

IF MOUNTAINS COULD SING

In the morning the chorus of birds. Then the bleating of the sheep.

The continuous resonance of the waves of the sea.

Sighs from the breeze.

Wind whistled.

Human metaphorology projects an arsenal of terms onto Sound.

But I can't find a poetics that tells me how the *Adagietto* of Mahler's Farm topples me into a vortex of emotion in subtle rotation. Or the way Jarrett's *My Song* rescues me from sadness. Or the way the riff of *I can't keep from crying*, decade after decade since adolescence, reconnects me with what I imagine the *original blues*. Okay, along with *In my time of dying*...

Alentejo, 2025

Preliminary point

Music has a mysterious power: that of affecting the soul at the very core of its vibrational essence. I paraphrase the physicist (and musician) Stephon Alexander, who, in improvising his own life and through his intuitive leaps which he describes as irrational (I would add: transcendental) – found in the music of the Universe something that works (or does not): *function*.

The planets touch their harmonies and dissonances, their mysteriously chaotic identities, into mathematical equations. The most integrative Physics and integral Spirituality tell us that there will be a cosmic genealogy literally in the background when we think of music in a broad sense, the same dimension of *cosmic background radiation* that led *aeons* to coalesce into radically creative stars.

Musicians, whether they are aware of it or not, are forces of nature, the latter through such channels reiterating and no less erasing provisionally perennial laws. Gravitations. To play music, and perhaps to listen to it, is the *tuning*, in moments, in the *momentum* inherent to each sound experience, of the instrument that is that of Life itself. We listen to it, we listen to it, we accompany it, we play it, that natural instrument that prolongs our being. In the truth of artifice, and no less when we sing the breeze between the leaves of the mountain and we realize it.

Echoing the way we opened the first SPHERA, via Albert Ayler, Alexander asks, rhetorically: – *What if the universe was like a jazz solo?* Listening, doing, understanding, creating music – including that of silence – is of the order of the celebration of existence. Being part

of the orchestra, the choir, the combo, the one-note samba school (re)creating itself, transcending itself in myriad rhythms, melodies, scale and cycles.

Does this imply an idea of time to which I do not necessarily want to add this text? I assume the principle and hypothesis that music is par excellence the expression of time, that *other* of space and conniving *gravitational gravitas of gravity*. Another of the mountainous matter. *Intro* to the discovery of the intimate truth of *the groove*. This does not prevent that each record we keep on the shelf, each artist we obsessively (pre)listen to or each song we preserve in memory are not strictly sound planets in a universe that is already and for now expanding. In these terms, mapping the sound experiences that cross us is to make planets aware of their atmospheric ecosystems.

Intro

When the Creator fashioned the human body, the human soul refused to enter because it didn't want to take on the body's limitations. The Creator then began to play music. In order to feel the fullness of this music through the senses and receptivity of the human form, the soul was coaxed into the body.

Russill Paul relaying an ancient Sufi story

There is something about music and facts. If they co-exist, something happens to the information. And it lasts.

Neil Young

The decisive moment of human development is continually at hand. This is why those movements of revolutionary thought that declare everything preceding to be an irrelevance are correct — because as yet nothing has happened.

Franz Kafka

The Sufi myth tells deep truth in the sacred *praxis agenda*. Young, a giant, asserts the transmutation of matter into an etheric event. Kafka seems to yield to agonistic nothingness, but he is aphoristic, if not cathartic, a demonstration that the consciousness of genealogy is a step on endless celestial staircases... *stairways to heaven*...

Kafka, capable of understanding his creative process deeply, is *in his own way* saying the opposite of what he says (so I read him, this giant on whose shoulders we creatively sit often). These two voices, in short and decontextualized topics, opened a text I wrote a few

years ago about Situationism. I reread them because they inhabit the helix of (free) rise/fall in a conscious and operative way, in a *sphere* of the common, of community and communality, beyond the socio-political plane.

This text, proposing to think of music as spiritual knowledge, a true path and a path to itself, seeks to do so in the orbit of a personal essayistic reflection, on the part of someone who has sought a lot in public art, urbanism and critical theory registers for the elevation of the *socius* to subtle vibrations. Someone who in the meantime thought of the mythical and the mystical in the same logic of the rise of the common and who is now invited to pay attention to music in a *spherical register*. Someone who does not hesitate to associate structures of what he perceives when thinking passionately. *Theorein*.

If in this previous text – *Situating Situationism* – I tried to highlight topicality in the action in the urban environment that wraps our being, and of the poetic-discursive action in particular – within the society of the spectacle – here I am challenged to reflect on music as an experiential channel. As a portal. This universal and cosmic, absolute dimension was already referred to in that text, mirroring the mental intricacies of a *retentive chronic rock* fascinated by the messages and *soundbites* of a revolutionary generation, which in the society of the spectacle intertwined the inherent suspension of values to the experience of creative freedom:

I'd add, in the spirit of Bergson, that only a few artworks in the city – or songs in rock – mystically interpret Life. This is related to a problematic which is today more alive than ever, the one of socio-political empowerment, of life as *molecular* production. It's a crucial one in public art and critical urbanism, precisely underlying one of the key aspects in Contemporary artists' productions I find in Debord's book: participation, in the sense of involvement.

In other words, there may be a connection – I refrain from defining it as necessary or sufficient – between the critical tradition (in which the Habermasian or Lefebvorean humanisms are key references) and the mystical one, the latter underlying *the ever-mergent argumentarium* of SPHERA, which in Abellio was precisely structured, in a famous diagram. A sphere. In the transdisciplinary spirit that moves me and in the *allegro-essayistic way* in which I move (*d'après* Montaigne, Barthes, Bergson or Massumi), this is vital food for the present to intuit. Emerging co-presence. Let's say that I work at the same time on scales that I risk composing, surrendered to the music that I know how to pluck from the noisy white silence that is the page. Or silence (where when I can I see instrumental theme and song).

