

Aldo Clementi—Horror pleni/ Horror vacui

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This article proposes an integrated look at Aldo Clementi's œuvre and examines it by first placing it within the selected context of twentieth-century avant-garde painting and then literature to analyse its (con)textual aspects. In addition, Umberto Eco's concept of post-modernist irony is applied to the interpretation of Clementi's compositional poetics.

Keywords: Avant-Garde; Capitalism; Canon; Christianity; Clementi, Aldo (1925–); Counterpoint; Eco, Umberto (1932–); Left; Marxism; Narrative; Strzemiński, Władysław (1893–1952); Synaesthesia; Text

What a strangely great century the 1900s were for Italian music! The century began with death and it ended with death, but so much happy turmoil happened in between those two grim occurrences—one naturally inevitable, the other so premature in its unnecessary inevitability—and so much belief and so many happy endings, for a while one would think that the impossible became possible and that century was ... the best. It opened with Verdi's death, and concluded with that of Fausto Romitelli, whose given name could unluckily not be more appropriate. Yet, as already indicated, there was much life, too, the 1920s giving Italian music a number of infant births, which would result in an unprecedented rebirth of art in general and music in particular—1920: Bruno Maderna and Luciano Chailly; 1924: Luigi Nono; 1925: Luciano Berio and Aldo Clementi; 1927: Franco Donatoni—the 'masters ... the most important generation of Italian twentieth-century music' (Cresti, 2005, p. 8). Of them all, only Aldo Clementi has lived well into the first decade of the twenty-first century, a remnant and a reminder of the only adventure of this kind in the entire history of art, so far ...

Our culture, and also our Western civilisation as a whole, still needs, let us hope—and, perhaps, pray—artists like Aldo Clementi, artists who, in the simplest of terms, still protect us from the side effects of mercantile indoctrination, the disease of voluntary servitude. Clementi as an admirable, humane character, a highly intelligent sender (a rôle model) and his mature music as a splendidly isolated (i.e., superior

objet d'art in and unto itself, a powerful and intelligible sign)—already a monument of creative independence, an exemplary point of reference, a standard for and a foretaste of things to come—together act as antidotes to the widespread inflation of technical means and expressive values, and are still capable of helping us, at least some of us, retain sanity.

Even though today Aldo Clementi appears to be a spectre from the past, a somewhat fossilised remnant of the richest period in Western music history—an epoch whose contribution, magnificent though it was, is now being constantly questioned, even rather inconsiderately and considerably belittled, which in the future will only increase the magnitude of its ultimate triumph—his ghostly presence successfully defies the appalling (one is tempted to use ‘ghastly’) ambitions and influences of contemporary populism; it signifies quiet resistance and refusal to accept, buy and read the amusing and comfortingly relaxing master narrative of capitalism (whether one refers to this specific paradigm as capitalism, neo-capitalism or post-capitalism is irrelevant; such categorisation is pointless).

In fact, Clementi’s inconspicuous presence constitutes a chapter in an alternative narrative (a supra-narrative concurrent to the mainstream one), a narrative co-authored within the field of advanced art composition by the likes of—these people come to mind nearly without reflection, instinctively, in no particular order—Barbara Buczek,¹ Sylvano Bussotti, Luigi Dallapiccola, Hans-Joachim Hespos, Ferdinand Kriwet, Helmut Lachenmann, Luigi Nono, Bogusław Schaeffer, Gerhard Stäbler, Iannis Xenakis and, for better or worse, Hans Werner Henze (when set against the others listed here, Henze is bad enough, but fortunately not as demagogical, one-dimensional and simplistic as, e.g., Hanns Eisler or Ervín Schulhoff); a narrative of what may be referred to as ‘progressive idealism’ and combining pragmatic social critique with idealistic ethics and aesthetic reflection; a narrative often influenced at one end by the adolescent Marxist dream (Nono, Henze), or by flamboyant, ‘libertine’ rejection of behavioural norms (Bussotti, Stäbler) and, on the other, by the enlightened Catholic rêverie of neo-Thomism and Teilhard de Chardin (Buczek), not unfriendly to some Marxist postulates of societal change, or by the utopian aesthetic stance alone (Hespos). Some writers single out the Italians (why not the Germans?!) as being much more inclined than other nations to this way of telling their stories, due to:

an exceptionally potent tradition of highly ‘committed’ protest against war and injustice, which reached maturity with Dallapiccola and is the mainspring of several of Nono’s most intense and moving works. Political protest-music has, of course, appeared in many countries; but compared with Dallapiccola’s and Nono’s that of composers like Tippett and Eisler, and even that of Shostakovich and Weill, seems relatively aloof and lacking in the more agonized kind of involvement. The Italians seem to be unusually willing to abandon themselves to this kind of musical ‘impurity’: no other country has produced such powerful expressions of protest from its resident composers; the only comparably forceful and committed musical utterances outside Italy are those of the by-then-expatriate Schoenberg. This tradition of protest-through-music may have its ultimate roots in the close

association of music (especially that of Verdi) with the struggles for freedom and national unity of the Risorgimento period. It reappears in a more desperate and 'modern' form in the strangely tormented works that Casella was writing during the First World War (in some ways his most interesting period). (Waterhouse, 1964, p. 22)

Unlike Dallapiccola, Henze or Nono, and very much like Barbara Buczek, Clementi has never been vocally outspoken. It is well nigh impossible to divulge with certainty his *political* outlook without knowing him personally, but most likely it would be pointless to try to find it out anyway. (Neither leftist nor rightist, outwardly Clementi may seem to have subscribed to Roman-Catholic Christianity—he is from Calabria, after all—but his message has firmly remained pan-spiritual in character, as there are too many historic and cultural cross-references at play there.) As an artist, Clementi speaks loudly—on another level, beyond the catchy slogans, which today constitute part of the unwritten code of political correctness as seen from the left angle. His is a more contemplative and nonviolent, Gandhian attitude: his protest is more introverted and, because of that, often more attractive, far more inviting and more clearly pronounced.

Today, Clementi's three-vector stance (i.e., personal–moral–aesthetic) is beautifully anachronistic, almost naïvely absurd (or absurdly naïve), yet so very necessary, if only to manifest the lasting power of resistance to theory and practice of the monopoly of materialism (here understood in its most basic tenets)—and to the ensuing distortion, abuse and invasion of man's private mental and physical spaces.

Among his contemporaries, Clementi occupies a position somewhere between Le Douanier Rousseau and de Chirico, with a little bit of Piet Mondrian and Paul Klee mixed in for balance. From Le Douanier and de Chirico he takes the mysterious simplicity of basic emotions expressed in a sophisticated (read: elegantly outlandish) manner; from Mondrian, the intensity of spiritual experience filtered through a subtle sense of cosmic distance and objectified humour, both translated into signs; and from Klee, the clarity of creative intent stemming from purity of aesthetic sensation at the service of compositional craft. Additionally, to provide evidence of Clementi's visual fascinations and his presumed sources of inspiration, a writer once called forth the names of M. C. Escher, Victor Vasarély and the less iconic Pietro Dorazio (1927–2005). (Among the latter three, Vasarély is the surest guess.) Apparently, 'Escher's interlocking and gradually evolving repeated figures seem ironically to put time into motion within the intrinsically static frame of the picture, while Clementi mirrors and reverses this process by so saturating the aural surface of his works with repetitive moving lines that their intrinsic temporal motion becomes subsumed into an aural stasis, producing a diffuse sonic "image" within an indeterminate "frame"' (Snook, 2007). Yet Escher is disdainfully pitiless whereas Clementi, humane. So, no, that is not it, or even if it may be, only so with strong reservations.

A painter of an earlier generation of whom Clementi has most certainly never heard, yet whose work possesses qualities quite incredibly similar to the Italian's technical propositions, managed to predate them by about half a century: so far apart

in time, space, ethnicity, they are nonetheless brothers. If born in France or the United States, that painter and theorist would have been considered a great pioneer of the European avant-garde. As it stands, the Pole Władysław Strzemiński (1893–1952) has remained obscure and prized immensely only by the few who have discovered his work through word of mouth and infrequent exhibitions.

