

Heterophony in the Instrumental Show of Mauricio Kagel. *Sur Scène* (1960)

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Abstract: *The weak receptiveness of the audience to a music prototype characterised as ultra-abstract is often coupled with the Avant-garde of the 1950es-'70es. Elements of modernity, developed/propelled by some artistic groups and that come under the new functions of language (incommensurable with those of the musical grammar of the late 19th century), function through yet inaccessible idioms, through a category of composing techniques united under the roof of serialism or post-serialism. The fan of possibilities for the expression of sound which stressed the articulation of the “Darmstadt” cultural phenomenon found a particularly original exponent in Mauricio Kagel (1931-2008). To aesthetically argue another genre of expression of sound: the instrumental theatre, means to supply the logic of a paratextual discourse, a semiosis included in the genre of theatre, in the given case even that of the “absurd”. The concept of heterophony finds here unsuspected significances in the classical sense, marking this semiosis. *Sur Scène*, the work that gives “green light” to the evolution of the new genre, arches synchronicities and lecture levels by becoming an object of associations, re-anchoring modernist theses which “sharpen” our intellectual perception to the maximum.*

Keywords: *instrumental theatre, heterophony, anagram, isolexism, Sur Scène*

1. Introduction

Giovanni Papini once stated that “there are no unreachable heights, only wings too short” (Radu 1989, 30), reasoning on the possibility to create different conditions (and following paths *equally* different) for getting closer to new aesthetic experiences. To discuss modern art through the lens of the reversed reactions it causes, to understand the criteria for establishing its new elements of emotional guiding, are appellations with a sensible cognitive impact factor when seriously taken into account. The musical art as a *mimesis* of its invariant structural matrix has remained for a long time the room one could very easily enter from an emotional perspective. People bought it by paying cheaply for the ticket. Its perceptive corridor was well established: Mozart and Beethoven owned their inalienable stylistic plot: nobody made “extra” comments to question the content of their music, Brahms was a revered composer...—“...You like Brahms” is not only the comment that induces the answer even before asking the question, but also a generative

leit-motive of the immediate psycho-physiological sensations, beyond which there “wouldn’t exist” much... Wagner implanted fresh intuitions in the human *cogito*, as he bent with a “new” attention over the structure of the sonorous object. The shaping of the artistic object expanded with Debussy, as his composing unfolding space induced other types of relations between object and subject; the optic effects (newly introduced in the Impressionist painting) radically influenced him, as he perceived the existential and artistic space as a space of dreaming. The multi-faceted contours and the suggestion of the cathedral beyond the “cathedral” object dismantled not only the perspective of the bi-dimensional painting of the Renaissance, but also the ideology through which the respective object functioned within the canons of traditional culture, with the background of the expression associated to it. For instance, the significance of the cathedral as a temple does not play any part for Claude Monet, but the light which reflects in certain moments of the day on its body of stone. The cathedral in the vision of the painter Friedrich Schinkel (contemporary with Beethoven) describes its identity through the “organic” presence of the ideology (which legitimates it everywhere). Here we are talking of the affiliation of the real of art to the determinist, historic programme, which has flanked the discourse for centuries, embodying it in a connected, predestined, teleological circuit every time. If the genre of *Symphonic prelude* (materialised in a recognisable sonorous poetics) in Franz Liszt or Richard Strauss maintained the focus on the clear orchestral narration in its proximal sense (white and black), the *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* of Debussy produces a rot in the programme of the morphological evolution plan of the music with traditional profile. Dedicating 9 minutes of sonorous colour, grace and integration in the ambient of nature in honour of the god Pan—faun-like and narcotic at the same time—the poem (inspired by Stéphane Mallarmé’s poetic gesture) assumes as an absolute reference a new style: *Modernism*. It is a moment in which the two French authors—intersecting a mosaic of semantic inflexions with the same resonance—initiate an ideology of releasing; the tonal sequences turn into portions of pure sonorous timbre. The cadence—representative of a complete effervescence in the tonal syntax (and the spatial correspondent of the central point in Renaissance painting)—loses its function in Debussy; the chords tailor a different perspective of structuring themselves; the cadence is close to the derived variables of the Wagnerian idiom, invoking a potential those (highly complex) postures of the portrait used to have in the plastic arts: it is about twists, contortions, effects of the pluri-dimensional; I am discussing here precisely the model of those breaches staged in order to dismantle the corpus of the traditional expressions – on the level of musical thinking. The seriousness of Beethovenian developments (see his forms of sonata with motive adaptations and thematic resuscitations) is replaced (by Impressionists) with symbolic elements of flowing, of water/underwater environment; these images are suggestively built into the folds of the sonorous gesture, probably because the water would be the only link between optics and acoustics... Organically combining

