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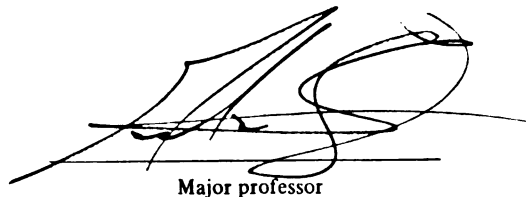
A SYNTHESIS OF EAST AND WEST IN THE
QUATTRO PEZZI OF GIACINTO SCELISI

presented by

Joseph M. Abramo

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

M. M. degree in Music Theory



Major professor

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A SYNTHESIS OF EAST AND WEST IN THE
QUATTRO PEZZI OF GIACINTO SCELISI

By

Joseph M. Abramo

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF MUSIC

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2003

ABSTRACT

A SYNTHESIS OF EAST AND WEST IN THE *QUATTRO PEZZI* OF GIACINTO SCELSE

By

Joseph M. Abramo

Giacinto Scelsi, trained in the Western tradition but philosophically and spiritually linked to the East, saw himself and his music as a product of both East and West. Scelsi's influence from the East is not a mere emulating of styles or structures, but a borrowing of Eastern techniques and changing their function so they serve as vehicles in achieving a Western aesthetic. The present study provides possible origins of these Eastern influences, including the music of Northern India, Tibet and Bali, and, more importantly, show how they are specifically manipulated and transformed in his composition *Quattro Pezzi for Orchestra*, creating a new and unique voice in the Western tradition. The study investigates works by Elliott Carter and Arnold Schoenberg, as well as Scelsi's *Pranam II*, in relation to *Quattro Pezzi*. The study also includes spectral analyses of *Quattro Pezzi*.

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The writing of any large document is never the work of one individual. The author always needs the intellectual, emotional and spiritual support of many people. I have been fortunate to be surrounded by people who were willing and able to give that support. Whether they were in New York, Chicago or East Lansing I always felt they were close to me throughout the entire project.

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I would like to thank the other members of my committee, Dr. Charles Ruggiero and Dr. Anna Celenza, for donating their expertise. The time during the summer that could have been devoted to their personal intellectual pursuits and their families, that was instead spent on myself, is much appreciated.

I would like to thank Editions Salabert for allowing the use of the excerpts in this paper.

I would like to thank my family, my mother Marguerite, father Joseph, and brother Matthew, who have always supported me in everything I do. They were always there as a sympathetic ear when the work felt like it was too much.

Finally I would like to thank my fiancé Melissa, who was always willing to take time away from her busy and demanding studies to help me in numerous ways. Whether it was to get books out of the Northwestern University library or to lend emotional support, she was always there.

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DESCRIPTION OF FIGURES

Images in this thesis are presented in color. These figures presented in color are from the computer program *Goldwave*. They show the overtones present in a sound. This is known as spectral analysis. In these graphs, varying degrees of overtones are represented. Overtones towards the top of the graph are higher in pitch, and conversely, overtones towards the bottom of the graph are lower in pitch. In addition, loudness, or strength, of the overtone is represented by color. The brighter the color, the louder, stronger, or more prominent the overtone is. From weakest to strongest overtones, the order is, purple, dark blue, light blue then green.

The graphs show analysis of the music over a period of time. The oldest material, or the music happening first, appears at the left of the windows, and the material at the right of the windows shows the newest material.

There are two windows in each graph. Each window shows the two channels of a stereophonic recording. The left window shows the overtones present in the left channel, and the right window shows the overtones present in the right channel.

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Introduction

This is Rome. Rome is the boundary between East and West. South of Rome, the East Starts, and north of Rome, the West starts. This border-line now, runs exactly over the Forum Romanum. There's my house, this explains my life and my music. I don't think I have more to tell.

-Giacinto Scelsi

The eccentric Italian composer Giacinto Scelsi chose his words very carefully. When asked to comment on his music, or supply program notes, he refused. On rare occasions when he did agree to talk, his comments, always introspective, provided fascinating insights into his music and compositional process. The last lines of his poem *Ohne Title*, quoted above, is no exception. Trained in the Western tradition by such masters as Respighi, and philosophically and spiritually linked to the East, Scelsi saw himself as a product of both East and West. His compositions were the same. He only wrote for Western instruments, but his music has strong references to Eastern traditions. Many musicologists and performers, as well as Scelsi himself, as shown in the above quote, acknowledge his debt to these traditions, but no studies have attempted to explain where specifically these elements may have come from and how they manifested themselves in his music. This study attempts to provide *possible* origins of these Eastern influences and, more importantly, show how they are transformed in his music, creating a new and unique voice in the Western tradition.

Since his death, the music of Giacinto Scelsi has become familiar to a small portion of the mainstream "Art" music community. Progressively more writings on Scelsi and his music have appeared. However, the writings in English are few, and specifically theoretical writings in English are nonexistent.

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Scelsi deliberately concealed himself from the musical community during his lifetime. Throughout his life he was a recluse and never allowed photographs to be taken of him. He purposely obscured the dates of his compositions in order to make it difficult to do later theoretical and musicological research on him and his work. He was vague, even to his closest friends, when asked of his past. Nonetheless, researchers of his music have constructed a general timeline of his life.

Giacinto Maria Scelsi, the last Count of Dayala Valva, was born in Italy in 1905. As a child he studied Latin, fencing, and chess, and spent much of his time improvising at the piano. His formal music training was sparse. He spent some time as a pupil of Ottorino Respighi. In 1931 he went to study in Vienna with Walter Klein, a follower of Schoenberg, and subsequently was the first Italian to write a twelve-tone composition. Although it is commonly thought that Luigi Dallapiccola was the first Italian to use dodecaphony, his first twelve-tone work, *Canti di Prigione*, was written in the years 1938-1941, placing it ten years after Scelsi's first twelve-tone composition of 1931.

After studies in Vienna he moved to Paris and wrote mostly piano music heavily influenced by Berg and Scriabin. He then moved back to Rome in the early 1950s. Shortly after his move to Rome, Scelsi's wife left him, which caused him to have a mental breakdown. This breakdown actually led to one of the most progressive compositional styles of the twentieth century. While spending time in a rest home following his breakdown, he would devote hours to playing only one note on the piano. This became Scelsi's "single-note" style, in which his compositions were a "variation on one note." His best-known work from this period is *Quattro Pezzi su una Nota Sola* for orchestra. In this work the single note is developed through "the deploying of quarter-tones, slow and

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wide vibrato and a multitude of varied playing techniques (excess bow pressure, changing bow position, varying the density and richness of the orchestration, etc.)" (Anderson 23).

The radical nature of this new style cannot be overemphasized. In a period when the influence of the music of the Second Viennese School, with its emphasis on controlling the total chromatic scale, reigned supreme over the avant-garde, Scelsi was pursuing ideas that could hardly be more dissimilar. It would not be for another twenty-five years that music based on one note would become part of the mainstream of the avant-garde. Though the cliché "before his time" is overused, in the case of Scelsi, the phrase has meaning and validity.

With this radical change in style came other important changes in Scelsi's musical processes. The first was a completely improvised approach to composing. Scelsi would go into a trance brought on by yoga techniques and then would record improvisations that would later become compositions. These improvisations were first done on the piano, but in 1955 he abandoned the piano for the ondiola, an organ-like instrument that allowed for quartertones, vibrato and other timbral manipulations. These changes enabled Scelsi to be more creative and experimental. The improvisation freed him from the limiting conventions of notation. The ondiola allowed him to explore more of the frequency range.

Scelsi's improvisational approach was supplemented by another unorthodox technique. After he improvised, Scelsi would elicit the help of composers and performers to help him transcribe and transform the improvisations into compositions. This led to controversy when, after Scelsi's death, one of his transcribers, Vieri Tosatti, a composer himself, claimed that he wrote the pieces he transcribed. Tosatti later withdrew the claim,

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and it is clear to anyone familiar with Scelsi's writing style that Tosatti did not compose them. His own compositions are neo-classical in nature, and the plain fact remains that from transcriber to transcriber, Scelsi's compositions are stylistically consistent.

Scelsi saw those that transcribed for him as collaborators. Many of the pieces the performers transcribed were written for them. The cellist Frances-Marie Uitti, who premiered his *Trilogia*, also prepared the score for *Sauh*. These unconventional compositional techniques are characteristic of his mature style and were followed to the end of his career.

After his "one-note style" came a period in which he focused on the voice and its wide range of timbres. In his instrumental works of this period, the use of quartertones became the most important aspect.

Scelsi died in August of 1988 in Rome. Very few members of the musical community were familiar with his work at the time of his death, but in the years since, more and more recordings and writings have begun to appear. There is still much research left to be done on Scelsi. There are no theoretical writings in English and few in other languages. stands in stark disproportion to his growing discography.

