

## Thematic Dossier: Understanding and Feeling Music and Time in Lourenço

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I THANK THE EDITORS OF *REVISTA PORTUGUESA DE MUSICOLOGIA / Portuguese Journal of Musicology* for their interest in featuring a thematic dossier on music theory and analysis, and for musing over and welcoming the idea that contributors to the dossier engage with selections from Eduardo Lourenço's recent book *Tempo da música, música do tempo* as suggestive mediations between musical phenomena and their own analytical explorations and theoretical constructions.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of Lourenço's celebrated and unique status as an essayist who, for the past seven decades, has been providing penetrating if complex or labyrinthine views of Portugal's historical situated-ness through the interpretative lenses of culture, philosophy, and literature,<sup>2</sup> the readership of this musicological journal might be somewhat intrigued to find that a book which assembles a multitude of diary-type notes, fragments, and short texts penned by a (self-proclaimed) musical amateur over several decades, addressing the experience of and sense of time in music ranging from composers such as Bach to Xenakis, genres such as tango to the solo concerto, and concepts such as the infinite to silence, might provide not only a common thread, but a fascinating motivation and catalyst for the various theoretical contributions of this dossier.

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<sup>1</sup> Eduardo LOURENÇO, *Tempo da música, música do tempo*, organization and preface by Barbara Aniello (Lisboa, Gradiva, 2012). The book received the 2012 Jacinto Prado Coelho essay award by the Portuguese Association of Literary Critics. It is not (yet) translated into English.

<sup>2</sup> An instructive source (in English) on Lourenço's thinking is Carlos VELOSO, 'A Call for Poets: Eduardo Lourenço in his Labyrinth of Images' (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 2008). For further reference (in Portuguese) see Miguel REAL, *Eduardo Lourenço e a cultura portuguesa* (Matosinhos, QuidNovi, 2008). The notion that our experience of reality is labyrinthine was shared by various modernists, notably Borges; see, for instance, L. A. MURILLO, 'The Labyrinths of Jorge Luis Borges an Introductory to the Stories of *The Aleph*', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 20/3 (1959), pp. 259-66.

The reciprocal qualifications of music and time in the book's title embody an attitude to inquiry in which each term is opened up to the perspective and 'conceptual action' afforded by the other.<sup>3</sup> Such an attitude aptly intimates Lourenço's long-standing notion (or spirit) of *heterodoxy*, suggestively and symbolically portrayed by the myth of Midgar, where a serpent circles and bites its own tail.<sup>4</sup> In the attempt to understand human experience and reality, the essayist needs to confront a place where 'reality bites and is bitten by reality',<sup>5</sup> a tragic discourse that undermines the notion of cultural and, by extension, musical autonomy. Accordingly, Lourenço's cultivated listening advances a plethora of musical intuitions, insights, provocations, critical commentary, and reflections, making it impossible (and undesirable) to dissociate the musical object from the 'intervention' of the listener, such that, in his words, 'to explain the fascination with music and to explain music is the same thing'; and 'the fascination with music resides in the fact that it makes the human word decadent and degraded. Being human thus becomes melancholic'.<sup>6</sup>

Lourenço's discourse on music and time is both disarmingly moving and metaphorically liberating, engaging the reader as a 'metaphysical detective',<sup>7</sup> who is invited to negotiate the paradoxes and associations entailed in the experience of musical time: the infinite and the present, the mundane and the divine, phenomenology and history. Lourenço's texts, taken as meditations for discourses in contemporary music analysis, can lead to conversations where established analytical methodologies, identities, and styles are reinforced or confronted, or which in turn might help impart superimposed layers of methodological order onto Lourenço's insights. Thus we may ask, in the spirit of heterodoxy: Can Lourenço's music texts become 'frozen velocities' for animating the Ariadne threads provided by music analysis, and can music analyses become *imagologies* able to provide some memorable pathways through Lourenço's labyrinths of music phenomenology and history?<sup>8</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The title of the book was chosen by Lourenço himself, as described in LOURENÇO, *Tempo da música* (see note 1), p. 17: 'Prefácio' by Barbara Aniello.

<sup>4</sup> The myth of Midgar, as symbolic expression of the spirit of *heterodoxy*, is recounted and discussed in Lourenço's 1949 seminal publication of the same name, see Eduardo LOURENÇO, *Obras completas: Heterodoxia I* (Lisboa, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 2011 [1949]), pp. 31-5: 'Prólogo sobre o Espírito da Heterodoxia'. Lourenço's notion of heterodoxy embodies a refusal to include himself in either of the established 'orthodoxies': Catholicism and Marxism, as expressions of the Absolute.

<sup>5</sup> VELOSO, (see note 2) p. 13.

<sup>6</sup> LOURENÇO, *Tempo da música* (see note 1), p. 133: '4.3 Hindemith, Thèmes et Variations, 1960', and p.113: '3.18 A fascinação da música, 22-I-1955'. The notion of 'melancholy' in Lourenço's work is also discussed in Paulo CHAGAS, 'Mirrors of Melancholy: Lourenço on Music and Musical Understanding', appearing in this dossier.

<sup>7</sup> Referring to *Heterodoxy I*, Carlos Veloso proposes that 'the act of reading turns the reader into a kind of metaphysical detective' given that 'ideas simultaneously assert and deny themselves'; see VELOSO, (see note 2) p. 15.

