RECONNOITERING THE SONIC SPECTRUM OF SALVATORE SCIARRINO IN 'ALL' AURE IN UNA LONTANANZA'

Brendan P. McConville

> With me, music inhabits a threshold region. Like dreams, where something both exists and does not yet exist, and exists as something else as well. And where these sensations, the most fleeting of them, cross the threshold of unconsciousness with the blink of an eye: outside, they are prolonged, sharp and clear, having survived the passage from drowsiness. These are the sounds found close to the horizon of the sense….[1]

The above quote, extracted from his *L'Opere per Flauto* (1977–1990), provides not only a colorful introduction to the effusive imagination of Italian composer Salvatore Sciarrino, but also a preview of what an unfamiliar listener may expect to find in his music. His largely unchanging musical language has slowly yet deliberately – like the four-minute unbroken cello glissando found near the end of his *Vanitas* for voice, cello and piano (1981)[2] – captured the attention of composers, performers, scholars, and new music enthusiasts for over 30 years. Moreover, examination of Sciarrino's music provokes consideration for fascinating compositional comparisons, particularly in 20th-century Italian music, as his oeuvre demonstrates similarities with, and advancements of, the music of his compatriots. In this article, we will 'reconnoiter' the music of Sciarrino on two different levels, by: 1) contextualizing the formulization of his compositional language from developmental and sociological perspectives, and 2) conceptualizing these investigations in *All'Aure in Una Lontananza* (1977), a work which would perhaps forecast goals of his life output.

Born in Palermo in 1947, Sciarrino was something of an artistic prodigy. He was a gifted painter – which perhaps helped him advance his control of spatial relationships – but music ultimately monopolized his aesthetic focus. Though he briefly studied formally with Turi Belfiore, he was primarily self-trained by independently deconstructing the music of Mozart, Mendelssohn and Brahms. Sciarrino has said that though Belfiore was a strong teacher, he chose to rely on rules instead of scores in his approach[3] – which drove Sciarrino to formulate his own ideologies regarding the creation and organization of music. His first major première came at Palermo's New Music Week in 1962. Other notable performances followed in Rome and Palermo in 1968, and his eventual move to Rome provided early exposure to electronic music at the Accademia di S. Cecilia, under the tutelage of Franco Evangelisti.[4]

[1] Sciarrino, Salvatore, trans. Brendan McConville. *L'Opere per Flauto*. (Milano: Ricordi, 1990).

[2] Sciarrino, Salvatore, trans. Brendan McConville. *Vanitas per Voce, Violoncello e Pianoforte*. (Milano: Ricordi, 1987).

[3] Pinzauti, Leonardo, trans. Brendan McConville. 'A Colloquio con Salvatore Sciarrino,' (In Conversation with Salvatore Sciarrino) in *Nuova Rivista Musicale Italiana*, 11/1 (1977), 51.

[4] Osmond-Smith, David, 'Salvatore Sciarrino' in *Oxford Music Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.

This experience would serve a critical function in the developmental process of the young composer. Evangelisti, engineer-turned-composer-turned-theorist, is widely known today for helping establish the Darmstadt-Italian connexion during the 1960s.[5] After experimentation with integral serialism and constructing austere parameters within aleatoric contexts, he shifted his energies to electronic music, and more specifically, researching the psycho-acoustic attributes of sonorous events. This fascination propelled his research entitled *Vom Schweigen zu einer neuen Klangwelt'* (From Silence to a New Sound Space) which was posthumously published in German.[6] Evangelisti's views regarding not only the multi-dimensionality of sonic events, but their cognitive and aesthetic repercussions on perception were of seemingly strong influence to Sciarrino. These views were transmitted through the study of electronic music – a process that no doubt frequently expanded compositional frontiers in general during that period of the 20th century. As György Ligeti has said, 'Working in the studio gave me quite new compositional ideas, new factors had come into influence my development.'[7]

His time with Evangelisti wove delicately into Sciarrino's burgeoning compositional voice. The result was, and remains, a quest for exploring the entire spectrum between silence and sound. In his mind, the creation of music requires clear consciousness of sonic spatialization – just as visual spatialization is necessary for a painter. He has stated, 'We deal with the sense of space which is the basis for music, but I do not mean actual space but mental space; for before giving out the organizing rules of a composition, space organizes musical perception …'.[8] For Sciarrino, internal designs of the music are subordinate to that which allows us to regard constructive mechanisms to begin with. One initial compositional characteristic demonstrating this principle is his frequent use of low dynamic levels – particularly in his solo works,[9] as we will see in *All'Aure*. At the threshold of audibility – as at the threshold of unconsciousness – there lies a powerful region, particularly on his musical canvas. Even his large-scale works, as Gavin Thomas has noted of his *Un'immagine di Arpocrate* for piano and orchestra (1974–79), may potentially 'produce little more than a murmur' for 45 minutes.[10] These potent regions help facilitate his passage between the polarities of silence and sound. When concerning these polarities, sound may be intensified by dynamic, texture, or timbre, while silence may be exploited by seemingly limitless duration. Sciarrino's sentiments also recall Evangelisti's influence: space organizes musical perception. To this point, he has also gone on to say '… there is one thing without which no delight in sound makes sense, and that is the intensity of silence. The tension and the thoughts of the person who listens made perceptible by the person who plays.'[11] He

[5] Ferrari, Giordano, 'Franco Evangelisti' in *Oxford Music Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.

[6] Vogel, Christian, 'Franco Evangelisti: Collection', *La Folia*, http://www.lafolia.com/archive/vogl/vogl199904evangelisti.html.

