Introduction

The career of Luigi Nono (1924–90) constitutes a creative arc that spans almost the entire second half of the twentieth century, from his public emergence in 1950 to the threshold of the 1990s. Even at three decades' distance from his death, any attempt at a systematic interpretation of this forty-year journey remains premature. The research conducted in recent years, based mainly on archival materials, has certainly shone new light on various artistic and biographical aspects of his career. At the same time, the fruitful multiplicity of interpretations that lie at the heart of these various studies and endeavors has revealed what a complex matter it is to try to achieve a unitary vision of Nono's multifarious body of compositional and aesthetic thought, one that was nourished constantly by an acute awareness of his historical moment.

This multiplicity, intrinsic to Nono's biography as both artist and human being, is revealed in the texts collected here. The topics covered range from his apprenticeships with Gian Francesco Malipiero and Bruno Maderna to the final works of the Darmstadt period; from the development of a complex musical language, the result of an idiosyncratic treatment of the serial technique that he first adopted in the early 1950s, to the difficulties of presenting in notated form the sound utopias (the "mobile sound") of his last creative decade; from the gradual evolving of his ideas concerning the relationship with the verbal text to the definition of a new vocality and a new *stile rappresentativo;* from the various applications of his experiences with electroacoustics,

initially through the medium of magnetic tape and later up to his use of live electronics; from the primary need to *communicate* to an inward reflection on the need for a *listening* that was qualitatively different from the usual kind; from an internationalist political commitment to the utopia of "*infiniti possibili*."[1] These, and still many other aspects, reveal how difficult and futile it would be to seek to sketch in an all-encompassing way a perspective that—to use a favorite metaphor of Nono's—might be better compared to an archipelago whose individual islands one can map out, but without being able to establish predetermined routes between them. The texts and interviews collected here aim to offer readers a compass with which to orient themselves within this multifaceted creative itinerary, whose concept of continuity consists in its sum of differences and transformations.

As with many composers of his generation—Luciano Berio, Pierre Boulez, Karlheinz Stockhausen among them—for Nono the practice of composing was a path marked by continuous conquests and innovations, in his case often arising from a unique way of reinterpreting tradition. Throughout his creative itinerary, it remains possible to trace the thread of a constant development running through and beyond the different "turning points," which sometimes appear as abrupt bursts and are often interpreted as such with excessive emphasis by critics and musicologists. Behind each of these turns, it is in fact possible to perceive a *fil rouge*—that of elements constantly reelaborated to serve a visionary idea of sound. In 1987, this is how Nono retrospectively summarized this attitude:

> My works proceed at irregular intervals, that they group themselves in threes or fours. This discontinuity, this change, is even more evident after a theatrical composition. . . . I could say, as Schoenberg did, that at the conclusion of each work I wish more than ever to breathe the air of other planets. When people ask me if I have changed my mind, changed direction, and so on, I say yes. I hope to change every morning when I wake up, to continually seek something different. Concepts such as continuity and consistency are to me incredibly banal; you have continuity in spite of yourself, with it often working against you. In spite of all the violence of the various upheavals. (see 74–75)

Each of Nono's works presents itself, upon closer examination, as the application of a previous intuition, as a unity in which one can recognize, at one and the same time, past and future techniques and compositional elements. Always, for Nono, the evolution toward new "routes," opened up by a fresh intuition, coincides with revolutions (or crises), at times violent ones. His is a veritable creative vortex, and recognizable at

its center is always the will to redefine the power of the meaning of *sound,* through its manipulation and its possible transformations.

In the end, what really seems to unite four decades of incessant research into sound is the strong desire, like that encountered in Rilke's Orphic landscape, to erect for listeners and present to them with each work a multiform and surprising "temple for them in their hearing."[2]

Born on January 29, 1924, in Venice, Nono received the first input for his artistic and cultural development from his family: his paternal grandfather, Luigi Nono, was a well-known painter in the late nineteenth-century Venetian tradition, and his great uncle Urbano was a sculptor; while his maternal grandmother, a descendant of the ancient Venetian family Priuli Bon, played the piano and sang, including the lieder of her own day (among her music Nono was astonished to find an early edition of Hugo Wolf's *Italienische Lieder,* and *Montezuma* by Sacchini). Both his mother and his father, an engineer by profession, were amateur pianists who enjoyed playing some of the major classics (including *Boris Godunov,* by Modest Mussorgsky, recalled by the composer as one of the first works he heard as a child).[3] In this fertile and privileged domestic environment one can recognize the roots of what was to become a hallmark of Nono's artistic universe, namely the idea and practice of music as an art without frontiers which can be inspired by, and grounded in, a whole range of artistic and scientific manifestations (painting, architecture, literature, poetry, philosophy, etc.) from all of history.

