



ACADEMY OF MUSIC AND DRAMA

***“Sequenza I per flauto solo”* Luciano Berio**
Differences between the proportional notation
edition and the traditional rhythmic edition and
its implications for the interpreter

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**Independent Project, Master of Fine Arts in Music with Specialisation in Symphonic
Orchestra**

Spring Semester. Year 2020

Independent Project (Degree Project), 30 higher education credits
Master of Fine Arts in Music with Specialisation in Symphonic Orchestra
Academy of Music and Drama, University of Gothenburg
Spring Semester. Year 2020

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Title: "*Sequenza I per flauto solo*. Luciano Berio. Differences between the proportional notation edition and the traditional rhythmic edition and its implications for the interpreter"

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ABSTRACT

This master thesis presents a comparison between the two versions of the piece *Sequenza I* for solo flute, written by Luciano Berio. Finding two editions of a piece with so different approach regarding the notation is not so common and understanding the process behind their composition is really important for its interpretation. Because of that, this thesis begins with the composer's framework as well as the evolution of the piece composition and continues with the differences between both scores. The comparison has been done from a theoretical perspective, with the scores for reference as well as from an interpretative point of view.

Finally, the author explains her own decisions and conclusions regarding the interpretation of the piece, obtained from this investigation.

KEY WORDS:

Berio, sequenza, flute, proportional notation, traditional rhythmic notation.

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BACKGROUND /PERSONAL INTEREST

The *sequenza* for solo flute written by Luciano Berio is one of the most important pieces for this instrument that we can find in the second half of the 20th century. For me it meant, when I began to practice it in the third year of my bachelor degree, an intermediate step between repertoire prior to the 20th century, which presents a traditional notation in which music is organised in bars, and contemporary repertoire, which several times develops and varies these conventional approaches, giving us new paths.

This piece presents the curiosity of having two editions, both written by Luciano Berio himself, and whose main difference is the rhythmic notation that is used. The first edition, published in 1958, presents a proportional rhythmic notation and, on the other hand, the edition published in 1992 has a traditional rhythmic notation.

When you are a student and you face this piece for the first time, it is quite common to follow the guidelines that your teacher provides you with. In my case, he advised me to choose the 1958 edition with proportional rhythmic notation and, of course, that is what I did. However, my current position as a flute master student along with my interest in this composer, has encourage me to investigate by myself, to compare the characteristics of both editions, and to verify if one of them could bring me more advantages than the other. Because of this, I would like to go deeper and develop this topic, looking for a better knowledge of the piece and the best way of playing it, while taking the conclusions obtained from the research into account.

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

The aim of this thesis is to obtain deeper knowledge of *Sequenza I* for flute and the two editions that have been published, looking for, a better understanding of the work from a musician's perspective, and to improve my own interpretation of it as a flute player.

When we face this *Sequenza*, several questions arise such as: Why did Berio change the notation? Was it because of aesthetic issues? How does each edition affect the interpretation of the piece? Could we say that one edition is better than the other, or at least more advisable?

To answer these questions, the methodology which I will proceed with will be to, firstly, to study the existing bibliography regarding the interpretation of *Sequenza I*, as well as the influences that Berio had when he composed this piece, and secondly, to carry out my own comparative study of the two editions, both theoretically and practically in order to reach a conclusion based on the knowledge acquired during this process.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 SEQUENCES

Between 1958 and 2002, the composer Luciano Berio, who was born in 1925 near Imperia, wrote fourteen pieces for solo instrument called *Sequenzas*. This collection began with a work for solo flute which was written for the flute player Severino Gazzelloni. He sent Berio a letter explaining the urgent need of a 4- 5 minute new piece that he would play in a recital organized by “Musik der Zeit” since he had been invited by the Radio of Cologne. The group of *sequenzas* ends with the *Sequenza XIV* for cello, which would have a posthumous revision made by Stefano Scodanibbio for double bass and that was published in 2004.