What follows is therefore an intuitive reflexive drift, admittedly *intermediate*, about music as a spherical journey. Where the problematics of politics and power, of social representation, key themes of the previous text, are rhetorically kept at bay to focus on a Human of *another dimension*: divine, mediumistic (the implicit media in an open and poetic sense) and magical. What follows is thought triggered by the hearing of music in public space-time *in the greater sense* that is Nature. For the *appearance* of music in the (dis)concert of the world. So, listening to and interpreting music brought me to *walking around here*. Anyway, *What appears is good; what is good appears*,— Debord asserted.

If Greil Marcus is of the opinion that the power of *rock 'n roll* lies in the jumps from here to there, in the impossibility of making transitions, it is no less true that theories of movements long before *rock* already found leaps (qualitative, aesthetic, formal, etc.) between creators and approaches to musical matter. Of the music that mattered. I see such leaps as subtle continuities. Contiguities. And I glimpse in the hearing of anything, I believe because my intelligence tends continually towards analogy and comparison, towards the interactive recognition of echoes and resonances, connections and affinities in an infinitely variable geometry.

Such connections, perceived, explored, experienced, ensure monumentality to the Human. In the choir of lighters lit in a stadium undulating to the rhythm of an anthem, in the room of a teenager looking for the first original chords on the guitar, in the International sung with a raised fist on the 1st of May, when we hear bars whose sequence suddenly leaves us speechless, in a trance, moved, rescued, crying; or, of course, in imagining — it occurs to me Mike Scott dreaming his *Big Music* or Phil Spector raving about the experiential notion of the *wall of sound*...

In the long term, evoking Jung, I live *some music* as a presentification (updating and reinvention) of archaic, if not eternal, or even sudden, emergent, sound monads; in the medium term, I am surprised when a melody, a timbre, a sequence of chords resonates another time that has historically passed, vivifying the two points of comparison; in the short term I enjoy understanding how the invention of a performative gesture generates in its *phenomenologizing* an aesthetic, paradoxically physical virtual place. Music has to do with Light. And mountains.

All this seems evident to me when I find in Black Sabbath the existential thunder that revolves my underbelly forever, when the Irishman Rory Gallagher sweatily translates the Blackest for working-class Belfast, when Chris Squire invents a strumming of the electric bass, letting the reed incision the roundness of the thumb and thus making the instrument the true Fifth Element in an orchestra of egos...

Musical creators reverberate here on earth *the sounds in the world, the sound of the world*. The sounds of complexity in *audio* mode. Distant and near, immediate and imagined, timelessly timely, temporarily timeless.

The older ones will have dealt directly with the chirping of birds and the rustling of leaves on the trees, then the impressive rumbling of locomotives and cannons, or the astrological vibration of the planets; today that more than 50% of the world lives in cities, unemployment and exclusion motivate *beats* and the bits of the digital inexorably enter *the house and head*. That said... we are what resonates in us. *Listen...*

From the animal nature of the flame. Silence

Years ago I read somewhere – in Novalis, via Rui Chafes – something like "the animal nature of the flame". *Arguably* metapoetic fragment depicting the divine and inner nature. In the light of the flame (of a candle), a piece of sun, I write about what will exist that is luminously animal in the music, in the sound. (The flickering candle). If "natural" comes from Nature and Culture is something else (Eagleton), nature being thus codified (if not previously and in the meantime stigmatized), the reflection on *the natural music of music* offers itself to me as an exercise to become aware of *how a mountain could sing*. The sentence presupposes a question. Also in the present tense.

Hermann de Vries (b. 1931) is a Dutch artist who makes his contemplative drifts a recognition of the natural – clod of earth, rag of cloud, leaves of trees – of the surrounding natural world (let's say that of this natural remains today). His art is rooted in an ancient genealogy, that of the journey-presence (St. Francis, Richard Long, Francis Alys). Walking around, *being*, is for this artist of the order of topicality. "Nature is always topical." In a *good place, if for a fraction of a second we bring to the fore the creative ethics as diagrammed by a priest-poet (Father José Frazão Correia), art can generate the intensification of being and being* in a good place.

In de Vries, the poetic drift is affirmed in the collection, documenting, archiving and framing of what is the world around him. Literally in (apparently) cold (mere) appropriation of the *wonderfully common*. The work bears witness to the natural, in a manner less of

Wunderkammer or *cabinet de curiosités* than of a pocket mirror. The consistency of his creation will result from this simple poet. From revelation to revelation, in continuity. This does not prevent the sudden explosion of the *genus* – gene/genesis/genius – where it is least expected. De Vries is silence – the most natural of noises –; or how much discreet and humble to stumble. Just as there are those who pick flowers, or buy them, to give soul to a room or a grave, killing them in the long term but recognizing their function as a living vibration, de Vries picks up whatever it is that reminds him/us of the poetry of what it *naturally is*.

For de Vries, nature is the primary reality, culture the secondary, and virtual reality the most distant reality. His work of restricted simplicity is maintained in the material to convey (and not so much compact, shelve or even museologize) the complex, endless and abundant spherical.

Silence.

Late into the night. I continue to write by candlelight (in fact, I also edit by the light of *led* Christmas lights and to the sound of Alabaster de Plume – and *the like*, via Spotify and *bro* algorithm; while outside the birds rest in total silence. The dawn still in suspense I feel that leads me to become aware, feeling it, of the relationship between silence and sound. Between the radical subjugation to listening to the material and the creative act that invents sounds – in the ether. A tango will never be pure code. In flamenco I don't believe that anyone can conceptually tame *el duende*.