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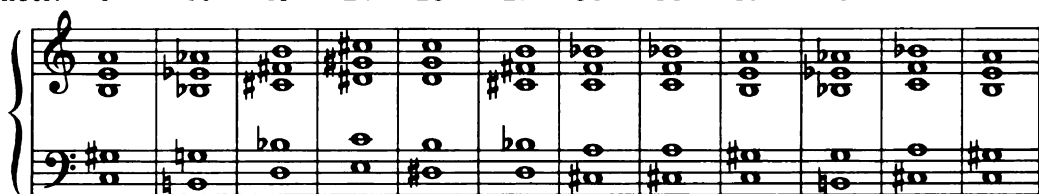
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Origins

Before *Quattro Pezzi* few works explored timbre and a single pitch. *Farben* from *Five Orchestral Works*, Op. 16, by Arnold Schoenberg, which explores timbre, precedes Scelsi's piece by fifty years. Another predecessor, which explores both timbre and the single pitch is Elliott Carter's *Seventh Etude* from *Eight Etudes and a Fantasy for Woodwind Quartet* of 1950. Though these pieces on the surface have much in common with the *Quattro Pezzi*, what they each strive to achieve with the material they present is very different.

The most obvious difference between *Farben* and *Quattro Pezzi* is pitch. The *Quattro Pezzi* is primarily one pitch where *Farben* uses all twelve pitch classes. The "Farben chord" occurs in many transpositions throughout the work.

Measure number: 1 10 15 24 28 29 30 38 39 40 41 43



The musical notation displays the 'Farben' Chord in various transpositions across twelve measures. The chords are represented by whole notes on a grand staff (treble and bass clef). The notes in each chord are: C, D, E, F, G, A, B, and C (octave). The transpositions are: 1 (C major), 10 (D major), 15 (E major), 24 (F major), 28 (G major), 29 (A major), 30 (B major), 38 (C major), 39 (D major), 40 (E major), 41 (F major), and 43 (G major).

Example 1: Instances of the "Farben" Chord

This change from one sounding of the chord to the other is brought about by canon. In order for this canon to be perceived the listener must concentrate on the pitches.

Therefore, despite the label as a *Klangfarbenmelodie*, it cannot be denied that *Farben* is also a piece that explores pitch and interval content.

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Example 2: The Seventh Etude from *Eight Etudes and a Fantasy* measures 1-10

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This motive reappears in m. 19-22, although the instrumentation is different. The absence of this motive in the middle of this composition contributes to the articulation of a ternary form.

This composition differs from the *Quattro Pezzi* in three very significant ways, the most obvious being the medium. With the use of a woodwind quartet, in comparison to a full orchestra, Carter is limited in his timbral range. The second is the difference in length. The *Seventh Etude* is 31 bars in length and about a minute in duration, whereas the *Quattro Pezzi* is over 13 minutes. Finally, the *Seventh Etude* uses rhythm as a significant unifying parameter, whereas the Scelsi does not. These aspects, as well as other less significant differences, show the composers' very different solutions to a self-imposed musical problem, namely, how to create motion in a harmonically and melodically static context. Though similar in idea, their results are drastically different.

It is probable that Scelsi was familiar with Schoenberg's *Farben*; he studied with Walter Klien, a student of Schoenberg, in Vienna. What would be more difficult to surmise is if Scelsi heard the *Seventh Etude*. Regardless, both these pieces, among others written prior to 1959, explored timbre as their unifying factor. The *Quattro Pezzi* also explored timbral elements, but did so in a way that had never been done up to that point. This will be discussed later in detail. Evidence suggests that this unique composition may have been influenced by techniques in music from the Near and Far East.

Scelsi looked to the East in everything he did. It will be argued that in the *Quattro Pezzi* he took very specific techniques from several Eastern musics and set them in a Western context. In doing so he did not borrow them simply to allude to Eastern

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music, but to change their function. These techniques, which in their original context of Eastern music had very specific functions, now have been given a new role in Scelsi's music.

Investigation into Scelsi's travels to the East is difficult because he was an intensely private man. His close friend Robin Freeman wrote, "He refused to be photographed, did his best to avoid programme notes, and gave information about his life only when he chose to forget himself in conversation" (8). This makes the tracking of his travels in the Near and Far East very difficult and makes documentation of his travels hearsay. We are sure, however, through his casual conversations with individuals he trusted, that he spent some time in those regions in his twenties and thirties. Freeman says that during a personal conversation with Scelsi at his home, the composer "described travels to Nepal and India, and perhaps Tibet, to explore their religions" (10).

Several of his works' titles are suggestive of a significant interest with the East. His *Four Illustrations on the Metamorphosis of Vishnu*, written in 1953, is about the Hindu God Vishnu, preserver of life and world, and his "Avatars" or incarnations in mortal forms. His later works also use Eastern words in their titles. Two of his compositions for chamber ensembles, *Pranam I* and *Pranam II*, come from Indian tradition; pranam is the Indian gesture of salutation where one leans forward with hands clasped on the chest.

Scelsi's literary works also imply an interest in the East. The lines from his poem *Ohne Title* quoted at the beginning of the paper show his fascination with the East and the role he believed it played in his music.

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Scelsi may also have come in contact with the musics of the countries he visited. He could have come across several genres: the Khyals of Northern India, the chants of the Tibetan Monks, and the Gamelan Gong Kebyar of Bali. I would argue that these musics and the techniques found within them, could be seen as possible influences on his composition *Quattro Pezzi*. These techniques in the Western context of the symphony orchestra changes their meaning, how the listener perceives them, and their function in the music. Doing this created a distinct sound that is the *Quattro Pezzi*. I am not arguing that Scelsi consciously changed these elements. I believe more importantly, it may give the listener a context in which to listen to these pieces.

The use of Eastern techniques in the *Quattro Pezzi* is not to be confused with exotic elements used by some composers in the Western tradition. Some examples of the “Exotic East” in Western tradition include *Scheherazade* by Rimsky-Korsakov, *The Dome of Kubla-Khan* by Charles Griffes, among others. Scelsi was directly influenced by techniques that were essential to various Eastern musics. In Scelsi’s music, those techniques’ functions are altered and incorporated into his composition so that they became structurally necessary elements. This is very different from composers who imitated Eastern music but still conformed to Western syntax. For example, the use of the augmented second to approximate the non-tempered scales of the East does not structurally or significantly incorporate Eastern techniques. Scelsi went far beyond this.

In Northern India Scelsi could have come across the technique of droning. Drones have been a part of Western tradition since the Middle Ages and were known to many Western composers in the early twentieth century. Debussy, who was also interested in Eastern music, used drones in some of his works. However, because of Scelsi’s interest

in the Hindu religion, it is possible the droning techniques in that music had an influence on him. The Khyal is the staple of the Northern Indian classical repertoire. In the way the symphony is important to Western music, the Khyal is important for Northern India. The ensemble for a Khyal consists, at least, of tablas (two pitched drums, played by one player), a tambur (a stringed instrument that played the drone), and a solo "instrument," usually a sitar or voice. The drone is a central feature of the music. "In every performance ensemble a drone must be present. It is built into some instruments such as the sitar and sarod, but even so, an instrument specifically for producing a drone will be present. That will most likely be a tambur, a plucked lute" (Wade 84). The tambur consists of a single string that is plucked through out the Khyal to maintain the "tonic" pitch.

Other musics that may have had an influence on Scelsi were chants of the Tibetan monks. The music of the monks is unique because of its distinctive use of overtones. "The monks sing in an ultra-bass register rarely reached by human voices. Moreover, each singer produces more than one note at a time" (Cogan 29). "Each of the voices chanting produces simultaneously a monotone fundamental and a harmonic overtone that rings out with great clarity, such that every monk is singing a two-note chord" (Crossley-Holland, quoted in Cogan 29). "Each voice brings the spectral elements forward to the listeners' immediate perception. Spectral elements do not merely color a single fundamental pitch; they become active participants in the sonic foreground" (Cogan 29). Unlike the Khyal of Northern India, the chants are notated, and there is no improvisation involved.

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On the Island of Bali is the distinctive music of the Gamelan Kebyar, the twentieth-century classical music of Bali. The aspect of this music that concerns us is the pair tuning system. The gamelan orchestra is divided into two equal parts; every member of a group of the orchestra has a corresponding partner in the other group. For example, a *Gangsa pemade*, a "ten-keyed metallophone usually of the hanging type, with bronze keys suspended on cords strung through holes bored at both ends of each key" (Tenzer, *Gamelan* 41) would be doubled by a *Gangsa pemade* in the other group of the ensemble. Therefore, there is essentially one orchestra with the parts doubled. Each member of a group and its corresponding partner in the other group play the same part. The reason there is this doubling is because each instrument and its partner are slightly mistuned from one another. The intervallic distance between the two instruments varies depending on their range. The higher the pitch the closer the instruments are tuned. This would be less than a quartertone. Conversely, the lower the pitch the farther away the instruments are mistuned. The instruments could be separated by as much as a half step. Acoustics is the reason for the change in the intervals. Paradoxically, as the pitch gets lower, the interval between the two instruments must be expanded in order for it to be perceived by the listener as uniform throughout the entire range of the gamelan. The Balisans created this interesting tuning system because they believe that an "in tune" sound (where the frequencies are identical) is a dead, unmusical and undesirable sound. They do not view this discrepancy in pitch as dissonance, but as a neutral sound.