The title of this work, as we can appreciate, does not have a poetic pretension nor does it seek to evoke extramusical elements. The collection was given the name of *Sequenzas* with the motivation to emphasize the way in which the works are constructed within it. As Berio explains in his interview with Rossana Dalmonte:

“The title was meant to underline that the piece was built from a sequence of harmonic fields (as indeed are almost all the *Sequenzas*) from which the other, strongly characterized musical functions were derived.” (BERIO 1985:97)

Virtuosity is one of the most outstanding and relevant characteristics that all the *sequenzas* share. There is an exploration in the development of the technical capacities that the instrument offers but without forgetting, at the same time, the musical quality and complexity of the work, which is just important as the virtuosity itself, trying not to fall into an empty discourse regarding the compositional quality. Furthermore, a virtuoso must not only show technical agility but must expose the interpretive capacity and sensitivity necessary to face this repertoire.

“Anyone worth calling a virtuoso these days has to be a musician capable of moving the tension between the creativity of yesterday and today. My own *Sequenzas* are written with this sort of interpreter in mind, whose virtuosity is, above all, a virtuosity of knowledge.” (BERIO 1985:91)

Another unifying element of the *sequenzas* is the way the instrument is used. Under his point of view, an instrument should not be modified and the composer can only contribute to its musical transformation, trying to understand the complex nature of its evolution over time. Berio himself states that he is really attracted by this slow transformation and for this reason, he never tried to alter the nature of the instrument or go against it.

“It may well be due to my “eurocentricity”, but I always thought that to “prepare” a piano was a bit like drawing a moustache on the Mona Lisa” (BERIO 1985:92)

For this reason, we can see a clear intention in the idiomatic development of the instrument in his sequences, but not alterations of it with external objects or materials. Examples of this are the utilization of frullato, keys slaps and multiphonics in the *Sequenza I* for solo flute.

All the *sequenzas* aim to establish and develop in a melodic way a harmonic content, while also looking for a feeling of polyphonic listening, especially in the case of monophone instruments. The ideal that our composer had as a reference was the polyphony within the melodies of J. S. Bach, although, he never ceased to be aware of the utopia that this objective entailed, since Bach was supported by nothing less than the entire context of the Baroque language while, for instance, in the first sequence for flute everything had to be planned out explicitly. However, in pursuing the ideal of implicit polyphony, he discovered the heterophonic possibilities in melodies. (BERIO 1985)

The writing of the *sequenzas* was not work that Berio carried out in isolation as a composer but quite the opposite. He always showed great interest in working and collaborating with the interpreters, as it is evidenced by the letters he shared with both Severino Gazzelloni, when he was writing the sequence for flute published in 1958 and those shared with Aurèle Nicolet, when the recording of the same piece was made with the new 1992 edition.

Berio, in turn, wrote the piece especially for the performer. In this regard, the composer said "I wrote this piece tailored for Severino Gazzelloni as a fashion designer makes a dress for a beautiful woman, and I must say that writing for Gazzelloni is very stimulating!" (DRINEK, 2003:26)

Other collaborations are also notable, such as with the trombonist Stuart Dempster in the composition of the sequence V and the close relationship he had with the American mezzo-soprano Cathy Berberian, with whom he married and for whom he composed numerous works such as the third *Sequenza*, for voice.

"In fact, *Sequenza III* is not only written for Cathy but is about Cathy" (BERIO 1985:94)

In the next chart we have the complete list of *sequenzas* together with the year of their composition, the performers, as well as the years of their premiere:

<i>Sequenza I</i>	flauta	1958/1992	Severino Gazzelloni (IT)	1958, Darmstadt
<i>Sequenza II</i>	harpa	1963	Francis Pierre (FR)	1963, Darmstadt
<i>Sequenza III</i>	voz feminina	1965	Cathy Berberian (US/AM)	1966, Bremen
<i>Sequenza IV</i>	piano	1966	Jocy de Oliveira (BR)	1966, St. Louis
<i>Sequenza V</i>	trombone	1966	Stuart Dempster (US)	21/03/1966, São Francisco
<i>Sequenza VI</i>	viola	1967	Walter Trampler (DE)	1967, Nova Iorque
<i>Sequenza VII</i>	oboé	1969	Heinz Holliger (CH)	1969, Basileia
<i>Sequenza VIIb</i>	saxofone soprano	1993	transcrição por Claude Delange	20/05/1993, Strasbourg
<i>Sequenza VIII</i>	violino	1976	Carlo Chiarappa (IT) (encomendada por Serena de Bellis)	1977, La Rochelle
<i>Sequenza IX</i>	clarinete	1980	Michel Arignou (FR)	1980, Paris
<i>Sequenza IXb</i>	saxofone alto	1981		1981, Londres, por John Harle
<i>Sequenza IXc</i>	clarone	1998	transcrição por Rocco Parisi	17/10/1997, Torino
<i>Sequenza X</i>	trompete (e ressonâncias de piano)	1984	Thomas Stevens (US)	1984, Los Angeles
<i>Sequenza XI</i>	violão	1988	Eliot Fisk (US) - encomendada pela <i>Associazione Filarmonica di Rovereto</i> (IT)	20/04/1988, Rovereto
<i>Sequenza XII</i>	fagote	1995	Pascal Gallois (FR)	15/06/1995, Paris
<i>Sequenza XIII</i>	acordeon <i>Chanson</i>	1995	Teodoro Anzelotti (IT/DE)	09/11/1995, Roterdã
<i>Sequenza XIV</i>	violoncelo	2002	Rohan de Saram (UK/LK)	28/04/2002, Witten
<i>Sequenza XIVb</i>	contrabaixo	2004	transcrição póstuma por Stefano Scodanibbio	15/06/2004, Stuttgart