Lisztian virtuosic instrumental twitches, works like *Jeux d'eau* by Ravel or *Reflets dans l'eau* by Debussy are eloquent clippings of these idea incursions. The elastic modernity I am talking of –the one delicately tossing away the conditioned reflexes of tonal language by prolonging them (in a certain way) in the plane of shadows (functional harmony and cadences do not entirely disappear in the music of the composers mentioned) –is hereditary and belongs to the French Weltanschauung; maybe even more prominent, the “Procustian” modernity of the “scandal” type, established in Vienna by Schönberg and his disciples and known under the name of Expressionism – manifests itself in a different way; its victory in the general orientation of the structuring exercise must (precisely because of this) be the object of a separate study. Without even attempting here its most timid analysis, we will realise, however, that Modernism (modernity) pushes the receiver into a net of morphologies rooted in the abstract trunk of structures (for creating some of the most novel musical games), with a corporality that tends to de-structure itself until reaching an ultimate, absolute inflexibility. Determining the musical process through a new order, of structuring that neutralizes the expression (see further on), falls into the category of incipient serialism; in the context of abrogating the traditional morphologies that characterise the West-European tonal language, the old modal reservoir will be a basis for the musical vocabulary –not “shut off in the tower”, but open for serialisation; I refer here to the *tone scale* identified in Debussy (but also in a few other predecessors of his – see the “Group of the five” and especially Modest Mussorgski’s creation). The elements of the dodecaphonic technique promoted by the “Second Vienna school” – Schönberg, Berg, Webern) appear soon, and that of the absolute quantification of the relations between the material morphologies (on multi-levels) is profiled *in extensor* a midst *integral serialism*. Starting a passionate ideological confrontation with the starting point in the abstract (pointillist) technique of Webern, Modernism takes on shape as an exclusivist and conservative aesthetics *par excellence*. After World War II, once the Darmstadt school is inaugurated, getting an impulse from the Avant-garde in all arts, the witnesses and actors of Modernism in music were: Olivier Messiaen, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Luigi Nono, Pierre Boulez, Luciano Berio, Theodor W. Adorno, John Cage, Mauricio Kagel, Morton Feldman, György Ligeti, Bruno Maderna, Siegfried Palm, Henri Pousseur, Edgard Varèse, Iannis Xenakis (and others).

2. “Corrections” brought to sonorous morphologies by the Modernism. The concept of *heterophony* as an amorphous environment

In the Avant-garde decades, the complex sphere of sonorous expression was (ever more) focused on structuring typologies created through polyphony; it is about imitation (a particular type of repetitiveness), superposed overlapping, interpolation,

successiveness, risomation (etc.) of a considered nucleus (generative syntagm); these are the established categories— we are not going to refer to now. However, it remains certain that polyphony (at a broad scale) would be a (more or less controlled) overflow of morphologies resulting from all these labour actions (continuous variation). Modernism profiled the structural pattern of polyphony in its own way. Picturing it at first as a Weberian pointillism—that is, as instrumental gestures/sounds pulverised in various registers (low-treble) through jumps, able to fluctuate toward different time intervals, it then prepared a separation from this coat through the other face of the medal, respectively the forms of controlled (Xenakis) or uncontrolled (Cage) randomism. This conversion from Weber's rigour to the heterogeneous universe of the freedom of creativity induced some semantic nuances, and thus set the framework for the attention – taken breathlessly captive by the serial technique –to shift its focus somewhere else (to other significances). The randomism (or the game) the relations between structures unfold in this new format –of synchronous cohabitation of structure and lecture without having the finite object of structuring as a starting basis (as the structuring potential starts from some game rules) – pretends a (far) more intense collaboration from the doublet composer-performer than in the situation of Weber's pointillism (where the concluded score, led to its completion by the composer, is the only distributor of the “words (also unique)” on the front –under a single command– through which music will be expressed/rendered). Activating the polarisation of intentions coming from randomism is the novel reference we dwell on further in order to understand the load of this polarisation (polarity) for the case of heterophony. If the score of integral serialism operated exclusively with the *literal* meanings of the “musical words”, the aleatory type score introduces a more nuanced objectivism: it uses the *figurative* meanings of some “musical words”.

The concept of *heterophony* finds a significant number of interpretations, starting from a genealogy that often crystallises, but sometimes also twists the path to an exhaustive comprehension. It seems that the scientific term of heterophony appears in the research of the classical philologist Kurt Westphal, who interprets a passage from Plato (Knauer, p.1); then it appears at Carl Stumpf, who introduced the notion in musicological research. Plato uses this concept in a polemic fashion, defining an irregular manner of playing—and which he rejects as a means of education. I think we are looking at an internal evolution of the sense of the concept, through that playing practice of (at least) two instruments that only reach harmonisation (synchrony) in certain moments, each manipulating an improvisation process in its own manner. The de-legitimation of the term was very close (and repeatedly) to occur; because of the mess in significations, the musicologist Jacques Handschin proposed to eliminate this term (Knauer, p.1).

The identification of the sense of the concept appears at Curt Sachs, who uses it to describe primitive, exotic practices: “... when in the primitive and Oriental music [...] a theme is played by two or several voices at the same time to reach full

validity,[and this] only when the players' natural flexibility, the performers' [rendering (n.n.)] phantasy is not blocked. "We know the assiduous research in the field of heterophony in both Romanian composition and musicology. I do not discuss the implications of this technique in Romanian music as this is not the place for it. Still, I would mention in passing the sense orientation identified by Ștefan Niculescu (1980, 271-278) regarding this concept. Like Sachs, the Romanian composer, too, gets to discover the heterophonic practice in archaic cultures, which will then develop pulsating structures different from the metrical symmetry of the traditional music of Western Europe, once rhythm emancipates (in the first half of the 20th century). We notice at Niculescu the sketching of distinct seeds of heterophonisation, different from those of serial heterophony, theorised by Pierre Boulez. Niculescu postulates the features of this technique especially in that the musical pattern subject to heterophonisation reinvents itself in the process of structuring, regardless of the other syntaxes (homophony, polyphony). Yet Boulez also assimilates the other syntaxes in the description process of heterophonic articulations, thus signalling indices of the last phase of serialism. Concretely, placing the heterophony according to Niculescu in the concept guides itself after the criterion of improvisation, which inaugurates a certain immediate filiation with the theme of "Kagel", of his heterophonies (see further on). Yet, Niculescu's definition is only convenient for re-signification up to a certain point, as "his" heterophony only proposes an "improvisational troubling of the mono-melodic fluency [...]" The rapport with melody, that is, with the ancient musical thinking traits, remains supreme at Niculescu. An interesting distinction between heterophony and texture (like a "fifth" musical syntax) appears in the thinking of composer Octavian Nemescu, who appreciates the *tuned* sonant contour of the heterophonic plural expression by analogy with the *off-tune* one of the texture. Both morphological situations have the multiplication of voices as a starting point, but heterophony maintains them in a state of sonorous centeredness, while texture releases them by propelling them in the space of harmonic infinity. I also put forth an image on heterophonic development processes when I talked about Anatol Vieru's *2nd Hourglass* (Beldean 2001, 53-59); in the respective case, the form was generated by a multiplication where the voice tracing the path of heterophonisation had to be guessed; this (main) voice did not actually exist. The types of heterophony I have dealt with until here, not very different as to their behaviour pattern, can be covered by one single concept which Curt Sachs labels as *positive* heterophony. After browsing through them we extract what maintains them in the same pattern: the legacy of the archaic, then the axis on which they are re-wound; therefore, we are talking of recognising concordances, the initial face of the main (deformable) voice; on the other hand, the (also (semio)graphic) representation of "delta type" is perceptible – of *getting close to-drifting away* from the unison (the sonorous one being not only a simple presentation brand (syntactic packaging), but also the archetypal nature of the tuning state which organises/disciplines the human

