

Sequenza XI: a practical performer's guide through rhetoric

Research report of Master's Degree

by

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SUMMARY

The research has been planned to give support to the interpreter who desires to start a personal research about *Sequenza XI*, focusing on rhetorical features as means for its interpretation. The thesis is aimed to provide a method for both the performer who approaches the work and he who already knows it to connect music and language by rhetoric, focusing on XVI-century rhetoric. The main question *In which way can the performer relate musical expression by rhetoric in specific areas of Sequenza XI ?* has been answered by consulting books about rhetoric written by Italian scholars such as Ferruccio Civra and Silvano Perlini and the British Judy Tarling, who inspired the connection between rhetoric of Renaissance and Baroque with its potential use in XX-century music and specifically in *Sequenza XI*. Rhetoric will be connected with basic elements of interpretation such as rhythm, dynamics, gesture and phrasing as well as gestures such as tamboras, rasgueados or arpeggios. Focus on rhetoric has been personally chosen as guideline of interpretation of *Sequenza XI* to provide a more vital performance: that will be therefore the starting point of the performer for a balanced interpretation. A further contrastive analysis among *Sequenza XI* and other *Sequenzas* will be provided to answer the question *How is Sequenza XI connected with others Sequenzas as regards rhetoric, gesture and tension?*. The aim of the thesis is therefore to mark the difference between an interpretation which does not take into account rhetorical features and the one which does, showing that it is vital for the interpretation of *Sequenza XI* itself to bring out expressivity and virtuosism by using rhetoric and gesture.

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INTRODUCTION

Brindo blandi bemolli di baritoni:
Elevo encomi all'estro eletrarmonico:
Ricanto e ritornello i rombi e i ritmi:
Inni ti inneggio, interludo interludi:
Opto te ottocentenne, otto millenne...
(E. Sanguineti, *per Luciano*, acrostic)

Sequenza XI has been chosen as leading topic of the following research for two reasons: the first one is based on the personal interest about dodecaphonic music and its expression on guitar, the second is based on the need to find a possible key to interpret the piece from a gestural-rhetoric point of view, hypothetically matching each specific rhetoric-gestural field with a specific area in the *Sequenza* itself. Quoting Berio (Berio & Dalmonte, 1985, p. 28), virtuosity is the result of knowledge, gesture and the effort to canalize the musical idea into the instrument: therefore, the composer needs to find a specific gesture for a specific emotional feature.

The research started from listening recordings of the piece by guitarists such as Eliot Fisk (Berio, Int. Release 18 Nov. 1998), Pablo Sáinz Villegas (Berio, 1998-2004) and Giulio Tampalini (Berio, 2011). Their recordings were different not only as regards solfège, but also their way of phrasing and connecting fragments in the piece. Therefore the need to find a hypothetical connection between music, language and symbolism in *Sequenza XI* brought to curiosity about rhetoric, as unitary means. This research has been thought to support the choice of direction of scales, musical phrases and then bigger sections with the support of *ars dicendi*. Luciano Berio himself published his idea about symbolism by quoting Joyce: '*In Finnegans Wake the symbolism, the syntax, phonetics, iconic imagery and gestural content create a series of semantic short circuits, a polyphony of associations[...]*'. (Berio, L. Remembering the future, 2006).

After reading his lectures reports in Harvard about musical semantics and his idea of polyphony in *Sequenzas*, the curiosity about his *Sequenza* for guitar brought to a question after performing it for some months: it seemed that the performance was correct, but the connections between phrases, and then sections, was missing as well as the connection between the soul of flamenco guitar and the classical one. After meeting composers who are specialized in dodecaphony such as Maurizio Azzan and Giorgio

Colombo Taccani and one of the most refined Italian lutenists, namely Massimo Lonardi, who provided books and essays about rhetoric in Renaissance and Baroque epochs, I was motivated to connect Berio Sequenza XI to Baroque music using rhetoric as mutual means.

As stated in *Summary*, the research is aimed on the study of the use of rhetoric in Berio's Sequenza XI to support the performer for his research of vital interpretation. Five limiters have been used to lead the research: Sequenza, rhetoric, gesture, emotional, tension. On this basis, the research questions have been structured as follows at the end of this chapter. A brief view of Berio's life from 1940s will show his development from his twenty until his maturity. The reader will therefore be informed about his conception of Sequenza and how he connected his ideas to the instrument itself.

In 1945 Berio was twenty and he joined the Conservatory of Milan: in that year he listened to works such as *Pierrot Lunaire* by Arnold Schoenberg and *La mort d'un tyrane* by Darius Milhaud. Two years later, after being attracted by Weber, Stravinsky and Hindemith among the others, Berio wrote *La Petite Suite pour piano*¹, in which there are evident influences of Ravel, Prokofiev and Neoclassicism. As Restagno (Restagno, 1995, p. 15) mentions, Berio in his works had a great capacity to assimilate features of multiple styles of his epoch.

In the 1940s Berio used to accompany singers with piano and among them he met his future wife *Cathy Berberian*. Staying close to her, Berio became interested into English, mainly in *idioms*, becoming also expert of linguistics both Italian and English. His close friend, the Italian novelist *Umberto Eco*, reported that he saw in Berio's house the course of General Linguistics by Ferdinand de Saussure and *Ulysses* by James Joyce. '*Why am I interested to linguistics? I think to feel the inherent need of music to explore the eternal path between sound and significance [...] which is not a specific one, but the meaning of musical processes. In an epoch in which there is research of new material organization, it seemed natural to study the organization of languages.*' (Restagno, 1995, p. 17)

¹ http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KTE_pthXCo, Andrea Bacchetti, piano. He studied with Berio himself as pianist and conductor.

After becoming musically connected to James Joyce with his works *Strings in the earth and air*, *Monotone*, *Winds of May* and *Thema (Hommage à Joyce)*, Berio became acquaintance of Stockhausen in Darmstadt and Maderna in Genoa: with the latter, he founded the *Studio di Fonologia della RAI di Milano*, in which they experimented combinations with voice, instruments and magnetic tape. Both artists had the aim to blend the French idea of *musique concrete* and the German principle of *Klangerzeugnis*, or the production of sounds through synthesis. The result was an enrichment of the ‘pure sound’ of voice and instrument by the electronic means.

The 1950s were crucial for Berio. Once he had experienced the neo-classicism assimilated through Ghedini and the 12-note serialism represented by Dallapiccola, the direction taken by Berio’s works in the years 1954-63 moved alongside the most radical developments of new music, subsequently reaching a position of unprejudiced autonomy, able to take advantage of the most heterogeneous musical material. Already in the works composed in 1954-6 the assimilation of post-Webern serialism does not imply an unconditional acceptance of its rigorous rules nor exclude poetic intentions of traditional range. Even his timely approach to aleatory procedures, prompted by the lesson of Cage in the late 1950s, excluded any participation in the crisis of Western concept of music, limiting its effects to proportional notation of *Sequenza I* for flute.



Figure 1 Berio, *Sequenza I* for flute, page 1

At *Ferienkurse* held in Darmstadt in the late 1950s Berio met Stockhausen: ‘during the first years of the Roaring Fifties we (Berio and his contemporaries) shared a need to change, to clarify, to get a deeper knowledge of and to develop the serialist experience. Each one of us made a different contribution to an important evolution in music. In 1953 Stockhausen was the theoretical pivot of *Ferienkurse*, Pousser provided the

speculative machinery, Boulez the analytical spirit and Maderna was a benign father-figure.' (Berio & Dalmonte, 1985, p. 59) Both musicians influenced Berio during his five years in Darmstadt: he was particularly affected by ideas of Maderna, on which he based his 'rumba' for the ballet *Allez-hop*.

