"Unsilencing" the Silence: Unacknowledged Silent Pieces

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Abstract: The following work seeks to restore from obscurity three silent pieces of music that predate John Cage's 4'33" and establish the reasons why they have not been acknowledged as being the first silent pieces. Hence, we present our methodology, analysis, and conclusion based on the motives that led them to musicological oblivion, their relevance in the context of experimental music, and why 4'33" was possible in its *zeitgeist*.

Keywords: Experimentalism. Silent pieces. Humorous music.

Quebrando o silêncio: Peças silenciosas não reconhecidas

Resumo: *O seguinte trabalho procurou resgatar da obscuridade três peças silenciosas, publicadas anteriormente a 4'33" de John Cage e apontar as razões pelas quais elas não foram reconhecidas como a primeira peça silenciosa. Assim, são apresentadas a metodologia, a análise e uma conclusão baseada nos motivos que as levaram ao esquecimento musicológico, sua relevância para o contexto da música experimental e por que 4'33" foi possível em seu tempo.*

Palavras-Chave: *Experimentalismo. Peças silenciosas. Música humorística.*

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John Cage's 4'33" has long been considered the first appearance of a work of complete silence in music. Since its premiere in 1952 at the hands of David Tudor, the piece has caused great repercussion, and an uncountable number of musicological works about its aesthetical meaning and consequences for contemporary music have been published. Although some silent pieces existed before Cage's work and one or two had been known in academia, less consideration has been given as to why little attention had been paid to these earlier pieces during their time and why we left them to rest in oblivion. What is their real relevance in music history, why should we be acquainted with them, and what are the mechanisms of distinction that decide what is to remain in canon and what may be forgotten? For this purpose, we will analyze three silent pieces[2] published before 4'33". The first one, currently unknown in the literature, is introduced here: *Il Silenzio*: *pezzo caratteristico e descrittivo (stile moderno)* [The Silence: Characteristic and Descriptive Piece (Modern Style)], composed by a person referred to as "Samuel" in 1896 and published in *La Nuova Musica* in Florence in the journal's first year. The second piece, *Marche Funèbre composée pour les funérailles d'un grand homme sourd* [Funeral March Composed for the Funeral of a Great Deaf Man], was composed by Alphonse Allais in 1897 and was published in the *Album Primo-Avrilesque*. And the third piece, *In Futurum* [In Future], was composed by Erwin Schulhoff in 1919 as the third work of a five-piece set called *Fünf Pittoresken* [Five Picturesques] and was sent to George Grosz, a member of the Berlin Dada. These three pieces are connected by the use of humor in their poietics (the main reason they were not acknowledged at the time) and why, therefore, our analysis uses a proven method of analyzing humorous music that had been used for all of the non-syncretic humorous pieces written by Erik Satie (PENA, 2017). As a result, we will be able to understand why, in the arts, there were mechanisms that would force humorous pieces to remain unknown and irrelevant in their time.

As is known in contemporary theories on humor, the nature of humor is incongruity; precisely in the pleasant psychological shift in a person's conceptual system, references, and expectancies (PENA, 2017; MORREALL, 1983; 1987; 1989)[3]. This means that the unexpected and incongruous, even if accidental, as long as it is pleasant, will awaken a person's sense of comedy. In music, the same rule applies, but because its poietic nature is different than visual arts and writing, such an awakening will happen under its own poietic characteristics and is more often associated with other arts due to the indeterminate character of the language of music.

The analytical methodology we used to understand these three pieces addresses only the technical aspects of applying humor in music. Attempting to understand the results and psychological effects caused by humor would demand a focus and effort that go far beyond the object of this paper as the effects of humor are more related to musical cognition than to analysis, musicology, and aesthetics. Comprehending something as humorous, or humor effectiveness, depends on a countless number of cultural factors and references of a conceptual system of

[2] Other pieces used silence in their compositions, but we will not present them here for the following reasons: *Silent Music* (1941) by Raymond Scott belongs to the world of popular music, as it has no score there is no certainty as to the real nature of the silence in the piece. On the other hand, reviews reveal that the band was actually playing noises and using the instruments as percussion (TIME, 2019; ROBSON, 2016; WINNER, 2009), therefore, silence was not part of the piece, but actually undefined pitch music. Also, the *Monotone-Silence Symphony* (1949) by Yves Klein is not a fully silent piece because its first part consists of twenty minutes of a sustained chord followed by twenty minutes of silence as contrasting parts of the same piece; the silence is not autonomous. There is of course the possibility that this author may be unaware of the existence of some yet unknown, hidden, or unacknowledged silent pieces until the present moment.

[3] A more thorough discussion of what each philosopher thought, wrote, and conceptualized about humor and how humor and laughter are theorized and discussed nowadays can be found in Morreall's books *Taking Laughter Seriously* (1983) and *The Philosophy of Laughter and Humor* (1987). On the same subject but written by a musicologist, PENA, and pondering the questions of humor in music is the work "*Satierik Musique*: Da natureza da música humorística em Erik Satie" (2017: 68 - 247). Both authors address the state of art on reflections upon humor.

expectancies of each individual. Proving or measuring the effectiveness of a humorous technique could not be validated because of the instability and variable human conditions related to humor. Techniques that could universally, immutably, and timelessly bestow plain effectiveness in the production of humor would be like trying to attribute a definition of the same character to music. Paraphrasing Dahlhaus (2009: 172, my translation) in relation to music, humor is a historical phenomenon that permanently escapes standardization; a technical approach that could "extend itself along history would seem to us empty or arbitrary: empty by trying to approach everything affirming nothing substantial; arbitrary, by establishing frontiers when, in fact, it is about transitional processes" because humans do not have universal and immutable features.

As Cicero says in *De Oratore*, "a comedian, it has been said, is someone who says funny things, essentially a teller of jokes; while a comic is someone who says things funny" (apud MORREALL, 1983: 64), thus, we are going to approach only what can be objectively measured in humor, the "incongruity in things" and not the reception or incongruity in presentation. As Walton points out in *Understanding Humor and Understanding Music* (1993), even if people do not find something amusing—because it offends them in a way, because they do not share the humorous intention, because they have heard that joke before, or because they are in a bad mood that day—comprehending what is the amusing incongruous element in an object of humor and why other people may laugh at it is still perfectly possible. This means that for a humorous intention to be effective, the listener must understand the joke and be compatible with the information presented, which also raises questions about the demands of the listener. Music, like any art form, demands a high level of knowledge from its listeners. Thus, a question for humorous music: What information is required for the listener to recognize something as effectively humorous? Music will have pieces in which the sense of humor is more clear and requires less from the audience and others, in which comprehension is circumstantial and related to aesthetics, repertoire, musical technique, and previous knowledge; also it could be related to a specific time, place, vogue, politics, or culture of a society. The catalog of expectations, the conceptual system expected from the musical audience to comprehend humorous music, may be substantially higher than the conceptual system required for more common formats of humor. Because music is a specific language, it will require specific knowledge from its listener as when someone would tell a joke about astrophysics.

Thus, we are going to focus on the poietic aspect of humor, apart from the problems related to cognition of humor in music, the aesthesic aspect of which is more related to music psychology[4]. This division is connected to the effectiveness of humor because the presence of humorous requirements at the poietic level, in a greater or lesser degree of incongruence to expectancies, does not ensure its effectiveness as a generative of laughter. In other words, humor is still humor and can be measured independently whether there is or is not laughter. The same way a bad joke can cause laughter by being told in the "correct" way; a good joke can be ineffective if told the "wrong" way. This is what comedians call timing. Therefore, the clarity of reception is conditioned not only by variables of the receptor but also the action of an interlocutor. Although still no concrete study has been conducted on the interpretation of the humorous music repertoire, the effectiveness of musical humorous techniques also depends,

[4] This division is based on the tripartite model of semiology and musical analysis of Jean Jacques Nattiez, which suggests three dimensions: the poietic, related to creation processes liable to be described or reconstituted; the aesthesic, related to the construction of a signification realized by the receptor of the symbolic message; and the neutral/material/immanent, related to that which comes from the musical taxonomic stock, i.e., foreseen and catalogued phenomena in one or more theories and which are independent from the poietic and aesthesic dimensions (Cf. NATTIEZ, 2002: 7–39, my translation).

to an extent, not only on their internal humorous nature (poietic) and reception (aesthesic) but also on the action of the performer in "telling" those humorous musical scenes in the most effective manner; essential to any humorous repertoire.

It is a fact that "serious" music prevails. It is more respected and is more often visited by researchers since humor has a reputation as an inferior art or cheap mockery compared to a society's culturally sacred elements. Humorous music is frequently considered too simple or superficial, or it is simply ignored for not being serious. Subsequently is considered irresponsible to the progress of music for its mocking and debauching of tradition, and for being irrational, lacking logic, and therefore commonly classified as amateur. Or it is deemed the result of the inability or ignorance of the proper methods of music composition (PENA, 2017; MORREALL, 1989). Nevertheless, humor can be realized with well-elaborated and complex techniques, and in certain cases it is highly relevant to understand our culture and must be looked at with seriousness. The techniques of humorous music we present here had been addressed in a previous work entitled *Satierik Musique* (2017) and were based on the works of Rossana Dalmonte's *Towards a Semiology of Humor in Music* [1995], Enrique Alberto Arias' *Comedy in Music: a Historical Bibliographical Resource Guide* [2001], the tripartite model of Jean Jacques Nattiez, and writings concerning the aforementioned general theory of humor with commentaries and examples (PENA, 2017). These techniques were developed as a method and neutral taxonomic stock to analyze humorous music. Its proven effectiveness was put to test by analyzing all fifty-seven purely musical, or non-syncretic humorous pieces written by Erik Satie (PENA, 2017). This set of techniques defines what is essential in certain creative processes of incongruence; being as a liquid (technique), it can adapt to the recipient (object) of each era, culture, or language, among other variables.

