Theatrical Expressivity of Berio’s Sequenza for Viola:
Levels of Communication

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Background in music psychology. Psychological approach to communicational process during performing and listening is directed towards personal perception and/or experience induced by music, as well as to the understanding roles of expression in compositional and performing processes. Performer intends to convey messages by his/her musical interpretation, but also by the nonverbal channels inducing a kind of ‘motor mimicry’ and emotional apperception. Different levels of experience and comprehension are engaged and intertwined – physical, emotional, cognitive and metaphorical.

Background in music history. In Sequenzas Luciano Berio requires the ‘virtuosity of knowledge’ from the performer, a virtuosity that often entails a thoroughgoing understanding of the history of instrument. Sequenza VI for viola is a work of considerable difficulty and it draws researcher’s attention to the history of the instrument, as well as to the analytical presentation of the work. In performance actions, the body of the player and the body of the instrument become a single entity. Physical theatricality is also found in aural and visual drama of Sequenza VI (Halfyard).

Aims. We aim to reveal the quality of musical/auditive, expressional, metaphorical and kinesthetic levels of communication in the tetrad: Berio’s Sequenza VI – viola – performer – listeners.

Main contribution. Method is an empirical research that includes live performing and responses of viola player and group of listeners on musical, cognitive, expressional and kinesthetic level. Qualitative content analysis of participants’ reports and narratives has been done. Sample is consisted of 23 participants divided into groups, on the basis of expertise: musical experts and non-musicians. The results suggest that there are patterns of musical, expressional and kinesthetic interactions viewed through the psychological and social context of communication. Music communication model during live performance of Berio’s Sequenza VI has been suggested.

Implications. Berio’s music demonstrates that expression does not come necessarily from any sentimentalism: the capacity of expression is written in the human nature. The music invents on this reality which is made of time, of movements, of gestures, of multiform languages (Imberty). Knowledge could be used in music education for defining differential strategies of interaction with audience during performance.

Keywords: Berio’s Sequenza VI, viola, performer, listeners, communication model, live performance, narrative, nonverbal communication, dramatic expressivity.

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Introduction

Different levels of musical communication with regard to live performance of Luciano Berio's *Sequenza VI* – music, expressive, cognitive, affective and kinesthetic – and their interactions are the core of this study. Live performance in the social context is important for two reasons: on one side, it expresses fully specifically theatrical ideas and expressivity of character, action and narrative of *Sequenza VI*, and, on the other side, it brings possibility for several layers of communication to be followed. We chose contemporary piece deliberately, in order to avoid some pre-experience in listening apprehension of the well known styles of music. Besides, it was an opportunity to ‘give a chance’ to a piece of music that is rarely performed in the local (Serbian) environment. Investigation of Berio’s ideas about different layers of perception of *Sequenza VI* and their efficiency when it comes to listeners’ responses to music were among our main areas of interest. Therefore, in this study we focus on the model of communicational path in the following tetrad: composer/*Sequenza VI* – viola – performer – listeners.

Our theoretical framework is based on music communication models in the field of (social) psychology of music, musicological concept of musical signification and meaning in music. Psychological approach is directed towards personal perception and/or experience induced or triggered by music, as well as to understanding the roles of expression in compositional and performing processes. On the other hand, musicological thinking is focused on the theoretical frameworks aimed at understanding how music can embody, express, arouse or otherwise signify emotional states. We considered that interdisciplinary approach could give a new quality erasing sharp boundaries and forming new dimensions of comprehending communication processes that are unfolding during instrumental performance.

Current methodological approaches to this issue cover laboratory experiments using computer technology and statistical analysis (Juslin, 2001, 2005; McAdams et al., 2004; Poulin-Charronnat, 2004), functional MRI (Cupchik et al., 2009) and socially contextualized empirical research (Miell et al., 2005; North & Hargreaves, 2008). Our method is close to the last one: we investigated levels of communication in a real social context. It is clear that listeners perceive and interpret music differently when listening unfolds in an interpersonal context in which musical meaning is then constructed (Hargreaves & North, 1998). Arousal of performer and listeners differs in the case of live performance when musical event is happening ‘here and now’ and this context brings an impression of ‘one time event’. Besides that, it includes more aspects of communication that make situation of performing – perceiving more complex. Visual cues of the performer’s movements are one of the important parts of better understanding of his/hers expressive intent (North & Hargreaves, 2008) and therefore it contributes to the quality and efficiency of the communicative process.

What often happens is that music listening becomes a transmission process which conveys some intended meaning, but specific musical language of a composer is not always grasped in the same or adequate manner. There are studies that demonstrated that artist’s implicit and explicit messages are usually missed by their audience (North
Theatrical expressivity of Berio’s *Sequenza 57* & Hargreaves, 1998). Since music lacks denotative semantic or referential meaning, the non-referential embodied meaning has a core function in musical communication, and it is conveyed by perceived intrinsic pattern structure of music (Thaut, 2005). Namely, the structural expression of music induces certain range of cognitive comprehension and diverse levels of emotional response and metaphorical elaboration of the listeners which are also highly dependent on personal attributes (Popović Mladjenović et al., 2009). The expressive performance is also a matter of how performers display the deepest and the most personal aspects of the work. It could be considered as a final or primary manifestation of their creativity and personality (Lehmann et al., 2007). Results have shown that there have been positive connections between size of the movement of the performer and the degree of his/her expressive intention and also that musical structure was found to elicit particular types of expressive movements (Davidson, 2002, 2005). Music itself is missing verbal or body expressions that represent cues to decode emotional content of communication but it evokes various degrees of energy, tension and arousal that can suggest or resemble certain types of human gestures and actions (Sloboda, 2005). According to Konečni’s arousal-based approach listeners’ arousal level is dependent on complexity of music and arousal based-goals (North & Hargreaves, 1998). Parallel to this basically physiological/emotional process another one is present that brings unity of cognitive and emotional processes and refers to performer and/or listeners. It is the process of event evaluation or appraisal that models the way in which individual asses the personal significance of an event. The result of this appraisal process is an emotion which is than expressed in physiological symptoms and in motor expressive movements in the face, body and voice (Scherer & Zentner, 2001). Furthermore, the pragmatic elements of communication which is determined by social and cultural context, learning and enculturation, as well as by local and situational circumstances, personal histories and intentions of the listeners, play a significant role in perceiving and understanding of the musical message. In our study, the choice of contemporary non-tonal music actualizes these issues, since many people still have difficulties in appreciating a good deal of this music (Landy, 1990).

Different theoretical and empirical music communication models are basically dealing with three main stages: composer/music-performer-listener(s). They are based on the idea that musical meanings encoded by the composer are transmitted via performer to the listener. Thereby, performer decodes these meanings, recodes them within the performance and transmits them to the listener, who needs to undertake another decoding and next to that, successful communication must involve shared implicit and explicit knowledge structures (Kendall & Carterette, 1990). But, when placed into the socio-cultural context, transmission process starts to be more complex. Music communication model, which is in concordance with our theoretical concept, gives an ‘umbrella theoretical framework’ for the researches that could answer key questions of musical communication: ‘how’, ‘why’, ‘what’, ‘who’ and ‘where’. The “double tetrahedral model“, based on the response and corresponded performance reciprocal feedback model, takes into account important social and contextual variables and its principle of reciprocal feedback indicates that the causal relationships between each of three major determinants (music- situation and contexts- composer/performer) operate
in both directions (Hargreaves et al., 2005). It covers various layers of factors that (could) affect communication process and are referring to the music, the listener and the listening situation, on the one hand, and the music, the performing/listening situation, the performer and the composer, on the other. Responses of the listeners that are implicated are physiological, cognitive and affective and performance encloses acoustics parameters, performance medium and context.

