



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG
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SOLO FLUTE PIECES THROUGHOUT THE
TWENTIETH CENTURY

Syrinx, Density 21.5 and Sequenza I

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Solo flute pieces through the twentieth century

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Introduction

This paper is about three major unaccompanied flute pieces written in the twentieth century: *Syrinx* by Claude Debussy, *Density 21.5* by Edgar Varèse and *Sequenza I* by Luciano Berio.

The twentieth century is an unquestionably important period for the flute repertoire and therefore, for flute players, mainly due to the amount and quality of the repertoire. The flute literature before this century is quite limited, with the undeniable exception of the baroque period.

On the other hand, solo repertoire use to belong to polyphonic and more virtuoso instruments like piano or string instruments. In the case of solo flute, some solo pieces were composed before the twentieth century and some of them by great composers like Bach or C. Ph. E. Bach, but besides those, it is just likely to find minor works written mainly by flute players.

The unaccompanied repertoire for flute was just incipient by the time Debussy wrote his *Syrinx*, and it is an undeniable fact that all these three pieces contributed to the development of this genre. It is also remarkable, that due to the evolution of the music language in this period, the treatment of flute in solo repertoire changed drastically and a whole new world was opened to composers and interpreters.

Therefore, the current aim of this paper is just to collect information about the musical background of the pieces and, if it is the case, to find connections between them, just in order to learn as much as possible about them since, as it is being established above, the solo repertoire in the twentieth century should be considered a major issue for the flute repertoire. A short analysis of each piece will be provided, in order to introduce the reader briefly into the musical aspects of the pieces.

Syrinx

Syrinx was the first well known solo flute piece in the twentieth century and it is of course, a basic piece in the flute repertoire. It is considered a turning point in the development of the solo flute repertory.

The piece was played for the very first time at the house of Louis Mors in Paris and, later on, in the first production of *Psyche*, both in the same year, 1913. *Syrinx* is dedicated to Louis Fleury, who was a student of Taffanel in Paris conservatory. He was a very representative flutist at that time, for example he played in the première of *Pierrot Lunaire* as well. The piece was not printed until 1927, nine years after Debussy's death. In fact, only Fleury was allowed to play it, obtaining always good successes in every performance.

In July of 1907, Mourey gave to Debussy the libretto of an opera based on the history of *Tristan e Isolde*. After some years, this project was thrown away by themselves. Instead, Mourey asked Debussy to compose music for a new drama based on the old myth of Psyche. In the third act of this play, an Oreade (nymph of the mountains) talks to a Naiad (nymph of the river) about God Pan. The Naiad has never seen him but she is afraid of him, due to his seductive gifts. Pan plays his flute far away from them. The music weaves with the conversation of the nymphs. Just after the Oreade warn the Naiad about Pan.

“*Mais voici que Pan de sa flûte recommence à jouer...*” (But now that Pan flute begins to play...).

The music starts to play. The Naiad is already haunted by the first 8 bars.

“*Tais-toi, contiens ta joie, écoute!* (Silent! Contain your joy! Listen).

The Naiad continues expressing the spell she is haunted by, while the music sounds. In the end she tells that she is not afraid of Pan any more and since then she belongs to him.

Syrinx was supposed to be played behind the stage. The original name was *Flute de Pan*, but in the posthumous version, that name was changed due to the fact that the *Chansons de Bilitis*, also by Debussy, had the same name.

Syrinx was a nymph also related with god Pan. Pan fell madly in love with her, but her sisters turned her into reeds to save her from him. Pan moved by the sound of the reeds with the wind, made a flute of them, in order to always remember his love to her. This is the myth of the birth of the instrument that nowadays, we know as syrxinx or pan flute.

Studies used to say that *Syrinx* was supposed to be played when God Pan dies, desperate because the unrequited love of the nymph Syrxinx, but recently Debussy's manuscript has appeared, and it seems, that Pan plays this melody in the forest while the nymphs listen to his music and then they get deeply in love with him.

It is not the first time that Debussy connects the flute with mythological themes and especially with God Pan. In 1894 he wrote *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* in which the opening theme belongs to the flute and represents a faun playing his flute, a syrxinx. Therefore, from the point of view of the interpretation of the piece, it would not be pointless to try to emulate the colour of the instrument syrxinx with the flute.

Originally, Debussy wrote *Syrinx* without bar lines. The flutist Marcel Moyse added them and nowadays most publishers shows Moyse's edition. Traditionally, *Syrinx* is played with a quite free sense of rhythm. In any case, it is understandable that an unaccompanied piece is interpreted with some sense of freedom. Whether the absence of bar lines would have given more freedom to the interpreter, is in any case a matter of opinion.

