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This paper would like to analyse Ferrari’s opera and
point out some of its characteristics starting from
the aesthetic-cognitive approach by Francesco Giosmi and
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1. INTRODUCTION

Luc Ferrari was trained in music at a very young age,
studying the piano under Alfred Cortot, musical analysis
under Olivier Messiaen and composition under Arthur
Honemegger. His meeting with Edgar Varèse, whose
Dépérus he had heard on the radio, was crucial in his
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Schaefffer and François Bernard Mâché. He taught in
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Beyond the mere acceptance of ambient sounds as
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Beyond his work involving technology, Ferrari has
composed a large body of instrumental music, ranging
from very early piano solos to works for large orchestra,
such as Histoire du pâtur et de la désolation (1979-81),
a towering 35-minute work in three movements which
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It is possible to classify the various events as:
• Materials related to acoustic instruments, probably
from:
  Organ (elements clustered);
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plucked strings-scratch, sounding beaten);
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As regards the first category, they have a considerable
global importance. These elements are not only present
with metamorphosis and spectral envelope, but also with
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The three clusters that opened Ferrari’s opera come
from an organ; they are repeated several times in the
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different relationship between them. The first cluster
appears as a tonic group, with a continuous finish, an
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series of percussive events, with a rubbed grain, leading
to the conclusion of the first semi-phrase, with a rapid
iteration, the relationship between the heights of three
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In the second region of the work, however, the shots
occupy the low frequencies and are reverberating; their
continuous pulse enriches the whole work, due to the
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The percussion elements are mainly of two types: in
a first region, they occupy almost always high and
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Electronic events are immediately introduced in the tail
of the main theme, first as an iterative band that comes from
the piano cluster (00:00:07), then as a rire
(00:00:12), clear revelation, without filters, of the former
band. The main feature of these elements is their near
pure spectrum, sophisticated and decidedly unnatural,
especially in comparison to the filtered items obtained
from the instrument.

They are mostly with fast evolution and a
preponderance of high frequencies. Furthermore, some electronic sounds are almost
monic, since they stop the drama filled with the exasperating
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toxic tuncic objects in the high frequencies, are all
events that refer to a fantastic imaginary, like a game,
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Finally, the rise to very high frequencies from 00:02:15
leads to the final band that closes with a significant
intervention by the piano deep band: this extreme and
rapid contrast justifies the formal division of the work,
that from this moment underwent a radical change. In
the last section, the events keep their electronic
characteristics of purity; this create an even greater
LUC FERRARI, TAUTOLOGOS 1: THE CRUCIAL REPETITION
Alba Francesca Battista
Conservatorio “D. Cimarosa” di Avellino

Damiano Meacci
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ABSTRACT
Tautologos 1 (1961) by Luc Ferrari is a composition for magnetic tape. It revolves around classic electric organ sonorities, animated with the fizz of less readily attributable sonic particles. It has a particularly clear compositional strategy by which a certain phrase, in which almost all sound events of the work are, is repeated several times, forming a musical period that emphasizes more the only real thematic change in the work.

This paper would like to analyse Ferrari’s opera and point out some of its characteristics starting from the aesthetic–psychological approach by Francesco Gionni and Marco Ligabue.

1. INTRODUCTION
Luc Ferrari was trained in music at a very young age, studying the piano under Alfred Cortot, musical analysis under Olivier Messiaen and composition under Arthur Honegger. His meeting with Edgar Varèse, whose Deserts he had heard on the radio, was crucial in his musical approach. He told of himself that he came from the tradition of the written score; before working between Pierre Schaeffer, he had already composed instrumental and orchestral pieces. He was following the various avant-garde movements of his time. The tape part in Deserts served as inspiration for Ferrari to use magnetic tape in his own music. In 1958 he co-founded the Groupe de Recherches Musicales with Pierre Schaeffer and François Bernard Mâche. He taught in institutions around the world, and worked for film, theatre and radio. The use of ambient recordings was to become a distinctive part of Ferrari’s musical language. Beyond the mere acceptance of ambient sounds as musical, Ferrari found that his forays with the professional tape recorder into public places added a level of social engagement to his work. This led him to compose pieces in which the audience becomes voyeuristically involved with a kind of audio home movie. In such a state, a great deal is suggested, which is why radio remains such a powerful medium, even in the face of the wide sphere of television. We, the disembodied voice of a human being in Ferrari’s work lures in the listener into an immobile which is palpable. Beyond his work involving technology, Ferrari has composed a large body of instrumental music, ranging from very early piano solos to works for large orchestra, such as Histoire du pilâtre et de la désolatîon (1979-81), a towering 35-minute work in three movements which won the International Koussevitzky Prize for recordings when it was released in 1990. Among his important credits are a series of invaluable television films which he made about the rehearsal processes of Varèse, Messiaen, Stockhausen and others.