Communication model that focuses on ‘micro-levels’ of music includes affective responses and aims to explain process of expression, perception and induction of emotion in music, is represented through the “communication chain” consisted of composer’s expressive intentions, performer’s expressive intention, acoustic performance parameters, listener’s perception and listener’s affective response. Author uses statistical methods to explain the degree in which, through the set of perceptual qualities (structural, emotional, motivational) expression message is transferred/understood by the person-dependent impressions of the listeners (Juslin, 2005). Some answers are proposed by the “Extended lens model of musical communication of emotions” that includes composer, performer and listener, and states that large amount of the variance of the listeners’ emotional ratings could be explained by linear combination of the main effects (Juslin, 2001, 2005).

![Figure 1. The chain of communication in a tetrad](image)

In our research we used Juslin’s communication chain as the basis for conceptual framework and included elements that might influence expression in music performance; piece-, instrument-, performer-, listener- and context-related factors (Juslin, 2003). On the basis of our assumptions, we extended the chain of communication (Juslin, 2005) in a sense that we included instrument/viola, assumed mainly reciprocal/bi-directional relations in the communication chain and included more levels of communicating next to de emotional. In each box we defined specific factors that were object of the study, putting in the brackets those that are important
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for their implicit influence (Figure 1). There are several reasons for inclusion of the instrument: it is a specific acoustic source; it is distinguishing foundation of composers creative intentions, based on composer's idea that “musical instrument itself is a piece of the musical language” (Berio, 1998) and it is a medium through which Berio's intentions are transmitted (creation of “implicit drama”). We focused on the qualitative approach to analysis, because it enables richness and idiosyncrasy of answers. Therefore, we could not define causal relationships between different communicational aspects, but what we could, is to reveal the possible transmission paths of the composer intentions to the different groups of listeners. We were interested to know ‘how’ this process functions, ‘who’ takes specific roles and ‘what’ are the relevant factors that are involved into a communication.

‘Points of departure’ in the communicational process – *Sequenza VI* and instrument for which it is written – will be explained briefly in the text that follows. The other ‘dyads’ will be discussed through all other sections of the study. That means that structure of this text reflects, in a way, a complex network of the communicational discourse.

**Sequenza VI.** Between 1958 and 2002, Luciano Berio wrote fourteen pieces entitled *Sequenza* for different solo instruments and voice. The *Sequenza* series is one of the most remarkable achievements of the late twentieth century – a collection of the virtuoso pieces that explores the capabilities of solo instrument and its player, setting extreme technical demands for the performer whilst developing the musical vocabulary of the instrument in composition so assured and so distinctive that each piece both initiates and potentially exhausts the repertoire of a new genre (Halfyard, 2007a). Berio’s new virtuosity becomes an integral aspect of the composition itself, the part of the manner in which the composition creates meaning rather than separates from it. In *Sequentzas*, the performer is given central stage.

Berio explains that “the title *Sequenza* underlines the fact that the construction of these pieces almost always takes a *sequence of harmonic fields*, as its point of departure and in all their individuality, the other musical functions spring from it” (Berio, 1998). This compositional technique is an abstract idea, realized through a succession of harmonically conceived groups of pitches. In the sequenzas for monodic instruments, like *Sequenza VI*, harmonic fields are necessarily presented in linear order. In most of Berio’s later sequenzas harmonic fields result from a gradual unfolding of a register-fixed, non-adjacent series of twelve different pitch classes. These invariant registers then exemplify redundant elements within the overall pitch structure of each composition (Schaub, 1989).

Composer points out that, in addition to an unfolding harmonic field, three other elements unify the *Sequentzas* – *polyphony, virtuosity and idiomatic writing*:

- Almost all the *Sequentzas* have in common the intention of suggesting a *polyphonic type of listening*, partly based on the rapid transition amongst different characteristics, and their simultaneous iteration. Here polyphony should be understood in a metaphorical sense, as the exposition and superposition of differing modes of action and instrumental characteristics. This polyphony, or “a constant schizophrenia between the different parameters” (Hander-Powers,
Berio describes his *Sequenza VI* (written in 1967 for Serge Collot) as an “étude in endurance, strength and intensity” (Uscher, 1982/83). The three composer’s works (*Sequenza VI, Chemins II* and *Chemins III*) use viola in a way unique to its past history: the viola is called upon to use techniques previously unexplored in its respective repertoire. It is faced with new tasks. Thus, the instrument becomes a tool for creating thickness, polyphony and tremendous intensity.

The verses for the *Sequenza VI* (written by the Italian poet Edoardo Sanguineti in 1994–1995 for the individual *Sequenzas*) are:

> my capricious fury was once your livid calm
> my song will be your very slow silence.

In case of viola en général, where history has consigned to this instrument an excessively constricted range of characteristics, Berio may write à rebours. The *Sequenza VI* for solo viola is a work of considerable difficulty (indirect and perhaps rather uncouth homage to Paganini’s *Capricci* – Berio, 1998), and invests its instrument with an unwonted ferocity. The fiercely hypnotic viola continuously repeats, develops and transforms (“wide transformational trajectory”, Osmond-Smith, 1985) the same basic harmonic sequence. It is a formal study on repetition, on the relationship between modules that are repeated frequently, and others which appear only once.

For Berio, one of the most important and fascinating aspects of music is the possibility of coordinating the different layers for the perception. If these layers have real functions (harmonically, time-wise, in terms of density) their coexistence, according to Berio, creates an “implicit drama” that can be very meaningful. A perception study of the “implicit drama” of the *Sequenza VI* was carried out by Irène
Theatrical expressivity of Berio’s *Sequenza 61*

Deliège and Abdessadek El Ahmadi in 1989 to identify the cues which facilitate the division of the work into its main groupings or sections in aural analysis. The plan of six sections was proposed by participants. The ‘dramatic vitality’ of the *Sequenza VI* derives from the development of a certain type of polyphony of different alternating textures, and from the ways in which these textures are prolonged and related to one another. The gestural and textural components of the insistent tremolos provide fundamental building blocks whose changes create music unfolding in time, and have been perceived by listeners in the analytical hearing of musical form of this piece (Deliège & El Ahmadi, 1989; Deliège & Mélan, 1997).

The development of minimum, medium and especially in *Sequenza VI – maximum levels of tension* within the differing modes of action (time, timbre, pitch etc.), generates a type of polyphony amongst the different musical elements. Even the specific tone of the viola is characterized by inner tension, which is the result of its size and tuning of the strings. Since it is tuned one fifth lower than the violin, viola should have a larger body to imitate the acoustical quality of the first member of the family. Due to its “tight” resonator, it has highly expressive colour which “strongly attracts and captivates the attention” (Berlioz, 1858). With its full, powerful and rich tone, viola differs from other stringed instruments.

**Viola.** Berio believes that “musical instruments are tools useful to men, but they are tools that lack objectivity: they produce sounds that are anything but neutral, which acquire meaning by testing meaning itself with the reality of facts. They are the concrete depositories of historical continuity and, like all working tools and buildings, they have memory. They carry with them traces of the musical and social changes and of the conceptual framework within which they were developed and transformed.” (Berio, 2006).

As far as viola is concerned, it has “richer tone qualities of the alto voice as opposed to the lighter, more brilliant soprano of the violin” (Boyden & Woodward, 2001), but it has been disregarded as a solo instrument during certain historical periods of its own history. It has “perhaps suffered the ups and downs more than any other stringed instrument” (Forsyth, 1982). As Berlioz noted, it had “nevertheless been long neglected, or put to use as unimportant and ineffectual – that of merely doubling, in octave, the upper part of the bass.” (Berlioz, 1858). Forsyth describes viola as “a betwixt-and-between instrument imperfect in construction, ‘difficult’ and somewhat uneven in tone-quality, and undeniably clumsy to manage. More than any other stringed instrument the viola is liable to have one or two *wolf notes* in its compass. In fact, very few violas are wholly free from this defect. The opposite disease, commonly known as *sleep*, seems to affect it less. Perhaps its constitution, inured for centuries to sleepy passages, has by now become immune to the microbe of sleeping sickness” (Forsyth, 1982).

