

HEMA-Ensemble 2024/25

Jacopo Caneva a wall around me - imperceptible glimmer (2024, world premiere)

In his biography of Franz Kafka, Max Brod reports this fragment from his friend's diary: "Die gehörte Musik zieht natürlich eine Mauer um mich und meine einzige dauernde musikalische Beeinflussung ist die daß ich so eingesperrt, anders bin als frei". Although he tried to learn piano and violin as a young student, Kafka was generally unmusical and the experience of listening to music made him feel locked up, as if surrounded by a wall.

This piece, scored for string duo and a "shadow" woodwind trio, imagines the former as "originator" of every musical discourse, both in form and content, and the latter as its shadow, or better, a multitude of shadows, as reflections and sonic reverberations of two string instruments surrounded by a wall which, on one hand, multiplies their acoustical existence and, on the other, isolates them from the outside world – as Kafka felt in presence of music.

The continuous shifting in perspective between duo and trio makes it clear that this piece is not a quintet, but the aural result of an attempt to communicate between two smaller ensembles, searching for places beyond the wall, depicted by a highly pulsating, almost folk-like dance, presented two times, to then leave space for its remains to wander around a desert of scattered and extremely altered timbres, rhythms and sequences.

The "imperceptibile spiraglio" (imperceptible glimmer), the potential possibility to create a disturbance in the wall in which the instruments –and Kafka himself– are locked up is best represented by these highly syncopated sections. Sharp gestures, continuous tension and strong personalities for musical characters are here employed as dramatic means in order to hypothesize a possible glance at the world, the real and historically characterized world Kafka lived in, outside the wall imposed to him by most experiences of the music phenomenon.

Mikel Iturregi Isila bezain ilun (2024)

Isila bezain ilun means "as dark as silence" in Basque. The title comes from a poem by Joseba Sarrionandia:

Elurra bezain isil badator iluna
Isila bezain ilun badator elurra
Elurra bezain ilun badator isila
Isila bezain elur badator iluna
Iluna bezain elur badator isila
Iluna bezain isil badator elurra

As silent as the snow comes darkness
As dark as silence comes the snow
As dark as the snow comes silence

As snow as silence comes darkness
As snow as darkness comes silence
As silent as darkness comes the snow

After "Elurra bezain isil", written also in 2024, this is my second piece inspired by this short text, which is constructed with a very limited vocabulary, rearranging a few words to form new meanings. These two pieces develop an ongoing interest for the expressiveness of fragile sound. Each one explores a different perspective of this quietness: the first one is softer and monochrome (snowier, a winter piece after all), while the second one is slower, emptier, darker.