[7] Irvine, John, 'Luigi Nono's *Canti di vita e d'amore*: New Phases of Development 1960–62,' in *Contemporary Music Review*, 18/1 (1999), 89. Reprinted in *Luigi Nono, the Suspended Song* (Germantown, NY: Periodicals Service Company, 2002).

[8] Sciarrino, Salvatore, from lectures of *Le Figure Della Musica da Beethoven ad Oggi*, in Giacco, Grazia, trans. Peter, Cedric, 'La Notion De Figure Chez Salvatore Sciarrino', *Sonus: A Journal of Investigations into Global Musical Possibilities* 27/2 (Spring 2007), 17–18.

[9] Hodges, Nicholas, 'A Volcano Viewed From Afar: The Music of Salvatore Sciarrino' in *Tempo No. 194* (October 1995), 22.

[10] Thomas, Gavin, 'The Poetics of Extremity. Gavin Thomas Introduces the Remarkable Music of Salvatore Sciarrino' in *The Musical Times*, 134/1802 (April, 1993), 193.

[11] Osmond-Smith, 'Salvatore Sciarrino.'

acknowledges that not only can a multi-dimensional space be filled up between silence and sound, but both extremes collectively contribute to a dynamic method of communication.

For Sciarrino, space-conscious discovery of relationships generated by exploration of silence and sound also requires another distinctive characteristic of his music: rendering new timbral possibilities on acoustic instruments. His inventiveness regarding sound production has become perhaps the most memorable feature of his work, due in large part to demands on both performer and listener. Through creative use of multi-phonics, trills, key clicks, rapidly arpeggiated string harmonics, unusual positioning of instruments during performance, breathing, and more, he continuously reconsiders how music may negotiate this spectrum by changing his operational palette. Thomas has also accurately pointed out that Sciarrino's extended instrumental techniques are not merely coloration within a larger agenda; rather, they are part of the basic subject matter.[12] This idea is true in a large number of his works, and will be evident in *All'Aure*. Moreover, since these techniques are often manufactured out of improvisation, Thomas continues by noting that they border on the aleatoric, as they become difficult to predict or recreate verbatim.[13] Bearing this in mind, we may surmise that not only does each work conduct a fresh examination of the sonic spectrum, but each performance does as well.

Sciarrino has an interesting position regarding construction of his works within the larger context of space. Formal designs do come into focus; however, he avoids selecting a traditional form, which may then become '… a container that is filled up in a scholastic way.'[14] For example, he has expressed of *Un'immagine di Arpocrate*:

> I translated the ancient form by means of pitches, other tensions, other units, with a new logic … Let us imagine people listening to a sonata form in a thousand years. The tonal sense may not exist any longer; but this form will not lose its meaning since it is an architecture of sounds. We already cannot distinguish the intervals as we could formerly and a seventh has already lost its expressive strength, so have most of the chords. Yet, the construction has remained the same.[15]

In his music traditional forms are not abandoned, though academic training need not dictate how tradition is to be utilized. Though the avant-garde compositional environment of the 1960s and 70s perhaps harmoniously sought a *tabula rasa* like that created from Schoenberg's work, Sciarrino did not pursue it from a formal perspective.[16] Rather, he reconsidered what may be used as compositional source material and applied it to reinvented forms, a practice he continues today. One may also consider his formal frameworks as abstractions from what he calls 'ancient forms', since he essentially extracts common aspects from them.[17] Once inside these forms, the progenitorial source may be a particularly creative sound, a combination of sounds, or, as we will observe in *All'Aure*, a carefully managed sonic scheme.

As mentioned, the concept of exploring relationships between sound and silence – and specifically their borders – immediately begins to conjure connexions to other luminary Italian figures of the last century; here we will consider the music of Giacinto Scelsi, Luciano Berio and

---

[12] Thomas, 193–4.
[13] Ibid, 193–4.
[14] Sciarrino, Salvatore, from lectures of *Le Figure Della Musica da Beethoven ad Oggi*, in Giacco, Grazia, 25.
[15] Ibid, 25.
[16] Irvine, 88.
[17] Pace, Ian, 'Recent Sciarrino Premières' in *Tempo No. 200* (April 1997), 49.

Luigi Nono. This sociological perspective induces an interesting discussion of how each of them arrived at these same borderlands; and their journeys to them explain their individual uses of, and objectives with, these regions.

Since Morton Feldman's designation of him as the 'Charles Ives of Italy,' attraction to the music of Giacinto Scelsi (1903–1988) has grown in recent years.[18] Like Ives, the Italian aristocrat (Count Giacinto Scelsi d'Ayala Valva, the last scion of an ancient Sicilian family) financed his early performances and scores,[19] which perhaps enabled him to experiment a bit more freely with his music. During his youth compositional influences included the Futurists, Scriabin, and the Second Viennese School; he having travelled to Vienna to study dodecaphony with Walter Klein, and it has been claimed he was the first Italian to compose with this method.[20] His body of work reveals stylistic traits beginning from an 'Expressionistic' voice (e.g. *Suite No. 2*, 1930), to one suffused with Eastern influences (e.g. *La Nascita del Verbo*, 1948) and ultimately vested firmly in simplification of materials. In 1959 he composed *Quattro Pezzi Chiascuno su una Nota Sola* (Four Pieces, Each on a Single Note) for small orchestra, which perhaps best symbolizes this simplification, and his consideration of the silence-sound spectrum. By stripping away the tendencies inherent to meticulous pitch organization and rhythmic construction, Scelsi forced himself to concentrate solely on primitive aspects of music such as frequency (specifically through his use of microtones), attack, dynamics, color, and duration.