It will not be argued the fact that this piece cannot be considered tonal, even though the Db major or Bb minor key signature is showed in the beginning of the score. Many writings note that the piece swings between tonality, modality and atonality. That statement will be acknowledged and developed through the following paragraphs.

Since it is been assumed that *Syrinx* is not a tonal piece, the nomenclatures gravity centre and resting point will be used, rather than tonic or tonal centre.

The structure of the piece consists of three sections, all of them headed by the same main motif, shown in the example below, and which is developed in different ways each time. The several developments of the motif possess improvisatory resemblances.



The theme is repeated, and used as a means of variation in each section. It is varied by octave displacements and various rhythmic alterations, all with the ever-present descending chromatic line. The same character is maintained throughout the composition.

It can be taken under consideration two possibilities of analysing the main motif, and, in consequence, the language used by Debussy in the whole piece. It could be considered that the main motif is based on the chromatic scale, but trying to think separately the ornamental notes and those notes in the stressed beats it is easily possible to observe the two whole-tone scales. The first one would be conformed to the pitches of Bb, Ab, Gb and E and the second one, conformed to those pitches in the ornaments, B, A, G and F. It cannot be argued the presumption of Debussy using two tetrachords¹ in the main motif of a piece based in a Greek myth.

The composition technique is being used in the piece, consists in creating through modal scales and motifs with a clear improvisatory character, a gravitational centre in which the music rests after the tension has been established. This gravity centre varies depending on the section.

¹ Tetrachords were a fundamental element in in the Greek harmonic system. **Höweler, C.** *Enciclopedia de la música.* (Barcelona: Noguer, 1978).

The first section is clearly dominated by Bb. It heads the main motif and it is the resting point both at the end of the introductory motif and at the end of the section. It almost brings the feeling of hidden pedal.

Debussy repeats twice the main motif in the first section. Both headed and led to Bb. He creates tension by developing the rhythmical pattern of the motif to a B natural, doing it also twice.

Finally, the composer transforms the B into a Cb, the same sounding pitch. By prolonging the cited Cb, Debussy decreases the tension that the previous B provides and provokes that the last Bb and end of the first section slightly lose the feeling of resting point.

The second section is introduced again by the motif, this time in the lower register, which consequently creates a darker ambience.

Between bars 10 and 12, the Bb is still a gravity centre, however, it does not feel that much as a resting point any longer, because a transformation is occurring. Debussy is shifting the gravity centre from Bb to Eb. This process would be the equivalent of a modulation in tonal music.

This action is accomplished, by leading the head of the motif through slightly ascendant melodic motifs to Eb but still using as a resting point the Bb, being the actual aim that the Bb starts to lose the power both as a resting point and gravity centre and to start pointing out what will become the new gravity centre, the Eb.

In bar 13, the composer reaches an A. The arabesque changing notes of the first beat of the piece becomes now main tones which invalidate the resting point feeling of the gravity centre and transform it from one to another. This is the spot in which the transformation is being finally achieved. By a chromatic descendent motif, with the ground pitches A, Eb and A, it settles down into a Eb, which automatically turns into the expected new gravity centre and resting point.

The composer creates once again tension, melodic variation, and finally the development of the piece itself, by playing with chromatic pitches that surround the gravity centre.

The development heads to a powerful Bb, which retrieves its power as a gravity centre, and it works both as a resolution of all the tension created earlier, and as a preparation for the forthcoming new section and consequently for the main theme and the climax of the piece.

In the beginning of the third and last section a *mf* is written with a later crescendo, which it is exactly the same nuance that is shown in the beginning of the piece. However, for being the undisputed climax, it is traditionally played much more *expressive*, extrovert and definitely louder.

This last section, beginning in the climax, should be played with lot of energy and with a more vivid tempo, due to the *au Mouvt* indication. Later on, it calms down into a *tre retenu*, printed with a *p*, diminuendo and *perdendosi* in the very low register of the flute. It goes, so to speak from the stasis to the total and final calm and rest.

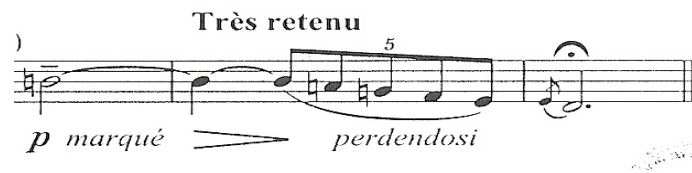
The section consists of ten bars plus upbeat. The upbeat is aiming to add more tension to the climax, by both shortening unexpectedly the final Bb of the previous section, and by advancing the desire Bb and consequently the main theme of the forthcoming one.