When he was about twelve Nono began to learn the piano with a friend of his mother, Signora Alessandri, who taught privately.[4] He had already begun to attend performances at La Fenice and the International Contemporary Music Festival of the Venice Biennale, and to make regular visits to St. Mark's Basilica, drawn by its unique acoustics (which would prove so important in his untiring exploration of space as a compositional element). In 1941, when he was seventeen years old, his father succeeded in presenting him to one of the leading musical figures of the day, Gian Francesco Malipiero, a composer who played a key role in his early years of training.[5]

Nono's education and musical apprenticeship took place during the crucial years of the Second World War and its immediate aftermath, in a family and intellectual milieu which were solidly middle class while being fundamentally hostile to Fascism. For health reasons, he was exempted from military service and did not play an active part either in

the war or in the Italian Resistance movement. Nonetheless, during the war years Nono made a point of frequenting young Venetian socialists and exponents of the local underground opposition, pursuing political and cultural ideals that were at odds with the regime. In an Italian cultural climate characterized by a very limited presence of the avant-garde experiences that had emerged in Europe since the onset of the twentieth century, Malipiero's teaching involved above all the study of Monteverdi and the great Italian Renaissance tradition (featuring polyphony and the madrigal), the theoretical treatises by Zarlino, Gaffurio, and Vicentino, and the discovery of the music of Arnold Schoenberg, Anton Webern, Luigi Dallapiccola, Igor Stravinsky, and Béla Bartók (artists that Malipiero had personally met but was not well acquainted with). In 1946, thanks once again to Malipiero, Nono met the young Venetian composer and conductor Bruno Maderna, just four years older than himself, who had made his mark as a child prodigy.

It was with Maderna that Nono perfected his fundamental musical apprenticeship, coming eventually to question everything he had accomplished or learned up to that point. Before then, as Nono himself recalled on a couple of occasions, he had composed a work influenced by his long discussions with Malipiero on the music of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and modeled on the sacred representations, *La discesa di Cristo agli inferi* (Christ's Descent into the Underworld): in it, he later said, "I believed in a completely naive way that I was using the language of Monteverdi."[6] This first compositional essay, unfortunately lost, is almost contemporaneous with his first meeting with Dallapiccola, one of the composers he most admired and a touchstone for many others of his generation (it is no coincidence that the earliest known text by Nono, "Luigi Dallapiccola and the *Sex Carmina Alcaei,*" is devoted to his music). The spark that set off that decisive change of direction, after some eight years of musical studies he came to regard as "quite 'useless' and at the very least insufficient" (254), appears to have been Dallapiccola's comments about the score of *La discesa di Cristo agli inferi,* which Nono had sent him at the suggestion of Malipiero: "'I saw your score'—Dallapiccola said—'and I understand that here in your heart you have a lot to express, only you need to study a lot more to be able to express it.' This gave me the impulse to start my musical studies all over again, and I then began my apprenticeship with Maderna" (255).

This encounter made an indelible mark on both Nono's musical and personal development, and to the end of his life he referred to Bruno Maderna as his first great mentor. In the course of lengthy days spent

either in Maderna's home or in the Marciana Library in Venice, Nono applied himself to an in-depth study of the music of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, covering *ars antiqua* and French *ars nova,* the Franco-Flemish school and Italian polyphony, in a continuous confrontation of theory and practice. In the years around 1950, analysis of the ancient music stimulated a comparative study of the various compositional processes that characterized the history of music. Once an understanding of a musical technique had been achieved, the goal was to discover its *function* in relation to the historical juncture, seeking out new possible transformations or applications in the music of later ages, down to the present.[7] For Nono, the relationship between the state of the material, its elaboration, and the period of production took on a fundamental importance: he became—and remained—convinced that artistic language has to develop alongside the major political and social movements of the age, so that it represents one possibility (or means) of intervening in these events.

It is with these new understandings that, in 1950, Nono approached his first orchestral composition, *Variazioni canoniche sulla serie dell'op. 41 di Arnold Schönberg*—Schoenberg's opus 41 being the *Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte,* a work declaimed to Byron's poetic invective against tyranny—that "was the result of my first studies of the enigmatic canons, but . . . also an ideological choice" (255). In 1950, he made his debut with this composition at the Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik in Darmstadt, the main gathering at which the young musicians of the postwar avant-garde could meet and exchange ideas; he landed up there thanks to a recommendation from Hermann Scherchen, whom he and Maderna had met in 1948 during an orchestral conducting course in Venice. Over the next five years the two young composers enjoyed a fruitful relationship with the elderly conductor, who became a spiritual guide in both cultural and personal matters. By frequenting Scherchen and hearing his performances and recollections, Nono gained firsthand knowledge of the conductor's experiences in Germany from 1912 onward, including the first performances of his beloved Schoenberg and Webern, and also German social and cultural life prior to the advent of Nazism.

Nono went back to Darmstadt each year for ten years, from 1957 as a teacher, and the experience was of crucial importance in his artistic, personal, and political evolution. It enabled him not only to gain further knowledge of serial music, and in particular the works of Schoenberg—whose daughter, Nuria, he married in 1955—but also to get to know Edgard Varèse, who was among the admirers of *Variazioni canoniche* at

its controversial first performance, and whose visionary music played a crucial role in the evolution of Nono's sound world. Also at Darmstadt he established important relationships—nurtured in some cases by mutual admiration, in others by constructive dissent—with a number of musicians from Europe and beyond, including Karlheinz Stockhausen, Pierre Boulez, Henri Pousseur, John Cage, and Hans Werner Henze. Above all, Darmstadt was the venue for the first performance of some of his most significant compositions of the 1950s: the *Variazioni canoniche* were followed by *Polifonica-Monodia-Ritmica* (1951), *Epitaffio per Federico García Lorca I: España en el corazón* (1951–52), *La victoire de Guernica* (1954), *Incontri* (1955), *Cori di Didone* (1958), and *Composizione per orchestra n. 2—Diario polacco '58* (1959).