Robin Freeman has asserted the pieces have historical significance comparable to Schoenberg's initial dodecaphonic works and Messiaen's *Mode of Values and Intensities*.[21] Through the portal of a single note Scelsi arrived at an acute exploration of the entire sound envelope and sound perception. He had foreshadowed his pursuit of this simplification in his *Son et Musique* (Sound of Music) – recorded conversations about music that were later published – as he discussed the spherical, three-dimensional nature of sound, namely: pitch, duration and depth.[22] *Quattro Pezzi* and similar works (e.g. *Trilogia – Die Drei Lebensalter des Menschen, III. Igghur*, 1965) thus give us a strong connexion to the frontiers made famous today by Sciarrino. In addition, Sciarrino shares two other important developmental qualities with Scelsi. First, they have both re-evaluated what may be used as a compositional point of departure: Sciarrino may use a sonic scheme (as previously mentioned) while Scelsi's famous starting point was a single note. Next, they have both traversed this spectrum with mainly acoustic instruments and their humanly manipulated improvisational qualities, while others have resorted to electronic means. Scelsi, however, arrived at these borderlands but didn't necessarily employ them to examine the intimate relationship between silence and sound. Rather, his acknowledgment of them in a multi-dimensional sense enabled him to enhance his compositional agenda, bound to overtly simple designs and Eastern traditions.

Luciano Berio (1925–2003), perhaps the grandest figure in Italian 20th-century music, likewise frequented these border territories. Like Scelsi, he was well studied in a serial vernacular; his early works quickly

[18] Fanning, David, 'Review: Recent Italian Music' in *The Musical Times* 64, No. 3/4 (Jul.–Oct., 1983), 320.

[19] Sciannameo, Franco, 'A Personal Memoir: Remembering Scelsi' in *The Musical Times* 142/1875 (Summer, 2001), 22.

[20] Freeman, Robin and Scelsi, Giacinto, 'Tanmatras: The Life and Work of Giacinto Scelsi,' in *Tempo No. 176* (March 1991), 8.

[21] Ibid, 15.

[22] Mollia, Michela and Giacinto Scelsi, 'Giacinto Scelsi: (Ohne Titel)' in *Perspectives of New Music* 22, No. 1/2 (Autumn, 1983–Summer, 1984), 266.

expanded out from this style. Yet unlike Scelsi he plunged thoroughly into the realm of electronic music to further develop his compositional pursuits. His electro-acoustic endeavors during the mid-1950s initiated a marriage between his contemplation of the sonic envelope and his pre-existing rigorous approach to musical organization. By co-founding the *Studio di fonologia musicale* (with Bruno Maderna) in 1955, Berio began an expedition that, as Berio scholar David Osmond-Smith has astutely observed, challenged the 'primacy of pitch'.[23] Like Sciarrino, close regard of the full sonic spectrum allowed Berio to discover new instrumental possibilities in his acoustic works – which incidentally led to use of similar materials to Sciarrino's. However, Sciarrino's music is again centered on manipulating the relationships within, and between, silence and sound, while Berio's explorations of these regions come largely as a by-product of a different schema (e.g. exploring virtuosic capabilities in performance). Moreover, Berio did not necessarily focus on the borderline of silence and sound, rather more specifically 'on the borderline of linguistic sound and musical sound'.[24] His *Sequenza III* (1966), for solo voice, may be considered an example of this particular scheme. The work exhibits moments of enormous intensity where silence fades into the sound of the human voice, and vice versa. But its central premise is perhaps more directed at the human voice's ability intimately to assume unfettered control over sound. The sound envelope may certainly be controlled electronically, acoustically, or both, yet no method of manipulation is as naturally connected to sound as the human voice. Consequently, Berio did come upon regions that Sciarrino now relies upon, yet they were not precisely fundamental to his works.

In the context of 20th-century Italy, Sciarrino's music is most popularly linked to that of Luigi Nono (1924–1990), and for many good reasons. Their greatest similarity is their uniform search for, and discovery of, relationships between silence and sound, specifically within the realms separating these two sonic axes (particularly in Nono's later music). Second, both composers are shrewdly attentive to the concept of space in their works. Roberto Fabbriciani, Nono collaborator and flute virtuoso, has commented that, 'Nono loathed the traditional staticity of sound and searched for a sound which was mobile in emission and also in spatialisation.'[25] Next, they are both indebted to their experiences with electronic music in shaping their compositional thinking. Finally, both have found it necessary to recruit Italy's finest new music virtuosi to successfully facilitate their explorations of the continuum between silence and sound (Fabbriciani included).[26]

Let us consider the greatest difference between these two composers. Nono's developmental process began heavily influenced by a Darmstadt aesthetic. Works such as *Incontri* (1955), for 24 instruments, and *Il Canto Sospeso* (1956), for soloists, chorus and orchestra, were personalized approaches to this style, incorporating symmetrical structures, palindromes and various levels of multi-parametric serial control.[27] With his opera *Intolleranza 1960*[28] he then began an important stage in his compositional maturation, as it was his first integration of electronic

[23] Osmond-Smith, David, *Berio*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 12–14.

[24] Ibid, 62.

[25] Fabbriciani, Roberto, 'Walking With Gigi,' in *Contemporary Music Review*, 18/1 (1999): 10. Reprinted in *Luigi Nono, the Suspended Song* (Germantown, NY: Periodicals Service Company, 2002).

[26] Hodges, 22.

[27] Gorodecki, Michael, 'Strands in 20th-Century Italian Music: 1. Luigi Nono: a History of Belief' in *The Musical Times* 133/1787 (Jan., 1992): 10–11.