Dialogic, naturally more than dialectical relation. When the greatest respect is required of us in a painful situation, before a symbolic moment to demarcate this segment of time, sublimating a gaze, silence is imposed. As so often when an atmosphere conducive to the channeling of a spirit in a *séance is required*. Or at the dawn of the act of praying. When something hurts us and it is imperative to breathe. In a comma, in a period. In the performativity inherent in the arranging and unarranging of ideas.

Le silence à ma tête et le bruit au dehors. The verse in *Silence* by (*voilà*) Telephone has never ceased to reverberate in my mind, in my process of progressive audiophilia, of neophyte adherence to the art of music. The silence in the meditative or contemplative act has never ceased to dialogue with the noise *outside*, as well as inside, of my clumsily *noisy being*. Feedback, when it entered the map of my hearings, will have had this function, that of seducing me into the silence-noise of *noise*. The other side of silence. And the noise itself, on the margins of musicality

Of the instrumental screech to which the cry will give the body. And here I realized that just as in meditation it is essential to let the world sing – in silence, because in silence – there is secret music in the noises of the world, in its sounds. Interrupted noises in which the mind, surrendering to them, recognizes flow. And antenna. To the limit of the flow can be edited, either by closing the bathroom door so as not to hear the flushing cistern, or to turn some of these sounds into a fragment of the sound narrative. The *riff* of *Satisfaction* sprang from this penumbra. Just like scratching in the voids of hip-hop.

Sampling gave these ghostly narratives co-presence, between the truth of *beats n'bits* and the lie of what at the beginning of this aesthetic we jokingly called the *Japanese drummer*. The truth is that, historically, musical noise has become part of music, if only so that it is kept at a safe distance and at the right time. Like in elevator music, which is purified... *background noise*. Or in maddening electronic loops. Perhaps less melodic than the sound of rain from the television set in the era when the night began early.

Sing, sing, friend sing

In the life of sounds we learn that, beyond and within the creative tension between silence and sound, there is the human voice. The infinite spectrum of voices that are sometimes noise, sometimes disarming, the song of humanity. The singing of Cante (we don't go any further) is the being landscape in the voices. In Bulgarian Voices, polyphony smells like roses.

Just as, in a historic urban intervention of public art that I had the opportunity to curate at *Luzboa 2006* (Fado Morgana, by the Belgian collective *Het Pakt*), a choir of voices (whose owners had no focus on the words of musical formation), duly equalized, sounding individually on different speakers, singing two of the oldest *fados* in Lisbon, transmuted a staircase in *Alfama* into an immersive anachronistic experience of the city in all its socio-cultural ancestry, because of the topicality of those laments; Each spectator could circulate between voices and orchestrate the relative intensities of each timbre, becoming a silent co-creative participant in the choir. That same piece would later be reinterpreted, translated into a long alley in the city of *Torun*, Poland, as part of the program of the *Skyway Light Festival*. There, the cliffs to experience were the words of the poet Wisława Anna Szymborska.

Voilà (this is how a discursive cane is unveiled by a fraction of a second *musical leimotiv* to move on to the next bar of a text). Another pause to breathe, already out of parentheses. If you practice yoga, pause for the magical and mantric singing of *yoga nothingness*, capable of calming my restless mind.

Bridge dixit.

Voices, perhaps more *directly* than instruments, channel emotions and feelings. *They invoke*. Joy, surrender... Pain. But these human conditioning factors of being are naturally found in the sequence of notes of a passionate composition - or excellently interpreted. When we listen to *Mozart's Requiem*, as long as it is interpreted that this composer's final testament returns the dimension of intimate revelation, we will not feel Pain in the same way again. Expanding the feeling in the pretense of feeling. *Voila*, Pessoa.

On the other hand, in the mystical choir – in the *Hebrew nobody*, in the devout refrain of a *qawwali*, even when at Fatima a *Hail Mary* is chanted by thousands of voices, or in an intimate and loving Hare Krishna ceremony we enter into a joyful and familiar trance – there is a truth of faith in search, spread, more than confirmation. The voices, together, pray, sing the prayer. They call us to fall into the vortex. That's what happens in a full stadium, in the chorus of that song.

The voice of the person is the human in maximum topicality. Vibration of vocal cords that relativizes and at the same time monumentalizes the common. Callas, mute in Pasolini, intones in silence what we imagine as the silence of the voice. And José Mário Branco, sung by other voices, will have difficulties in being present. Elvis is unrepeatable.

What seems evident to me is that if we ever heard Camões, it was precisely when Branco intoned “*Mudam-se os tempos, mudam-se as vontades*”? And that something procedural in the sentence that is *Restlessness* we have – and we have – more heteronyms, Pessoaans. The voice seeks vital resonance, from the universal, in the individual. Like when Patti Smith is just – and so much more than – *grungy murmur*. Or Cesária – only and so much more than – bare feet.

Power Age

I am coming to another key dimension of these intuitions. Music as the *output* of processes of channeling a superhuman Force, Energy, Source. The song, the phrase, the echo, the symphony, the concert, the reverberation on the walls of a club, *orchestrate* the being in being there listening. Combining sudden congeniality.

Conductors and divas, virtuoso instrumentalists and *pimba singers*, singer-songwriters and *outcasts* on the corner with empty caps at their feet, sprout like flowers in the world of sounds, and it is up to each pair of ears to discover to what extent those sounds *at that moment* channel (*voila*, if that is the case) in a spiral what is above and what is below, and the way in which each gesture – each change of

agreement, each melodic inflection, each harmonization — transmutes matter. Complexity is not necessarily higher here than puerility. Not even virtuosity ensures anything.

