

Celibidache on
simultaneous time and
immeasurable *tempo*

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The question of “bi-temporality” (G. Zaccaria*)

Is clock-time (seen as objective) the basis for man-time (then seen as subjective)

OR

is (a certain understanding of) man-time the origin from which clock-time is derived?

*On bi-temporality and the determination of physical time (sl. 4) see M. Carfora e G. Zaccaria, *Sul tempo (tra fisica e filosofia)*, <http://www.scienzanuova.org/it/dialogo-sul-tempo/>

Celibidache

*A thinking that provides
a version of man-time (“musical-time”),
while explicitly demarcating it from
the physical version of time, i.e. clock-time.*

Physical time

“Time is the dimension of the qualitative or quantitative computation of the duration that passes off and elapses in the format ‘one after the other’, which consists in the irreversible succession of punctual moments, i.e. in what is commonly called ‘time’s arrow’ .”

Physical time

“Physical time” implies the traits of

- duration (time is the duration *of something*);
- unidirectional succession (time is the irreversible flow of instants ordered according to the criterion ‘one after the other’).

Tempo

Common notion of *tempo*:

- indicates the speed, or pace, of a given piece;
- measured in beats per minute;
- measured by a device called metronome.

“Metronomic time” defines an **absolute** duration.

Tempo

“*Tempo* taken as an object, in the way the idiots write on their score ‘the quaver at 72’ [metronomic mark], doesn’t exist. *Tempo* is the **condition** for the multiplicity of phenomena that present themselves to my consciousness to be **reduced** by the in itself unique force that the consciousness possesses: that of reducing the multiplicity, and of making of it a very complex whole, a **unity** to own, and then to leave and transcend in order to find oneself in front of the subsequent unity. ...

Tempo

... The greater the multiplicity, the slower the materialized *tempo*, i.e. the *tempo* seen in the physical dimension of time. But **in truth the *tempo* isn't slow.** It is neither slow nor fast. Today, the *tempo* has become an object that can be characterized by means of a physical measure. The convention of physically measuring the *tempo* is idiotic. **Physical time doesn't exist in music [...]** *Tempo* has nothing to do with speed.”

Tempo

“In phenomenology we teach that *tempo* is **not a reality that subsists in itself** (it can in no way be reduced to the scales of time measurement of the world); rather, it is a **living consequence** that results from many concurring factors.”

Tempo

“The *tempo* can have a **correlate in the world of physics**, but it has nothing to do with physical time and its course. In relation to *tempo*, all temporal characterizations such as ‘slow’, ‘fast’, ‘not slow’, ‘not so fast’, ‘too fast’, ‘right’, ‘wrong’ are not even remotely applicable. The proposition according to which a greater multitude, in order to be reduced, needs more *tempo* than a smaller multitude, is as fallacious as the hope of science to be able to attain the fundamental and not further divisible ultimate elements thanks to infinite partitions. Given that the *tempo* is a *unique* condition, **it can’t be greater, smaller, inferior or different.**”

Tempo

“If someone has the feeling that <a movement> is too long or too short, he’s already out<side of music>. Music has no *duration* in this sense. There are no long and short movements, only from an external viewpoint there are long movements, short movements, strong movements, soft movements, a.s.o.”

Tempo

“Velocity has nothing to do with *tempo*. The conflation of *tempo* and velocity is a conception <that comes out> of the total lack of music in our epoch. Every *tempo* has a special colour, as sound is not the materialization of all elements at the same time; <indeed>, the epiphenomena, or lateral phenomena [viz. overtones], appear in time, and **with time and thanks to time**, the sound becomes richer. Every sound is an irreducible solar system: now, what happens if I go from one solar system to another without having **allowed the first one the time** to unfold completely? It is a cut in the richness of expression: ...

Tempo

... I truncate the first [solar system] through the presence of another. The result is an aridness, I renounce the richness. Hence, richness is a prerogative of slowness, richness takes place in a slow *tempo*; [...] every *tempo* [...] is a **unique composition** of certain epiphenomenic values, which depends on a thousand things: on the conductor's culture, on the acoustics of the hall, on the musicians' phantasy [...]"

Summary and main implications

1. *Tempo* has nothing to do with **speed**, velocity, pace;
2. while the *tempo* is **not measurable** in terms of physical time, one can always assign to it a **correlate** in terms of “materialized” *tempo*, which, however, is arbitrary and **meaningless** in musical terms;
3. *tempo* does **not subsist in itself**: it “is” or “is not”, but when it is, it consists in a unique **relation** of the mind to the unity of a multitude (reduction);

Summary and main implications

4. music has **no duration** in the sense of physical time;
5. to feel a duration is “**to be out**”, namely in a state of the mind, or mode of consciousness (the one in which we “materialize”), that implies the **inertia** (“dormancy”) of our native being-in-time, our native time-awareness;
6. the *tempo* is a **unique condition** for the reduction of a multitude, namely a **constellation of sounds**, each of which, in turn, is a solar system;

Summary and main implications

7. by composing, gathering in one, the multitude, the *tempo* makes perceivable the **richness** of sound;
8. the *tempo* composes by **allowing for the needed “time”**: it is itself the **space-of-time** *for* the richness;
9. the *tempo* is a “living consequence” resulting “from many factors”, which **concur** in shaping the **unique** space-of-time **needed for preserving the unifying unity (the One)** in the manifest richness of the composed multitude of epiphenomena.