[28] Fondazione Archivio Luigi Nono Onlus, 'Opere' (Works), http://www.luiginono.it/it/luigi-nono/opere.

medium into live performance. Nono has said that *Intolleranza 1960* 'did mark a beginning for me, but in no sense did it constitute a tabula rasa or a response to "divine inspiration"'.[29] He worked mostly with magnetic tape and tape-acoustic/voice combinations for the next 20 years, when his *Fragmente – Stille, An Diotima* (1980), for string quartet,[30] suggested a break from the body of music he had compiled to date. With this work his music became quite aligned with elements associated with Sciarrino's language: seemingly endless silences, quiet rustlings, alarming eruptions, et cetera – all means for communicating targeted points within this vast spectrum so crucial to Sciarrino. It was at this time that Nono also traveled to the Heinrich Strobel Foundation Experimental Studio in Freiburg, Switzerland to study electronic music.

Michael Gorodecki has pointed out that one of Nono's primary research goals included 'investigations into the extremities of acoustic sound, working very closely with modern virtuosi – on the borders between note and silence, breath and tone, the fundamental and simultaneously sounding partials.'[31] Yet all this considered, the difference between these two composers becomes their *path* to this common location. At an early age, Nono was introduced to traditional compositional methods at a Venetian conservatory,[32] subsequently experimented with highly serial structures, and finally integrated electronic medium into his gradually maturing voice. Sciarrino, on the other hand, was largely an autodidact and was exposed to electronic music at an early age. He has said that he was born free, not born in a school of music,[33] which has given him an unacademic and personalized developmental process. Therefore, the formulation of Sciarrino's compositional voice has not at all detached from the practice of sonic exploration. In fact, his life output has demonstrated a consistent language and purpose wedded to his early compositional development. This is not to say that the two composers' goals in the early 1980s, for example, were vastly different, but it does create an interesting account of two different paths to a similar point. There are of course other differences between their works, as Nono's music was dependent on electronic components while Sciarrino's is not, and the former's has been much more politically charged. Yet their comparable goals have helped pave an intriguing road for Italian music as it travels into the 21st century.

❦

All'Aure in Una Lontananza,[34] **for solo flute**
Translated as 'To Air in a Distance' (or more poetically 'Distant Winds'), *All'Aure* was composed in 1967, though not published until ten years later.[35] This early work is available within Sciarrino's aforementioned published compilation *L'Opere per Flauto*, and it incorporates a number

---

[29] Irvine, 88.
[30] Fondazione Archivo Luigi Nono Onlus, 'Opere' (Works). http://www.luiginono.it/it/luigi-nono/opere.
[31] Gorodecki, 14.
[32] Fondazione Archivo Luigi Nono Onlus, 'Biografia' (Biography). http://www.luiginono.it/en/luigi-nono/biography.
[33] Casa Ricordi, 'Salvatore Sciarrino' (biography), Universal Music Publishing Ricordi S.r.l., http://www.ricordi.it/composers/s/salvatore-sciarrino/sciarrino.
[34] Sciarrino mentions he reintroduced the post-World War II world to the poetic term 'Lontananza' (distance). He also says Nono was affected by this term and used it in a work dedicated to Sciarrino called *La Lontananza Nostalgica Utopica Futura* (1989/1990). He describes their friendship and this dedication in, Boni, Monica, trans. Brendan McConville, 'La Musica in Italia dal 1945 ad Oggi. Un Archivio Vivente' (Music in Italy Since 1945: a Living Archive) in *Musica/Realtà* 18/54 (1997), 180.
[35] Casa Ricordi, 'All'Aure in una Lontananza' (details regarding the work), Universal Music Publishing Ricordi S.r.l. http://www.ricordi.it/catalogo/archivio-opere/salvatore-sciarrino/allaure-in-una-lontananza/.

of the previously mentioned elements. First, he utilizes innovative instrumental techniques to activate relationships between silence, sound, and areas in between. Though it is difficult to fashion the effects he requires, the piece applies only a few fundamental gestures – a point also true of a majority of his works.[36] After devising such modern techniques he often decides to remain steadfast in saturating the musical landscape with them. Second, the piece features a multi-level discourse between continuous states and their interruptions, as surface communication between these two states also exists on a macro level. This discourse reveals much about his consciousness of spatialization within the frontiers of a given sonic environment. Hodges has pointed out that unstable balance between these states consistently exists in Sciarrino's work.[37] Finally, he facilitates development of his *sonic scheme* in an adopted traditional, tripartite form (with smaller sub-sections). Table I provides a general description of events within the form.

Table 1:
Formal Overview of *All'Aure in Una Lontananza*

Section: Extends until[38]	Analytical comments
Ia: violent glissando, near middle of line 4, page 1	Establishes 'motto'
Ib: violent glissando, second ending, page 1	Begins to develop parameters of 'motto'; introduction of "x"
Interruption: close of first 'xy' gesture, line 2, page 2	Large-scale interruption to 'motto'-based music of Section I; introduction of 'y'
Ic: violent glissando, near end of line 3, page 2	Reestablishes 'motto' now on D^6
IIa: extended violent glissando, near middle of line 9, page 2	Departure from 'motto'; develops relationships between 'x' and 'y' technique types
IIb: return of 'motto', near end of line 4, page 3	Role reversal now apparent
III (formal return): end of piece	Returns to 'motto' now on $E\flat^6$

Identifying Tools for Exploring the Sonic Spectrum

We may elucidate Sciarrino's agenda for spectral investigation by observing the following specific aspects of the music: 1) the establishment of the 'motto', 2) the gradual implementation of his 'x' and 'y' techniques, as we will call them, 3) the recognition of further relationships among 'x' and 'y' technique types, and 4) his use of the polarities of complete silence and full pitch.