Already before the Second World War (a soldier, he was gravely wounded during the previous war and lost his left forearm), around the mid-1920s and independently from the main branches of the avant-garde, Strzemiński laid out the principles of what he called ‘Unism’ in painting, an aesthetic of homogenous treatment of texture and colour.² These principles he formulated theoretically in his 1928 collection of essays, *Unizm w malarstwie* [Unism in Painting] and further developed in the 1932 *Kompozycja przestrzeni, obliczenia rytmu czasoprzestrzennego* [Composition of Space, Calculations of Space-Time Rhythm, co-written with his wife, also an avant-garde artist, Katarzyna Kobro (1898–1951)]. Prior to the Second World War, Strzemiński was associated with the radical left and shared its ill-advised belief in the Marxist doctrine. It is therefore a cruel irony that after the war, in communist-dominated Poland, Strzemiński quickly fell out of favour as someone opposed to the aesthetic ideals of Socialist Realism. Brutally treated and stripped of his post at the State Higher School of the Visual Arts in Łódź (where he had settled in 1931; Łódź was at that time the centre of the Polish cotton industry and one of the cradles of the Polish left), Strzemiński died of tuberculosis and exhaustion, preceded by twenty-one months by his estranged wife, another victim of the system. In the 1950s, some of Strzemiński’s fellow artists deliberately destroyed some of his works in an act, clearly vindictive and sadistic, of ‘aesthetic cleansing’.

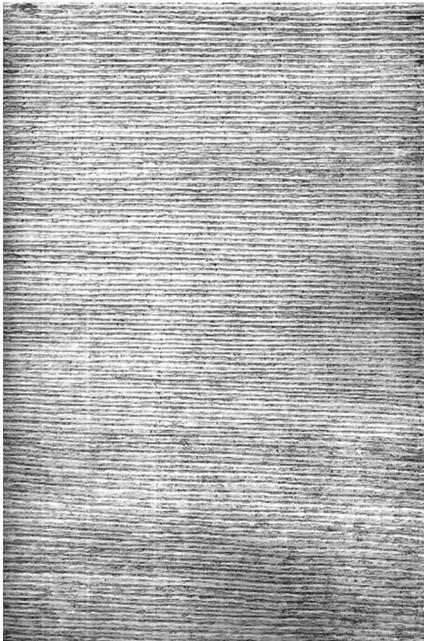
The inescapability of Strzemiński’s concepts proving attractive to composers was soon after his death confirmed by the work of Zygmunt Krauze (b. 1938), known, in his own words,

first of all as a composer of ‘unistic’ music, based on the theory of unistic art adopted from the painting of Władysław Strzemiński. ... Unistic music lacks contrasts, tensions and climaxes in the traditional sense. Its form is as homogenous as possible. According to the composer in this music ‘everything that the listener discovers in the first few seconds will last to the end without any surprise. ... The form without contrasts, in its essence, has neither a beginning nor an end. This music can have an arbitrary time length. It can be interrupted at any moment and this will not change its basic traits.’³

No fundamental contradiction exists between Strzemiński’s Unistic asceticism (proto-minimalism) and Clementi’s expressive moderation rooted in the textural cohesion of his sonic constructions. What was once said of Clementi might easily be applied to Strzemiński: ‘a great chiseller of precision. The slow evolvement of the music creates a sense of spatialised time, time that becomes a space of meditation that progressively leads to silence’ (Cresti, 2005, p. 9). Moreover, one may even be tempted to feel that Clementi’s texturally homogenous narratives permeated with soft

dynamics constitute a more adequate sonic equivalent of the Strzemiński meditative, Unistic narratives than Krauze's often dramatic music, Clementi's consistent use of canons, so visible in the Strzemiński work, notwithstanding . . . Truly, 'Clementi starts with a saturated image and allows its pulsations and vibrations, its condensations and rarefactions, to register briefly in aural perception, and then inevitably and ineluctably fade away' (Snook, 2007). Yes, if one has the urge to look for visual references in Clementi's music, it is Strzemiński's work that provides them. From sparse Constructivism, Strzemiński's art grew organically toward the densely yet discreetly woven Unism; Clementi's grew in the same way. Both the mature Strzemiński of the 1930s and the mature Clementi of the 1980s betray one tremendously important common quality: their dislike for emptiness, their *horror vacui*. How different from the *horror pleni*, which characterised Strzemiński's work early on and Clementi's work in his serial and post-serial periods, as if the preordained demise into emptiness could be delayed by filling the void (see Figure 1).⁴

The densely woven, irregular lines which fill up the canvas in the Strzemiński *Kompozycja unistyczna 9* and which make a strong impression of being cut out of a larger piece of coarse cotton fabric, or of rough parchment, correspond natively to the closely knit voice layers in the Clementi *Duetto* (in reality a quartet), or many other pieces of his representing this specific approach to texture. What sets Strzemiński's Unistic work apart from the (much) later Minimalism—and what will have set apart



a *Ciro e Roberto*

DUETTO
per flauto e clarinetto
con due strumenti in eco

ALDO CLEMENTI

Flauto

Clarinetto

Figure 1 Left: Władysław Strzemiński, *Kompozycja unistyczna 9* [Unistic Composition 9], 1931. Right: Aldo Clementi, *Duetto*, p. 1. Courtesy of Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, Milan.