These techniques are divided into three poietic categories that are related to strategies of production, music construction and creation. The first is an explicit form, i.e., it uses resources external to sound to produce humor, like the use of written language or visual resources added to the score as musical elements or basically, resources within the realm of the score. The second category is an implicit form, i.e., it only uses sound and/or silence to generate humor and can be comprehended without the aid of written or visual aspects of the score and is detected through the musical structure itself. Finally, the third category is a syncretic form, i.e., humor produced through the combination of different languages such as gestures and music in dance, theater and music in opera, and poetry and music in songs. The three pieces analyzed have similar characteristics and do not make use of the full spectrum of the techniques. Therefore, we provide below a list of these techniques by their names only and will not provide a detailed explanation of each one as it beyond the scope of this paper. Explanations of the techniques used will be provided case by case by order of appearance in the pieces examined.[5]

Explicit techniques:

E1 - Through the use of a humorous text;
E2 - Through titles of pieces or movements;
E3 - Through genre designations;
E4 - Through visually curious notations;
E5 - Through redundant notations.

[5] However, a full explanation with commentaries, examples, and application of each one of these techniques and other aspects of humor in music can be found in the work cited (PENA, 2017: 95-247).

Implicit techniques:

I1 - Through parody or any kind of musical borrowing;
I2 - Through unexpected juxtaposition of syntactic elements;
I3 - Through the use of musical description;
I4 - Through references to styles in particular;
I5 - Through the use of metaphors, irony, or sarcasm;
I6 - Through the use of unusual orchestral devices;
I7 - Through allusions to a famous comic character;
I8 - Through unusual effects of texture, dynamics, rhythm, and melody shape;
I9 - Through strange tonalities and modulations;
I10 - Through reference to past styles;
I11 - Through musical caricature;
I12 - Through the quotation of many musical materials;
I13 - Through tempo modifications;
I14 - Through the use of chance/indeterminacy;
I15 - Through incessant repetition of a musical material.

Syncretic techniques:

S1 - Through the use of a humorous text;
S2 - Through parody or any kind of musical borrowing;
S3 - Through the use of musical description;
S4 - Through the quotation of many musical materials;
S5 - Through performance styles;
S6 - Through addition of lyrics to instrumental pieces;
S7 - Through the use of *soggetto cavato*;
S8 - Through allusions to a famous comic character.

There is still the possibility of other humorous realizations in music and other techniques that may fit in the presented definition of humor that have not been foreseen in this list. Also, these techniques are not mutually exclusive, they are often combined freely and that is what creates variety in the humorous repertoire. Many of these techniques may be mistaken as incompetence or ignorance by the composer's compositional *métier* since they do not correspond to the expected "correct or serious" way of constructing music. Pieces using these techniques may also be considered simple and superficial when listeners do not understand what is being referenced through humor because they do not have the knowledge of what the composer hopes to allude to through the musical material.[6] It is also important to highlight the relevance of these techniques as taxonomic stock for identifying the structural elements of humorous music and their development. Furthermore, we recognize the potential they have to bring out

[6] Let's suppose a composer is making a parody of Beethoven, hence, the listener must know the style and the original piece by Beethoven and, after, be able to recognize and establish the connection between what he is listening to at the moment and the original piece, in spite of any modifications existent in the parody that frustrate his expectancy to hear the original piece. Only then would he be able to enjoy the incongruence provided, and only if he is not an affectionate and unconditional lover of Beethoven who would be offended by the mockery. Without this disposition, the humorous effect would fall to pieces.

aesthetic and historical context as well as the critiques usually behind the practice of humor and not displayed in the score or piece itself or revealed by traditional analyses.

Pseudo *Concerto*

The first piece on our list was found in a forgotten local journal published in Florence at the turn of the twentieth century. The journal called *La Nuova Musica* was founded on January 31, 1896 by the composer and pianist Edgardo Del Valle de Paz (1861–1920), who was a piano professor at the *Istituto Musicale di Firenze*. Similar to French journals, it published music criticism and essays on music, piano playing technique, interpretation and performance, and pedagogy, as well as reviews of books and concerts, mostly in Florence, with the addition of a supplement containing scores from local and guest collaborative composers. The journal was published until 1919. The editorial board was initially composed of Edgardo del Valle de Paz, Nino Abate, G. Senigaglia, Antonio Morosi, and a figure named Samuel, who was always referred to as a *collaboratore umoristico* (humorous collaborator). Neither the journal nor Samuel had ever been addressed in the musicological literature. Samuel was responsible for publishing concert reviews, often with acid wit and critical humor. He made comparisons between composers, e.g., "Chopin: a composer pianist. Liszt: a pianist composer"; (SAMUEL, 1911: 106, my translation). The comparisons were qualitative, similar to those Erik Satie published in French journals as pawn and poet composers (SATIE, 1981: 36-38) (i.e., caricatures, mesostics; SAMUEL, 1898: 5). He also wrote funny articles criticizing the world of music and its political practices of social climbing and idiosyncrasies, such as in his *Advice from an old musician to the youth or A theoretical-practical guide to teach how to know well the divine art of sounds and to become a great composer* (1896a: 4).

Although it was Samuel who first began publishing ironic articles, being contemporaries, in many ways this humorous practice was very similar to that of Satie in French journals. But as we look back, Satie suffered retaliation from so many institutions, historical musicologists, and critics during his entire life that perhaps if it were not for his association with his great contemporaries in art and music, we would probably have forgotten about him and his practice of composing humorous music (PENA, 2017). At this point, it is obvious that the non-Italian name Samuel is fake, being in fact a pseudonym. Before analyzing the piece, we must understand that the real man behind Samuel foresaw the unquestionable fact that dealing with humor (and worse, dealing with humor in order to criticize instrumentalists, composers, conductors, professors, critics, political practices, composition itineraries, institutional requirements, competitions, quality of pieces and concert repertoire, composer egos, the patronage, etc.,) would raise such a wave of hatred over him that it could have destroyed his career and legacy, erasing his relevance from history.

While we recognize there may be a remote chance of being otherwise, all the facts point to Samuel being, in fact, Edgardo del Valle de Paz, the founder and director of the *La Nuova Musica* journal. Though the composer may have removed it from his public name and on every score, there are sporadic sources, such as an article about him in the Italian Wikipedia, that claim his birth name was actually Edgardo Samuel del Valle de Paz. Nevertheless, we may argue that Wikipedia is not a strong source by which to justify the claim, but there is other evidence still visible in the journal itself. On August 31, 1896, Year I, Vol. I, No. 8, Samuel writes of a conversation he had in the small newsroom with Del Valle de Paz, where the journal's director asks him for his late contribution to the journal. The conversation clearly demonstrates that

someone is speaking with himself (SAMUEL, 1896b: 6–7). After the conversation, the director leaves the room and Samuel begins to read letters from the readers to the director and then answers them as if he were Del Valle de Paz. All the letters are asking who Samuel is, to which he makes funny responses. In two of those letters, Samuel affirms that he and Del Valle de Paz are the same person. In the first one he writes: "My modesty alone had suggested the means of writing those brilliant articles under a pseudonym, and I had promised myself not to reveal this secret to anyone; but I hope you will be a gentleman and will tell only a dozen people [...] 'The Director'" (SAMUEL, 1896b: 6–7, my translation)[7]. Also signing as the director, he answers a collective letter from musicians who wanted to know who Samuel was in order to teach him a lesson, i.e., beat him: "Samuel and I are one person only; if you believe you should ask me for some retractions– maybe by taking up arms – I'm at your disposal. You can find me in my office every day from 10 to 12. 'The Director'" (SAMUEL, 1896b: 6–7, my translation)[8]. Another sign is that Samuel constantly makes observations in regard to the piano and composers for piano, and his articles present Del Valle's pedagogical character (e.g., the *Advice*) and area of expertise. On December 31, 1897, Year II, Vol. I, No. 24, Samuel writes a letter to the director resigning from the journal, saying that he has too much work to do, that he cannot stand the "geniuses" working there, and that either he or the director should resign, but both could not go on together. In January 1918, Year XXIII, Nos. 318–319, when Del Valle returns to assume his role having left Luigi Parigi as director of the journal for the entire year of 1917, he received an open letter of support from Samuel, saying that Del Valle would not be abandoned and that the two of them and Nino Abate would be enough to run the journal. The last item of evidence is a comparison between Samuel's signature in the journal and a written dedication by Edgardo Del Valle de Paz in one of his scores (Figure 1).

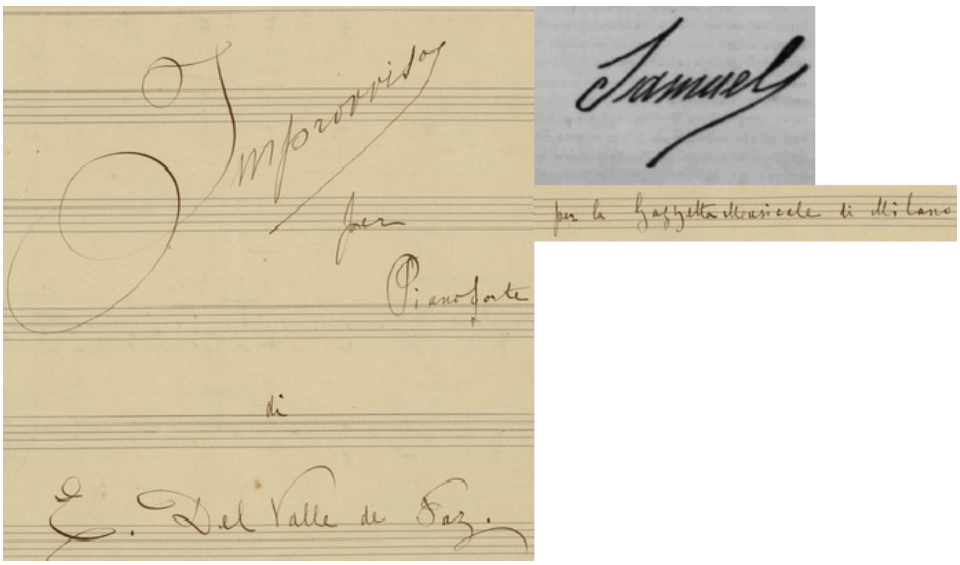


Figure 1: Comparison between the writing of Edgardo del Valle de Paz and Samuel's signature.