Berio's *Sequenza VI* echoes viola history, its usage and technique in many layers: its position in orchestras, chamber ensembles, its dominant or subordinate role, etc. As already mentioned, this piece displays composer's extraordinary technical demands on all levels of the viola technique: holding the instrument, placement of the left hand and fingers, holding the bow, positions and shifting, bow strokes – especially in the
broken tremolo required to be played “as fast as possible forward the frog” – shifts of arco and pizzicato, dynamics, effects such as sul ponticello, harmonics, glissando or col legno.

Method of the Study

In our study we aim to: a) reveal the quality of communication levels in the tetrad: Berio’s Sequenza VI – viola - performer – listeners with special regard to performer- and listeners-related factors of communication, e.g. physical reactions, affective responses, cognitive comprehension and narrative; b) to discover the content, scope and directions of interactions within tetrad; c) to confirm possible differences regarding professional expertise and age. Our method is an empirical research that includes live viola performance of the contemporary music piece in front of the selected audience and it is followed by the responses from the viola player and the group of listeners on musical, cognitive, expressional and kinesthetic levels of their experiences.

Variables that were taken into account are: considering the performer (cognitive elaboration of the piece, emotional experience, physical reactions, relation to the public, attitude towards viola, narrative) and the listeners (physical reactions, affective responses, music comprehension, attitude towards viola, perception of the performer, narrative). The listeners filled in two questionnaires with open end items (Appendix). One consisted of general questions about previous experiences with contemporary music, Berio’s music and viola (questions 1-5); about listening to related factors (current mood and expectations) (6-8). The second questionnaire, based on self-reports, had two forms, constructed for the performer and the listeners, covering same issues: physical reactions (questions 1-2), affective responses (3-6), cognitive elaborations (7-10), attitudes towards viola (11-13), perception of the performer/listeners (14-18), narrative (19). Sample consisted of 23 participants divided into three groups, based on the level of expertise: 1) viola students of different age (high school pupils, BA students, PhD students) (N=9); 2) exceptional performers, composers and theoreticians (N=6), and 3) highly educated non-musicians of different professional profiles (N=8).

Generally looking, mood in the group was mixed, from positive (“relaxed, open, normal, balanced”) (12 participants), over neutral (5) to restless, mainly evoked by previous happenings (“tired, nervous, illness, some annoyances”) (6). Attitudes towards research situation were mainly positive (16). Participants expected “to experience something new and were curious and intrigued” or had not any kind of expectations (7). All musical experts were acquainted with or experienced in performing contemporary music, but students expressed less acquaintance with contemporary and Berio’s music and had diverisive attitudes, from being restrained from “intellectual” in music, to attraction and attitude of “liking” and “respect”. Non-musicians mainly did not have previous interest in contemporary music (5), though they were speaking about being open to listening to something new (3), but also about “having difficulties to define and understand” (2). Attitudes towards viola were mainly unison when musicians are in question (14) – tone quality, timbre, strong
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expressive possibilities and extensive ton range, analogy with a human voice. Non-musicians were acquainted with the instrument and manly had a neutral attitude.

Live performance of Berio’s Sequenza VI was carried out by the eminent Serbian performer Dejan Mladjenović who is internationally recognized, has recorded several CDs with solo and chamber music, and who played Sequenza VI for few times on public concerts. He was open to join the ‘experiment’ and looked upon it with curiosity and understanding it as an unusual challenge.

The whole research procedure lasted one hour. The listeners first filled in the Questionnaire I (approximately 15 minutes), then Luciano Berio’s Sequenza VI for solo viola (approximately 15 minutes) and after that the listeners filled in the Questionnaire II (approximately between 20 and 30 minutes) and the performer was interviewed. Analysis of data included qualitative content analysis of the performer’s and the listeners’ responses. Listeners’ responses on open end questions were categorized and described by frequencies.

Results

Performance, Sequenza VI, Composer’s Intentions. When we look at the concert platform, we tend not to see a person holding a viola, we see a violist. Therefore, as Mladjenović points out, the performer is wearing a tailcoat – in order to be mentally separated as a personality. There are various assumptions and expectations about the gestural vocabulary of performance that are built into that preconception of what a violist is: how the player stands, how the instrument is held, how the bow moves, and so on. As a result of this, in the actions of performance, the body of the player and the body of the instrument become, in effect, a single entity: the body of the performer becomes subsumed into the action of performance. In other words, as pointed out by Mladjenović, a certain “symbiosis” between the performer and his/her instrument occurs.

Any physical gesture which contradicts our expectations regarding this gestural vocabulary is likely to draw attention back to the performer as a person separated from the instrument, disrupting the performance through intrusion of physical actions that do not fit into the model of our expectations. When intentional, these gestures become theatrical, the performer acts outside the conventional range of gestures and creates new ones drawing the viewers’ attention to the action itself as meaningful, regardless of any specifically musical meaning. These actions surprise us, taking on a life of their own within the piece, and although they may have a musical origin or result, they are nonetheless always also theatrical on some level, because, “apart from the tailcoat, every time I go on stage to perform I ‘unfold like a sock’. In order to be able to sing through my instrument, as a performer I need to be significantly cheeky, exhibitionistic, I need to have something to say, and by doing so to create an atmosphere of a temple, of a festivity! Especially in the case of the Sequenza VI for viola solo, the performer needs to have in him-/her both the demonic and the angelic, to intertwine what he carries in him-/herself through his/her hands and this instrument,
to sing the music with the voice that should be his/hers as much as possible. Because, the basic idea of the performing art is to re-interpret the piece, one should have the need to be touched by the piece, to posses the piece, as if it had been created at the very moment of one’s performance. The piece needs to travel through you, to break through the prism in you and to be born at that moment with its own voice, like a story or a song” Mladjenović says.

The *Sequenza VI* enacts ritual, starting out form static and restricted material, a chord. This opening gesture becomes the musical equivalent of ‘in the beginning is the word’ – it is from the first ‘note’ that all the others are subsequently introduced and woven into Berio’s musical narrative. It is evident that in terms of narrative, character and action, this piece displays elements that encourage us to experience them as theatrical on one or more levels. The sense of narrative extends into the way the music itself unfolds. According to Mladjenović the *Sequenza VI* is a matter of temper – it requires strong temper and extreme (self) control of this temper in order to be played at all. If you do not have its character in yourself, you cannot act it; its character can only be emphasized and experienced at the very moment of performance. It is important to transfer it to the audience, to invite the audience to “breath” with the performer in its own way.

In turn, the expected gestural vocabulary of an instrument extends to the level of its repertoire: the history of the instrument and the music written for it create a paradigmatic model of both what the instrument is and what its music sounds like before performer begins to play. “When I play Schumann or Bach, for example” – Mladjenović points out – “at the very first moment one part of me is opening to this piece, that part of me knows how it is there, in that “room”, warm and in what way – I am familiar with everything that is waiting for me there and I look forward to it! When it comes to the *Sequenza VI*, I first think: “Oh God, will I be able to perform this, to physically endure it?”

These dual aspects – the expectations of how the performer behaves and of how the instrument sounds – are found in many of the *Sequenzas*, where they work reciprocally to exploit and challenge our assumptions, unusual physical gestures leading the instrument to sound strangely, unusual musical gestures causing the performer to move in unanticipated ways. This physical theatricality is significant especially for the arresting aural and visual drama of the *Sequenza VI*, where the viola player is required to chisel away at the strings of the instrument to produce its blocks of chordal material for 10 minutes or more, a feat of physical stamina quite unprecedented in the viola repertoire (Halfyard, 2007b). This piece represents a translation of the extreme demands and sense of danger of physical theatre into an equally demanding and exigent instrumental theatre.