Clementi's work (much) later—is that his patterns are not repeated: they are multiplied. It is a major and momentous distinction, which also characterises Clementi's mature polyphonies of the 1980s when positioned against the latter's Minimalist counterparts. Strzemiński, in fact, had managed to create a perfect visual equivalent of intervallically cohesive and timbrally uniform polyphonic textures—like in the best work of Lassus and Palestrina, in which notions of vertical and horizontal divisions of temporality are completely disregarded, suspended as it were. Yet, largely due to the subtly intense, yellow hues of the original Strzemiński painting, this aforesaid irregularity and unevenness of the texture exudes a powerful feeling of peaceful inevitability of the eternal, the feeling achieved, perhaps, by careful avoidance of utilising regularly-shaped geometric forms in the course of the visual narrative. Strzemiński's shapes and forms are never quite 'Euclidean' in their asymmetry; something is always ingeniously disquieting about them, and this is precisely why, unlike the vast majority of Abstraction, his narratives convey a sense of slow, inexorable motion and by this very token constitute such a perfect complementation of Clementi's sonic narratives, with their potent pull toward extratemporal meditation. And what was once said about Clementi, could in turn be applied to Strzemiński:

[The music] is sensitized in every respect, and especially in regard to the distribution of durational values. It is . . . spare . . . but takes more attentiveness for accurate decoding of its plot. Perhaps it is enough merely to say here that [it] is a good example of supple and integrated organization, successfully divining the essence of [ensemble] realities. (Powell, 1960, p. 481)

As already indicated, the musicality inherent in Strzemiński's work was observed, and then consciously absorbed and developed into a compositional system by Zygmunt Krauze, to whom the encounter with Strzemiński's oeuvre led to almost religious illumination:

I encountered Strzemiński's work for the first time while in the music gymnasium in Łódź. I visited an exhibition then organised in the Sienkiewicz Park—it was winter—which left me thunderstruck. When I came back home—and I lived close by, at #20 Sienkiewicz Street—I sat at the piano and found the source of music. It is a bit strange, because a painter gave me musical inspiration. (Szerszenowicz, 2008, p. 454)⁵

That moment weighted decisively on my future. What I mean is that at that very moment I understood, first, that I shall become a composer; second, how I shall cultivate the musical craft. He [Strzemiński] gave me the direction and pointed the way, in which to compose. (Szerszenowicz, 2008, p. 453)⁶

One cannot but agree with Krauze, who convincingly posits through his own compositional work and theoretical writings that Strzemiński's *Kompozycje unistyczne* [Unistic Compositions] belong to the category of polysemous aesthetic statements (stimuli), affecting a variety of sensuous responses of an unambiguously synaesthetic

nature. This finds confirmation in another arresting example of a close degree of consanguinity between Strzemiński's Unistic paintings and Clementi's music in the former's *Kompozycja unistyczna 14* (1934) and the latter's *Concerto* for piano and seven instruments (1970), both works based on a noticeably similar idea of gradual increasing/decreasing of their respective constituent gestures' sizes and density. In the Strzemiński, these visual gestures remind the receiver of the somehow enlarged and then stretched linen cells as seen through a magnifying glass, the resultant image then transmuted in the Clementi into gradually accumulating and decumulating textures (see Figure 2).

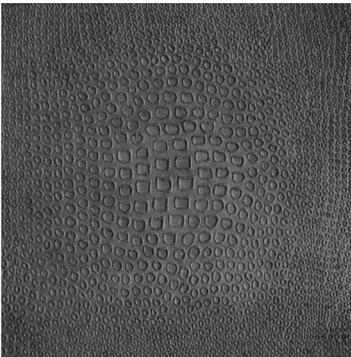
Clementi is a Romantic at heart, but Romantic in a sense associated with the expressiveness of Bach's music. To him, like to Bach, retaining a degree of metaphysical restraint is imperative. Pseudo-Romantic excess has never been his sin. Mario Bortolotto, the dedicatee of Clementi's *Replica* for harpsichord (1972), underscores this aspect of the composer's aesthetics in no uncertain terms:

There is no preciosity, but a precise constructivism, in the works of Aldo Clementi—once he broke from Stravinskian influences. Even when he followed in Stravinsky's footsteps, he was not a mere formal imitator. His study of [*Cedipus*] and the symphonies was eminently abstract and outside the boundaries of Stravinsky's esthetics. 'Abstraction' is a general and equivocal word, especially when one borrows its usage from the realm of the visual arts and applies it to a composer. It is possible to use 'abstraction' as a convenient term, to define it as a total lack (psychologically, narratively, and illustratively) of that expression which according to Hanslick could not be found in any serious music. In the music of Clementi, interior time, the time of experience (the *Erlebniszeit*) is consistently eliminated, and the music, bound as it is to the insurmountable limits of clock time, tends to disperse itself by spatial expansion. Individual phrases, or 'episodes', as Clementi calls them, are not opposed in the classical manner, nor are they recalled by analogy. They are juxtaposed, are brought together by means of a technique of fusion, or to use an artistic term, by 'collage', a technique that can also be applied to much modern European poetry. (Bortolotto, 1965)⁷

Indeed. Poetry. Even when prose—poetry. Hölderlin, Hugo, Lampedusa, Rilke, speculatively speaking. Is one justified to reach toward Hölderlin's strive to escape into forgetfulness and light; Hugo's brutal compassion; Lampedusa's resigned, cold understanding of human nature and his admission that art is the most fragile of instruments; and Rilke's desperate self-questioning? Like Don Fabrizio Corbera—and Aldo Clementi, like Giacinto Scelsi, is Don Fabrizio's wraith—the composer's mind echoes the disappearing world and, like Lampedusa himself, Clementi, too, captures that world in a series of stop-frame sonic photographs: reverberations of his obsessive doubts in the validity of novelty for its own sake (his youthful confidence long gone),⁸ but also resonances of his hopes and expectations of a future, a little bit brighter than habitually predicted, despite what the poets say, despite himself.

The final irrelevance and redundancy of ideological competition between economic systems began to be underscored in the early twenty-first century by the outbreak of religious neo-crusades, tailor-made for television (they are not even like