It is difficult to speculate whether Scelsi did hear the Kebyar Gamelan music. There is no documentation, first or second hand, of Scelsi traveling to Bali. Regardless of whether he did hear that music, the gamelan shows the difference in the ways Westerner

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and Eastern music traditionally treat dissonance. A quartertone in the gamelan is seen as necessary in creating a pleasing tone, whereas in classical Western music, adjacent quartertones sounding simultaneously, as it is in the gamelan, would sound “out of tune” and would cause a great tension that would need to be resolved. Scelsi’s use of quartertones in the *Quattro Pezzi* is seen as a tension-causing tool. This will be discussed in great detail later.

Scelsi could have encountered the techniques described here in his travels to the Near and Far East. These techniques are present in his *Quattro Pezzi*, though put to new purposes. One thing that these different Eastern techniques have in their original contexts is that their purpose is not to create motion. A drone, for instance, creates no motion on its own. It is a static pitch. The quartertones of the gamelan are also static. To say that these techniques do not have motion is not in any way a criticism. Michael Tenzer writes in *Western Music in the Context of the World*:

In generalizing about the traits of non-Western music that have appealed to composers, it is important to clarify that there are few, if any, pan-cultural attributes binding all non-Western musics together that set them apart as a group from Western music. All are distinct and rich on their own terms. None the less, those that have had the most pronounced impact- mostly the more developed traditions of Africa and Asia- share some qualities that, particularly from the standpoint of a Western novice, contrast vividly with Western music. Foremost among these is a non-linear, less directional idea of musical time, such music generally adheres to a cyclic, repetitive background structure as opposed to the large-scale, organically developed forms of the West. Within such constraints these musics tend to accentuate... ...a close attention to sonority and sculpting of individual notes (392).

In other words, at least from a Western composer’s or listener’s standpoint, the major differences between Western and Eastern musics are their perception of time and goal. Eastern music, generally, is concerned with creating a calm, cyclical, non-goal-oriented product, free of tension. Western music is more teleological, focusing on goals and

climaxes. To this end, ideas of tension and resolution are fundamental. I argue that in Scelsi's music can be perceived as a synthesis of these two contrasting aesthetics.

Scelsi's music can be heard as the different treatment of Eastern musical techniques so they produce the effects precisely counter to their original functions. That effect is namely the creation of tension and goals.

The drone is the most obvious technique that Scelsi borrowed. Both the drone and *Quattro Pezzi* are essentially one pitch. A drone is traditionally produced by one instrument, so the timbral and dynamic variance is limited. The tambur, for example, is a single stringed instrument. The string is not stopped with the fingers the way a Western stringed instrument, like the violin or guitar, is. The playing technique is also standardized. The string is always plucked, never strummed, picked or bowed. The purpose is to keep the pitch sustained throughout the work. Before the sustained pitch fades away the string is plucked again. These parameters inhibit the tambur, and consequently the drone, from creating any sense of motion on its own. It is simply an unchanging base upon which the composition is set. This is not what the single note does in the *Quattro Pezzi*. It is a vehicle to create motion. In order for it to do this, three things that the drone lacks in its Eastern context are added: fluctuation in timbre, fluctuation in dynamics, and rhythm. These three elements, among others to be discussed later, create motion. This can be seen in mm. 16-25 in the *First Piece*. In these measures, through layering of instruments, Scelsi creates a musical line. This melody starts with horn 3 and cello on a harmonic at *ppp*, a relatively dark sonority. Motion is started an octave lower in horn 1. The texture increases in activity when ponticello high strings and trumpet are added. The texture becomes the most active when fluctuations in

instrumentation, primarily in the brass, happen at an accelerated rate (mm.18-20). This tension reaches its climax when the instruments that were alternating back and forth all converge in m. 20. From this climax the instrumentation dies away in the high strings, this time without ponticello. There is one final resurgence with the accented English horn in m. 22.

This timbral development is also present in single instruments. The trombone in mm. 19-22 uses the wa-wa mute to develop its four notes. The first, second and final notes are muted and the third is unmuted. This, coupled with the dynamics used, *p*, *mp*, *mf* and then *mf* again, gives the line an arch.

This analysis of this line is supported by the presence of overtones. The overtones gradually increase until they peak at the downbeat of m. 21 and are slowly eliminated. This dying away of overtones is interrupted with a resurgence of overtones created by the English horn's accented note in m. 22.

Figure 1: Spectral analysis of measures 18-23

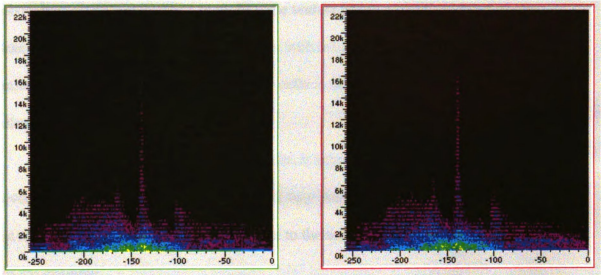


Figure 1a: Wyttenbach recording

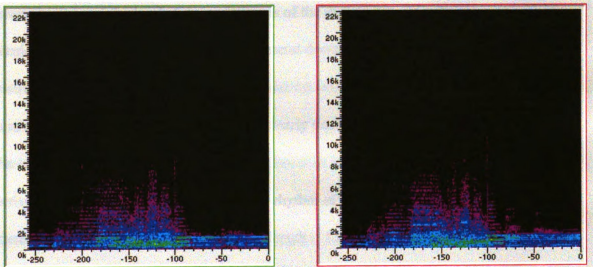


Figure 1b: Zender recording

Another example comes from mm. 30-40 of the *Second Piece*. After the accented notes in the trumpets, the dynamics die down to *pp*. The note is then taken over by the oboe, bass clarinet and cello 1 in m. 33. The texture grows with the addition of other instruments until the line reaches its climax with the accented notes in the trumpets in m.36. To exaggerate this climax B5 in the cello is added. From this climax the texture dies down.

This analysis, like the earlier example, is supported by the spectral analysis. The overtones start at a low level and grow until they sharply peak with the trumpets and cello in m. 36. From this, the overtones decrease to the same level they began at the beginning of the example.

One final example comes from near the end of the entire composition in the final piece in mm. 50-55. These measures come after an extended agitated section that uses quartertones¹ and the loudest dynamic levels of the movement. The release of this tension is achieved in mm. 50-55 by the general decrease in dynamics of the individual instruments, slowing of rhythmic activity, and timbral manipulation in the individual instruments. The decrease in dynamics is clearly marked in the score, most obviously in the oboe and English horn in m. 50 and the horns in m. 52. The slowing of rhythmic activity is not as obvious. If the composite rhythm of the three trumpet parts is taken, there is seen a general increase in the note lengths. Finally, the horns are instructed to "poco a poco---sord," Slowly add the mute. This darkens the sound gradually and releases tension.

¹ Because of the use of quartertones, "Una Nota Sola," A single note is a misnomer. Use of quartertones and other pitches will be discussed later.

The timbral manipulation described in the three examples happens in many other examples throughout the composition. Scelsi took this single pitch, an idea borrowed from the drone from many Eastern musics, particularly the Khyal of Northern India, and created a sense of “melodic motion” through the use of timbre. This kind of timbral development is juxtaposed with other textures to create form. This will be discussed later.

In several places in the second movement Scelsi calls upon a technique of harmonics borrowed from Tibetan chant. The F#4 is the third harmonic of B. The F#4 is always accompanied by the B2 and its first harmonic B3. This is a clear indication that this pitch is not the introduction of a new pitch, but used to “bring the spectral elements forward to the listeners' immediate perception” (Cogan 29) as in its original Tibetan context. However, different from its Tibetan context, this pitch merely colors the fundamental pitch and does not become “an active participant in the sonic foreground” (Cogan 29). The F#1 is not meant to be a new melodic or harmonic pitch. Scelsi tried to draw as little attention to this pitch as possible. Every time the pitch is sounded it is accompanied by the instructions *appena percettib.* (m. 45 string bass) or *quasi impercettibile* (mm. 76 and 94 in horn 1).

Scelsi made every attempt in the score to show that this pitch *is* the second overtone of the B. In addition to its function as overtone support, the F#4 has a large-scale pitch function that will be discussed in the analysis section.