Enriched by ideas of Stockhausen, Maderna, Dallapiccola, as well as his composition teacher Ghedini, Berio started his long project of *Sequenzas* with the first one written for flute, dedicated to the Italian flutist Severino Gazzelloni and published in 1958. Berio was seriously inspired by virtuosity: *'the most obvious and external unifying element among Sequenzas is virtuosity. It often arises out of a conflict, a tension between the musical idea and the instrument, between concept and musical substance. [...] Finally, as I have often emphasized, anyone worth calling a virtuoso these days has to be a musician capable of moving within a broad historical perspective and of resolving the tension between the creativity of yesterday and today. My own Sequenzas are written with this sort of interpreter in mind, whose virtuosity is, above all, a virtuosity of knowledge* (Berio & Dalmonte, 1985, p. 90). Those features were evident in every *Sequenza*, even though Berio points out in his interviews with Rossana Dalmonte to *Sequenzas* III and V: he tried to develop a musical commentary between the virtuoso and his instrument by disassociating various types of behavior and then putting them together again, transformed, as musical unities. In the mentioned *Sequenzas* Berio is particularly focused on theatrical elements. In the fifth one, for example, that feature is explicit because the piece makes open reference to the clown Grock, neighbour of Berio in Oneglia, and, in particular, to his famous '*warum*'. The instrumentalist's wind column must perform two functions simultaneously: playing and singing. It is not easy to get the co-ordination of the two elements exactly right and the sense and efficacy of the piece depends on scrupulously respecting the intervals between voice and instrument. Gesture and theatrical virtuosity were also the leitmotif of *Sequenza* XI for guitar, commissioned by the American guitarist Eliot Fisk and Associazione Musicale in Rovereto (Italy) to write a *Sequenza* for guitar. Berio called it '*maledetta*', cursed one, and it was published in 1988 for Universal.

At the question *do the other Sequenzas have something in common?*, Berio answered that they are intended to set out and melodically develop an essential harmonic

discourse and to suggest a polyphonic mode of listening (Berio & Dalmonte, 1985)². The idea of Berio was supposedly to establish a way of listening, both for polyphonic and monodic instruments, so strongly conditioned as to constantly suggest a latent, implicit counterpoint. The idea was kept in all fourteen sequenzas, and it was even empowered by his *Chemins*, in which material from a selected number of Sequenzas, the one for guitar was among them, was taken as solo part of the instrument which has to play with the orchestra. The project of Berio last from 1958 to 2003, the year of his death. On that year he wrote his last work, *Stanze*, for baritone, three male voice choir and orchestras, with lyrics by Sanguineti, Caproni, Celan, Brendel and Pagis, giving a synthesis of his poetics³.

² Sequence: a melodic or harmonic pattern repeated three or more times at different pitches with or without modulation, etymology: : 1350–1400; Middle English < Late Latin sequentia, equivalent to sequ- (stem of sequi to follow) + -entia -ence (Source: www.dictionary.reference.com)

³ Source: www.lucianoberio.org

The hypothetical rhetorical analysis in Sequenza XI has been chosen as concept field of the research to provide a personal interpretation of its use by the author: starting from the analysis of phrases from a rhetorical point of view, it will be shown how they can be vitalized and then logically contextualized in bigger sections through the use of rhetoric. Four questions will lead the research to the interpretation of Sequenza XI which will connect rhetoric elements to tension and gestures starting from the energetic and emotional scope.

1. Main question: In which way can the performer relate musical expression by rhetoric in specific areas of Sequenza XI ?

1.1 Subquestion 1: Which hypothetical rhetorical features taken from rhetoric of XVI century have been placed in Sequenza XI and how?

1.2 Subquestion 2: In which way does Berio underline the weakest and strongest points of tension as regards the use of musical gesture?

1.3 Subquestion 3: How is Sequenza XI connected with others Sequenzas as regards rhetoric, gesture and tension?

METHOD

The research has been carried out with the aim of finding a vital interpretation of Sequenza XI by using rhetoric as main guide, which provided the idea to interpret it not only from a morphological point of view, looking at figures which regard rhythm and structure, but also from a gestural point of view, in which gesture was considered not only from the performer point of view –i.e. rasgueado or tambora for guitar- but also specific patterns used in Sequenza XI for specific emotional tensions.

Books written by Massimo de Sandro, Ferruccio Civra (Civra, 1991), Claude Palisca (PALISCA, 2006) and Judy Tarling (Tarling, 2004) provided a synthesis between XVII-century treaties about rhetorical figures as well as the rhetorical contest in XVI century, in which there were already treatises who were really interested in connecting music with spoken language. Particularly interesting has been the introduction of *Il Fronimo, l'arte di ben intaulare* (Galilei, 1584) : meant to teach how to write on tablature for Renaissance lute, it contents a long introduction in which Vincenzo Galilei explains what *affection* of soul means, and how it can reproduced in music using rhetorical figures, as well as how to use particular ornamentations for a particular attitude of the soul. Also interesting was the book *Le discourse musicale* by Nikolaus Harnoncourt, which awaked the will to research how certain Baroque works can be interpreted and in which way they are connected to language. I found more interesting to concentrate on books about rhetoric written in XVI century rather than concentrating on treaties such as Aristotle *Rhetoric* and *Poetics* or Cicero *De Oratore*:

-First because rhetoric of XVI century was anyway based on that from Ancient Greek and Roman periods, so the writers of treaties such as Kircher already carried out a research on Ancient Rhetoric;

-Second, as a consequence of the first one, because treaties written by modern scholars and inspired by XVI-century treaties, provided not only a complete view of Classical rhetoric, but also a context from the development to the decadence of the *ars dicendi*.

To answer to the first two subquestions, which have been initially considered as one subquestion: *Which hypothetical rhetorical features taken from rhetoric of XVI century have been placed in Sequenza XI and how? In which way does Berio underline*

the weakest and strongest points of tension as regards the use of musical gesture? the book by Di Sandro (Di Sandro, 2005) was particularly interesting because he summarizes the definitions written by scholars of the XVII century, such as Burmeister and Kircher, laying out a more complete definition, on which basis the rhetorical figures provided in chapter *RESULTS* have been detected: after reading the essay, which was enriched by examples taken from music of XVI century, the step further was to detect first certain passages on Sequenza XI which referred to the examples of that essay and then recognize the rhetorical figure. After that, on the basis of his definitions of rhetorical figures in the examined essay, a musical analysis of every found figure was needed to understand what that rhetorical figure could actually mean for the interpreter who is interested in a figurative approach of Sequenza XI. Furthermore, it was needed to read books by Civra, Palisca and Perlini, associating already from the beginning the use of rhetoric in music of XVII century and the one used in Sequenza XI. The rhetorical figures which will be analyzed in the next chapter have been personally chosen: it means that those fragments taken from Sequenza XI can be interpreted from different points of view, depending from the interpreter sensitivity, which avoids to have one unique model of performance of the piece itself. To answer to the third subquestion *How is Sequenza XI connected with others Sequenzas as regards rhetoric, gesture and tension?*, it was necessary to read books written on Berio, like the one by Rossana Dalmonte (Berio & Dalmonte, 1985) as well as most of Sequenzas, which helped not only to find a guideline to the interpretation of Sequenza XI, but was also interesting to find its stylistic contextualization among the other Sequenzas. It was therefore needed to take into account the other Sequenzas published by Universal Editions.