[7] La sola mia modestia mi aveva suggerito il mezzo di scivere quegli articoli brillanti con um pseudonimo e mi ero promesso di non svelare a nessuno questo segreto; ma spero che sarete galantuomo e non lo direte che a una dozzina di persone [...] Il Direttore (SAMUEL, 1896b: 6-7).

[8] Samuel ed io siamo una persona sola; se credono dovermi chiedere qualche riparazione – magari par le armi – sono interamente a loro disposizione. Mi troveranno in ufficio tutti i giorni dalle 10 alle 12. Il Direttore (SAMUEL, 1896b: 6-7).

Although Samuel's handwriting leans to the right and a difference in style could have been purposeful, we can see that both samples use the same shapes for the letters "s," "a," "m," "u," "e," and "l," and by comparing "*improviso*" and "*Samuel*" both finish the word with the same flourish underline. Therefore, there's plenty of evidence to confirm that Samuel was, in fact, Edgardo Del Valle de Paz, but more important than his real name is his need to hide himself behind a pseudonym in order to write humorous critiques and counter critiques in the media. Del Valle de Paz demonstrated a lack of courage or had a strong sense of social self-preservation when he also decided to publish the piece *Il Silenzio* under a pseudonym. His supposed fear would have been for its negative reception and the consequences of having the piece associated with his real name.

The piece appears on November 30, 1896 in the Year I, Vol. I, No. 11 supplement of the journal. The score is preceded by a presentation on page three of the same edition:

> The supplement of Samuel. Samuel, our humorous collaborator sent us one of his compositions with a petition for publication. The score accompanied by a letter which we reproduce in full here comes published in a special supplement. We have adhered to the desire of our Samuel for one reason only: he gives us his word that he won't start again and this forgives his (let's call it)..."noisery." - The Direction.
>
> *Dear Director*, Diogenes, who wasn't that fool everyone believed, said, don't know in which place or moment, but he said (at least Seneca, Plutarco, Svetana and yet others assure), that "the best part of our existence is the one we spend in silence" and I add: the best part of a musical composition is that which makes no noise.
>
> Well, since I'm not used to not practicing what I preach, I took the liberty to write a piece of music that, above all others, has the required quality.
>
> I named it just "*Il Silenzio*" thinking on Diogenes and reminding me of that Arabian saying that you know: Music is made of copper, the Word of silver and the Silence of gold. I've written a characteristic and above all descriptive [piece]; never has a title been so well suited to a composition. You, who are [a] composer – and not among the last –, will judge and if you are of the opposite opinion, it means that... you don't understand.
>
> Anyway, a lot of new music was printed in *Nuova Musica*, it's true, but worthless music, so you can welcome this piece of mine with equal value. However, I desire that it doesn't get published among other works: better alone than in bad company; hence, a special supplement is needed, if not, I'd rather put it in the trash. I also desire the ownership of the work to remain with me and not to beneficiate the journal. In compensation, I give you my word of honor that *Il Silenzio* will be my first and last piece published at *Nuova Musica* with my signature.
>
> Before making a point, an explanation: the Maestro Umberto Giordano has removed from the key signature all the accidentals, I, on the other hand, have put them all in; this idea seems to me to be more *ingenious* than the other. Isn't it more convenient to have all of them ready rather than to have to add them one by one according to the necessity?

> And with the accidentals, I say to myself, dear Director, the most respectful and affectionate of editors. – Samuel (SAMUEL, 1896c: 3, my translation)[9].

In the presentation, Samuel's goal is made clear. His humorous piece critiques the quality of pieces previously published in the journal and some practices of so-called modern music, in this case, the avant-garde. The core of the joke is that the pieces published were so bad and of such poor quality that silence was preferable: "if you have nothing good to say then remain silent." The critique takes the stand that this modern music is worth nothing and an empty piece would be of equal value, therefore, there is nothing better than to take it literally as he did by characteristic and descriptive means. He also refers to Umberto Giordano's practice of suppressing the key signature, a common application in expanded tonalism and nonfunctional tonalism, forming his critique against the modern avant-garde style of new music from his time that was characterized by chromaticism and pervaded Europe under Richard Wagner's influence. In Figure 2, we can see the first system of the piece.

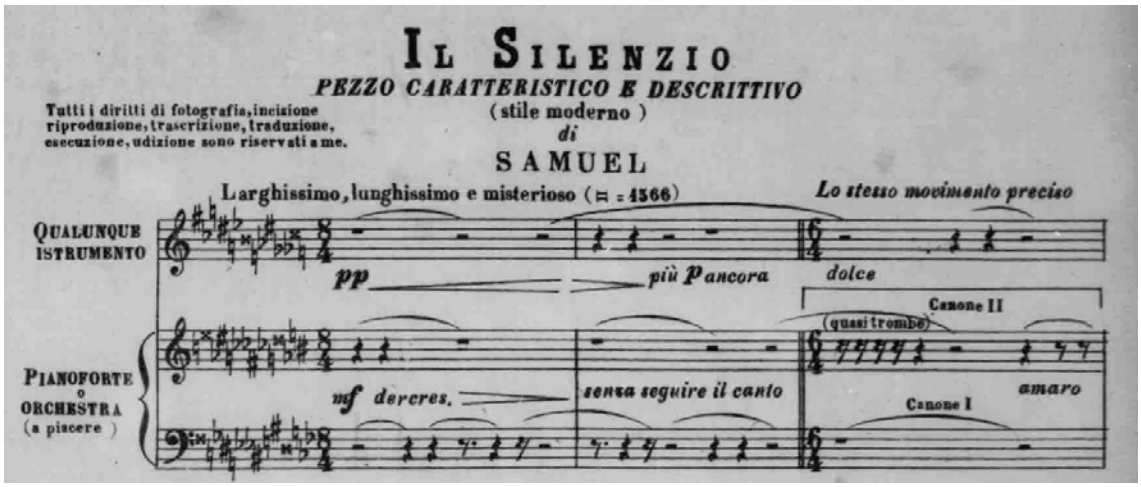


Figure 2: First system of *Il Silenzio*.

[9] Il Supplemento di Samuel. Samuel, il nostro collaboratore umoristico ci ha mandato una sua composizione con preghiera di publicazione. Il pezzo accompagnato da una lettera che riproduciamo in intero vien pubblicato in apposito supplemento. Noi abbiamo aderito al desiderio del nostro Samuel per una sola ragione: egli ci dà la sua parola di non ricominciare e ciò gli fa perdonare la sua (chiamiamola così)... chiasata. La Direzione. *Caro Direttore*, Diogene che non era poi quel grullo che tutti credono, ha detto non so in qual luogo nè in qual momento, ma l'ha detto (almeno lo assicurano Seneca, Plutarco, Svetonio ed altri ancora) che "la miglior parte della nostra esistenza è quella che si passa nel silenzio" ed io aggiungo: la miglior parte di una composizione musicale è quella che non fa rumore. Ora siccome io non uso predicar bene e razzolare male, mi son permesso di scrivere un pezzo di musica che sopra ogni altro pregio posiede la qualità richiesta. L'ho intitolato appunto "*il silenzio*" pensando a Diogene ed anche rammentandomi di quel detto arabo che voi conoscete: la musica è di *rame*, la parola è d'*argento*, ed il silenzio d'*oro*. Ho scritto della musica caratteristica e sopratutto descrittiva; mai titolo è stato cosi bene appropiato ad uma composizione. Voi che siete compositore – e non fra gli ultimi –, giudicherete; e se siete di parere contrario, vuol dire che... non ve ne intendete. In tutti i casi avete stampato nella *Nuova Musica* tanta musica nuova, è vero, ma che non val nulla, che potrete accogliere questo mio pezzo di egual valore. Desidero però che non sai pubblicato insieme ad altri lavori: meglio solo che male accompagnato; dunque ci vuole per me un supplemetno speciale, se no piuttosto il cestino. E desidero pure che la proprietà del lavoro resti a me e non vada a benefizio del giornale. In compenso vi do la mia parola d'onore che *Il silenzio* sarà il primo e l'ultimo pezzo pubblicato dalla *Nuova Musica* colla mia firma. Prima di far punto una spiegazione: il Maestro Umberto Giordano ha tolto dalla chiave gli accidenti, io invece li ho messi tutti; mi pare questa trovata più *geniale* di quell'altra. Non è forse più comodo averli li tutti pronti anzi chè metterli uno ad uno secondo il bisogno? E con gli accidenti mi dico, caro Direttore, il più rispettoso ed affezionato dei redatori. Samuel (SAMUEL, 1896c: 3).

The first humorous technique we should observe is the use of humor through titles of pieces or movements (**E2**). The title of the piece ("The Silence") is enforced by the work's characteristic and descriptive aspects, taken literally here, through the use of musical descriptions (**I3**). Through designating the genre **(E3**), Samuel also indicates off the score that the work is intended to be in the modern style implying that it is a satire of the growing avant-garde. Through the use of humorous text (**E1**) off the score itself, includes his request for not only full copyrights of the score, leaving nothing for the journal, but extends his demands to every possible case, some being incoherent and unexpected: "all photography, engravings, reproductions, transcriptions, translations, executions, edition rights are reserved to me."