As explained earlier, the use of quartertones in the Balisan Kebyar Gamelan is not meant to create tension or movement. The Balisan Kebyar Gamelan uses what is called pair tuning to create what they believe is a non-static, musical sound. The appearance of

quartertunes in the *Quattro Pezzi* is drastically different from this. The presence of quartertones creates tension. It becomes the main tool Scelsi uses to cause tension and motion in the *Quattro Pezzi*.

The first example to illustrate this point comes from the first three measures of the *Third Piece*. The pitch Ab⁴ is sounded in trumpet 1 in m. 1. In the following measure, horn 1 introduces its upper quartertone neighbor Ab quartertone sharp. This sonority of the Ab and the Ab quartertone sharp creates tension that must be resolved. Therefore, in m. 3 horn 1 stops sounding the Ab quartertone sharp and the dissonance is resolved back to the Ab.

Another example comes from the first five measures of the *Second Piece*. The pitch B-natural is sounded in the clarinet, bass clarinet, horn 3, tenor saxophone and saw. After three measures of this pitch sounding, in m. 4 the bassoon enters on the B-natural and the Clarinet, bass clarinet, tenor saxophone and saw move to B quartertone sharp upper neighbor as the horn continues to sound the B-natural. As in the example from the *Third Piece*, this causes a tension that must be resolved, and this is done in m. 5.

These examples are just two of countless sections that include this very simple, basic use of “pairing” a tone with its upper neighbor to create dissonance and motion. Scelsi also uses quartertones in more structurally significant ways. This includes the sustaining of these quartertone clusters over a longer period of time to create large-scale tension that will take an entire movement, and in some cases the entire composition, to be resolved. These aspects will be discussed in detail in the section titled *Analysis*.

In the two examples shown, and the body of other examples of which they are representative, it is clear that the use of quartertones can be heard as vehicles to create tension and movement to propel the composition forward. This is different than the function of quartertones in the Balisan Kebyar Gamelan.

Scelsi's use of the features commonly found in Eastern musics (drones, quartertones and harmonics) is a possible way that Scelsi created this unique composition. This is not to say this the only possible source of material for Scelsi nor it was a conscious borrowing and manipulation. This explanation at least serves as one way to listen to the *Quattro Pezzi*.

Analysis

Analysis of this work presents several difficulties. Traditionally theory has devoted itself to pitch and harmony. From Rameau's theories of harmony to Allen Forte's codification of set theory², most approaches to Western music has assumed the priority of pitch relations. Other theories have dealt with rhythm. These theories do not aid in adequately categorizing and analyzing the *Quattro Pezzi* because it is a work not based on rhythm or harmony but on timbre. For that reason, some nontraditional as well as some traditional ways of examining and analyzing have been used to help understand this work. One of the nontraditional ways of looking at the work is through the use of the computer program *Goldwave*. *Goldwave* is a recording program that has the feature of graphically displaying the overtones present. This is known as spectral analysis. In this analysis two recordings were used: Members of the *Ensemble Integration Saarbrücken*, conducted by Hans Zender,³ and the *Cracovie Radio-Television Orchestra*, conducted by Jürg Wyttenbach.⁴ Emphasis on recordings is justified in analysis of Scelsi's works. He did not have traditional sketches and would improvise his works and record them. He would then use those taped improvisations as aides in the compositional process. In addition to his sketches, Scelsi worked closely with the performers of his works. Francis-Marie Uitti said about her work with Scelsi on *Trilogia* for solo cello, "I had the privilege of working with Giacinto for years on these compositions; polishing, refining and at times revising the scores" (Uitti 2). William Colengelo, in his interviews with performers who worked

² Forte, Allen. *The Structure of Atonal Music*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973

³ CPO record 999 485-2. Recorded February 19, 1978. CD Released 1997

⁴ Accord record 200612. Recorded April 12-20 1989. CD Released 1989

first-hand with Scelsi found that the actual sound, and performance of the composition, was paramount to the written music. With his interview with Uitti, Colengelo found that "She [Uitti] believed Scelsi wanted to hear how the pieces 'would come over from the score'" (53). In his interview with the double bassist Joelle Leandre, Colengelo found that "Sincerity was Scelsi's goal for performers above accuracy of the score, Leandre asserted. 'He asks you to be real. To demand to be true. You cannot lie. Even if you made a fault, it's not important.'" (59). Performance was at the heart of Scelsi's compositions; thus analysis dependent on performance is justified.

The quotes from the interviews conducted by William Colengelo come from his dissertation, *The Performer-Composer Paradigm in the Solo Music of Giacinto Scelsi*. In addition to the interviews with the performers, he also did spectral analysis on some of their performances of works by Scelsi. In his qualitative, musicological study, Colengelo examined Scelsi's solo works. He set out to find the performers' processes in performing and interpreting those works. To investigate this, his research included interviews with internationally known interpreters of Scelsi's music, including individuals who worked directly with Scelsi and those who did not, and a spectral analysis of the interviewees' recordings of Scelsi's solo works. The spectral analysis was done to see if the interviewees' views on timbre and expression in Scelsi's music were apparent in their performances. With those tools Colengelo came to the following conclusions:

In his role as composer Giacinto Scelsi: 1) Viewed his role as distinct from the traditional role of a composer in Western music. 2) Was influenced by Eastern influences in an eclectic way. 3) Derived his works from a life-long improvisational practice. 4) Viewed his works as definite identities that contained specific elements of sound color, effect, and emotional or meditative states. 5) Used pitch and rhythm as compositional elements which were integrated with and inseparable from sound color, dynamics and articulation. 6) Worked with

performers to realize the specific implementation of his works in regards to instrumentation and use of sound color. 7) Encouraged performers to make innovative use of sound color changes and take liberties necessary to achieve a state of sincere emotion in performance.

In their role as performers, the subjects studied: 1) Viewed Scelsi's music as distinct from traditional Western compositions. 2) Were creative musicians and performers. 3) Were drawn to Scelsi's works because they provided a means of greater creative input and personal expression in performance. 4) Were experienced improvisers and identified with the works because of their improvisational origin. 5) Believed in working in a more collaborative environment where they as performers were able to have input and not be bound solely to the demands of a written score. 6) Recognized that a certain degree of interpretative freedom is valid in regards to the score, but this does not imply an invitation to improvise (146).

Colengelo's study differs from this study in two ways. Colengelo did not use spectral analysis to yield any insight into theoretical structures of the music. The dissertation only concerned itself with Scelsi's solo works. No mention of the chamber and orchestral works was made. However, two of Colengelo's conclusions are related to this study. They are that Scelsi was influenced by the East in an eclectic way, and that he used pitch and rhythm as compositional elements, which were integrated with and inseparable from sound color, dynamics and articulation. Colengelo has found that Eastern influences and timbre play important roles in Scelsi's music. One of Scelsi's interests in timbre and pitch is shown in his instrumentation. Specifically, the instrumentation of the *Quattro Pezzi* shows Scelsi's interest in lower sonorities. Scelsi takes a standard symphony orchestra, and with additions, deletions and substitutions creates an ensemble with a lower tessatura.

Standard Instrumentation	Substituted with	Addition
Flute in C	Alto Flute in G	
Oboe 1		
Oboe 2	English Horn	
Clarinet 1		
Clarinet 2		Bass Clarinet
Bassoon		
Horn 1		
Horn 2		
Horn 3		
Horn 4		Tenor and Alto Saxophone (one player)
Trumpet 1		
Trumpet 2		
Trumpet 3		
Trombone 1		
Trombone 2		
Bass tuba		
percussion		
Violin 1	Viola 1	
Violin 2	Viola 2	
Viola	Cello 1	
Cello	Cello 2	
Double Bass		

Table 1: Instrumentation

The most substantial change of the instrumentation from a standard orchestra comes in the strings, where he eliminates the violins and replaces them with second viola and cello parts. His replacing the standard C flute with the alto flute in G is another significant change. The flute, in relation to most instruments, is a high-pitched instrument with the capability of going as high as D7. Replacing it with the lower pitched alto flute maintains the same basic timbre but allows the flute to participate in a range more desirable to the Scelsi, and the range that this composition encompasses.

Una nota sola, a single pitch, is perhaps a misnomer, because the works are not literally “one pitch.” Quartertones are used and the fundamental pitch is played in

multiple octaves, and in some movements the pitches even “modulates.” These elements are not incidental aspects, but in fact are extremely important to the structure of the composition. They will be explored later.

First Piece

The *First Piece* is the shortest and perhaps the most concise. In this piece there is an importance put on form. Scelsi, through pitch and intensity of timbre, creates a symmetrical structure. Example 2 shows a mapping of the dynamics of the first movement.