These works revealed Nono as one of the leading exponents of the European avant-garde and the serial technique, alongside Stockhausen and Boulez. Nonetheless, in 1959 he explicitly distanced himself from these two composers and from the milieu of the *Ferienkurse*. In a lecture entitled "Historical Presence of Music Today" (1959), he took issue with what he himself had dubbed the "Darmstadt school," denouncing instances of incoherence and contradiction. After years in which valid stimuli had gone hand in hand with constructive clashes, this lecture marked a first rupture with the milieu and some of its representatives. The split reflected firstly the incipient academicism according to which Nono saw certain examples of serialism degenerating into "formulas," and secondly experiences based on chance and indeterminacy—those involving both a group of composers among whom Nono explicitly named John Cage and, especially, (unnamed) younger musicians who had, in his opinion, been fascinated by the poetics of indeterminacy.[8] In both cases Nono denounced the practitioners for shunning history and refusing to take a clear, responsible stance on the artistic issues of the present. His central argument consisted in reaffirming the need for composers always to bear in mind that the material with which they work is historically determined and thus to avoid the temptation of predicating their experiments on a pure contemplation of the sound material as such.

The split was made definitive when Nono gave another lecture in 1960 entitled "Text—Music—Song," in which he explicitly attacked Stockhausen. Ten years later, and still this controversy had not yet died down and indeed, Nono took it up again, thus indicating his detachment from the musical avant-garde in an even more explicit manner, trying to expose the political mystification concealed behind the various

radicalisms, merely superficial in his view, of the new music of the 1960s.[9]

Another aspect of the speech-manifesto “Historical Presence of Music Today” is the alarmed denunciation of an American “colonial” aggression that harbored the ability to do significant damage to European culture. However, although Cage and Joseph Schillinger were then his two main polemical targets, the documents reveal that in reality Nono at the time had fruitful and long-lasting relationships with several North American artists he had met in Darmstadt, as well as with Varèse and with Cage himself. In 1954, he formed important friendships with Gunther Schuller, who would soon organize the first performance of a Nono work on the American continent,[10] and a few years later Earle Brown, who, as producer of the Time/Mainstream record label, would be among the first to promote the dissemination of Nono’s music on disc, as well as that of Berio and Maderna. Beyond the 1959 controversy, Nono would always show a keen interest in the new experiences arising on the other side of the Atlantic, and he would become an enthusiastic supporter of the experimental proclivities expressed by the ONCE group, for whom, in 1964, he promoted a pioneering collective performance at the XXVII International Festival of Contemporary Music of the Venice Biennale.[11] One should also not omit to mention his direct collaboration with the Living Theatre in the preparation of *A floresta é jovem e cheja de vida* of 1965–66.

Throughout the 1950s, another important experience for Nono was the exploration of twentieth-century political and cultural events outside Italy, from the Soviet Revolution to the culture of the Weimar Republic, covering the Russian and German historical avant-garde and the innovations in the domain of theater spearheaded by Vsevolod Meyerhold, Vladimir Mayakovsky, and Erwin Piscator. The stimuli he received from these sources were combined with his enthusiasm for the teachings of Antonio Gramsci, the philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre, and for poetry that grappled with the issues of the day, notably that of Federico García Lorca, Pablo Neruda, Paul Éluard, Cesare Pavese, and also that of Giuseppe Ungaretti. The texts of the vocal works he composed during the 1950s were primarily by these authors, while the masterpiece dating from midway through the decade, *Il canto sospeso* (1955–56), was based on letters by European resistance fighters. With this work Nono improves a peculiar technique of fragmentation in which the text is enunciated in its vocalic or phonetic components either successively in the individual parts or simultaneously as a sound bloc or aggregate.

As can be seen from a number of his theoretical texts written during the 1950s, Nono became increasingly convinced of music's communicative capacity and of the imperative to express the multifaceted contradictions of his time in his art. In selecting texts he opted for political themes arising out of events of the present or immediate past. This transpires clearly in *Intolleranza 1960* (1960–61), the first work to give tangible form to the ideas concerning a "new music theater" he had developed during the previous decade. And the trend reached its apogee in the first half of the 1970s with the second *azione scenica, Al gran sole carico d'amore* (1972–74, revised 1977).[12]