psyche). Precisely because it pursues the need to start from an (optically and acoustically) fixed point in order to drift away and to (eventually) get there yet again, to that respective point, we talk of *positive* heterophony—as being the *intentional* heterophony. But what happens when heterophony is uncontrolled as to its intention, that where the author is himself to a (very great) extent a spectator? How can the relations (if they exist...) between the unintelligible whispers and the rumour in the hall be defined in John Cage's work <4'.33">? If the existence conditions of a sonorous structure, the (most general) shaping rules of juxtapositions disappear, can we talk of a sonorous work, of its ontology—that makes it authentic? The armouring of this “heterophony” is amorphous; its plan puts the stakes precisely on the anti-coagulation of (sonorous) events. It is also Sachs who speaks of *negative* heterophony when envisaging this type of “syntax”—therefore, defined by the gesture (and sound) variables produced when the performers act in an unconscious manner (Knauer, p.1).

3. Kagel's “*instrumental theatre*” and the sense of the “negative” heterophony through which it takes on gestures

A pioneer of modernity, Mauricio Kagel defines that model of Renaissance personality who –like a Leonardo da Vinci – not only manifests the encompassing of sensibly differentiated medial sides –chiselling his ideas as a composer, dramaturg, film director, performer (narrator), theoretician –,but also “feeds” them equally, without breathing “heavier” when bringing one or another to the foreground. The refined mix of these values as a consequence of the morphological analysis of the “kinetics” and rhetoric nature of each and every addressability form led Kagel to creating the *instrumental theatre*—a complex synthesis of ideas that envisages the potential of the existing multi-sensorial field. Standing between boundaries all the time, Kagel's art surprises, even shocks one.

If Marshall McLuhan –when talking of encoding a text and (particularly) the conditioning caused by its traces as a *mimesis* of an *impersonal* knowledge experience—warned that “the culture of manuscripts is a culture of “producers”, a culture of “do-it-yourself”, and that [this] dealt more with the applicability of a material than with its origin”(McLuhan 1975, 220), well, this reflexological sedimentation—which is the ferment of the consumer culture (... quite anaemically concerned with the control of authenticity, but “enchanted” by authors) –did not interest Kagel at all, quite on the contrary. In compositions or in his movies *Antithese* (1965), *Ludwig van...*(1969), *Scenario* (1982) or *Nosferatu* (1983).

However, if we look back to the historical management transported by the sphere of arts (here of music), we will realise that this appears (definitively...) in the immanence of the resonance with the manuscript; we know that Bach copied Buxtehude “atrociously”, Mozart (kept on copying) Bach, Wagner Beethoven, and

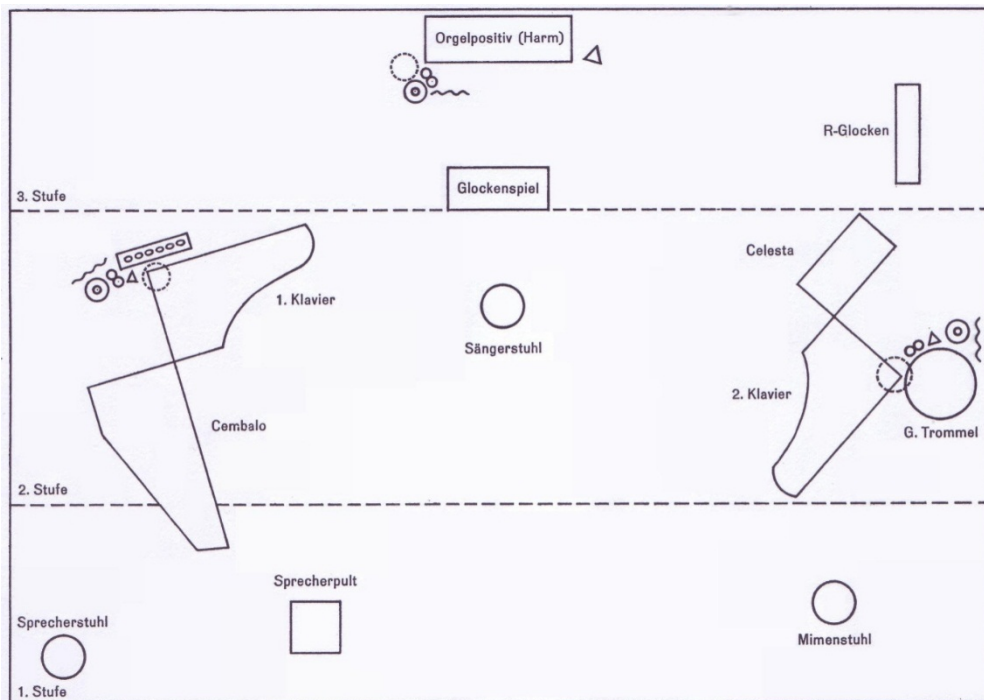
so on. Even syntaxes, with their precise functions, are listed as “good for plagiarising”... Positive heterophony has this property of being “positive”, as it acquires (secondarily) the right to be multiplied and becomes either a manuscript (before long), or a sonorous gesture that can be identified as a duplicate. Boulez wishes to reduce the reflex of this mechanism to the maximum; by conceptually dominating with “his” heterophony amidst integral serialism, he becomes less original (without knowing it). The modernity of the expression he proposes by denying tradition (and the connexion elements with the previous grammars) still remains at the edge of syntax; heterophony as a technique materialises – from this perspective – a formal choice, which (also) stands in the half-shade of manuscripts. The relationship with convention is very strong, prejudices make way for the equivocal and the nebula in the appreciation of the aesthetic datum.