The use of chance/indeterminacy (**I14**) is applied through the work's open instrumentation. Although it is written in a concerto format, the solo part was written for "Any Instrument" and the orchestral part written for "Pianoforte or Orchestra *ad lib/a piacere*", which means any orchestra formation desired. This resource was probably used as a means to represent the quality of the pieces he was criticizing; any orchestra formation or piano accompaniment of any instrument would fit any piece whatsoever in this critique. Yet, before the score itself, we see the use of an unexpected, impossible, and contradictory tempo indication and modification (**I13**), both in character and in tempo. *Larghissimo, lunghissimo e misterioso* is a character designation for grave, serious, and generally slow-tempo pieces, but it is completely incongruous with the precise tempo designation of *Lunga* or a quadruple whole note at 1,566 bpm, which equals a *semínima* or quarter note at 25,056 bpm. At this rate, the whole piece would end in 0.2071... seconds, but of course, the purpose of the indication is to create a contradictory, incongruous, and unusual tempo and character that would generate humor, and consequently laughter, not to actually play it precisely. In the beginning of the work, he announces his key signature with all accidentals. They seem to have been chosen randomly, and their sole purpose, as with other elements throughout the score, is to criticize modern music practices; this one critiques suppressing the key signature in the works by the aforementioned Giordano. It is achieved through the use of redundant notations (**E5**). The time signature itself, besides being uncommon, is not humorous, but what happens with it is. The ever-changing time signatures and their unusual formulae could be a critique of unusual time signatures and the use of occasional changes in modern pieces instead of keeping the same time signature throughout the whole piece. In Samuel's work, there are ten different time signatures for twenty-one measures, a hyperbolic use of this process. This also counts as the use of redundant notation (**E5**), since there is no practical reason for them, besides the illusion of phrases and sections and for providing an unexpected juxtaposition of syntactic elements (**I2**). Consequently, we begin to notice that he is, indeed, making references to a particular style (**I4**), in this case, the aforementioned modern avant-garde.

Looking at rests, their only humorous contribution is their redundancy (**E5**) since there is no practical reason for giving them beats. What he does during the entire piece is act as if the rests created a means to discern phrases and sections. We observe that the first two measures are mirrored. The first measure of the soloist is mirrored in the second measure of the "right hand of the piano," and the first measure of the "right hand of the piano" is mirrored in the second measure of the soloist; though we have a minor typographical error in the first measure (the absence of a half-note rest). The first measure of the "left hand of the piano" may be seen as being mirrored and retrograded in its second measure. Finally, through unusual effects of texture, dynamics, rhythm, and melodic shape (**I8**), Samuel uses dynamic indications for rests, which is, of course, absurd, since they should represent the absence of sound. The soloist goes through a *crescendo* and *decrescendo* and the piano/orchestra part goes through a *dercrescendo* (where the additional "r" is probably just another typo), *Senza seguire il canto*

[without following the singing or melody], which also indicates the possibility of the soloist being a voice and reinforcing the technique of indeterminacy through open instrumentation (**I14**). The second section begins with the reinforcement of the tempo indication (**I13**): *Lo stesso movimento preciso* [The same precise motion]. In the "right hand of the piano," we have the indication of *quase trombe* [Almost (like) trumpets], which is represented by four sixteenth-note rests and a quarter-note rest, which imitates and makes reference to the opening of a march, the call to march typically played by trumpets, e.g., Mendelssohn's "Wedding March", but here, a silent call indicated through humorous text makes reference to a particular style (**E1**) (**I4**). The soloist part has an expression indication of *dolce* [sweet/soft], a standard indication in classical music for color and timbre, but it becomes funny when the piano/orchestra part counterposes it with the expression *amaro*, meaning "bitter" (probably a never before used expression in music), provoking, through the use of humorous text associated with effects of timbre, the sense of taste and gustation and not *dolce's* accepted traditional sense it has in performance (**I8**) (**E1**). Before we begin to address the term *canones* that appears on the score, let us look at the second system of the piece in Figure 3.

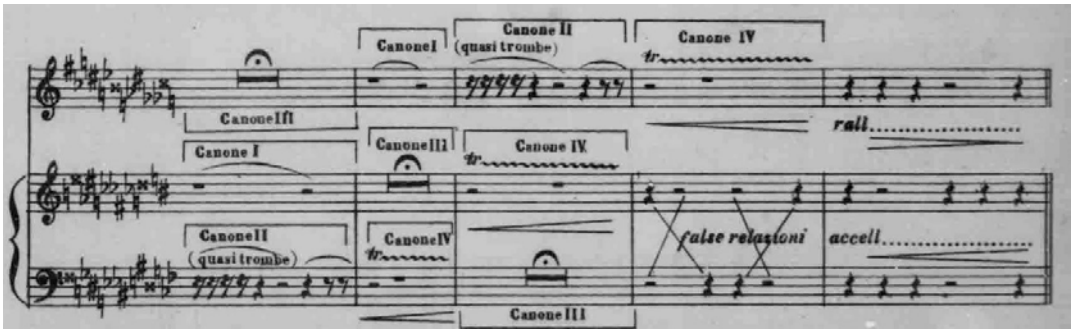


Figure 3: Second system of *Il Silenzio*.

In the second section,[10] Samuel develops a traditional canon divided into four phrases that spread through the three staves. *Canone I* consists of a whole-note rest and a half-note rest; *Canone II* is the trumpet call; *Canone III* is a full-measure rest held by a *fermata*; and *Canone IV* is a half-note rest and whole-note rest with a trill indication over the entire measure. The use of a canon contradicts the modern style becoming an incongruous element on the score, providing, therefore, a concomitance of three techniques: reference to a particular style (**I4**), musical description (**E3**), in opposition with a reference to past styles (**I10**), a very usual humorous technique that will later be used often in the neoclassical repertoire. Perhaps the criticism behind it is that the modern repertoire published in the journal was not so avant-garde after all, being overwhelmed by opera and traditional clichés. *Canone III* brings a confusing fermata, since it is applied only to one of the voices (first the soloist, then "right hand," then "left hand"), while the others are supposed to continue normally, an impossible effect of rhythm (**I8**). Similarly, *Canone IV* presents the impossible melody and dynamics indication of a silent trill between two rests and a crescendo (**I8**). After the canons, Samuel provides on the "left hand of the piano" the same rest pattern as the solo part at the beginning of the second section and creates a silent *False relazioni [false relationship]* with the "right hand" by reversing their positions. Since there

[10] The "right hand of the piano" lacks the second $A^{\flat}$ in the key signature, but, since it occurs only in this system, it is probably just another typing error.

are no accidentals in rests, the indication is necessary and its incongruence has the potential to be humorous in combining it with humorous text (**E1**) and a reference to a particular style (**I4**), which is why he used it. It is a way to criticize the predominance of accidentals and false relationships in the repertoire in function of chromaticism, particularly because of Richard Wagner's pervasive influence in European Opera. The section ends with three quarter-note rests, a half-note rest, and a quarter-note rest motif written in both the "left hand" and the soloist part and its retrograde in the "right hand." The same procedure used for *Canone III* and *IV* is applied here: there is a *rallentando* and a *decrescendo* in the solo part as the "piano" is supposed to be *crescendo* and *accelerando*, a dynamics and tempo procedure impossible to coordinate in time and to realize in silence (**I8**). Figure 4 below shows the third system.

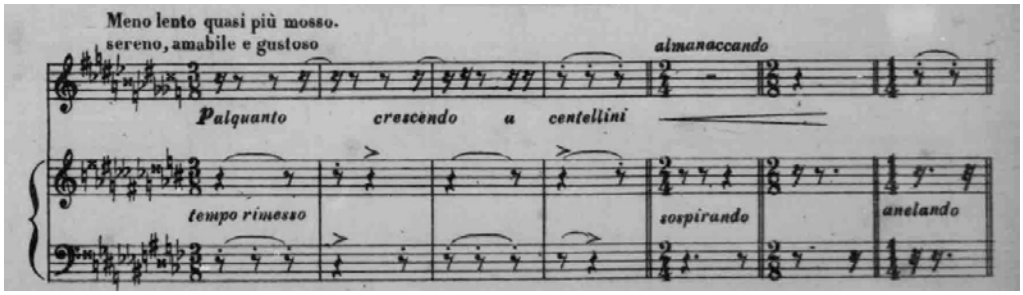


Figure 4: Third system of *Il Silenzio*.

The third section begins with the tempo indication *Meno lento quase più mosso sereno, amabile e gustoso* [Less slow, almost faster. serene, lovely and tasty]. Although this indication alters the initial tempo, we have a contradiction with the *tempo rimesso* [tempo restored/re-put] indication in the piano/orchestra part. We could also question what "tasty" is supposed to mean as a tempo character and recognize it as humorous text (**I13**), (**E1**). In the "left hand," then the "right hand" and solo part, articulations appear of three eighth-note rests in *portato*, some in *staccato*, followed by an accented quarter-note rest, another impossible resource to be expressed in silence (**I8**). This section is also supposed to start *Piano alquanto crescendo a centellini* **[**Piano while growing by sipping little by little] which, as aforementioned, is impossible in silence (**I8**) and contains humorous text (**E1**). To follow are three measures of transition in which the only humorous technique used is the three unusual expression indications: *Almanaccando, sospirando, anelando* [Daydreaming, sighing, and craving] achieved through humorous text (**E1**); and the recurring effect of silent dynamics (**I8**). The third section and the three transitions work as a moving force to reach its peak--its glorious golden section--in the fourth and last system (Figure 5).

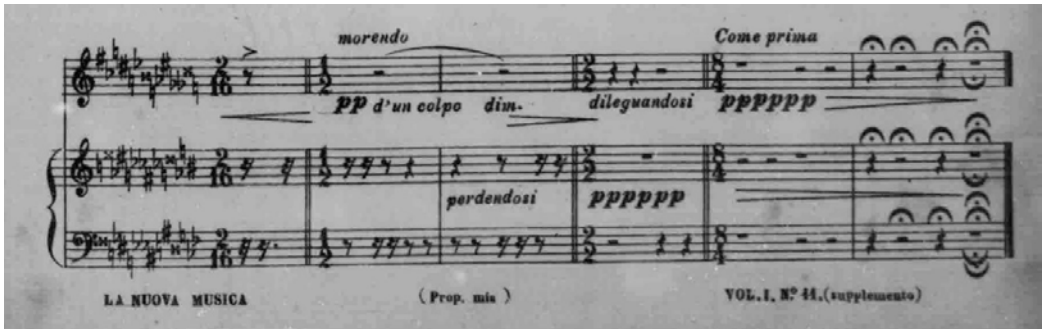


Figure 5: Last system of *Il Silenzio*.