According to Mladjenović, the *Sequenza VI* for viola solo puts on the performer extreme demands in all aspects – enormous physical effort; extremely complex combinations in the cord structure; and the most important – strict following of the musical logic that does not allow any kind of improvisation. The composer’s idea is obvious – to lead the performer, through the instrument, to the physical, psychological and mental edge so that (s)he can make the “leap to the side”. The performer is faced
Theatrical expressivity of Berio’s *Sequenza 65*

with the basic challenge of physical exhaustion. He is prevented from bringing himself to the natural psycho-physical condition. The aforementioned elements cause in Mladjenović the following:

- unnatural psycho-physical breathing (conditioned by sudden and strong changes, as well as enormous elations);
- sudden motions, hits – unusual movements of the body, hands, legs (movements conditioned by various effects, changes of the colour and rhythmical changes that cut the flow, give impulse) – according to the violist – he feels as if he were running a marathon on the athletic track and every five minutes needs to sprint, to jump up and down, right or left, to make a split in the air without the pace he runs and breathes by;
- appearance of rudimentary energy – the violist metaphorically describes it as the necessity to release the “beast” in himself so that it can “go wild” but at the same time he needs to control it, since in the *Sequenza* there has to be enormous tension in comparison with all our music pieces that do not have such constant maximal tension (once you stop “speeding up”, it is not what it should be). It is simply irritating but it should not irritate!
- intense creation in the very moment – *now* – unprepared in advance, since this piece does not allow the usual preparation, it resists it. Basically, the performer cannot play the *Sequenza* only with his/her knowledge, experience, aptitude, but at the very moment (s)he needs to “dry out the last drop” from him-/herself. “This piece, in comparison with other pieces that once prepared, lie in your hands and you have them as music, requires from the performer to instantly “awake” and release from the biggest depth, from the very epicentre of the moment and being, that elementary energy and, simultaneously, to link/articulate in one entity (fusion) everything that flies all over and is torn apart (fission)”.

It seems that the composer’s goal is to cause, as much as possible, the fission of oneself through strict notation, the breaking of the polaron self/other in order to release the “other” onto the surface, in order to awake the real face of an “actor” who is not an actor. Berio is a conjurer of sounds, fundamentally scene-manager of the theatricality of sounds and of incredible instrumental virtuosity of those that should produce them, but also and especially a scene-manager of the mimesis of the desire of the body which contains and denies at the same moment the abstracted structures from the writing. What Berio demonstrates brilliantly is that the expression does not come necessarily from any sentimentalism: but the capacity of expression is written in the human nature, in the body and its attitudes, its movements, its states. The music invents on this reality which is made of time, of movements, of gestures, of multiform languages (Imberty, 2003).

**Viola.** The performer has underlined for his instrument: viola has depth and colour, when it goes to the depths, it spreads everywhere and possesses everything; it goes down to certain spheres that bewitch: it is necessary to have viola tone’s frequency and nobility that are difficult to achieve; alt register makes viola the most beautiful *voice*, both literally and metaphorically; this register is not standardized according to the “instrument size” – all instruments have this register, but none of them has viola’s color, its “soul”; its apparent faults – very specific color, much harder articulation, difficulties to play it – are essentially its quality; the viola can whisper, scream, sing.
Listeners. Mladjenović felt the audience as an entity, as a “living ocean of Solaris”. Through empathy, with the “red part of the audience all the time he breathed in the same rhythm, movement, impulse”, while with the “blue part he did it only partially and occasionally”. He had the impression that the listeners were “white”, i.e. that people came to listen to music without preconceived ideas. According to Mladjenović – music has power only when there are no preconceived ideas – in order to enjoy it we do not need to know anything about it. He did not want nor could he verbalize his experience performance of the Sequenza VI into a narrative, pointing out that once you verbalize music, “it is no longer what it should be!”

Listeners: Responses to…

Piece/Music.

Physical reactions during listening. When asked about their physical reactions during listening, our participants/ musicians reported that at the first they were mainly still, concentrated, attentive and felt muscle tension and that it was plodding to listen to it (Table 1). They were calm with bung up concentration and almost no move. Musician groups had no problem to remain concentrated: “following the exchange of tension and appeasement” and to “calm down in order to make whole picture out of seemingly torn parts.” But, some of them (6 participants) felt restlessness, agitation and body discomfort during listening of the whole piece, which was also the reaction of majority of non-musicians (5). The majority of participants/musicians did not have the need to move (14), they were more oriented to “mental and emotional experience; contemplation”. Non-musicians were more ready to leave the room, felt an urge to run away, probably feeling tense or irritated (3) or to express their need for movement metaphorically - “maybe to play like the performer” or to “bear heavy loud on my shoulders”. Here, we notice that on the contrary of previously mentioned opinions of the other authors (Davidson, 2002, 2005; Scherer & Zentner, 2001) our listeners were not following the expressive music structural changes with their movements, they were either still or wanted to “run away”. It could be explained with the music itself that has broken rhythm and melody and sudden changes that in a way ‘freeze’ those who try to follow musical flow.

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<td></td>
<td>agitation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6/5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need to move</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No move, contemplation</td>
<td>14/3</td>
<td>To play like</td>
<td>Need to run</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>performer;</td>
<td>away, to go</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>to bear heavy</td>
<td>out 0/3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>load 0/2</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Musicians N=15; Non-musicians N=8

Affective responses to music. When we asked the listeners whether music was exciting or irritating, musicians reported excitement (10 participants) for its “divergent tempos, energy and colour, tense” and 5 of them were restless (Table 2).
Non-musicians (3 participants) mainly felt tension and also some level of aggression in music, restlessness (2) too, though for the two of them it was exciting. Musical experts were ready and open for new exciting experience, so their arousal based-goals were pointing to a higher level of response that could be understood referring to Konečný’s arousal-based approach. Namely, sometimes music becomes appropriate for the situation because it helps listeners to achieve level of arousal that they aimed for (North & Hargreaves, 1998). Even though almost all listeners reported on emphasized emotional reaction, such as excitement and/or disturbance, almost half of them (11) were of the opinion that Sequenza does not induce easily emotions, perhaps they thought of specific ones. The rest of the participants were reporting about significant emotional arousal during listening (10), non-musicians suggesting that “it is imposing and effective, disables other thoughts and feelings”; “brings narrative that is intimate and tells the story”, while musicians were more apt to connect emotional arousal with musical flow and articulation. When emotional stream was in question the musicians perceived a turbulent flow, where frequently excitement and peaceful moments were being exchanged with an appeasement at the end, and also gradual rising of arousal: “music is more and more involving; perceiving nuances in character and dynamic following musical material”. These dynamic changes were explained by “dramaturgical structure of the music”, as was pointed out earlier as an intention of the composer (Berio, 1998). Non-musicians (5) were also reporting about dramatic musical-emotional flow but more on the level of specific emotional reactions: “positive and negative emotions; feelings of unrest, suspense, tearing apart, nervousness and agitation, at the end alleviation”. One annotation is imposing – emotional responses are clearly bipolar pointing out into two directions, either exciting tension or irritating repulsion.

