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From time to time, more than any other cultural manifestation, it has been believed that new music has literally *ended*.

This was happened when Josquin Des Prés died in the 16th century. Regarded at the greatest singer on Earth – probably comparable with Caruso some centuries later – his death represented the apprehension that what has become known as *serious music* had reached its last possible stage of development.

The same had already happened much before, with Perotinus Magnus.

The myths of a musical apocalypse came one after the other.

When Beethoven launched his last quartets, some people criticised him by insinuating that he should really be deaf to do that. Other people believed that Western music had reached its definitive and highest point of refinement with those fantastic quartets.

Richard Wagner was one of these. Once, young, when he was trying to meet Beethoven, he wrote «my thoughts revolve around a single desire: to see Beethoven! My desire to find Beethoven is greater than the faith of a Muslim in his pilgrimage to the tomb of his prophet».

Some time later, certainly motivated by the experiments of his friend and father-in-law Franz Liszt – who had composed the famous *Bagatelle Without Tonality*, anticipating Arnold Schoenberg in almost one century – Richard Wagner himself presented with the *Third Act of Tristan and Isolde* a new *end* to Western music, which was regarded at the time as an unsurpassable climax in the history of the Western music.

A few years later, as if History was founded on fractal operations of self-similarity, it appeared Gustav Mahler and the *Second Movement* of his amazing *Fourth Symphony*. In that movement, Mahler produces continuous modulations breaking the sacred rules of *good music* as established by the previous moments of rupture. Once again, this was hailed as music arriving at its definitive *limit*.

But then we had Claude Debussy, who took tonal permutations to the extreme in *Jeux*, dated of 1907, and once again the *end* of music was proclaimed.

Nothing would be possible after that masterwork by Debussy, it was believed.

His music was considered so radical that the critic Camille Bellaigue wrote in 1902 that the music of Claude Debussy was «of no interest» and «devoid of charm», (...) «There is no one better», continued Bellaigue, «than Monsieur Debussy to preside over the decomposition of our art».

So then world was once again convinced that music had come to an *end*.

But then there was Arnold Schoenberg, Anton Webern, Alban Berg, Eric Satie, Edgar Varèse, Pierre Boulez, Karlheinz Stockhausen, LaMonte Young and John Cage among others.

To many people, each of these composers represented the end of research on music.

But music has no exclusivity on this kind of judgements about its own death.

The nineteen sixties were a boom period for the death of art in general.

Later, in June 15, 1992, an important Architecture Conference started in Vienna, Austria, with the title: *The end of architecture!*

And so it goes on.

At the end of the 1970s I began to research a new technique for musical composition: *planimetrics*.

I studied for years with Hans Joachim Koellreutter, who had been pupil of Paul Hindemith, Marcel Moyse and Hermann Scherchen, had been close to Ravi Shankar in India as well as with several Japanese composers.

The planimetric technique of composition involved the graphical representation of sounds on a plan – not using traditional notation, but a new graphical system instead.

At that epoch I began my quest for the guiding principles behind the plastic formation of synaptic patterns.

Starting with Freud, in his celebrated *An Outline of Psychoanalysis*, Marvin Minsky, John Wheeler and others I spent several years studying Charles Sanders Peirce and Richard Buckminster Fuller, and discovering the works of Gerald Edelman.

Edelman received a Nobel Prize in 1974 for his work in the field of immunology. He claimed that the human organism simply did not *learn*. Our defences run by an automatic process of self-regulation, giving birth to an idea closely related to the work of Ylia Prigogine, for which he received the Nobel Prize three years later.

In the 1980s, Leif Finkel, John Pearson and Gerald Edelman managed to formalise the plastic formation of neuronal – not synaptic – patterns, using computer simulations and a principle of Natural Selection, that is, self-regulation.

In Edelman's model simply there is no place for *intention*. Transformation is everything, everywhere, all the time.

Some time later, the greater Japanese botanist Motoo Kimura proposed a selection model in which *chance* played a highly important role.

He demonstrated that it was *chance* what determined the *point of mutation* in biological systems.

This brilliant idea was accompanied by the theory of *punctuated equilibria* developed by Niles Eldredge and Stephen Jay Gould.

Back in the beginning of the 1980s, I began to work on musical scores inside virtual environments.

If the formation of our synaptic constellations is designed by catastrophic responses – in the sense used by René Thom – of sensorial stimuli, we live in a continuous perceptive looping process.

This means that the principles that underlay musical creation in the past – including *Integral Serialism* – cease to have any meaning.

Instead we create organisations of sounds that, before all else, represent a real criticism of our mental configuration, leading us to participate interactively in the sound universe.

Everything has become metamorphosis.

Working on music in virtual spaces means extending the use of other senses in shaping creative designs for the ear.

Not only is the eye closely involved in structuring music, but also touch, through the constant massaging of the retina by computer screens, light emitting screens.

Each time we *enter* inside a *virtual reality* and establish a logical structure for musical discourse, we alter our cultural references, thereby causing a real change in the plastic formation of sound elements.

The old hierarchical order gives way to order by coordination, to mystery and constant discovery.

Music transforms itself at each step into a new whole.

Developments are non-intentional and chaotic.

The plastic formation of sound elements distributed in a virtual environment represents a criticism at a synaptic level.

It is a true *criticism*, in the sense of *illusion*, which etymologically means *counter-game*.

In this way we can generate real *logical traps* for our mind, which exist simultaneously inside and outside us.

And the music turns into an interesting *mental game*, inside or outside, not limited to seeking symbolic references – either as tonal discourse or as serial discourse.

In a certain sense, this is what John Cage did in seeking *silence*: disarming traditional logical principles established by ideas of ordered values. In this aim, he followed Eric Satie, Debussy, Beethoven and Palestrina when they sought to criticise the conventional.

The paradigm of the Middle Ages, to follow the thought of Thomas Kuhn, was the *series*. The same principle has always been characteristic in the East.

The paradigm of the Modern Western period was *tonality*.

In the 20th century the reaction against almost four centuries of tonality led to creation of *atonal* and *twelve-note* music, both returning to the medieval paradigm of the series.

But on our planet, penetrated by another planet, this time virtual, present in satellites and communication systems, a *paradigmatic* reality is no longer possible.

We have moved onto *syntagmatic* reality, that is to say, a reality composed of different paradigms in dynamic mutation and in new combinations.

The move from a *paradigmatic* universe to a *syntagmatic* one has led to the transformation of the concept of *serious* or *erudite* music into music of *high* or *low repertory*, destroying the previously clear boundaries between *popular* and *erudite* as opposites.

For this reason, the Beatles learned from their laboratorial experiments with Stockhausen's, Pierre Schaeffer's and Pierre Henry's works much of what contributed to their huge commercial success.

They spent three years without appearing in public, working in laboratory research.

In the same way, Edgar Varèse scored a major success with his *Poème Electronique*. Presented at the Philips Pavilion designed by Le Corbusier at the *World Exhibition* in Brussels in 1958, this piece of music – otherwise regarded as *serious* - reached an audience of thousands of people, like a rock concert.

So, music has transformed itself into a subtle game, in a sense, a gravitational game.

Whereas for the orbit of a planet a small disturbance doesn't necessarily mean a catastrophic event, a throw of the dice is, inevitable and *a priori*, a zone of instability.

This is the image of our time.