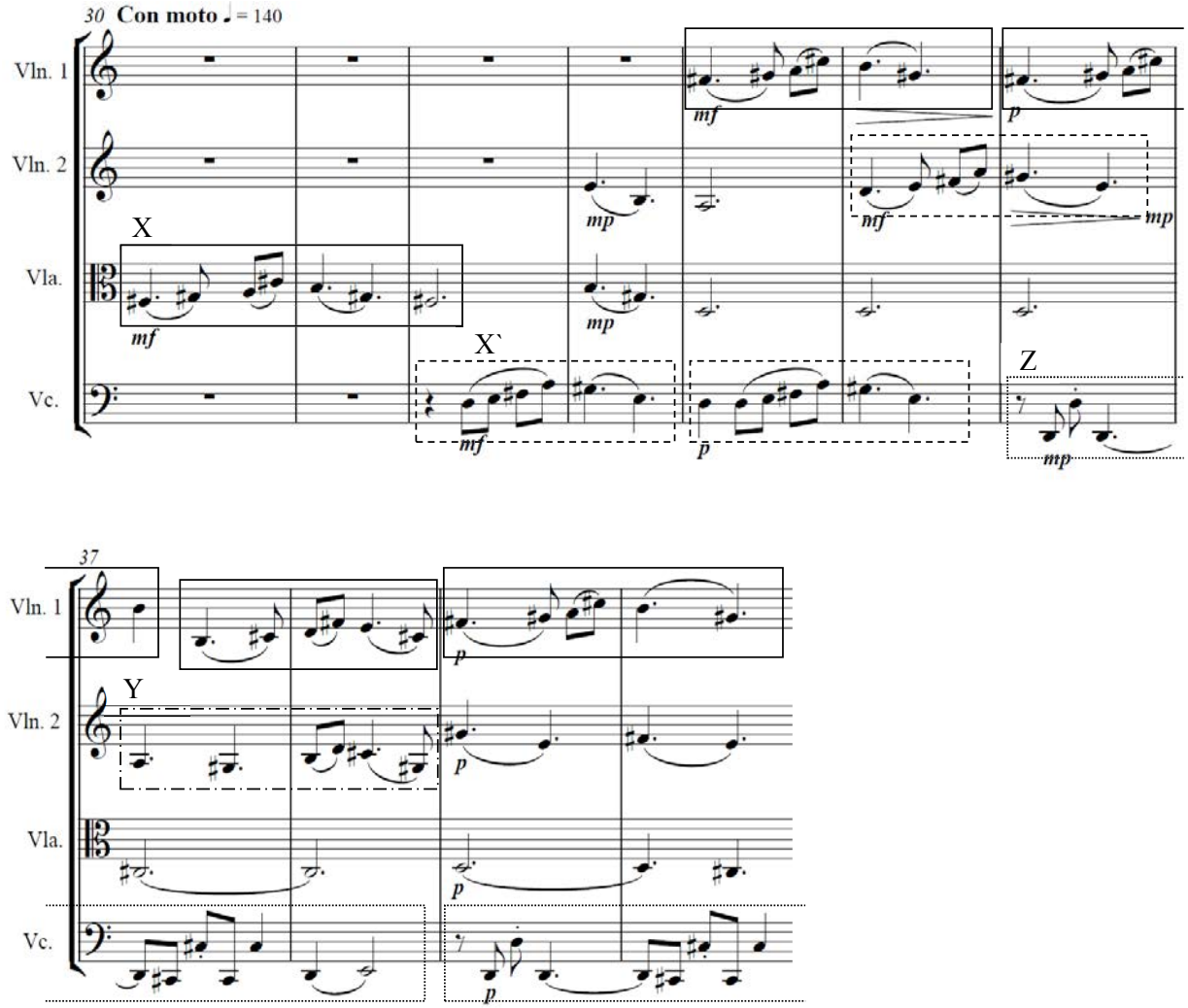


Example 5.26: The last bars of section A in *Gelsomina II*.

Section B

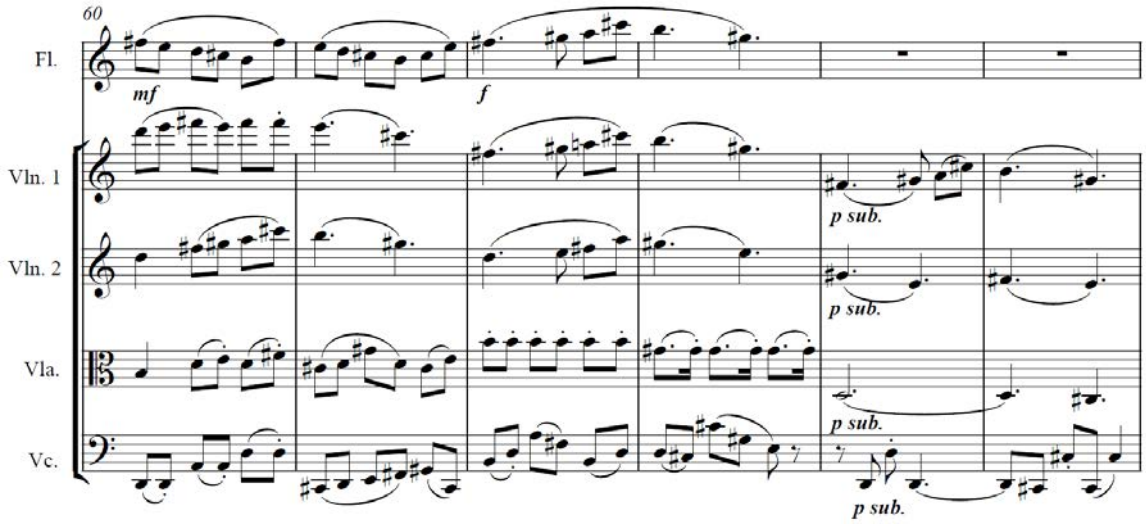
The sudden change to a contrasting musical idea in the second section indicates that in *Gelsomina II* there are more clear-cut boundaries between the sections than in *Gelsomina I*. In section B, the lyrical nature of the piece is at its climax. A few motifs that are constantly repeated and imitated come together to produce a composite musical structure. As opposed to the preceding section, the strings now take a leading role.

At the very beginning of section B (Ex. 5.27), the viola presents the leading melodic motif (X) and then it hands it over to the first violin. Since it is first heard unaccompanied, this musical idea immediately makes a considerable impact. The violin then forms a chain with this motif that incessantly recurs in different octaves, or is occasionally transposed or altered. Following the first entry of the viola, a variation of the same motif (X`), with some changes in interval sizes and a slightly altered rhythm, is heard on the cello. In a similar way, the motif played by the cello is then continued by the second violin. Shortly after, the latter breaks the pattern by inserting varying melodic phrases, which however are still closely related to the central motif (Y). The basic structure of the different phrases remains the same but the minor changes make the music more interesting. In general, the violins are entrusted with imitative melodies that are all linked together due to their common features. On the other hand, even though the viola and the cello introduce the motifs that are later developed by the upper strings, after that, they both present a divergent melody. The cello sticks to a musical idea that mainly involves octave leaps (Z). However, the viola remains more free, playing long notes and occasional quaver rhythmic phrases. The interweaving of these multiple melodic fragments, which pervades the whole section, yields a rich texture.



Example 5.27: Bars 30-40, showing the different musical ideas used in section B.

At bar 51, the string instruments, except for the cello, deviate from the imitative melodic motifs, and prepare for the return of the flute, after its long absence. Unlike in its previous entries, the flute here is treated equivalently to the other instruments (Ex. 5.28). In fact, it participates in the imitative progressions, together with the strings, and at times moves in parallel octaves with the violins. Furthermore, in bars 60-61, the high notes on the first violin veil the presence of the flute. Owing to the entry of the wind instrument, the original motif (X) that had earlier dominated the melodic line of the first violin now also permeates the parts of the flute and the lower violin. In bar 64, the intensity of the melodies fades quickly. Yet, the music escalates again to *forte* by the end of the subsection, which is marked by the elongated notes that are released after the second beat in bar 74. The third bear then marks a fresh onset.

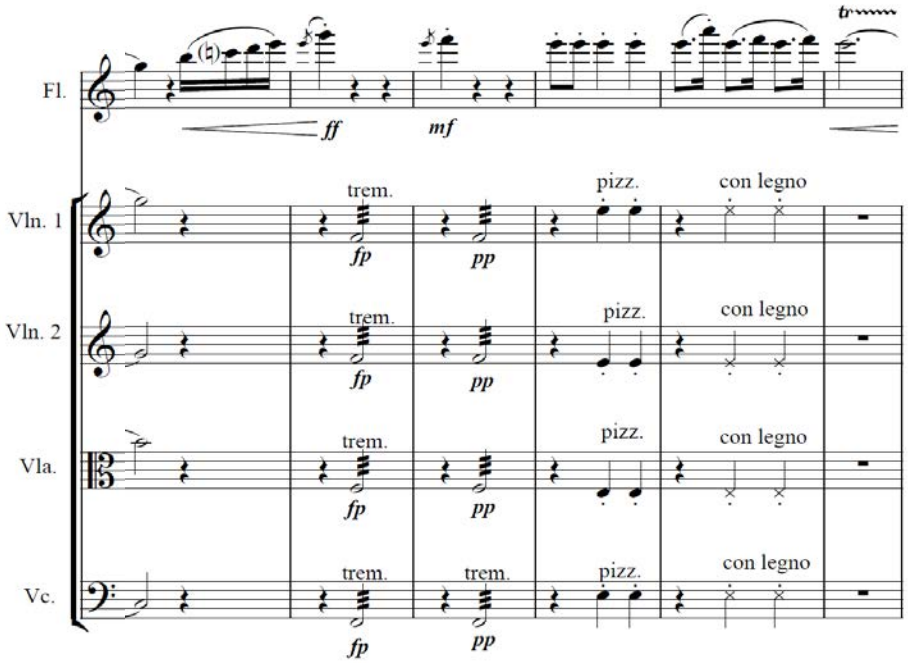


Example 5.28: *Gelsomina II*, bars 60-65.

This imitative passage has an abrupt ending, like several other motifs or musical materials presented in the piece. Vella purposefully interrupts these passages to present new material in order to reflect the unsettled lives of the travelling characters of *La Strada.*[24] Like the protagonists who find themselves in unforeseen situations as they go from one place to the next, and do not reach a safe shelter, the numerous motifs in *Gelsomina* are heard over a few bars and quickly make way for new material to be introduced.

From bar 74, the flute regains its prominence when it performs a melody of high-pitched notes that ends with the piercing sound of a long trill, which gradually increases in volume and diminishes again into nothingness, after reaching the climax. To accompany the flute, the string quartet plays in unison, with a soft sound. Even when the strings' parts depend only on a couple of pitches, as in bars 75-78, the sudden changes in the bowing techniques create contrasting timbres. The considerable disparity between the flute and the strings is not only related to their textures, but also to the different emotions that they attempt to convey (Ex. 5.29). While the flute starts off with a tuneful line, the *tremolo*, the *pizzicato*, and the percussive sound of the *con legno* strokes suggest an anxious mood.

[24] Zammit, 'Towards a Notion of Cultural Soundscape', 72.



Example 5.29: The colourful timbres created by the instruments, in bars 74-79.

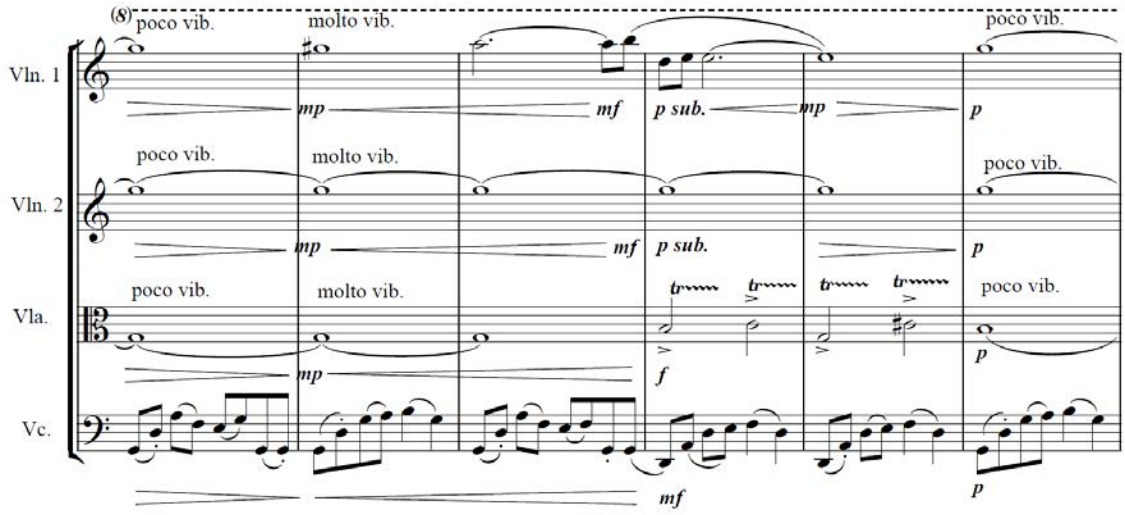
In the last bars of this intriguing section, a common motif that is mirrored in all the string instruments brings about an apprehensive sensation. The conflict created between the flute and the string quartet is reminiscent of the conflicting forces of comedy and tragedy outlined in the film. The coexistence of the two forces brings about a continuous tension that builds up throughout the movie. As already indicated in this commentary, the narrativity of the musical piece does not rely on the precise mapping of the plot presented in *La Strada*, but is more strongly shaped by musically-created expressive states that are similar to those evoked by Fellini's film. The film and the chamber work project similar messages, but because of the diverse characteristics and potentials of the two art forms, they use different methods to manifest them. Almén refers to this kind of approach as the '*sibling model*, in which the two media [the musical narrative and the literary narrative] share a common foundation but varying manifestations.'[25] The author is here referring to a written narrative only, but the same principle can be comfortably adapted to the film narrative and actions of *La Strada* and Vella's musical narrative.

[25] Almén, 'Narrative Archetypes', 3.

Section C

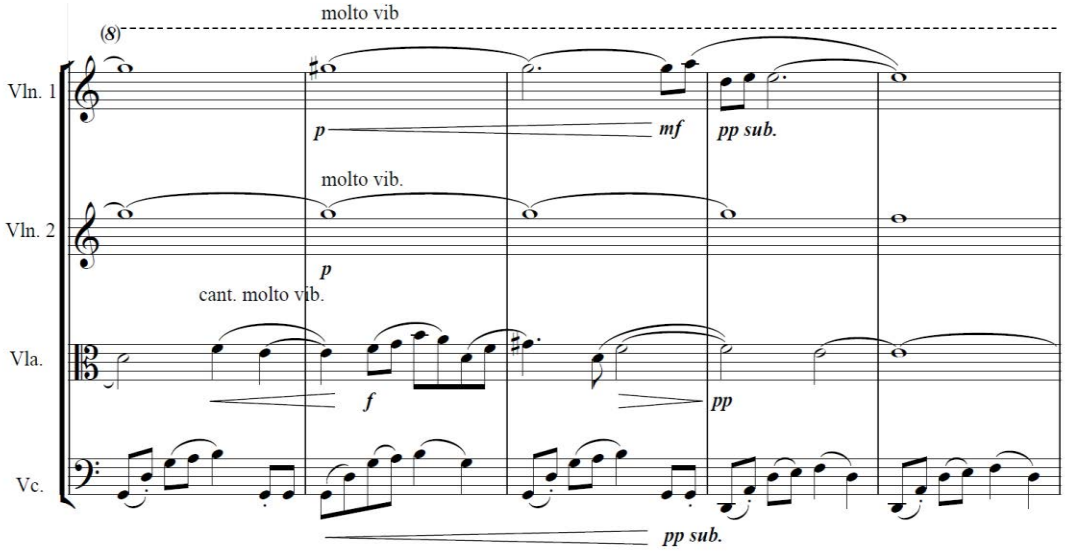
The motoric accompaniment on the cello, together with pedalled G notes on the remaining strings, set off the weird and mysterious mood of this section (Ex. 5.30). This brings to mind the appalling events in *La Strada* that sooner or later lead to the physical, psychological or emotional demise of the main protagonists. The shrill voice of the first violin, as a representation of a cry for help, turns into a choked scream when, at bars 85-87, the high-pitched G rises chromatically to G♯ and A. With an oscillating *vibrato* on the sustained notes, the assembled accented trills, and the sudden changes in dynamics, the expressive nature of the music is intensified.

