

## **Temporal organization of musical discourse in Ludwig van Beethoven's Fifth Symphony**

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*Musical discourse, and all its important events (thematism, repetitions, interior articulation, elements of diversification and motivic development etc), must be conceived at the moment of creation within the time frame in which they will take place when the piece is interpreted, in other words, the composer must be capable of imagining a realistic positioning of his work in the time that takes music in its flow. The composer must have a special sense of time, he/she must surpass the reality of the composing time (a much extended reality) and position himself/herself at every moment in the time of the interpretation of his/her work.*

Key-words: *time, organisation, meaning, symbolism, functions.*

### **1. Preliminary considerations on terminology**

Musical discourse has time as its main organizational basis: this is the main criterion around which musical discourse articulates, grows, develops, accumulates the tensions of the work of art and frees them according to temporal patterns well mastered by the composer. Music depends on time in the deepest meaning of the word; it is pre-eminently the temporal art.

### **2. Theoretical perspectives**

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essential environment for music and musical interpretation, the continuum in which music exists and is valorised. The organisation, development and conveyance of the musical message depend on time.

Time plays an essential role in structuring (synchronic and diachronic) musical discourse. The composer is a great manager of his artistic time: the discourse comes into being precisely as an effect of time organisation, tension distribution and maintenance throughout the artwork. Time is the frame of the manifestation and materialisation of music. Art supposes an interior temporality on which the semantic demands of the work depend. By means of the values they convey, the great masterpieces of the history of sound art benefit from a deep current interest of people in different centuries and millennia.

The musical form itself is “the way of organising sound events, which by their unfolding and organisation in time, fold into certain architectural patterns. At the level of musical form, one pursues the organisation of the musical time according to its discursive linearity, the structural analysis of the composition being punctuated by the laws of the musical morphology and syntax” (Timaru, Valentin, 2003: 11).

The musical form is the fixed criterion of the organisation of the musical time, the structure (the design) of the composition according to formal principles that require a more and more thorough understanding, the most important criterion being that of *contrast/variety*. Time is a very complex criterion, difficult to apply and analysed, in musical art of the highest value; many composers have regarded time as a subjective element of their creation, although there is also an objective time frame of the work of art (that neither the author nor the interpreter nor the public can ignore: the duration of a work).

Time is one of the fundamental concepts of physics and philosophy, art and poetry; it is “the indefinite continued progress of existence and events in the past, present, and future, regarded as a whole” (*Oxford Concise Dictionary of Music*, 2007: 268), “the fundamental tool of communication” (Adrian Iorgulescu), it is “a complex and heterogeneous fundamental dimension of life and society” (Solomon Marcus); it is a universal condition for everything that takes place, considered by Shakespeare, as “king of men and oldest among judges”.

Time has always been an important topic in philosophy, art, poetry and sciences. Time is that “dimension of the universe according to which events succeed each other irreversibly” (Dictionary of the Romanian Language), “the indefinite continued progress of existence and events in the past, present and future, regarded as a whole” (Oxford Dictionary), “a non-spatial linear continuum wherein events occur in an apparently irreversible order” or “a temporal succession imagined as a subject-independent substratum” (Aristotle: “the soul is the condition for the existence of time”), a reality that is sometimes certain, sometimes imperceptible (St. Augustine).

Time can be defined as “a subjective experience, a psychological form of organising experience” (Leibniz, Hume), “an a priori (universal and necessary) form of intuition” (Kant). If for Husserl it is “the force of consciousness that retains certain moments – the important one being the present” (On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time), for Heidegger “the primacy belongs to the future” (Being and Time, 1927) (Encyclopedia of Philosophy and Humanities, 2004: 1102).

Two fundamental perspectives on time were investigated in the history of philosophy: scientific time (objective) and artistic time (subjective, the time of a work of art): the ephemeral time of History and the eternal time of the Myth. In his poem, *We have time*, the Romanian philosopher Octavian Paler placed temporality among the privileged dimensions of our existence: “we have time for everything. (...) We have time to chase our questions away, to delay answers (...) We have time to receive gifts and not to understand them. We have time for everything. There is no time for just a bit of tenderness. When we are about to do this too - we die”: this is the poetic dimension of time.

Time is one of the few base physical quantities (seven in the International System). In philosophy, time is defined as an uninterrupted, irreversible flow, a continuum in which events succeed each other from the past, through the present to the future.