First, Sciarrino's emblematic 'motto' presents itself through dramatic repetition for roughly the first 30 seconds of the piece. As previously mentioned, this 'motto' is not dependent upon a particular collection of pitches or characteristic rhythmic sequence (a truism of his language as well), rather a symmetrical sonic scheme: silence – air – sound – air – silence. We find this 'motto' in its original form through nearly the entire first line of the piece in the 'expository' Section I (see Fig.1). To execute this gesture the performer must employ rapid tremolandi fingering to proceed out of silence, through blown air (thus pitches in parentheses) to arrive at the harmonic E^6. Labeled *pppp*, this pitch is intended to remain near the point where blown air meets vibrating sound. But in this same gesture – and breath – the performer must then return, through retrograded passage, to silence once again. Faithfully notated dynamics provide further reinforcement of this unbroken

---

[36] Also the opinion of Thomas, 193.
[37] Hodges, 22.
[38] Sciarrino does not include bar numbers in the score.

continuum throughout. Furthermore, the 'motto' has three distinct components for subsequent spectral exploration, generating the rest of the work: silence, air, and sound.

Figure 1

Second, Sciarrino develops this 'motto' by isolating these various parameters within. Two new instrumental techniques emerge in the fifth line on page 1 (Figure 2a, 'x') and in the second line on page 2 (Figure 2b, 'y'). These 'x' and 'y' techniques contribute to the developmental nature of the air and sound components, respectively. Sciarrino gives careful directions for producing the desired effects, stating that in order to yield the sounds with open diamond note heads ('x'): 'Cover the entire mouthpiece with the lips holding it between the teeth (without biting down), as far-inside the mouth as possible; the result will be a blowing sound of definite pitch.'[39] Of those with closed diamond note heads ('y'): 'Idem, but with the tongue inserted into the hold of the mouthpiece, closing it by about two-thirds; a slight whisper is thus obtained, pitched two octaves above the indicated fundamental.'[40] Through these techniques Sciarrino has again manufactured methods for isolating the boundaries between blown air and actual pitch. Yet they possess slightly different individual functions. The 'x' techniques create effects closer to blown air; 'y' techniques inhabit this same region though their sonic effect produces slightly more of an actual pitch.[41] He applies these two gestures in a similar manner with rapidly slurred glissandi, yet their ultimate emphases differ – just barely – giving way to an intimate examination of the characteristics inherent to the 'motto' of

[39] Sciarrino, Salvatore. *L'Opere per Flauto*. Score notes.
[40] Ibid.
[41] These are the two intended theoretical effects (and those created by Fabricciani), yet due to the nature of these somewhat 'aleatoric' techniques they are not guaranteed in every performance. These interpretations are also made clear in Sciarrino's performance notes when he mentions that regarding the 'x' techniques, 'the result will be a blowing sound', and that the 'y' techniques are 'pitched two octaves above the indicated fundamental'.

the piece. Moreover, these two techniques often merge (e.g. Fig. 2b), and Sciarrino is at times forced to connect them with parenthesized pitches, citing, 'given the difficulty of precisely controlling the emission of the whisper, the notes are given in parenthesis.'[42] These parenthesized 'connexion pitches' germinate from their original counterparts within the 'motto'.
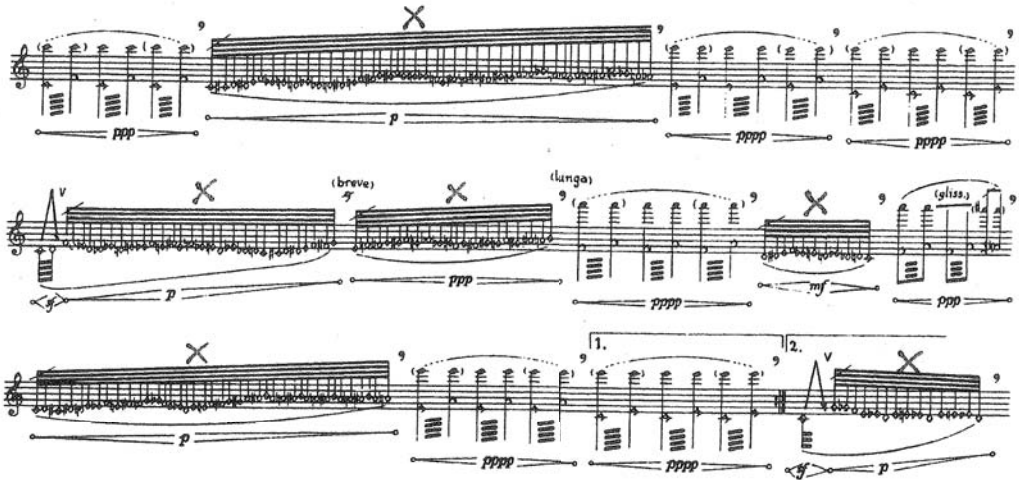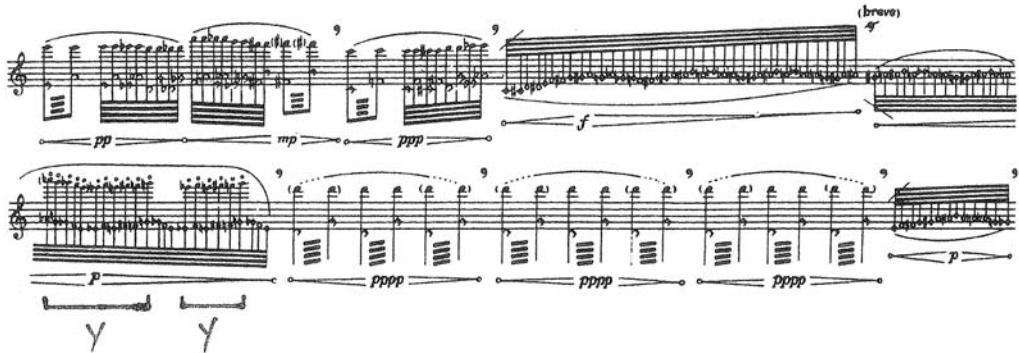

Figure 2a

Figure 2b

Third, we may advance our study of his 'x' and 'y' techniques by giving them specific names to identify contour-based relationships. A close contour analysis of *All'Aure* illustrates the practical approach Sciarrino takes to applying intuitive gestures.