The *RESULTS*, considered as answers given to the three subquestions, will lead to the answer of the main question: *How will the performer relate musical expression by rhetoric in specific areas of Sequenza XI ?*, which will be provided in *CONCLUSION*. In the Appendix 1 a CD⁴ (Berio, 2012) has been attached to give a practical example on how the interpretation of Sequenza XI can really change from neutral to vital taking into account those rhetorical features which will be further analyzed.

⁴ In the first three tracks rhetorical figures will be announced and then played, in Track 4 the first page will be recorded first without taking into account rhetorical features, whereas the track 5 will focus on rhetoric.

Consulted literature

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RESULTS

RHETORIC AS GUIDELINE FOR THE INTERPRETER

As mentioned in the introduction, Berio takes into account in every Sequenza rhythmic, temporal, dynamic and morphological features, in which there are different level of tensions. Starting from the first section, namely the exposition, which has been determined by scholars such as Vianello (Sequenza XI per chitarra sola, 1994) and Porcaro (Porcaro & Halfyard, 2007) from page one to page four, hypothetical reference points will be taken to see how expressive and rhetorical means have been used to follow a certain line of tension.

MORPHOLOGY OF THE EXPOSITION

Starting from the very beginning of Sequenza XI, two chords have been provided, in which the author includes the core polyphony of the piece itself: they will be used in root position at the very beginning, as the picture shows, and then inverted during the whole piece. They will be called respectively A and B chord:



A-chord



B-chord

Those basic chords lead to the scale of seven sounds used in Sequenza XI: it has been detected as follows. It is namely made out of

C3 – D#3(as enharmonic of Eb3)- G3 - F#3 - E4 - Eb4 - A4

and it has been used in all three-dimensional lines (melodic-horizontal, chord-vertical, rasgueado plus fast scale-diagonal) already from the fourth line of the first page, as shown in next picture.



Figure 2 Berio, Sequenza XI, p.1 line 4

RHETORICAL FEATURES IN SEQUENZA XI EXPOSITION

The following images has been included in the research to give a synthetic idea of rhetoric figures used in the first and second page: every figure detected from page one and two will be first collected in three macrostructures, namely *rhythmical*, *melodic* and *structural* and then they will be analyzed in the extent in which it has been used and in which way the knowledge of it will influence the performer in his interpretation. As a guideline for the interpretation and the definition of the hereby figures, as stated in chapter *METHOD*, a glossary will be provided as follows, using 'Il madrigale' by Massimo di Sandro⁵ as source.

Figure 3 Berio Seq. XI p. 1

⁵ The abbreviations used in the definitions are the followings: B.= Burmeister, *Musica poetica*, 1606; K.=Kircher, *Musurgia Universalis*, Roma, 1650; Be.=Bernhard, *Tractatus compositionis augmentatus*, ca. 1660

RHYTHMICAL FIGURES⁶

ANAPHORA

Anaphora= [K.]: insistent repetition of a melodic pattern, even with variations and with different height. It is used to express strong passions, for example 'all'armi!', it imitates the prosodic intonation of intonations or warnings for example.

The image below has been taken from the first two lines of Sequenza: the use of *anaphora* here is meant to remind to the performer first and then to the listener in which harmonic fields they are involved. This hypothesis can be confirmed by the presence of pauses of heights put at the beginning and at the end of every anaphora: the performer has then time to change harmonic field on the one hand and on the other hand he is involving in the classical soul of the guitar, before the burst just after the first two lines. Second, it is meant to destabilize the smooth atmosphere of the first two line in order to announce the stronger *improvvisamente violento* as warning.

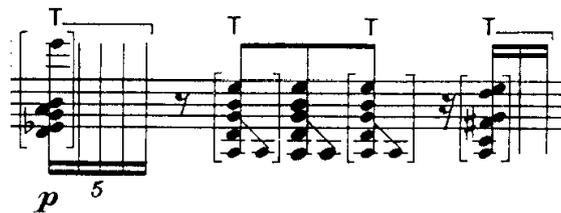


Figure 4 Seq. XI, p.1 line 1

ABRUPTIO

Abruptio= [K.; Be.]: unexpected interruption or break of a melodic phrase using a pause: its aim is to express an abrupt event. According to Be. It can be also the elision of last note of cadenzas. The pause is generally followed by a sudden rhythmical change.

Used to suddenly cut the thrilling breath of crescendo at the end of second line of page 1, this figures is meant to provide a shock in dynamics and rhythm. If the performer is aware of the power of this figure, that in Sequenza XI has been used as pause or very short rasgueado, he will exploit its function from technical as well as emotional point of view. For example, at the beginning *abruptio* has been used to split harmonic fields to give space among them; at the end of second line it has been used as breathing between two very strong emotional crescendo

⁶ See CD track 1

as well as release of tension between two demanding passages from technical point of view. The original use of *abruptio* in this piece provides its usage as closing part of a phrase, pointing out an emotional shock, as well as short breathing for the next effort, as well as break to change technical patterns.

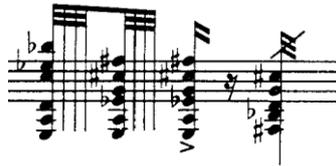


Figure 5 Seq. XI, p. 1 line 5

MYMESIS

Mymesis = [B.]: repetition of an homophonic passage with different height. A sharp split is needed among those passages, with a pause or with a further repetition.

At the end of lines fourth and fifth of page 1, *mymesis* appears to introduce changes rhythmical and structural changes. As consequence of the first one, there is a rise of tension led by *climax*, whereas the second introduces a drop as regards tension as well as dynamics. The use of this figure allows the interpreter to have a break: the difference between *abruptio* and *mymesis* in this piece regards timing of release of tension. As a consequence,

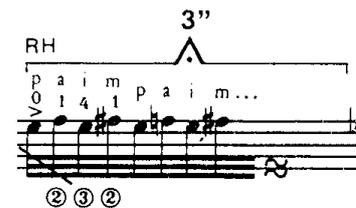


Figure 6 Seq. XI, page 1 line4

abruptio does not involve a rhythmical change, whereas *mymesis* requires that. Metaphorically, *abruptio* will be defined as a wall or springboard, whereas *mymesis* as turn or slide.

MELODIC FIGURES⁷

ANABASIS / CATABASIS

Anabasis=[K.]: figure which points out a rise, used to express feeling of spiritual ascension.

The etymology of anabasis comes from Greek ἀνα (ana, “up”) + βάσις (“walk, going”), pointing out to an ascent which goes to a series of chords on page two at the penultimate line: the stability of multiple chords is introduced by an ascending and fast arpeggio. The knowledge of this rhetorical figure brings the performer to give a direction to the arpeggio in order to have a complete idea of the fragment, more than focusing only on its technical difficulty. Usually anabasis introduces a crescendo, even though in this example it is characterized by diminuendo: this contradictory usage of rhetoric and dynamics brings even more emotional tension.