In the last system, Samuel reaches his golden section with an accent in the eighth-note rest, an impossible silent articulation (**I8**), and immediately starts the closure of the piece. In the "right hand" there is a typing error, a missing dot on the first sixteenth-note rest. The final section frustrates the crescendo by providing a sudden *pp d'un colpo* [in one stroke], which is an unexpected juxtaposition of elements (**I2**) while all the staves mirror themselves. The indications *morendo* and *perdendosi* [dying and losing yourself] are traditional. There is a *diminuendo*, an impossible dynamic in silence (**I8**), and the *dileguandosi* [fading out] in the "left hand" mirrors the soloist, while the piano/orchestra has a *pppppp* dynamic, which is an exaggerated concept. It is almost impossible to perform an exact difference between so many dynamic levels, even if the piece had pitch, providing an unusual dynamic effect (**I8**). The penultimate measure presents another reminder of the absurd tempo of the piece i.e., *Come prima* [Like before] (**I13**), and extends the *pppppp* dynamic to the soloist, while the soloist and the "left hand" play together as the "right hand" mirrors them, providing the same unusual dynamic effect (**I8**). Thus, in the last measure, the entire process of fading out of the section ends through a diminuendo *al niente* in unison with an unnecessary number of *fermatas*. Samuel uses eighteen *fermatas*, and at the last rests he uses four for the same rest in the left hand and three for the same rest in the right hand and the solo part, which is redundant notation and an absurd effect of rhythm/duration (**I8**) (**E5**). A final element we should observe is another warning at the bottom of the score stating *Prop. Mia* [My property], reinforcing the humorous copyright text in the beginning (**E1**).

Through this piece, Samuel was attempting a different means of writing one of his humorous critiques on musical society, mainly in Florence. All the techniques used are well developed and extremely diversified for a piece having no pitch and with a skill that only Erik Satie could match at that time. He highlights and questions every compositional cliché that was in vogue during the period among traditional Italian composers and the growth of modernist avant-garde arts, using humor as a mechanism of critique. Of course, the piece has never been performed, taken seriously, or even acknowledged, but it is one of our earliest and richest examples of **humorous music** (having applied every complex humor technique), **experimental music**[11] (in the way it defies, critiques, and questions institutions, values, itineraries, and the status quo and is an opposite approach to traditional and avant-garde composition through humor, silence, and indeterminacy), and **silent music** (in the way it questions the relevance of pitch in a piece, together with the potential to rewrite our traditional telling of music history, or at least, experimental music history).

[11] Experimental music does not share one defining compositional characteristic. In fact, it shares "a rejection of musical institutions and institutionalized musical values [...] experimental music has frequently been defined in opposition to the values and aesthetics of the modernist avant-garde" (SUN, 2013). It is an opposition to tradition and to its expansion, through the means of the avant-garde, working outside of it. (NICHOLLS, 1991; NYMAN, 2009: 1; MAUCERI, 1997: 191-192; LUCIER, 2012: 97). It is a refusal to accept the status quo (COPE, 1997: 222) calling into question and looking anew at what is taken for granted (WOLFF, 2009: 436). It is presented in "a general form, the rejection of the institutionalized notion of what music is inside a dominant culture and to the status quo, and in a strict form related to the origins of the experimental practice, its opposition to the European modernist avant-garde and to the academic institutions that maintained its dominancy" (PENA, 2018: 74-75, my translation). Cage is more concerned with practical terms. For him, experimentalism consists "of an act the outcome of which is unknown" (CAGE, 1961: 13). What Cage brings as experiment is the indeterminacy of the work and its relation to a new experience, for the listener, performer, or composer, every time it is realized.

Digging Up Rests

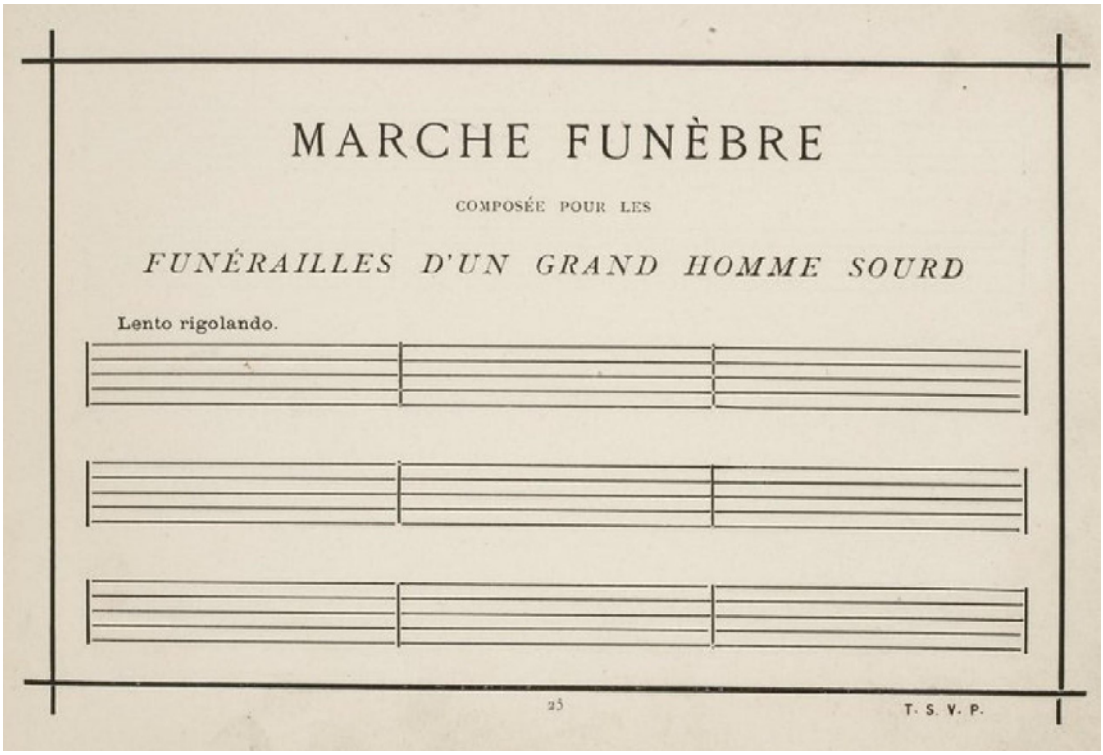
The second piece on our list is much simpler than the one composed by Samuel. Although it may be recognized by musicians through a series of correlations connecting John Cage to Erik Satie and Erik Satie to Alphonse Allais or through John Cage to Rauschenberg and Rauschenberg to Alphonse Allais, it has still been unacknowledged and has not been taken as seriously as it deserves. Alphonse Allais (1854–1905) was one of the greatest humorists in France at the turn of the twentieth century. His literary works, tales, fables, false interviews, and articles were furnished with critical humor towards all minor and major writers of his time, and he was appreciated by many of the great artists of the Parisian circle, especially the cabaret circle, like Alfred Jarry, Maurice Maeterlinck, Erik Satie, and Claude Debussy. In many ways, Erik Satie's humor was influenced by Allais through their childhood acquaintance. Both were born in Honfleur, Normandy and were attendants of the Chat Noir (ROLAND-MANUEL, 2013: 273–275; 284). What brings us to Allais is his pioneering work on many fronts in the arts, not only literature. Between 1882 and 1885, Jules Levy curated an annual exposition of Incoherent Arts with a series by Allais called "For People Who Cannot Draw", which was later published in his *Album Primo-Avrilesque*, [April's First Album or April Fools' Album] in 1897 (GILLMOR, 1988: 66). The album included seven monochromatic paintings, the most famous being his all-black painting "*combat de nègres dans une cave, pendant la nuit*" ("Negroes Fighting in a Tunnel, by Night") and his all-white painting "*Première communion de jeunes filles chlorotiques par un temps de neige*" ("First Communion of Anemic Young Girls in the Snow"). Although there are other precedents, these seven paintings associate Allais to Malevich's "Black Square" and Rauschenberg's "White Paintings" and ultimately connect Allais to John Cage, who identified Rauschenberg as his reference when composing *4'33"* (CAGE, 1961: 98; 1990). The second correlation is made through John Cage and his thorough research on the works of Satie, Allais' fellow countryman, and the possibility that John Cage may have stumbled upon Allais' name and works in the process. We may speculate, therefore, that Cage may have been aware of a score of a funeral march that was also included in the second part of the *Album Primo-Avrilesque.* Allais published his *Marche Funèbre composée pour les Funérailles d'un grand homme sourd* in 1897, one year after Samuel's *Silenzio*, making it not the first example of a completely silent musical composition, as it is known, but the second. The piece is preceded by a preface:

> Preface
> The author of this Funeral March was inspired, in his composition, on the tenet, accepted by everyone, that all great griefs are mute.
> The great griefs being mute, the performers will only have to occupy themselves with counting the measures, instead of surrendering themselves to this indecent uproar that removes any august character from the best funerals. – A. A. (ALLAIS, 1897: 23, my translation)[12].

To understand this preface and the humorous title itself (**E2**), we must go back twelve years to the death of Victor Hugo. When he died, he was one of the greatest icons and symbol

[12] Préface. L'auteur de cette Marche funèbre s'est inspiré, dans sa composition, de ce principe, accepté par tout le monde, que les grandes douleurs sont muettes. Les grandes douleurs étant muettes, les exécutants devront uniquement s'occuper à compter des mesures, au lieu de se livrer à ce tapage indécent qui retire tout caractère auguste aux meilleures obsèques. A. A. (ALLAIS, 1897: 23).

of humility and humanity, a rather artistic hero of France. Two days after his death on May 22, 1885, the *chambre des députés* authorized the return of national funerals and, on June 1st, it is said that almost two million people attended the procession and funeral of the writer. An event of such magnitude caused much attention and impact on society, and once national funerals were permitted again by law, the practice of processions and large party-like funerals spread throughout the richest and popular layers of society and is still common today (GILLMOR, 1988: 66). Therefore, Allais was using the piece to criticize the popularization of these grand funerals by composing a funeral march for a great deaf man. The word great symbolizes not only Victor Hugo, but the fact that only important people, great people, had this kind of funeral. Deaf, because it represents the incongruence of having an indecent party instead of silent grief at a funeral and a lack of respect. Moreover, because a dead person cannot hear the funeral going on, a silent piece would be more appropriate to represent the respect needed for such occasions. Therefore, Allais realizes these objectives through musical description (**I3**) based on the tenet that we should mourn in silence and the eternal silence for the deceased. What is the point of playing pitch music if the dead cannot hear? In his way, Allais is not criticizing the world of music, its institutions, and so on, because, after all, he did not have a career as a musician. He is aiming, in fact, at Parisian and French society and questioning their practices. Throughout the score, we notice what may be a lack of musical knowledge on Allais' part, since it consists of 24 empty measures with no key signature, no time signature, no rests, no clefs, and no instrumentation, to enforce his musical description (**I3**), which could also mean the openness to any number and type of instruments or instrumentalists, any clef, time signature, and so on, through indeterminacy (**I14**). The only indication we have is the tempo and character *Lento rigolando*, laughing slowly or slow laughing, which consists in the irony of his request for musicians to play nothing and to remain in silence, being a humorous text associated with tempo indication (**I13**) (**E1**). Figures 6 and 7 show the score.