Kagel designed a first distribution of random causalities – articulating traits of the *negative* heterophony – in *Heterophonie* (1959-'61) for orchestra. Chronologically, this followed after *Sur Scène* (which we will talk further on about), but both reveal the same foundation: to maintain in focus the texture of a set of events planned to occur unexpectedly (accidentally) in the *live* presentation. The instrument performer's ability to participate as an “actor” in the configuration of music is stimulated; it becomes ever more pregnant, the texture of the accidental being generated by the effect of the performer's *new* function. The presence of the *instrumental* theatre as a modulator of cognitive and synesthetic plurality now open the path to the most unusual sonorous variables. The discourse consistency derives from the “slipping” of musical gestures toward the instrument performer's bodily/attitude gesture (we also discover this concern in other older works of the composer (*Anagram*, *Pandora's Box*)). Formulated by the historical trajectory, the “moral fatigue” that shapes the information-redundancy dialogue by articulating itself on the same stability– of pure music (which once remained stuck like a web of interferences on the back of the audio-cognitive eye) – is critically “discussed” and put in the corner by the new syncretic figure, as the hidden spatial/ picture facets of the movement of sound from one sonorous morphology to the next are revealed (from the kinetics of the instrumental voices toward the kinetics of gestures).

4. *Sur Scène* (1960)

“Actually, the domination of one single sense is the formula of hypnosis. And it may occur that a culture falls into somnolence as an effect of the domination of any of the senses.” [McLuhan 1975, 130,]

If we pay attention to the precise moment the theatrical mediality appeared in Mauricio Kagel's composing-directing landscape, *Sur Scène* is the first work of this genre.



Example 1. [Mauricio Kagel: *Sur Scène*, Peters Publishing House, Cologne, 1963 (design of the instrumental theatre ensemble)]

The polemic tone of the piece is outlined by both integrating speech, specific of the theatre show – which creates a picture with Dadaist reflexes in the overall dramaturgic ensemble –, and the presence of other components: sound, scene movement, costumes, lights. By combining the instrumental and the acting function, the piece introduces a narrator, a mime, a singer (base) and 3 performers on the podium, who operate an entire array of instruments (see further on); a component superposed to the whole mentioned is the electroacoustic one (3 magnetic recorders, 6 microphones and an amplifier). As stage props that also belong to the theatrical framework are (particularly) mentioned 3 rotating piano chairs (one for the narrator, one for the mime and one for the singer), a speaker's desk for the narrator and 3 Mälzel metronomes. The attention of the audience is shifted toward the half-darkness coming down over the action of each protagonist; the 3 instrumentalists (in tail coat) have a set interaction module in the stage positioning that has no setting, but only a few black curtains that accompany the empty walls. The indications addressed to them on the first page of the score are: “While the audience take their seats in the hall, the second instrumentalist enters from the left side of the lit stage and sits down at the second piano close to the celesta and (maybe) lights his small bedside lamp on the desk. In the following, he starts executing chords in different

nuances (*ad libitum*) on the piano and celesta, which should always contain the maximum number of sounds (as well as their resolutions). The author mentions that no particular (ascending or descending) direction of execution is preferred, but the *arpeggiato* is to be avoided. The jumps from one chord to the next are also *ad libitum*; the chord speed must be unequal, but the chords are to be separated by pauses with equal duration. In this action, the typical (obviously “steady”) perseverance of the performer will be highlighted; pauses will be interspersed all the time; the piano will dominate the celesta. Without containing music notes or any other semiography that should point to the express presence of music (according to the established stationary pattern), the score’s efficacy only achieves the idea transposition of a project, a strategic accompaniment addressed to the director’s intelligence; only his thinking will supervise a field of vision that will further articulate the show’s medial language. Therefore, the score presents a unitary, calculated, systematic guiding for each protagonist –in the manner I have exemplified the role of the second performer. Following the role of the mime–dressed in a black T-shirt (maybe made-up with grey foundation on the face skin) and trained in all sorts of agilities –we realise what type of ambivalence the director proposes; the mime’s imagination is able to arch the contrast curve through a rapport of (in)coherences with the other theatrical faces. In *Sur Scène* we assist in two synchronic (parallel) actions (circuits). The *mimetic* circuit, born as a “reflected mirror” of the established *cultural* one, is –in Kagel’s theatre–a circuit of satire, fine irony, humour. Reading them (on one hand that of the instrumentalists –together with that of the narrator, singer and electroacoustic medium – and on the other that of the mime) we are placed in front of medial experiences that pour differentiated expressions in the forms of music and show alike, (dis)parities, received as (potentially) infinite equations with unknown elements that may remain unsolved.