Throughout the piece, Vella personifies the instruments such that through their music she can express the emotive aspects of the protagonists and the ambience in *La Strada*. Besides, altered motifs and similar techniques create different emotional tones when they are placed in different parts of the piece. For example, a widely used musical feature in *Gelsomina* is chromaticism. When examined in more detail, it is clear that this technique conveys different meanings according to the context in which it is used. For instance, while the half-tone steps here express a chilling tone, they produce a more vivid sound when used in the circus theme, in *Gelsomina I*, section D (see Ex. 5.15). Thus, the technical and emotional properties of music both contribute to the expressiveness of a musical narrative.



Example 5.30: The strings in bars 85-90.

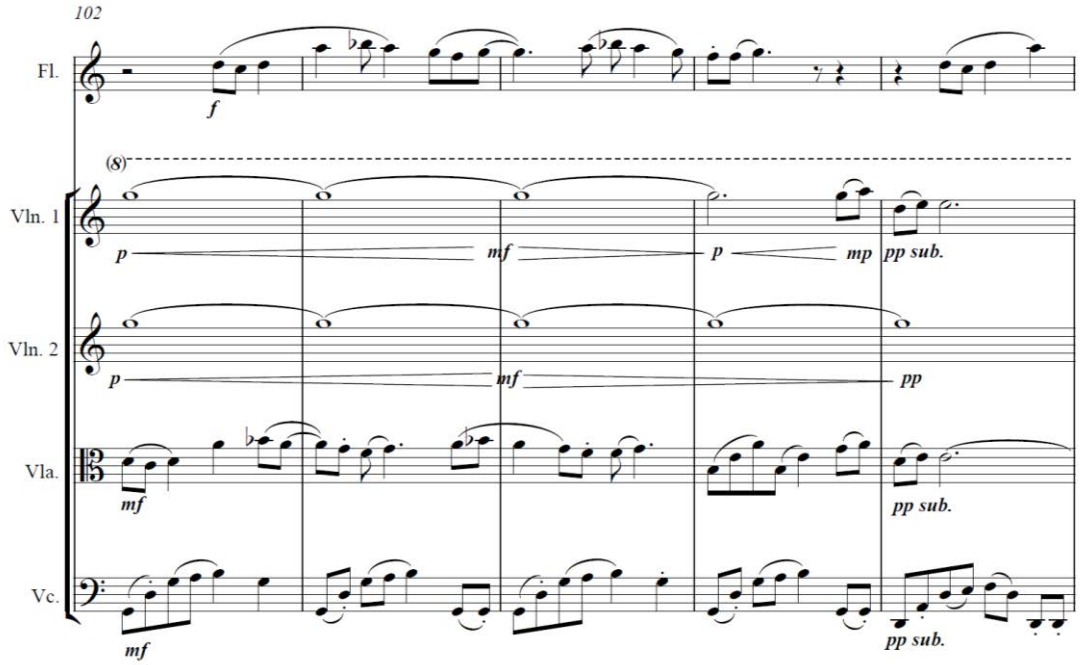
More sonorous colouristic effects blend in as the alto flute joins the string quartet in bar 90, this instrument being employed up to the end of section C. The darker timbre produced by its lower register contributes to the dark mood that pervades the section. In her own commentary on this chamber work, Vella explains that the alternation between flute and alto flute portrays two contrasting aspects in Gelsomina, her childish innocence and her cruel fate.[26] Even though the tessitura of the accompanying first violin is high, the dynamics are softer to ensure that its penetrating sound does not overshadow the deep tone of the alto flute. The clashing pitches (G-G♯) between the strings, and the ambiguous bimodal elements that are introduced by the cello (G major - D minor) help to convey a sense of tonal ambiguity and create tension (Ex. 5.31), and the entry of the alto flute with its darker tone quality represents the sinister connotations brought about by the tragic storyline of the movie.[27] To intensify the tragic aspect of the narrative, Vella uses an opposition of minor and major keys. For, as Klein states, 'in music a minor key has no power to signify the tragic except within a field of difference that opposes it to a major key'.[28] The shift from the cheerful melodies of the flute to the duller motifs of the alto flute, meanwhile allude to the road from innocence to affliction, mostly observed in Gelsomina's experience.



Example 5.31: The string instruments in bars 91-95.

[26] Zammit, 'Towards a Notion of Cultural Soundscape', 74.
[27] Ibid., 77.
[28] Michael Klein, 'Chopin's Fourth Ballade as Musical Narrative', *Music Theory Spectrum* 26/1 (2004), 27.

The alto flute line consists of detached, though still very much related, phrases. The same first three beats, which are sometimes performed in different octaves, repeatedly turn up at the beginning of almost every phrase, and are followed by slightly varying rhythms and pitches. Thus, like the violoncello which has a semi-ostinato character, the alto flute also remains consistent in its material. As in the previous section, the viola part is less restricted. From bar 91, the sustained notes are replaced by a more ornate line that sets the viola apart from the other instruments. Then, in bars 102-104, it predicts the melody of the alto flute, which the latter imitates two beats later (Ex. 5.32).



Example 5.32: The alto flute and string quartet in *Gelsomina II*, bars 102-106.

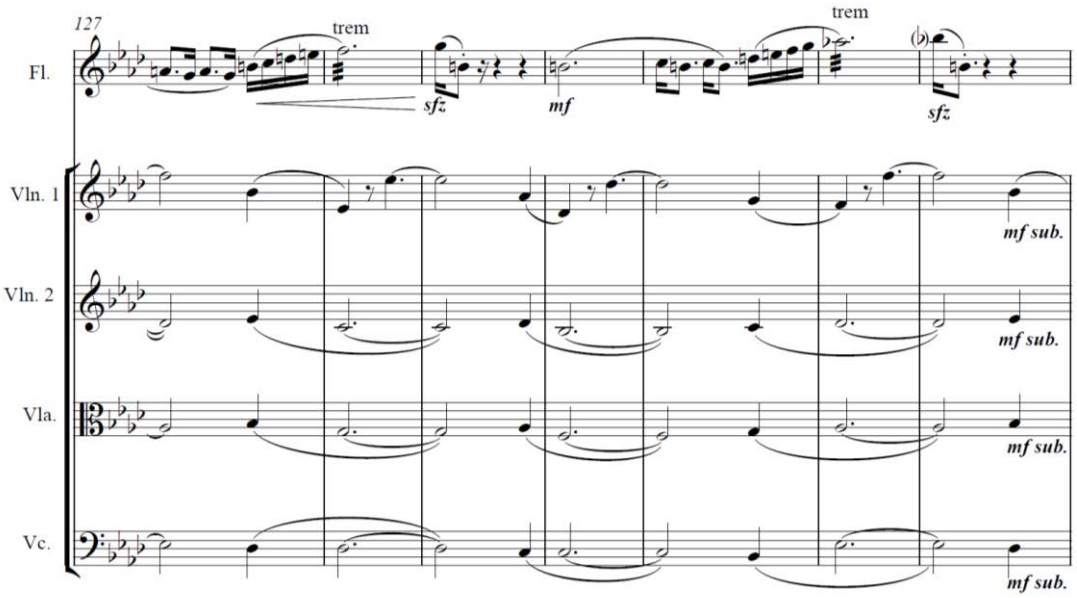
Towards the end of this section, the metre becomes unstable. In bar 113, it changes from simple quadruple to simple duple. Once more, the next bar sees another time signature change, with three beats per bar. This metre regulates the closing bars of section C, which echo the same musical material presented in the last four bars of the previous section. Thus, these bars become the link between two sections and also the indication of a shift in mood.

Section D

The turning point of the plot in *La Strada* is perhaps musically portrayed in this last section of *Gelsomina II.* After the incident that caused the death of the Fool, Gelsomina becomes mentally disturbed. Her spirited childishness dies away and she becomes inconsolable. Zampanò, tired of her melancholy and unable to deal with his guilt, feels that he cannot live with her any more, and decides to depart, leaving her on the street.

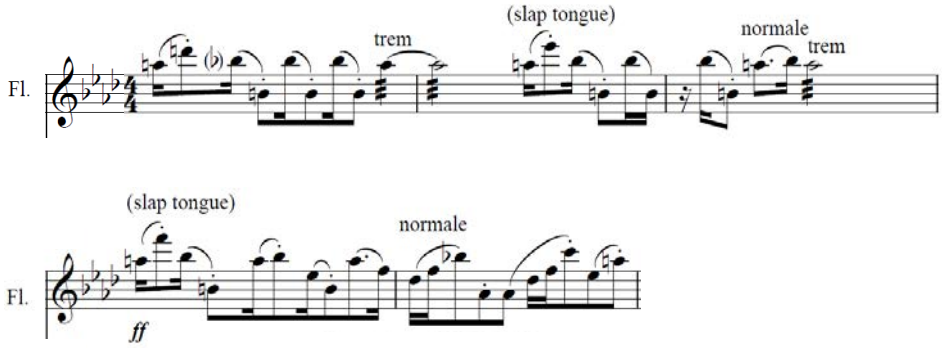
The beginning of this longer section, at bar 118, is marked by a change of the key signature to A♭ major, the sudden softening of the dynamic levels to *pianissimo*, and new rhythmic ideas. The couple of cycling chords that are played slowly and quietly on the strings set the mood of the gloomy and hostile aura that surrounds the protagonists after the death of the innocent acrobat, who earlier in the movie comforted Gelsomina with his words and tried to instil in her a sense of self-worth. The lower three strings stick to the same rhythmic arrangement of crotchets, minims and dotted notes. Superimposed upon them is the rhythm of the first violin, which is slightly more fragmented. These constant patterns are interrupted by more rapid notes in the cello, a few bars before the flute is heard again. After an increase in volume, once more, the accompaniment of the strings instantly becomes very soft to give precedence to the flute.

The irregular line of the wind instrument, which returns from alto flute to flute, is heard alongside the almost hypnotic repetitive patterns of the strings (Ex. 5.33). In bar 126, the musical direction *piano ansioso* that comes with the first note of the flute suggest the emotional state of Gelsomina. To detach itself further from the music of the other instruments, the pitches in the flute part are naturalized, except for some infrequent chromatically altered pitches, such that this is another passage of music in two simultaneous keys. The first motif of the flute in bars 126-129 is predominantly in its lower register, and therefore produces a weaker sound. To make up for this, more dynamic movement is added in order to emphasize the flute part. The music gradually increases in loudness as the pitches ascend, and lead to a *tremolo* on F, which precedes *sforzando* attacks on quaver notes. This motif is then repeated a third above. Meanwhile, the harmonic accompaniment starts to fluctuate.



Example 5.33: The contrasting textures of the flute and the strings in bars 127-133.

In bar 135, the metre changes to 4/4, which indicates the beginning of new musical material for the wind instrument (Ex. 5.34). The flute line has a disjunct contour, with frequent wide intervals, which nonetheless do not exceed an octave. As the notes on the flute alternate between low and higher registers, the flute's timbre varies. Moreover, the *slap tongue* technique is used to produce a percussive, rough sound, and vary the tone colours in this passage.

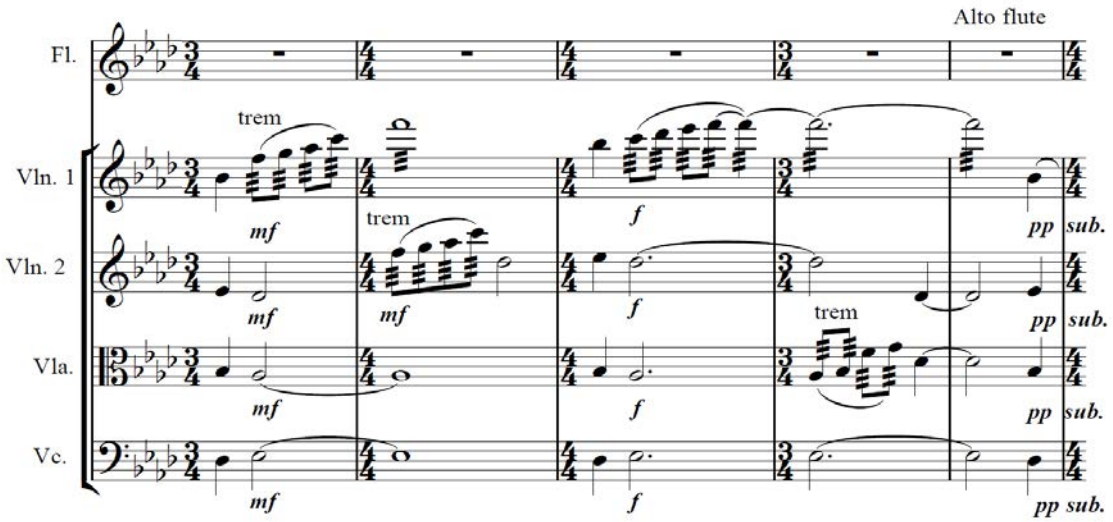


Example 5.34: The flute part in bars 135-139.

In bars 135-139, the notes in the string instruments are elongated further and the dynamic levels change rapidly to create a more dramatic impact. Even if new material is continuously being presented, to set the different moods that relate the musical piece to the movie, there are still common features that combine the distinct sections of the chamber work. The rhythm of a

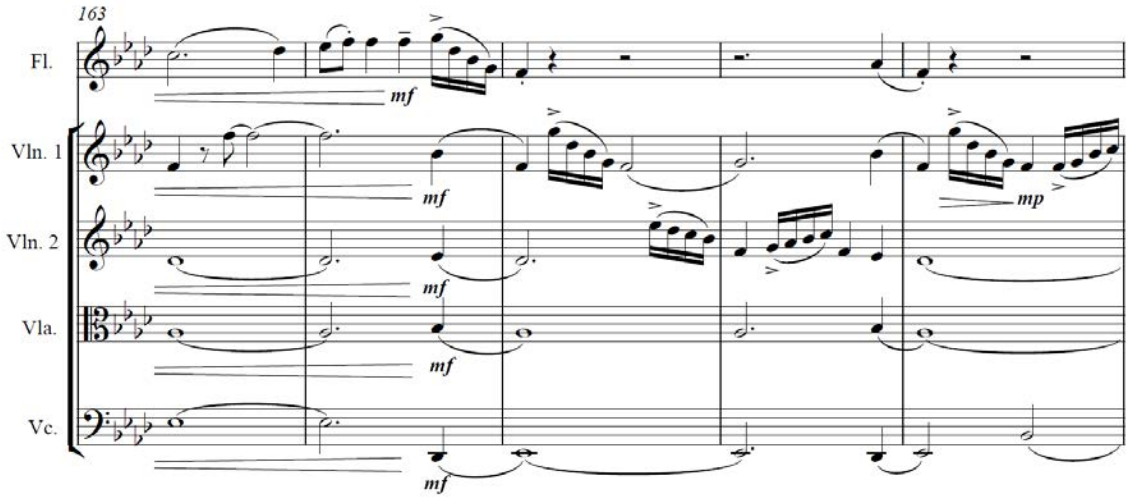
semiquaver, quaver and semiquaver, which is used here in the material presented by the flute, links this passage to section B in *Gelsomina I*, where it was first used (see Ex. 5.7).

After the short passage in simple quadruple time, the alternating metres in quick succession add to the ambiguity of the music. This also effects the stable rhythmic patterns in the string instruments. Together with the long notes, in bars 144-148 (Ex. 5.35), the main characteristic in the music of the strings is the concentrated *tremolos* on ascending quavers. The vibrating notes heighten the affective tension of the passage. The unsettled music possibly corresponds to the turbulent feelings of Gelsomina and Zampanò that are brought about by the precarious situations that they encounter on their life's journey.



