

## Flavio Scogna

The pertinent sobriety, which characterizes the titles chosen by Scogna for his works, should really come as no surprise if one bears in mind his Ligurian origins. These titles are made up of neither adjectives, images nor even metaphors; instead we are confronted by one single word, pregnant with its own history and meanings.

Ever faithful to himself, the author pursues his research into the possible combinations and rapports which exist between sounds, without ever resorting to the seductive aids offered by the use of electronics. These six pieces, composed between 1987 and 1990, are all performed by musical instruments with significant “alternanze” (alternations) and “risonanze” (resonances) between them: beginning, for example, with the *Capriccio* - in which the solo cello covers staves of several octaves rising from somber outbursts to rarefactions and controlled fugacity -, to the ever-changing musical interactions present in the two pieces *Concertino* and *Musica Reservata*, a sort of colourful kaleidoscope for ten instruments.

The reading of the scores is indeed fascinating: there hardly exists a bar in which either a particular form of execution or deliberate timbrical effects is not required. There are frequent markings for tremolo and vibrato and recurrent accentuations and sudden toning down of “rearing” dynamics. A traditional vocabulary is coupled with a thoroughly contemporary research into the possibilities (as yet not completely looked into) of the instruments. This indeed is one of the best ways to understand much of the twentieth century and in particular more recent contemporary music. Yet there exist other frequent excursions into the past: the narrative format willingly leads the way towards musical lines of counterpoint, a firm and established field of vision, within which the audacious feats of instrumental inventiveness can be enacted and chanced.

Scogna, besides composing, is himself a conductor of notable repute, whether it be conducting the works of the most enigmatic of classical composers

(Schubert, for example) or unedited scores and not simply his own works. It is to be noted (much to the dismay of some) that for some time now, music no longer emits messages of either political or moral content, but only ones which are concerned with the pure matter of sound itself. One could see it perhaps as an ideological “surrender”, which would explain the present flood of music reconciled with both past and present (perhaps the same cannot be said for the future); a form of music which is receptive to pleasant melodies, moderation and even more responsive to the rapport established with the audience, a spoilt child who is in constant need of being coaxed and caressed.

Scogna himself does not seem to be prone to such effusiveness.

These pieces are built up around a duplicitous, dialectic and contradictory procedure, whereby an impetuous beginning seeks, finds upsets and reimposes an equilibrium. There are frequent and unexpected changes in atmosphere: on the keyboard, as on the strings, the glissandi open up the sequence, where the dominating musical forms branch out in opposing directions, fading away to then come together and recommence. Pauses are created so producing a musical impression which is at once acoustical, narrative and theatrical. These are breaks which offer, after an intense dialogue, the ultimate surprise: the music seems to never end, devoid of a final conclusion; it fades away and vanishes unexpectedly leaving behind an unresolved ending.

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