If we tried to identify the exchange of actions between the mime and the others from the way this is integrated in the general kinetic environment, we could not distinguish if he intends to enter a dialogue, if he refuses or only *simulates* cooperation with the narrator, the singer and the instrument performers. At any rate, the mime creates negative heterophony; I think it is a “dialogue of the deaf” with the mixed variety of one and the same isolated sense: auditory; the respective heterophony will notice through its effect, also encouraging to exploit the other present (but often dormant) senses in the ample sensory experience. A deeper understanding of the mime’s role results from what is mentioned in the score; he also enters the stage from the left side (like the performer) holding the hall programme of the performance in his hand, he looks interestedly at a music instrument nearby, then at a desk and (finally) discovers the mime chair by sitting on it, with his back turned to the audience. Until the narrator enters, he looks captivated by the respective programme (which now completely unfolds before his eyes); very slowly, he spins “one and a half rotations” on the chair and passes it in front of his eyes from one side to the other (horizontally). He suddenly starts

laughing at the audience; he still keeps the programme folded, this time lifting it ostentatiously right in front of his face, so that only his laughing mouth can be seen. Eventually the programme unfolds itself in his right hand and flutters downwards (to the left); then it will be left to (vertically) slide before the eyes; he will persist in repeating the same movement. The score has a co-ordination system of the agents through arrows (respectively keywords), so that all of them be encompassed in the overall kinetic net by following each other's eyes. A first arrow will signal the mime to "shift countenance"... He first looks at the narrator standing still, listening to him with maximum concentration. Then he steps ever more forward; the accents of his gaze are allusive. The narrator's attitude is completely opposite. He enters the stage with small and heavy-footed steps (in a black suit, with eyeglasses...) and holds a discourse manuscript in his left hand. He bends before the audience somewhat shyly; he puts on his ("resting") spectacles and arranges the manuscript sheets. The dark light-obscure of the stage makes way for the light (lit gradually). He starts reading precisely when the indicator <,,→">in the score requests concomitant actions from both performer and mime, too: the former gradually finishes his piano exercise without (necessarily) also slowing down the speed, "...chords in fortissimo are heard now and then", and the mime (as I said) stares at the narrator and closes in on him (ever more). The narrator's discourse triggers a type of cliché-oriented attention. The words that are heard sound: "Ladies and gentlemen!"... and he pauses. He starts again: "My esteemed ladies and gentlemen!" – this time followed by a longer pause. Then he starts with a constant rhythm that sometimes gets accelerates: "...If I may have your attention today; but it is clear to me that here, likewise, the sentence of profusion with special expression values, in which a movement of an idea is proclaimed, and it must narrow down and create order, and if we are not yet fully absorbed by this... (again pause in the speech)... He starts again, performing on his own (this time): "It is proven to (be) necessary – but this only succeeded in certain periods of creation—that a specific look can be focused on a general science and that should not become exclusively lost in "special" matters, but for instance in our times, it still does not work, ... it is also proven necessary that the multitude of particularities be collected again in larger totalities...", [here the narrator is required to gradually look to the left (little by little), to the mime, while he speaks, and to continue] "... which should group themselves in certain stages, highlighted, and then again in their own system..." [now the narrator is required to repeat and at the same timed form the word <system>in the locution act (and to go on)] "of musical formulations". While he is looked at, the mime slowly bends his upper body without losing sight of the narrator; his gesticulation tends to find an *alter ego* in the latter's spoken word, in each morphological particle (see discussion on *isolexisms* further below). Looking for arguments to associate syntax nature of the two manners of expression, Nichita Stănescu stated that "up to a point, the spoken word can be considered an essentialisation of a complex of gestures."(Stănescu 1990, 34) ...Broadening the "syntax" of the mime's gesticulation in his manner, the narrator

looks at him coldly. Then a long pause ensues. Suddenly he carries on, staring at the mime again: "... *The present crisis of music is one of the last consequences of...*" (and the text goes on).

Reproducing these differentiation forms of human thinking perpetuates itself as an irisation of several reference systems, subsumed to both the topics approached by Kagel and to the symbolic side of the show's media (as a whole). The parody of wadded music (abundant with sonorous "neologisms" known through the historical tradition), the ironic signalling of that *perpetuum mobile* of the old musical vocabulary, with "twitches", ironising the utilitarian musical semiography or aesthetics are content parts in the reference texts the narrator only separates himself from at the work's "double bar". Already from the first minutes of *Sur Scène*, when the laboratory of plural experiences gets to self-sustain its burning, the singer, too, enters the stage in a black suit (see the indication <„→ Dovon", score, p. 4>). Entering the stage from the right-hand side, he utters an "mmm" (as a sign of amazement...), gently bends with his back turned to the audience and heads for his chair. The "panta rhei" of the crosswords he will solve further goes through an entire scale of gestures: sung and spoken sonorities, vocal effects, stage movement, various meddling into the other protagonists' reflexive consciousness and that of the audience, of course. When related to the spoken word, the physiology of his role is kept captive by themes like "Webern", "Schönberg", "...the young generation of composers"....; his actions gradually multiply; thus, he will communicate gesturally synchronically (or diachronically) with the actors next to him; but he will also operate on the music instruments present on stage. Above is presented the first page from *Sur Scène* (example 2).