MARCHE FUNÈBRE

COMPOSÉE POUR LES

FUNÉRAILLES D'UN GRAND HOMME SOURD

Lento rigolando.

25

T. S. V. P.

Figure 6: First page of *Marche Funèbre*.

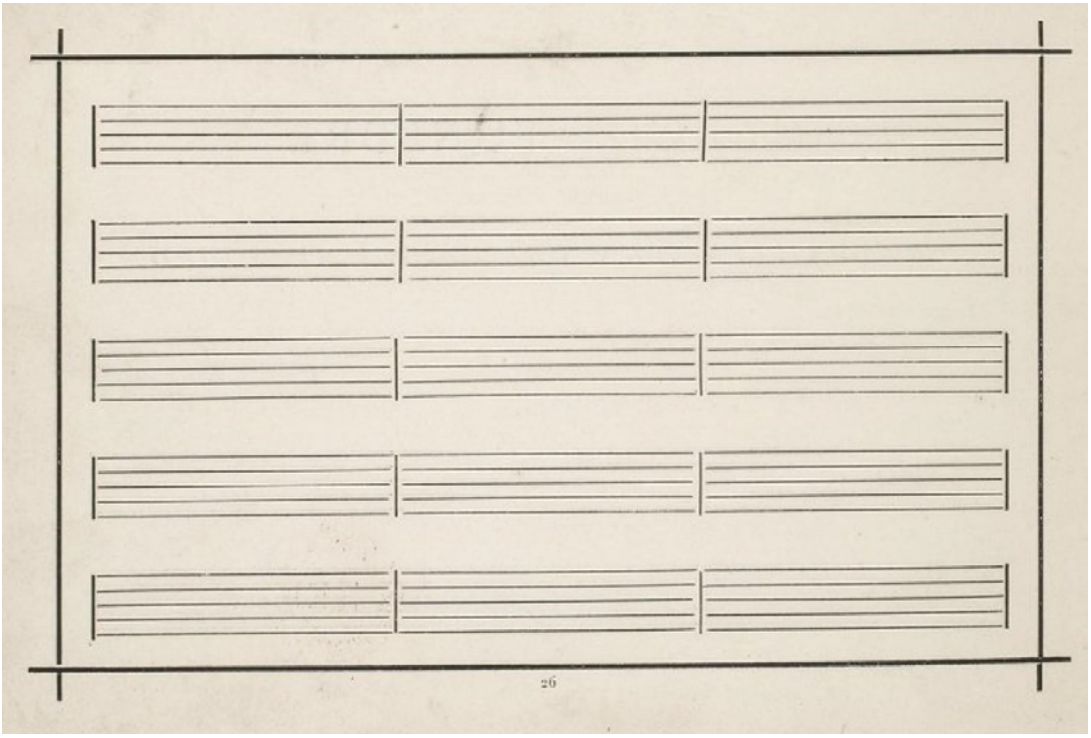


Figure 7: Second page of *Marche Funèbre*.

Although much more rudimentary in humorous music technique, Allais' *Marche* is still our second earliest example of **humorous music** (through its incongruous score, presentation, titles and indications), **experimental music** (through aspects of indeterminacy and critique, questioning the establishment and the societal status quo), and a genuine **silent music**, for the need of pitch is not only questioned but advocated against in a genre like the funeral march.

Sine Tempus Tempo

The last piece on our list is placed a little ahead in time. In 1919, the Czech and Jewish composer Erwin Schulhoff (1894–1942) sent to George Grosz of the Berlin Dada, his *Fünf Pittoresken*, a set of five movements, three jazz pieces, a jazzy Brazilian Maxixe, and a silent piece as the third movement called "*In Futurum*". Schulhoff, like most artists who were not born in one of the three traditional cultures of Western music (France, Germany, and Italy) was open-minded to all aesthetic possibilities. He received guidance and recommendations from Antonín Dvořák to study at Prague Conservatory, where he attended until 1906, moving to Vienna in 1908 to study piano, then to Leipzig to study composition with Max Reger until 1910, to Cologne to study with Carl Friedberg until 1914, while having sporadic classes with Debussy between 1913 and 1914. He served the Austro-Hungarian army during the First World War and was wounded. At the end of the war, he went to live in Dresden with his sister, who was a painter, having become a socialist disappointed with the Romantic tradition. Through his sister, he meets Otto Dix and has his first contact with the Berlin Dada. George Grosz presents jazz to him as an alternative to European tradition, and Schulhoff begins his move to coordinate his socialism in politics, his love for jazz, the revolution of arts and total rejection of tradition and the realm of "imperialistic" tonality and rhythm from Dada, and his appreciation of the Second Viennese School of avant-garde through

his friendship with Alban Berg. Unfortunately, Schulhoff found himself in a delicate situation being labeled a degenerate and forbidden to perform in Germany. His communist associations were also an issue in the Czech Republic. Finally, his only way out was to apply for citizenship in the Soviet Union in 1941, but before he could move there, he was captured by the German Nazis and died in 1942 at the Wülzburg Concentration Camp (KATZ, 2020; BEK, 2020; HARMAN, 2011: 6–14).

Five picturesques were the first jazz pieces Schulhoff composed, but the Dada never became interested in having it performed. The score was not published until 1930. In its opening, he dedicates it to George Grosz ("to the painter and Dadaist George Grosz, with the warmth of my own heart") alongside a poem praising the non-European world written by Grosz:

> Worlds! Waters!
> Your tumbling and staggering houses!!
> Cakewalk on the horizon!!
> Your Negro melodies
> Lovely as Ellins Blauaugen – –
> Worlds, Oceans, Continents!
> Australia, the land of Sun!
> Africa with your dark Ju – Ju – Jungles,
> America with your Express-Train-Culture,
> Worlds – I call, I scream!!!
> Wake up, you awe-inspiring pale faces
> You Sons of Bitches, Materialists,
> Bread Eaters, Meat Eaters, – Vegetarians!!
> Headteachers, Butchers, Pimps!
> – You rags!!!
> Thought: My soul is two thousand years old!
> !!! Triumph !!!
> God, Father, Son – Joint-stock society.
> George Groß (my translation).[13]

This period represents Schulhoff's complete disappointment with European tradition and culture due to his experience in war. The Dada counter-art form preached an Art that is not supposed to be beautiful, or mean something, or be comprehensible, or be serious at all; an Art opposed to theories, systems, and academic institutions; an Art that eradicates the idea of past, memory, and tradition and abolishes the future and any pretention of genius, prophets, and schools. In many ways, Dada is in fact experimentalism in its purest definition (**see footnote 10**):

> Now, what is this aesthetic proposal if not experimentalism? Or, if we perform reverse and chronological reasoning, what would experimentalism be if not Dadaism – since we well know its influence on the former? The denial of the past, tradition, language, systems, artistic theories, artistic narratives,

[13] Welten! Fluten! / Ihr taumelnden, torkelnden Häuser!!! / Cake-walkt am Horizont!! / Ihr Negermelodien / Lieblich wie Ellins Blauaugen - - / Welten, Ströme, Erdteile! / Australien, du Sonnenland! / Afrika mit deinen dunklen Ur - Ur – Urwäldern, / Amerika mit deiner D-Zug-Kultur / Welten – ich rufe, schreie!!! / Wacht auf, ihr ehrfurchtbuckelnden Blaßgesichter!!! / Ihr Hundesöhne, Materialisten, Brotfresser, Fleischfresser, - Vegetarier!! / Oberlehrer, Metzgergesellen, Mädchenhändler! / - ihr Lumpen!!! / Denkt: meine Seele ist zweitausend Jahre alt! / !!! Triumph !!! / Gott, Vater, Sohn – Aktiengesellschaft. / George Groß.

> the academy, the canon, the future, its status as a movement and artistic school, the disregard for beauty, logic, seriousness, and to criticism are essentially experimental characteristics. In fact, to classify Dadaism as avant-garde would be something as illogical as the Dada proposal itself and its continuous contradiction, which has an artistic sense, but which does not fit within a scientific, historic or aesthetic narrative. The concept of avant-garde is completely inadequate, since Dada has no intention in the least of expanding the borders of tradition, but on the contrary, it is to ignore all of its means and tenets, or to establish a new starting point or point of arrival, a language that everyone will later follow as a common practice, to abolish any form of language and system and deny itself a future and recognition as a movement, "ism," and school (PENA, 2018: 83, my translation)[14].

In this paper, it is argued that Dada, among other movements and artists, is in fact a form of an experimentalism *avant la lettre*. And, in this way, alongside with jazz music, it was probably the most non-European material Schulhoff could have laid his hands on at the time he composed his cycle. The third movement, and its title, *In futurum*, is his imagination of what music could be *in the future* (**E2**) and represents the Dada-influenced piece of the cycle. The title has a number of possible interpretations: 1) His experience in the Great War may have filled him with a sense of apocalyptic foreboding, as it did for many Europeans, and after another war, mankind would cease to exist and there would be silence on Earth. 2) The most effective way to follow Dada standards and deny all tradition, language, institutions, etc. in a single piece would be to compose the utter antithesis of a musical composition, the complete opposition of sound, a silent composition. 3) It is a prerogative of *instantanéisme* and the nonexistence of a future for the arts. 4) The title in Latin is probably used as a humorous resource. It is a common technique to create virtual relevance, since Latin is used only for religious, sacred, and important documents. It has a curious potential when applied to humor, because there is a major contradiction between the most inherently serious language and humor. Satie used the same resource in his *Véritables Préludes Flasques (pour un chien)* (PENA: 2017: 133–142). 5) Its middle position in the five-movement set also gives it an interlude character between the pieces. Finally, in relation to the general title, *picturesques*, was another type of dedication to the painter, George Grosz, and was used to reinforce the visually and sonorous descriptive aspect of the pieces (**I3**). Figure 8 shows the first system of the piece.