**Table 2. Affective responses to music**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M/NM</th>
<th>M/NM</th>
<th>M/NM</th>
<th>M/NM</th>
<th>No answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General emotional reaction</td>
<td>Exciting 10/2</td>
<td>Restlessness 5/2</td>
<td>Tension/Aggression 0/3</td>
<td>No specific reaction 0/1</td>
<td>0/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional arousal</td>
<td>Imposing and effective 6/4</td>
<td>No intensive arousal 8/3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional flow during listening</td>
<td>Tension-peacefulness-expectation exchange with appeasement 7/2</td>
<td>Gradual or chaotic involvement in a process 3/0</td>
<td>Positive-negative emotions exchange 0/5</td>
<td>No specific reaction 4/1</td>
<td>1/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associations</td>
<td>Dramatic events/Monodrama/Film/Theatre 2/2</td>
<td>One thought/same event that varies 2/0</td>
<td>Restlessness/Fight/Agony 3/1</td>
<td>None or external associations 3/5</td>
<td>5/0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Musicians N=15; Non-musicians N=8
The associations that are reported (musicians and non-musicians) are assigned as dramatic in character and metaphorically referred to as music for film or theatre, where its drama was understood as fight or agony (4 participants). Dramatic character that is put into the first row of associations confirms common interpretation of the one of the composer’s primary ideas and that is one of the dramatic character of the piece, were excitement and peacefulness are exchanging with sudden velocity. Berio’s idea was understood by the listeners, which means that communication chain showed its efficiency. The performer succeeded in decoding and transferring the core message of the composer to the listeners, he was also speaking about “theatrical narrative” of the piece. The fact that relatively small number of listeners showed this kind of insight independent of their music expertise, speaks about necessary prerogatives in order to hear “difficult music” and these are: appropriate level of arousal and activation (Lindqvist et al., 2009), as well as openness and sensibility as personality attributes, intellectual/mental/cognitive curiosity and positive attitude and mood towards listening to contemporary music. Also, liking is associated with preference for moderately-arousal stimuli, repetition and being well known. Therefore contemporary music piece that is not heard/listened often would not have a previous attribute of liking (North & Hargreaves, 1998).

Difference in affective responses and related associations between musicians and non-musicians could be noticed, in such way, that musical experts frequently give cognitive elaborations or analytical comments of the piece structure or some musical cues (motive, segmentation and harmonic flow). Emotional expression is clearly more often bounded to music itself and emotional response is more intertwined with musical structure. There are indices that some features of musical structure, that are present in our piece, represent basis for certain reactions. Namely, complex, dissonant, atonal harmony is often followed by tension, fear and anger; fast tempo with activity, surprise, potency; sharp timbre with many harmonics also with fear, potency, anger, disgust; repetition, sequential development, condensation, pauses with increased tension (Gabrielsson & Lindström, 2001). Some of specific emotions that were reported belong to a group that is not so commonly experienced while listening music (Juslin & Laukka, 2004), but at the same time these emotional states (anger, tension, frustration, confusion, anxiety) are designated, in another research, as a specific for strong experiences in music (Gabrielsson, 2001). Non-musicians give more linear emotional responses that are still complex in experiential part, but they react more often to auditive/tonal quality. Responses of the listeners that experienced music as repulsive are in agreement with Berlyin’s influential theory (Berlyine, 1971) by which too high arousal potential of the music that causes rejection by listeners. On the other hand, exceptional musicians have developed higher sensibility (Bogunović, 2008) and over excitability (McPherson & Williamon, 2006) – that could be the reason for lower emotional threshold in their reaction to music, but also for the richness of their cognitive-emotional elaborations. Findings that speak about two levels of art apprehension support our results considering affective responses. Namely, in aesthetic processing, the reactive model accounts for responses with pleasure and arousal, while reflective model describes how emotional responses...
Theatrical expressivity of Berio’s *Sequenza 69* contribute to the generating of polyvalent meanings in multilevel art and literary works (Cupchik, 1994).

**Cognitive comprehension.** When asked how they *understand* Berio’s music (Table 3), some half of the listeners (12) gave answers that could be sorted as to affective responses (“extremely affective music; it provokes certain kind of rebellion and revolt; inner turmoil; telling a story in which the emotion is the basic line”), metaphorically expressed experiences (“as if the performer/protagonist were trying to tame a wild beast and the beast slowly gives in; artist’s emotional reaction to the meaning of life today; reflection of our way of life and senselessness of our time”) and references to musical structure and material (“I expect the unexpected; music full of demanding and subtle contrasts”). We cannot miss the identical metaphor of the performer and one of the listeners – ‘the fight of the wild beast’ which speaks about fulfilment of composers ideas to put the highest demands to performer that would bring him to the ‘physical, psychological and mental edge’. Listeners’ references to a present life style and difficult, turbulent and senseless “time” that we are living in at the moment clearly impose the relevance of the socio-cultural context, but also of the *Zeitgeist*, for understanding and perceiving music. These answers confirm the idea of the communicational models that contextualize the music reception process (Hargreaves *et al.*, 2005).

**Table 3.** Cognitive comprehension of *Sequenza VI*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M/NM</th>
<th>M/NM</th>
<th>M/NM</th>
<th>M/NM</th>
<th>No answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>Affective music-emotional story 2/3</td>
<td>Images, metaphorical expressions 2/3</td>
<td>Musical material 2/0</td>
<td>Hard to understand 4/2</td>
<td>5/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message</td>
<td>Metaphorical 3/2</td>
<td>Communication 3/0</td>
<td>Emotional 1/1</td>
<td>Hard to understand 2/5</td>
<td>6/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segments/whole</td>
<td>The whole 4/1</td>
<td>Segments/Stages 6/7</td>
<td>The whole and segments 5/0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character</td>
<td>Dramatic/Dynamic 4/2</td>
<td>Tragic, odd, energetic, strong 5/3</td>
<td>Chaotic/Cracked 2/1</td>
<td>Expressive/Lyric 1/0</td>
<td>3/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulties to perform</td>
<td>Physical demands 4/4</td>
<td>Technical demands 5/1</td>
<td>Performance demands 3/1</td>
<td>Cognitive comprehension/Personal demands 3/2</td>
<td>0/0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Musicians N=15; Non-musicians N=8
Considering messages that are inbuilt in music, listeners again expressed their experience through metaphors that refer mainly to a dual nature of the piece ("ups and downs, ‘everything is good in the end’; the message is that all the pains finally stop; the aesthetics of the ugliness; fission, resignation"), and emotional response ("an entire drama in sequels; temporariness (of time, life, stage), struggle, futility"). What, interestingly enough, appear are some levels of communication that were perceived by participants-musicians ("premeditation, questions, questions! (hidden) dialogue, auto-communication, multi-level conversation; artistic message grounded in emotional layer").

We may noticed that in both issues, of understanding music and message, we got the lower number of listeners’ answers, even having certain number of them who reported difficulties in understanding, in comparison to number of answers given for affective responses. It could mean that music is such that induces strong emotional reaction and that broken rhythm and lack of melody, do not give fruitfull ground for cognitive/verbal elaboration of musical experience, even not for musicians. Also, it seems that when it comes to a cognitive elaboration and/or meta-analysis, it is again a matter of listeners themselves more than a matter of profession because, musicians and non-musicians gave answers that were equable, therefore we analysed them together. Only those three that were musical experts perceived Sequenza VI as a communication trigger, for them or for the performer.

All the questioned persons perceived segments/parts/stages of the piece or the piece as the whole or noted at the same time the whole and particular micro-plan of composition. The last group of the listeners/musicians identifies the segments but this does not prevent them from following the flow, there are breathes that are connecting tissue: “the whole and segments but not as separated elements: homogeneity of micro-parts”. Some were even more precise: “dynamic and less dynamic – dramatic and calming – shift of aggression and peace”. Listeners in this group had a tendency to segment the piece in two exchanging parts, expressionally different ("two segments: the faster, louder, more daring and more tired and the more silent, slower with twitches") or three, again induced by tempo and character of music ("three parts/three images; three entities of different tempo, expressions, dynamics and character"). Musicians had a significant tendency to perceive piece as the whole or whole with integrated segments, while non-musicians were reporting about the sequence of segments in different emotional charge. There are findings that state that listening strategies of expert and non-expert listeners, namely ‘cognitive’ and ‘associative’ or emotional and referential are differing. Experts follow the “syntactic” strategy in which analytical, musicological processes take precedence (North & Hargreaves, 2008). Interestingly enough listeners ‘spontaneously’ segmented Sequenza VI in two or three parts, which differs from analysis done in the research with controlled situation, when it was segmented in six segments (Deliège & El Ahmadi, 1989). This finding suggests that musicians have meta-cognitive comprehension of the structure and musical material. But, is it also a matter of ‘knowing music’ or ‘having knowledge about music’ that enables them for this kind of mental strategy? On the other hand, when understanding of composer’s messages was in question, then metaphorical thinking top-down was used, nevertheless musical (i)literacy.
The answers considering character of the piece were relatively homogenous and mainly were depicting a pattern of duality in perceiving expressional qualities of the Sequenza VI, already defined when affective responses were in question. Character of the piece was described as “energetic, strong, ruffled, bright; sincere; strange and incomprehensible”, and therefore designated as dramatic and dynamic (“theatrical, dramatic, dynamical with a lot of passion; music for a black-and-white movie; expressively lyrical, tragic, dark”), but also chaotic and cracked (“broken, linear”).

