

## Review of the 18<sup>th</sup> Slowind Festival 2016: A Broad View of Fedele's Music

This year's Slowind Festival was marked by contemporary Italian composer Ivan Fedele, about whom we had heard very little prior to his arrival. A genuine impression of Fedele only emerged in the course of the festival's seven concerts, which highlighted his music, with the occasional interspersing of new Slovenian works, compositions by Fedele's composition students (A. Manzoli, P. Corrado) and works by compositional role models (P. Boulez, L. Berio, G. Ligeti). We heard a wide range of compositions, both in terms of their chronology (the earliest Fedele composition presented was from 1983, while we also witnessed two world premieres) and their instrumental forces (from solo works for the violin, to compositions for chamber ensemble and symphony orchestra).

Thus, a wide view was opened up on Fedele's music, which is entirely committed to modernism, although its perspective on the latter constantly shifts: in some works, the composer reveals himself primarily as a researcher of pure sonic material, which he then decomposes into the compositional logic; elsewhere, his works are filled with more specific, grounded musical semantics, sometimes even flirting with postmodernist palimpsest. One could say that Fedele enters into a dialogue with the entire body of music of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, that he respects all traditions, while at the same time utilising all contemporary "acquisitions", both stylistic (e.g., spectralism) and technical (live electronics). Although it may seem at first view that such an approach is very eclectic, the music in fact reveals quite the contrary; it is almost classical, which can be attributed to its clear compositional-technical perfection and the measured nature of the compositions in terms of expression. In this respect, Fedele's music precisely reads the contemporary musical moment, which is characterised mainly by an extraordinarily virtuosic treatment of compositional-technical elements. In its orientation towards mild communicativeness, however, the music manages to surpass this moment.

The second part of the first concert will remain in my memory in particular. The composition *Pulse and Light* touches on an ambitious desire to achieve a sonic rendering of the formation of the Universe, with the composition being based on sound masses that gain more mystical and spatial features in their derivations, while a more powerful musical game – a dialog between two pianists and two percussionists – marked the composition *Phasing*. The compositions for soprano and strings, presented in the fifth concert, took an entirely different approach. When Fedele is forced to engage with a text, his music, while still focused on the mastery of sonority, gains an even more grounded expression in terms of emotion and content. With its palimpsest affinity to the medieval technique of the sequence, the *Fourth String Quartet* was extraordinary, as was the composition *Morolòja Kè Erotikà* for string quartet and soprano, a kind of contemporary version of Berio's *Folk Songs*, in which the exceptional string players of Quartetto Prometeo were complemented by the brilliance of soprano Valentina Coladonato, who, in addition to the violinist Francesco D'Orazio, was the second important discovery of the music festival.

Slovenian music gained its opportunity in the third concert. In his composition, Neville Hall attempted to construct a string of fine sonic details on the oboe, thus remaining faithful to his distinctive aesthetics of fleeting impulses and expressive refinement. Similarly, Nina Šenk remained on her familiar tracks with *Silhouettes and Shadows*, on this occasion also technically an expressively refined work, with its carefully considered formal edges concealing gentler sonic material, as well. As expected, there was no gentle and refined material in Juhart's *Svetovi* (Worlds), only that on this occasion his attempt at "awakening" was not so successful, as the material seemed mostly merely strung together and rarely linked into a breathing compositional whole. Finally there was Lebič's *Barnvi krog* (Colour Circle), which, like Fedele's compositions, seemed classical, not so much because of its compositional refinement, but rather due to the muted contours of its clear spiritual foundation, which appears to be something of a rarity in contemporary technically coloured composed music.

Slowind provided new information, a view of an Italian maestro that brought a great deal of good music. Meanwhile, the Slovenian music world smugly squats at home, so that the distances in the contemporary networked world in fact continue to grow.

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