> Look, [he says tracing the directional lines of a schematic musical discourse] the elements of the discourse ascend, but the musical figure is in the complex of a descent, the perception is doubled, much richer; if instead an element ascends, and the successive element again ascends, the ear perceives a single mode, lightly articulated and less rich. I take these perceptive laws into account, and it explains, therefore, why my way of being a musician is very different from that of the serial and structuralist composers, because my way of listening to music is the same for older compositions and for those modern (compositions): the perception is the same …[43]

---

[42] Sciarrino, Salvatore. *L'Opere per Flauto*. Score notes. Note also that half open/half closed diamond note heads produce the parenthesized pitches.

[43] Though work he is describing is unknown, Sciarrino details his technique in Pinzauti, 54.

In Figures 3a and 3b each 'x' and 'y' technique from Figure 2 is further specified with Greek names extracted from analysis of medieval music. Here, we have chosen to recall neumatic notation in our classification system in an effort to reconcile two styles that exist in opposite moments of Western music history, yet demonstrate similar inflective qualities. It must be remembered that Sciarrino's figures here include many more notated pitches than those involved in their medieval ancestors, and for simplification we will generally extract only the first and last pitches of each glissando pattern along with a third pitch, if necessary. Table 2 presents the four basic patterns that may be labeled in association with 'x' and 'y' technique types in *All'Aure*. In a further effort to create simplification of this analytical device, we will not extract more complicated neumatic names/configurations, but use combinations of the above names.
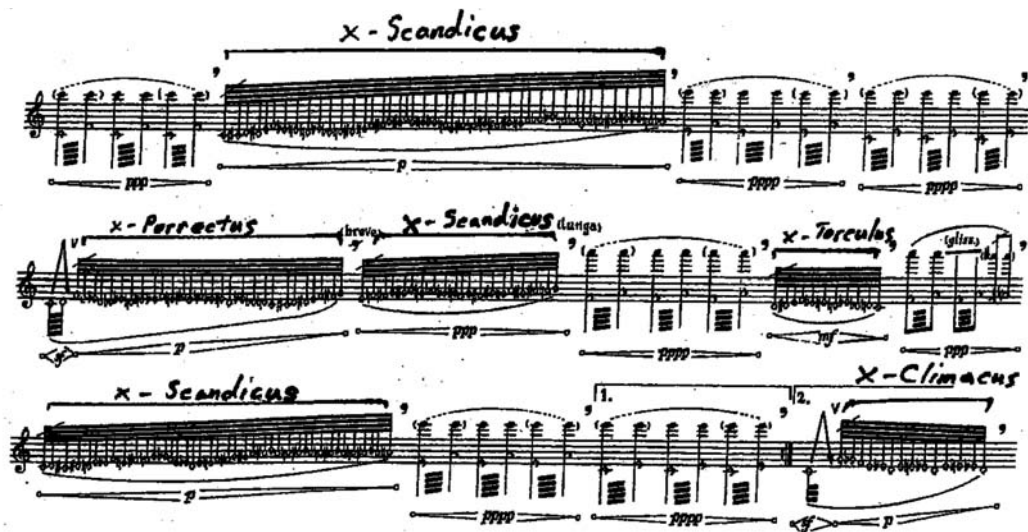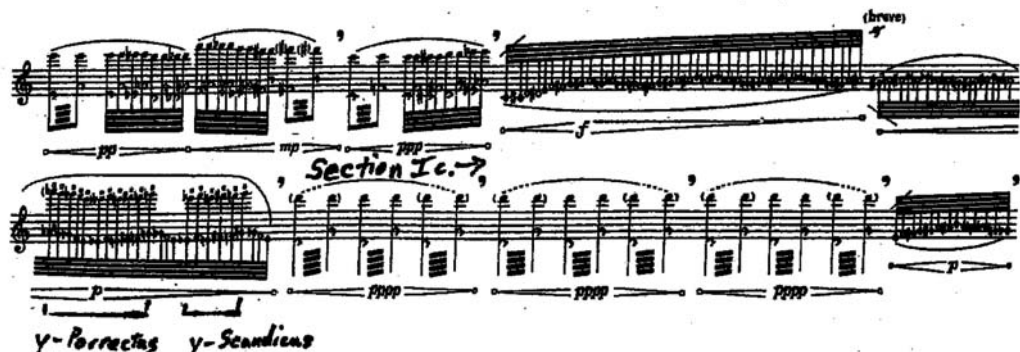

Figure 3a,

Figure 3b

By expanding our identification of these techniques we may closely trace Sciarrino's exploration of these sonic regions. Figure 4 provides an illustration of comparable types with two particular gestures highlighted. Each of these contains a combination of both types, but they conversely embed one technique into the other (at varying degrees). The 'y – Torculus' type is common to each gesture, and additionally, these instances are nested within an even larger uniform 'x-Scandicus' type. In this way we examine 'x' and 'y' types as they weave together into coöperative gestures: varying themselves, yet holding aspects invariant