These ten bars comprise a long stretch of the theme itself. The first two bars consist of the theme, with the well-known rest in Bb and some also familiar flourishes. Afterwards, the theme is presented once again, but in this occasion, it does not rest in the usual Bb, but heads into the lower octave. At this moment, Debussy contracts the theme along two bars by creating a new rhythmical variation.



At this point, *en retenant jusqu' a la fin* is indicated, meaning ritardando until the end. For these two bars, the composer stretches out the final notes of the theme, Gb, F, E and Db, shifting the focus and the gravitation to Db.

The piece ends with a tiny final coda, which, by taking the whole-tone scale from the old-tension-creator B, descends to the final rest in the ultimate gravity centre and resting point, Db.



It cannot be avoided to point out, as a general thought of the piece, that the chromatic flourishes through the piece and that the descendent sense of the main motif provides the piece with a languid character, which remains along the whole piece, thanks to the tempo indication (*très modéré*) and the narrow nuance range (from *p* to *mf*).

Density 21.5

This piece was written by Edgard Varèse in 1936 and revised in 1946. It was first performed in New York on February 16th of 1936. It was the only one that the composer finished in the decades of the 30s and 40s.

Varèse wrote *Density 21.5* for the Franco-American flutist Georges-Barrère, specifically for the inauguration of his new platinum flute. This metal has the exact density of 21.5 grams per cubic centimetre. Georges-Barrère, the disciple of Paul Taffanel, led the School of Paris in the United States. He was the solo flutist in the Symphony Orchestra of New York and also a teacher at the Juillard School of Music.

Concerning the new instrument, it is remarkable to point out that the density of the platinum is exactly 21.5, while the density of other precious metals is considerably lower. Gold 24-carat gold has a density of 19.32, and the silver 999 has just 10.49. 24-carat gold and silver 999 means that the metal itself contains a 99.9% of the precious metal in it. In both cases this is the maximum possible to get.

The increase in the density of the precious metal makes the sound volume of a platinum flute unusual, and allows a considerable increase in the volume of the instrument. Whether the quality of the sound is better or the most desirable is in any case a matter of taste. Aside the quality of the sound, platinum flutes represent for some players the ultimate flute, but because of their great cost and extreme weight, they remain a very exclusive example of the flute maker's fine craftsmanship.

It is understandable that one wants to try to find a relationship between the pieces *Syrinx* by Debussy and *Density 21.5*, thinking that by this time the solo flute repertoire was really limited. In fact, Varèse himself told the flutist Samuel Baron that *Density 21.5* should be played following *Syrinx*, but he didn't established the relationship between the two pieces.

The performance of Varèse's music took place at the Village Gate, a nightclub in New York City. At the time, Baron was surprised that Varèse wanted another composer's work played in a programme of his music.

Actually, some writings point out that the first three notes in *Density 21.5* are a transposition of the beginning of *Syrinx*. The head of the main motif in *Syrinx* has the same intervals as the head of the first motif in *Density 21.5* and goes in the same direction (F-E-F# __ Bb-A-B).

Carol K. Baron finds a hidden relationship between both pieces:

*“(...) Density 21.5 originates in Varèse's analysis of Debussy's theoretical system of pitch organization in Syrinx. Such an analysis may be implied because Varèse utilized that system as the basis of his own piece. (...)”*²

Baron compares both the beginning and the end of the pieces. She finds the same relationship, which is being already pointed out about the beginning of both pieces, but also realizes that the end of *Density 21.5* contains an identical pitch class order, but in retrograde, than the whole-tone scale used by Debussy in the first motif of *Syrinx*. Moreover, she finds a whole new world of connections between the first hexachord used by Debussy (Bb, Ab, G, E, which range is a tritone) with the tritones in Varèse's work.

Like Schoenberg or Scriabin, Varèse was among the revolutionary composers whose works initiated the beginning of a new mainstream tradition in the twentieth century music. As an example of this new composing line, it is remarkable to point out the use of the intervals as a melody, the extreme contrasts as a main resource, the predominance of diminished seventh chords and tritons over diatonic intervals and the use interval cycles .

The following example shows the main theme in the piece. In the end of the motif, the before mentioned tritone (C# - G) appears, and it can be clearly observed how the composer insisted on developing the theme by using the same interval three more times.

² **Baron, C. K.** “*Varèses's Explication of Debussy's Syrinx in Density 21.5 and an Analysis of Varèse's Composition: a secret model revealed*”. (The Music Review, 1982).