Source of the chart: Ferraz, Ana, "L'interpretation de la Sequenza I." (Master thesis, 2018)

1.2 EVOLUTION OF THE *SEQUENZA I*

Sequenza I for flute, is one of the most important works of the early post war years written for this instrument due to its complexity, its high level of virtuosity and the proportional notation that characterizes the edition published in 1958. It is not possible to talk about the 20th century repertoire for flute without mentioning it and making a special place for it among notable works such as *Syrinx* written by Debussy in 1915 or *Density 21.5*, composed by Varèse in 1936.

The first edition of the *Sequenza* for flute was presented in 1958 by the editorial Suvini Zerboni and what is most striking is the type of notation used. Berio presented a work with spatial notation, without structure by bars and without a rhythm written in a traditional way that apparently sought to provide the interpreter with the necessary flexibility for its interpretation and with which he intended to solve the problem of the extreme rhythmic difficulty of the piece. The rhythmical notation is based on small marks, for reference, with an established metronome time and a separation between the notes that gives an idea of their duration and location in time. This gives the flutist some freedom to play with the rhythm within the established structure but without deforming the proportions.

It is not so much the question of slower or faster speed, but rather – once the speed is selected- the proportions of the durations. It follows as a consequence that one must also choose a tempo (I have MM 70 indicated, that should be interpreted with a little flexibility), which permits one to respect these proportional relations. These proportions will always be a little approximate to be sure because of the adopted notation. But I only selected this “proportional” notation in order to allow a certain accommodation for the interpreter in the extremely dense and quick passage. Each flutist can therefore adapt the degree of speed, but always keeping the indicated proportions. (BERIO)¹

Example of the 1958 edition with proportional notation:



Example 1. 1958 edition, first system.

However, this was not the composer's first approach, since his initial idea presented a very precise rhythmic notation framed in a 2/8 bar that he finally abandoned at the request of Gazzelloni.

“He originally wrote it in exceptionally fine detail (almost like Ferneyhough in the original form), but Gazzelloni could not handle it, so Berio decided to use proportional notation” (WEISSER, 1998:38)

¹ Fragment of a letter written by Luciano Berio to Aurèle Nicolet and published in the book: *Berio's Sequenzas. Essays on Performance, Composition and Analysis*. Chapter 1: Rhythm and Timing in the two versions of Berio's *Sequenza I* for Flute. Pages 13-14

Here we have an example of the first phrase of the piece, extracted from the first sketch²:



Example 2. Typesetting of Berio's handwritten example of *Sequenza I* from a letter to A. Nicolet (1966)

Despite the fact that finally the decision was to use proportional notation as a solution and that was how it was published in 1958. Berio was not satisfied with the interpretations that were being carried out of his work, as he confessed to Rossana Dalmonte in an interview and because of that he considered rewriting the *Sequenza* for flute.

The piece is very difficult, and I therefore adopted a notation that was very precise, but allowed a margin of flexibility in order that the player might have the freedom – psychological rather than musical – to adapt the piece here and there to his technical stature. But instead, this notation has allowed many players – none of them by any means shining examples of professional integrity – to perpetrate adaptations that were little short of practical. In fact, I hope to rewrite *Sequenza I* in rhythmic notation: maybe it will be less “open” and more authoritarian, but at least it will be reliable (BERIO, 1985: 99)

Sequenza I was published again in 1992. On this occasion, it presented a “conventional” notation in which the rhythm is traditionally notated, although again without bars, in order to maintain fluidity in the performance.