Figure 2: Dynamic mapping of the First Piece

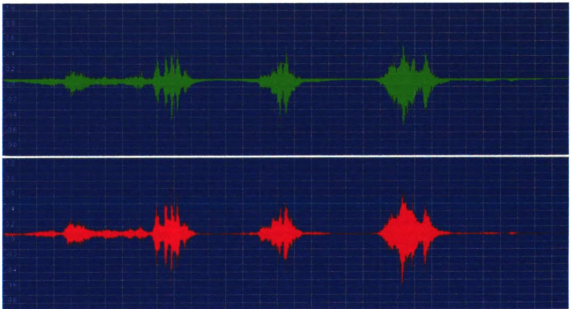


Figure 2a: Wytenbach Recording

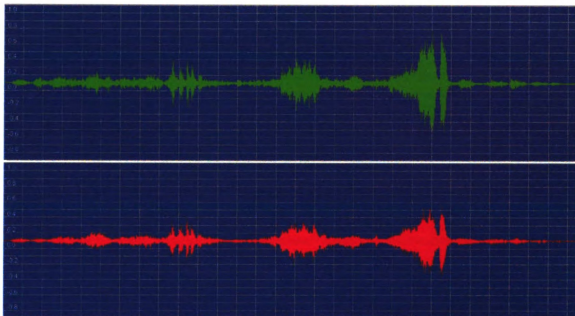
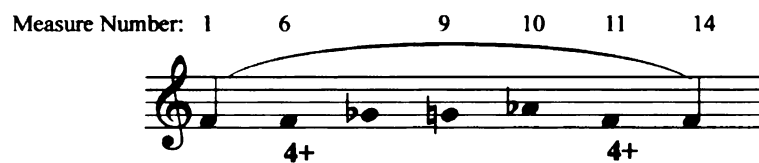


Figure 2b: Zender Recording

The movement consists of three swells, the first one peaking at the first beat of m. 13. The second peaks at the fourth beat of m. 20. The final swell peaks on the upbeat of the first beat of m. 31. These swells can be grouped into two categories, one that uses quartertones and one that only uses the fundamental pitch. The first and third swells belong to the first category and the second swell belongs to the second. In this way an ABA form created.

The first swell, roughly mm. 1-15, starts with the pitch F in the clarinets, horns 3 and 4, trumpets and violas. This pitch is reinforced by an F-quartertone-sharp to E-quartertone-sharp trill, notated in septuplets. Immediately, the listener is made aware that the twelve pitches of the tempered scale are not the only pitches that will be used. This trill I believe is not perceived as separate pitches but as a "widening" of the F. This pitch spreads apart farther when F2 is introduced. That pitch, too, is widened with vibrato. The pitch continues down this path of expansion as sustained quartertone-upper-

neighbors, in the horns, flute, tenor saxophone and strings, and a Gb to F trill, in the oboe, are added in m. 6. The pitch then slides to other pitches: G in the strings on beat 1 of m. 9 and Ab in trombone 1 and strings on beat 1 of the following measure. This Ab, a minor third above the fundamental pitch, is the farthest the pitch will venture away from the main pitch in the composition. The sliding is followed by F quartertone sharp. It is introduced in all brass and strings, timpani and flute. As example 4 illustrates, the opening section of this "single-note composition" there is a well-crafted pitch arch.



Example 4: Pitch arch of measures 1-9

The second swell happens in mm. 16-25. The beginning of this section is signaled with the tumba, the first time percussion is used. Over the next eight bars instruments are added to increase the dynamic level. The structure of this crescendo is built around the bass clarinet in mm. 18-21. In these measures the bass clarinet jumps between F3 and F2, reinforced by other instruments. For example, the tuba only plays F2 in unison with the bass clarinet when the bass clarinet plays that pitch. Conversely, the trombone plays F4 only when the bass clarinet plays F3. The most important element of this section is the elimination of all manipulation of the pitch. No quartertones are presented to create motion, nor is any vibrato used to "widen" the pitch.

The final swell appears in mm. 25 to the end. In this section, like the first, the pitch is expanded or widened. The section starts with the pitches F4, F3 and F2. Slowly the pitch begins to be pulled apart, beginning with the vibrato in cello 1 in m. 26. This is

then expanded further, in multiple octaves, with vibrato on F quartertone sharp in the cello, viola 1 and 2, trombone 1, trumpet 2, tenor saxophone and bass clarinet in m. 27. Added to this is the trill in the clarinets in the following measure, joined by the oboe and English horn in m. 31. Over this trill the brass make two statements of F quartertone sharp. The first is stated by the horns alone in mm. 29-30, the trumpets and trombone then join them in m. 31 for the second statement. This second statement is the climax of the final swell. From this point the texture dies down. The tuba and timpani, along with a quartertone trill in the double bass, state the F quartertone sharp one last time as a "codetta."

Measures 35 to the end serve as a coda for the movement. Elements that were used to widen the pitch are presented in these five bars. The violas and cellos reiterate the minor third slide that was originally presented in mm. 9-10, the vibrato is presented in cello 1, double bass and viola 1, and finally the sextuplet figure that was used in the climax of the first and third swells in the horn, is again stated in horn 4.

This series of three phrases creates a Ternary form. The first and third swell are similar in that they use quartertones to "widen" a pitch, and the second swell is dissimilar in that it makes no attempts to change the pitch. The symmetrical nature of ABA form is expanded by the use of the minor third slides in mm. 9-10 and m. 35. These distinctive gestures frame the form and serve as "bookends" to the movement.

The dynamics written, as well as the overtones, show the movement's overall arsis-thesis structure. The heights of the three swells are marked *f-mf-ff*. The climaxes are carefully designed in order to create cohesiveness between the three sections, and to

place the climax of the entire movement closer to the end. The overtones present support this idea. Figure 3 shows the three climaxes of the first movement.

Figure 3: Spectral Analysis of the three climaxes of the *Third Piece*

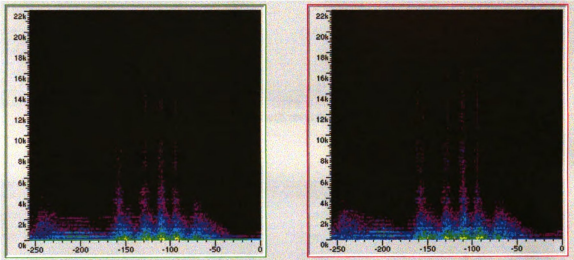


Figure 3a: Wytenbach recording, Climax 1

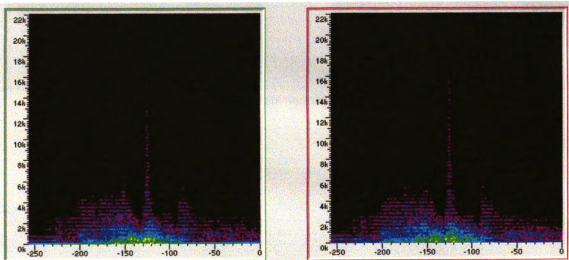


Figure 3b: Wytenbach recording, Climax 2

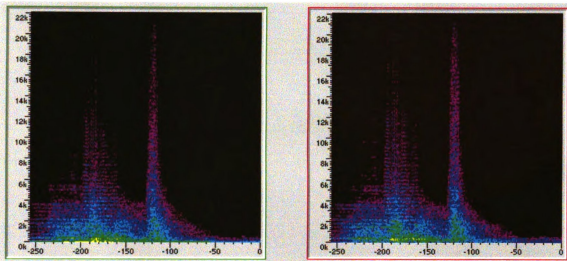


Figure 3c: Wyttenbach recording, Climax 3

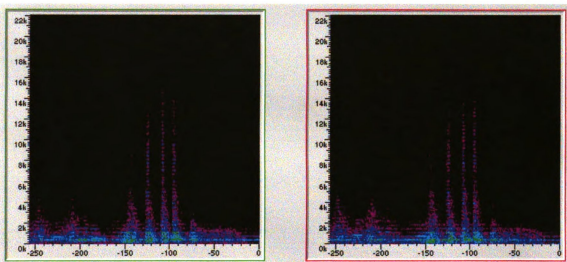


Figure 3d: Zender recording, Climax 1

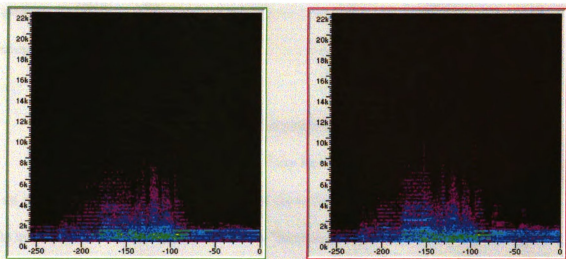


Figure 3e: Zender recording, Climax 2

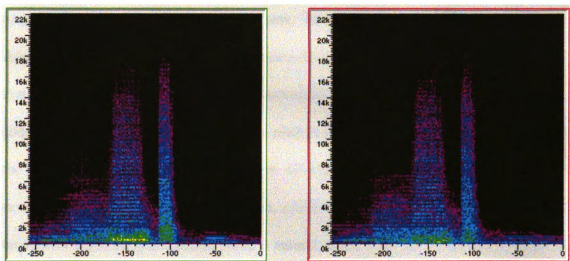


Figure 3f: Zender recording, Climax 3

The three climaxes' overtones coincide with the dynamics written. As can be seen in both recordings, the first and third climaxes have high spikes of overtones whereas the second climax has considerably fewer overtones. Of the first and third climaxes, the third has more overtones. This evidence, coupled with the absence of

quartertunes in the middle section, point to an ABA form with the climax of the work occurring in the final A section.