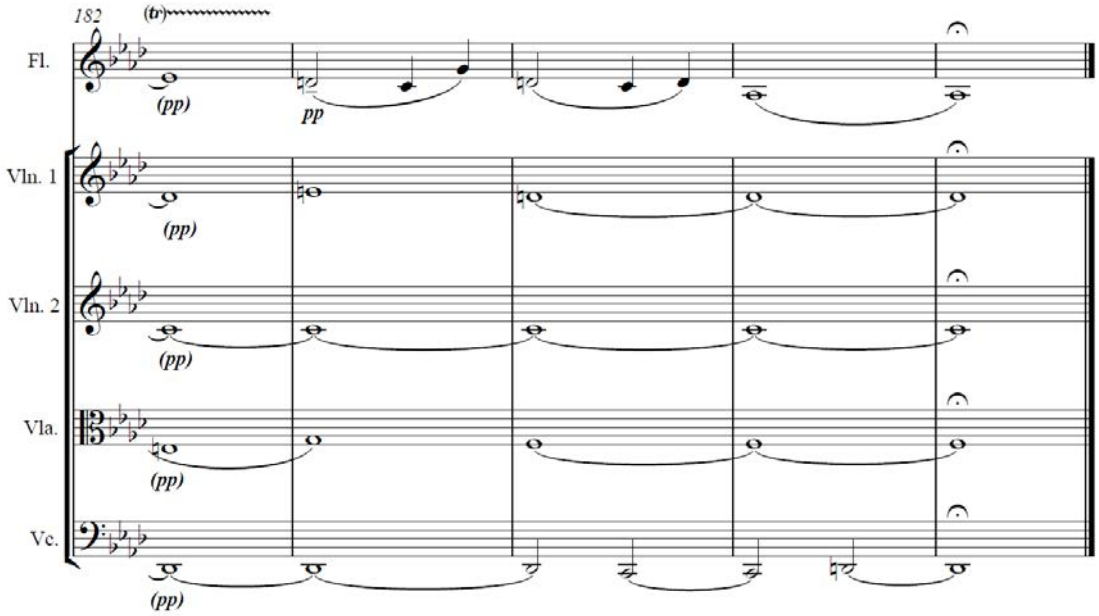
Example 5.35: *Gelsomina II*, bars 144-148.

In the subsection marked *misterioso* the flute is once more required to change to alto flute. The melody line on the alto flute, assisted by a light texture on the strings, produces music that is more serene. Though the textures of the alto flute and the strings are different, the instruments occasionally share the same material, such that the melodic line of the alto flute extends itself across the violins. The falling and rising movement that starts at bar 164 in the alto flute part and continues in the violins, combines the three instruments (Ex. 5.36). The undulating shape of the music with pitches that undecidedly go up or down suggest feelings of restlessness and panic.



Example 5.36: The descending and ascending movement in bars 163-167.

Descending progressions, often comprising adjacent pitches, continue to prevail in all the instruments, until at bar 181, very soft dynamics, along with the performance direction *morendo fino alla fine*, lead the piece to a smooth closure (Ex. 5.37). The alto flute part slows down and the strings perform long notes that are scarcely changed. In the last bars, the music that narrates the story line of *La Strada* and the emotive state of the protagonist of the film, expresses desolate feelings, after the intricate journey of life.



Example 5.37: The closing bars in *Gelsomina II.*

In *Gelsomina*, Vella deals with narrativity in its different dimensions. The title of the piece, which is the name of the leading female movie character of *La Strada*, is already suggestive and invites listeners to read the music as a narrative with links to the story and the message of the movie. The instruments are given particular expressive characters such that they can be interpreted as protagonists. Thus, though it lacks the lyrics or imagery that would be expected in a literary or dramatic work, the musical piece has its own actors. Motifs as well as performance techniques play an important role in bringing out this aspect. At certain points, the music can be interpreted as alluding to particular scenes from the film, but it generally depicts major themes that arise in *La Strada*, such as the idea of a journey as a metaphor for life, the imagery of the circuses, and the conflicting themes of comedy and tragedy. More directly, the music intends to trigger in its listeners the same emotions experienced by the viewers of the film. Ultimately, *Gelsomina* is an assortment of musical aspects translated into a narrative that is very loyal to the film, yet can be appreciated for its own sake.

What chiefly distinguishes this quintet from the three selected chamber works composed by the pre-independence generation, is the complete avoidance of atonality. Where Joseph Vella, in *Segments No. 1*, resorts to Western historical styles and tonal forms via triads and pitch centrality, he uses these amid a twelve-note serial technique. Véronique Vella is much more tied to tonal features. This does not mean, though, that in *Gelsomina* the music modulates from one well-defined key to another, instead it regularly includes tonal ambiguity and multiplicity. The progression from clarity to ambiguity and vice versa is one of those compositional characteristics that creates the contrasting emotions that the narrative piece attempts to convey.

In terms of style, even if Véronique Vella's piece and Grech's duet are very different in their compositional techniques and musical sound, the two works share similarities with regards to their dramatic quality. As in *Gelsomina*, the title of Grech's chamber work, *Five Events*, also tends to direct listeners towards interpreting the piece in terms of dramatic scenes, and presents the instruments as protagonists that sometimes come together in dialogue.

Véronique Vella is similar to the other composers regarding links to the European musical world. In the selection of Maltese works analysed so far, Camilleri thus remains the only composer who extends his influences to include non-European musical features. Unlike Camilleri's *Silent Spaces*, *Gelsomina* lacks any associations with purely Maltese characteristics, even though in other compositions Vella adopts an approach that captures local

features. In this quintet, Vella's music instead points to the strong impact of Italian culture on Maltese music and other art forms. While in earlier centuries, the Italian influence on music was mostly related to the educational formation of musicians and the compositional style of liturgical works and secular large-scale works, especially operas, Vella here merges the world of the film industry in mid-twentieth-century Italy with contemporary music, to create an expressive narrative piece.

Ġgantija

Mariella Cassar Cordina

6.1 Introduction

Mariella Cassar Cordina's project related to Ġgantija Temples, a prehistoric site in Xagħra, Gozo, consists of two works both bearing the name of the megalithic complex: *Ġgantija 2013* and *Ġgantija II*. These cultural sites, which are a symbol of the distinctive precolonial distinctive heritage of the Maltese nation, are also the subject of Camilleri's *Silent Spaces.* Through music, the works by Camilleri and Cassar Cordina would seem to seek to induce a national sentiment by bringing to life historical and mythical connotations related to the temples. Malta is quite well-known for its several prehistoric monumental buildings, but Cassar Cordina undoubtedly feels that she can relate best to this particular place that is situated in the island of her birth. *Ġgantija 2013* is an interdisciplinary work embracing music, visual art and literature, specifically prepared to be performed at the temples. The composer worked on this project in collaboration with the Maltese visual artist Victor Agius, who prepared artistic installations using mixed media to be exhibited on site. The music is scored for soprano, piano, percussion, didgeridoo, synthesizer, two violins and violoncello. Some of the musical instruments were exclusively built to be used for this composition. The project was premiered on 21 June 2013. On the day, visitors could listen to the music as they walked through the prehistoric temples. The following year, on 6 August, the electro-acoustic musical work *Ġgantija II* was performed for the first time at St James Cavalier, Centre for Creativity, in Valletta, Malta. Written for piano four-hands, violoncello and narrator, this work combines acoustic and electronic sounds as a means to show that through this work, the traditional past and the contemporary can be brought closer to each other. Both compositions are based on literary works by Immanuel Mifsud, an acclaimed contemporary Maltese writer of poetry and prose.

These were not Cassar Cordina's first musical works to be influenced by the culture of Malta's smaller sister island and the megalithic temples that enrich its history. *Gaudos*, which refers to an ancient Greek name for Gozo, was written in 2008 for an ensemble of two violins, violoncello and accordion. In a commentary on this work Cassar Cordina explains how she uses her personal musical language to reinvent themes that allude to Maltese traditional music, in order to express her empathy for the ancient past and the simple way of life of the Gozitan

people.[1] This simplicity is also exhibited in the majority of musical works by Cassar Cordina that give preference to minimalistic techniques, such as in her chamber works *Colpi d'Armonia* (2009) and *Reflections* (2009), and her piece for string orchestra entitled *Waiting* (2011). In *Ġgantija 2013* and *Ġgantija II*, the use of limited musical material and regular rhythmic structures help to give more prominence to the text and ensure that it is intelligible. Also, this is a suitable technique to reflect the characteristics of the Neolithic temples, above all the static ambience, the plainness, the empty spaces, the stillness and the silence that prevail in these sites.

It might seem questionable at first whether these two works by Cassar Cordina can be considered as belonging to the chamber music repertoire. In fact, the composer challenges the generally accepted idea of what this genre entails. Christina Bashford defines the 'pure' genre of chamber music as:

> music to be performed for its own sake and enjoyment of its players, in private residences (usually in rooms of limited size), perhaps in the presence of a few listeners, perhaps not.[2]

The music for the Ġgantija project, especially the first work, is in all likelihood not intended to be the focal point of the audiences' listening attention, but rather to provide a sonic background, as discussed later on. Then again, it can still yield a reward to close listeners who respond to the sounds others miss. With regards to location, *Ġgantija 2013* was written to be performed in a specific open space, whereas chamber music was originally meant to take place in the intimacy of private households. Nevertheless, the megalithic places, which are far from rooms with a limited area, still evoke a feeling of privacy and even isolation, and presumably, in the prehistoric era, they used to serve as spaces for community gatherings or other social and religious events. The second piece, *Ġgantija II*, which is aimed to be presented to a smaller group of audience in an enclosed space, is more loyal to the original idea of chamber music for intimate locations. In both works, the music is scored for a small number of instruments, but also follows twentieth-century tendencies in chamber music. Cassar Cordina uses instruments from the percussion family, incorporates new means of sound production, such as the synthesizer and electronically generated sounds, and combines music with literature. Just like

[1] Mariella Cassar, 'Creative Response to Maltese Culture and Identity: Case Study and Portfolio of Compositions' (Ph.D. diss., University of Plymouth, UK, 2014), 98.

[2] Christina Bashford, 'The String Quartet and Society', in *The Cambridge Companion to the String Quartet*, edited by Robin Stowell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 3.

in any other chamber performance, the independent musicians and the voice need to communicate closely together, without being directed by a conductor. The function of this music is to help the audience feel or experience a sensation similar to that which arises from the ambience of the prehistoric temples and perhaps creates a sense of closeness even though they are visiting a large space. Thus, though this musical project often contrasts with the original definition of chamber music as used in earlier centuries, its scoring, function and location can comfortably classify it as a modern version of chamber music.

6.2 Ġgantija 2013

As noted above, the piece was written to be performed in a particular open space, the Ġgantija Temples, and aimed to accompany passers-by during their visit to the site. To fulfil these purposes, the composer uses a style in which the music is made up of a collage of musical fragments rather than musical ideas that unfold to reach a climax. Yet, similar compositional features that appear from time to time create a sense of coherence. Since there is no progression towards a focus, the audience does not necessarily need to listen to the piece from its beginning to the end in order to interpret and appreciate the musical message.

This work by Cassar Cordina can be described as a form of ambient music, whose emphasis is directed towards creating the desired mood and producing an atmosphere rather than using clearly identifiable traditional musical structures. Ambient music is often regarded as being anticipated by Erik Satie, when he came up with the innovative form of *musique d'ameublement* or furniture music,[3] performed only once to an audience in 1920. These pieces are not intended to be listened to, but to function as a decorative sonic backdrop while everyday life continues uninterruptedly. In the 1970s, Brian Eno (b. 1948) developed this idea with a series of compositions consisting of a collage of artificial and natural sounds, to fulfil a similar purpose. Eno's ambient music is designed to become part of the acoustic environment of a particular location, without imposing its presence.[4] Unlike in a concert hall, there is no aural point of focus that requires attention, but the music serves as a background with no clear temporal boundaries, which quickly immerses the listeners into a sonic space. According to Eno,

> Ambient music must be able to accommodate many levels of musical attention without enforcing one in particular; it must be as ignorable as it is interesting.[5]

Cassar Cordina has also perhaps adopted Eno's principle to let the mood of a particular soundscape determine the style and tone of her musical work. The composer tries to recall the desires of the ancient prehistoric people by incorporating music with percussive instruments to create sounds that might have existed in the temples, and mixes this with contemporary musical styles produces by string instruments and electronic sounds. The fragmented phrases or

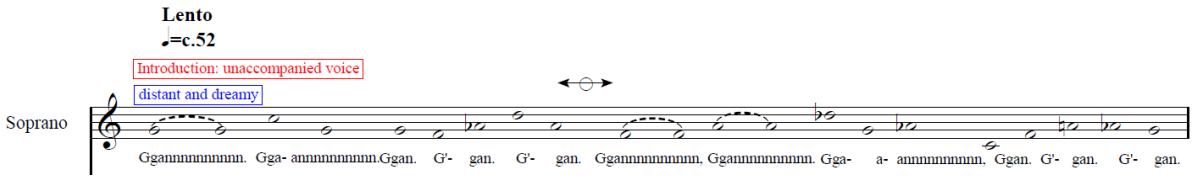
[3] Nick Collins, Margaret Schedel, and Scott Wilson, *Electronic Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 137.

[4] Eric Tamm, *Brian Eno: His Music and the Vertical Color of Sound*, rev. ed. (Boston: Da Capo Press, 1995), 54.

[5] David Rothenberg and Marta Ulvaeus, eds. *Music Culture: The Book of Music and Nature - An Anthology of Sounds, Words, Thoughts (2)* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2013), 141.

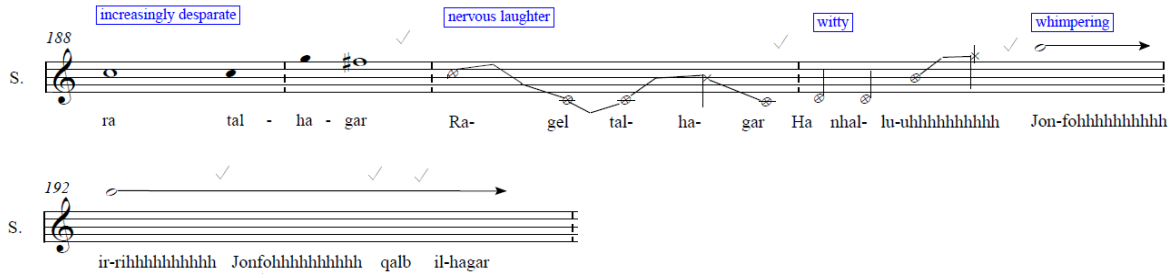
syllables sung by the voice, together with the minimalistic approach, suggest that Cassar Cordina intended to create attractive sounds, but at the same time was well aware that the music needed to be interruptible, and able to accommodate any interfering noises produced by the visitors. The overall musical form for the interdisciplinary project implies an amount of freedom not only on the part of the musicians who sometimes have to improvise, but also because it is formally open to the listener's interpretation. Given that in ambient music the emphasis is on the sound and on establishing a pervasive atmosphere, the musical form then depends on the listener's own creation of an aural structure based on the superimposed layers of sounds designed by the notated acoustic music and electronically generated sounds, and the natural soundscape of a prehistoric environment.

Ġgantija 2013 is introduced by an accompanied soprano voice singing a vocal line in a free unmeasured rhythm (Ex. 6.1). The singer repeatedly pronounces the first syllable of the word Ġgantija in a gasping voice and produces different tone colours sometimes even on the same pitch. The repetition of the same syllable 'Ġgan' automatically creates regular pauses that replace the missing bar lines, and at times makes the vocal line sound disconnected.



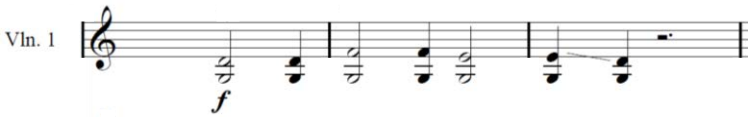
Example 6.1: The vocal line that introduces *Ġgantija 2013*.

The sung text in this work mainly focuses on two words, 'ħaġar' [stones] and 'Ġgantija' [female giant], and often accentuates consonants to create a strong harsh sound (Ex. 6.2). Throughout the piece, whenever the voice is used, the given pitches are never assigned to a rhythm, thus, the soprano is allowed to improvise within the guidelines indicated by the composer. A number of symbols invented by Cassar Cordina are added to the vocal part to direct the singer with clear instructions about how to produce the desired tone quality.



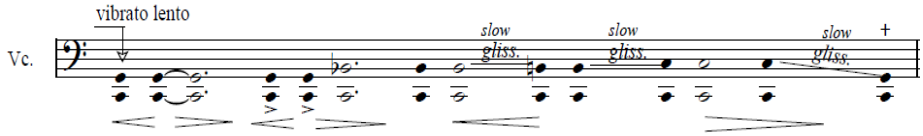
Example 6.2: The voice part in bars 188-192 with emphasis on the consonants, and symbolic and worded instructions for the singer.

One of the main characteristics in the string instrument parts is that of having an open string tone, usually the lowest note in a sequence of dyads, which repeats itself while the other notes are changing. In bars 163-165 (Ex. 6.3), while the note G serves as a pedal note, the upper pitches in the two-note chords form a motif. This recurring musical fragment is generally performed on the first violin or the cello. As the music progresses, the motif appears more clearly and is heard more frequently.