During the 1960s and 1970s political commitment, social conflict, and denunciation, and the treatment of individual psychology always in relation to the collective drama—all elements which characterize *Intolleranza 1960*—became constants of Nono's production as the concept of *engagement* took on for him the value of a "moral imperative" (Jean-Paul Sartre) to match the aesthetic imperative. The relationship between art and the present became ever more interwoven and profound: each work, whether achieved or merely planned, was conceived as a means of participating actively in a broader process of transformation of the social reality. In both his artistic and human biography the concept of engagement has been (and indeed continues to be) one of the most complex and fiercely debated issues, which can easily be misrepresented. Nono was a member of the Italian Communist Party from 1952 and of its Central Committee from March 1975. But he never betrayed the ideal of the committed artist, even when, in the latter phases of his life, his denunciations took on less direct forms, moving away from the reality of an explicit commitment vis-à-vis current political issues and heading toward other sources of inspiration, more specifically mythical thought. But in his most intensely political phase during the years 1960–70,[13] artistic milestones often coincided with biographical highpoints, for example, the various journeys he made in Eastern bloc countries starting in 1958, to the Soviet Union in 1963 and again in the 1970s, to the United States in 1965 and 1979, and to Latin America from 1967 onward, first to Argentina, then to Chile, Peru, and Cuba. This was the time when he measured himself against the theory and practice of international Marxism, participating in workers' movements during the 1960s and the students' revolt in 1968. For him, political militancy—made explicit in his ethical, social, and artistic choices—was inseparable from his activity as a musician continually in search of new sound worlds. Composing, making, and disseminating music repre-

sented a dialectic synthesis of art and life which he saw as the only means for a composer to "attain full self-realization" (274). But in the context of his whole career, the concept of engagement also applies to the "responsible" conception of research implicit in each new work and in the construction of an innovatory musical language whose revolutionary aspect lies *in* the resulting sound world. This means putting into perspective, if not actually rejecting out of hand, the notion of an alleged unpolitical phase for Nono in the 1980s: art experienced as responsibility and *subjective* commitment (associating the author, performer, and listener) is a constant which characterizes his whole artistic trajectory and is not confined to political content, whether overt or latent.

In the mid-1970s, after *Al gran sole carico d'amore,* Nono underwent a profound creative crisis.[14] Previous attributes such as the performer's prime function in the creative process or the role of technologies, were complemented by a new impulse toward the interiorization of the musical message and the concept of commitment. With the onset of the 1980s the chief characteristics of Nono's style—starting from the string quartet *Fragmente-Stille, an Diotima,* 1979–80—are silence, pauses, the juxtaposition of fragments in which *pianissimi* verging on the imperceptible alternate with explosions of sound, and the structural value of space. Although these elements have prompted some critics and commentators to speak of either a "turning-point" or abrupt caesuras in his artistic development,[15] there can be no doubt that the germ of all these elements was already present (and indeed exploited) in a number of works going back to the 1950s. In *Polifonica-Monodia-Ritmica,* for example, there are silences and sonorities verging on the inaudible, just as the chiaroscuro use of dynamics and the lacerated sonorities typical of some works dating from the 1980s are to be found in *Due espressioni per orchestra* (1953), *Il canto sospeso, La terra e la compagna* (1957), and *Cori di Didone.* Contrary to interpretations of technique or style dictated by sequential decades, one can recognize a continuous development running right through Nono's creative career, involving the unremitting elaboration of elements that go to nurture a sound world with a rich potential for imagery, at times verging on utopia.

The changes in the world political and social scene and the awareness of the progressive loss of a collective subject and the illusory nature of social revolution are visible in the texts that Nono selected for his compositions during the 1980s, clearly influenced by his friendship with the philosopher Massimo Cacciari: Friedrich Hölderlin, Rainer Maria Rilke, Robert Musil, the Hebrew mystics, Walter Benjamin, Edmond Jabès,

Giordano Bruno, Friedrich Nietzsche, Greek tragedy, and mythology. These new literary stimuli were complemented by the technical resources offered by live electronics, which Nono was able to explore at the Experimental Studio of the Heinrich Strobel Foundation, in Freiburg, Germany. He began to use this brand-new electronic laboratory in 1980, after about twenty years of experiments carried out at the Studio di Fonologia of RAI in Milan.

The philosophy underlying the creations of his last decade is characterized by his progressing through "attempts" or "choices" and his use of constant transformations of sound events in performance. This mode of proceeding by way of modeling the sound in real time and allowing it to be enriched by new possibilities thrown up as reactions to technical hitches, can be clearly seen in the genesis of *Prometeo,* constructed out of at least four preliminary works: *Io, frammento dal Prometeo* (1981), *Das atmende Klarsein, Quando stanno morendo. Diario polacco n. 2*, and *Guai ai gelidi mostri.* Although *Prometeo* features among Nono's works for the theater, the scenic or narrative element has actually been completely stripped away: all the action is in the sound, viewed as a mobile entity deprived of any visual apparatus and projected into a resonant space consisting of a wooden arklike structure specifically designed by Renzo Piano for the deconsecrated church of San Lorenzo in Venice for the first performance in 1984. Ideally *Prometeo* can be seen as the culmination of all the dramaturgical experiments carried out in the wake of *Intolleranza 1960*, subsumed in a sound world in which *sight* gradually cedes to pure *listening* (see "Toward *Prometeo*").