The Second Piece

As in the *First Piece*, the *Second Piece* has a clearly defined climax and serves as an important part of the composition. For that reason we will start there. The climax is in mm. 55-70. It can be defined as a slow "breaking away" from the fundamental pitch. The section starts with the horns in m. 55. They are then joined by the flute and oboe in the following measure. The flute and oboe are then answered by the C quartertone-flat neighbor in the trumpets, trombones and saw. The tension is then resolved in m. 58. Again the pitch is moved to the C quartertone-flat neighbor on beat four of m. 59. It is then joined by C to B trill as well as C quartertone-flat to B trill. In m. 61, C-natural is added in trombone 1. As can be seen, the pitch is slowly rising and "breaking away" from the B natural. This is finally achieved in m. 62 when Horn 1 and 2, trombone 2, tuba, saw and cello 1 play C-natural. This pitch, which lasts five beats, is the only time in the movement when the fundamental pitch, B natural, is not sounded. From this point on the pitch descends from the C natural back to the fundamental pitch. In the third beat of m. 63 the C natural is joined by a C to B trill in the oboe, English horn, and cello, and C quartertone-flat in horn 1, trumpets, trombone 1 and saw. The trill is then eliminated and the C-natural and C quartertone-flat are prolonged via instrument exchange.⁵ Horn 1 and

⁵ Note that the C quartertone-sharp in the double bass in m. 65 is a misprint. It should be a C quartertone-flat.

2, trombone 2, tuba and strings move to B-natural on the second half of beat two of m.66.

The remaining C quartertone-flats are resolved to the B-natural in the downbeat of the next measure. Example 5 shows the pitch movement of this section.

Measure Number: 55 56 58 60 61 62 64 65 67

The image displays a musical score for measures 55 through 67. The score is written on two staves, a treble staff and a bass staff, with a brace on the left. Above the staves, measure numbers are indicated: 55, 56, 58, 60, 61, 62, 64, 65, and 67. The notation includes various note values, including quarter notes, half notes, and whole notes, with some notes beamed together. There are also rests and dynamic markings. The score illustrates a pitch movement that starts in measure 55, moves through measures 56, 58, 60, 61, 62, 64, 65, and ends in measure 67. The movement is characterized by a gradual rise in pitch, reaching a peak in measure 62, and then a gradual descent back to the starting pitch in measure 67.

Example 5: Pitch movement of measures 55-70 of the Second Piece

Quite clearly the pitch slowly breaks away from the fundamental pitch until it reaches the C natural in m. 62. It then works its way back to the B natural. Again, as in the beginning of the first movement, a pitch arch is present.

Spectral Analysis yields the results that confirm the assertion that this section is the climax of the movement, a look at the overtones shows that the C natural in the brass in m. 62 has the highest saturation of overtones in the movement.

Figure 4: Spectral Analysis of measures 55-70 of the Second Piece

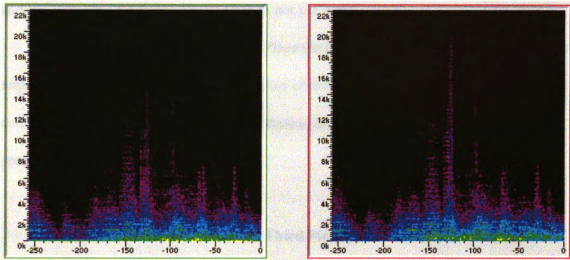


Figure 4a: Wytenbach Recording

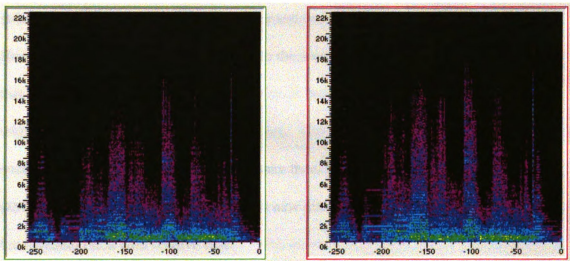


Figure 4b: Zender recording

One other piece of evidence supports the idea that this climax. The proportions of golden mean have been investigated in many Western works, particularly that of Bela Bartok. If the total number of beats of the movement (310) is multiplied by .614, the

number that is arrived at is 190.34. Beat 190 (m. 63 beat 1) is precisely at the point of highest concentration of overtones, the farthest the pitch rises from the fundamental pitch, and the only time the fundamental pitch is not present.

As in the *First Piece*, the *Second Piece* the climax serves as the goal and the most important part of the movement. The climax of the work is placed at the golden mean, a common place for it to occur. The quartertones, as well as the harmonic F#, are also present.

The Third Piece

The *Third Piece* is perhaps the most fascinating of the four movements. Unlike the other movements there are distinctive pitch centers. The term "una nota sola" is, strictly speaking, inaccurate for this movement because there is a secondary pitch center. However, this transition, or modulation, to the secondary pitch center is done in a way that it is barely perceivable. The modulation is brought about by saturating a passage with a tone cluster consisting of quartertones. These tone clusters are sounded long enough to disorient the listeners and to make them lose aural "sight" of the fundamental pitch. When the cluster is cleared away, a new pitch can be substituted for the fundamental pitch with relative ease.

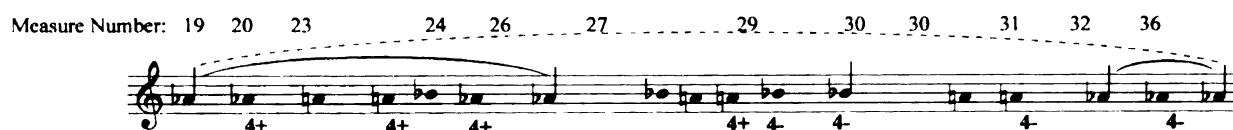
This process of changing pitches happens in the concentrated area of mm. 19-36. Over these 17 measures the pitch rises from the fundamental pitch Ab, through Ab quartertone sharp, A-natural and finally Bb quartertone flat. M. 19, at first hearing, seems like an unusual place to start this process. It is, however, a point that Scelsi conceived as a starting place, because the preceding measure is to be played with retardation, and then

m. 19 is marked with an *a tempo*. M. 19 starts with the fundamental pitch Ab. In m. 20 the upper quartertone neighbor is added. This is sustained for two measures and in m. 22 the Ab is eliminated. In the next measure, m. 23, the upper quartertone neighbor to that pitch is added. So the pitches present are Ab quartertone sharp and A natural. Thus there is a duplication in pitch material of mm. 20-21, transposed up a half step. At this point the listener's "fix" on the fundamental pitch begins to be weakened. To these two pitches, present in the beginning of m. 23, an added A quartertone sharp, and then Bb, in the same measure. Just when it seems that the pitches present are getting far enough away from the fundamental pitch to create a new pitch center, a most unique gesture is used to orient the listener back to the Ab. In m. 24 the bass clarinet is introduced on E2, a diminished fourth lower than the fundamental pitch. From this E2, which is sustained for four and a half beats, the bass clarinet glissandos, through F# and G, to the fundamental pitch. Through this process, the upwards motion away from the Ab is counteracted by motion starting under but farther away from the fundamental pitch resolving to the Ab. Besides the intrinsic aural draw to this unique gesture, this line is highlighted because it is played by the bass clarinet. It is the only non-brass instrument to be used in the first forty-five measures of the piece.⁶ One's ears are quickly drawn to the different timbre in this texture. One other parameter makes this gesture particularly noticeable: all activity up to that point, m. 24, has taken place in the Fourth octave. When a gesture is introduced in the second octave, after a period of concentration on higher pitches,

⁶ The only exception to this is the alto saxophone, which is technically a woodwind. The saxophone is however, consistently scored as a brass instrument. This is indicated by the placement in the score; it is placed between the horns and the trumpets. It is also used to reinforce brass sonorities throughout the composition. In addition, listening to the third movement, the beginning has a timbrally homogenous quality. The saxophone does not contrast with the other timbres, but reinforces them.

immediate attention is given to this variation in the texture.