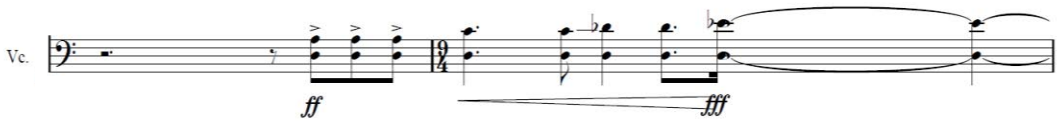


Example 6.3: A pitch motif in the first violin at bars 163-165.

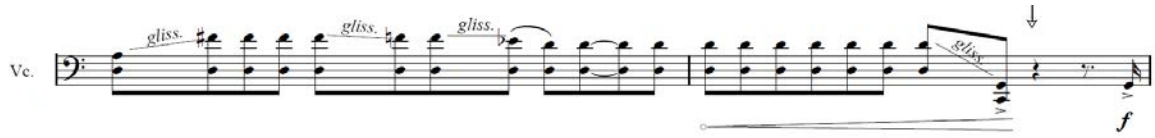
The earliest indication of the motif is heard in the second bar, on the cello, with a tiny difference in the intervals and an added descending glissando over a perfect fourth at the end (Ex. 6.4). When the motif is repeated, the rhythm is often varied, and the direction of the intervals is sometimes changed as well, such that the motif sounds different. However, the reference to the same motif remains still clearly audible due to the common unordered pitch-class intervals 3, 1 and 2 (Exs. 6.5 and 6.6). At other points, more pitches are added to embellish the original musical idea and make it more distinctive. For example, in bars 17-20, the first violin first performs the motif and then faintly restates it with extra notes in between the main pitches D-F-E-D, over the sustained tone G (Ex. 6.7). Though the motif is repeated twice, the interpolations, the variations in dynamics, and the rhythmic and metric modifications produce a new melody.



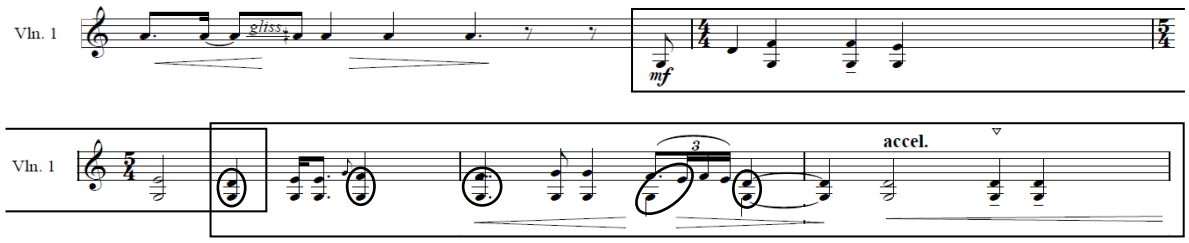
Example 6.4: The motif in the cello at bar 2.



Example 6.5: The motif in the cello at bars 21-22.



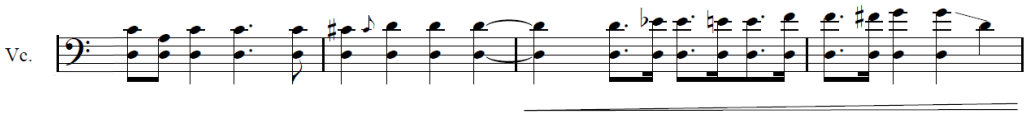
Example 6.6: The motif in the cello at bars 56-57.



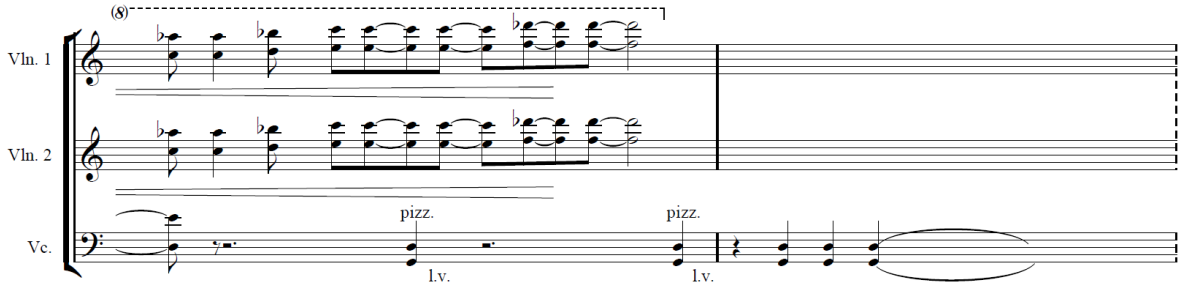
Example 6.7: The first violin part in bars 16-20 showing the motif D-F-E-D with ordered intervals + 3, – 1, – 2 followed by its modified version.

Rising or falling sequences with pitches separated by a semitone or two are quite frequent throughout the piece. Semitone relations are at times found in the voice, such as in bars 68-70 or bars 88-90, but are more common in the violins and cello parts. Another widespread technique for the cello is the use of an open string pedal tone in the bass with a second line that rises such that every note is always at a larger interval from the bass note than the one before it. As in the cello part at bars 239-242, when repeated notes are performed against continuously changing pitches, they create more dissonance and therefore build up tension (Ex. 6.8). The string instrument parts that are mainly built on dyads, apart from frequently using a same bass

note, also work a lot with perfect fifths and major sixths. Parallel doubling at these constant intervals enhances the harmonic content and produce a denser texture (Ex. 6.9).



Example 6.8: The cello part in bars 239-242 showing a common bass note and widening intervals.

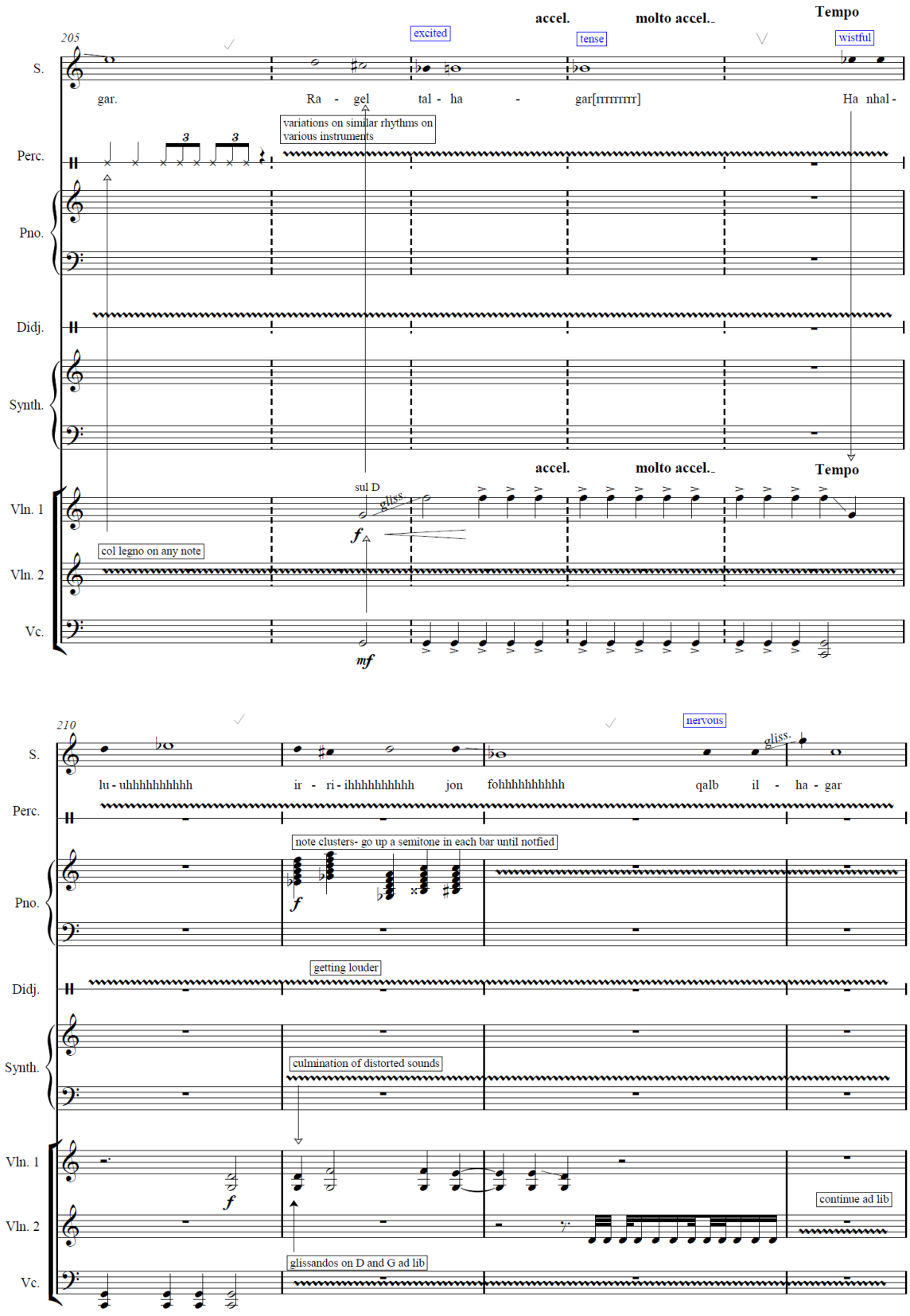


Example 6.9: Bars 23-24 showing a series of major sixth intervals in the violins and perfect fifth dyads in the cello.

The violins and the cello are the main instruments entrusted with pitched music and melodic material. In addition, to enlarge the palette of tone colours, Cassar Cordina exploits a wide range of techniques on these string instruments. The contrasting timbres of the violin and the cello are already a supplement to the music, but the *arco*, *pizzicato*, *col legno*, *glissando*, *vibrato* and *tremolo* techniques generate a variety of further sonorities. A number of unpitched percussion instruments and the didgeridoo then contribute to intensify the rhythmic feeling and build up momentum (Ex. 6.10). The rhythms of the percussion instruments are often based on improvisation. Hence, the piece is constituted by a mixture of pitched and unpitched instruments that join together to perform improvised rhythms against the more stable music of the violins and the cello. The piano then participates with its harmonic and percussive capabilities, usually performing a sequence of chords with equal durations.

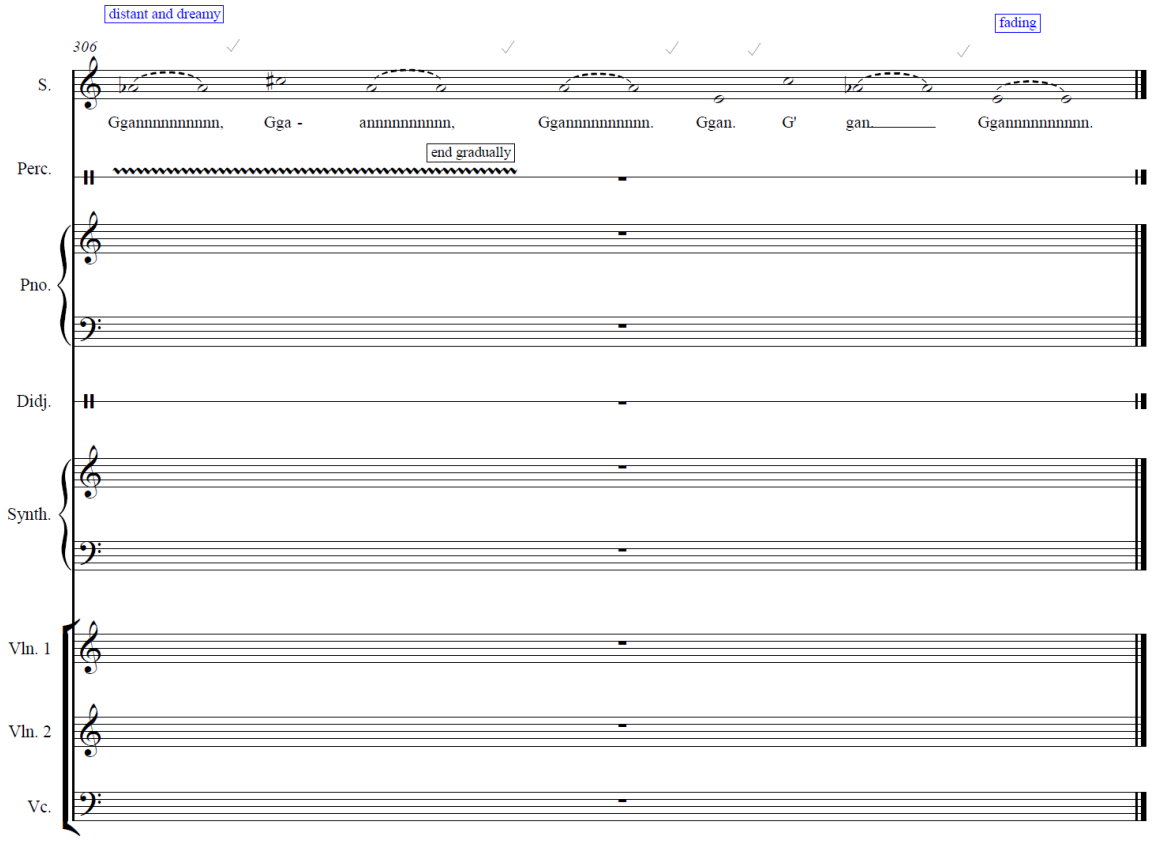
The variations in tone colours and the distinctive timbres of each instrument are of particular interest. Some of the percussive instruments that were specially made from natural raw materials to be used in this work produce sounds that blend perfectly with the ambience of the

site of musical performance. Among the mixture of percussive sounds, there are those created by shakers, drum tapping, random hitting on hollow objects, or vigorous bangs on metal objects. Furthermore, the electronic effects on the synthesizer, including sustained distorted sounds and echoing reverberations make the piece even more intriguing. Altogether, the acoustic sonorities, the expressive vocal sounds and the electronic manipulations often produce an otherworldly, eerie atmosphere, which is then balanced by the more comforting pre-recorded sounds of distant church bells and the thin sound of soft strokes on chimes.



Example 6.10: *Ġgantija 2013*, bars 205-213.

The ending of *Ġgantija 2013* shares similarities with its opening part. The singing voice is first accompanied by a percussive rhythm on various unpitched instruments, which ends gradually, and then is left on its own to perform a line that replicates the first part (Ex. 6.11).



Example 6.11: The last bar in *Ġgantija 2013*.

6.3 Ġgantija II

This second composition from the project related to the Ġgantija Temples is quite different to the first. This is mainly due to the purposes for which the two works were written. While *Ġgantija 2013* was intended to be performed at a specific open-air site to create an atmospheric effect, *Ġgantija II* was written for a concert performance in an enclosed small space. The two works are therefore built on different forms that are appropriate to the characteristics of the performance venues and to the different audiences. *Ġgantija 2013* has the form of ambient music with no subdivisions and is made up of overlapping disparate musical elements with underlying common material that make it sound continuous, while *Ġgantija II* is built upon a more regulated approach with contrasting features that distinguish the sections, until the piece reaches a climax. *Ġgantija II* has a narrative structure and seeks to describe in musical terms the perception of a contemporary audience that looks back in an attempt to understand and bring back to life the experiences of the ancestors in the megalithic temples, as portrayed in Immanuel Mifsud's literary work. A prominent difference between the two pieces is related to the voice parts: one is written for a singing voice while the other is to be recited. However, even though in the second composition, the text is not assigned any musical notes, the directions given to the reciting voice with regards to the tone quality and expression with which the poem should be read are very specific. The correlation between the rhythm of the music and the verses of the poem, the way in which the music expresses the literary text, the contrasting musical features, and the richer musical language that requires more attention from the listeners are all topics that will be pursued in the following analysis of *Ġgantija II*.