Figure 7 Seq. XI, page 2 line 7

CATABASIS is, instead, the exact contrary of *anabasis*, so it is a walk down both as regards heights of sound as well as drop of tension. Here as follows, there is one example taken from page 3 of Sequenza XI.



Figure 8 Seq. XI, page 3 line 2

⁷ See CD track 2

DUBITATIO

Dubitatio=uncertainty in modulations: it occurs by repetitions or fragmentations. It can have as consequence confused hypothesis on the continuation of the speech.

This figure has been used at the end of the very first exposition, namely at the end of the long series of rasgueados on page 2. This sample has been considered as *dubitatio* seeing that the author is still taking into account both flamenco and classical soul of the guitar, it means very short or long phrasing as well as huge contrasts of dynamics. Also the number written on the box, namely $x 7$, provides information about doubting: a very long passage based on arpeggiato cluster brings the performer to erase what has been stated so far to look for, but still not finding, a new path. Actually, the new rhythmical and structural pattern has being shaped on page 3.



Figure 9 Seq. XI page 2, line 4

HYPERBOLE

Hyperbole=[B.]: it occurs when a melodic line goes over its height limits.

This figure has been used in a genial way on a precise place in which the performer needs space and time to rest. The jump from B3 to G#5 is one among the longest



Figure 10 Seq. XI, page 2 line 6

ones used in Sequenza XI to the highest note of the first section. In the image below it can be seen that the chord

is one of the few tonal ones used in this piece: it can be considered as a drop of dew after a storm, which introduces a short peaceful time before the new series of rasgueados. Hyperbole has been not only used from a melodic point of view, but also from a rhythmical point of view: it is the first time on this section in which a chord brings such duration. It will be later used even with longer value, as continuous sighs. Hypothetically, hyperboles used on this

page can be considered even as *abruptio*, seeing that they emotionally interrupt all the tension whenever they appear. This strengthens the hypothesis that there are melodic figures used as rhythmical ones as well.

INTERROGATIO

Interrogatio= [Be.]: conclusion of a melodic phrase with ascending intervals. It express questions; a Phrygian cadence⁸ can occur to express interrogation. Usually it is followed by a pause, which enhances the question itself.

The usage of interrogatio at this point of Sequenza is particular for two reasons: the phrase is concluding with a fade out of dynamics and therefore tension, but still there are some elements which reminds those passages with a lot of energy. They are apparently disturbing the *diminuendo* and bringing the listener to the desire of an end of the section itself. This is the main characteristic of Sequenza, namely to be dichotomic as guitar is, seeing its classical and flamenco souls: the first refined and the latter rude. Actually, the interrogatio has been shown with rasgueados, which are basics for flamenco, and they rhythmically lead to the question *when is this phrase going to be concluded?*, even though they keep the same tension of the beginning of *improvvisamente violento*.

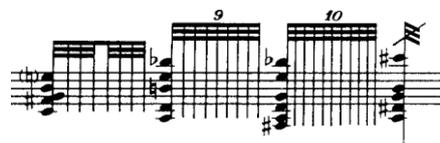


Figure 11 Seq. XI, page 1 line 5



FIGURES USED MUTUALLY MELODICALLY AND RHYTHMICALLY

In this paragraph, *anaphora* on page 2 will be analyzed as well as mutual *rhythmical* and *melodic* rhetorical figure. In the image below, this huge *anaphora* has been divided in phrasing *anaphora* or chord *anaphora*: here there are short phrases based on a series of bichords which are repeated for three times and then repetitions based on chords which appears for three times too. The difference regards quantity of sound, and therefore quantity of notes, on one hand; on the other hand the first mentioned *anaphora* refers to the melodic phrasing, whereas repeated chords refer to a structural pattern which is more focused on rhythm than *cantabile*. As regards *hyperbole*, in the previous paragraph it has already been considered as both rhythmical and melodic figure.

The image displays a musical score with three staves, annotated with rhetorical figures. The first staff is labeled 'DUBITATIO' in green, with a bracket indicating a section marked 'x7'. The second staff is labeled 'EPISTROPHE' in green, with a bracket indicating a section marked 'x6'. The third staff is labeled 'HYPERBOLE' in red and 'ANAPHORA' in blue. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'pp', 'f', and 'p'. The annotations use colored lines and brackets to highlight specific musical phrases and their repetitions.

Figure 12 Seq. XI, page 2 lines 4-6

STRUCTURAL FIGURES⁹

CLIMAX

Climax= [B.; K.]: gradual rise or drop of one or more voices. According to K. climax is only a rise, it shows spiritual elevation. It efficiently imitates an increase or decrease of tension.

The big climax found on line three is born from the abruptio at the end of the second line, which gave the first emotional shock of the new section *improvvisamente violento*. Climax is here used to increase tension from zero to maximum: as regards rhythm, Berio starts from simple rasgueado to nine time rasgueado and even in this climax he uses bare chords as abruptio, providing even more tension as regards dynamics. The placement of climax is logical, seeing that after this line, there is a short but very intense series of the basic chords of Sequenza XI and then a long fade out until the end of the page. Climax has been therefore used from a structural point of view, separating the first part of the introduction from the second one, giving to the listener an emotional split already in the first page.

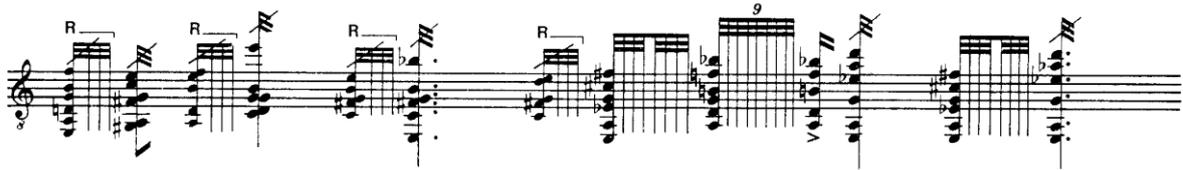


Figure 13 Seq. XI, page 1 line 3

EPYSTROPHE

Epistrophe= periodic return of certain notes, phrases or entire melodies; it particularly fits for prayers.

The epystrophe D – Eb has been used to remind to the interpreter that in this small section those two notes are more present than others and therefore he



Figure 14 Seq. XI, page 2 line 4

focuses on those notes concentrating the listener to that half tone. It is used at the end of musical phrase, as epystrophe was used at the end of every line of prayers, to remind to the

⁹ See CD track 3

listener which are the most important notes of the scale in that precise moment. As follows, an overview of the rhetorical figures detected on page 2 has been provided. Surely there are more figures which can be found from a subjective point of view: this research has therefore been meant as starting point for the performer who is curious about rhetoric as science and the way it could be applied on contemporary music.

The image shows a musical score with five staves. The first staff is annotated with 'DUBITATIO' in green, a triangle symbol with 'x7', and dynamic markings 'ff', 'pp', 'f', 'p'. The second staff has 'EPISTROPHE' and 'EPIST.' in green, with 'p', 'ff', and 'p' markings. The third staff features 'HYPERBOLE' in red and 'ANAPHORA' in blue, with 'p', 'f', 'p', 'dolcemente', and 'p' markings. The fourth staff has 'ANABASIS' in blue, with 'dolcemente', 'p', and 'ff' markings. The fifth staff is marked 'ABRUPTIO(1)' in red, with 'p', 'f', 'ff', 'p', 'f', 'p', and 'dolcemente' markings. Other annotations include 'p', 'ff', 'pp', 'f', 'p', 'dolcemente', 'vibr.', 'pont.', 'T', 'R', 's', 'ALLIT.', and 'UE 19273'.