[14] Ora, o que é esta proposta estética senão experimentalismo? Ou, se realizarmos o raciocínio reverso e cronológico, o que seria o experimentalismo senão dadaísmo – uma vez que conhecemos bem a influência dele sobre o primeiro? A negação do passado, da tradição, da linguagem, dos sistemas, das teorias artísticas, das narrativas artísticas, da academia, do cânone, do futuro, seu estado como movimento e escola artística, o desprezo à beleza, à lógica, à seriedade e à crítica são características, essencialmente, experimentais. De fato, classificar o dadaísmo como uma vanguarda seria algo tão ilógico quanto a própria proposta Dada e sua contradição contínua, a qual tem um sentido artístico, mas que não caberia numa narrativa científica, histórica ou estética. O conceito de vanguarda é completamente inadequado, uma vez que o Dada não tem a menor intenção de expandir as fronteiras da tradição, mas sim de ignorar todos os meios e ditames dela, ou de estabelecer um novo ponto de partida ou de chegada, uma linguagem que todos seguirão posteriormente como prática comum, de abolir qualquer forma de linguagem e sistema e negar a si mesmo um futuro e um reconhecimento como movimento, "ismo", e escola (PENA, 2018: 83).

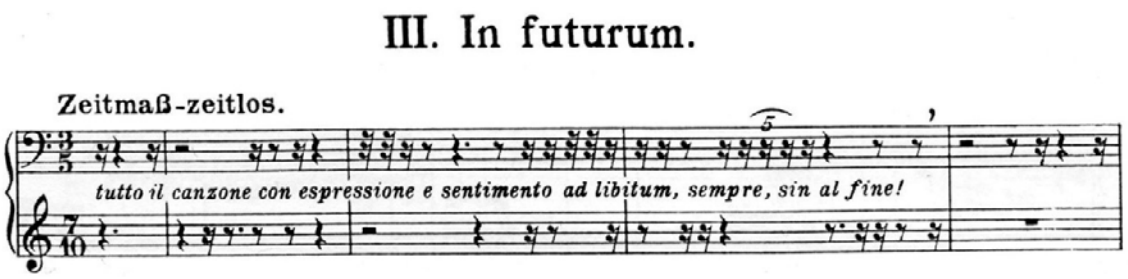


Figure 8: First system of "*In futurum*."

The tempo indication follows the same pattern of the other pieces but has a different character. In all the other pieces, the prefix *Zeitmaß*, which means *tempo*, is followed by the names of the rhythms: *Zeitmaß* (Foxtrot); *Zeitmaß* (Ragtime); *Zeitmaß* (One-step); *Zeitmaß* (Maxixe), but in this third movement, the composer writes *Zeitmaß-Zeitlos*, which means *timeless tempo* or *tempo without tempo*, providing a humorous tempo indication (**I13**). This indication can also mean indeterminacy in tempo (**I14**). Since it is not possible to be outside of time or timeless, it can be interpreted as a flowing and variable tempo or a specific random tempo, chosen by the performer. This could also mean that the score should be viewed as a painting, or both painting and music, and not only in time itself, the junction between *Zeitkunst* (temporal art) and *Raumkunst* (spatial art).

The second aspect we should observe is the change of clefs. As the set is written for piano, this piece is also for piano. However, Schulhoff inverts the traditional position of clefs without any musical reason, only to cause the incongruence of having the G-clef on the bottom and the F-clef on the top. This is redundant notation as there are no written notes (**E5**). Schulhoff uses a double false time signature, the top stave being a $^{3}_{5}$ and the bottom stave a $^{7}_{10}$, while the piece is actually in $^{4}_{4}$. This technique is a result of a combination of redundant notation through unusual effects in rhythm and tempo indications (**E5**), (**I8**), and (**I13**), while we have an unusual use of different time signatures for each stave and a third one later in the score, it produces a visual comic aspect of having one time signature while writing another and their incompatibility in time, vertically, between the staves, and horizontally – a common process in unsounding music or artistic compositions like the works of John Stump. This also reinforces the aspect of the tempo indication (**I13**) being a means to musically describe in duration/rhythm effects (**I3**), (**I8**) the timeless aspect of the tempo. Although unusual, these impossible to coordinate time signatures would represent three quintuplet quarter-notes per measure and seven quintuplet eighth-notes per measure, respectively, disagreeing vertically and horizontally, since none of them fit in $^{4}_{4}$. In addition, we have the only expression indication of the piece: *Tutto il canzone con espressione e sentimento ad libitum, sempre, sin al fine!* [The whole song with expression and feeling ad libitum, always, right up to the end!] This expression is, in fact, a free pass allowing the performer to produce any expression he desires throughout the entire piece, another aspect of indeterminacy (**I14**). Like Samuel, Schulhoff uses redundant notation (**E5**) when he also makes use of rhythmed rests throughout the whole piece in a way to discern phrases and sections, as well as to provide an *arpeggio*-like aspect in some parts. Figure 9 shows the next two systems and the first major punctuation.

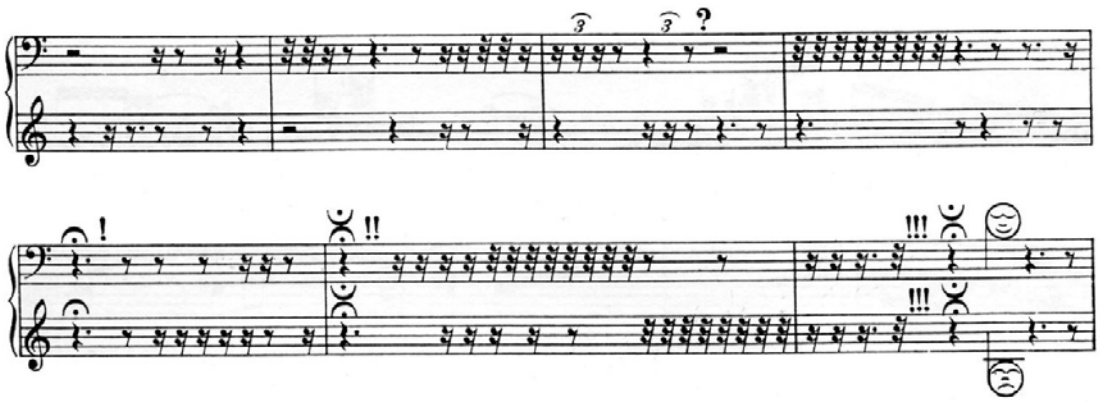


Figure 9: Systems 2 and 3 of "*In Futurum*."

Besides maintaining the techniques presented in the first system, we observe that the second system starts with the same pattern as the first. Schulhoff uses the same motif to create a simple parallel period (a + a') in measures 1 to 8. This parallel period will make up part of the sonatina-like form of the piece, which can be an ironic mockery on his part by alluding to a particular style (**I4**). In measure 7, we have this unexplained question mark without any definitive reason. Perhaps he was trying to point out that the written time signature was not corresponding to those at the beginning; perhaps he is trying to say "what is it?" as a tip for us to identify the parallel period he wrote; or perhaps he is trying to point out the fact that the eighth-note rests below it were not supposed to be vertically aligned because they belong to different parts of the measure; or perhaps it is even a question for the performer, asking if he wants to change the expression and feeling. It could also mean that the breath mark he put in the first system is reinterpreted. He may be extending it to nontraditional marks. If we have a comma working as pause punctuation to take a breath, why can't we have question marks and exclamation marks as well, creating a metalanguage between music and text? Anyway, it is uncertain, but according to this last theory, it counts as humorous text (**E1**), as it brings incongruence to the message and extrapolates the meaning of a common pause notation extending it to another context of unusual indications (**I8**). In the next system we have what could be called a transition or cadence part. The first *fermata* has an exclamation mark above it, a way to represent its intensity. The second is a double *fermata*, a redundant indication (**E5**), and he adds two exclamation marks, making it a more intense pause. Finally, the third is also an unnecessary double *fermata* with three exclamation marks and a drawing of two large half notes with faces on them, one happy and one sad. These faces count as a visually curious notation (**E4**). We could question whether they are or not notes to be played, since they are notated as a B (H), but their size and the faces, aligned with the fact that they are out of the measure time, we still have it filled with rests, make it doubtful to think that they are more than a visual joke on the score, maybe representing an expression and feeling tip for the performer. In Figure 10 we have the rest of the piece.