Example of the 1992 edition with traditional rhythmic notation:



Example 3. 1992 edition, first system.

At the time I wrote *Sequenza I*, in 1958, I considered the piece so difficult for the instrument that I didn't want to impose on the player specific rhythmic patterns. I wanted the player to wear the music as a dress, not as a straitjacket. But as a result, even good performers were taking liberties that didn't make any sense, taking the spatial notation almost as a pretext for improvisation. Certainly some sort of flexibility is part of the conception of the work. But the overall speed, the high amount of register shifts, the fact that all parameters are constantly under pressure, will automatically bring a feeling of instability, an openness which is part of the expressive quality of the work – a kind of “work-in-progress” character if you want. (BERIO 1997:19)

² Typesetting of Berio's handwritten example of *Sequenza I* from a letter to A. Nicolet (1966) published in the book: *Berio's Sequenzas. Essays on Performance, Composition and Analysis*. Chapter 1: *Rhythm and Timing in the two versions of Berio's Sequenza I for Flute*. Page 17

It could be expected that this last edition was a faithful transcription of the one published in 1958, trying to transfer the rhythm that was previously proportional to traditional notation, but when comparing them we realize that this is not the case. When Berio made the decision to rewrite the piece, he did not take the proportional edition as a reference but returned to his first sketches of the work with the idea of, pencil in hand, modifying the rhythms to facilitate them and eliminate some excess of complexity.

The truth is that Berio originally composed the flute *Sequenza* in standard notation back in 1958. It was written using very strict serial rhythms, and was barred in 2/8 from start to end. The notation was very similar to his other works published by Suvini Zerbini, for example the *Quartetto* (1956), or *Serenata I* (1957). This is the moment when proportional notation was “born” because Berio rightly felt that the original notation was too awkward. He therefore proceeded to transform this *Sequenza* visually into the version that we all now know. Unfortunately, over the years, he became increasingly disappointed with how the flute players approached this notation which is by no means as free as it seems. (This was the case, in effect, with all his proportionally notated pieces.) ... M^o Berio asked me to process the original version on the computer (I worked from his personal original transparencies). With this in hand he “corrected” his own notation, smoothing the original rhythms down. In a sense, he did in 1991 what he perhaps should have done back in 1958. There is no question that I began from a renotated version. The Suvini Zerbini publication is in reality a renotated version of the original. (ROBERTS, 2005)³

1.3 INFLUENCE OF SERIALISM AND THE “OPEN WORK” OF UMBERTO ECO IN BERIO’S WORK

The courses Berio attended in Darmstadt were a great influence on his way of composing. After having a first contact with the world of serialism thanks to Luigi Dallapiccola in USA, Darmstadt gave him the opportunity to meet composers of the stature of Boulez or Stockhausen, who not only defended the use of the twelve-tone system as a construction technique for the pitches, but also took this model to all the other parameters of the composition. Boulez argued that the new generations of composers should start from the serial process to generate the structure, durations, dynamics, articulation and timbres in a creative way within it. Berio was impressed by Boulez and greatly admired his writings. However, despite the great influence that that serialist ideas had within the musical world, it began to rival against the ideas that John Cage promoted from the United States regarding the freedom of the performer, basing his work on randomness and chance operations.

Total indeterminacy against the total control that serialism supported was the framework in which Berio was operating, two fundamentally opposite approaches. However, we can find the reconciliation in the figure of Umberto Eco, Italian writer and

³ Email message from Paul Roberts to Cynthia Folio and Alexander R. Brinkman and published in the book: *Berio’s Sequenzas. Essays on Performance, Composition and Analysis*. Chapter 1: *Rhythm and Timing in the two versions of Berio’s Sequenza I for Flute*. Pages 15-16

philosopher with whom Berio maintained a close friendly relationship. Eco proposed an innovative approach to the structure, the "open work", which defined as follows:

...one that "produces in the interpreter acts of conscious freedom, putting him at the center of a net of inexhaustible relations among which he inserts his own form." ... What is more important, adopting the proper attitude toward an open work has political and social ramifications: the open work denied conventional views of the world, replacing them with a sense of its discontinuity, disorder, and dissonance (ECO, 1962)⁴

Based on the work of James Joyce, Eco proposed the idea of maintaining a frame, based on the old forms while the interpreter could move within it, molding the upper layers and creating an apparent feeling of disorder.