The search for *unprecedented* sound realities and what Nono refers to repeatedly as "*mobile* sound" is the basis of Nono's late work, characterized by an awareness, almost utopian, of the impossibility and at the same time the transience inherent in a search, whether on an artistic or a human level, that is always projected toward an infinite "beyond": "I think that the transformation taking place in our time is making intuition, intelligence, and the capacity of expressing such transformation into the new necessity of life: openness, studies, highly risky experiments, renouncing security and all guarantees, and even *purposes.* We have to know that we may fall at any moment, but we must always seek, nevertheless, seek the unknown" (384).

Perhaps the time of Nono's death, in 1990, is also the beginning of the end of that historical season in which all so-called avant-gardes were seen as playing an active role in social and cultural progress more gener-

ally. According to such a perspective, a composer could acquire the status and prestige of a leader on the musical scene. Nono had this role right from the beginning, and he shared it with few other composers of his generation. This was so much the case that in the specialist journalism of the 1950s, the image very soon crystalized of a hegemonic triad on the new European music scene, which, other than Nono, included Pierre Boulez and Karlheinz Stockhausen. While the reality was much more complex and multifaceted than this journalistic image suggests, there is no doubt that these three composers were united not only in the special quality of their respective musical outputs but also in a radical attitude and a subjective conviction, publicly expressed, of the *necessity* of their own work in relation to the historical horizon of the progress of musical language.

It was therefore consistent with this conviction that the composer would offer some kind of theory. Nono soon began to set his ideas down in writing, and his first texts, aimed mainly at technical considerations, have an objective importance in the context of the compositional theories of the time. However, while artists like Boulez and Stockhausen methodically pursued a formalization of their thought that, for some time, offered technical elucidations that correlated precisely with their own musical output (or sometimes, even, that of others), within a short time Nono abandoned this direction. Already from the early 1960s, compositional theory and the purely technical questions addressed in "The Development of Serial Technique" (1957) or in "Text—Music—Song" (1960) gave way to other issues. What now preoccupied him was an intensive critical engagement aimed at examining the social role of the composer and addressing the problem of communication, albeit without making compromises at the level of technical-compositional innovation. Whenever these issues arise forcefully in his literary output, Nono finds himself turning to new expressive means, finally discovering, with *Intolleranza 1960*, a theatrical format adapted to the dramaturgy hitherto only implicit in his music. From that moment on—alongside the trajectory of Nono the composer, as briefly mentioned—the output of this *scriptor de musica* often takes the form of polemical or directly political statements, a form that persisted for some time and was apparently abandoned only in the last years of his life, when new ideas of a seemingly more interior nature appear to take precedence over open commitment.

The reader will find timely echoes of all this in this volume, which gathers together for the first time Nono's writings translated into English. It is the hope of the editors that it might provide the premise for a

growth and a renewal in studies of his work, which up to now have flourished mostly in continental Europe. Recent signs of a promising increase in studies on Nono in English-speaking countries have, moreover, helped to highlight the lack (and the necessity) of a publication like this one.[16]

That a volume such as this sees the light of day only in 2018 should not, however, be taken to indicate that Anglo-Saxon music scholarship has been lagging behind. Even in Europe, knowledge of Nono's theoretical ideas has spread in a far from uniform fashion and not without obvious inconsistencies (on the linguistic and chronological level). Until the beginning of 2000, and more than ten years after his death, a collection of this type was not even available to the Italian public. Paradoxically, his most important theoretical writings of the 1950s (among them "The Development of Serial Technique") had until that date not even appeared in Italian.[17]

During Nono's lifetime, only one volume had been published, in German in 1975. This was a selection of writings published up to that point, many translated specially from the Italian originals, which appeared alongside a series of studies and commentaries by critics and musicologists close to him.[18] That first collection was conceived on the basis of criteria that inevitably reflected a specific phase in the reception of Nono's work. His profile, in 1975, was typically that of the politically committed artist who had his roots in a period of research—the 1950s—that had not yet been relegated to history, and toward which it was still legitimate to take a militant stance or, on the contrary, to adopt a distant position that allowed one to dismiss that recent past with an often excessive polemical verve. Only a year later, in 1976, Nono was urged by his friend the musicologist Massimo Mila to begin work on what would have been the first collection of his writings in Italian.[19] Nono welcomed the invitation and appreciated the opportunity that such a project presented. However, at the same time he felt for various reasons the clear need to adopt for the Italian edition a different approach from the German one. Unable to arrive at considered decisions in a manner not governed by haste, he thus decided to postpone the publication:

> Seeing it [the volume in German], I do not think it can be translated into Italian as it is.
>
> It has texts that are repetitive, short, and in some cases useless (perhaps for Germany it is fine in its entirety in view of their deafness, their ill-informed opinions or their a priori thinking). . . .

So:

I do not consider valid for Italy the republication of the book as it is.

It should be revised, edited down in parts, updated in others. . . .

So for now: let's suspend it altogether.[20]

After other unsuccessful attempts, Nono's initial interest in the edition project gradually began to wane, until it was finally set aside. In fact, for the first collection that took account of his entire career, one had to wait until 1993, the year in which the first posthumous edition of his writings came out, in a French translation.[21] The system was modeled by the editor on the collection published in Germany eighteen years previously, and many translations were made drawing not on the originals in Italian but on versions already subject to an initial translation into German.