Figure 15 Seq. XI page 2 second half

INFLUENCE OF RHETORIC ON GESTURE

In the previous chapter, rhetoric was the main feature analyzed: a list of gestures will follow to list those elements which are needed to understand how rhetoric influences gesture. At this point of the research, a few lines about rhythm will be provided to connect measure to emotional gesture hypothetically used in Sequenza XI. A mixture of rhythms holds his attention and repetition in music of the same rhythmic pattern with variations in pitch and intervals can provide an opportunity for the composer to surprise the listener. In Sequenza this change is sharp when Berio leads the style from flamenco to classical guitar and backwards. Like many contemporary works, a list of performance notes needs to be provided to give to the interpreter a track of what the composer wished. In this case, the three main elements indicated are *Tambora*, *Tremolo* and *Rasgueado*, which are respectively characteristic of minimum, middle and maximum tension in Sequenza itself.

TAMBORA: This effect is provided by a percussion with the right thumb just behind the bridge. Berio uses this effect both to give a mysterious atmosphere, provided by the *pianissimo* dynamics which occurs by the percussion and to create a particular fade out.

♩ = 50, ma liberamente, come preludiando



The musical notation shows a sequence of chords and percussive markings. Above the staff, there are several 'T' markings with arrows pointing to specific notes, indicating tambora effects. The dynamics are marked as *p*, *pp*, *p*, *pp*, *p*, and *p*. A '5' is written below the staff near the end of the line. The tempo is indicated as ♩ = 50, ma liberamente, come preludiando.

Figure 16 Seq. XI, page 1 line 1

This is the very beginning of Sequenza XI. Tamboras create a quiet atmosphere already from the first line; they have been used alternated with plucked or arpeggiato chords or independently, like the third three repeated chords. In the first case their aim is to provide a different timbre: this is realized with the speed of percussion, faster than pluck and therefore more dramatic, and also by the metallic color of tambora itself. In the second case, tamboras are used as dynamics intervention: starting from a pause and ending with a pause, they are

used as Doppler effect¹⁰ from a dynamic point of view. With a closer look at the following figures, it can be noticed how Berio used tambora in diaphanous phrases, like the previous one, or in dramatic ones. From a rhythmical point of view, the first tamboras are used as sigh, providing anxiety in audience and sense of expectation, whereas the second ones describe the equal rhythm, the spondee, as being useful to calm. Already from the beginning of the piece, there is a clear difference between two affections and, therefore, two souls of the same instrument.



Figure 17 Seq. XI page 1 line 4

This is the last part of the last line of page 5. Here it is shown that Berio uses the first tambora as a fade out, whereas the second one is used to give a major dynamic impact. There is a basic difference: in the first sample tambora starts from the beginning of the figure, as the downwards arrow shows; the second figure shows that the first chord needs to be played with a stroke of right thumb-nail from the sixth to the first string and then tambora starts. This kind of tambora is louder and therefore more passionate, seeing that it starts from *forte*.

TREMOLO: They have a softening function when tension is maximum, like in the first page, or they are used to keep tension as in page 7:



Figure 18 Seq. XI, page 7 lines 1-2

¹⁰ The classical meaning of Doppler effect is the change in frequency of a wave (or other periodic event) for an observer moving relative to its source; in this case it has been used to metaphorically clarify crescendo from zero and diminuendo to zero.

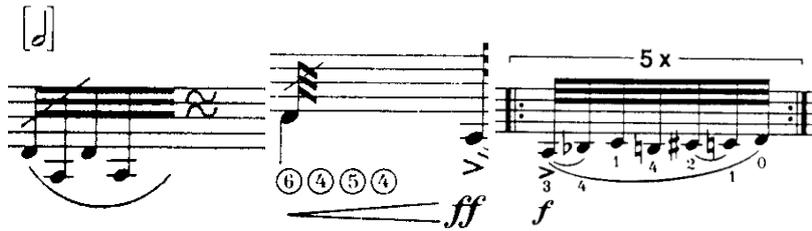


Figure 19 Seq. XI, page 7 lines 2-3

Those are the first two lines of page 7. Three kinds of tremolo has been pointed out above: the very first one is an example of very fast tremolo on close notes –in this case they are close by half tone- and it is generally played on one string; the second typology of tremolo is played on very distant note and on two strings, whereas the third is obtained by plucking the same note on three different strings and then striking them in form of rasgueado.

A special kind of tremolo is obtained by slurs and tapping. In the following image there are two staves: in the first one there are those notes which will be plucked and then slurred with the left hand, whereas in the lower one there are those tapped notes with index of Right hand. This typology of tremolo often has a fading-out functions: here there its first comparison on page 2.



Figure 20 Seq. XI, page 2 line 3

RASGUEADO¹¹: This effect is provided by playing continuously all six strings from the sixth one to the first one and vice versa. They are typical guitar effects and they were used the comparison of Renaissance guitar, seeing that it was used as instrument to accompany popular songs. In Baroque period rasgueado¹² was no longer used randomly, seeing that in tablatures provided by Francesco Corbetta and Robert de Visée, who used arrows pointing to the highest or lowest note, which gives the direction of rasgueado itself.

¹¹ Gaspar Sanz gave the first written definition of *rasgueado* in his *Instrucción* (*Instrucción de música sobre la guitarra española*, 1674 - 1697), distinguishing it from *punteado*: he writes that to provide the first effect all strings need to be stroken, whereas the second one is given by plucking the indicated string.

¹² In Italian it was called *botta*, in English *battery*

In Sequenza XI Berio provided different kind of rasgueados, starting from speed variety, to duration variety and to purpose variety. Two images will be now provided, the first one taken from *La guitar royalle* by Corbetta and its transcription in modern notation , in which it can be noticed the use of rasgueado, and then different samples of rasgueado in Sequenza.



Figure 21 Corbetta, Francesco, Sarabande de la re sol

Corbetta used signs of modern notes to indicated his will to have rasgueado in the chords previously written with Roman alphabet, whereas in the modern notation arrows are placed before the chords which is going to be *rasgueado*. In the first page of Sequenza XI Berio there are four examples of Rasgueado, which can be found in the following image: it has been described which characteristic they have as well as their connection with rhetoric. For example, the rasgueado *to be played as fast as possible*, which is one of the most energetic technical patterns used in Sequenza, has been used at the end of the *climax* of page 1.

for eliot fisk

TAMBORA FOR DIFFERENT TIMBRE

sequenza XI
per chitarra sola
(1988)

luciano berio

FADING-OUT TAMBORAS

$\text{♩} = 50$, ma liberamente, come prelu diando

ANAPH.

$\text{♩} = 60$
improvvisamente violento

ABR.

ANAPH.

ANAPH.

ANAPH.