Eco's exemplary open musical works consists of rigorously composed parts that may be assembled in many different orders (as in Stockhausen's *Klavierstück XI* [1957]), or of parts whose relation is capable of change even if their order is fixed (as in the durations and tempos of Berio's original *Sequenza* for flute [1958]); an open work is not improvisatory like jazz or Indian raga, nor is it a complete refusal of intention and control, as in Cage's Zen-influenced works. Open works are not indeterminate, not totally without pre-existing structure, but rather suspended between many different but fully determinate structures. Thus they enable a composer, in principle at least, to reconcile the apparently contradictory imperatives of complete control, which reached its apotheosis in the total serialism of the earlier Boulez and Stockhausen, and the freedom in performance that was the hallmark of Cage's aleatory works. (MURPHY, 1999)

The *Sequenza* for flute, published in 1958, was born as a result of all these influences. On one hand we can find traces of the twelve-note system that was defended in Darmstadt and on the other, a type of rhythmic notation that seeks to give the interpreter the necessary flexibility to undertake such complex work. However, the publication in 1992 of a new edition of the piece, with traditional rhythmic notation, leads us to wonder if Berio, despite verbally presenting his piece as an open work, is not contradicting himself with the new score.

⁴ Work cited: Umberto Eco, *The Open Work*, trans. Anna Cancogni (Cambridge, 1989.) p.4 published in the book: *Berio's Sequenzas. Essays on Performance, Composition and Analysis*. Chapter 11: *Vestiges of Twelve-Tone Practice as Compositional Process in Berio's Sequenza I for Solo Flute*. Page 19

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 NOTATION AND RHYTHM

2.1.1 PROPORTIONAL NOTATION AND TRADITIONAL RHYTHMIC NOTATION

- Proportional Notation

The decision of finally writing *Sequenza I* with proportional rhythmic notation was not arbitrary but, as we previously mentioned, the result of influences like Umberto Eco's "open work", which promoted a fixed structure of the piece in which the interpreter had, at the same time, the necessary flexibility to be able to move among a series of fixed parameters, as well as Severino Gazzelloni's request of simplifying the notation of the piece.

In this kind of notation, rhythmical figures such as quavers or crotchets are not assigned to the different pitches in order to specify their durations. On the contrary, notes and silences are determined by the spatial position that they take up within the timeline.

Even though proportional notation seeks to provide flutists with some margin of flexibility in relation with their interpretation as well as to be able to adapt certain passages of great rhythmical density to their abilities, it is also true that it presents a series of issues. In the first place, speaking from my personal experience, it is a challenge facing this type of notation without previous experience. Even though we do find other examples of proportional notation in the solo flute repertoire like *Musica per flauto solo* (1965) by Kees van Baaren, *Studie II* (1969) by Cristóbal Halffter or *Serene* (1978) by Toni Bruyneel, these are minor works by composers of less renown than Berio, so it is not completely unreasonable to think that *Sequenza I* would be the first approach to proportional notation for the majority of flutists. We can find other relatively contemporary examples of proportional notations in the repertoire for other instruments, or even ensemble and orchestral works. However, these types of notation are not standard, so the way in which each composer decides to write ends up being quite different. Some notable examples are:

Music of changes (1951), for piano solo, by John Cage. In this piece, a quarter note equals 2.5 centimeters in the score (almost one inch). However, we don't find any temporal markings for each pulse, as we do in Berio, except for a barline in the middle of each system. Cage still uses traditional rhythmic values, albeit in an ambiguous way, which is a hallmark of his style.