Part of the task of *reading* these multiple dimensions has to do with the mental and sensitive capacity to *feel* music, to surprise it in its relationship with time and surroundings, to glimpse it in the noise of existence; which the popular expression "music for my ears" so well summarizes. Sudden ethereal rise and fall into sound — is that why Karajan seems possessed? Or that devilish kid from *Staff Benda Bilili* looks like a mad magician, extracting from the stretched metal wire an unprecedented function? — that the configuration of the notes tears into the real, music gives the spectrum of existences — in the natural in all senses — an ever-mergent... soundtrack.

I may be falling (again) into abstraction. It will be inevitable because I am on the score, in the text. To diagram through words an experience in the labyrinth of my own auditory experience and sensitivity. But to this operative abstraction, didactically schematic and which provisionally gives names to things, I juxtapose without any desire for forced synthesis the living chaos of the Universal in Flux, of the Spirit in its diverse and multivocal states. This conviction points to a couple of pieces of evidence.

I will stick to one that pierced me. Music, music... only the one that is done live. The rest is a record of what happened (tombstone, monument, document, proof, message). Hearing a friend scratching an out-of-tune guitar will not necessarily be of the order of the sublime, but if that amateur musician does it in an act in sacred childish search, such co-presence will inspire consciousness for future channeling. We see (hear) the fingers looking for the right note, the rhythm, the intensity. Hence, the music-product, even when extraordinarily well designed in the studio, no matter how excellent it is in some specific dimension, does not surpass in affection the singing of a grandmother putting a baby to sleep. They are things apparently of the same order, but different in the reverberation of Life. AI doesn't get pregnant.

With the caveat, the music to be played is the result of a ritual of articulation between the pure being in energy (this sensation of participation) and the plastic decisions (from the German *Plastik*, a term that Beuys preferred to *Kunst* or *Art*) — there it is, artistic — that by channeling this energy become a magical and mystical device, in the Bergsonian sense, through which the relationship between faith in the beginning is assumed, which leads — because it derives from it — to the unconscious courage to continue. *Afrobeat* or *Funaná* demonstrate this in hypnotic delays that then manage — for as long as — to keep at bay the technological codes that shape them. It

remains to be seen to what extent his magic is distorted by the arimanicly conspired (no longer just luciferically perspired) hertz. And it remains to be seen how a rhythmic logic – let's think of the reaggae, which in turn was born from ska... – transmute its original essence (its origin), when the combo explodes on digital platforms.

Longer silence.

In the orbit of Faith, it occurs to me as a sudden audio-sound image the ecstatic whirling in Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, a sublime superhuman voice, on the threshold of infinity and staying there; or the sun-drenched desert of the *gnawi* music of North Africa; music (of the world) to my ears, precisely because *and when* These tune songs into availability to access a (their) spiritual frequency. There are days when I try to feel, experience, relate, understand or diagram these transcendences by *sphering*.

On certain mornings, someone will sing *Ohm* whatever I *want*. In many breakfasts, it will be the spaced rhythms of Kruder & Dorfmeister's *beats* that suit me – excellent music to vacuum the house. At dinners I offered to friends, it was so many times the sound of Oscar Peterson playing Sinatra (hallelujah, without the Voice!) that generated the appropriate atmosphere for socializing. What is certain is that, in other t(r)opics, there is at this very moment an aborigine reciting his *songlines* and a young Finn rehearsing the tango (*Finland is, after Argentina, the place where this world of sounds is communally lived by many people*). In homes near and far, I even know that someone listens to the Blue Danube aware that it is instrumental rendition of the healing energies of the Violet Flame.

There is therefore music that, in these moments, redeems us the being in flux, the transcendence of sound, rescuing our spiritual vibrations, our becoming and no less our hunger for new aesthetic and cultural horizons. As an intellectual – who someone defined as the one who uses his head (and not just for the occasional *headbanging* to the sound of *Smells...*) – I feel that *I learned it with music to like music*, in continuous mapping of topicalities that generate new topicalities. What concerns the afore mentioned issue of genealogies.

World Music is, therefore, a spherical term that has prevailed in this integrative drift and averse to the waves of sound invasions that put at risk all places and geographies of sounds organized by different cultures. In the same way that investigating biographies and the bodies or physiology of the performers explains other things. Including the hallucinated power that led fascists to cut off Victor Jara's hands.

Mapping, contemplating.

For those who, like me, music are omnipresent lovers, this solo cartography is of the order of an active contemplation (I evoke an anonymous mystic of the century that is read today with the same grace as *Rick Rubin's The Creative Act*, both curiously pedagogues of self-consciousness) also of my own *personhood*. With music I learned to recognize emotions and feelings, to honor them in an instant of catharsis, in prayer, in the party, in the celebration, in the inter legacy (-cultural, -classist, -generational...), in the oracular truth (so often a state of mind and an emotion finding *in that moment a kairotic echo*). In recollection, in confession, in mourning. In death and in life. And to stimulate them so that the creative channel, poetic in the broadest possible sense, is activated. The music calms down, even in the most heated sessions. Garbarek – Norway, mountain, sky, fog – serene. *It works*.

Pause. Silence.

In this landscape of reverberations, echoes, cross-references, in this network of sounds, a *heavy riff* from Entombed insists on remaining valid access to a restless zone of the soul (for how long, is an underlying question, not least because of the creative tension between tradition and innovation – between revering a well-defined aesthetic-place and stimulating the multiple fusions that expand it); the first chords of Mozart's 40th symphony will one day have to be put aside so as not to be make inert *déjà vu* of joviality.

And there you have it, what music do we need to heal wounds and illuminate shadows? Will coda in D major? The soil in Dorian mode? It is through the transtemporal community – the we sometimes in the strict sense of the social sphere, but also broad (the various selves in me, the multiple Self, multiplied by the open and punctually interconnected portals) – that the spherical journey of each musical genius, each artist, each genre and each culture, also becomes the gestation of a more rounded collective consciousness.