Instrumentalisten	Mime	Lautstärke Tonhöhe Zeitmaß	Sprecher
<p>Während das Publikum noch im Saal Platz, nimmt, tritt II von links¹ auf die saalhelle Bühne und setzt sich an das 2. Klv. (eventuell schaltet er eine kleine Pultlampe an). Anschließend an Klv. und Cel.: »Üben«², Lautstärke ad libitum. (Geübt werden vor allem große Sprünge, indem man absichtlich »unsauber« spielt. Die Intervalle der Sprünge gönnen nach Belieben wiederholt werden. Ungleiche Dauern, von einer immer gleichbleibenden Pause getrennt, werden die typische Beharrlichkeit des Übens klar zur Geltung bringen. Zwischendurch</p>	<p>Der Mime tritt von links¹ auf die saalhelle Bühne (ein Programm der Vorstellung in der Hand), betrachtet interessiert ein Instrument, ein Pult, dies und jenes, entdeckt schließlich den Mimenstuhl und setzt sich mit dem Rücken zum Publikum. Bis zum Auftreten des Sprechers</p>		

pausieren. Im allgemeinen soll das Klavier über das Celestaspiel dominieren.)

liest er im Programm, welches in Augenhöhe entfaltet ist. Langsam dreht er sich auf dem Stuhl (insgesamt anderthalb mal) und schiebt das Programm waagrecht vor seinen Augen hin und her. Plötzlich lächelt er zum Publikum; hält mit beiden Händen das Programm vor sein Gesicht, so, daß nur der lächelnde Mund zu sehen ist. Schließlich entfällt das Programm der rechten Hand und baumelt in der linken Hand nach unten; er läßt es senkrecht nahe an seinen Augen vorbeigleiten, von Zeit zu Zeit in einer Bewegung verharren.

Mit kurzen, kräftigen Schritten auftreten, das Vortragsmanuskript in der linken Hand. Etwas schüchtern vor dem Publikum sich verbeugen; mit größter Ruhe Brille aufsetzen und die Manuskriptseiten ordnen. Die Bühne wird allmählich heller, während die Saalbeleuchtung erlischt.

(→ *Sehr*) Allmählich mit dem Üben aufhören, aber nicht unbedingt verlangsamten. Ab und zu einige Alferde ff.

(→ *Sehr*) *Blick auf den Sprecher; unbeweglich, mit äußerster Konzentration zuhören, den Oberkörper immer weiter nach vorne schieben.*

normal

normal

langsam

→ *Sehr* geehrte Damen und Herren. (*Pause*) Meine sehr verehrten Damen und Herren. (*lange Pause*)^d

↓

Wenn ich Sie heute aufmerksam machen möchte; dann ist aber klar, daß auch hier wiederum das Urteil die Flut der speziellen Ausdruckswerte, in denen eine Bewegungsidee sich kundgibt, eindämmen und ordnen muß, wenn wir nicht völlig darin versinken sollen. (*Pause*)

normal

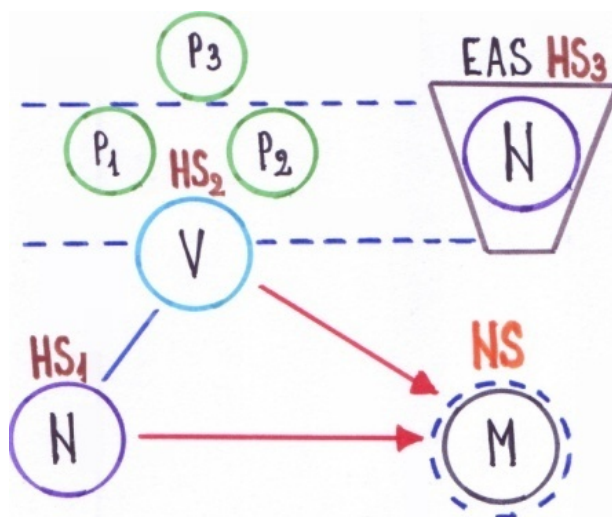
Example 2

The texts of the theatre are *asemantic alphabet* that will be presented by heart by all agents. The focus is only captured by the relations between the elements that come from the para-text (see the set of indications in the score together with the legend), but also by the dependency the theatre in *Sur Scène* manifests with other (older or newer) works of Kagel's. The composer tests the limits of the musical text combined with those of the para-text in most of his works. From the famous

movie *Ludwig van...* (1969) we recognise some programmatic similarities in *Sur Scène*. In the movie the functions of some isolexisms are presented (figures of speech consisting in the truncated / derived repetition of some words), which touch upon sensitive strings through their expression (translated into cultural codes); the isolexism turns into twitches, their substance thus passing way beyond the connotations that fill the referents of (simple) words. Verbal twitches present here, like “ <Beethoven>, <Bum/Bum>, <Bumelei>, <Rasulai> [...], <Brobert>, <Bemmet>, <Bdorothy>, <Britchard>, <Beer>, <Bschnaps>, <Bweine>, <Bossi>, <Byössi>, <Johannes von Bamsel>, <Bamsel Brahms>, <Bamsterdam>, <Broterdam>, <Brause>, <Bimmel von Bammel>, <Brudolf>, <Bgeorge>, <Baschenbecker> or <Beer von Schnaps>, <Birnen von Apfel>, <Basel am Brhein>, <Brown>, <Bstephan>, <Bsophie>, <Bleib>, <Bitter>, <Beiter>, <Beißer> [...], <Brat-Kartoffeln>, <Blinoleum>, <Brappeln>, <Blampe von Gas>, <Blampe van Bترولium>, <Blampe von Strom>, <Bpelikan>, <Käsebrot>, <GutenNacht>, <GutenNacht>, <GutenNacht>...” ironically point their finger to lexical conditionings; the respective conditionings (almost always) neglect the semantic import of the sonority; it is noticed that cultural codes ignore (in a reflex manner) the sonority and the referent (the meaning of the sonority), and it is omitted that each divides the format and the sense percentage into two slices. The isolexisms in *Sur Scène* illustrate similar types of semantic side-slips: instead of the word “ouverture” (<Ouverture>) attached to “*Fidelio*” (=cultural code), the word <Obertüre> (“upper door”) is introduced, thus re-distributing the internal sense of the text. Seeming to define pre-imaginary states, the spoken word and the physiology of sonorous gestures are also taken over as amalgam by the voice of the electroacoustic medium (as a new block of synesthetic sensations). The 4 tape fragments [A], [B], [C] and [D] are recorded (rendered) as inhomogeneous media of sonorous evolution; there is actually a counter-current which distinctly structures the inter-sensory rapports managed by the stage action. [A], [B], [C], [D] are supplied with content both from the narrator’s text and from the piano piece *Mimetics* (*Metapiece*), written in 1961. Their microstructural morphology (dissected until the phoneme level) is ingenious. The tape recording “voices” to a great extent from the “tearing words to pieces and from the fragments of the *live* text”. Additionally, the author mentions that “when recording, the features of the speech speculated by the mime will be taken into account: as both voice and rhythm”. The allusion to the canon of *integral serialism* is present here, as “on each recording, different words and phrases must be uttered so that no repetition occurs when all layers are rendered simultaneously. It will never be talked uninterruptedly; pauses of different lengths will always be inserted. The dynamics will change continuously”. The references regarding the structure (and performing) of this closed space which opens up to the dynamics of the stage bring some extra stiltedness. It is required that “when rendering this tape [...] a mix with the piano on stage should be made, as homogenous as possible” and further on that “taking into account the performance