In 1993, at the behest of Nuria Schoenberg Nono, the Luigi Nono Archive was established in Venice. This new accessibility of the author's legacy marked a decisive turning point for research into Nono's music and thought. It was thanks to having access to this extensive documentation and the composer's original materials that, as a result of several years of research, we managed in 2001 to collect almost all of Nono's Italian writings and conversations from the period between 1948 and 1989.[22] In editing the first edition of Nono's writings and interviews in Italian, we decided to follow a fundamental philological criterion, that is, to faithfully restore the author's original words, which had often been undermined in the various Italian or foreign publications by cuts, arbitrary editorial interventions, and translations that were at times approximate, and not always so merely by reason of Nono's idiosyncratic and sometimes impervious style. To this end, accurate checks were carried out, not only on all available print sources, but on the typewritten drafts (and in some cases, the manuscripts) that it was Nono's habit to preserve. This resulted in two volumes of writings and interviews (making a total of about twelve hundred pages), which contained almost everything Nono had published along with several unpublished items. All these appeared in a form as close as possible to the final "intentions of the author," as documented or at least able to be presumed.[23]

Having thus established a version of Nono's theoretical texts and his writings on his works, based on his original words, we came back six years later to compile those texts we considered the most significant into a more easily accessible edition, one that would be capable of wider

dissemination.[24] With the new 2007 collection, we intended to offer a volume of readings destined not only for specialists but for those wider audiences potentially interested in the ideas of one of the greatest composers of the twentieth century. This collection included only a selection of theoretical writings and lectures; the talks and interviews, meanwhile, which in 2001 had occupied the entire second volume, were completely excluded. Also excluded were the notes on individual works—today available on the website of the Luigi Nono Archive.[25]

Although the selection required difficult as well as inevitable compromises,[26] it resulted in an edition that gave preference to those statements in which Nono had objectively offered a more articulate exposition of his ideas. To these was then added a scrupulous selection of texts that would complete (and restore) as comprehensive an image as possible of the multiplicity of Nono's thought. Furthermore, by grouping texts according to thematic areas, the aim was to provide an effective alternative to the purely chronological arrangement that had been chosen for the two volumes published in 2001.

This anthology edition is the inspiration for the present volume, which—for reasons that will be mentioned later—preserves the same title: *Nostalgia for the Future*. Despite the substantial affinity, there are nonetheless fundamental differences between the two editions, which make the present volume, specially conceived for a wider, international audience, new and exclusive. First, there is the considerable expansion of content that is due to the presence of a selection of interviews and other texts, here called "Excursus" (I–VI), placed as intermezzos or thematic introductions between the various sections of the collection. Among them—almost a book within a book—is the long autobiographical interview collated and organized by the critic Enzo Restagno in 1987, three years before Nono's death. It is placed at the beginning of the volume as an introductory compendium (and retrospective) of the most important events of the composer's life and work.

The grouping of the texts in the volume into thematic areas has a sound justification. It is guided by our intention to offer a valid illustration of the different focuses of interest in Nono's thought, and the changes that can be objectively noted within each over time. The chronological arrangement of the writings in these individual sections therefore follows as a logical consequence from this choice.

In the first section, entitled "Musical Analysis and Composition," are found the reflections, dating from circa 1948 to 1960, concerned with musical technique, many of them aimed at the international community

of composers and referring to the Darmstadt courses; to these it was decided to add just one later text, written in 1976 (on *Il canto sospeso*), which, though preferring an approach that is more historical-documentary than analytical, presents a firsthand testimony regarding one of the most important compositions of the 1950s.

The second section, "Music Onstage: From a 'Theater of Ideas' to the 'Tragedy of Listening,'" is devoted to the renewal of music theater, a problem present in Nono's thinking since the early 1950s, and which came to the forefront following his experience with *Intolleranza 1960* (a period during which he wrote a group of texts dedicated to the subject). The realization of a "theater of ideas" and a "theater of situations," inspired by Sartre, dominates a long phase that embraces the central years of Nono's activity, approximately between 1960 and 1977. Thus, perceptible differences appear, in both the conceptual system and the form of expression, between the thoughts expressed in the 1980s in "Toward *Prometeo*" and Nono's earlier writings. These are indicative of the profound metamorphosis that his thoughts on musical dramaturgy underwent during those years.

Under the title "'Conscience, Feelings, Collective Reality,'" taken from a motto of Nono, one finds the most characteristic expressions of the "political" composer of the 1960s and 1970s. These pages begin by focusing the urgency of grounding the work of composition in an understanding of the historical emergence of social configurations, and represent the logical development of the program announced in 1959 with "Historical Presence of Music Today." This, in fact, is the prelude to the passionate resumption of the Sartrian question "Why write?" (formulated for the first time in "Text—Music—Song" of 1960), which, at the turn of a decade, is transformed into a harsh and thorough polemic against contemporary European avant-garde music (see "Music and Power," 1969). During those years, his orientation toward a politically focused musical production was sharpened and radicalized. It was aligned both with an agenda derived from a "progressive" reading of national culture (see "Music and Resistance," 1963) and with that of the international workers' movement. The five texts assembled, therefore, testify to Nono the political militant, not only in his role as a musician, but also as a political observer. A good example is provided by "In the Sierra and in the Parliament" (1971), a militant reportage of a trip to the countries of South America. In all, one can find traces of the rather complex relationship that Nono had with the Italian Communist Party, in which he was actively involved from 1952 onward.