New silence

Now, the vital migrations in the music that connects *others* (from fusion, from endless *crossovers* and *remixes*) into criollo miscegenations, and even the borrowings or even thefts and flagrant shrieks that animate careers – Hotel California d'après Tull –, when a genuine search for the *sonorous* future, not only capillarily animate the ether, they also sediment *sonically* [sic] the above-mentioned design of a collective spiritualization; whether of noise, or of silence, or of the voice, or of things, or of the world as a common experience.

Such a spherical pan-topical totality then leads us to the ends of the Universe. This happens when in the fragmented continuity of sounds a theme emerges to finish off the experience... In Fade Oct... as if entropy were entangled in gravity to teach us something. Breathe closing The Dark Side of the Moon, the other disarmingly simple (mere lowering of the volume) of the last movement of Supper's Ready... Such quotation marks on the overflowing audio device are equivalent to the moment when listening to one side of a vinyl record is over, it is time to decide whether to turn the record over and play it. Or if it's time to end the session and silence the mountains.

Magic Scales

I have no idea how, but I feel that the mathematics of sounds has to do with the music of the spheres mentioned above. And I know that scales, in turn, are paths set up over millennia, *trecking* musical *oblige*. Craggy, when Howe takes the Telecaster off the obvious in *Relayer*, liquid when Abercrombie circles around what seems to have nothing to do with it. In the voice, Cesária's chanting betrays bare feet, while Titina's lordly serenade in Praça Nova. The scales are fixed serpents whose undulation makes melodies and timbres luminously significant. Tempered by dance, sadness, faith and desire, they become a mirror here of culture, there of personal innovation; the same scale transmuted into a scream, sigh, prayer or lesson of the is-so-and-so-must-be type.

The rhythm scores illuminate the points of the serpent of the notes, especially when the matter already transmuted by the intention is eternalized into a definitive version of the ideate. Godard recorded the moment when Sympathy was still in the belly of the Stones, waiting to be born in the white blackness of those congas and after the falsetto that whistles in the *ginga*. Generation after generation, this terminal gimmick imposes itself on the song itself when, today, live, anxiety moves thousands of uh-uh before the moment originally imagined. Perhaps Sympathy is not exactly a song in these terms. Or perhaps it is an open-ended song, open to the end of repetition, surrendering to the coda without reticence. In fact, as it happens in the layered structure of *Sultans of Swing*. There are songs that are particularly eloquent in demonstrating the elevations that the scales are offering us. Duration is where the human ear meets itself beyond what is perceived, bringing the soul to a deeper awareness of music as an enchanting device, as an assertive pattern in which matrix delighting in its temporal meaning. *Bésame, bésame mucho...*

Pause.

I am sorry, reader soul, that the text is drenched in metaphorical allusions, but the present text, precisely because in a rehearsal register – seeks to give, of what I feel to be music, a living idea. The words seek to performatively equate the naturally musical. The poet of sounds. In my curious and dilettante spiritist spirit, in the *jazzy automatism* that circulates between memories and ideas, intuitions and acquired convictions almost watertight (*thanks*, Virginia Woolf, *for your flow of consciousness*), music is strictly something that certain works, more than others, assume as a *magical act*. The *Adagietto* of Mahler's 5th, in a couple of versions, will be a historically unsurpassable moment; and hearing it in *Uri Caine*, ironically destroyed, gives it the status of a transtemporal symbol. Symbol of what? Every pair of genuinely open ears will seek to live that symbol beyond any meaning. When I listen to Carlos Puebla in *Hasta Siempre*, it is not an ideological Pandora's box, but political love.

To feel that vibration, beyond any sense... Hence music, despite occasionally raising flags, in the cases of activism and *cultural animation*, functions above all as an epigraph of the text of life and the world. It is at the same time an ephemeral piece of time, but never, as long as we hear it, more than a shadow (Plato, *ouch!*) of something impossible to darn. Of an idea-horizon paradoxically present and without words.

And there, in the musical experience, there is a sublimation of emotions and feelings, of intelligence and aesthetic sense in action. Math-rock will move the amateur mathematician, in the same way that *Blue Monday* buries a depressive era and drags the same generation into clubbing – something happily danceable for some, but for others more melo-dramatic mortals a luxury coffin to Dor that was closing a cycle. That musicians so often have no idea of this kind of impact... It happens, *por supuesto*.

It is in these terms that the music once imagined is for a long time after the moment of creation a natural remedy for the broken heart, a game for play, a pretext for fun, an atmosphere for eroticism, a condition for religion and spirituality. A love always comes first. A top recognition. *Music, I was born for music...*

Muses

For some reason the word music itself derives from the Ancient Greek *mousiké techné* – the art of the muses. The goddesses themselves are musical instances, functional *themes* that interfere in the development to which the most original compositions in the world have arrived. The way in which music in Africa or the East connects sound, dance and speech-word-language itself reminds the West of how

Music is less an art than a dimension of Creation, specifically complex in its sempremergence and at the same time permeating a way of vibrating/activating space-time.

In a radically innovative project, which I tried twice without success, we devised an urban lighting plan based on the concept of musical score. Geir Johnson was the guest composer. He has since passed away. In the silent peace of the skies, he will be in a mute jam with Orlando Pantera, who on the Island of Santiago gave birth to so many songs, without having had the opportunity to give them shape – the form that would inevitably dirty them with their primeval power, as Mário Lúcio was able to explain in Catarina Alves Costa's recent film.

Brief waiting. Two minutes of silence.