space, there should be no noticeable differences (especially as to dynamics and timbre) between [the acousmatic instrument (n.n.)] and that sound produced by the microphone rendering the piano sound; [...] an acoustic change (of sonority) should be attained”. The 4 fragments are recorded separately, but rendered simultaneously (see the synchronisation plan further below), and thus the hermeneutic circle of the para-text grows. The structure of every uttered sentence belongs to the narrator “who has to carry out all the continuous changes in the pitch and dynamics of the sounds as precisely as possible. The speech velocity for these sentences (depending on the indicated duration of the parts) can be disproportionate; however, the punctuations must be articulated with clarity in the fast tempos [...]. The dynamics in rendering the tape must be changed all the time.”

This is the synthesis of the instrumental apparatus in *Sur Scène* (example 3).



Example 3

NB:

[P₁, P₂, P₃= performers /instrumentalists]

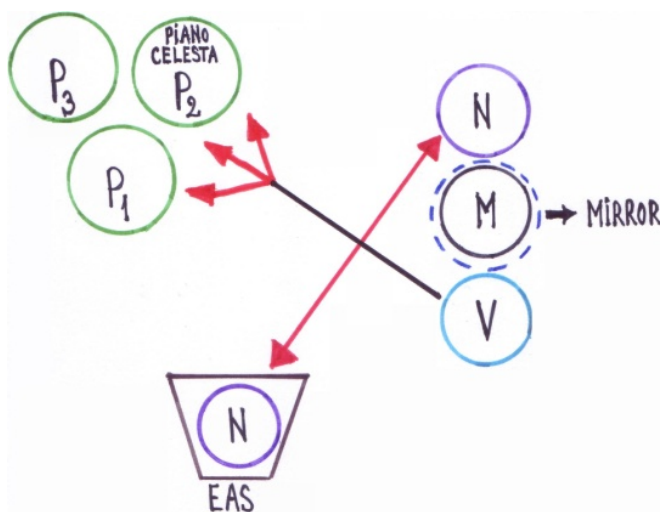
[V=vocalist][N=narrator][M=mime][N/EAS= electroacoustic]

[HS₁, HS₂, HS₃ = main voices (*Hauptstimme*)]

[NS = subordinate voice (*Nebenstimme*)]

We notice the structural multi-levels created: 1. – singer, narrator + tape voice are voices with a main function [HS] as they are represented by the sensory concrete, the audible media; 2.– the mime’s voice [NS] is shaped as a “secondary” role, as it radically removes the audible medium and translates it physiognomically into what is *aural* in the nature of the human being.

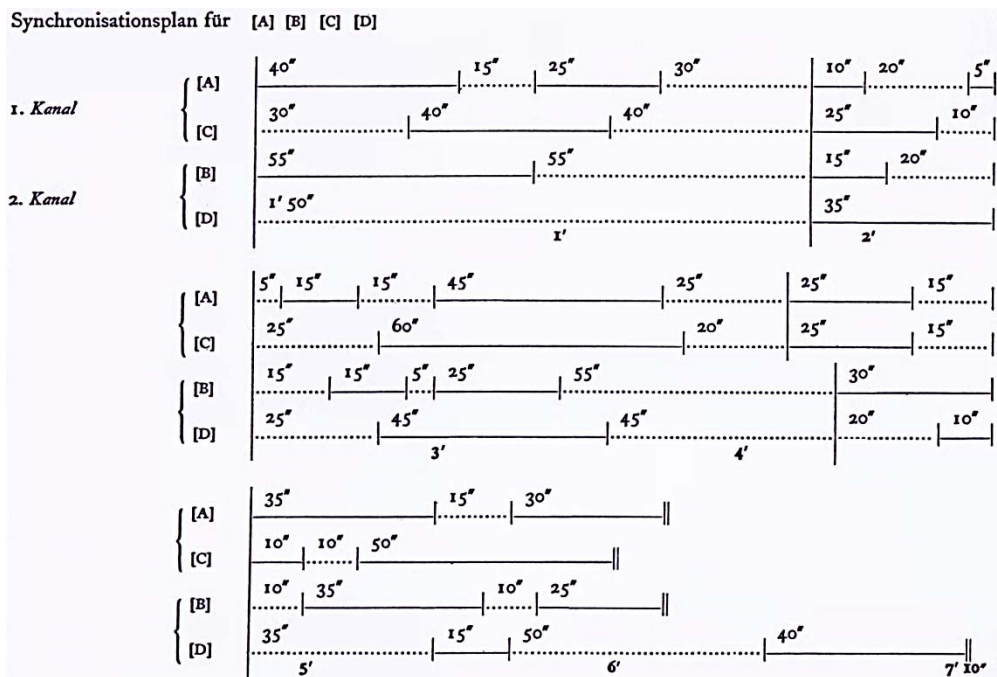
The *negative* heterophony in *Sur Scène* is manifested by the following lines of force (oriented vectors) (example 4).