The fourth section, "Portraits and Dedications," is devoted to backward glances into the past and to persons who featured in different ways in Nono's biography as both man and artist. Mirroring the progress of a journey, of an artistic and emotional awareness gradually attained, or of an ever more living "presence" of the past, it is no coincidence that they focus especially on Nono's last two decades, the 1970s and 1980s. Here too, in contrast to the Italian edition, we preferred to give space to personalities closer to American and extra-European cultures, rather than to those with closer links to the Italian political or artistic scene.

The fifth and final section, "The 'Possible Infinities,'" attests to the doubts and anxieties of Nono's last decade. It brings together his most radically questioning reflections, which go hand in hand with a poetic approach very different from that adopted in the past. It is marked by the productive uncertainties and the utopian openness that are typical of his last, but earnest, creative phase.

In a play of concentric circles, the five sections are embedded among the six "Excurses," of which the last ("'Proust' Questionnaire") is placed, as if closing the circle, as a literal *pendant* to the short text ("Clarifications") placed at the beginning as an "Overture" to the entire book. These two texts were in fact written thirty years apart from each other—the first in 1956, the second in 1986—and in their character as autobiographical sketches, they can be seen (playing with the title of a well-known composition of the 1980s) as a true *prae-ludium* and *post-ludium* to the entire collection.

It is precisely in the "'Proust' Questionnaire" that, to the question "The main trait of your character?" Nono responds: "Nostalgia for the future." No title could have summed up better that yearning toward a new and different knowledge and reality of sound, one that remains projected toward the future, and that particular propulsive *spleen* that accompanied Nono throughout his entire creative itinerary.

The texts reproduced in the present edition were translated from the definitive versions established for the 2001 and 2007 editions.[27] For a detailed illustration of the at times highly complex methods and issues involved in the heuristic and philological research that went into reconstructing the original forms of Nono's texts, we refer the more curious reader to a further explanatory article,[28] and also to the preface and the critical and bibliographical footnotes of the two collections in Italian.[29] The most pertinent information on the relevant sources and the history of the individual texts is nevertheless summarized here in a

special section, "Bibliographic Notes and Comments to the Texts," which acts as a documentary appendix. As a rule, the first edition and the subsequent reprints and/or known translations are given here. The title of each text is provided in the original language (even if different from Italian) near the information regarding the first printed editions; only rarely, and in cases of multiple or spurious versions, are reprints and/or translations taken into account. The title should be assumed to be unchanged unless otherwise indicated. For interviews, the editorial title, if any, is given.

Editorial footnotes, explanations and contextual comments regarding individual texts are cued with superscript Arabic numerals and displayed at the end of the book. Any original footnotes (whether originating with the author or the text's publisher) are, on the other hand, placed at the foot of the page, with superscript Roman numerals; occasionally these may contain additional editorial comments placed in square brackets. Bibliographic references – here updated for the Anglo-American reader – contained within editorial footnotes occasionally include supplementary information about editions present in Nono's rich personal library, preserved at the archive in Venice. Mentioning the existence of an annotated copy is tantamount to providing a concrete testimony of Nono's interests and the reading he pursued alongside his activity as a composer.

The volume is rounded off with "Chronology of Nono's Works," a reference tool offered to enable the reader to retrace the composer's creative arc, especially in terms of the dating or the instrumental forces of works cited in the volume.

Unlike in the Italian editions, it was decided to overlook certain purely philological peculiarities. The texts are reproduced in their entirety; any indications of discrepancies or substantial variants with other sources are noted, if deemed important to the history of the text, in the "Bibliographic Notes and Comments to the Texts" or, exceptionally, in the editorial footnotes.[30]

Certain general choices implicated in the translation process involved the notion of presumed "faithfulness" to the register of the author's language. In the 2001 and 2007 editions, we made a priority of returning to Nono's original words, previously often distorted or "domesticated" in the editing of the various printed editions. In preparing this English edition, however, we considered the need to preserve as far as possible the utility and comprehensibility of the texts to be of paramount importance. The problems related to translating these texts into other languages are indeed particular ones that go far beyond the

difficulties inherent in the usual dichotomy of "translation vs. betrayal." The difficulties, indeed, are related primarily to the altogether personal idiosyncrasies of Nono's writing.