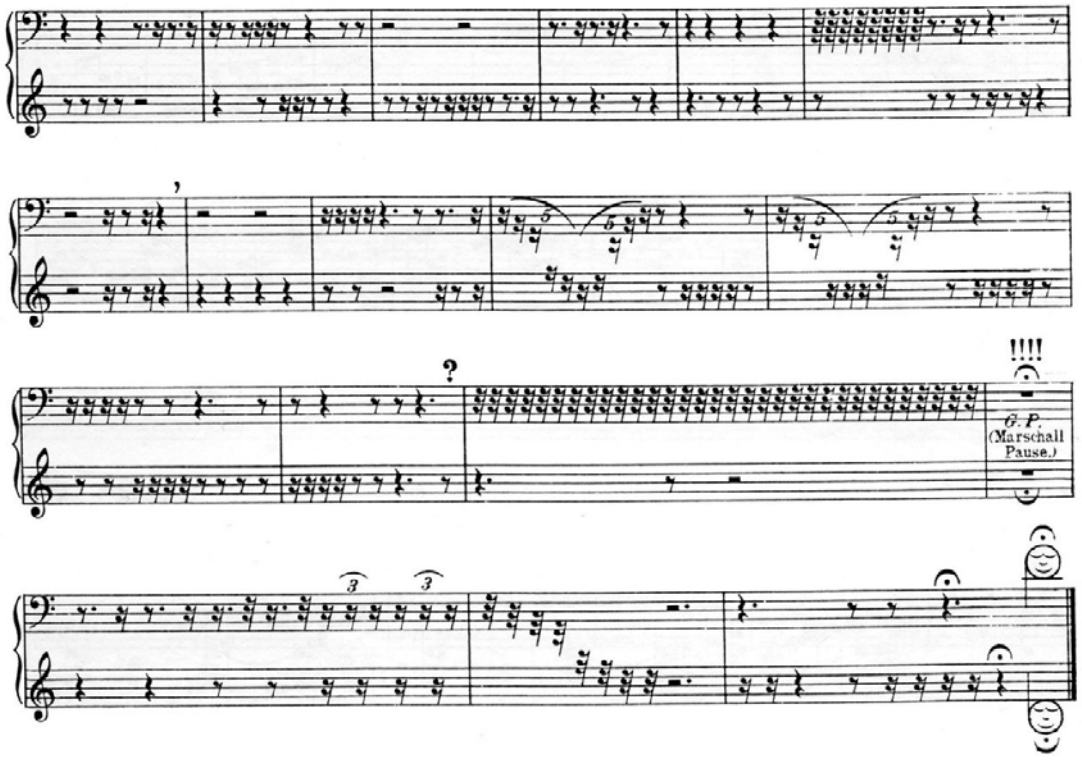


Figure 10: Final systems of "*In Futurum*."

The fourth system starts with what we may call a development arriving to a recapitulation in the first measure of the fifth system, a reference to a past style in another context, the sonata form (**I4**). We have another comma, now with a new metalinguistic meaning, and the aforementioned redundant *arpeggio*-like figures (**E5**). In the sixth system we have another question mark leading to the apex of the piece by fast repeated rests, a reference to procedures of the classical style (**I4**) culminating in the Grand Pause – Marshal Pause with four exclamation marks, an exaggerated humorous indication in text and signs (**E1**) (**I8**). The last system is what could be called a coda, finishing with a traditional descending arpeggio; it is redundant notation and a reference to ending procedures of the classical style (**E5**) (**I4**). At the end of the piece, there is again the two half notes with faces, but now, they are both happy and written as a D and not a B (H), a visually curious notation (**E4**).

Schulhoff's "*In futurum*" is midway between the works of Allais and Samuel in the use of humorous techniques, but it is indeed an example of **humorous music** through its incongruous score with so many unconventional and misleading notations. Its Dada influence gives the piece an authentic character of **experimental music**, since it questions, negates, and mocks tradition, praises silence over sound, and has indeterminacy in its essence. This last example is also considered **silent music**, since it makes no use of pitch in its composition as a mechanism of counter-art.

There is still one final consideration worth mentioning before jumping to our conclusions, although it is not a piece of music per se. Kyle Gann revealed in his book, *No Such Thing as Silence: John Cage's 4'33"*, the cartoon shown below in Figure 11 that he discovered in a 1932 publication of *The Etude*, a magazine for piano enthusiasts. It is "of a boy who gets out of practicing by composing a piece entirely of rests. What makes the coincidence uncanny is the name of the cartoonist: Hy Cage" (GANN, 2010: 120). This is relevant since it is also a humorous outcome of

silence in music. The score produced by the boy is called *Song of the Sphinx* and is represented by six measures of rests. The procedure is the same foreseen in our analysis: the use of redundant rhythmed rests, inaccurate in some measures (**E5**) (**I8**), and absent in one measure. The humorous title (**E2**) is also described musically (**I3**), for the sphinx is a mysterious and enigmatic creature best portrayed as silence.

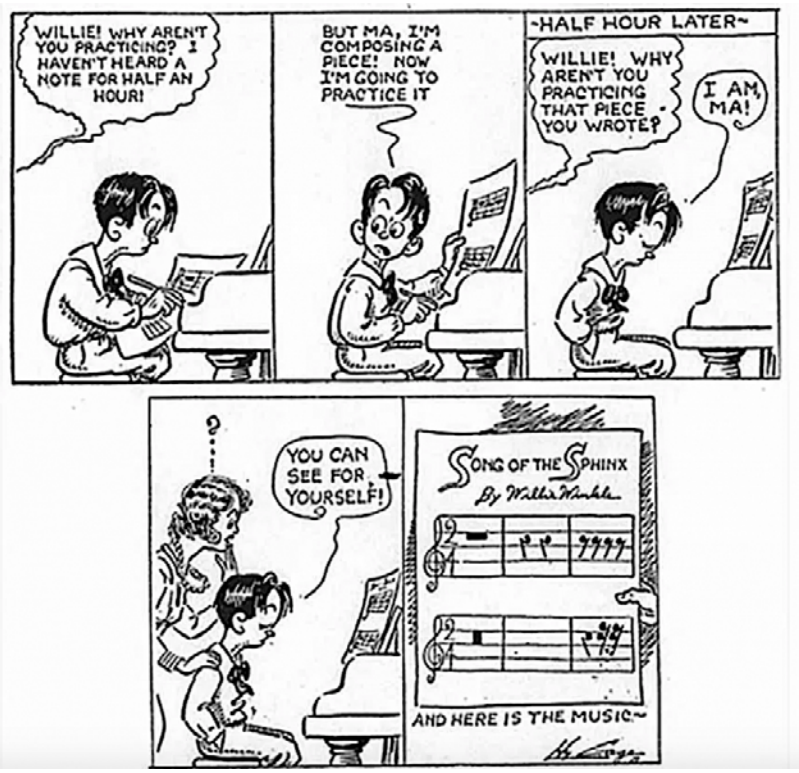


Figure 11: Cartoon from *The Etude* magazine, 1932 (GANN, 2010: 119).

Silenced Motifs

Although we could agree that some works are not recognized in their time for a variety of reasons, these pieces were intentionally muffled or ignored by musicologists, institutions, and critics at the time. Their humorous nature represented an undesired audacity and insult to all things built and held sacred over centuries by tradition, little more than cheap mockery and debauchery. The first thought was prejudice: that humorous art was amateurism, inadequacy, pejorative simplicity, irrelevant play, superficiality created by an ignorant, envious, immature, and incompetent artist and that was enough to discard the works without taking a second look or considering a proper analysis. Their relevance was never considered at the time since humor's poor reputation and ephemeral quality made them appear to be irrelevant, flitting social pranks. The thought of them being art may have never occurred in the scholar's mind. As we have seen repeatedly in this paper, humor was never a dignified form of art, but a repudiable one. As Satie said: "It seems that, over the delicious pinnacles of Reason, the Joke is nothing but an inferior Art that shouldn't be taught, shouldn't be enlarged, whatever may be its title, whatever may be

the purpose it proposes" (SATIE, 1981: 18, my translation)[15]. Society was not ready to take humor seriously, no matter how clever and ingenious its critique, how innovative and groundbreaking, or how complex the humorous techniques used. Besides being humorous, these pieces were all composed in Europe at a time when tradition began to face the first signs of questioning by the simultaneous decaying of common practices with the emergence of a multiplicity of new practices in the arts. Still, there was no space for experimental art in a place governed by long-established tradition like Europe. They were trying to revolutionize art by denying tradition in a time their representatives were desperately trying to keep the castle standing and expand it through the avant-garde. Samuel was easily dismissed, for after all, he was not even a real person, but a pseudonym in charge of a monthly funny column of a forgotten local journal. Allais did not even have a career as a musician, so what prestige could he have in a society that dismissed Erik Satie as a technician and not a composer? Schulhoff was buried in history through his Jewish ancestry, communist associations, and precocious death in the concentration camps. When John Cage wrote *4'33"*, he was far from the "invisible hand" of tradition; he did not have the weight of Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, Rameau, Lully, Couperin, Vivaldi, Monteverdi, and Rossini on his shoulders. He did not attend strict schools preaching a unique and absolute form of composition. The United States was a country proving itself artistically and in a process of building its own form of composition. Cage also was not working on virgin ground. Charles Ives, Henry Cowell, Edgar Varèse, Charles Seeger, Charles Ruggles, Leo Ornstein, George Antheil, Ruth Crawford, and others sowed the seeds and built a public more open-minded to receiving experimental art. Overall, John Cage took care to present it as a serious piece with a serious aesthetic purpose behind it and to not use humor as a mechanism of combat, although it is still dismissed as a joke by part of the public, mainly lay people, accidentally, since sounds are expected in music. For even nowadays, humor is still overlooked and not respected in fine arts.

So, what is the reason for acknowledging these pieces and what is their relevance in history? It certainly is not to remove merit from John Cage, but to retrieve the relevance of important pioneers in the history of art. To understand and accept that some aesthetical practices--originating from breaking from the language of tradition and the disruption of common practices at the end of the nineteenth century--do have an experimental character, means we must reobserve these practices with more appropriate forms of analysis. It means that some aesthetical practices had disengaged early on from the notion of common practice and the cultural supremacy of a unique tradition, seeking to discontinue it, break it up, deny it, and oppose it, creating new poietic mechanisms that were formerly inexistent. Until today, these practices are still neglected acknowledgement and sufficient and adequate analysis. Recognizing these pieces helps us to better understand the construction of art throughout the twentieth century and realize that, like avant-garde, experimentalism did not suddenly start with John Cage, Earle Brown, Morton Feldman, and La Monte Young with only a few precedents as is often the narrative. These pieces are a product of this breaking from common practice. Recognizing them helps us to re-tell some important chapters of the history of music and arts rediscovering new characters of undoubtedly artistic and aesthetic relevance. This approach is one path for better understanding the complexity of events and developments in art, which are far wider than the mainstream narrative.

[15] "Par cela, il apparaît, sur les délicieux sommets de la Raison, que la Plaisanterie n'est qu'un Art inférieur qui ne se doit pas enseigner, qui ne se peut magnifier, quelque en soit son titre, quelque en soit la fin que l'on se propose" (SATIE, 1981: 18).

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