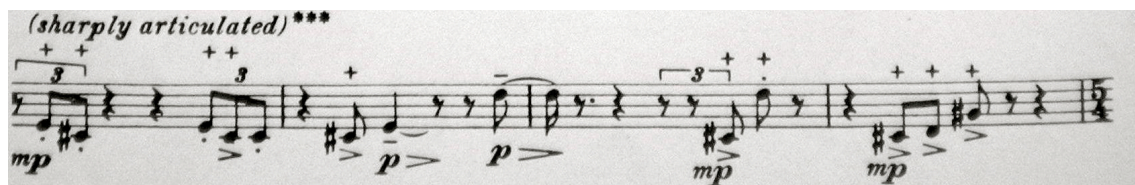


New contributions are made by Varèse to the flute solo repertoire within this piece. He explores new areas of space in the composition of an unaccompanied melodic instrument, using extreme register and nuances contrasts to emulate polyphony.

The next example shows how the composer uses both the nuances and the register changes to emulate this pointed out polyphony.



It may be easily assumed, that there is a before and an after *Density 21.5* concerning flute technique. Varèse, which used to explore the limits of the sounds in the instruments, even incorporating the noise as a part of the music, introduces in this piece clicking keys as a reinforcement of the attack of a note. It can be argued, that this piece confirms the origin in the exploration of new timbre resources in the instrument, path that many composers will follow in the 50s and 60s. In the score, the clicking keys are illustrated by a cross.



He also develops a huge range of nuances, which had not been seen before in flute

compositions. One can find extreme dynamics contrasts, which build the power of climax points, by using the higher top register in the flute. As a contrast, one can find several spots with *p subito*, which breaks the exciting points previously mentioned.

The first of the two following examples shows the higher pitch range in the piece and demonstrate the extreme resources used by the composer. He utilizes the D in the fourth octave (D7 according to the French-Belgian octave system). Some orchestral compositions had already reached this pitch and it is certainly tricky to assure, but *Density 21.5* might be the first well known solo piece in which this pitch was included and definitely the first one in which this note was held and repeated several times.

The second example shows the extreme dynamic contrasts.



According to the composer himself, the piece is based on two melodic ideas, one modal and one atonal, and the whole piece is based on this material.

Since the composer did not make any more reference of which idea would be the atonal and

which one would be the modal, the different analyses of the piece that has been made, do not agree in the matter. Some of them state that the head motif is presumably Varèse's atonal idea. Others assign the qualification of modal to the same motif.

All those different writings, do not either agree in the structural division of the piece. In this paper, it will be argued that the piece is divided into three parts, and that the head motif presumably is Varèse's modal idea.

As it has been already stated, the opening motif is considered to be modal and it is shown in the example below.



The motif is characterized by the pitches, its interval order, and its rhythm. The three pitches belong to the chromatic scale, the interval order is always down a half step and up a whole step and its rhythm consists of two sixteen notes on the beat followed by a tied eight note.³

The motif is shown, along the first section, a total number of three times accomplishing these three properties. In bar 9, a pitch alteration of the theme can be found, which conforms a permutation: first rhythmically, finally melodic. The composer takes the rhythm of the head motif and develops, in order of appearance, the most characteristic intervals of the theme.

Varèse first develops the half step interval in different rhythms. These rhythmical variations are followed by the whole step up, from which he builds the tritone from, to also make more variations based on it, both rhythmically and melodically.

³ Perle, G. *"The Listening Composer"*. (California: University of California, 1990).



Perle analysed the piece and observed that it is based on partitions of the octave, due to the use of interval cycles, one more of the characteristics that positioned Varèse among the revolutionary composers of his time. He also regarded the piece to be divided in two sections of relativity equal length.⁴

An interval cycle is a collection of pitches created from a sequence of the same interval class. In other words, a compendium of notes with the same intervallic distance from each other, which reaches the same pitch that it started with. The cycle is the collection of all the notes met on the way.⁵

Interval cycles are usually labelled with the letter C for cycle, with an interval class integer to distinguish it, meaning, that the C is accompanied by the number of semitones beneath the initial and last pitches. For example, the diminished seventh chord would be C3. Interval cycles are symmetrical and thus non-diatonic.

In this first section the tritone plays two different rolls. Firstly, it represents the final proof of the cited use of interval cycles, being the partition of the octave in itself, thus an interval cycle C5.

On the other hand, as it has been already established, it is constantly shown, so for the listener it becomes a motivic item, recognizable as the aforementioned head motif.

A percussive section divides the first and second section.

⁴ Perle, G. *"The Listening Composer"*. (California: University of California, 1990).

⁵ Adler, D. <http://danadler.com/misc/Cycles.pdf>

The second section is considered to be atonal. Atonality is built upon a premise of negation of tonality by the exclusion of tonics, dominance of any pitch over the others, thus no hierarchy. Composers of atonal music try to avoid all reminders of tonal music, avoiding major and minor chords, triad chords, scales, keys, dominant functions, etc.