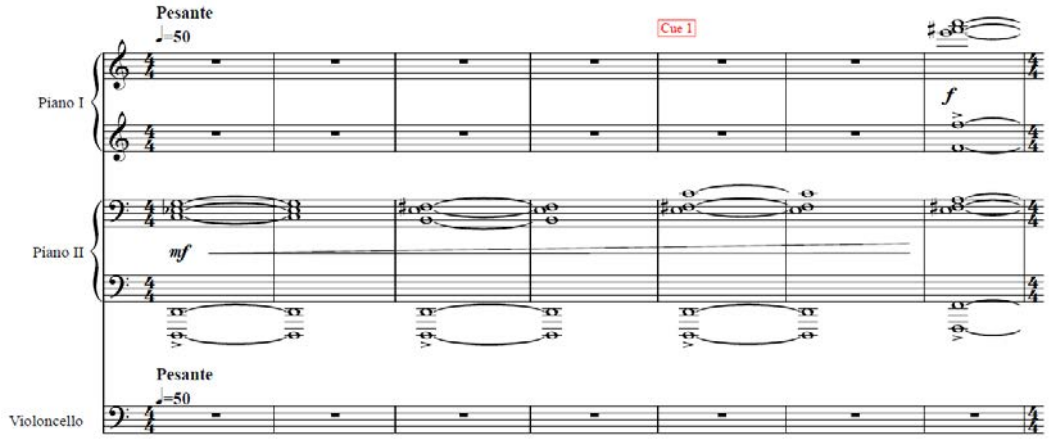
Ġgantija II is made up of an introduction and five sections. Each of these corresponds to a stanza from Mifsud's poem, with the only exception being the fourth part, which is instead linked to a few short phrases. The differences between the sections are quite well-defined, with every part having a particular style that changes abruptly as soon as the next one begins. On the whole, the sections are equally divided, with the majority consisting of eleven bars. Section D, however, is not restricted by a metre due to the free rhythm in the final *ad libitum* passage. The final section that leads to the climax is also a bit longer, consisting of sixteen bars, but again, in the improvisatory section, bar lines are not explicit.

Among the particular features in this composition is the use of repetitions that are heard both in the music and in the text. Musical material is kept to a minimum and therefore the same

melodic, rhythmic and harmonic patterns, usually with small modifications, are repeated over and over. Ostinato layers as well as chord progressions are compositional techniques used by Cassar Cordina throughout the entire piece. To distinguish between one section and the next, the composer changes the time signature and often employs a specific selection of pitch classes. The placing of the seven-note pitch-class collection C-D-E-F-G-A-B (white notes) against the frequent use of the remaining five pitch classes (black notes) in particular sections not only creates sharp contrasts between one musical passage and the next, but also reflects the mood that the composer needs to produce. Other key differentiating characteristics are related to textures, contours and the use of interval relationships.

Introductory Bars

The piece is introduced by the piano duet with a succession of dissonant chords spanning different registers (Ex. 6.12). Each of the chords is stretched over at least two bars in 4/4 time. The deliberate exploitation of the vertical and horizontal spacing between the notes, which features regularly in the piece, is instantly recognizable from the first bars. Even though the composer is using free atonality and therefore the chords are not clearly related to each other, they are still closely connected. Some notes are retained from one chord to the next and therefore ensure common tones and a sense of stability, while the changing notes are usually only a half-step apart. In the chords presented at bars 1-2 and bars 3-4, the Ds in octaves remain constant while the pitches that make up the triad C-E♭-G move chromatically to B-E-F♯. Pitches E and F♯ then remain unchanged up to bar 11, such that only the third note of the triads and the octave notes in the bass are altered. Together with the harmonic structure of the chords, which is mainly based on small intervals, the close proximity of the individual neighbouring chords, also determined by narrow pitch intervals, adds further to the dissonance of the music.



Example 6.12: *Ġgantija II* by Mariella Cassar Cordina, bars 1-7.

The first three chords, performed by the pianist on the left and therefore using the bass register, provide a hollow tone. When the music gets louder due to the ongoing *crescendo*, the dark sonority is contrasted by the primo (piano I) that joins in and produces a high-pitched sound as it imitates the chord on the secondo (piano II), an octave above. The long notes as well as the slow tempo of 50 crotchet beats per minute allow enough time for the blending harmonics to be heard. While the sound of the fundamental notes decreases, the listener's attention moves to the higher harmonics that fill the spaces between the chords. As from bar 5, the echoing effect of the sustained chords is aided further by electronic distortions and a mixture of other pre-

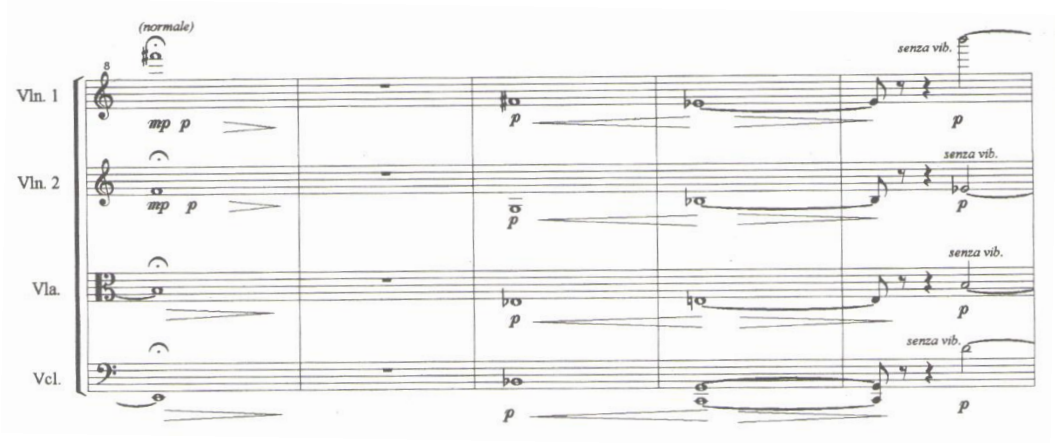
recorded acoustic sounds, making the music seem more unearthly and weird.

In the first eleven bars that act as an introduction to the piece, Cassar Cordina already attempts to transmit the characteristics of the prehistoric temples in terms of music. The large spaces, the stillness, the height and depth of the massive stones, the unique shape of each stone with its rough edges, and the resounding sounds that are trapped in the empty openings between the gigantic stones are all characterized by the chords (Figs. 6.1 and 6.2). To symbolize the large walls surrounding the temple, the composer uses a wide range of pitches that encompasses almost six octaves, from the lowest note C_1 up to the highest note A_6. Chords with different intervallic contents may be heard to symbolize the individuality of each stone that forms part of the Bronze Age structures. In between the sustained chords, the fading sounds and the harmonics suggest the bareness that lies within the huge stone constructions.

Figure 6.1: Part of the boundary wall that encloses Ġgantija Temples, Gozo.

Figure 6.2: A passageway at Ġgantija Temples with massive stones on either side.

The high vertical dimensions of the musical space and the use of sustained dense chords are musical features earlier used by Charles Camilleri in the first movement of *Silent Spaces* to portray the physical characteristics of the prehistoric temples of Malta (Ex. 6.13). Instead of stretching out the chords for longer than one bar Camilleri uses rests, possibly to denote the sound – or the lack of it – in the empty spaces. In the piece by Cassar Cordina, the fusion of acoustic and electronic music points out an additional feature of this particular environment, that is, the contrast between the tangible features of the Neolithic buildings and the mysterious and supernatural ambience of these surroundings.



Example 6.13: *Silent Spaces* by Charles Camilleri, bars 8-12.

Section A

In this first section, starting at bar 12 (see Ex. 6.14), the piano is still entrusted with a chordal texture, but is later accompanied by a recurring motif in the cello. Though the time signature is elongated from 4/4 to 6/2, the chords now consist of shorter notes and follow a faster progression. Instead of slurred long notes, they take the form of accented semibreves or minims that respond to each other as if imitating the rhythm and sound of decisive heavy steps. The performance direction *Pesante* given at the beginning of the score becomes even more meaningful when the shorter hefty chords alternate between the left hands and right hands on the piano. This walking rhythm corresponds with the phrase in the poem, 'fil-mixja li mxejt fuq il-blat abjad' [of the walk that you walked on the white rocks], which recalls the arrival of the ancestors after they crossed the sea. Furthermore, the weighty sound of the chords alludes to the female deity, usually referred to as the 'fat lady' of the prehistoric temples, to whom these temples are dedicated. In his verses, Mifsud refers to her when he writes:

‘Ifakkrek f’ommok, kbira w abbundanti, F’dawk dirgħajha jġorru t-toqol; f’riġlejha Jisħqu l-art, jagħfsu taħthom il-ħamrija;’	[Reminds you of your mother, big and abundant, Of her arms carrying weight; of her legs Crushing earth, pressing the soil underneath them;]

Later on in the same stanza that is recited alongside the music in section A, Mifsud also makes reference to a strong male figure.

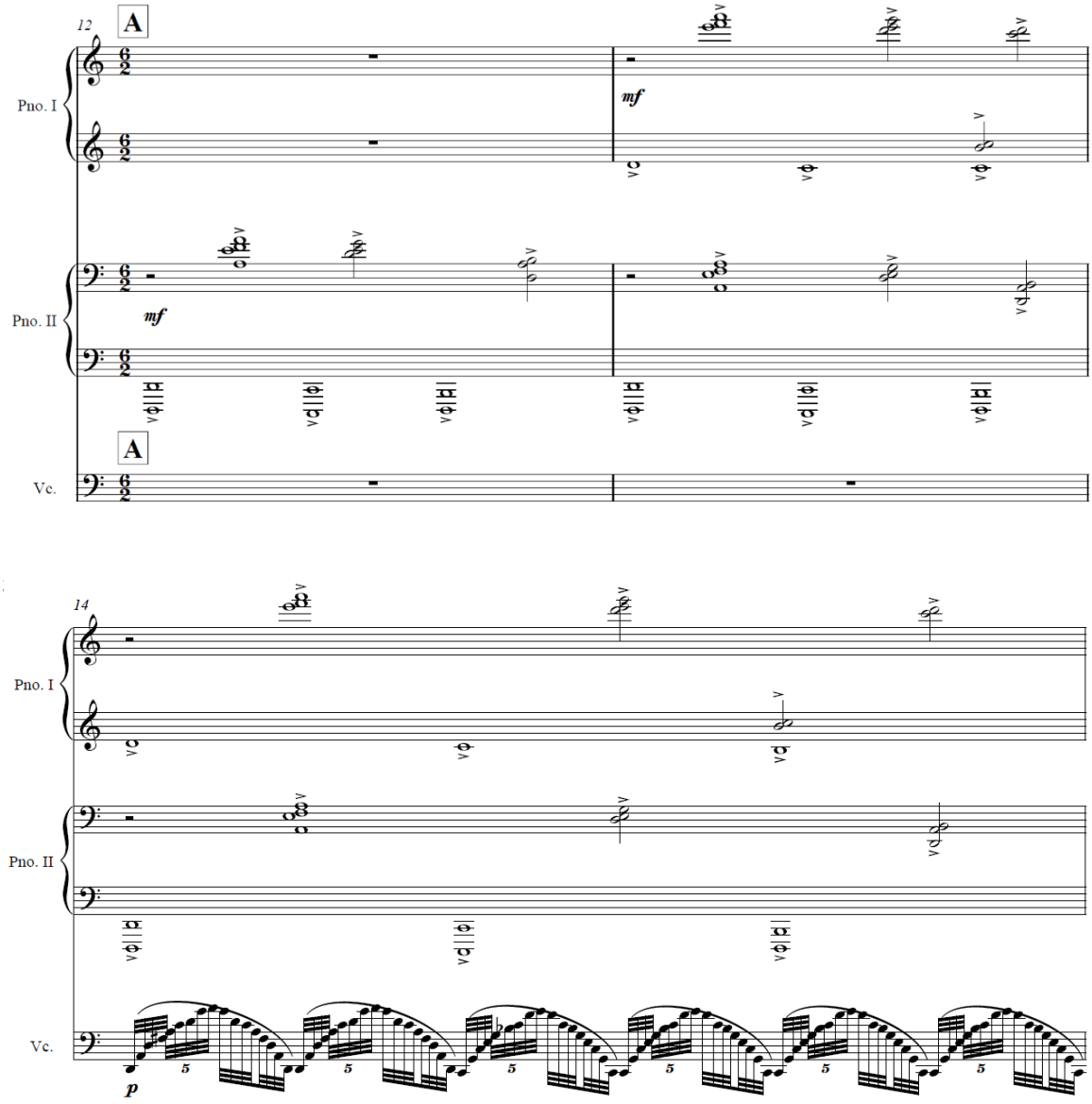
‘Ifakkrek il-ħaġar f’missierek godli; Fil-ġilda skura, maħruqa, miksura; Fil-ħafna qawwija li biha żammek Malli wasaltu eżatt fil-quċċata;’	[The stones remind you of your brawny father; Of the dark skin, burnt, broken; Of the firm grasp with which he held you As soon as you arrived exactly at the summit;]

As in the introduction, the secondo takes the initiative. In bar 12, three split chords, all distinct but with some common tones and intervals, form a descending motion. All the vertical sonorities presented here are based on the ‘white’ note mode on D. In the next bar, the same chords are repeated. However, while the left-hand part keeps the same low registers, the chords on the right are taken down by an octave, and thus continue to emphasize the downwards movement. The low notes on the secondo are then balanced by the primo with another set of chords, using higher registers. The arrangements of the pitches that form these chords are almost the same as those in piano II except for some repeated notes that are omitted and a note in the last chord that is altered.

From bar 14 onwards, the piano repeats the same chord progressions as in the previous bar with only one difference in the last chord of the primo, where the lowest note C descends to B such that the left hand also contributes to the falling motion that is evident throughout the piano parts in section A. The cello, with a warmer tone colour, joins in with a fast, continuous motif that repeats with every change of chord until the end of the section. The agility in the string instrument stands out against the slow chords and fills in the empty spaces between them.

The wavy contour represented by the unremitting pattern may perhaps be heard to portray the

sea and therefore express what the writer states in the very first lines of the poem: 'Ifakkrek fil-baħar ikħal il-ħaġar' [The stones remind you of the blue sea]. Each wave is symmetrical in terms of pitches and almost also in note values. The demisemiquaver notes, first rise and then fall to form the wave.



Example 6.14: *Ġgantija II*, bars 12-14, with chords based on the D mode against the repetitive motif of the cello.

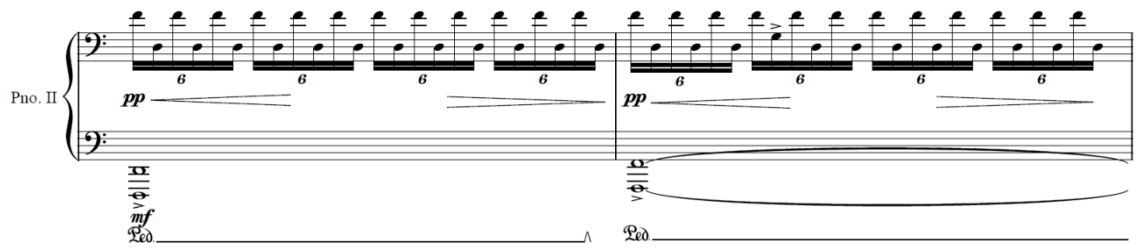
In the first two groups of demisemiquavers, the lowest note is D, and the highest A, while the four remaining groups start with C and emphasize the note G instead. Thus, the prominence given to pitch classes D and A in the first chord of the piano part, and the pitch classes C and G in the second chord, which also happen to be the lowest and highest notes of the tetrachords,

is reinforced in the cello part. Some notes are given more importance than others. The priority given to pitch class D persists up to the last bars of section A. Multiple statements of the same pitch class D, played together and sustained for two bars (bars 21-22), close this first part. The *forte* notes die away softly as they overlap with the first bar of section B.

A main feature in the first section is the opposing yet complementary textures between the lingering piano chords that build into a recurring loop, and the rhythmic and pitch ostinato of the cello. Both instruments use a repetitive style but the pattern in the cello is more concise and full. These flawless repetitions also help maintain a stable rhythm throughout the section. Together with the unchanging musical material, which sometimes results in a hypnotic feeling, the composer incorporates electronically generated sounds in order to add interest to the music. The directions given to the narrative voice also play an important role in arousing stronger emotions in the listeners. The number of repeated bars is in a way regulated by the length of the stanza in the poem and therefore the text not only determines the message that the music needs to communicate but also the duration of each part. Once more, the way the music is written is representative of the scenery on which the music is based and now also the descriptions in the poem. According to the writer, and as converted into music by the composer, the sea and the stones will remind the listener of the beginning of the story of the stones, and therefore the initial steps of the first civilization that inhabited the Maltese Islands.