In the 1960s, Ferrari was already working on his own conception of minimalism. Tautologos 1 has a particularly clear compositional strategy by which a certain phrase, in which almost all sound events of the work are, is repeated several times, forming a musical period that emphasizes more the only real thematic change in the work.

The title itself, Tautologos, already seems to focus on a speech that is repeated, “identical” to himself (from τόνως, “the same, identical” and λόγος, “speech”). He developed a manner of repeating by deviation, so that repetition was prevented from becoming a new rule. “It was only later called minimalism. It was actually inevitable due to the accumulated constructions of the compositional schools of the time, where perpetual variation was demanded. [...] Suddenly, the only thing that could be a logical musical development was to use repetition. It was to break up maximality. In my brand of minimalism, the sound is reduced to the least point of recognition with respect to the musical tradition. This is complete minimalism.” [8]

Ferrari was at the center of the process of the expansion of music beyond notes to the incorporation of any and all sound during the last century. An influential teacher, composer, and performer.

2. SOUND CONTENT AND SIGNIFICANT EVENTS
It is possible to divide the work into two sections, as we will later do, on the basis of the type of sound objects and the interaction between the materials. We will describe, then, some of the most important events, in order to justify we say a coherent formal subdivision.

- Materials related to acoustic instruments, probably from:
  - Organ (elements clustered);
  - Piano (mostly metallic elements, perceived as plucked strings-scratch, sounding beaten);
  - materials of electronic type.

As regards the first category, they have a considerable global importance. These elements are not only present with metamorphosis and spectral envelope, but also with their distinctive timbre, as concrete events.

The three clusters that opened Ferrari’s opera come from an organ; they are repeated several times in the first section, always in the same sequence, but in different relationship between them. The first cluster appears as a tonic group, with a continuous finish, an abrupt attack, a flat envelope, and it occupies the low-mid frequencies. The second one has a broader spectrum, but evolves almost like a pulse. The last, finally, deals with the low frequencies, and evolves dynamically and spatially in second plane related to a series of percussive events, with a rubbed grain, leading to the conclusion of the first semi-phrase, with a rapid repetition of the three clusters (approx. 00:00:04) and towards the second semi-phrase.

These three elements just described are repeated at the beginning of each change and are recognizable for their height and their tone, but their envelope is always transformed, and the first variation (about 00:00:17), the equilibrium of time is changed, with the first cluster that has an almost tripled duration, and the next two that develop as stroke. At 00:00:22, that is the second iteration, the relationship between the heights of the three elements are met, but everything is shifted to higher frequencies; in addition, the second cluster has a glide attack, which caused him to lose the impulsive temper, and it is doubled by a sound event of the same height, probably from a piano; in this variant, the third cluster arrives later, with an attack in sforzando and a percussive event on its tail. The variations of the three clusters begin to make them unrecognizable from 00:00:43 thereafter; nevertheless, the structure of each sintagma continues to follow that of the first phrase. Even the first percussive events (about 00:00:03) of the main clause maintain the structure of the three repetitions and have some correlation with the height progress of the cluster, as well as the first event due to the piano (00:00:03:5).