69 = \downarrow = 200mm. ACCEL. **MUSIC OF CHANGES** John Cage

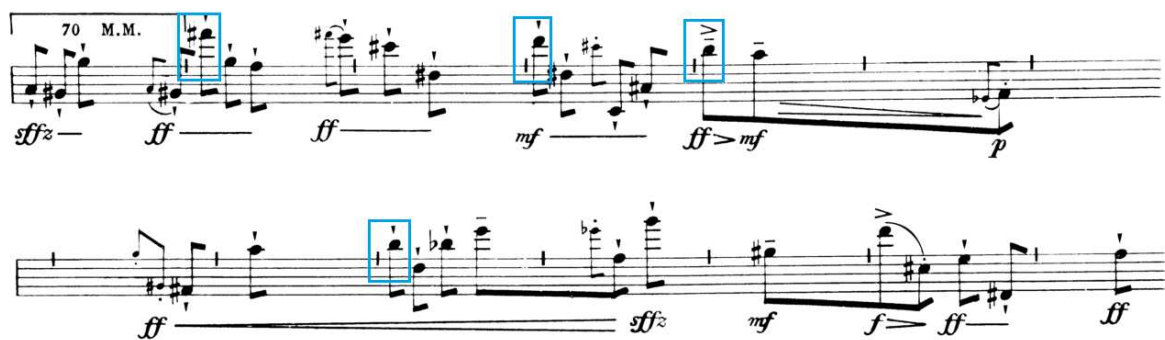
Kontakte (1958-60), for fixed electronics, piano and percussion, by Karlheinz Stockhausen. In this piece, the different events are framed in temporal references of variable duration, which allow the player to be synchronous with the fixed electronic music.

Nr.12 Kontakte Karlheinz Stockhausen

String Quartet (1964), by Witold Lutosławski. This score presents an interesting approach, halfway between traditional and proportional rhythmic notations.

Périodes (1974), for ensemble, by Gérard Grisey. In this example we find a very similar notation to that of Berio, since the beats are marked by vertical lines, while notes and their durations are written proportionally inside those beats. The particularity of this piece is that this one needs to be conducted, which means the conductor will indicate the beats (the vertical lines), and the musicians will play the notes proportionally in those spaces.

Another aspect of the issues that proportional notation shows, it is the ambiguity presented by the writing itself. An example of this is where to place, when playing the piece, the first note after the line which serves as reference within the timeline. As can be observed in the next fragment of the score marked in red, we have two notes which are both very close to the time marking. However, the distance between this notes and their corresponding line is not exactly the same. Should the flutist take the time to precisely measure that distance in order to add a small silence (corresponding to the distance) when playing the piece? If this kind of notation is aiming for some flexibility during interpretation, does curbing oneself to this level of detail meet this goal? If not, should the flutist make an approximate interpretation of the notes, taking them as a mere reference?



Example 4. 1958 edition, first and second systems.

If we take the rhythmically traditional edition of 1992 and locate these same examples, we notice how this problem immediately disappears, since both are written as a downbeat (if we divide the score in quarter note beats). This might make us rethink whether or not such small distances between the reference line and the first note of a beat should be considered, and from what distance is a note not considered a downbeat anymore.



Example 5. 1992 edition, first system.

In relation to the methodology of study when facing *Sequenza I*, I propose some different ways that have been useful for me. The first one would be to simply use a metronome. To make sure we won't skew the stability of the *tempo* due to the technical difficulties, we could set the metronome to 70, allowing us some level of flexibility in the inner organization of each pulse. However, by doing this, we might be making the mistake of perhaps falling into a too strict sense of *tempo*, such avoiding the fluidity in phrasing that Berio was aiming for. Another strategy to adhere to the correct proportionality, that was so important for the composer, would be to use a ruler to precisely measure the spaces between the notes in order to reflect the written distances during interpretation. However,

this took me to a level of curbing which moves away from the ideas expressed by Berio, since the piece should be like a dress for the flutist, not a straitjacket. Finally, we can always take previous recordings of the piece, or directives from a teacher as a reference, since an auditory example can always be of great help, but this would risk imitating the commonly repeated errors that made Berio rewrite the *Sequenza* with traditional rhythmic notation.

- Traditional rhythmic notation

The second edition of *Sequenza I* for flute was published in 1992 with a significant change in its notational approach. Berio finally made the decision of rewriting the score using, in this case, a traditional rhythmic notation, as was his original idea before publishing the piece with proportional notation. It is quite notable that in spite of the kind of notation and that the whole piece could be framed in a 2/8 bar, except for some exceptions, the piece is not divided by barlines.