Section B

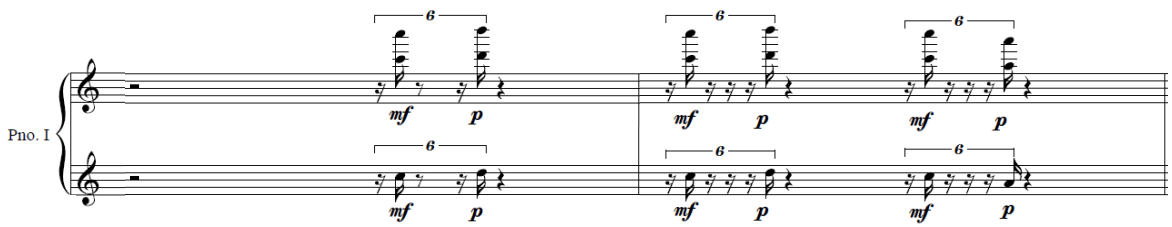
As the word 'ħaġar' [stones] is echoed in bar 23, the secondo starts the new section with groups of pedalled sextuplets in the right hand. The same rhythm is repeated over and over again throughout the section. At the beginning of each bar, the semiquavers start *pianissimo*, then gradually increase in volume and slowly become softer again. The quick repetitive rhythm, marked *legato sempre*, is often based on only two alternating pitches from two different registers with an octave or a wide leap in between. The alterations applied to some of these sextuplets in order to break the repetitive process is very small. To highlight the changes, each shifted note is also accented (Ex. 6.15).



Example 6.15: The secondo in *Ġgantija II*, bars 24-25.

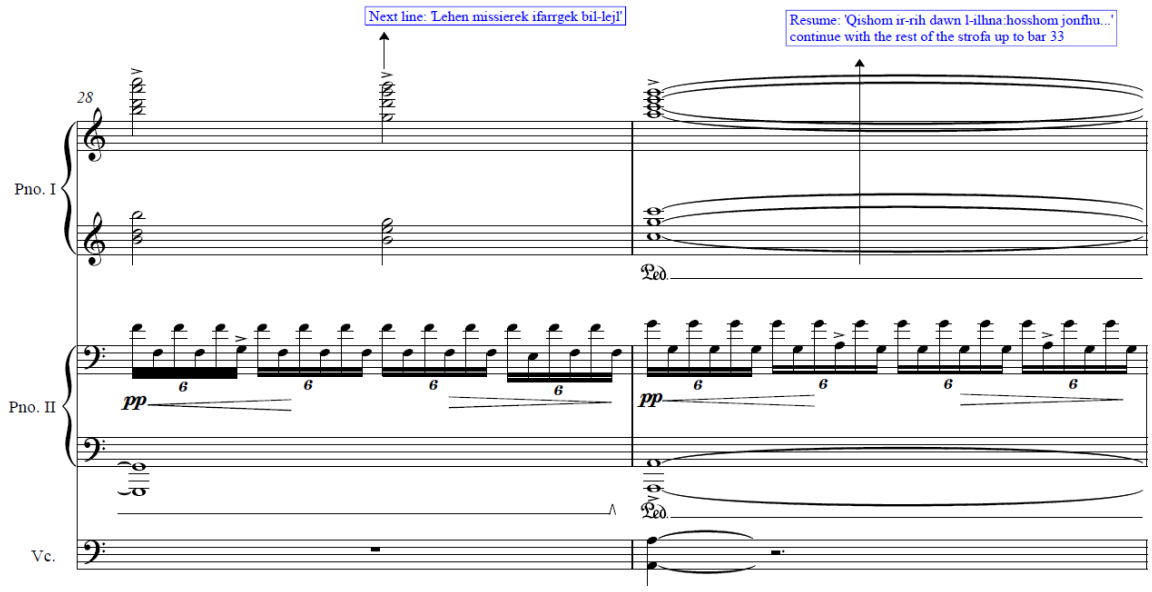
This rhythmic pattern, with an exception at the first bar, is accompanied by long pedalled octave dyads usually sustained over two bars of simple quadruple time. Each time, the two-note chords rise in pitch, forming a bass line with the notes: D-F-G-A-C and back to D. The same chord is at times supported by a chord of shorter duration performed on the cello, consisting of crotchet notes from the same pitch class.

Meanwhile the primo, which is the last to join in, is the most irregular of the three instrumental parts. Midway through bar 25, it reintroduces itself with infrequent, but rhythmically and melodically effective vertically aligned semiquaver octaves on the second and sixth notes of some selected sextuplet figures (Ex. 6.16). The notes and rests, which are set out in a very systematic way, present a short melodic fragment that is a rarity in this piece.



Example 6.16: The melodic fragment of the primo piano part, in bars 25-26.

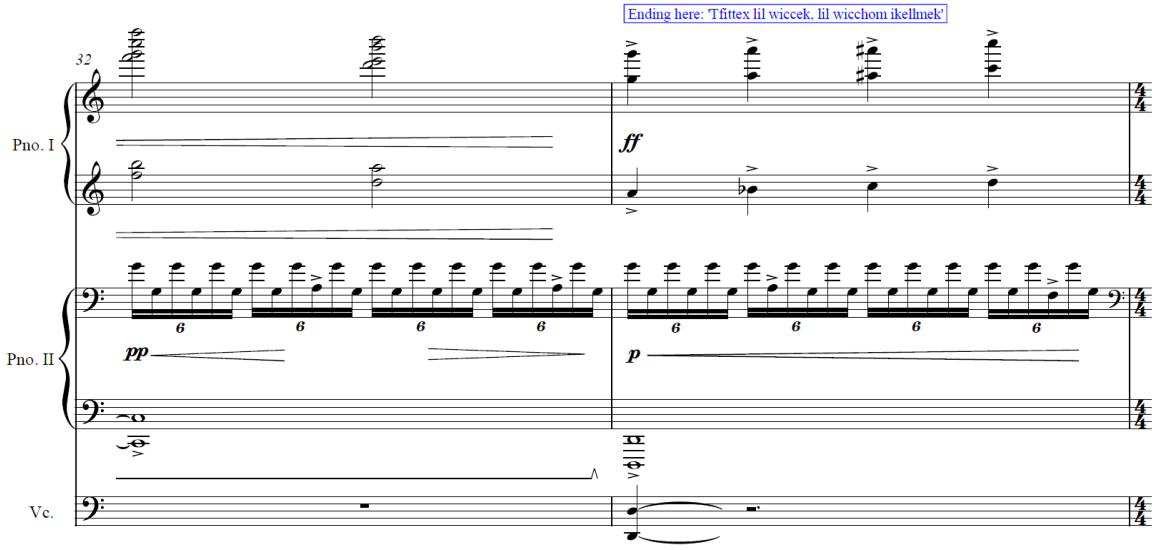
From bar 27, the primo then adopts a denser chordal texture. Octaves remain common and therefore each tetrachord is expanded to contain six or seven notes (Ex. 6.17). Long-held chords and rests that create a lot of space around the notes feature again in this section as a reminder of the large empty spaces inside the prehistoric temples, dominated by the impressive rough cut stones. The latter are depicted by the verticality and the height of the chords, and their individuality.



Example 6.17: The chordal texture in piano I, with an accompaniment on the secondo piano and the cello.

The idea of having neighbouring chords with some common notes and other pitches that move by small intervals, often a major or a minor second, stands out in this section as well. These tiny variations in the chords and in the sextuplets, the regular pulse entrusted mainly to the secondo and the cello that shows up only at alternating bars, and the continuous repetitions are all features of minimalist music.

Towards the end of the section, the primo gradually gets louder, and though the chords in the last bar are reduced such that they contain only two different pitch classes with a pair of octaves in the right hand, they also become quicker, changing at every crotchet beat (Ex. 6.18). Thus, in bar 33, the *crescendo* that leads to *fortissimo* is accompanied by a faster harmonic rhythm. Once again, as in the first section, Cassar Cordina mainly works with the 'white note' diatonic collection. Accidentals appear only in the last bar where the enharmonically equivalent B♭ and A♯ follow each other in the primo part of the piano.



Example 6.18: The last two bars of section B in *Ġgantija II*.

Pre-recorded sounds of echoing voices serve as a backdrop to the acoustic music and the recitative. The soft murmuring refers to the phrase in the poem by Mifsud, which refers to voices that are like the blowing of the wind. Alongside this, the piano continuously uses the pedal to enhance its vibrating characteristics. The stanza correlated to this section describes the place as a memorial of the ancestors whose faces and voices are still existent in the stones and in the present generation. The poem therefore suggests that whoever walks in the temples should walk slowly and kiss each silent corner.

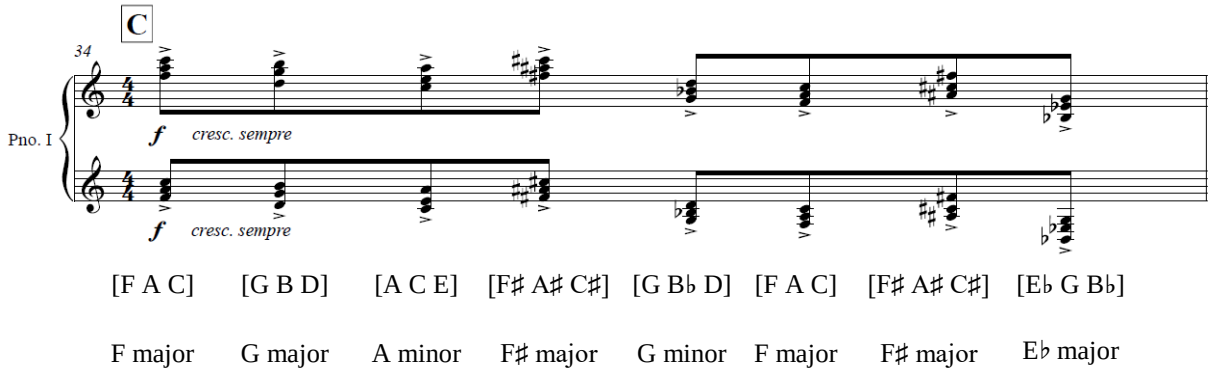
‘Imxi bilmod u bus kull rokna siekta,	[Walk slowly and kiss every silent corner;
U ssemma’ għal leħen ommok jidħaqlek;	And listen to your mother’s voice smiling at you;
Leħen missierek ifarrġek bil-lejl.	Your father’s voice that consoles you at night.
Qishom ir-riħ dawn l-ilħna: ħosshom jonfħu	These voices are like the wind: feel them blowing
Waqt l’int itterraq, tiġġerra mal-ħaġar,	While you walk, and run by the stones,
Tfittex lil wiċċek, lil wiċċhom ikellmek.’	Searching for your face, for their face that speaks to you.]

To comply with the text, the music is generally soft and though the tempo marking remains the same, the long notes make the music feel slower. The chordal texture, with a nearly uniform pattern of slow, pedalled high-pitched notes, suggests a mystical setting.

Section C

Suddenly, the mood changes completely. There are no indications for any adjustments in tempo, time signature or expression markings, but the faster rhythms, the denser texture and the chords with multiple accidentals generate higher levels of musical tension. The harmonic rhythm in the first piano is faster than that of the previous parts. As opposed to the calmer sections where the chords usually changed on every minim, semibreve or even less frequently, the chords in section C last for only a quaver beat, thus producing eight chords in every bar. Each of the trichords is accented and repeated in both hands, at the octave. This creates a strongly rhythmic effect and a more detached sound.

All the chords in bars 34 take the form of a major or minor triad, most of them in root position, and others in first or second inversion (Ex. 6.19). The harmonic structure is thus confined to simple triadic material, reminiscent of minimalist-influenced styles. The unchanging interval content of major and minor thirds, stacked in this order or the opposite order, maintain an overall uniform sonority, acting effectively as a drone.



Example 6.19: The major and minor tonic triads in the primo piano part, bar 34.

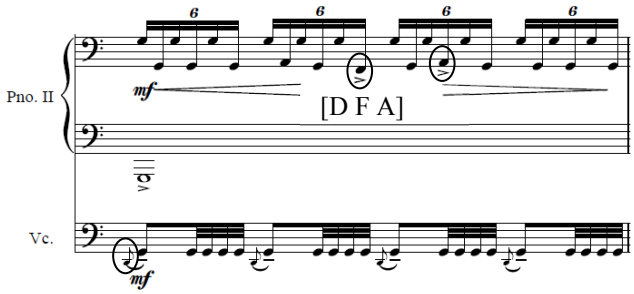
In the subsequent bars, all the pitches in the chords go up by one semitone, except in bar 41 where the chords in the left-hand part are further raised by an octave. At the same time, the volume of the music accelerates to accompany the rising pitches. The articulations *f* and *crescendo sempre* help the music to build up tension that reaches a climax towards the end of the third section. As in the preceding section, the primo remains the leading musical part. However, the heavy use of accidentals created by the semitone shifts makes a big contrast between the two sections. The softer sections that were exclusively represented by elements

from the white-key collection instantaneously change into more assertive parts in which the pitch content is mainly based on the black-key pentatonic collection (C♯-D♯-F♯-G♯-A♯).

At bar 34 the melody performed by the primo, which is based on chords, lays out the contour segment <6 5 4 7 2 1 3 0>, with 0 assigned to the chord with the lowest contour pitches, in this case the E♭ major chord, and the other trichords then ordered according to their relative register, from lower to higher. Since the musical content in the subsequent bars is based on this group of eight chords, the same contour relationships are therefore applied over and over again throughout the whole section. The shape of this collection of chords is mostly falling, but then the triads are raised a semitone each time they are repeated. Hence there is a descending motion within an ascending pattern.

The emphasis on pitch class G is clearly identifiable in this section. The chords in the primo are constantly supported by G pedals, which take different rhythmic forms in each instrumental part. The secondo is the most conservative and thus creates a link between the second and third sections. Its right hand again uses sextuplets for every crotchet beat. The *crescendo* and *decrescendo* markings, and the wide interval gaps remain constant. However, a lower range of the piano keyboard is used. Alternating semiquaver figures on G octaves are infrequently substituted by an F or an A, just one tone higher or lower. A pedal note G in the left hand, which is even lower in register, accompanies the sextuplet pattern. From bar 38 onwards, these accented semibreves are sustained by a pedal and so they become less detached. Hence, on the whole, the secondo part holds onto the same rhythmic and textural material used in the second section.

A new rhythmic motif on the cello differentiates between the two sections. The cello adopts another minimalistic accompaniment, with D as a grace note followed by a quaver and demisemiquaver G notes. Alongside with the repeated note G, the grace note and the shifted pitches F and A in the secondo sextuplets form the dominant minor triad of G (D-F-A) (Ex. 6.20). These pitches make up the primary chord structure of this section. The same triad is used harmonically in the primo and as a fragmented chord between the secondo and the cello. The ostinato pattern with an agitated harsh sound on the low notes of the cello persists through eleven consecutive bars.

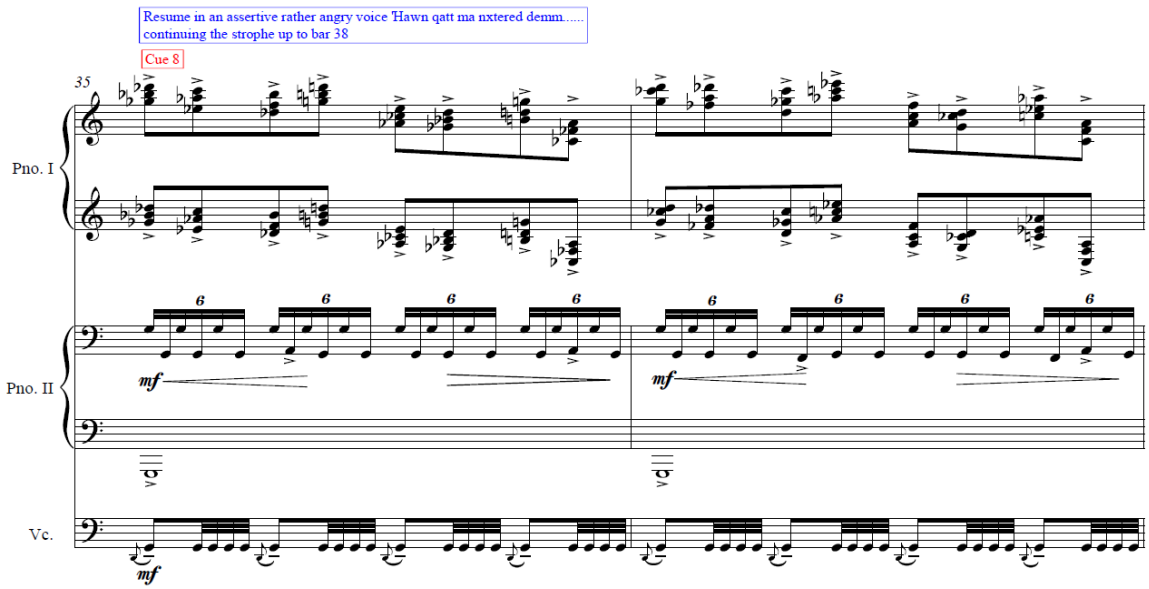


Example 6.20: The secondo and the cello parts in bar 37 showing ostinato patterns that emphasize pitch class G and form the D-F-A triad.