a



b

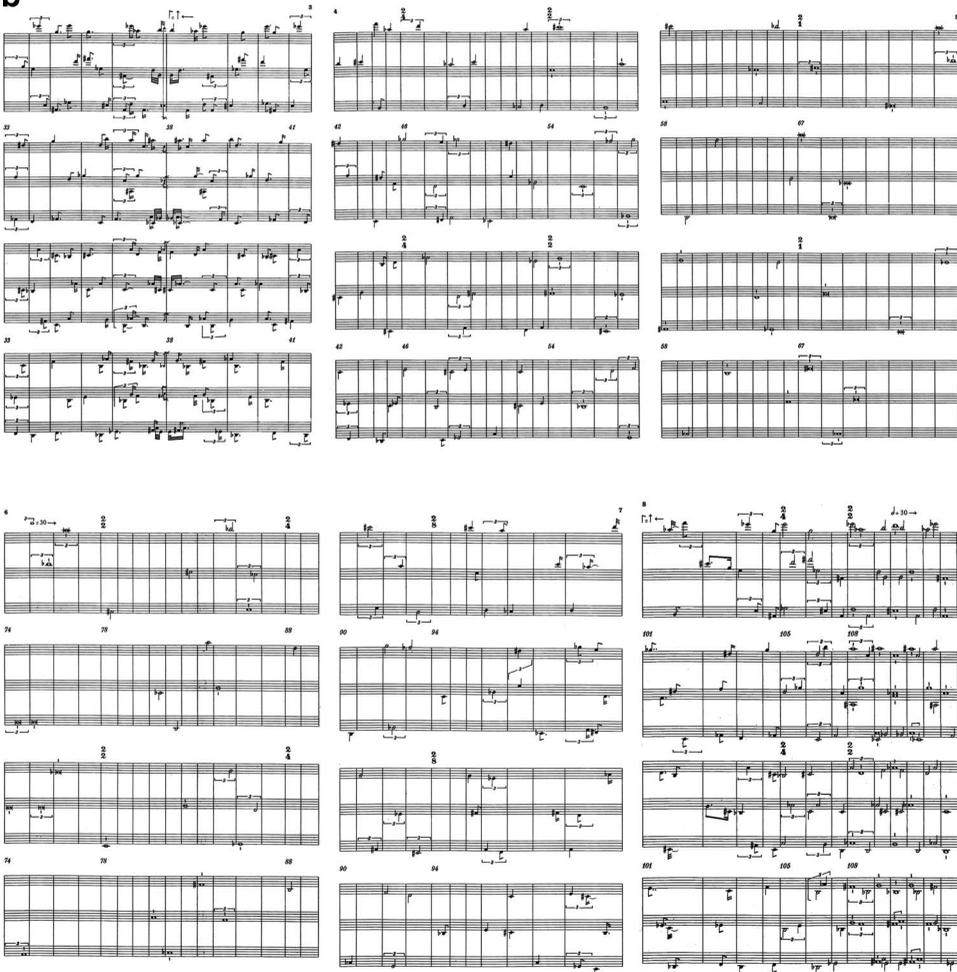


Figure 2 (a) Władysław Strzemiński, *Kompozycja unistyczna 14* [Unistic Composition 14], 1934. (b) Aldo Clementi, *Concerto per pianoforte e sette strumenti*, pp. 3-8. Courtesy of Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, Milan.

decent computer games)—the next step in entertainment’s development and, through their boring predictability, validation and confirmation of the addressee’s complacent self-enslavement. In such light, Clementi’s unobtrusiveness and his profile, intentionally kept low, are as admirable as they are out of this world. He resists.

In that aristocratic solitude, Clementi reminds us of his compatriot, Scelsi; and not only in that, but also in his pursuit of aesthetic values fully, completely at odds with the most current fashion(s); insofar as today’s general discussion on style and technique has been developing, it is unnecessary to speak of the present incarnations of Minimalism, or New Romanticism, or both combined into a single stylistic mongrel, as anything other than commercially-driven trends. Minimalism and New Romanticism ought to be perceived as two aspects of the same tendency, similar to the one that affected music in more than one negative way before the Second World War, Parisian neoclassicism. Yet a ‘postwar’ revolution akin to that which occurred after the Second World War is already impossible in the West, only resistance remains—before it is rendered futile, inevitably. Or is it? Never will even the loudest North American Marxists give up their university-tenured comfort zones; how amusing—and how telling. In this context, Clementi appears a resistance fighter of sorts, unique in his attitude, what I will call the ‘stoical guerrilla’, stubbornly against playing the game of fashion—and fashionable—politics. Often, he will manifestly choose a smaller means of artistic communication because peaceful dialogue makes him feel much more comfortable than putting up red-and-black posters.

Through his serene otherness, steeped in the religious tradition, which Gibbons referred to as ‘primitive Christianity’, Clementi has been trying to express feelings of introverted peace, but also, occasionally, uncertainty and suspension. This is important to him, because it produces the tension necessary to conduct a meaningful dialogue with the addressee, that ideal interpreter who will still, or at least still may, try to comprehend. Perhaps thanks to its indirectness and conflict with the actuality of commerce, his art may be perceived as a reincarnation of the ‘old’ aesthetic paradigm, where nothing is as it seems, everything is open to scrutiny, endlessly perplexing and leading to metaphysical longing. (By the way, Clementi could make this intentionally abstract idiom appear more abstract by giving his pieces abstract titles, which he sometimes does, but on a larger scale that would serve no purpose. To him, the title and the content are equally important: they complement one another. A good, well-conceived and well-verbalised title gives something special to the work, enhances its cognitive and speculative spaces and contributes much to the overall semiotic cohesiveness of the narrative.)

If Umberto Eco be right in asserting that the response of postmodernism to modernism—the response based on the premise that the past cannot be obliterated, for this would lead to silence—must of necessity be that of retaining the past, revisiting it with a grain of sad irony, then Clementi offers plenty of sage resignation, but also a carefully articulated hope (Eco, 1985, pp. 65–72).

In the age of capitalism's unchallenged supremacy, when ideological and economic competitive struggles fought for the better part of the twentieth century—struggles meaningless enough in their professed anti-élitism to sound appealing even to some first-class thinkers like Heidegger or Sartre—are no longer necessary, Clementi and his oeuvre inscribe a sign of obvious truth: the truth of the unaltered text, the Urtext of Western tradition. The message is straightforward and, because of its simplicity, hard to accept uncritically, without cognitive suspicion: 'Is it what it really is?' The message and its semiotic context may be misleading and therefore cease to be straightforward. Clementi is the master of metonymy.