The gesture that was used to reorient the listener to the fundamental pitch is used to do the opposite, to move the pitch from the fundamental pitch. In m. 27, the motion upward that was interrupted by the bass clarinet continues. In the beginning of that measure, Bb is added to the Ab. As the G quartertone sharp, A natural and Ab quartertone sharp are added, the bass clarinet descends from Bb2, through Ab2, and E2, to C#2. Thus as the pitch is "thickening" in the fourth octave, the bass clarinet is expanding downwards. This ascending tone cluster reaches a point of arsis on beat 2 of m. 29 when the tone cluster is eliminated and the only pitch remaining is Bb quartertone flat in horn 3, trumpet 1 and trombone 1. This Bb quartertone flat is sustained for six beats, but is then immediately left as trombone 2 and horn 2 descend to A-natural via a glissando and the same pitch is added in horn 1. In m. 31 the A-natural is the only pitch present. Again horn 2 and trombone 2 descend through a glissando down a quartertone to A quartertone flat in m. 32. Finally in the second beat of the following measure, m. 33, the fundamental pitch is descended to, to complete the ascending pitch arch. To counteract this emphasis on the higher side of the fundamental pitch, Ab quartertone flat is introduced on the last eighth note of m. 33. This pitch is coupled with the Ab, until it is resolved back to the fundamental pitch on the second beat of m. 36. Example 6 shows the pitch movement of this passage.



Example 6: Pitch movement of measures 19-36 of the *Third Piece*

As in the *First* and *Second Pieces*, a pitch arch is created in the *Third Piece*. The *Third Piece* is different because the pitch at the top of the arch is sustained for a longer period of time, and it has more weight as an individual note. However, this longer, more independent secondary pitch center is reliant on the fundamental pitch just like the *First* and *Second Pieces*. There would never be a sense of closure if the composition ended on the Bb quartertone flat. That is why the Bb quartertone flat is considered a secondary pitch center.

The *Third Piece* is a predecessor to Scelsi's Chamber work *Pranam II* (1973). The latter work can also be described as "one pitch," but its fundamental pitch is not as unambiguously presented, and there is a significantly longer section devoted to a secondary pitch center. The fundamental pitch of *Pranam II* is C#. Even from the beginning, however, this fundamental pitch is accompanied by E, D# quartertone sharp and Eb.

3/4 Lento (♩=54)

FLAUTO 1°

FLAUTO 2°

CORNO (FA) SORD. *pp*

CLAR. BASSO (NOTE REALI) *pp*

ORGANO ELETTRICO

VIBR. (V. UM) *pp* *mp* TRASP. *pp* (—)

3/4 Lento (♩=54)

VIOLINO

VIOLA TAST. *pp* *p* *2m più no rapido*

V. CELLO PONT. *pp* AL -- NAT. (III c) *p*

C. BASSO *pp*

Example 7: *Pranam II* measures 1-4

As the composition advances the weight of the C# diminishes and the E natural takes on a more prominent role.

3/4 **70** (ben sostenuto)

The musical score is written on four systems of staves. The first system consists of three staves (treble, alto, and bass clefs). The second system also consists of three staves. The third system consists of three staves. The fourth system consists of three staves. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, dynamics (mf, f, p, mp), and performance instructions (VUM-VIBR., NAT., TAST., AL., TAST. V (non arm)). The tempo is marked 'ben sostenuto'.

Example 8: Pranam II measures

Though the C# is still present in the organ, the E-natural is the more important pitch. It is emphasized by its chromatic, as well as quartertonal, neighbors in the flutes, bass clarinet organ, right manual, violin and double bass.

Like the *Third Piece* of the *Quattro Pezzi*, this piece, too, must return to the C# in order for it to be complete. As the composition comes to a close the C# becomes the fundamental tone.

95*rallent.*

The musical score is written on five staves. The first system consists of four staves. The first staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a series of notes and rests, with a dynamic marking of *mp* (mezzo-piano). The second staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a series of notes and rests, with a dynamic marking of *p* (piano). The third staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a series of notes and rests, with a dynamic marking of *mp* (mezzo-piano). The fourth staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a series of notes and rests, with a dynamic marking of *mp* (mezzo-piano). The second system consists of five staves. The first staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a series of notes and rests, with a dynamic marking of *mp* (mezzo-piano). The second staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a series of notes and rests, with a dynamic marking of *mp* (mezzo-piano). The third staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a series of notes and rests, with a dynamic marking of *mp* (mezzo-piano). The fourth staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a series of notes and rests, with a dynamic marking of *mp* (mezzo-piano). The fifth staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a series of notes and rests, with a dynamic marking of *mp* (mezzo-piano). The tempo marking *rallent.* is present at the beginning and in the middle of the score. The score concludes with a double bar line.

Example 9: *Pranam II* measures

The C# has been reasserted as the fundamental tone, yet the E still remains, but has lost its position of being the central pitch. The composition comes to a close when the C#

sounds as E-natural in the cello and double bass. But as one final gesture, an E-natural is played in flute 1. This is one final acknowledgment of the secondary pitch. Looking back at the *Third Piece* of the *Quattro Pezzi* in this light shows that it was perhaps the beginning of a "one-note style" that evolved into a new "one-note style" that utilized more than one pitch class.

Golden mean once again plays a role in this movement. As has been noted, the first forty measures of this movement is scored for brass only. The only exceptions to this are the saxophone, which is used as a brass instrument, and the bass clarinet, which is used in timbral contrast to the brass as a gesture that reorients the composition towards the fundamental pitch. This homogeneous texture is replaced by a heterogeneous texture when the strings, clarinets, and bass clarinet enter in m. 41. From this measure to the end of the movement the piece takes on a different character. Besides the change in texture, there is a change in the manipulation of pitch. The quartertonal tone clusters that were present in the beginning of the composition are no longer present. Only the occasional quartertone upper neighbor is used. In addition to this change in pitch organization, octave placement plays a role as well. All material in the first forty measures takes place in the fourth octave. The only exception to this, again, is the bass clarinet, whose placement in the second octave was done to highlight that instrument and its gesture. From m. 41 on, Ab₃ and Ab₂ play as active a role in the texture as Ab₄. These elements very clearly change the character of the movement. This change in character, however, is not a random change. If the total time of the Wytenbach recording (4:13) is multiplied by .618 the time yielded is 2:36.354. It is at 2:35 that the strings and clarinet enter. Thus the timbral change occurs at the golden mean. This holds true for the Zender recording as

well. The total time of the *Third Piece* (4:31) is multiplied by .618 the golden mean time is exactly 2:47.478. At the 2:50 mark the strings and clarinets enter. In both cases, the times do not coincide exactly, but are close enough that they conform to theories about the golden mean.⁷

Like the other movements discussed, the *Third Piece's* large-scale organization is directed towards the climax. Though this movement uses a drone, it changes pitch and causes tension by moving to these other centers. This is similar to modulation found in the common practice period in the respect that a second pitch for a short period of time becomes the most important pitch. In addition to this, golden mean proportions are used to divide the composition formally, and to delineate large-scale goals.

The Fourth Piece

The final piece of the *Quattro Pezzi* can be heard as the goal of the entire composition. It is the only movement that uses all the instruments. The highest and lowest notes of the composition, A6 and A1 respectively, are present in this movement, as well.

Like the other pieces, one of prominent aspects of the *Fourth Piece* is the "widening" of the pitch. The length of time this widening of the pitch is sustained is longer than in the other pieces. The process occurs over the entire movement. The process starts with the fundamental pitch A natural. The pitch, over the course of the movement, rises from this fundamental pitch to A quartertone sharp, to Bb quartertone

⁷ For a detailed discussion of Golden Mean in music see *Bela Bartók: an analysis of his music* by Erno Lendvai, published by Kahn & Averill, 1971.

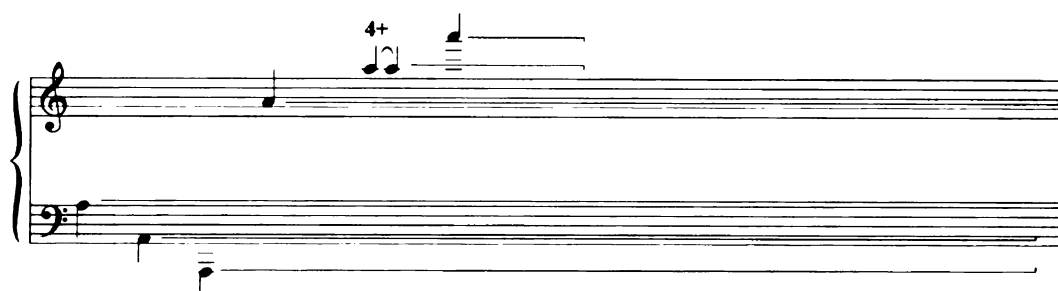
flat and Bb. This sort of evolution has been described with minute detail in the other movements further description is unnecessary.