CLIMAX

FAST GRACE RASQUEADO (A)

CONTINUOUS RASQUEADO TO BE PLAYED AS FAST AS POSSIBLE

ABRUPTIO

FAST GRACE RASQUEADO PLUS ACCENTED CHOROS (B)

ABRUPTIO

INTERROGATIO

MIMESIS

FAST TREMOLO ON TWO STRINGS

UP AND DOWN STROKES WITH ONE FINGER (D)

MIMESIS

CLIMAX

CLIMAX

ABRUPTIO

*) T = tambora
 **) So schnell wie möglich wiederholen / Repeat as fast as possible
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Figure 22 Seq. XI, page 1 rhetorical figures + gestures

Use of rhetoric and gesture

Starting from page 5, there is a big section containing tremolos, in guitar style, it means that thumb plays bass and anular, middle finger and index play fastly the other three notes of quatrain. The line as follows is an example of mixed style at the beginning of the new section. In this area there are still figures like *dubitatio* or *interrogatio*, which point out mystery and

silent atmosphere, followed by an *exclamatio*¹³ when there is the sudden forte!

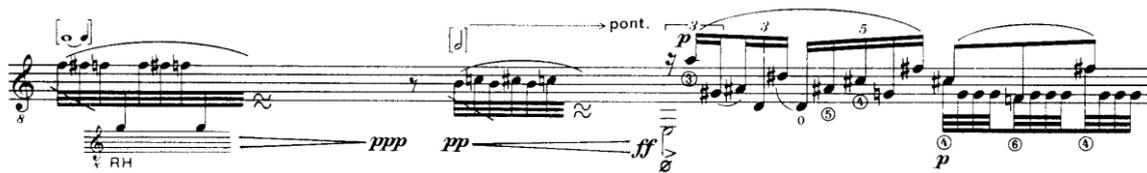


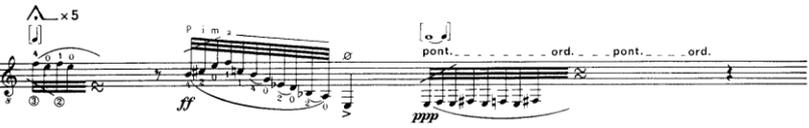
Figure 23 Seq. XI, page 5 line 3

The first half of the section goes on with a very long series of rasgueado, in which the powerful sonority of flamenco comes out, until the end of page 6. Afterwards, a series of tremolos and fast arpeggios and scales prelude to an intimate atmosphere, suddenly broken at page 8, where there is a series of rasgueado which finally leads to a meditative sound: dynamics become lower, rhythm becomes less tight. Here as follows there is a graph in which rhetoric and gesture will be both taken into account as connected.

	<p>Page: 5 Gesture: Bartok + tremolo Dynamics: mostly <i>piano</i> and <i>mf</i> Figures: repetitio+dubitatio Tension: middle</p>
	<p>Page: 6 Gesture: rasgueado+fast arpeggios Dynamics: from <i>f</i> to <i>ff</i> Figures: abruptio+exclamatio Tension: high</p>
	<p>Page: 6 (second half) Gesture: tremolos Dynamics: <i>piano</i> Figures: distributio¹⁴ Tension: min./middle</p>

¹³ Rise or drop of a sound preceded by a jump and associated to interjections such as *alas*, or generally an accentuated emission of a particular sound with emphasis (Di Sandro, 2005)

¹⁴ Articulation of a melodic phrase in different parts which are sharply characterized.

	<p>Page: 7</p> <p>Gestures: fast scales and tremolos</p> <p>Dynamics: from <i>pp</i> to <i>ff</i></p> <p>Figures: epiphora+interrogatio+epistrophe</p> <p>Tension: middle/maximum</p>
	<p>Page: 8</p> <p>Gestures: small and slow arpeggios interrupted by very fast and irruptive scales</p> <p>Dynamics: mostly <i>p</i></p> <p>Figures: exclamatio, abruptio, catabasis</p> <p>Tension: from middle/maximum to minimum</p>

All those figures which point out to strong emotions and, therefore, high emotional tension, are connected to theatrical gestures such as fast scales or rasgueado or long and fast arpeggios: as far as tension drops, both dynamics and rhetorical figures become softer, referring to diaphanous emotions.

A particular analysis needs to be provided at page nine, where new elements are introduced: they include both technical, polyphonic and emotional features which are unedited so far. It is an interesting point of development of Sequenza, seeing that the material already used appears again and



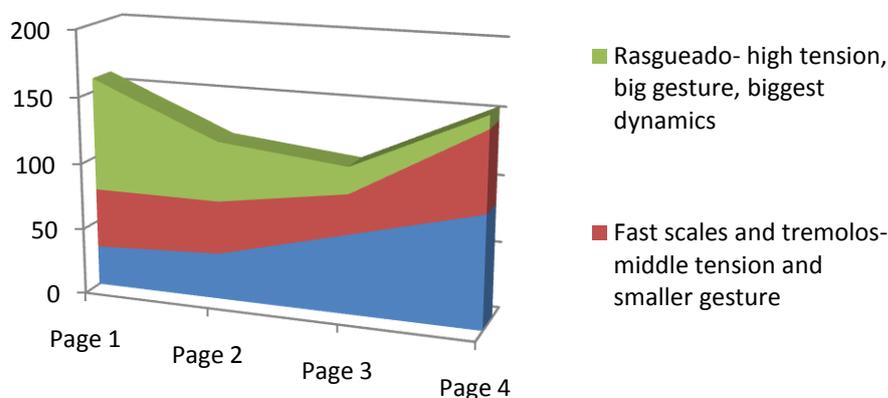
Figure 24 Seq. XI, page 9 lines 4-5

it melts with new elements. For example, at line 4  this element appears for the first time. Actually it is a tremolo, as mentioned in performance notes, even though dynamics and tensions are very high at this point: therefore, this sign has been personally interpreted

as a development of the following element , in which gesture and rhetoric were at maximum tension. Both elements are called *elemento di disturbo*, or disturbing element, by which Berio meant a great emotional shock if they were chords, or a decontextualized scale or tremolo when he wanted to mean break or development to a new passage: this contradiction and incompleteness has been stated by Berio in his book *Remembering the future*, as it follows:

We are all aware-because we have been reminded of it time and time again- that any discourse on music is by its very nature condemned to be partial and incomplete. So partial indeed, and so incomplete, that in this final lecture I find myself in the position of making statements which could probably be refuted by an alternative discourse which maintained the exact opposite! (Berio, L. *Remembering the future*, 2006, p. 122).

As stated at the middle of the chapter, a graph has been provided to give a sharper view of how tension, dynamics and gesture are connected in *Sequenza XI*, from page 1 to page 4.



Graph 1 Connection among tension and gesture in pages 1-4 of *Seq. XI*

CONNECTION AMONG SEQUENZA XI IS AND OTHER SEQUENZAS FROM A RHETORICAL AND GESTURAL POINT OF VIEW

Considering guitar as belonging to the family of string instrument and relating Sequenza XI to Sequenza VI for viola, Sequenza VIII for violin and XIVa for cello there are some common points as regards writing style and the techniques used to underline the peculiar features of those instruments. Of course, *pizzicato*, *Bartok* and *repeated chords* has been found in all four Sequenzas. As follows in the table, there are certain examples among Sequenza VI, VIII and XI which are similar in the writing style. On one hand, as regards cello, it has been mostly considered as monodic instrument by Berio: seeing that all the other three instruments have been considered both as monophonic as polyphonic, only Sequenzas VI and VIII can be considered close to Sequenza XI. On the other hand, the case of Sequenza II for harp deserves to be pointed out: even though guitar is more familiar to this instrument than to the bowed ones, Berio used a complete different style for Sequenza XI than that of Sequenza for harp, in which the instrument has been considered as aggressive one, going against the tradition of the harp as soft instrument. It is also curious to notice that the style of Sequenza II is closer to that of Sequenza I for flute, perhaps for chronological reasons, that to that for guitar.