<sup>8</sup> The paradoxical term 'frozen velocity' appears in LOURENÇO, *Tempo da música* (see note 1), p. 88: '2.11 Béla Bartók, Música para cordas, percussão e celesta, 3-XII-1952'. The notion in Portuguese of *imagologies* (as critical self-images) is crucial for self-reflexive knowledge throughout Lourenço's work.

While Lourenço's thoughts on music collected in this book have been inscribed in his usual "native" languages of Portuguese and French, the articles in this dossier are in English, for heuristic and cultural reasons.<sup>9</sup> Considering the scarcity of English translations of Lourenço's vast oeuvre, the present dossier hopes to make a small contribution to the exposure of his thought, in which reflection on music is marginal in scope but integral in character, to the diverse and wide musicological readership in English.<sup>10</sup> A more substantial, cultural reason is the potential dialogue this opens up between the phenomenologically grounded, modernist self-reflexivity of Lourenço and the multitude of music-theoretical approaches of Anglo-American provenance or influence, symbolically portraying the role brought to music analysis since the 1960s by that tradition.<sup>11</sup>

Finally, I would like to thank the authors for undertaking this project and for submitting to the scrutiny of the peer-review process. The six articles featured in the dossier can be thought of as traversing two general perspectives: the first three articles engage with meta-theoretical, philosophical, and pedagogical aspects, which explore various resonances or attitudes suggested in Lourenço's book; whereas the remaining three articles take on pertinent aspects of specific selections of the book as the stimulus for close readings in music analysis, its methods and claims. In 'Mirrors of Melancholy: Lourenço on Music and Musical Understanding', Paulo C. Chagas examines the scope of Lourenço's musical thought, in its abundance of meanings, and confronts his ideas with semiotic and philosophical interpretations, especially those of Wittgenstein. Miguel Ribeiro-Pereira's 'The Labyrinth of the Soul: Wagner's Musical Lament' is conceived as an essay on *music in language* and stands as the first part of a trilogy devoted to Wagner's *Tristan*. Here, he examines distinctive sound, sensorial, and artistic qualities of the spoken word and explores diachronically the unstable equilibrium between music and language. In 'Approaching the Analysis of Post-1945 Music: Pedagogical Considerations', Miguel A. Roig-Francoli proposes a conceptual and pedagogical framework for the analysis of post-1945, post-tonal music in harness with Lourenço's preoccupation with the crucial relationship between phenomenological understanding

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<sup>9</sup> Portuguese is Lourenço's native language, but he also writes fluently and frequently in French, as he lived and worked in France from 1959 to 2013.

<sup>10</sup> Translations of Eduardo Lourenço's voluminous writings (in Portuguese and French) into English are scarce. The following publications offer translations of selected articles and include excellent introductory notes to Lourenço's critical and philosophical thinking: Eduardo LOURENÇO, *This Little Lusitanian House: Essays on Portuguese Culture*, selection, translation and introduction by Ronald W. Sousa (Providence - RI, Gávea-Brown, 2003); and LOURENÇO, *Chaos and Splendor and Other Essays*, edited by Carlos Veloso (Massachusetts, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, 2003).

<sup>11</sup> The pertinence of that dialogue is also reinforced by the critical scrutiny Lourenço's work devotes to the 'post-modern' role of the United States, especially the latter's tendency towards a subject-less history, and decentralization of self-reflexivity. For discussions of Lourenço's relation to the United States, see 'Introduction' by Carlos Veloso in LOURENÇO, *Chaos and Splendor* (see note 10), pp. 10-22, and Viriato SOROMENHO-MARQUES, 'Representações da América no pensamento de Eduardo Lourenço', *Colóquio Letras*, 170 (2009), pp. 251-56.

and historical context. Daniel Moreira proposes a process-oriented analytical approach to a piece by Anton Webern, in ‘Nondirected Linearity and Modulatory Networks in Webern’s Op. 10/4’: engaging with Lourenço’s comments on the fragmentary, discontinuous character of the piece, and drawing upon the work of Wallace Berry and Jonathan Kramer, he advances a theoretical construction (formal network) for modeling set-class structure and progression. In ‘Lourenço, *Transfigured Night*, and Musical Writing’, Steven Rings explores the methodological dialectic outlined by Lourenço between comprehension (*compreender*) and feeling (*sentir*),<sup>12</sup> in order to engage with some recent Anglo-American scholarly debates regarding musical ineffability. Against that backdrop, Rings invites us into the formal discourse of transformational music theory for an in-depth analysis of Schoenberg’s *Verklärte Nacht*, a work that attained a privileged place in Lourenço’s personal musical canon. Finally, the article ‘What Was New Music: Arrigo and Bartók in Lourenço’, co-written by José Oliveira Martins and Jonathan Dunsby, delves into Lourenço’s self-reflexive accounts of the distinct experiences of ‘modern’ and ‘classical’ art music, and discusses how aspects of temporality raised by Lourenço’s text (especially his notion of time being musically creatable in reverse) can be interpreted through various claims of established analytical methodologies: the article plunders Girolamo Arrigo’s *Thumos* for emblematic musical examples that may inform Lourenço’s perceptions, and offers an intense analytical exploration of time and pitch relations in the first movement of Bartók’s *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta*.

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<sup>12</sup> This dialectic also informs the subtitle to this introductory note.