Of all of the contrapuntal means of organisation of the music's fabric, canon is the most objective and most unconditionally detached from the emotive temptations anchored in the mind; it is free of superfluous pseudointerpretative ballast and offers pure intellectual enjoyment; it is, as well, the most demanding tool used in the process of stretching the music's audible substance—a web of canonic relations must radiate perfect compatibility of its constitutive elements; a universum of canons (a piece making use of canons) must result in bringing into life an organism greater than the sum of its parts. In other words, its use implies an ability to move beyond the empty, seductive gestures of materialism and toward a condensed spirituality of Truth, which unites inspiration, intuition and learning. As such, the canon is a reproductive kernel of all music and, indeed, in Clementi's hands, the canon stands for music itself in its universal, Pythagorean (cosmic) narrative dimension, as does past Western music—so consistently and so warmly embraced by him—for mankind's creative ability to face its Creator.

In that sense, Clementi is himself a metonym of the world's highest culture.

Acknowledgements

My special thanks go to my friend Dan Albertson, to whose inspiration I owe this text, written very slowly, with much hesitation, but also with much joy. I am infinitely grateful to the distinguished Canadian writer and expert on the avant-garde, Jerry Ozipko, for his very thorough reading of the text.

Notes

- [1] 1940–1993. Polish composer completely ignored during her lifetime and now completely forgotten, whose work anticipates that of New Complexity and often surpasses the latter in terms of textural innovation, timbral imagination and expressive intensity. Between 1969 and 1974, she studied composition with Bogusław Schaeffer in Kraków. In 1990, she received a PhD in Philosophy of Culture from the Maria Skłodowska-Curie University in Lublin. Her main works include *Koncert wokalny* [Vocal Concerto] for twelve solo voices (1969), *Anekumena*, a concerto for 89 instruments (1974), *Labyrinth* for large orchestra (1974), *Hipostaza I* for soprano, flute, alto saxophone, cello, and vibraphone (1978), a violin concerto (1979), *Désunion* for soprano and contrabass (one performer, 1982), *Transgressio* for string quartet (1985), *Hipostaza II* for string sextet (1987), *Les accords ésotériques* for piano (1991),

and *Eidos I–IV* for solo instruments. The regrettable neglect of her music by almost the entire new-music community in Poland should be considered scandalous and shameful.

- [2] ‘Strzemiński’s creative stance was a product of Cubist, Purist and Neoplasticist influences. Constructivism was particularly important in shaping his concept of art, though at the same time he opposed the Constructivist-supported motto stating that art should be subject to social utility. Instead, Strzemiński defended the idea of the autonomy of art and the right to “laboratory conditions” in artistic experimentation. The artist accepted the need for blending the order inherent in art with the order of social reality, but viewed art as having a modeling rôle in relation to all forms of human activity. ... [Strzemiński] made a fundamental contribution to the history of the world avant-garde through his theory of Unism. In 1927, he formulated the theory in relation to painting, and subsequently extended its theoretical application to sculpture, architecture, and typography in the years 1931–33. The general principle in Unism, relating to all forms of artistic expression, was the requirement for “unity between the artwork and the place of its creation”. In painting, this meant accenting the complete autonomy of the painting as a flat quadrilateral defined by a frame and thus separated from its surroundings, and thus fully enclosed within itself. At the base of Unism lay the principle of the complete unity of paintings based on laws relating solely to them, paintings constituting optical unities deprived of all contrasts. Strzemiński’s explorations into the full integration of the painting’s surface through elimination of any forms of dynamism or illusion of space echoed the post-Suprematist compositions of the 1920s, abstract works in which balance was ensured through appropriate distribution of biomorphic forms and the mutual relations between colors. Further attempts at melting forms and background into an organic, static whole lead to a limitation of chromatic range and to the combining of colors of equal intensities (*Kompozycja unistyczna 9* [Unistic Composition 9], 1931)’ (I have made slight revisions not detrimental to the content – Ed.). (Irena Kossowska, Institute of Art of the Polish Academy of Science, December 2001) (cf. http://www.culture.pl/en/culture/artykuly/os_strzeminski_wladyslaw).
- [3] See http://www.zygmuntkrauze.com/about_my_music.htm. Cf. also Sz wajgier (2008). Here is a summary translated by Natalia Szymaszek: ‘The [œuvre] of Zygmunt Krauze constitutes a separate and highly individual field in Polish post-war music. It is to a large extent due to the influences of unistic theory in painting that the composer transferred to the area of music. In unistic works the sounds fill the pitch range evenly but at the same time irregularly. Also, the dimension of time consists of irregular durations, beyond pulse and rhythm. In the 1960s Krauze composed a number of unistic works that differed in their mode of expression from both Polish and foreign music of the time. He replaced the principle of maximum changeability (post serialist) and climactic form (*Polish School of Composition*) with a *form devoid of contrasts, possibly most homogenous ...* —as [he] himself put it. ... Even though unism is only one of many genres and techniques practiced by the composer, its influence on the characteristics of the entire compositional style of Zygmunt Krauze turns out to be predominant. ... The unistic system of composing music aims at the creation of textural monolith, combined of a limited number of simplest elements. As a result, we get music [whose] main feature is permanence: stable, externally homogenous while at the same time shimmering with internal complexity that has been captured in unistic sound, potentially eternal.’
- [4] ‘After some rather uncertain attempts, even though these proceeded along clear and decisive lines, Clementi produced three instrumental works: *Episodi* for orchestra, *Ideogrammi No. 1* for sixteen instruments, and *No. 2* for solo flute and seventeen instruments. In these three works one can find the essence of his style. This style avoids all serial principles; its basic element becomes intervallic logic, which, by means of the systematic employment of [“dissociative”] or “aggregate” intervals, avoids the formation of any traditional harmonic or melodic figures and removes the necessity of using any of the classical serial principles.