Going back to Sequenzas VI, VIII and XIVa, they have been considered similar to Sequenza XI, seeing that the XIVa considers cello as both plucked and bowed instruments, and in Sequenza VI there are elements such as fast scales which falls in full chords; chords used as *acciaccatura* and the rhythmical pattern dotted eights plus eights used at the end of a very intense section to release all tension, as it has used also in Sequenza XI as follows:

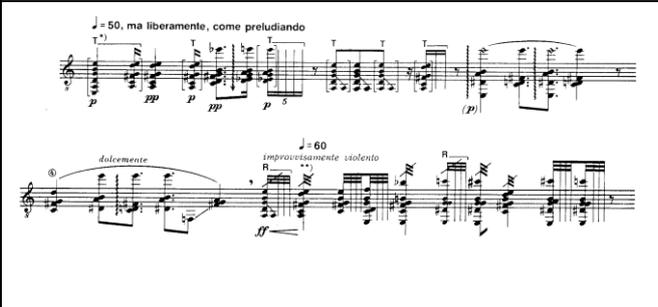
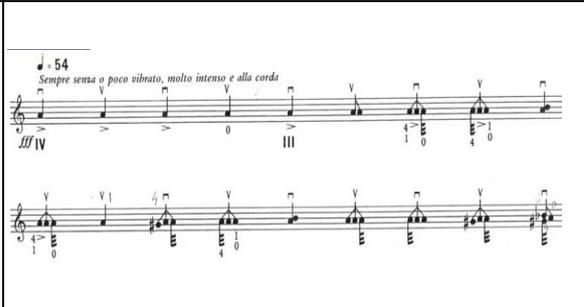


Graph 2 Seq. XI, page 1 line 6

RHETORICAL AND FORMAL CONNECTIONS BETWEEN SEQUENZA XI AND SEQUENZA VIII

Sequenza XI and Sequenza VIII have been taken as very similar not only from a formal point of view, but only from a rhetorical and gestural point of view, considering gesture not only a specific ability of the performer but also a specific pattern used by the composer.

Quoting Berio in Stoianova's essay (Stoianova, 1985) *Sequenza VIII is constructed around two notes –A – B- which, as in a chaconne, form the compass in the quite varied path of the piece.* Therefore, Sequenza VIII begins with the main subject – gesture- which will be developed for the whole piece. As a comparison, Sequenza XI for guitar also starts with two chords, previously referred as chord A and B, which will generate the whole work. Comparing the two beginnings, in Sequenza XI there is a delay of the very start of piece with a prelude: this is to remark the two souls of guitar, as Berio stated, in which one is typically classical and elegant, the second one has its roots in flamenco, ruder and stronger.

<i>Sequenza XI- page 1</i>	<i>Sequenza VIII – page 1</i>
	

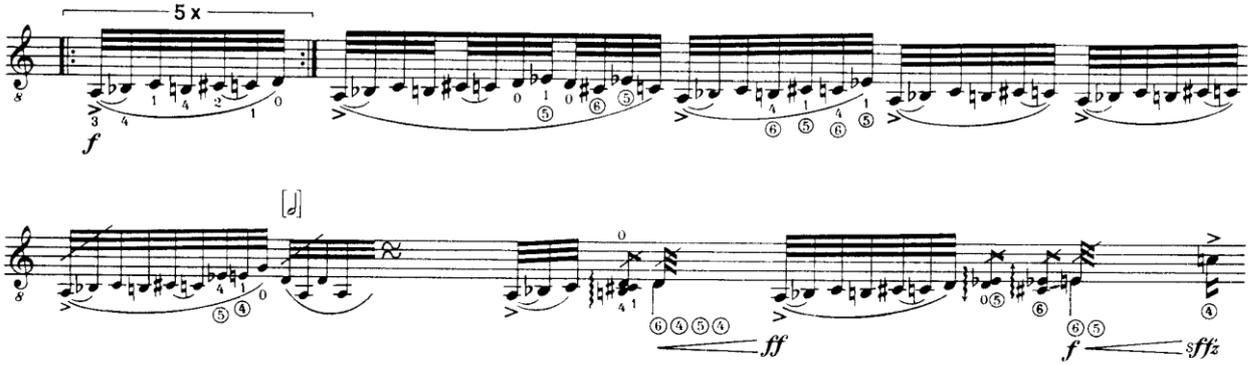
In the first section of *Sequenza VIII*, the compass functions as a registral centre amidst rapid arpeggiated figures. These figures counterpoint the central dyad, branching out from it as the leaves from a central trunk. This music is fast and fleeting, searching the upper registers of the violin and rarely repeating itself. In contrast, the pitches of the compass sound a regular rhythm of crotchets, as shown in the image below from page three of the score. These pitches, including some outside the original A – B dyad, function as a registral and rhythmic contrast to the increasingly boisterous figuration and thus are unmistakably linked to the opening compass. The inclusion of A# and other non-dyadic pitches in creating this rhythms show that Berio's path through the music is undergoing change-*work in progress*-. A similar function of the core chord of Sequenza XI can be seen in the last lines of page 4, where open strings

counterpoint the notes of chords A and B, in the form of guitar tremolo. The atmosphere is interrupted by abrupt rasgueado or fast notes, which brings *elementi di disturbo* and an immediate rhythmical and pattern change. In *Sequenza VIII* similar passages like those taken into account are longer than that of *Sequenza XI* because the author wants a continuous fight through two souls of the guitar, whereas on violin he is inspired on classical violin. Rhetorically, in those passages *anabasis* and *catabasis* are used as leading figures. Hypothetically, they provide confusion from an emotional point of view: *anabasis* leads to heavy moods, on the contrary *catabasis* provides light emotions and on a third level there are fixed elements –for example open strings as regards tremolo and A-B dyad for violin- which try to keep a steady listening. It means that the listener is involved in a three-dimensional listening, in which he can notice a work in progress on one hand and on the other hand a steady development through tension, morphology, dynamics and rhythm.

<p><i>Seq. VIII</i> page 3</p>	
<p><i>Seq. XI</i> page 4</p>	

From a gestural point of view, both extracts are marked by long phrases with arpeggios, in which the main subject has been stretched: this is the main hypothetically the main reason of the tension drop on one side and a slower gesture.

Both Sequenzas are *work in progress*, as Berio defined his works: the original subject, in this case two notes or two chords, generate the all material of sequenza. In the following extracts,



for example, it remarkable that the material of the written improvisation is taken from chord A¹⁵, as well as the birth of the new gesture in Sequenza VIII from notes A and B and their familiar B and C #.