From the first bars of the section, the reciting voice suddenly becomes assertive. The music is characterized by fast rhythmic patterns and electronically generated sounds in the background, such as distant murmurings of the female voice, occasional sudden heavy strikes on metal plates, elongated echoes and amplified distortions. The combination of these features indicates that this section is a representation of a ritual (Ex. 6.21). Though the exact use of the prehistoric temples is not known, according to a common theory these buildings were used as places of gathering and ceremonial centres where people worshipped their goddess and offered animal or human sacrifices. The poem by Mifsud denies any bloody sacrifices but implies that the site witnesses the processes of birth, growth and death of the ancestors.

‘Hawn qatt ma nxtered demm. Inxtered	[No blood was ever spilled here. Spilled was
l-għaraq	the sweat
Mielaħ daqs ir-raxx li jitla’ mill-baħar.	Salty as the sprinkle that comes out of the sea.
Hawn xterdet iż-żerriegħa li kabbritek.	The seeds that made you grow were
Hawnhekk xterdu n-nies: ħutek u zijietek	scattered here.
Li xjaħu w mietu b’wiċċhom lejn il-qamar.’	People scattered here: your siblings and
	uncles or aunties
	Who got old and died with their face
	towards the moon.]

The continuous chords belonging only to just one triadic template, with the same bass note and nervous recurring rhythms, are also accompanied by reiterations of the same phrases from the short stanza of the poem, to enhance the idea of a ritual structure in both music and literature.



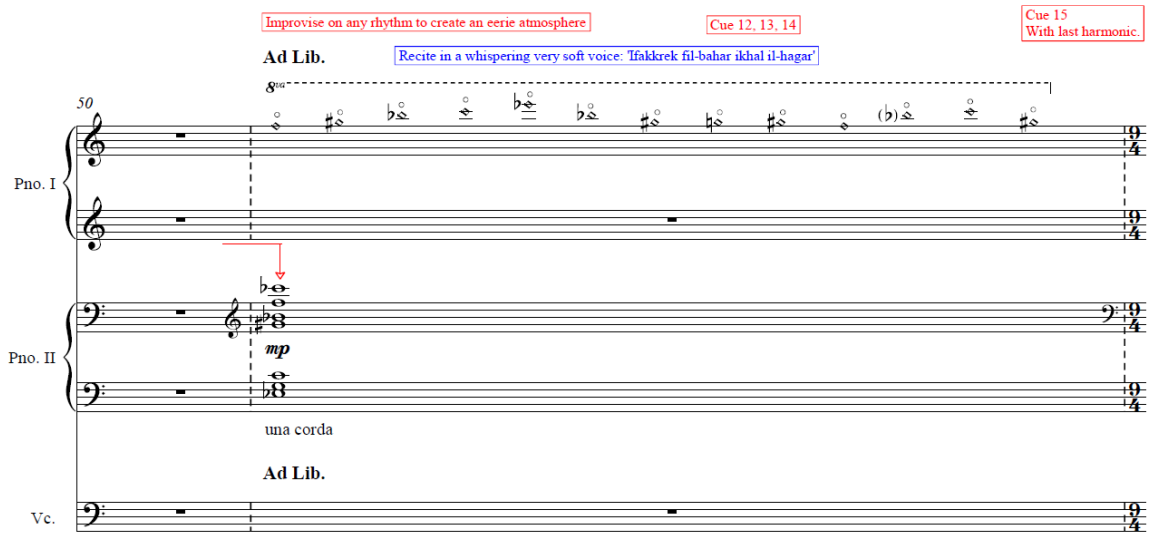
Example 6.21: Bars 35-36 from *Ġgantija II*.

Section D

After a section in which the music was strictly controlled by repeated rhythmic procedures and calculated chordal progressions, the music changes to a more improvisatory idiom. In bar 45, the fourth section starts with clusters of whole-tone intervals in the primo part accompanied by one note (F_1) on piano II. An intense and jarring sound is created as two arpeggiated clusters, with 'black' notes in the right hand against 'white' notes in the left, are performed at the extreme registers. The next cluster covers the natural notes in the middle register. Therefore, the music first moves away and then back towards the central octave of the piano, such that a wide span of pitches is immediately narrowed within one bar of two crotchet beats. The combination of black and white keys played simultaneously, slowly decaying reverberations of the sustained chord, and electronic sounds set up an edgy and hostile ambience.

What immediately follows creates an even more unsettling feeling. Improvised extended techniques on the strings of the piano are set against pre-recorded percussive sounds and electronically generated sonorities as a representation of spinning tornadoes and a howling wind. The resonances, the sound of metal scrapes, the drums whose rhythm becomes very quick at times, the abrupt and strong attacks on the strings and the perfect silence that arises after this combination of noises, give an acoustic impression of the rite during a prehistoric gathering and the silence that prevails in the temples after a supernatural intervention from a deity.

The 2/4 time that was set at the beginning of the section is abandoned at bar 51, where the note on the score specifies that the piano is expected to 'Improvise any rhythm to provide an eerie atmosphere' (Ex. 6.22). While the rhythm is free, the pitches are given, and therefore the improvisation on the piano is still controlled. The very high pitches, ranging from F_6 to $E♭_7$, which are above the normal range of a human's vocal expression, possibly allude to the voice of a deity. Meanwhile, the recitative voice pronounces the words 'Ifakkrek il-baħar ikħal fil-ħaġar' [The blue sea reminds you of the stones] in a soft whispering voice. This is the only phrase narrated during this section. Individual words from this phrase are repeated several times and enhanced by electronic manipulations of the voice. Once again, the pitches are arranged such that they form a wavy, sea-like contour and therefore the shape of the music gives emphasis to the wording. To complement the silence, the note heads are written in a diamond shape meaning that the pianist should hold the keys silently and create harmonics. The notes in piano I form a subset of the diatonic collection of E♭ major. Meanwhile, the secondo accompanies with a penetrating widespread chord containing seven different pitches E♭-G-C-G♯-B♭-F-C♭. This chord is congruent in pitch-class terms with the primo. It uses the same pitch classes but adds a C♭ at the top, to give the tetrachord at the higher register of the piano a contrasting E♭ minor sonority. The sustained notes that are extended over the whole improvisatory section are played as a normal chord with a marking for the una corda pedal to produce a softer sound.



Example 6.22: Bars 50-51, where the primo piano is entrusted with rhythmic improvisation against a long-held chord in the secondo.

This aleatoric section that in Cassar Cordina's *Ġgantija II* symbolizes the rite and the moments of worship in prehistoric times is much alike in style to the first part of the third movement in Camilleri's string quartet *Silent Spaces*. Similarly, he prescribes the notes of the first violin but allows a free rhythm. The *ad libitum* melody line is then supported by chords in the other string instruments. However, though the two comparable parts use the same techniques, they convey different emotions due to the varying sonorities that they produce. In Cassar Cordina's piece, the echoes added to the human voice and the very high pitches on the piano refer to an unearthly sonority. Moreover, the electronic sounds are an additional aid to conjuring up an eerie ambience. Camilleri's improvisatory section is marked *Lento - spaziale* and the given tones with occasional glissandi really do produce a supernatural and mysterious sound as well, but the melody line is more cantabile and therefore creates a lighter yet solemn and expressive music. Cassar Cordina's familiarity with the work of Camilleri and his music's influence of his works on her are evident in her compositions. Camilleri was her tutor and mentor, and his music was also one of the subjects she chose to pursue in her doctoral research.[6]

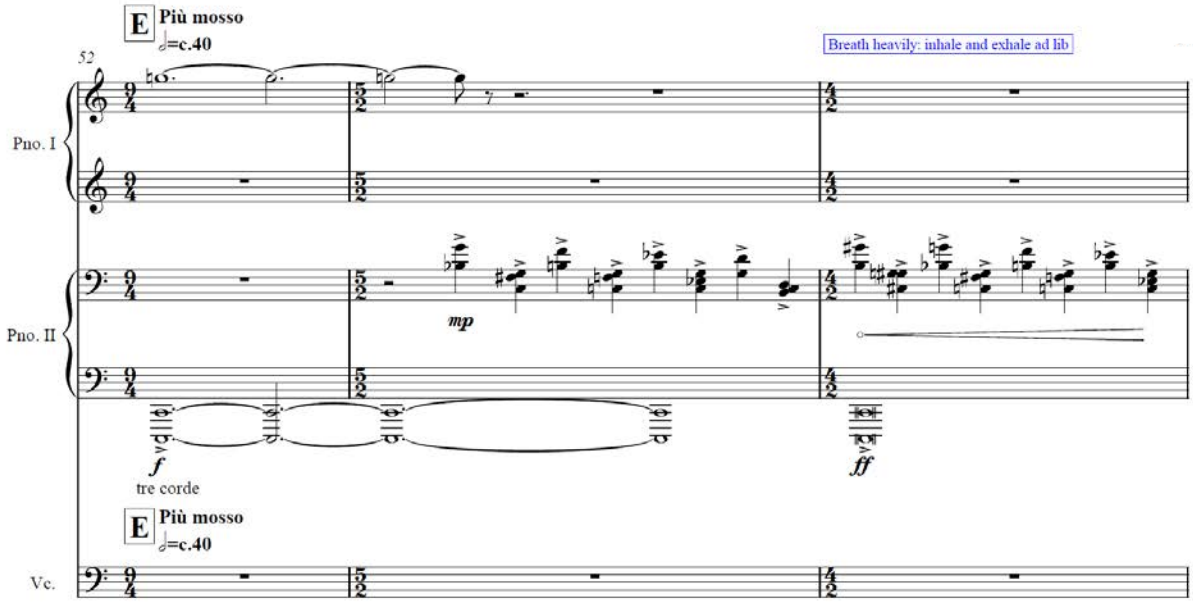
Section E

The last section of *Ġgantija II* is the quickest and this is in fact indicated by the direction *più mosso* and a metronome marking of approximately forty minims per minute. There is a sense of temporal instability at the opening bars of the fifth section. Only one bar is written in 9/4 time, then a 5/2 time signature subsequently follows, and this is soon changed again to 4/2 in the next bar. The time signature is contracted to accelerate the tempo of the music and build up tension, until it then remains stable up to the end of the piece. As the section continues, uneasiness is suggested, as the texture thickens with the addition of rapid notes that accompany the dissonant chords. The intensity of the music correlates with the last stanza of the poem in which Mifsud allegorically attempts to revive the experience of confusion when someone finds him/herself surrounded by a mystical presence.

'Fittex, fittex fil-ħaxix kollu nida.	[Search, search in the grass covered with dew.
Ħossok kif ksaħt bin-nida mbierka.	Feel yourself cold with the blessed dew.
Ħossok kif ksaħt bin-nida mbierka	Feel yourself cold with the blessed dew
Nieżla fuq xagħrek u nieżla fuq wiċċek.'	Coming down your hair and coming down your face.]

[6] Cassar, 'Creative Response to Maltese Culture and Identity', 39-83.

The notes in the first bar (bar 52) of section E are somewhat indicative of what will follow in the next bars. Three notes, a G on piano I and two notes from pitch class C on piano II make up the *forte* dyad. The pitch classes used in this dyad remain the two prominent ones. While the right hand of the secondo part initiates a sequence of chords, the left hand keeps repeating the Cs in low registers. The chords in bars 53 and 54 alternate between dyads and trichords (Ex. 6.23). The latter are very similar in their structure, forming the interval of a seventh between the lower and higher pitches, and a third pitch between them, such that they make up one of three different types of trichords. The first type consists of a diminished fifth or an augmented fourth and a semitone, and suggests an implicit contrast with the other two types that are more directly tonal. The second type is a trichord with a perfect fourth and a major second, and the third is based on the conventional major and minor triads. Almost always, the pitch classes in the adjacent chords vary only by a semitone or two. Otherwise, they remain unchanged. The emphasized pitch classes C and G which were indicated in the opening chord of this section are generally the bottom and top pitches of the trichords, with one exception where both pitches are raised a semitone. As already observed in previous sections, pitch class G remains prominent in several parts of the piece. The dyads are more inconsistent since the interval between the two notes varies, even though the bass note is generally a B or occasionally a B♭. The diagram below (Fig. 6.3) illustrates the structure of the three-note chords and the two-note chords used in bar 54, and the small horizontal intervals between them.



Example 6.23: *Ġgantija II*, bars 52-54.

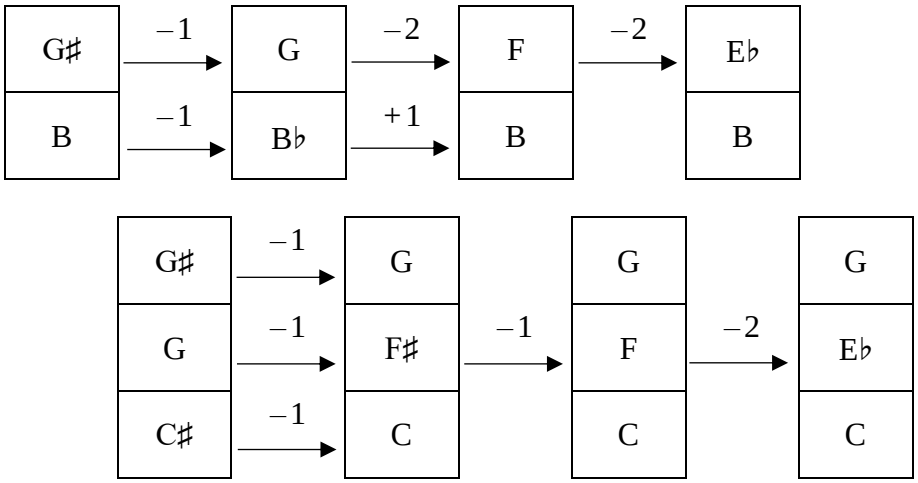
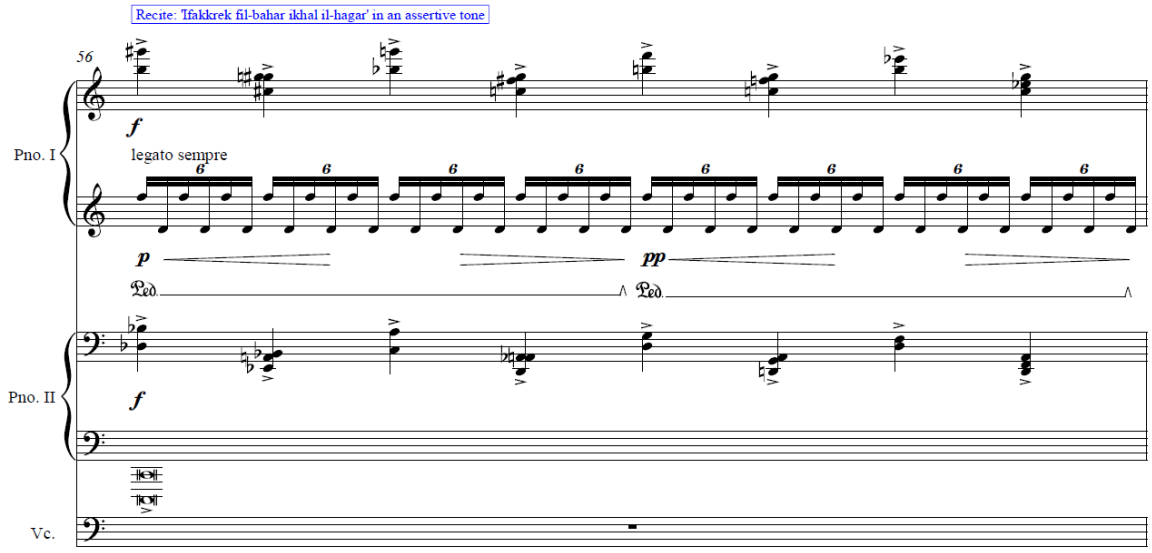


Figure 6.3: The structure of the dyads and trichords in bar 54.