Without wanting to go into pathetic resonances, and much less into arid and absurdly hypothetical definitions, what I feel and reiterate is that the consciousness of music is a specific dimension of the consciousness of/in *being and being here*; and that in this dimension of being and walking around here something happens through music, through its composition, interpretation, improvisation. There is in music a thematization of sound that makes it, under certain conditions, a spiritual experience, a human way of transcending the *givens* of the sound world. A plane where understanding, wonder, study and evidence of otherwise intangible harmonies in the cosmos. Music is like a ticket to the opening of the being to its expansion precisely as *an* ephemeral arrangement in the infinite interaction between the fundamental waves that make up sound and the fundamental waves that make up everything else, as Stephon Alexander suggests – there it is, physicist and musician. *Voilà*.

In his work *The Jazz of Physics* (2024), the author intones the theory that it will be in musical experience, in his laboratories, that we see the rotating cosmos itself, “the volatile personality of quantum mechanics, making the boundaries of cosmology and quantum gravity reverberate.” They are metaphors, in the book's synopsis – borders, reverberation... – to say the way everything is music, so that this dimension of being is made explicit – in an authorship, in an arrangement, in a sudden inspiration, in study. And in the iconic passionate corner in the shower.

The *qualia* of the mind at stake – musically *played* – into the cosmic structure and which a spiritual visionary like John Coltrane transmuted into method-freedom-aesthetic-political act. Paths that the harp of another Coltrane – Alice – and the saxophone of Pharoah Sanders will fly over in *possessed*, guruwise *grooves*, to *Satchidananda*.

When we listen to the best music – the purest, the most intelligent, the most spiritual, the most transcendent – we thus access cosmic codes and their performative malleability, integrating us. Crying or laughing, commotion or panic are to some extent collateral damage. In this emotional and sentimental surrender, in this participation in *the certain understanding of the uncertain*, something appears that elevates the cognitive and even the philosophical to the poetic – *wordless*, *speechless*, in a new dance step between silence and sound, chaos and order, matter and life.

Pause. I think of the fall upwards on *Sunset Mission* by Bohren & der Club of Gore.

The musical gesture can be far-fetched, rehearsed, it can be talking noise, time managed by a blind heart or a decided metronome. It can be left over or sublimated, failing, absent. What I do know is that in the search for the moment that *speaks* – that bleats, moans, cries, screams, recognizes... – a wrong time kills the place opened by inspiration, a delicate-sweet melody ruins a *stoner trip*. Musical ethics becomes a perceptible ticket to eternity.

At the right time, the journey becomes a language of movement not so much of the mind as of the body – whether in a devilish dialogue between bagpipe and harmonica or in a diabolical techno. The ray of metaphors chirps thin in the face of what is sometimes a sound moment. And the point misses, whether what we are listening to is not even... real music. Whether when it is a bastard, libertarian or free sound. Killing in the name of.

I am a witness to this when I heard John Zorn play live at the CCB a theme inspired by Chinese torture... when I programmed Dror Feiler in Lisbon and I don't know if anyone stayed in the room until the end of a deafening *continuum* of *noise*... or when one day I was confronted with the disarming near-silence of a concept on the subject of the stars... (days after Sonic Youth in Campo Pequeno).

The fact that the mountains can sing (thank you Terje Rypdal) has to do with the fact that pieces of music appear to me as soundscapes that can reflect emotion, feeling, intelligence, reflection, knowledge, consciousness. Something natural that subsists in the artificiality

of played-recorded music. Or faith. I think of Garbarek as a consistent ethereal place that I return to whenever I need a little mental freshness.

Music will have to do with the search for and the encounter with resonances – some visible, instinctively snapped up; but other energy foci without a name. Like muses, who once recognized – the musicians offering themselves to them – guide the various approaches to sound. The time dedicated to the search is a vital point in this process.

I therefore speak not so much of perfection – which I do not know if it exists, first of all because the virtuosity associated with it takes me away from the idea – but of grace. Of volatile but also memorable experience of beauty. I know, and I can prove it, that there is no record in the history of humanity as perfect in terms of the economy of notes and sounds as *Communiqué* by the Straits – that is, the ability to avoid *too many notes* to Mozart and at the same time the excessive-sublime (Peter Hook's methodically inexpressive bass in *Heart and Soul*, from *Closer...* that is, of the Beautiful, which is virtually impossible to ignore in the Beethoven of the Ninth. Such moments can occur in a couple of bars achieved from a band of friends in a jam without a defined direction, or of course, more evidently, in Strauss's waltz that surrounds the ship in Kubrick's 2001.

To a certain extent, the music that is inspired and breathes in the Beautiful, the Sublime and the Graceful, when it is integrated by the individual or the community in its reception, is SPHERA in co-creative co-existence. This explains the air guitar, a ritual that one day a hairy man turned into a performance design of an auditory experience at the Marquee in London (Iron Maiden were taking their first steps). Or the assertiveness with which in *rai* we are called to clap our hands together, in pure verticality.

Going back and continuing to return to circularities, to what extent is the introductory riff of *Smoke on the Water* from the same batch as the intro of Quinta Sonfonia? To what extent are the similar, the inverted, the expanded, the shortened, mechanical disasters or extraordinary operations? The question will have to do with the question of music as a function. Hence Rory Gallagher in the temple of *attack* and the aesthetics of sweat sounds more genuine to me than any *Disney Fantasia*; at the same time that Mendelsohn, in Wednesday, introduced me to the metal that will come to me via *War Pigs*. Music is inevitably *a dent* and *mass*, so let us know how to “hearsee” the differences

Music as human culture is therefore a palimpsest, where *layers* and dimensions rise to the surface in the most subtle of details. The *pastoral* that unites Genesis to Beethoven is of the order of an invisible but experiential language, even as a refounding myth. The way Clapton, Zeppelin emulate, steal and, in the end, pay homage to the soul of a sonority is the way an original encounter, emerging, becomes Voice (Individual, Cultural, Cosmic). Topicality.