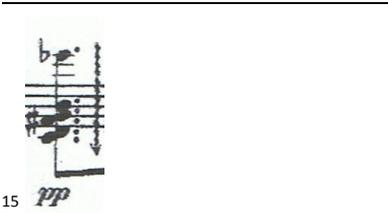
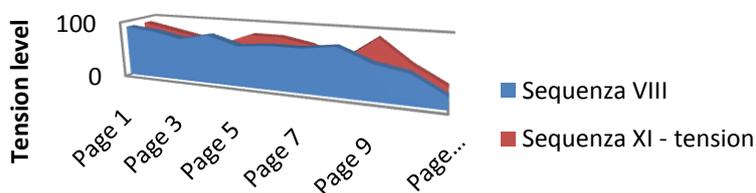




Figure 25 Seq. VIII page 7

From a rhetorical point of view, both Sequenzas are characterized from strong figures when dynamics are louder and opposite. On one hand, *climax*, *abruptio*, *interrogatio* and *exclamatio* will be found in the first page of Sequenza VIII as well. On the other hand, when tension becomes middle and gesture changes from repeated notes or rasgueado to improvisations and therefore faster single notes, dynamics drops and new rhetorical figures rise: *epistrophe* and *catabasis* recalls moods of spiritual ascension or prayer, against passionate emotions of ruder *abruptio*.



Also in Sequenza VIII there is a big climax as a drop of tension and dynamics through the ending: as a chaconne, the first subject is recapitulated, whereas in Sequenza XI there is still a drop of dynamics disturbed by high level of tension determined by flamenco excerpts. The above graph will provide a comparison as regards a personal interpretation of tension for both sequenzas.

CONCLUSION

Why am I interested to linguistics? I think to feel the inherent need of music to explore the eternal path between sound and significance [...] which is not a specific one, but the meaning of musical processes. In an epoch in which there is research of new material organization, it seemed natural to study the organization of languages.

Luciano Berio (Restagno, 1995)

The specific sentence *to explore the eternal path between sound and significance* mentioned above has been interpreted in the entire research as the *need* for the interpreter of Sequenza XI to find a connection between the idea of the composer and the sound itself, or rather his interpretation of the message given by the composer. That *need* has been stated to be fulfilled answering to the main question of the research itself:

In which way can the performer relate musical expression by rhetoric in specific areas of Sequenza XI ?

exploiting rhetoric as guideline of his interpretation. The CD provided as Appendix 1 shows how the interpretation of Sequenza XI can develop by adding rhetorical features, such as figures, rhythm, focusing on emotional tensions and specific gestures used by the composer to define a certain emotional sphere.

The title of the research has been stated as follow: *Sequenza XI: a practical performer's guide through rhetoric*. Its aim was to show that this piece without focus on rhetorical features, as they were in Baroque music, will be less attractive not only for the audience but also for the performer himself: it means that material such as dynamics, rhythm and figures are much more important to be marked than technical skills themselves.

In every section of Sequenza XI a specific typology of figures has been used to set out a specific emotional sequence. As Berio stated in his interview with Rossana Dalmonte, all Sequenzas are the result of a combination of rhythmical, temporal, dynamic and technique dimensions. All of them has been connected to provide a sharp idea in a specific area of the

work itself, focusing more on certain aspects of technique, such as *tambora*, more than others, such as *rasgueado*.

There are essays like those written by *Civra* and *Tarling* in which it is stated that rhetoric faded out after Baroque because of different sociological and anthropological needs. I personally think that this science obviously stopped to develop the quantity of figures but it is still exploited from contemporary figures, who are connected with audience, such as composers, performers and lawyers. It has been interesting to use a science from the past to analyze and interpret modern music: this comes from the needs of the interpreter to recollect the composer's intentions if he is no longer living or too much far to discuss with and to express emotions. Personally I think that the performer does not need to learn all those figures analyzed: it is needed instead that the performer see through certain rhetorical features the connection of emotions. Therefore, the figures taken as examples can be discussed by further performers who are interested in taking into account the importance of rhetoric in *Sequenza XI*, which can support a more vital interpretation. A citation from the book by Restagno (BERIO, 1995), using Berio's words will be useful to understand what Berio asked to the interpreter of *Sequenza XI*:

With Sequenza XI I was interested to develop a dialogue between the idiomatic harmony of guitar, linked to its tuning and a 'different one' (the passport to switch between those two dimensions is the triton). In Sequenza XI there are also two different gestural characteristics: the first one has its roots in flamenco guitar, the second one in the classical guitar. The dialogue between the mentioned dimensions and characteristics will be provided by the continuous transformations of figures, which will be specific and clearly recognizable. (Restagno, 1995, p. 192)

Looking at *Sistine Chapel Ceiling* by Michelangelo we remained astonished by its beauty and his care of details in a big view of the whole painting. The curious spectator will focus on certain details and see how they were textured: if he looks at that detail too much close, he will lose the ensemble of the painting, whereas if he goes too far from the ceiling he will see a blur image. In the same way, if the performer looks at *Sequenza XI* from a distant point of view, he will lose the richness of smaller passages, or if he focus on notes he will forget about phrases and periods. Rhetoric is one of those means which brings the performer and the listener to look at the piece both closer and further at the same time, in order to have a general

image of the work with details in morphology: therefore interest will be kept alive along the whole work. In this case the feeling will be balanced between a wide and relaxed view of the work on one hand but critical on the other.

It is curious to notice how the first two lines of Sequenza will become boring and spoiled leaving just notes, without any indication about gestures, dynamics or emotional tension, and then compare with the original version provided by the author himself.

Without expressive references

♩ = 50

♩ = 60

or with

♩ = 50, ma liberamente, come preludiando

p *pp* *p* *pp* *p* 5 (*p*)

♩ = 60

dolcemente *improvvisamente violento*

ff *R* *R*

As a dispositional point of view, *freely as in a prelude*, if taken away will not give to this two lines an improvisational feature. From a declamatory point of view, if dynamics are taken away there will be no shock and no preparation to it: so even the performer will not be impressed by a change not only in dynamics but also in fervor and passion. Taking away

pauses, both performer and listener will not understand the meaning of each sentence, interpreting those lines as stammering or rather as a lump of chords. As last features, words as *dolcemente* and *improvvisamente violento*, i.e. sweet and suddenly violent, are the limiters of the two souls of guitar: when he performer finds the first one, he will focus more n the classical and melodic one, when finding the other two, he will focus on flamenco features such as violence, screaming melancholy and rude passion.

Finally, rhetoric has been considered as leading means for a vital interpretation, seeing that the interpreter needs a complete view of *Sequenza XI*, taking into account its rhythm, melody and structure, to describe the constant emotional tension stated in the piece itself with the aim of making his interpretation an expressive one.

The report has been meant to guide the potential interpreter of *Sequenza XI* from the very first reading to a vital interpretation. The research has not been meant as a formal analysis: its aim was to bring out ideas and emotions of the performer starting from rhetoric connected to music. Certainly, this is one way to start interpreting the piece: personally, this way of reading this piece was helpful also for Baroque and Renaissance Music, which means that Berio was interested in the scope of vitality of emotions in his music: this was his originality as Post-War composer. The report can be considered on one hand as starting point to consider the differences between rhetoric used in all other *Sequenzas*, both considered separately or together. On the other hand, it can be used to consider rhetoric in contemporary music without preparation of the instrument, as Berio does, or with, considering for example Brian Ferneyhough. As guitarist, I think that a research about gesture and rhetoric about the Italian contemporary music for guitar would be interesting, to have a clear guideline about the way by which composers such as Berio, Petrassi or Solbiati connected their gestural ideas on guitar.

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APPENDIX 1

CD 1 – see *work cited* for references

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