Regarding the question about the difficulties to perform this piece all listeners noticed that this piece is very demanding: physically (exhaustion of both performer’s and instrument’s possibilities), technically (“it requires speed, accuracy, frequent changes of playing techniques, difficult sections and tremolos”), as to performance (“it is difficult to cope with the length of the piece due to constant movement through different atmospheres of the musical flow”) and cognitive and personally (“it is more difficult to get the idea how to perform the piece than its technical difficulties; extremely musically complex with hidden melody and micro-form; great performing ability is at the service of the expression”). So, high demands on virtuosity that asks for good physical status and excellent technical and performing skills, and that was noticed clearly by all listeners. In other words, Berio’s demands for ‘endurance’, ‘strength’ and ‘intensity’ were easily recognized.

Narrative. The listeners were asked to tell the story that would depict the whole piece with the intention to get an insight in meta-cognitive representation of the piece. Stories were not so extensive in size but gave the essence of the “expressive musical reception” of the deliberate intentions of the composer and the performer. The content of received message seems to be short, dramatic and tense. There are several common themes that were repeated, not only in narratives, but in self-reports of listeners and the performer referring to music and expressive responses: fight, sea storm, nature, beast, scream (intended by Berio and performer), not for victory, but for overcoming on the path to the reconciliation. The narrative was given by 20 listeners and was divertive considering level of comprehension and verbalization. There were:

• Metaphorical/integrative which well expressed dramatic character of the Sequenza VI with a certain level of personal projections; “it presents eternal fight of opposites or fight for life, for essence of life, against danger, with nature”; black and white movie and drama as theatrical exponent of musical events: “Man who is in dilemma, no time for thinking, emotions will decide”; “Man wandering aimlessly through night and storm, ideas of uncontrollability, destruction, and weirdness”; “Middle-aged man fighting with himself and the world (unsatisfied, angry, disappointed). He does not succeed and is dying slowly”;

• Associational metaphor (images with story): “Talk with a dull person who repeats the same story and at the end finds solution by him-/herself”; “Man lost in a forest runs away from different animals”; “Celebration in the house, 19th century, warm, pleasant, outside snow, coldness”;

• Concrete associations: “ship in the storm; winter; chaos; storm; running and escaping; fear in the air; uncertainty”;

Theatrical expressivity of Berio’s *Sequenza* 71
Story without definite content/fluid hovering emotional states: “nervousness, absence, restlessness with lyric oasis”.

Experts did not provide any concrete narrative, unlike other participants. On the contrary, they gave abstract and short interpretations from the domain of tension motility, accenting fundamental emotional energy and opposites of dynamic/dramatic/disturbed (“capricious fury”), on one hand, and calm/peaceful/quiet (“slow silence”), on the other hand. However, other participants gave concrete narratives in which fight, stormy nature, chaos, winter, jungle, wild animals, etc. have central role. Through these images atmosphere of “a nice warm room with fireplace” and “pleasant smell” hesitantly appears.

We may say that there are no significant differences in two subgroups of listeners when cognitive elaboration and comprehension is in question. Frequency of self-report answers point out that mainly half of the listeners were responding to Sequenza VI primarily from the cognitive level of understanding. Looking back to the narratives given by listeners, we may conclude the same. There we must refer to studies that suggest that listeners can analyse music more effectively if they are ‘field independent’ types, i.e. people who can concentrate on specific parts of whatever they perceive (Ellis, 1995). Similarly research findings point out that ‘intuitive’ people respond to music more deeply and sensitively than to more ‘sensing’ people (Lewis & Schmidt, 1991).

**Viola.** Concerning viola itself, when asked about the most touching and affecting elements of the instrument (Table 4), participants pointed out the recognizable colour of the instrument (“it has harsh tone, sometimes sad, sometimes angry”), while others noticed the technical possibilities, effects and virtuosity, strength and diversity of expressive potentials. Interestingly enough, one participant noted that the similarity of viola with human voice was very appealing: “this is not a celestial, but a human sound”. As a part of viola expressive capacities immanent oppositeness and contrasts were mentioned (“viola can be monstrous in a beautiful way”; “a bit nasal sound that reminds me of screams and sweet song in different changes of the mood”). Again, we meet duality that is embedded in viola and Sequenza VI (Berio, 1998) and that is mentioned in the interview with performer. Even the same words were used to depict the colour of the viola’s tone: scream, song, human voice. We could say that colour and expressiveness of viola ton were efficiently used by composer as a medium for his intentions. It was accurately decoded by the performer who used all his ‘powers’ to engage acoustical features of viola that could pass on the intention. Again, some half of listeners gave answers to this question, more of them musicians who were responsive on colour and expressive potentials of viola.
Theatrical expressivity of Berio’s *Sequenza* 73

Table 4. Listeners’ responses to viola

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M/NM</th>
<th>M/NM</th>
<th>M/NM</th>
<th>M/NM</th>
<th>No answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Touching and affecting elements</strong></td>
<td>Colour 4/1</td>
<td>Virtuosity and expressive potentials 5/0</td>
<td>Similarity with human voice 0/1</td>
<td>No specific reaction 2/4</td>
<td>4/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sound of viola</strong></td>
<td>Technical and expressive diversities 4/1</td>
<td>Various dichotomies 4/2</td>
<td>Unpleasant, odd, unnatural, sharp 3/5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4/1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Musicians N=15; Non-musicians N=8

Answers concerning the *sound of viola in the particular work* pointed the same dichotomy previously noticed. Participants remarked technical and expressive diversities (5 participants) and dichotomies (6) such as dramatic and lyric, combination of light and dark, harshness and warmth ("aggressive and pleasant, like the beauty and the beast in one"). The performer also mentioned in his reflections on the performance experience as if he had a task to convey “demonic- and angel-like inner parts of himself through his hands and instrument and to sing this music”. Even viola itself, as a “conscious container” (Berio, 2006) of its physical and musical legacy, bears this polarity: neglected in certain period of its history, viewed as instrument of the middle, but rarely “in the first line” as a contrast to unquestionable beauty of the tone and timbre. In the *Sequenza VI* these oppositions gain further expansions in the sphere of fiercely hypnotic viola and mellow lyricism, aggression and tranquillity, strength and exhaustion, heaven and earth, soul and body, agony and reconcilement, fury and motionless rest. It could be said that dichotomy perceived in emotional responses of the listeners is also strongly present in attributes that are attached to viola and its tone that is obviously provocative: “it is divergently expressive, dramatic, full of anger, but clear, light, peaceful”. Non-musicians insisted on unnatural and odd sound, irritating effect. Researches in domain of fine arts pointed out that art works that have High Rank (e.g. ‘open’) evoked patterns of response consistent with both diversity and unity in aesthetic response (Cupchik et al., 1996). These findings could be considered as concordant to ours, due to the confirmed duality/bipolarity of affective experience, but also in a comprehension of the piece structure that is also divergent, either top-down or bottom-up.