Unlike in the other movements, the unfolding, or widening of the pitch, in each of the octaves plays an important role. The composition starts on A3. By the third bar this pitch begins to be pulled apart. In m. 2 A2 is introduced, and in the fifth bar the expanding of the pitch begins. In m. 10 the double bass introduces A1, and in m. 16 this pitch is then widened. The composition then moves up to A4 for its next entrance. Unlike the other three pitches, the upper quartertone neighbor is introduced first in trumpet 2 in m. 18. It is then resolved to A natural in m. 20 in the oboe, and then the process begins. In m. 26 the composition reaches a level of agitation as A5 is introduced. This pitch begins to pull apart in the following measure. The accumulation of the separate octaves and their widening increases the texture and the tension of the movement. The *Fourth Piece* reaches its climax as A6 is introduced in m. 43 in the violas. This pitch, however, is never pulled apart.

The "expanding" of these pitches must, of course, be returned to their original octave in order for the composition to resolve. In m. 49, as A6 and A5 disappear, A4 and A3 are resolved, thus ending the widening of the pitches. Example 10 shows the pitch arch of the *Fourth Piece*.

Measure Number: 1 2 11 18 26 43 50

60 61



Example 10: Unfolding of the octaves in the *Fourth Piece*

All pitch manipulation in this movement has been upper neighbors; there was no movement downwards. In order to counteract this imbalance of direction, the last gesture of the composition is the lower quartertone neighbor, in the third octave, in the tuba in mm. 57-59.

Once again this movement is dependent on tension caused by the pulling apart of a pitch. In this movement it happens within each octave, with the use of upper neighbors. This pulling apart starts with A3 and expands outwards by adding octaves above and below. The tension caused by these two kinds of expansion of pitch is vital to the forward momentum of this piece. Without these changes in texture, the composition would have a static, serene quality similar to a simple drone.

The Four Pieces

The four pitches of the *Quattro Pezzi* that are presented are not random pitches. In fact they create a large-scale resolution that link the pieces together.

Before examining this large-scale connection, a few final details must be examined. The first detail concerns the gesture in the timpani in the *Fourth Piece* shown below.

Example 11: Selected timpani excerpts from the *Fourth Piece*



Example 11a: measures 33-34



Example 11b: measures 37-40

The gesture contains two pitches, A2 and F3. The use of A2 is obvious, because it is the fundamental tone, but the use of F3 does not seem as clear. On first thought, the logical candidate for a secondary pitch would be E3: timpani traditionally play fifths, a use of the fifth would emulate the use of the F# in the second movement, and the E-natural is in the harmonic series of the lowest note of this movement A1. Upon further examination, however, an F-natural would seem a logical choice because it recapitulates the fundamental tone of the *First Piece*. This subtle gesture brings the piece together, not as four separate pieces that have one element in common, but as movements that rely on one another to be resolved and complete.

The other detail is more general but must be highlighted in order to understand the overarching connection of the composition. In addition to the single note, the most important element in the entire composition is the upper neighbor, and to a lesser extent

the lower neighbor. The composition is saturated with quartertone-, semitone- and whole-tone neighbors. They are used to create motion and tension via form in the *First Piece*, and arches in the remaining movements. The composition relies heavily on neighbors in order for a static element, the “drone”, to move forward.

With the elements of the recapitulation of the F natural in the fourth movement and the neighbor being an important element in the composition, Example 12 shows the tight weave of pitches used to link the four pieces together.



Pitches notated indicate Pitch class, but not necessarily pitch in that octave

Example 12: Pitch Chart of all four movements of *Quattro Pezzi*

This chart shows the subtle linking of the movements together through their fundamental pitches and their prominent secondary pitches. All pitches in the first three pieces are resolved in the *Fourth Piece*. The fundamental pitches B, of the *Second Piece*, and Ab, of the *Third Piece*, are the upper whole-step neighbor and the lower half-step neighbor respectively, to the fundamental pitch, A natural, of the *Fourth Piece*. In addition, the Ab, present at the beginning and end of the *First Piece*, also serves as a foreshadowing for the *Third piece* and its neighbor function. As well the Bb quartertone flat, the prominent secondary pitch present in the *Third Piece*, serves as the upper quartertone neighbor to the A natural of the *Fourth Piece*. Finally, the F# of the *Second Piece* serves

as the upper semitone neighbor linking the fundamental pitch of the *First Piece* with the F recapitulated in the timpani in the *Fourth Piece*.

This large-scale resolution is one of many elements that give the composition a cohesive quality. Rather than being four separate though similar pieces, they depend on one another for resolution and all depend on the *Fourth Piece* as their ultimate goal. This last point, perhaps, explains the quality of finality of the *Fourth Piece*.

As can be seen, the element that permeates the composition on the micro level, the neighbor tone, is also projected on the macro level.

Conclusion

Scelsi's *Quattro Pezzi* reflects the eclecticism of the Twentieth century. He was significantly influenced by many different sources from many different parts of the world. Scelsi inserted the techniques of drone, quatertones and enhancement of overtones in the Western context of the symphony orchestra. But instead of merely imitating these techniques, he changes their meaning and function. The drone of the Khyal of Northern India is transformed from its background role to the main element of the composition. Through timbral manipulation, the “drone” is given motion in Scelsi’s *Quattro Pezzi*. The quatertones of the Gamelan Gong Kebyar of Bali are considered not as sounds that cause tension, but as elements necessary for a pleasing tone. Scelsi takes those quatertones and uses them to create tension and to give motion to the composition. In the chant of the Tibetan monks, the monks sing a low fundamental pitch while also producing one other note in that pitch's harmonic series. Instead of being used to create a melody, as it is done in its original context, Scelsi uses the overtone to serve as a neighbor that links the F natural at the beginning and end of the composition. All this creates a composition that has many Western aspects: the orchestral instrumentation, movements that are linked through the use of neighbor tones, the “organic” connection between local and global musical structures.

Scelsi’s influences helped him create a distinct voice. To him, the Eastern and Western elements described here were one and the same. To separate one from the other would be impossible. This is similar to his symbol.

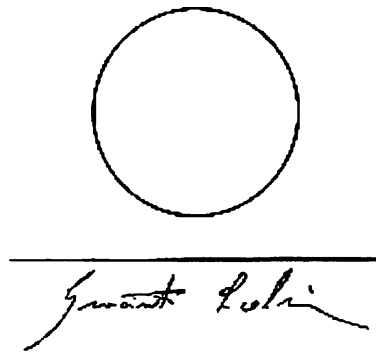


Figure 5: Scelsi's Symbol used for his signature and in lieu of a photograph

Scelsi signed his name with this circle and line. Also, whenever asked for a photograph of himself he would supply this symbol instead. This symbol is a representation of the tight connection between the East and West in his personality and his compositions, particularly the *Quattro Pezzi*. In the East they view time as cyclical and nature; every thing that once was will return again. The circle is the representative of this. Time in the West is conceived as being linear; we are always moving forward. The line is representative of this idea. Even the symbol that Scelsi used in lieu of his own image embodied these ideas of a synthesis of East and West.

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Title of the recording
Pieces by Scelsi on the recording
Performers and conductors
Year the recording was published

Accord (Fra) - #200612
Giacinto Scelsi
Quattro Pezzi for Orchestra, Anahit, Uaxuctum
Josef Dwojak, Jadwiga Jakubiak
1996

Accord (Fra) - #200742
Giacinto Scelsi: Illustrazioni
Quattro illustrazioni, Xynobis, Incantations, Duo for violin & cello
Carmen Fournier, Suzanne Fournier, David Simpson
1995

Accord - #200802
Giacinto Scelsi: Suites Nos. 8 & 9
Suites Nos. 8 & 9
Werner Bartschi
1996

Accord - #201692
Giacinto Scelsi: Oeuvre Integrale pour Choeur et Orchestre Symphonique
Aion, Pfhat, Konx om Pax, Quattro Pezzi for Orchestra, Anahit, Uaxuctum, Huqualia,
Hymnos, Cukrum
Jurg Wyttenbach
1990

Accord (Fra) - #202122
Murail: Memoire
Uaxuctum
Yves Prin
1997

Adda (Fra) - #243112

Scelsi: Maknongan

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Quattro Pezzi for Orchestra, Poème for piano No 2

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Carol Robinson, Clara Novakova

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Annum Per Annum

In Nomine Lucis

Christoph Maria Moosmann

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C'est bien la nuit

Siri Torjesen

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Canti del capricorno

Pauline Vaillancourt

1997

Sub Rosa - #51

Scelsi: Tre canti popolari

Tre canti popolari, Duo for violin & cello, Wo Ma, Sauh, liturgia, Aitsi

Andre Stordeur, Jean-Paul Dessy, Paul Gerimon, Marianne Pousseur, Lucy Grauman,

Jean-Luc Fafchamps

1996

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David Simpson, Graham O'Reilly

1998

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