In the same way, pure values are channeled in this way: Satie channels ‘something like’ simplicity, Debussy something like a lake... These are cases of place-authors. Different to a large extent from authors-vehicles, such as Yes in topographical oceans – spiritual – or Genesis fascinated with a lamb lying on Broadway – surreal?

Poetics is here – I reiterate, insist, reinforce – as *poeting*. To the limit, generating places for the mind to rest from the world. You can do it in a myriad of holy places stored on vinyl or digital. I can think of the amorous purity of Joni Mitchel’s Blue, no less than *Annete Peacock’s full New York* flair irreverence in *x-dreams*, or Marianne Faithful’s seductively macaronic languor – to name a few female souls... On the manly side of the image, the *Freebird biker* mesh comes to mind...

These portals originally take place only at one point on the planet: where a creative consciousness, alone in the group, takes responsibility for assuming bleed, roar, tide, mountain. These places derive from the possible or possible conditions, which condition a grammar of the sensible. The hills are alive...

Pause

Outside, the trees are resounding. Elective affinity with the sounds of the world leads attention to an encounter. Being/between sounds that the composition mirrors. That education shapes.

A good friend who led me to the *Glimmer Twins* explained to me at the time: *music is born of cocaine* – Keith Richards actually took the heroine in his buttocks, not by the arms. Alvin Lee had an unconscious mission: to prolong his father’s obsession with instrumental jazz on guitar. Here the question of biography arises. As Amadeus knew how to recreate so well. That is, individual motivations – traumas, drives, deviations, temptations, desires, paranoia, missions... The grammar of meaning, of the intuited, becomes a boat for the Babel of sounds: Liverpool, Manchester, Vienna, Jamaica, Cape Verde, Mali – of departure-arrival-departure. Glimpsing these connections consciously or unconsciously makes us music lovers, lovers of their spectral geographical richness.

In a journey that is currently Ahrimanic, Humanity may be losing its voice, body and soul. For many purposes, the imaginary archive of the infinite music in the world remains, integrating the obscure musician into an altarpiece of incensed stars, integrating a child into the room's playing drum, the thunder in the sky, the thunder of the motorcycle without a carburetor, the chewing of the drunk at dinner. The musician in us plays by listening, by imitating, by recognizing, and finally by sublimating: composing.

Here comes the issue of mediation. In recording, in producing, the alchemy of apparition occurs on a different plane than that of playing well or even assuming community in a choir (see the cultural mediation of AMPAGDP). It is the magic dust of a curatorship of sounds that turns the FMM into a geo-spatial spaceship, just as the velvet and wood design turns the Gulbenkian room into a multisensory chapel. Mediation in the sense of a device for aligning the material with the experience. As when in the flowers or in the desert, in the field, trance is not necessarily silencing sheep but perhaps making us stars in the sphere of the celestial. That celestial that in the old rock concert was reproduced in the sea of lighters. And in which with our eyes closed we immerse ourselves in a classical music concert when all the factors called for correspond to: direction, interpretation, acoustics, atmosphere, program. It was precious to say this about musical temples. And of priests lost in them such as Lee Scratch Perry or Manfred Eicher at ECM, who added flow to the original channels.

The word and the phrase

I take a deep breath.

I will not know how to experience operatic recitatives in the same way as arias with their immediate melodies. Where in the sung song the idea of conciseness assists me is in popular song. Bob Dylan or Sérgio Godinho, or Léo Ferré, are voices, yes, and their moments of intonation are punctually enormously enfolded by the arrangements that frame the word-poem. This is another lever that generates emotional resonances that bind us to places of affection.

The lyrics – for some reason, in English, *lyrics* – in their semi-autonomous musicality, are the music of words, of words, of prosody, almost always living in the space between images and episodes – voids that those who listen fill with the resonance of their reading-experience. Imagining. *First we take Manhattan...* Going down the stairs four by four at the ternary rhythm.

The truth is that there are musical works – themes, records – that close epochs because new eras are glimpsed in them. And they are not always masterpieces. And each era comes to us through what was previously heard. The process leads us to an elliptical conversation. He proposed it, and back to the framework of instrumental music, once I heard a pianist friend rehearsing a piece by Beethoven for examination. At the end, jokingly, he played an entire section again but in the rhythmic dynamics of a syncopated blues. The notes essentially the same. Sounded strangely familiar.

The musical phrase is in this framework another minimum unit of meaning to consider when we play or think about music, and it is equally crucial to consider it in the creative process, consciously - or unconsciously. Perhaps therein lies a rhetorical dimension of musical expression, or at least ‘linguistic’. This would explain the speeches of fado, tango, rumba, a ghazal, a souk, as if a subtext resided in the phrase and its chaining. ‘I am this, now I will tell a story’.

Crescendo, staccato, piano, allegro... Classical music had time to stabilize discourse and language, and their signs as a cue for the performer’s dance with the score. The *drop* in dance music is an element that, like those, frames the experience triggering a reaction. Something similar inhabits the *break* in classic *hard rock*.

The phrasistic is therefore crucial for the construction of the musical experience. Ravel, in Bolero – there it is, transcending a formula, a genre, the canon – takes the phrases to an orgasmic extreme that in the last measure opens heavy doors of sound. It is no coincidence that Stravinsky is the phrase that worked as an invitation figure at the beginning of Yes’ concerts. Igor lit the flames that – the composer could not guess – would burn in contiguity with the fiery entrance of the church organ in *Parallels*, propelling us out of the suite. The *riff* in heavy rock is, in these terms, the assertive, consistent, and not always eloquent phrase that drags the heart into a vortex. *Taratata tata taratatata...* throw us Benny Goodmann’s clarinet... in a phrase that announces the entire Post-War.

Epilogue | or the true sound in art that I came across as a curator

Last night, a dj saved my life opened my first and only rehearsal (*Life and the Monster*) more than two decades ago. It was a way to recover an existential maxim.