Piano events are of various kinds: they range from cluster to scratched chords, from glissando to pedal at low frequencies, to blows on the soundboard. They sometimes enhance, sometimes clarify the sentence presented by the organ clusters. Sometimes they give a greater importance as repeated several times, as the band at 109°, presented in five repetitions (00:01:09, 00:01:14, 00:01:18, 00:01:25, 00:01:29), with a slightly different attack, which is even doubled with a delay (00:01:25 onwards); this band is a constant in the continuous evolution of the first sintagma.

While in a first region piano elements are used across all the spectrum of frequencies, even with several filters, in the last part of the work there is a prevalence of low-frequency components, which evolve as a long pedal on short acute events reserved for electronic items.

The percussive elements are mainly of two types: in a first region, they occupy almost always high and medium frequencies and have a tonic mass. Their role is fundamental, above all for the particular structure of the work: they have the vital task of signing the flow of time in which primary cell develops, emphasizing the imperative pace of the whole opera. The tonic shots that follow one another in all the work interrupt the flow of the various phrases, or, for example, introduce new elements, such as the piano at 00:00:53; at other times, they evolve in different events with a different envelope (at 00:00:39 they become scratched strings).

The three identical and equidistant shots (00:00:45, 00:00:47, 00:00:48) have a key role because they are unperturbed while the other events of this variation continue rapidly, and they exacerbate, in comparison, the feeling of great speed; in addition, they have high local significance because they are the only unchanged ingredient of the successive sentences.

In the second region of the work, however, the shots occupy the low frequencies and are reverberating; their continuous pulse enriches the deep band, due to the piano. Finally, the final shots leading up to the silence have a reverber that makes them feel like they are coming from inside, almost like heartbeats going to fade.

Electronic events are immediately introduced in the tail of the main theme, first as an iterative band that comes from the piano cluster (00:00:07), then as a sine (00:00:12), clear revelation, without filters, of the former band. The main feature of these elements is their nearly pure spectrum, sophisticated and decidedly unnatural, especially in comparison to the filtered items obtained from the piano.

They are mostly with fast evolution and a preponderance of high frequencies. Furthermore, some electronic events are almost ironic, since they stop the drama filled with the exacerbating variations: the totally synthetic birds at 00:01:28, the glissando at 00:01:32, the riff at 00:01:44, made of successive tonic objects in the high frequencies, are all events that refer to a fantastic imaginary, like a game, and that very contrast with the seriousness of the main sintagma.

Finally, the rise to very high frequencies from 00:02:15 leads to the final band that closes with a significant intervention by the piano deep band: this extreme and rapid contrast justifies the formal division of the work, that from this moment change. In the last section, the events keep their electronic characteristics of purity; this create an even greater
contrast with the low-frequency band in background, which seems to trap them with its constant throb.

Pauses are used very sparingly, as fast breaks at the end of each transformation; this gives greater unity to the whole piece.

The only moment of silence is really evident (00:00:43) because it is prolonged by a long tail of an electronic element that decreases until it disappears, creating a stalemate that concludes the first repetitions clearly related to the first phrase and opens a series of convulsive changes, with the introduction of new elements, in an always new exposition of the theme.

As regards the movements on the stereo front, there are few clear trajectories, but elements just appear and vanish on one or in the other channel.

3. FORMAL AND STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

It is possible to split the composition into two sections:

- **SECTION A (00:00:00 – 00:02:30)** This first section is very fast, with a hysterical rhythm, and this is the result of the extreme rapidity with which clusters and electronic elements from first phrase come in succession, sometimes superimposed on the same floor space. That *sintagma* is the tautological element which clearly refers to the title of the composition (00:00:00 – 00:00:17). The section evolves gradually changing the whole sentence of the first exhibition, explaining the origin of some items and adding new events. The long moment of suspension (00:00:41 ca) leads to the deep spectrum band is enriched by middle region of frequency. From 00:03:15 onwards, the element at 00:03:39 begins a crescendo, a diminuendo.