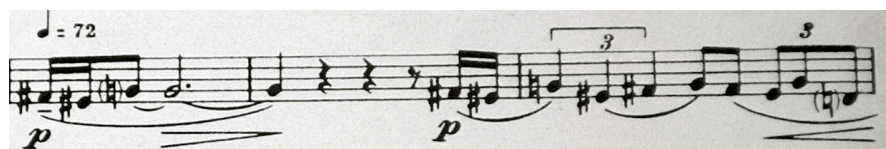
Therefore, in the second part of this piece, the usage of second, seventh, octave and bigger intervals, predominates over the others, used in a way that no traditional sense of melody is perceived.

Besides, with the aim of avoiding any resemblance to tonal resources, Varèse uses the dominant seventh chord but without the third, so it cannot be acoustically related to any major or minor tonality.

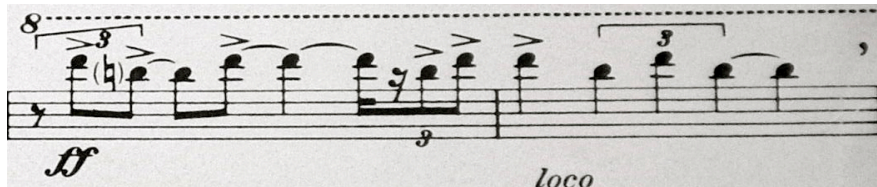
Varèse uses almost the whole chromatic scale in the section (E and C# are missing). It is remarkable to point out how he starts with three pitches and expands the range, adding to every other bar pitches from the chromatic scale, always in chromatic order.

- Bars 29 – 30: E#, F#, G.
- Bars 31 – 35: E#, F#, G, G#, A, Bb, B.
- Bar 36: E#, F#, G, G#, A, Bb, B, C.
- Bar 37: Eb, E#, G, G#, A, Bb, B, C.
- Bar 38-40: D, Eb, E#, G, G#, A, Bb, B, C.

The last section takes back the head of the main theme, this time starting on F#. Varèse decided to develop the theme, like he did in the permutation in bar 9, playing with rhythmical and melodic variations with the second major and minor intervals and of course, the tritone.



A sudden interruption occurs, when in bar 46 it seems that the listener is placed once again in the atonal game, more characteristic from the second part of the piece. Now the rhythmical patterns overtake the interval variations and, with an extreme change of register and nuances, just two notes are taken into consideration.



Afterwards, the piece is coming to its end, and traces of the three intervals can be found but not anymore with the defined form of the theme.

In the last bars, Varèse still wants to show two extremes, and goes, after several attempts, from the very low register in the flute and *pp* to the top with *fff*. He naturally, concludes the piece with a tritone.

Sequenza I

Berio composed the first of his work series *Sequenza* for unaccompanied flute in 1958 and dedicated to the flutist Severino Gazzeloni, who played it for the first time in Darmstadt in the same year. He wrote a total amount of fourteen *sequenzas*, all of them for solo instruments.

Berio talked about the denomination *sequenza* and his intention with these pieces:

The title refers to the fact that the piece is built from a sequence of harmonic fields from which the other, strongly characterized musical functions are derived. In Sequenza I an essentially harmonic discourse is set out and developed melodically, suggesting a polyphonic mode of listening. In 1958 I wasn't using the term "polyphonic" in any metaphorical sense, as I would do now when working with monodic instruments, but literally. I wanted to establish a way of listening so strongly conditioned as to constantly suggest a latent, implicit polyphony.(...)

Luciano Berio⁶

The first *sequenza* is an important work in many ways. It not only inaugurates the series of *sequenzas*, but it is also the third of the major three unaccompanied pieces for flute in the twentieth century, following Varèse's *Density 21.5* and Debussy's *Syrinx*.⁷

Sequenza I is a piece written in one movement using proportional notation. The aim of the composer was to develop the technical and interpretational possibilities of each instrument. All the instrumental elements of playing are not necessarily new in the case of the flute *sequenza*, but they clearly expand the possibilities of the instrument. Nevertheless, *Sequenza I* was one of the first pieces to require multiphonics on the flute and the very first piece in which Berio used proportional notation.

⁶ Luciano Berio's official website: www.lucianoberio.org

⁷ **Halfyard, Janet.** *"Berio's Sequenzas: Essays on Performance, Composition and Analysis"* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

The proportional notation concerns rhythm. The composer gives the player a certain kind of freedom. The player is supposed to distribute the notes given in between commas in the tempo of 70 MM, 60 MM or 72 MM, depending on the section of the piece. Therefore, this means that an arithmetic relationship between musical figures no longer exists and the pace of the notes is variable and dependent on their number and the distance between them. Thus, the optical distribution of the notes shows which one should be kept longer or shorter.