Example 4

The trajectory rules of heterophony reside in generating incompatibilities on the variation levels of the instrumental theatre scaffolding. If we point the constitutive elements toward a paradigmatic class each, we realise that the group of instrumentalists creates the first compact set (class); that of the narrator together with the accompanying electroacoustic source is identical— as being the second; the third set is regularised by one single component: the voice; and the paradigmatic cycle is closed with the last character (the 4th class): the mime. Heterophony is formed through the collision of the material of these classes when the elements are syntagmatised; thus, we differentiate such heterophonic aspects more between mime, narrator (+tape), and voice; then, between mime and instrumentalists; (last but not least) between instrumentalists and narrator, but also between narrator and voice.

The distribution of the events contained on tape is rendered in values of “absolute” time (example 5).



Example 5. [Mauricio Kagel: *Sur Scène*, synchronisation PLAN of the tape fragments [A], [B], [C], [D]]

NB:

Continuous line [—] = text; dotted line [.....] = pause.

The systematics of the track configuration is designed so as the fragments to be distributed toward the 4 microphones on stage. Thus, the track 1 = tape fragment [A] – is placed behind the stage, on the left side; track 2 (= [C]) – is positioned in the front microphone, on the right-hand side; track 3 = fragment 3 (= [B]) will be heard in the front, from the left side, and the last track (= [D]) is in the back, on the left side. This rigour of the diagram suggests an *amplificatio*, seemingly contained in a modern (20th-century) “cori spezzati”, which lets itself be dressed in the costume of electroacoustic stereophony. The *work in progress* of the piece can still be re-created, redesigned, retired on a (post) modern reality, thus marking a new module of semantic (on one hand) and hermeneutic-investigative initiation (on the other).

5. Conclusions

The argument of instrumental theatre in Kagel (articulated after composing the piece *Anagram*, 1957/58) reconfigures some landmarks installed in the so atomised circuit

of the modern music corpus. In the 1960es, the anti-convention that changed the programme of music through an outcry of unacceptance in Darmstadt, recoiling itself as a *theatre*, de-edged some narrow morphological patterns with Avant-garde pretensions, but which often found similar sonorous resolutions. This would be a first idea regarding the composer's rapport with the Avant-garde, the need to reflect upon its *relative* functions; and about the automatized ones, related to the receptiveness of *conventional* music (linked to tradition), a critical opinion can also be noticed. Penetrating through the total show into the "parallel" circuit (of which I talked above) – as a manner of getting closer to and aware of the matter of conventional music (stored in the subconscious in the shape of an "I don't know why..." and taken out into the light for a (very short) while) – and as an antechamber of a more "real" circuit that postulates the "anti-convention" through its nature, we realise that the "parallel" one is "sent from somewhere..." to help in discovering that hypnotic tin can of the intellect that maintains contemporary man in cultural / civilising belt straps (which he does not even feel anymore). The functionality of Expressionism, its fractured biology, the force through which it spontaneously modifies the receiver's option in order to awake in him a certain taste for art, almost "genetically" influenced Kagel. The irony with which he puts the mime on stage to comment by gestures the hypothesis according to which the audience would manifest – through the schemes they use when encountering music, with its aesthetics/symbolism – traces of "idiotism" is a suggestion for resolving an equation that causes one to go back to one's *authentic* interior and chase away all external (reflex) temptations. The necessity of the experiment is also found here as a potential solution: to try and find the causes for the triggering of stereotype in the reception of art. The Absurd Theatre also captures – through its "wax" dramaturgy, through the "analysable analysable..." (see the narrator's discourse...), through "anti-functional" explanations in symbolising the Real –Kagel's Weltanschauung. In the part of the instrumentalists (score, p. 3) we distinguish a moment when the third one advances onto the stage with the same well-known assuredness (given by the speed of short, heavy-footed, pounding steps) and makes his reverence; under the right arm he holds a score of a 19th-century composer "whose name can be read from afar (...could it be Brahms?...)" – and the score of *Sur Scène* is (deliberately) hidden in that moment. Seated at the piano, he stands up and greets the audience with two reverential bows; he then sits down again (this time, fluttering nervously through the score, without avoiding the noise of the pages he turns). He suddenly stares at the second instrumentalist and greets him while he strikes a *c sharp* (in the low-pitch register) and lets it resound. At the same time, the mime slowly prepares a revolver, pointing it to his ear with his right hand...

Kagel's relationship with politics, with Hegel's philosophy (officialised in Germany, but vehemently criticised by Adorno), with tradition as a set of conventions (always "questioned" by the anti-tradition), with modern opera and theatre, with currents of the literary Avant-garde (the Dadaism of the first decades

of the 20th century being a significant mark of his creation), makes the *instrumental theatre* become an *absolute* music for the stage, but avoiding from the bud to be tangent with “stage music” (that serves as an “accompaniment for a concomitant action on stage”). A high-rank exponent of Modernism in 20th-century music, Mauricio Kagel remains the unbeatable mentor of modern (post-dramatic) theatre, maybe next to Hans Lehmann. He will continue to be *requested* to “still teach” – through the complex pedagogy he invented – that “interactive understanding” which reclaims and marks the status of the contemporary composer.

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