**Performer.** Bearing in mind that Mladjenović’s acting is not acting but that it is provoked by “breaking the elementary energy” of one unconscious theatre, participants answered the question “Did you think how the artist feels during the performance?” by pointing out that performers physical tenseness and effort, as well as emotional investment into playing moved them the most. Physical status during performing was perhaps the most striking impression on the part of the listeners of both sample subgroups (8) and was designated as “very stiff, tense, and excited”. The listeners felt significant empathy with an unceasing high level of activation that was understood as “fighting with the piece; he is constantly changing the nature of his psycho-physical action due to the piece that is demanding both physically and
mentally’’. Even possible “suffering from right hand pain from constant tremolo’’ was mentioned. Thus, the extent to which virtuosity can only truly be communicated and appreciated in a live performance connects it firmly to the idea of theatre, the music creating its meaning through physical action, comprehended through our visual sense as much as through abstract musical sound (Halfyard, 2007b).

According to performer’s loud breathing, that was mentioned several times, it was obvious that, emotional arousal and process were highly activated (6 participants). Listeners suggested that performer “also finds music upsetting; he feels unpleasant; tense; ample of emotions; he does not feel at ease, it is not easy for him, he has a big burden”. Though they perceived performer as “completely focused; very concentrated’’. Answers considering engagement in communication (4 participants) validate performer’s intention to transmit his interpretation of Sequenza VI: “engaged to penetrate with his being into details and touched by the sound to transfer his experience to the audience; he wants and fights to transfer his feeling to the audience, as well as to activate the audience by expressive playing and the strength of his own imagination”. If we recall the words of the performer who intended to invite audience to ‘breath’ with him, but also to show his ‘demonic-angelic’ powers we could say that this goal is reached in the case of the majority of listeners and especially for musicians.

When asked what the basic message of the performer is, almost a half of the listeners could neither define nor verbalize what the “performer’s message” is, whilst the others pointed out the following categories of “messages”: Metaphorical (“opening eyes?; after rain comes sun”), presentation of Sequenza, viola, himself (“the artist finds and expresses everything – the most subtle parts of the piece; attract the listeners’ attention”) and emotional message (“the “performer’s message” is that there is no separation between the message of the piece and the message of the performer; drama; hard to play contemporary music; uncertainty”). Again some half of the listeners (12) was having responses considering the question that asks for cognitive elaboration.

The artist’s movements, gestures, mime were having significant impact on experience of approximately half of the listeners (13) and again, there were no significant differences between subgroups. Emotional arousal was induced by movements of the body, not so much on the gesture and mime, sometimes seen as a unity with sound (“exciting playing, both the sound and the movements; dynamic movements were in real relation with the music”) and by attitude that was transferred into body posture (“his attitude contributed to my attitude that this is aggressive content; his concentration made me focus”). Especially strong inducing agent was breathing and sudden hitting on the floor (“I was absorbing the music and felt performer’s breathing; I heard hard breathing and leg hitting”). Interesting remark came from one participant, “the piece itself entices movements”, that speaks, as the others too, about intentions understanding chain of composer, performer and listeners, and that means communication. Findings of the previous research confirms presence of the positive connections between size of the movement and the degree of the expressive intention
and also that musical structure was found to elicit particular types of expressive movements (Davidson, 2002, 2005).

Table 5. Listeners’ responses to performer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performer’s feelings</th>
<th>M/NM</th>
<th>M/NM</th>
<th>M/NM</th>
<th>M/NM</th>
<th>No answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical tenseness and effort</td>
<td>4/4</td>
<td>Emotional process</td>
<td>5/1</td>
<td>Engagement in communication</td>
<td>3/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic message of the performer</td>
<td>Metaphorical</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>To present Sequenza, viola, himself</td>
<td>3/1</td>
<td>Emotional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performer’s movements, gestures, mime</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>9/4</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>6/4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongest impression</td>
<td>Mastering, focus</td>
<td>7/2</td>
<td>Sound</td>
<td>2/0</td>
<td>Movements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performer’s relation with the instrument</td>
<td>Unity</td>
<td>4/3</td>
<td>Personal relationship</td>
<td>7/1</td>
<td>Struggle with reconciliation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Musicians N=15; Non-musicians N=8

The strongest impression of the audience was provided, next to the movements (6 participants), by engagement, mastering, focus and dedication of the performer (9): “extreme engagement; being in the piece, dedication to the piece; utter unity with the piece; infatuation with the music; the clarity and the idea of the interpretation; focus, spontaneity, sincerity; excellent mastery of the instrument.”. Musicians gave the strongest appraisal value to the high degree of performance mastering and focus to performance. Perceived mastering of the performance has its roots in the intention of the performer, as he stated, “to exhibit extreme self-control and strong temper at the same time” in order to focus on psycho-physical aspects of performance. Performer’s movements had significant role in communicating expressions and character of the piece: “his movements and his expressions; breathing and facial expressions; movements of the artists that were identical with the character of the composition”. When we recall the words of the performer, we see that he was speaking about the same issues: unnatural psycho-physical breathing, sudden motions, hits – unusual movements, appearance of rudimentary energy and intense creation in the very moment, to link/articulate in the unity (fusion) everything that flies all over and is torn apart (fission). These reports are in concordance with findings that support idea of the existence of genuine emotional responses to music which might be induced through a process of emotional contagion (Lundqvist et al., 2009). Emotional contagion represents part of nonverbal communication and it is primitive, automatic and unconscious behaviour (Hatfield et al., 1994). Higher energy level of event causes
more alertness, so the same emotional valence (positive or negative) would lead to a higher emotional contagion (Juslin, 2005).

Majority of listeners experienced the performer’s relation with the instrument almost identically, though we could sort out two major groups of answers: those which refer to unity (“the performer and the instrument were one, one entity, as if they had united in order to create something they would never be able to individually create; they were in complete harmony”) and to very close personal relationship as if viola was a human being (“they know each other very well; special emotion, amazing connection and bond; deep, affectionate relation; very intimate and painful relation”).

We could say that composer’s intentions to put up drama-lyricism dichotomy in the core of his work have been successfully transferred through viola as a medium, and that this basic message was transferred through the performer to the listeners. Findings suggest that in the communication dyad performer – listeners, all inquired channels of communication were intertwined. Listeners were induced in a communication process through unceasing high level of psycho-physical activation, expressed by engagement, focus and dedication of the performer and his mastering of instrument, followed by extreme body movements and posture which activated emotional arousal. Performer’s intention to transmit his interpretation of Sequenca VI was validated by reception of unity of the performer, piece and viola in a process of transferring the same dramatic message. Result that is perhaps unexpected in this study, where contemporary piece was used, is that, on the contrary to the previous findings of other authors (North & Hargreaves, 1998) there were clear understanding of the intention/messages through communication chain: composer-performer-(part of the)listeners.

Age differences showed not to be of a special significance, therefore we treated answers of all participants/musicians in a same group.

Conclusions

The findings of our study suggest that there are patterns of musical, expressional, cognitive and kinesthetic interactions viewed through the psychological and social context of communication. Theatrical expressivity of the Sequenza VI for solo viola is based on energy, on its elementary, rudimentary form. It is an integrating factor which intertwines all levels of communication and involves deeply participants of this complex process. Just like “the black and white movies”, mentioned in one of the responses, this corresponds to the opposites connected with other answers of participants and the performer: angelic and demonic, beauty and the beast, whisper and scream, shriek and sweet song, light and darkness, schizophrenia and integration, etc.

Complex network of relations, set in dyads and triads, was unfolding during communicational process. We considered three persons relevant for an event (composer, performer, listener/s), and viola and Sequenza VI as means in a process of
Theatrical expressivity of Berio’s *Sequenza 77* conveying - receiving expressive intentions. Results are presented through ‘Communication model during live performance of Berio’s *Sequenza VI*’ (Figure 2). In comparison to the model that presents theoretical concept of our study (Figure 1) conceived on the basis of previous music communication models (Hargreaves *et al.*, 2005; Juslin, 2005) and assumptions of possible relations, this one is conceptualized according to the results of our research.