Nevertheless, the initial intention of Berio was to use measured notation. In his first draft of the piece, he became very detailed regarding rhythm instructions. Gazzeloni, actually performed it in Darmstadt with this first version, but Berio was not satisfied. Hence, he chose to use the spatial notation.

Berio was still not contented and he soon expressed his deep disappointment with how flutists had not come to understand the style of the piece, particularly in regard to reading the proportional notations. Berio explained in a private discussion with the flutist Robert Dick:

*“By the time I wrote Sequenza I, in 1958, I considered the piece so difficult for the instrument that I didn’t want to impose on the player specifics rhythmical patterns [...] But as a result, even good performers were taking liberties that didn’t make any sense, taking the spatial notation almost as a pretext for improvisation. Certainly some sort of flexibility is part of the conception of the work...”*⁸

Therefore, Berio made a second revision, which led to the publication of a new version by Universal Edition in 1992 using conventional rhythmical notation, which was sent to the flutist Aurele Nicolet. For this last version, Berio took the initial old draft of the piece and modified all the rhythms in order to simplify them.

⁸ **Folio, C. and Brinkman, A. R.** *'Rhythm and Timing in the Two Versions of Berio's Sequenza I for Flute Solo: Psychological and Musical Differences in Performance'*. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007)

It is well known that Berio himself was conscious about the enormous virtuosity that is required on both tongue and fingering technique in order to interpret the piece, but it seems that he seemed relentless in this regard. According to Berio himself, the *sequenzas*, are written for the kind of virtuosic players who are both sensitive and intelligent. He adds that these players should have the higher levels of technical and intellectual virtuosity.⁹

Sequenza I is not clearly organized in sections and it does not match to the letter any classical form, however, there are multiple hypotheses which try to, somehow, divide the piece in smaller cells in order to obtain a better understanding of it. Some of them even ascribe the piece to the lied or the sonata form.¹⁰

What these theories share is that they base their division on the texture and density of the different fragments, meaning that they do not base their divisions on melodic, harmonic or rhythmically patterns, but on the amount of activity, the predominant nuances or even the character of the section itself.

Rather than trying to find an alleged structure, quite unlikely to support anyway, relevant aspects concerning pitch, melody, nuances, articulation and other resources will be describe below.

Traces of twelve-tone practice can be found in *Sequenza I*, but it cannot be considered a serial work. In the first phrase 21 pitches are presented. By eliminating repeated pitches, a twelve-tone series is obtained. Even if it is not really possible to name this series as a real theme, it is certainly true that it is a melodic resource that appears at least four times, which are shown in the followings examples.

⁹ **Conde, Miguel.** *Las Sequenzas de Berio.* Available in: http://usuarios.lycos.es/miguel_conde/articulos/berio.html

¹⁰ Several hypotheses can be found in: **Halfyard, Janet.** “*Berio’s Sequenzas: Essays on Performance, Composition and Analysis*” (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

The image displays several staves of handwritten musical notation. The top staff is marked '70 M.M.' and features dynamic markings *ffz*, *ff*, *ff*, *mf*, *ff* → *mf*, and *p*. Below it is a smaller staff with *ffz* and *ff*. The third staff has *f*, *ffz*, *ppp*, *f*, and *pp*. The fourth staff shows *ff*, *p*, *f*, *mf*, and *p*. The bottom staff has *mf*, *ff*, and *mf*. The notation includes various note values, rests, and slurs, illustrating the dynamic and melodic contrasts discussed in the text.

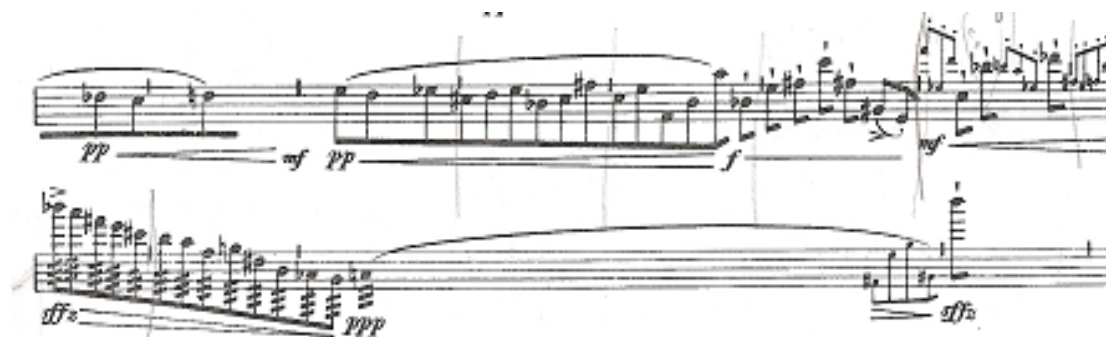
As a part of the analysis of the melodic aspect of the piece, it is important to outline that Berio explored unceasingly the melodic potential of the second and seventh intervals. That fact can be easily observed in the examples above, since the opening of the series is a minor second.