It would be expected that this second edition of the piece would resolve all of the issues from the original edition, and that it would be, as such, an improved version. Nevertheless, we do find some other challenges. Berio himself took for granted, as we saw in the theoretical framework, that after rewriting the score, the piece would be “less open” but more reliable. This kind of notation, which presents a high level of rhythmical detail, entails for the interpreter a bigger responsibility and a certain level of psychological stress, adding to the technical complexity in itself for the flutist. However, it is also worth mentioning that when this second edition was published in 1992, years had passed since the emergence of aesthetical movements like the so called *New complexity*, best represented by composer Brian Ferneyhough, whose piece *Cassandra's Dream Song*, also for solo flute, was written in 1970, and only premiered in 1974 precisely due to its high level of rhythmical complexity. Berio, in the 1992 edition, really tried to somehow simplify his original sketches, and conformed to only using three types of irrational rhythms: triplets, quintuplets and septuplets.

In relation to the methodology of study, the way of approaching this score that I used was to divide it with barlines in every beat. This helped me to clarify and structure the written rhythm because reading the score lineally without these markings was quite difficult for me. However, the direct disadvantage of this tool would again be the possible lack of direction in phrasing as well as a more vertical than horizontal interpretation, without fluidity. One possible solution is to mark bigger bars, comprising whole phrases, allowing the interpreter to have a more spacious view, instead of reading beat by beat.

2.1.2 RHYTHMIC DIFFERENCES

There are three types of differences according to the writing of durations and rhythm. In the first place, we find those in which a value has been added in respect to the original, as are the following examples:



Example 5.a. 1958 edition, hash marks 1-2



Example 5.b. 1992 edition, 1st system



Example 6.a. 1958 edition, hash marks 28-29



Example 6.b. 1992 edition, 4th system

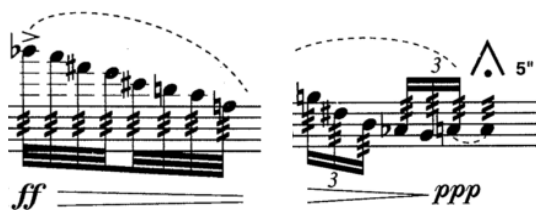
In the example 5.b. we see how the 1992 edition adds an extra semiquaver in both the first and the second beats. In the example 6.b. a whole quaver is added in order to allow for a semiquaver triplet plus two quavers in just one beat.

We can also mention cases in which the rhythm accelerates in respect to the first edition, as we can see below:



Example 7.a. 1958 edition, hash marks 144-146

🔊 Audio file 1.



Example 7.b. 1998 edition, 19th system

🔊 Audio file 2.

Likewise, the third case is striking because it is not only a question of adding or subtracting rhythmical values, but it is a modification that directly affects the construction of the phrase.



Example 8.a. 1958 edition, hash marks 131-135

🔊 Audio file 3.



Example 8.b. 1992 edition, 18th system

🔊 Audio file 4.

In the second edition we can observe how the F is not anymore a short note beamed to the previous harmonic B flat, but is turned into a long note which takes us directly to the next E.

2.1.3 GRACE NOTES AND THEIR DIFFERENCES

The *acciaccaturas* present a very concrete issue within the notation of the piece. In the 1958 edition, with proportional notation, it is specified that this kind of groups should be played as fast as possible. However, of course, they take up some space graphically in the score. For this reason, as interpreters, we are lead to ask if one should respect the placing of the beginning of a group of *acciaccaturas*, playing it as fast as technically possible and leaving a silence when necessary with the next note to also respect its placing within the beat, or on the contrary, one should start the ornamental group afterwards to link it with the following note.

To understand this better, let's take a look at the following example:



Example 9.a. 1958 edition, hash mark 18

🔊 Audio file 5.

The group of *acciaccaturas* starts right after the downbeat marking, but the main note, the B flat, is placed on the last third of the beat. This way, in case a flutist were able to play the ornamental group faster than the space it takes up on the score, should they start playing the *acciaccatura* on the downbeat, thus leaving a silence between it and the B flat, in order not to displace it? Or should they delay the start of the ornamental group to connect it to the B flat? On the opposite case, if the flutist is not capable of playing the *acciaccatura* as fast as it is written, one should ask whether it should be advisable to start on the downbeat, thus somehow delaying the arrival of the B flat, or if on the contrary, it would be better to start the *acciaccatura* earlier in order not to displace the B flat from its position on the last third of that beat.

This problematic is solved in the 1992 edition, in which the *acciaccatura* is clearly treated as an ornamental group which likewise should be played as fast as possible, and which is associated to the real note, whose location is explicitly indicated.