The second meaning of time refers to duration: it exists for each of us subjectively - it is the time of myth, of the sacred, of art, the pure time that Bergson writes about. We can analyse some temporal archetypes:

1. **SUSPENDED, INTERRUPTED TEMPORALITY**: for expressive reasons, the time of the musical work may be discontinuous (“the thread of time is full of knots” – Bachelard, “Dialectic of Duration”)
2. **SUPERPOSED TIMES** (the analysis of inter-textuality in the musical discourse): in music, sound levels organise together in an *autonomous* way in a complex context, around “strong textual structures” (Dominique Mangueneau) that support the milestones of the work. The superposed temporalities imply the superposition of events that offer consistency to the discourse.
3. **SILENCE** is very important among sound elements in music, highlighting precisely the moments charged with sound significance. The composer works not only with musical sound, but also with the expressive pause, with the absence of sound.
4. **PROJECTED TIME, IMAGINED TIME, (YET) UNCONSUMED TIME**: these concepts refer to the “past-future relationship” (Dragomir, Alexandru, 2006: 25) (approached also by philosophers in general).

The art of sound is organised primarily at the chronological level (by framing, distributing the sound phenomena in time). In general, composers work with three types of temporal organisation of musical events (each with its unique expressive laws): rarefaction, intermediary state and agglomeration.

### 3. Analytical perspectives: Beethoven's Fifth Symphony (part I)

We intend to analyse the musical discourse in Ludwig van Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, part I: one of the most complex masterpieces of the classical art, with an impeccable, profound and clear temporal organisation. In short, we will exploit all the temporal concepts discussed from a philosophical, theoretical perspective, by applying them to the analysis of the chosen musical discourse.

At the beginning of the first presentation of symphony's first theme we can hear string instruments, using the same sounds played in unison and octaves. The pause separates two motifs presented in sequence, so becoming an important element in the musical discourse's morphology:

The image shows a musical score for five string parts: Violino I, Violino II, Viola, Violoncello, and Basso. The music is in 4/4 time and D minor. The first five measures show the initial motif in unison and octaves, with a pause in the fifth measure. The score is marked with a forte (f) dynamic.

The temporal dimension is amplified by the fact that motif's second exposition is extended by a measure (m. 3-5), which shows the composer's desire to deliver a higher energy.

Starting from the fifth measure, the motif is exposed through intervallic diminution and augmentation, but without pauses. The continuity of exposure becomes evident, differently from the first five measures (where fragmentation was the creative solution). At the same time we notice that occurs the polyphonic dimension of the musical discourse, which facilitates its fluency.

Violino I.  
Violino II.  
Viola.  
Violoncello.

The image shows a musical score for four string instruments: Violino I, Violino II, Viola, and Violoncello. The score covers measures 18 to 21. The key signature is two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The dynamics are marked as *ff* (fortissimo) in measures 18 and 19, and *p* (piano) in measures 20 and 21. The music features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests and slurs.

In measures 18-21 we can experience a synthesis of accumulated musical tension, and a climax at the same time, which is reflected (at the temporal level) by returning to the initial fragmentation of the symphony debut. If the tensional phase assumed musical continuity, the beginning of the climax phases assume the presence of pauses between musical motifs.

The image shows a musical score for measures 18 to 21, focusing on dynamics and crescendo markings. The score is written for multiple staves, including strings and woodwinds. The dynamics are marked as *p cresc.* (piano crescendo) and *f* (forte). The crescendo markings are placed above the notes, indicating a gradual increase in volume. The music features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests and slurs.

#### 4. Conclusions

Usually temporality refers to the development of the musical piece as noted in the score, with the sound events arranged in the order desired by the composer. It implies a strict chronological profile, measurable, objective, *homogeneous* (it flows equally fast all the time). The intellect operates with scientific time (the first meaning of time analysed above), organising everything in distinct sequences, giving reality the appearance of order (that in fact it does not possess).

In Beethoven's Fifth Symphony we can observe an important temporal situation. Musical discourse has a unique way of musical time organizing. The composer uses sounds and pauses, the interaction between sounds and pauses as a playwright who directs very precisely the entry and the exit of each character in the scene (in a musical sense, of a particular presentation of a certain musical idea). More semantic analysis (in terms of temporal organization) must be done to better explain the author's conception of the evolution of musical discourse.

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