Name	Description of type	Notation
Scandicus ("climb")	Ascending	
Climacus ("ladder")	Descending	
Torculus ("twist")	Ascends and returns to about the same location[45]	
Porrectus ("stretch")	Descends and returns to about the same location	

Table 2:
'x' and 'y' types [44]

to maintain comprehensibility in perception. This gives Sciarrino the ability to approach the border between blown air and sound from multiple trajectories, contexts, and perspectives.
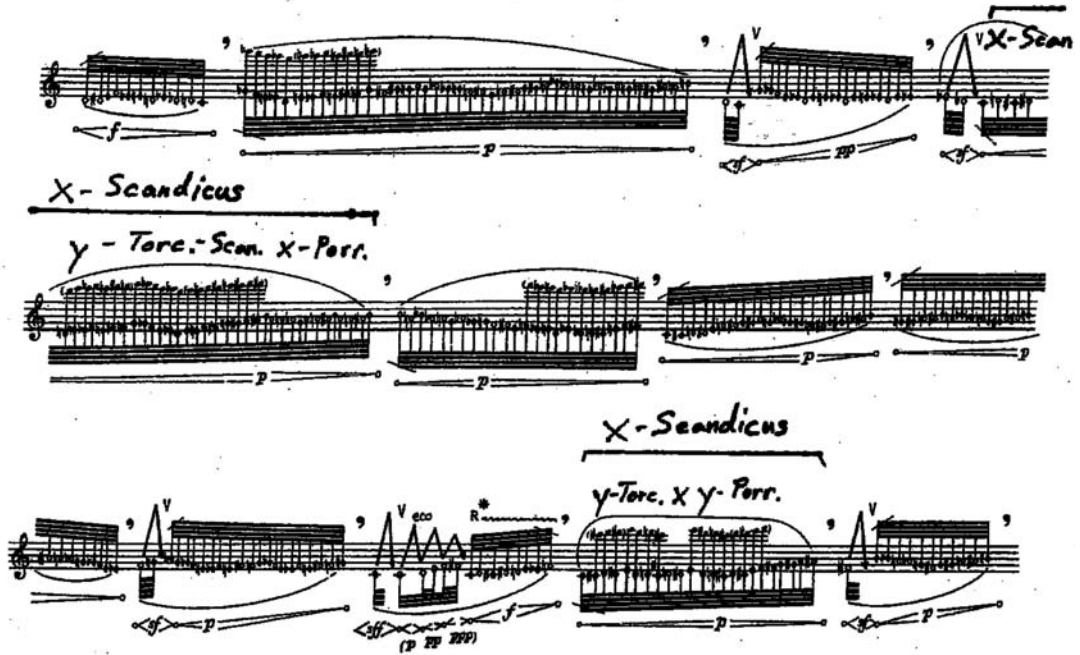

Figure 4

A final tool for consideration within his schema is the development of relationships in the outer parameters of silence and fully pitched sound. From the side of complete inaudibility, Sciarrino progresses through the piece from consistently using *lunga* breath marks in the original statement of the 'motto' (Fig. 1) to carefully alternating *breve* and *lunga* breath marks to vary the perception of silence (compare Figs. 1 'motto' and Fig. 5 'return'). From the side of audibility, Sciarrino struc-

[44] System devised with consideration of analytical methods described in Parrish, Carl, *The Notation of Medieval Music* (New York: Pendragon Press, 1978), 5–7.
[45] Gestures may not return to exactly the same starting point, yet we are more concerned here with a broader context for contour.

turally incorporates a long-term pitch relationship, beginning from the E^6 in the original version of the 'motto', moving to a D^6 in Section Ic (Fig. 2b), and finally to an $E\flat^6$ (Fig. 5) in Section III. This relationship is perhaps Sciarrino's fully audible illustration of another fluid continuum inherent to sound: the musically chromatic palette. He further demonstrates chromatic fluidity in the original 'motto' by bending to an $E\flat^6$, which also foreshadows the eventual move to it in the return. Through the piece, Sciarrino continues to use the 'motto', 'x', and 'y' as vehicles for exploring interior spectral regions, but complete silence and sound do play global-scale roles as well.

Figure 5

Continuity vs. 'Interruption'

In a purely abstract sense, Sciarrino's continuous states and their respective interruptions help engender 'mentally' spatial relationships that may strongly influence perception of the music. In a practical sense, continuity and interruption exist on multiple levels in *All'Aure*. On a local level, Sciarrino's 'violent glissando' technique serves as an interruption of the perception created by the continuously sounding 'motto'.[46] Figure 6 presents the initial instance of the violent glissando (see asterisk), which separates the first two sub-sections in line 4. This technique is not necessarily regarded as 'cadential' as it does not conclude anything, though it does at times help define formal sections within the music (see Table 1). On a sectional level, a large interruption threatens the consistency of the 'motto'-driven music (in Section I, see Table 1), which dominates the first four and a half minutes of music. The interruption section is momentarily grounded to the recently introduced instrumental techniques, then returns to re-establish the 'motto'.

Figure 6:
Lines 3–4, page 1
Violent glissando as local
'interruption'

[46] To produce this technique Sciarrino instructs: *'covering the whole mouthpiece with the lips and holding it between the teeth as far inside as possible, blow a violent glissando as if warming up the instrument. The tone produced will be a seventh below written pitch.'* (Sciarrino, *L'Opere per Flauto* score notes.)

In fact, we may consider the entire middle section (Section II) as an even greater interruption of a continuous state created by the bookend 'mottos'. Section II provides a contrasting, interruptive language featuring role reversal of the staticity of the 'motto' and the activity of 'x' and 'y' techniques (see Fig. 7). In this middle section, the 'motto' now provides the interruptions. Finally, in an aesthetic sense, are interruptions on all levels reflections of Sciarrino's thoughts concerning the interruption of dreams with consciousness?