The contrast becomes an extremely important aspect in this piece. Berio tries to create them by always going to the extreme in every aspect involved in the piece, like nuances, articulation, rhythm, etc.

Due to this search for contrasts, different levels in the density of the music are found. For instance, the beginning of the piece is characterized by strong nuances, sharpened articulation, lot of energy and great amount of activity, followed on the second page by a passage with more presence of longer notes in softer dynamics.



The contrasts in the temporal dimension revert on moment of great activity followed by some of relative calm. Regarding the articulation, the great amount of accents and sforzando in some passages, and the almost total absence of those in the calm passages are notorious. There is a direct link between the rhythmic activity and the dynamics. When the rhythm accelerates, there is an increase in dynamics. The longer notes are often held at a lower dynamic level.



Some extra resources are used in the piece, like flutter tonguing, key clicks and multiphonics. The first mentioned were not new for flute players, but in regard to multiphonics, Berio was a pioneer in the inclusion of this technique, which only had been used before in jazz music.

In the end, by using this variety of resources, the instrument becomes a tool for creating thickness, polyphony and tremendous intensity. According to Berio, there is no phrasing of a conventional nature and he asks the performer to do “exactly what is written on the page”.¹¹

¹¹ Halfyard, Janet. “Berio’s Sequenzas: Essays on Performance, Composition and Analysis” (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

Conclusion

The aim of the current paper, as it was stated in the introduction, was to collect information regarding the background of three solo flute pieces written throughout the twentieth century. An analysis of each piece was provided in order to accomplish a better understanding of the pieces. A reflection of the usefulness of the writing itself and the choice of subject, will work as a closer of the present thesis, since the relevance of a conclusion in this regard is none,

This paper has accomplished no other thing, but corroborate the relevance of the pieces in the solo flute repertoire. As it has been stated, it is commonly accepted the fact that these three pieces belong among the most important works of this repertoire in the twentieth century.

Although, it has not been overlooked the fact that the relevance of these pieces in the frame of the music history is, at the very least to say, modest. In any case, this paper has hopefully become for the reader, a journey through the twentieth century, learning about some minor works of three major composers in that period.

Finally, it is remarked in the introduction as a part of the aim of this writing, to find whether the pieces are connected at all or they are not. The answer to that question is affirmative: There are connections. A next step or even maybe a new research, could certainly find a whole world of connections between the composers and the pieces. As far as this text is concerned, it is assumed that the composers had in mind the previous pieces, they quoted motivic material from each other, as the beginning of the pieces, and share composition technics.

Attached scores

Syrinx

(La Flûte de Pan)

Claude Debussy
(1862–1918)

Psyche (Gabriel Mourey)

III. Akt, 1. Szene

« Mais voici que Pan de sa flûte recommence à jouer... »

Très modéré

[*mf*]

p

Retenu - - -

p *mf* *p*

« Tais-toi, contiens ta joie, écoute. »

Un peu mouvementé (mais très peu)

p

p

13 *mf* *p*

15 *p* *p* *p* *p* *p* *p*

Cédez - - - Rubato

18 *p* *p*

21 *p* *p* *p* *p* *p*

en animant peu à peu

23 *mf*

au Mouvt (très modéré)

(trille) (trille)

27 *dim.*

29 *p* *p*

31 *p* *p* *p* *p*

En retenant jusqu' à la fin

Très retenu

p marqué *perdendosi*



DENSITY 21.5*



te Solo

EDGARD VARÈSE

$\text{♩} = 72^{**}$

mf *f* *mf* *p* *f* *mf*

f *p* *mf* *p subito*

f *ff* *mf subito* *fff* *f*

ff *p* *f* *p*

ff *p subito* *p*

f *ff* *p subito* *p* *f* *p subito*

(sharply articulated)***

mp *p* *p* *mp* *mp*

Written in January, 1936, at the request of Georges Barrère for the inauguration of his platinum flute. Revised April, 1946. 21.5 is the density of platinum.

Always strictly in time—follow metronomic indications.

Notes marked + to be played softly, hitting the keys at the same time to produce a percussive effect.