Clementi's abandonment of serialism is accomplished by these few very simple principles. This method is one of great freedom, which arrives at the same results as do the more calculated serial scores, but at the same time leaves a freedom that Schoenberg did not allow and also avoids introducing any of the traditional clichés—e. g. melodic figurations, rhythms, and musical phrases. The few basic principles of this system guarantee, a priori, coherence within the defined boundaries. The episodes here firmly individuated can be compared to the individual heavenly bodies. Thus the Webern image, saturated with Viennese song, becomes a symbol of a nameless reality. Here the sound is as extremely precise and as little diffused as one could imagine. And if the title, *Ideogrammi*, seems hyperbolic, since a title describes the limits of a work, one must keep in mind that it also points up the non-human chill of this work, which deprives all hedonism of its right to existence. *Silence, as in Webern, is the basic event in the music of Clementi, and into silence the individual sounds cry to be swallowed up. The horror pleni presents itself in the works of Clementi as a lack of faith in logic: the music does not develop nor is there repetition; it simply occurs, always different, always the same, as with the coincidence of opposites*' (Bortolotto, 1965; emphasis added).

- [5] The original reads: 'Pierwszy raz zetknąłem się ze Strzebińskim będąc w liceum muzycznym w Łodzi. Odwiedziłem wówczas wystawę, która była zorganizowana w Parku Sienkiewicza—było to w zimie—i ta wystawa zrobiła na mnie piorunujące wrażenie. Wróciwszy do domu—miałem niedaleko, bo mieszkalem na Sienkiewicza 20—usiadłem do fortepianu i znalazłem źródło muzyki. To jest dosyć dziwne bo malarz dał mi źródło muzyczne.'
- [6] The original reads: 'ten moment zaważył na mojej przyszłości, to znaczy wówczas zrozumiałem, po pierwsze, że będę kompozytorem, a po drugie, zrozumiałem, w jaki sposób będę uprawiał swoją muzykę. On dał mi kierunek i wskazał sposób, w jaki komponować muzykę.'
- [7] See also Bortolotto (1963), in which Bortolotto suggests another poet, Stéphane Mallarmé, as an alternative possible source of what he refers to as Clementi's 'musical speech' (*musikalische Sprache*).
- [8] 'Aldo Clementi is a pupil of Petrassi who has written a number of fluent essays in post-Webern chamber music. His recent style shows him apparently sharing in the widespread post-serial depression of the 1970s. *Intermezzo* takes a four-note motif from Brahms's E minor *Intermezzo* Op. 119 No. 2 and reduplicates it at carefully chosen pitch levels and time intervals; *Madrigale* operates similarly with a configuration derived from the names of its piano-duettist dedicatees. Each piece is to be played quietly and with a gradual decelerando. With that, the music is just about fully described' (Fanning, 1983, p. 320). And, to reinforce the argument, one more quote: 'Aldo Clementi's *B.A.C.H.* was a delightfully witty exploration of repetitive material played "without pedal and as fast as possible". Its lively charm contrasted with an earlier *Composizione no. 4* [sic] of 1957. ... Darmstadtery at its most tedious' (Drakeford, 1994, p. 116).

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