Figure 7:
Lines 1–2, page 3 role reversal

Though the salient features of *All'Aure* certainly do not represent his entire corpus of work, it does allow us to observe the young composer's ambitious compositional objectives. Through his 'motto', individualized tools, and discourse between continuity and interruption, Sciarrino communicates a tightly constructed introduction to his language. Multi-tiered sonic agendas also exist – and perhaps most important in this work is the extrapolation of his 'motto', itself. The 'motto' and the large 'rounded' form are in fact reflections of each other, as both constructions begin at a given point, gradually navigate away and finally return to the same position. The uniformity of these two designs creates a sense of organicism for the piece as a whole, as we can think of one growing out of the other. In this way, an intriguing juxtaposition is created, as the highly original 'motto' is a microcosm of a traditional formal design.

Music examples reproduced by kind permission by Universal Music MGB Publications.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Boni, Monica (ed.), trans. Brendan McConville. 'La Musica in Italia dal 1945 ad Oggi. Un Archivio Vivente. Colloquio di Luigi Pestalozza con Salvatore Sciarrino' (Music in Italy Since 1945: a Living Archive. An Interview with Salvatore Sciarrino by Luigi Pestalozza) in *Musica/Realtà* 18/54 (1997), 173–184.

Casa Ricordi. 'All'Aure in una Lontananza" (details regarding the work), Universal Music Publishing Ricordi S.r.l. http://www.ricordi.it/catalogo/archivio-opere/salvatore-sciarrino/allaure-in-una-lontananza/ (accessed 7 July, 2008).

Casa Ricordi. 'Salvatore Sciarrino' (biography), Universal Music Publishing Ricordi S.r.l. http://www.ricordi.it/composers/s/salvatore-sciarrino/sciarrino (accessed 7 July, 2008).

Fabbriciani, Roberto. 'Walking With Gigi,' in *Contemporary Music Review*, 18/1 (1999), 7–15. Reprinted in *Luigi Nono, the Suspended Song* (Germantown, NY: Periodicals Service Company, 2002).

Fanning, David. 'Review: Recent Italian Music,' *The Musical Times* 64, No. 3/4 (Jul.–Oct. 1983), 320.

Ferrari, Giordano. 'Franco Evangelisti,'' *Oxford Music Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed 29 June 2008).

Freeman, Robin and Scelsi, Giacinto. 'Tanmatras: The Life and Work of Giacinto Scelsi,' *Tempo No. 176* (March 1991), 8–18.

Fondazione Archivo Luigi Nono Onlus. 'Biografia' (Biography). http://www.luiginono.it/en/luigi-nono/biography (accessed 29 July 2008).

Fondazione Archivo Luigi Nono Onlus. 'Opere' (Works). http://www.luiginono.it/it/luigi-nono/opere (accessed 6 July 2008).

Gorodecki, Michael. 'Strands in 20th-Century Italian Music: 1. Luigi Nono: a History of Belief', *The Musical Times* 133/1787 (Jan. 1992), 10–17.

Hodges, Nicholas. 'A Volcano Viewed From Afar: The Music of Salvatore Sciarrino,' *Tempo No. 194* (Oct. 1995), 22–24.

Irvine, John. 'Luigi Nono's *Canti di vita e d'amore:* New Phases of Development 1960–62,' in *Contemporary Music Review*, 18/1 (1999): 87–109. Reprinted in *Luigi Nono, the Suspended Song* (Germantown, NY: Periodicals Service Company, 2002).

Mollia, Michela and Giacinto Scelsi. 'Giacinto Scelsi: (Ohne Titel),' *Perspectives of New Music* 22, No. 1/2 (Autumn 1983–Summer 1984), 265–272.

Osmond-Smith, David. *Berio*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Osmond-Smith, David. 'Salvatore Sciarrino,' *Oxford Music Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed 1 July 2008).

Parrish, Carl. *The Notation of Medieval Music*. New York: Pendragon Press, 1978.

Pace, Ian. 'Recent Sciarrino Premières,' *Tempo No. 200* (April 1997): 49–51.

Pinzauti, Leonardo, trans. Brendan McConville. 'A Colloquio con Salvatore Sciarrino' (In Conversation with Salvatore Sciarrino), *Nuova Rivista Musicale Italiana*, 11/1 (1977), 50–57.

Sciarrino, Salvatore. *Le Figure Della Musica da Beethoven ad Oggi* (lectures), in Giacco, Grazia, trans. Peter, Cedric, 'La Notion De Figure Chez Salvatore Sciarrino,' *Sonus: A Journal of Investigations into Global Musical Possibilities* 27, No. 2 (Spring 2007), 16–25.

Sciarrino, Salvatore. *L'Opere per Flauto* (Milano: Ricordi, 1990).

Sciarrino, Salvatore. *Vanitas per Voce, Violoncello e Pianoforte*. (Milano: Ricordi, 1987).

Sciannameo, Franco. 'A Personal Memoir: Remembering Scelsi,' *The Musical Times* 142/1875 (Summer 2001), 22–26.

Thomas, Gavin. 'The Poetics of Extremity. Gavin Thomas Introduces the Remarkable Music of Salvatore Sciarrino,' *The Musical Times* 134/1802 (April 1993), 193–196.

Vogel, Christian. 'Franco Evangelisti: Collection', *La Folia*, http://www.lafolia.com/archive/ vogl/vogl199904evangelisti.html (accessed 28 June 2008).