This page of musical notation consists of ten staves of music, likely for a piano. The notation includes various dynamics, articulations, and performance instructions. Key features include:

- Staff 1:** Starts with a tempo marking of $\text{♩} = 60$. Dynamics range from *mp* to *ff*. Includes a triplet of eighth notes.
- Staff 2:** Tempo marking of $\text{♩} = 72$. Dynamics include *ff* and *p*. Includes a triplet of eighth notes.
- Staff 3:** Tempo marking of $\text{♩} = 60$. Includes the instruction *loco*. Dynamics include *ff*.
- Staff 4:** Dynamics include *ff* and *p subito f > p*. Includes a triplet of eighth notes.
- Staff 5:** Tempo marking of $\text{♩} = 72$. Dynamics include *f > p*, *f > p*, and *p*. Includes a triplet of eighth notes.
- Staff 6:** Dynamics include *ff*. Includes a triplet of eighth notes.
- Staff 7:** Includes the instruction *loco*. Tempo marking of $\text{♩} = 60$. Includes the instruction *ten.* Dynamics include *ff*.
- Staff 8:** Dynamics include *p < f > p*, *sf*, and *sf > p*. Includes a triplet of eighth notes.
- Staff 9:** Dynamics include *p*, *pp*, and *cresc. molto*. Includes a triplet of eighth notes.
- Staff 10:** Dynamics include *ff*. Includes a triplet of eighth notes.

a SEVERI



SEQUENZA

PER FLAUTO SOLO

LUCIANO BERIO

(1958)

+ corras y acubados

70 M.M.

explosivo

pizz

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S. 5531 Z.

1

Handwritten musical score consisting of ten staves. The notation includes various dynamic markings and articulation symbols. The first staff begins with *ppp* and *sf*, followed by *pp* and *ppp*. The second staff starts with *pp < ff* and *pp < ff - ppp*. The third staff features *p*, *mf*, *p*, *mf*, *f*, *p*, *f*, *mf*, and *f*. The fourth staff includes *pp*, *mf*, *pp*, *mf*, *p < mf*, *pp*, and *p*. The fifth staff has *p*, *pp*, *ppp*, *pp*, *p*, *p*, *pp*, *mf*, and *ppp*. The sixth staff shows *(ppp)*, *p*, *sf*, *ff*, *mf*, *f*, *pp*, *ppp*, and *mf*. The seventh staff contains *mf*, *p < mf*, *fff*, and *ff*. The eighth staff includes *(ff)*, *mf*, *pp*, and *ppp*. The ninth staff has *ff*, *p*, *f*, *mf*, and *p*. The tenth staff starts with *mf*, *ff*, *mf*, *ff*, *mf*, and *ff*. The score is written in a cursive hand with some corrections and slurs.

S. 5531 Z.

2

Handwritten numbers: 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.

(*ff*) *molto* *f*

ff *p* *f* *mf* *pp* *mf* *f* *p* *mf*

ppp *pp* *p* *pp* *p*

f *pp<sfz* *pp* *pppp*

p *pp* *mf* *mf*

pp *mf* *pp* *f* *mf*

sfz *ppp* *sfz*

f *mf* *p* *pp*

mf *f* *p* *pp* *mf* *p* *ppp*

sfz *pppp* *pp* *f* *p* *mf*

vcc

ff *f* *f* *p* *mf* *f*

ff *f* *ppp sempre* *sf* *sf* *(PPP)* *sf*

p *ppp sempre* *(PPP)* *sf* *sf* *sf-mf*

f *ff* *pp* *ff* *ff* *ff*

ff *mf* *ff* *ff* *sfz* *f*

mf *ff* *f* *sfz* *mf* *ff* *sfz*

PP *mf* *cresc. con le chiavi* *dim. molto col fiato* *sparire*

sf (il possibile) *dim.* *PPPPP*

p *mf* *PP* *mf* *PP*

S. 5531 Z.

Musical score for a single instrument, featuring ten staves of music. The score includes various dynamics and performance instructions:

- Staff 1: *ppp*, *p*, *pppp*, *(pppp)*
- Staff 2: *ppp*, *p*
- Staff 3: *pppp*, *pp*, *mf*, *ff*, *f*, *mf*, *ffz*
- Staff 4: *ff*, *(dolce)*, *ppp*, *(ppp sempre)*, *p*, *(ppp)*, *p*, *ppp*
- Staff 5: *mf*, *ppp*, *ppp sempre*, *(p)*, *p*
- Staff 6: *ppp*, *pp*, *mf*, *sf*, *p*, *mf*, *ppp*, *p*, *mf*, *ppp*
- Staff 7: *f*, *mf*, *f*, *p*, *pp*, *mf*, *pp*
- Staff 8: *72 M.M.*, *mf*, *ppp*, *p ppp sempre*
- Staff 9: *più p ancora*
- Staff 10: *sfz - pp*, *pppp*

S. 5531 Z.

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