

*This issue*

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This issue is dedicated to the writings of the three authors whose work shaped the beginnings of electronic music in Italy. However, during the second half of the 1950s, Luciano Berio and Bruno Maderna, founders and first organisers of the RAI Phonology Studio, had already carried out important experiments in Milan. Likewise, similar experiments were in progress in Rome at the electronic music studio equipped by the Roman Philharmonic Academy and at Vittorio Gelmetti's studio, equipped by the generosity of the Ministry of Postal Services and Communications. So, the experiences included here, while not claiming to be the earliest, were among the first to initiate the articulated process of cultural, didactic-pedagogical, and theoretical dissemination, whose effects are today before us all to see.

We are profiling here three indisputably unique personalities, who carried forward their work and convictions with dedication, energy, and almost complete renunciation of any form of personal profit.

Among the many parallels between them that the reader will easily note we would like to underline the following: personal effort and commitment of private resources, resulting in the creation of electronic music studios; the founding of courses in Electronic Music at Music Conservatories; interest in the social and cultural impact of new technologies; reflection upon aesthetics; interaction with visual forms.

At this distance in time, we believe it is interesting to revisit material by these authors in order to meditate on those origins at a critical transitional point for the application of technologies to music. The relative adjustment and standardisation of possibilities for managing material offered by a market that is increasingly less directed toward research, together with a gradual inclusion of those new means within the traditional instrumentation – accompanied by the loss of innovative impetus (in such cases, an indicator of a generalised tendency toward depletion of innovation in musical thought) – beg for a definitive evaluation of the coherent reflections proposed at that time. All the more so in light of the general processes set in motion by those very technologies: linguistic globalisation, linguistic fusion, and specific changes in repertory. In fact, if working with the technologies was aimed, in addition to the study of new technical possibilities, at research and development of new composition process-

es, particular attention was also concentrated on what the new possibilities could have meant on a social and operational level, changing habits of use and access to musical knowledge and radically transforming our relationship to music.

This unleashes a whole series of acquired ideas, today taken for granted socially and culturally, which does nothing more than highlight the innovative force of those very ideas. To cite a few: any material could be used and re-used at will, with the gradual loss of copyright value for the author and the resulting need to gradually transform it; interdisciplinary working methods based on teamwork at the operational level between musicians and experts from the different fields in a position to inspire research in elaborating technological solutions specifically suited to the new musical challenges; identification of new working habits to facilitate the creation of new forms of musical organisation and interaction between different forms and languages of expression through common processes and algorithms; creation of musical databases to be re-used for the most varied applications – musicological, analytical, compositional; meditation on the impact of the commercialisation of technological means applied to music; changes in the role of the composer, the performer, the spectator, the means of sound production and the method, place, and means of listening (with the consequent loss of the traditional ritualising element), literal disintegration of the elements of traditional language. The list could go on.

Intuitions elaborated, with individual nuances, by all of the authors in question, to stimulate us to reflect and rethink the origins of our musical future, our very musical future.