- **SECTION B (00:02:31 – 00:04:20)** The major band that opens this section, with a variable trend and a pulsated rhythm, is a new element in the homogeneity of materials that characterized the first section. Its constant evolution in time and space remains in second place to the electronic element also with pulsated rhythm. The contrast is more evident because they occupy the upper-middle region of frequency. From 00:03:15 onwards, the deep spectrum band is enriched by middle frequencies, with a consequent frequenting of the electronic interventions; the event to 00:03:25 is particular, more reverberated with a new echo element on its tail, repeated on different spatial perspective and in mp. The element at 00:03:39 begins a diminuendo, a slowing area of the section; the band becomes more evident. The final event of the opera is certainly at 00:04:03, when high frequencies are followed by a final slowing down, which dampens the pulse that had moved across all the section.

4. CONCLUSIONS

With this charming play, Ferrari deals with his *adventure of creation*, that he always tried as if he had no experience. He was constantly in search for his musical language and poetics.

He thought sound is around anyone and gives anyone a chance to creatively record it. During the conflict between the exceeding formalism of *sintagma* and something that looked like a formalism, he took the extraordinary opportunity to forge his own musical world filling out between these two paradoxes.

He was struggled by *treat powerful phenomena*, that he attempted to solve in him at that time: the influence of *Vaiete*, musique concrète, serialism and the total openness offered by John Cage. About the latter, Ferrari was very impressed by Cage’s theory that a concept is something that can exist outside of the disclosing of time, such as one is accustomed to in a musical work.

In his musical language investigation, *TautoLOGOS I* is placed in Ferrari’s endeavour to build his own conception of *minimalism*, a new trend in the sixties that totally changed the artistic climate, characterized by a process of reduction of reality, impersonality, emotional coldness. In music, the architecture of minimalist music consists of short and simple melodic cells, rhythmic figures, and unravels the creative speech on *repetition*, often obsessive, of these modules.

In this sense, *TautoLOGOS I* is a first step of this process: it is possible to find in it a simple main theme, that is called *sintagma*, and this cell is repeated, with extreme variations, until a radical change, a deviation, which brings to the end.

In Ferrari’s brand of *minimalism*, sound is reduced to the least point of recognition, with respect to the musical tradition.

The theme of the whole work is *repetition*. This issue is dealt with through the aggravation of an initial fragment, which is repeated and turned frantically in the first part of the work, and through the *absence of repetition*, which is highlighted in the final section, which flows into the extinction of the pulse that made it living, in which everything flows without a fixed point, without any reboot, to a slow decline.

The complete contrasting nature of the two sections most strikes the finality of the first, leaving a feeling of emptiness almost unbridgeable transported from the long and regular band of the last part.

About Ferrari’s peculiar use of sound, when Brigitte Robindoré asked him if he was attracted to certain sounds and situations more than others, he answered that he would never interpose his will on the sound, only on the manner in which he recorded it. He use electronics as a completely new instrument. “Why cut, mix, and assemble electronic sounds to the same kinds of gestures one finds in instrumental music? This seems absurd to me.” [8] He thought that capturing a sound is a creative gesture itself.

His idea in treating sound is particularly clear in this work, as can be seen since the very first listening. Moreover, the type of materials used makes the first section an uniform one, despite the constant repetition interrupts the musical flow.

In the second section, however, the deep band dissolves the frenzy perpetrated in the previous section, scrolling events in a gradual damping.

In the end, it is necessary to say that developing a relationship of interdependence between creative and analytical dimension of music is very ambitious. As Luciano Berio said, “all speech about music is incomplete, by its nature.” Every great work always implies a plurality of texts, even without this is not identifiable on the surface: sources, quotes, ancestry, who have been assimilated by the author, even unintentionally. This multiplicity requires the analysis of multiple new perspectives.

The aesthetic-cognitive approach is a very powerful method which allows to analyse music on the basis of perception; as we show, it is possible to theoretically dissect any opera, reaching a shared vision of the work.

Nevertheless, the analyst must take care to place the examined work in an evolutionary history of the composer. This perspective is the one of his poetic. Analysis, as well as music itself, makes sense when celebrates a permanent dialogue between ear and mind, between perception and sense of sound.

Analysis should not be a mere speculative instrument or a tool for the theoretical conceptualization of music. When we apply it to the topology of becoming and of the transformation of musical forms, it can be a profound contribution to the creative process.

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