Those scholars who have already set themselves the challenge of reading the texts in the original language will know that Nono's writing, even in Italian, often demands a painstaking hermeneutical effort. When delivering a piece of writing for publication, Nono would almost always submit a text whose stylistic and orthographical characteristics were ill-adapted to commonly accepted conventions. His style—in grammar, spelling, and syntax—is not easily reconciled with the conventional rules of his mother tongue, nor to the criteria of *bella scrittura*. Not infrequently, his personal syntax, certain writer's quirks (such as his constant use of the lower case),[31] or even the use of an entirely personal vocabulary, such as neologisms or substantivized verbs or adjectives, increases the risk of linguistic error. This state of affairs is not, moreover, attributable simply to the carelessness or alleged irresponsibility of those publishers of Nono's texts or interviews, even if, in their print editions, the originals were often inundated by corrections that tended to level the text and bring its readability back within the confines of recognized linguistic conventions.[32] The "utopia" often invoked by Nono in his later years to define his sound horizon was already, from the 1950s, firmly established in his way of phrasing and expressing himself on paper.

So, in translating Nono's peculiar manner of expression, most of the choices used here aim at the intelligibility of the text. On an orthographic level, for example, it was decided to follow English writing conventions in the use of initial capitalization and punctuation.[33] The formatting of the texts has been normalized in comparison with the originals. In only one case ("For Helmut"), the graphic layout of the text has been retained in a way that is faithful to the original, due to the importance of the manner of the text's spatial unfolding on the page. Even on the level of syntax, certain adaptations have been deemed appropriate to safeguard the intelligibility of the English idiom. The interlinguistic accommodation necessitated in the act of translation (faithful in meaning, free in adaptation) does not render these texts simple to read, nor does it amend them of their roughness or of the originality of formulation characteristic of Nono's style. Only in rare cases, and to leave intact the liveliness of his turn of phrase, have we opted for a literal translation of individual terms, typical of the composer's vocabulary: among these, words that Nono modified from technical lan-

guages, such as the frequent metaphorical use of the term *formant* (borrowed from acoustics). A number of these were carefully weighed up before being adopted in the English version. An example is the recurring term *sound bands,* which translates a phrase (*fasce sonore,* literally: "sound belts"), much used in the jargon of Italian composers to indicate multi-stratified, shifting, and continuous sound textures, but not firmly established in writing on music, especially in the English language.[34] Other words characteristic of Nono's vocabulary are sometimes placed in square brackets in the original language after the translation. In this way, we desired not so much, or not only, to highlight the difficulty of translating them, but to insert them in a specific context that indicates to the reader those points at which, even in his mother tongue, the flow of Nono's thoughts could no longer be contained within conventional linguistic or syntactic schemes. What is characteristic, in this regard, is the frequent use of substantivized verbs, attaining in the case of the term *pensari*, often present in the texts of Nono's last decade, the status of a true linguistic coinage. This term is born from the nominalization of the verb *to think* (It. *pensare*), but sometimes in the plural (*pensari*), and is often associated with adjectives that underline its vastness ("other *pensari*," "infinite *pensari*," etc.). This choice of Nono's is entirely poetic: *pensari* is an almost nonexistent word in the Italian lexicon, which can, and in a certain sense must, be watered down into the more conventional "ways of thinking" (the translation preferred here). But it is in the conciseness and vividness of such a nominalization, deliberately used in an arbitrary fashion, that Nono adds greater weight to the plurality of his thought, and it was therefore our wish to leave a trace of these grammatical stress points and to show some recognition of them.

Worthy of mention in itself is the translation of the terms *serial/series,* which are not always used in a manner consistent either with twelve-tone music or with the music properly termed serial (in which the concept of series is extended to all parameters). In this regard, we have preferred as far as possible to disambiguate the two meanings (fundamental in certain texts of the first section): whenever the Italian term *seriale/serie* relates to the dimension of pitch, as in the music of Schoenberg and Webern, it is always translated as *(twelve) tone/tone row;* on the other hand, whenever the Italian term refers to the more properly serial-multiparametric usage typical of the 1950s, the English *serial/series* is used. Indeed, in the text that is most significant in this regard, "The Development of Serial Technique" of 1957, Nono almost always places the adjective *serial* in quotation marks. Unique to this

essay is also the observance of a usage on which Nono explicitly insisted,[35] that is the use of German to indicate certain forms and procedures of twelve-tone music (e.g., *Krebs, Umkehrung, Spiegel*): for consistency, they have not been translated into English here. The same choice has been made regarding other terms or concepts used systematically by Nono in a language other than Italian,[36] whereas certain general or place names that are well known in their English forms are for that reason translated into English, regardless of how Nono used to cite them in his originals.

Nono's habit of not providing in full the forenames of persons mentioned, tending rather to give initials only, has been respected here. Forenames have been added only in ambiguous cases, whereas they are given in full in the index of names. It should also be noted that we have chosen to retain the facsimile reproduction of manuscripts in the music examples of "Toward *Prometeo*" and the original examples of "On the Development of Serial Technique" (from 1956, partly taken from printed editions of the time); all other examples have been recreated *ex novo*.

Finally, due mention should be made of the long "Autobiography of the Author Recounted by Enzo Restagno," whose peculiar stylistic register and readable smoothness reflect the kind of origin that urges caution. As the text's title reveals, the one "recounting" Nono's memory streams and recollections is the interviewer, Enzo Restagno, who has subjected Nono's answers to a wholesale editorial restructuring, one that was admittedly arbitrary and which cannot unfortunately be documented today due to the loss of the original tapes of the interview.[37]

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Veniero Rizzardi