Returning to this topic after the excursion to the *off* tradition of Greil Marcus (situationists *vs.* punk), was justified because this text was written in trance mode, deliberately without recourse to sources. I improvised from what I was envisioning: music as a tool and *output of sphering*. Sound palimpsest, noise turned into work, works-noise, places-people elevated to Forms.

Reflection on aboriginal songlines *was left out*. But in the drift, I tried to show how music is a particular dimension of connection – of the Human with himself reconnected, in multiple registers and regimes of affectation. Catharsis and freedom are records of a grid of sounds that sometimes asserts itself and sometimes is diluted in noise and silence.

Decades ago, when visiting Nuno Cera's exhibition at *Luzboa* in 2004, whose images were portraits of the Sun, I was struck by the ambient sound, with an evident physical impact, which I 'read' as something at the same time unique and absolutely universal... it was a real sound. When the artist explains to me that it was the sound actually emitted by the *Astro-king*, I was speechless. Today, I reiterate the conversation with this moment: – Will there be music for ears other than humans? A way to recover the provocation from the beginning of this text. Well, yes, there it is, if the mountains sang... And it's not that they sing?

In another installation, also at *Luzboa* in 2004, Daniel Schlaepfer proposed the experimentation of a cistern in the Fado Museum, from a drop of water that fell there day after day, minute after minute. In fact, a drop of water that the artist surprised in space, and that with a team of sound designers he transmuted into a quadriphonic immersion that he put in dialogue with the images projected on the walls. If in Cera I experience the recording of a brutal energy, in *Undae* by Schlaepfer I experienced the transmutation of the invisible – the in practice inaudible – in a chaotic composition that did not let me find any other nexus than that of my own willingness to stay there in hypnosis.

There were two moments pregnant with abstraction – but, in fact, absolutely concrete – that I put in dialogue with the role of music in the art of the Belgians *HetPakt*. And I will stick to two pieces in which the experience of sound is spatially and performatively deconstructed and thus radically present in terms of the perception of how there is music beyond any interpretation or recording, specifically in the crossing of reality through the body.

In *Fado Morgana* – the work mentioned above – and *El Sol*, which I curated in another edition of the *Skyway Festival*, the sources of each instrument – in the first case the human voice, in the second the instruments of a band – meet the listener-spectator as he moves; thus,

he reconstructs, step by step, the complexity of the whole from the isolated fragment. Something like a *social symphony*, therefore, emerges not from the sealed object, but from a theatrical staging that celebrates music as a puzzle. Despite their apparent simplicity, these two works have both been repeatedly presented at festivals, each time as conceptual and performative variations on an original idea. They thus belong to a kind of *moving pedagogy of listening*: a practice that draws us out of the apathy of consumption.

The music we sing to the mountains I believe is a sound palimpsest that humanizes being and being; and it is when one can speak of creative truth and aesthetic engagement. I couldn't get a soundtrack à la Bernard Hermann or Miklos Rosa for reading this article – perhaps such sounds would give color to the dryness of the typeface. This text, I am aware of this, did unveil itself as a spiral story that sought its musicality in a fluid structure, in a *jam* between myself and my (weak) consciousness. In the center of the vertiginous off-center mandala, I underline then: the creative tension noise/silence inhabits the musical language of sounds. In its expansion, rhizomatically linked living patterns sprout, exposing in the ether – for us, who are not mountains – the most *connected language* of the universe in which we have incarnated.

The music we sing to the mountains, I believe, is a sound palimpsest that humanizes being and existing; and that's when you can talk about creative truth and aesthetic engagement. I couldn't order a soundtrack à la Bernard Hermann or Miklos Rosa for reading this article – perhaps such sounds would give colour to the dryness of the typeface. This text, I am aware of this, did unveil itself as a spiral story that sought its musicality in a fluid structure, in a *jam* between myself and my (weak) consciousness. In the centre of the vertiginous off-centre mandala, I underline then: the creative tension noise/silence inhabits the musical language of sounds. In its expansion, rhizomatically linked living patterns sprout, exposing in the ether – for us, who are not mountains – the most connected language of the universe in which we have incarnated.

Mário Caeiro

Spoiler alert

Below I explain, in order of appearance in the text, the full names of songs referred to and their reference interpreters, as well as the songs from which I have taken textual fragments. Other titles and verses of songs in Portuguese, which I integrate into my language, and which I deliberately refuse to make explicit, so as not to lose the appropriative logic of *sampling*, I punctually put in italics.

I can't keep from crying | *I Can't Keep from Crying* | Ten Years After
In My Time of Dying | Led Zeppelin
Listen | *Awaken* | Yes
Satisfaction | *(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction* | The Rolling Stones
Smells... | *Smells Like Teen Spirit* | Nirvana
Hotel California | The Eagles
Breathe | *The Dark Side of the Moon* | Pink Floyd
Supper's Ready | Genesis
Relayer | Yes
Sympathy | *Sympathy for the Devil* | The Rolling Stones
Sultans of Swing | Dire Straits
Bésame, bésame mucho... | *Bésame mucho* | Consuelo Velázquez
Música, eu nasci para a música... | *A Minha Música* | José Cid
Satchidananda | *Journey in Satchidananda* | Journey in Satchidananda | Alice Coltrane
Killing in the name of... | *Killing in the name* | Rage Against the Machine
Mannish Boy | Muddy Waters
Smoke on the Water | Deep Purple
Quinta Sinfonia | *Sinfonia n.º 5 em Dó menor Op. 67* | Ludwig van Beethoven
War Pigs | Black Sabbath
Freebird | Lynyrd Skynyrd
The hills are alive... | *The Sound of Music* | Julie Andrews
First, we take Manhattan | Leonard Cohen
Last night a dj saved my life | Indeep