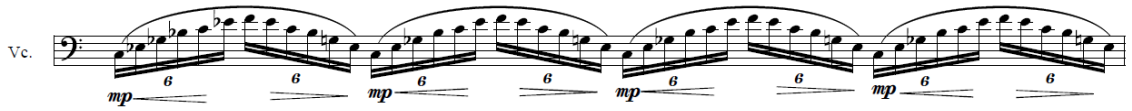
The chords in bar 54, most of which are copied from the previous bar, or are only raised by a semitone, provide the chordal progression for almost all of the remaining bars in this last section. In the secondo, up to bar 64, the same set of eight chords is again raised by a semitone with every new bar. Octave breves state pitch class C in the left hand and act as pedal notes until bar 56. For the next five bars, these are then replaced by two single semibreves, an F and a C. Towards the end of the section, when the primo is again left almost on its own, the sequence of chords is once more accompanied only by Cs in octaves on the secondo. Therefore, the dyads and trichords remain continuously in the forefront and are supported by a slightly varied accompaniment.

When the primo joins in with a *forte* marking, at bar 56, the right-hand side repeats the same chords three octaves higher, but the sequence of chords is delayed by two bars and thus the pairs of simultaneous chords are two semitones apart (Ex. 6.24). This denser chordal texture creates more clashing sounds and adds to the harsh and strident character of the music. The idea of using chromaticism or narrow intervals to imply a cold ambience resurfaces in this chordal progression as well. The dyads and trichords are accompanied by semiquaver sextuplets with notes that alternate between F and D in different octaves, starting from the higher note. Both the chords and the sextuplets form a zigzag shape. The lack of smoothness in the contour of the music is reminiscent of the irregularly cut edges of the stones, and the uneven shapes and heights of the buildings of the Neolithic temples.



Example 6.24: The chordal texture accompanied by a sustained octave and ostinato sextuplets.

The cello enters again in bar 57 with a fast motif that from *mezzo piano* increases and decreases again in volume every time it is repeated. Alongside the changes in the intensity of the sound, the agility of the string instrument continues to enhance the tension. The upside down v-shaped motif consists of two sextuplets, with semiquavers that go up from C_2 to F_3 at unequal intervals, and then down again. Its symmetry is broken as the G♭ in the rising sextuplet is changed into a G♮ in the descending semiquaver figures (Ex. 6.25). The lowest and the highest notes on the cello are further reinforced by the left hand of the secondo piano part.

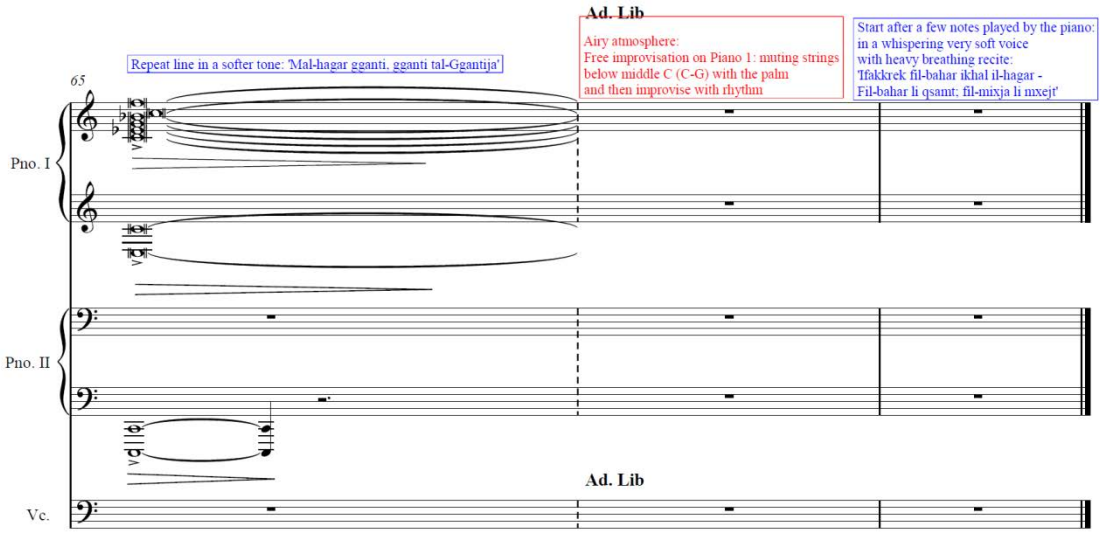


Example 6.25: The repetitive motif of the cello in bar 59.

Towards the end of the section, the music gradually decreases in speed until it rests on a chord [C-E♭-G-B♭-F] in bar 65. The notes that form this chord are the same as those used in the second half of the ostinato motif in the cello, which moves diagonally downwards.

The closing bars in section E (Ex. 6.26) share similarities with the fourth section as they turn back to an aleatoric idiom based on the choice of the performer (see also Ex. 6.22). When the acoustic music fades away, together with the aggressive voice of the reciter, the primo piano

part engages into free improvisation, accompanied by repeated phrases from the poem. The instruction on the score requires the pianist to mute the G to C strings, below middle C, with the palm of the hand and then develop a rhythmic improvisation. At the same time, the narrator whispers the short phrases 'Ifakkrek fil-baħar ikħal il-ħaġar – Fil-baħar li qsamt; fil-mixja li mxejt' [The sea reminds you of the stones – Of the sea that you crossed; the walk that you walked]. Thus, the last part of the piece is a reminder that this music is in itself a journey that brings back to mind the initial voyage of the first residents of the prehistoric temples and therefore all the Maltese native people.



Example 6.26: The last two bars in *Ġgantija II*.

The textures used here are very similar to those already employed in previous sections. In the third section, the piano parts also used a series of chords that goes up a semitone each time it is reused in a new bar. Also, the style in which the same pitch class is constantly repeated in the form of semiquaver sextuplets, now entrusted to the primo as a left-hand accompaniment to the chords, was earlier given to the secondo and played in lower registers. The motivic idea in the cello consisting of two groups of sextuplets, the first rising and the next falling, is unprecedented but other comparable patterns that persist for several bars were also used in sections A and C.

Even though Cassar Cordina is working with minimal musical material and limited compositional techniques, she applies other methods that make up for the relentless repetitions of notes and patterns presented in each section. Whenever the piano parts are playing the same

notes in octaves and also when a group of chords move up to higher registers, the music becomes more intriguing through the effective use of the different timbral characteristics present in the various piano registers. Another common technique that features in almost all section is the layering of simple musical patterns in both the piano and the cello, which often generate more intricate musical material. Moreover, while the restricted variations in the music tend to make it sound less dramatic, the composer makes use of electronics as an additional backdrop, and therefore adds to the intensity of the music. The combination of minimalist and electro-acoustic elements as the main form of musical expression in the work by Cassar Cordina is a very effective mixture to describe the physical and the mystical ambience of the captivating yet bare structures at the Ġgantija Temples.

While the *Ġgantija* project and Camilleri's *Silent Spaces* can both be regarded as music that brings forward national elements, the composers' perspectives, compositional languages, and perhaps even their intentions are rather different. *Silent Spaces* was composed a few years after Malta attained independence and was therefore still trying to come to terms with its postcolonial status after centuries of foreign rule. The necessity to rebuild the nation could still be felt and therefore Camilleri sought to delve deeper into the authentic cultural features of the islands. In particular, he chose the Neolithic temples, architectural structures that are unmistakeably Maltese, and interpreted their characteristics in musical terms that bring together elements from Maltese folksong, Mediterranean music sources, and Western European compositional techniques. Cassar Cordina wrote the music for the *Ġgantija* project in the early twenty-first century, when Malta was already a member of the European Union.[7] The driving force behind her intention to compose music that could enhance national sentiment would have been rather different. The idea of fostering nationalism through music was already addressed by composers from an earlier generation. Hence, she attempts to present a renewed national musical identity that is not explicitly dependent on vernacular folk music. In *Ġgantija 2013* and *Ġgantija II*, Cassar Cordina intensifies the mood of a monumental building from the primitive past of her home island through a contemporary sound based on a combination of minimalist techniques, improvisation and electronic media.

[7] Malta officially became a member state of the European Union in 1 May 2004.

Conclusion

Domestic music making, in the context of social gatherings and artistic entertainment, flourished in Malta especially when the islands were ruled by the Knights of St John (1530-1798). The earliest available documents refer to theatrical works given in the auberges of the Knights, in the seventeenth century. Other sources dating from the next century provide further evidence of the presence of a group of musicians performing instrumental and vocal music at these residential palaces. Most of the chamber works written in the eighteenth century by Maltese composers, who resided either in their native island or abroad, adhered to the basic principles of forms and styles that were popular in other Western European countries. Almost nothing is known, and perhaps much still remains to be discovered, about intimate gatherings revolving around chamber music in the homes of Maltese aristocrats and middle-class families, during the era of the Knights.

Historical evidence about the chamber music scene in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, when Malta was under British rule, also remains limited. For a long time, especially until the end of WWII, chamber music was considered as a secondary genre, inferior to opera. Only a few Maltese composers were keen to write works for small instrumental ensembles, and chamber music struggled to make it to the concert stage and keep a small audience interested. Yet, a few dozen works from this era were significant milestones for the development of Maltese chamber music. A small number of composers started to explore non-traditional instrumental combinations, while others were among the earliest who had their chamber music scores published abroad.

In the mid twentieth century, new initiatives to organize public concerts and radio broadcasting transmissions helped to make chamber works available to the general public. Subsequently, the repertory of chamber music by Maltese composers continued to expand gradually. After the 1950s, a small group of composers took the initiative in writing music using an assortment of early twentieth-century techniques, frequently related to post-tonal theories and concepts. Charles Camilleri and Joseph Vella are among the most influential and prolific composers of this period, and Pawlu Grech devoted the major part of his compositional output to chamber music. Another generation of composers, whose works were presented near the end of the twentieth century and mostly during the first years of the twenty-first, including, among others,

Véronique Vella and Mariella Cassar Cordina, focused on late twentieth-century compositional strategies.

The pre-Independence generation of composers began to produce music at a time when the socio-political and cultural conditions in Malta led to an increasing interest in establishing a national and cultural identity. Camilleri was deeply touched by this urge, and amalgamated the indigenous sounds of his homeland and its immediate and remote surroundings with a contemporary idiom, to develop a personal musical language. This remained a fundamental aspect of his writing style throughout his compositional career. Not the same, though, can be said about his Maltese contemporaries, since Pawlu Grech and Joseph Vella have both resisted any direct associations with nationalism. Grech's style in *Five Events* demonstrates his beliefs in the intrinsic value of music, while in *Segments No. 1*, Joseph Vella focuses on other trends that emerged in the first half of the twentieth century. In a few other works, though, Vella shows mildly nationalistic inclinations. Nevertheless, Camilleri made a considerable impact on a younger generations of composers, with regards to his approach in forming a national musical idiom.

Even if Camilleri's *Silent Spaces*, Grech's *Five Events*, and Joseph Vella's *Segments No. 1* are all based on procedures derived from atonality, the three chamber pieces still represent divergent stylistic tendencies. In general, Grech uses a free-atonal idiom, alongside a slightly more controlled serial method, in which some pitch-class sets tend to reappear prominently within the same *Event*. On the other hand, *Segments No. 1* reflects the neoclassical style often embraced by Vella, and provides a different example of twelve-tone serialism. Vella's work is much more conventionally structured, containing melodic and harmonic material that is skilfully generated from predetermined sets of twelve-note rows. New versions of tone rows are sometimes constructed to create further variety and distinguish between the different sections of the piece. Unlike in *Five Events*, although *Segments No.1* 'is' an atonal piece, it nevertheless clearly displays a centric pitch class.

Instrumentation is another contrasting feature between these two chamber works. The clarinet and the piano, most overtly in the second movement of *Five Events*, take the role of characters, as if in a theatrical event, and engage in a dialogue embellished with opposing performance directions, extreme dynamic levels, and extended techniques on the clarinet. The call-and-response feature is also recurrently presented in *Segments No. 1*, but it frequently develops into

an imitative contrapuntal dialogue shared between melodic lines, typical of classical music, rather than into a dramatic discourse. In the same piece, more often than not, the piano is treated as an accompanying instrument, with chordal textures, ostinato patterns or passages moving in parallel motion. Undoubtedly, in Grech's duet, the piano has a more active role, and displays a broader range of techniques, revealing the pianist-composer's profound knowledge of the instrument's potentials.

The works of Véronique Vella often recall musical and non-musical characteristics from Maltese traditions, lifestyle and ambience, and include Maltese titles and texts. This is less evident in the chamber piece analysed here. Instead, the subject matter for *Gelsomina* is drawn from the Italian neorealist film *La Strada*, by Federico Fellini, and might thus exemplify Malta's long tradition of cultural influence from Italy. The composer takes a postmodernist approach to depict the overall feeling of the movie and the main themes addressed in *La Strada*. In *Gelsomina*, Vella intentionally writes a nostalgic pastiche of music that at times sounds older than it really is, and therefore emphasizes the links to the past. The two-part piece also involves a renewed return to tonal elements, in which the triadic nature that implies tonality is sometimes ambiguous. Harmonic structures that suggest the presence of tonality also feature in the *Ġgantija* project with music by Mariella Cassar Cordina, another female composer representing the post-independent generation of Maltese composers. The two works though, are far apart in their choice of instrumentation. Cassar Cordina adds electronic elements and percussion to the more conventional combination of voice and acoustic instruments, thus challenging the common notion of a chamber ensemble. Vella scores her piece for a smaller traditional ensemble consisting of a flute and string quartet, and occasionally makes use of more contemporary methods, such as the extended flute techniques towards the end of the second part of the piece, in order to blur the boundaries between the old and the new. *Gelsomina* is written in a lyrical style, very characteristic of Vella, with expressive elements embedded into easily discernible motifs.

In terms of compositional techniques and styles, the chamber works by Véronique Vella and Joseph Vella are readily distinguishable, even though they both attempt to connect the present to the past. On the other hand, the two works share common features especially in relation to the use of melodic motifs. *Segments No. I* contains new motivic material for every section. Each motif is clearly outlined and emphasized, sometimes through imitative procedures that run throughout the whole segment. In *Gelsomina*, multiple brief motifs are often introduced,

repeated consecutively with minimal alterations, and are then quickly discarded to make room for new ones. The motifs, here, evoke images from the movie or express the inner state of the protagonists in *La Strada*. In both works, the motifs do not recur between sections, with the exception of the 'journey' motif in *Gelsomina*. Also, while in *Silent Spaces* and *Five Events*, the movements or *Events* are clear-cut, in *Segments No. 1* and *Gelsomina*, the different sections blend into each other before the varied forms and structures of each section can be solidly identified.

The *Ġgantija* multidisciplinary project shares a similar subject with Camilleri's string quartet. Both chamber works are influenced by the physical properties, sonic features or imaginary characteristics of the Maltese megalithic temples. In *Ġgantija 2013,* Cassar Cordina writes an ambient sound composition that serves as a backdrop to this particular environment, in order to help the audience 'feel' the atmosphere of the temples. This work was composed with the intention to be performed at the megalithic and now-roofless temples, yet it attempts to retain authentic functions of chamber music, that is, to involve the musicians in an interdependent relationship, as well as to create an intimate atmosphere for the audience. *Ġgantija II* is more systematic in its structure, and changes in textures and rhythmic patterns generally correspond to a new stanza of the literary work by Immanuel Mifsud, specifically written for this project. Camilleri's approach in *Silent Spaces* is contrastingly different as he attempts to translate into music an ambience that has been preserved for thousands of years, according to his visual and auditory perspective. *Ġgantija* is entirely built on minimalist processes, initially developed by a group of composers from the United States, with inclinations towards tonality and modes. Thus, the nationalistic element in Cassar Cordina's choice of subject is mixed with more contemporary forms that developed in the last decades of the twentieth century.

A number of Maltese composers launched their careers in the intimate language of chamber music before proceeding to write larger-scale works. Others adopted this genre as a first means to express their progressive or traditional methods in musical composition, or even held it as a favourite genre throughout their careers. In any case, chamber works provide a good insight into the musical languages of Maltese composers. The works analysed in this study display diverse compositional methods that absorb a broad spectrum of musical sources, and compositional techniques that were originally introduced in Europe and elsewhere mainly during the twentieth century. Maltese music that in earlier centuries was restricted by the narrow-mindedness of the island people or constrained by the cultural interests of those who

ruled Malta and the countries closest to the archipelago, is increasingly opening itself to worldwide influences. Broadly speaking, as observed in these pieces, Maltese composition is split into two directions. In some works, composers tend to detach themselves from what is purely Maltese in order to overcome the boundaries of their tiny island. Other chamber pieces exemplify how composers use a contemporary style imbued with indigenous influences to form a personal idiom that can be perceived as distinctively Maltese.

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