Communication model (Figure 2) represents also an enhanced theoretical model and points out open systems, within which communication is unfolding, and their content which implies that transmission of the composer’s intentions is successfully done. Results presented in this model are organized in three levels: subsystems, interrelationships and content referring to each part of the tetrad Composer/*Sequenza VI*-performer-viola-listeners. Three simultaneously active and intertwined open subsystems are presented within the wider system of communication in a tetrad. Within each subsystem there are communicative relations that are (be)directional. Subsystems are marked as composer-performer-listeners; *Sequenza VI*-performer-viola and performer-listeners-social context. Every box contains the key words of findings that are referring to the one of the tetrad elements. We may say that idiosyncrasy and richness of answers that we got from our participants approves qualitative empirical approach.

![Figure 2. Communication model during live performance of Berio’s Sequenza](image-url)
The degree of consent amongst the composer’s intentions, performance and the listeners’ reception was high. This result has a good reliability because the piece (as well as Berio’s music) was previously unknown to the majority of the participants, so they had ‘white’ minds (as performer perceived), e.g. had no preconceived ideas about the piece. The other thing that makes these results more valuable is the existence of the general assumption about rather low comprehension of contemporary piece and results of some other studies that speak about necessity to know more before listening contemporary music in order to understand it better (Weale, 2005).

Due to its maximum levels of tension and special type of polyphony amongst the different musical elements the Sequenza VI was highly responded to in terms of affective, physical and narrative contents. It was grasped in terms of cognitive comprehension (message, meaning, cognitive understanding) only by the part of the listeners and then independently of their musical expertise. It seems that affective response was clearly bi-polar pointing out into two directions, either exciting tension or irritating repulsion. The raw energy, tension and dramatic charge of the music, instrument and performance itself were not left without expressive reception. The reasons for that could be found in the specific situation of live performance, which was also highly expressive, influential. Another reason could be the music reduced to harmonic utterance, disintegrated melody and meter (in the usual sense of the word), which, together with high technical and musical demands for viola, brought surprise with its unexpectedness (Meyer, 1957) and enhanced alertness. This music, performance and expressive timbre of viola were direct, intrusive, provoking and aggressive. It was not easy to escape from its dramatic value. The tension was built up directly into the music and forced the performer to transfer it further on. The peculiar thing is that performance provoked strong analogical almost ‘mirror like’ responses in the listeners, on different levels of reception. Emotional expression of musicians was clearly more often bounded to music itself and emotional response is more intertwined with musical structure. Non-musicians gave more linear emotional responses and they react more often to auditive/tonal quality. Musicians have higher sensibility and over excitability and that could be a reason for lower emotional threshold in their reaction to music, but also for the richness of their cognitive-emotional elaborations.

Theatrical expressivity induced psychical and emotional responses in the majority of participants, but the analysis of meta-cognitive elaborations showed certain differences between group of musical experts and non-musicians. A certain number of participants directly associated music with (mono) drama, tragedy, theatre and film. Findings suggest that musicians have meta-cognitive comprehension of the structure and musical material. On the other hand, when it comes to a cognitive elaboration and/or meta-analysis of composer’s messages, then metaphorical thinking top-down is used, independent of musical literacy.

In our opinion, the narrative represents the integrative element, a kind of mirror of processes during the performing event, the essence of experience from different points of view (Popović Mladjenović, 2009). The performer mentioned that “for him playing a piece is like telling a story”. It is refers to intimate, personal content that has its
Theatrical expressivity of Berio’s *Sequenza 79*

roots in the performer’s past and present. Therefore, there is no conscious verbal, cognitive narrative, but his narrative is there – it is emotional, personal and intimate in its nature. It is condensed in metaphors with which he explains his relations to music and the piece itself, as it was mentioned before. He wants to say how the performer should be, to give his vision of the appropriate performance, to set a model, to say something about himself with superiority, based on the experienced strength to perform musical and personal message.

During live performance, listeners/audience were involved in the social communication with the performer. Physical expression of the performance played a significant role in the communication process, in establishing “a new kind of dialogue” between the musical instrument – viola – and other units of the tetr (composer, performer and listeners). Visual cues of physical expression presented a strong contribution to the overall response to the performance. There are indications that generation of the movements and subsequent meaning of it, is intended more or less consciously and that as a result, listeners perceive these kinesthetic messages. Therefore, the type of movement, gestures and posture of the performer and meaning associated to it is a free field for personal projections of the listeners in the realm of content, but it seems that, in the case of our research, there are rather high degrees of consent between the nature of the performer’s movements, his inner processes and annotation on the part of the listeners. The performer’s explicit expressive intention is in Berio’s piece strongly supported by the intentions of the composer, who really wanted to make this piece “mind and body” theatre, to push the performer to the limits (and even across) of his physical abilities and this intention was clearly transmitted to the listeners (enriched with personal, mental and physical content) who in a great majority receive their meanings.

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**References**


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**Appendix**

**QUESTIONNAIRE I - LISTENERS (Before listening)**

1. What is your previous experience about contemporary music?
2. What about it attracts or rejects you, what do you like or dislike?
3. Are you familiar with Luciano Berio’s music? In what way?
4. Are you familiar with the piece that will be performed? In what extent?
5. Please, describe your attitude to viola. Are there any particularities that distinguish viola from other (string) instruments?

6. What is your mood like today?
7. Did something particularly good or bad happened today that left impression on you?
8. What do you expect from this experiment?
QUESTIONNAIRE II - LISTENERS (After listening)

1. Please, describe your bodily/physical sensations/reactions during listening.
2. Did this music stimulate you to move, to walk, stand up, dance, run... 

3. Was this music exciting for you, did it disturbe you?
4. How would you describe your emotions (or emotional flow) that occurred during listening?
5. Do you think that music that you have just listened arouses emotions "easily" and how?
6. Did you have certain associations or memories while listening to the music? Can you specify them?

7. How do you understand this music and messages conveyed by it?
8. Did you distinguish certain segments, parts of the music, or you perceived it as a whole?
9. How would you specify/define character of the piece?
10. Do you find it difficult to perform? How would you identify possible difficulties?

11. Is there something about viola in this music that especially "touches" you, inspires, associates to... What would that be?
12. How would you describe the sound of viola in this piece?

13. Did you think about how does performer feel and what he feels during the performance? Please, explain.
14. What is the main "message" of the performer, in your opinion?
15. Were your reactions to the music caused by movements, gestures, mime of the performer during his playing? In what way?
16. What affected you the most about the performer?
17. How did you experience relation between performer and his instrument? Please, describe.

18. Please, describe the fantasy, story that would reflect events in this piece.

QUESTIONNAIRE III - PERFORMER (Semi-structured interview)

1. Did you play this piece before in public? Where and when?

2. What attracts or rejects you in this piece?
3. How did you conceive the concept of interpretation of this work?
4. How would you describe content of the piece?

5. How do you see composer's intention?
6. What kind of message did you intend to communicate through the performance?
7. What is the basic emotional content of this work, in your opinion?
8. What are your strongest emotions/feelings during the performance?

9. Do you restrain your movements or you move freely during the performance?
10. How do you coordinate movement with the message you convey?

11. Are you aware of the audience when you are playing and do you notice movements in the audience, sounds produced by it?
12. How do audience reactions affect your emotions, interpretation and behaviours while you play Sequenza VI?

13. What distinguishes viola from other instruments, what are its peculiarities?
14. What makes Sequenza VI difficult for performance?
15. How would you comment relation between strict requirements of the composer and interpretative liberties?
16. If someone would ask you to describe a "story" of this piece, what would you answer?

Biographies

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