Time?

The “needed time” is

- from an *exterior* point of view, a sufficiently long elapsing duration;
- from an *interior* point of view, the **musical time**, of which the former is the “materialized correlate”.

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The following quotations introduce the notion of musical time as **simultaneity**. The first one addresses the alertness thanks to which the mind remains continuously related to the unifying unity, as well as to the variety of interrelations that stem from it.

Musical time

“[This alertness is] a sentiment that in philosophy is called ‘becoming-conscious’ [realizing, becoming aware], as opposed to ‘being-conscious’: not grasping <something>, but rather, constantly **becoming aware**, and <thus> at any instant knowing where one is. I need to perceive the C sharp in relation to the sequence and the combination of intervals that have led to that C sharp, for they are contained in the latter. And in the same way the future of that C sharp is contained in it. Consequently, I need to **perceive in the past and in the future**. But where <does such a perception take place>? In the **simultaneity!**”

Musical time

“[*Question:*] How does one transcend sound perceptions?”

[*Celibidache:*] By not remaining at the reception of single sound sensations, <but rather> by alertly listening over-and-beyond the single sound sensation, by cultivating **perception in simultaneity**, by not sensing the “now” as a dead border between what was and what will be, but rather by experiencing it as a **unifying becoming**, in which the **past constantly becomes the future.**”

Musical time

“The *tempo* is nothing but a condition, a catalyzer, which makes possible the uniting identification of vertical and linear simultaneity in our consciousness.”

Musical time

“In each note there is the essence of the whole [...]. Only by transcending the sound, by somehow leaving it behind (after having perceived it and made it one’s own), can one experience its configuring function, and its function consists in this: to act **now, here**, and that far from the beginning [past]; **now, here**, and that early or that late, before or after the point of maximum expansion; **now, here**, and this close to the end [future]. At each instant of the musical evolution, the perceiving, correlating mind is there, and on the becoming line as well. **This is the simultaneity...**

Musical time

... This is possible only by constantly, continuously bringing to mind **the future-becoming past** [the past in its constantly becoming the future]. The constitutive linearity of consciousness [mere being-conscious], which is always the consciousness of something, cannot grasp it: it is an exclusive monopoly of pure becoming-conscious [becoming aware], an exclusive right of the **mind**".

Summary and main implications

1. *Tempo* is a space-of-time, the **space of the “now” of simultaneity**, borne by the human alertness to the (identifying) unity;
2. in the “now”, vertical simultaneity (one or more actual sounds together) and linear simultaneity (future-becoming past) are identical, i.e. **One and the same**;
3. **past and future “are” only in the “now”** , i.e. *in* and *as* the simultaneity of future-becoming past;

Summary and main implications

4. future-becoming past means: (in the “now”) the relations of **already-sounded-but-not-anymore-sounding sounds** come, as a whole, out of the whole of relations of **about-to-sound-but-not-yet-sounded sounds**;

5. musical time is the **time of the One**, the unity of the one and same simultaneity; the *tempo* is the space-of-time of the One;

6. when time is the time of something, the future becomes the past; when time is the time of the One, the past becomes the future.

Conclusion: musical vs. physical time

1. **Succession.** Musical time is, in a sense, characterized by a ‘one after the other’; however, the succession of “now-and-heres”, i.e. of unique, immeasurable instants of *tempo*, does not constitute a unidirectional sequence of elapsing “dead” punctual moments (a directed flow, a line): in fact, the past and the future are given only in the minded “now”, and nowhere else, and they are given as the simultaneity of future-becoming past.

Conclusion: musical vs. physical time

In other words, the succession of instants of *tempo* (the movement of the piece) is the **continuous self-articulation of the One** (the unifying unity), in which the One itself, “escorted” by a human awareness that provides the needed space-of-time, pursues its own accomplishment (beginning \leftrightarrow end).

Conclusion: musical vs. physical time

2. **Duration.** Music has no duration, hence musical time is not graspable in terms of qualitative or quantitative intervals on an absolute directional extension. As long as there is music, there is time – as soon as we feel that “time elapses”, we are “out”. The sense of duration in music is the continuity (the togetherness) of instants that finds its firmness in the human **awareness of the articulation** (in the form of a whole of related instants) **of the unifying unity of the One.**