Example 9.b. 1992 edition, 3rd system

Within this rhythm-*acciaccatura* relationship, we can find more cases in which the transcription to traditionally notated rhythm not always corresponds to the graphic location of the *acciaccaturas* in the proportional notation.



Example 10.a. 1992 edition, hash marks 194-196

🔊 Audio file 6.



Example 10.b. 1992 edition 16th and 17th systems

Another striking difference is that not always are the *acciaccatura* groups from the first edition transcribed as such to the second, but are sometimes written with a specific rhythm.




Example 11.a. 1992 edition, hash marks 179-181

🔊 Audio file 7.



Example 11.b. 1992 edition, 24th system

2.1.4 FERMATAS AND THEIR DIFFERENCES

The length of the *fermatas* is another of the aspects which were undefined in the 1958 edition, since their duration is not specified, but are only marked with the *fermata* symbol . On the preliminary explanation of the score it is indicated that their duration should be *ad libitum*. However, graphically some are longer than others, which might suggest an approximate idea of their relative durations. Let's take the following example:



Example 12.a. 1958 edition hash marks 48-51

 Audio file 8.

Following the visual reference, we would rightly consider the first fermata to be slightly longer than the second one, but when compared to the 1992 edition, in which the approximate duration of these *fermatas* is specified in seconds, we notice how Berio indicates exactly the opposite, giving the second *fermata* one second longer than the first.



Example 12.b. 1992 edition, 7th system

 Audio file 9.

Within the rhythm-*fermatas* relationship, specifying the duration in seconds is not the only change from the first to the second edition. As we can observe in the following example, the way in which the duration of the notes after the *fermata* has been written, does not alter in any way the total duration of the long note once it goes out of the fermata. However, it does suppose a substantial change in the placing of the following notes within the beat. Thus, the F coming after the harmonic B flat is now written on the downbeat, while in the first edition it was written in the middle of the given time unit.



Example 13 a. 1958 edition, hash marks 126-136

 Audio file 10.

Example 13.b. 1992 edition, 17th and 18th systems

🔊 Audio file 11.

2.2 ARTICULATION AND DYNAMICS

2.2.1 ARTICULATION

Inside the group of articulation parameters we can find some changes that were added when the second edition of *Sequenza I* was published. They are not the biggest structural changes in the piece, as the notation modification is, but they are probably the most noticeable changes for the listener.

Firstly, the most famous difference among the flute players is the use of frullato at the end of the excerpt that we have below. In the 1958 edition, the interpreter had to maintain the articulation until the end of it, which is really tiring. Frullato makes the interpretation easier and facilitates achieving the goal of increasing the dynamic intensity, as well as maintaining the character of the passage.

Example 14.a. 1958 edition, hash marks 104-108

🔊 Audio file 12.

Example 14.b. 1992 edition, 15th system

🔊 Audio file 13.

Another of the most striking changes is the addition of two more groups articulated with key slaps in the following fragment:



Example 15.a. 1958 hash marks 200-205

Audio file 14.



Example 15.b. 1992 edition, 27th and 28th systems

Audio file 15.

Likewise, we also find details such as notes with staccato that now have an accent:



Example 16.a. 1958 edition, hash marks 112-114



Example 16.b. 1992 edition, 16th system

Finally it is necessary to mention the importance of the duration-articulation relationship that the proportional notation presents, and which does not happen in the 1992 edition since durations and articulations are independent parameters due to the traditional notation. In the 1958 edition one depends on the other, as the above explanation (before the score) specifies, for the execution of the short notes. This way the shortness of a note depends on if it has got an accent, a *staccato*, or a *staccatissimo*. However, the proportions are not always maintained when transcribing to traditional rhythmic notation:



Example 17.a. 1958 edition, hash mark 69



Example 18.b. 1992 edition, 10th system

In this example, it can clearly be seen how it is not related. In the first case we have a short note followed by a note that would be a bit shorter because of the staccato, but in the end it is translated as sixteenth note followed by a demisemiquaver with staccato within a quintuplet. It is therefore necessary to ask if the rhythmic values assigned to these two notes are only in relation to their position within the pulse, or if the staccato of the second is suggesting that the sustained F is excessively short, since the rhythmic value to which it is associated is also less.

2.2.2 DYNAMICS

Regarding the dynamics, we can find many examples of changes between the first and second editions, however, we are not talking about large differences that suggest contradictions between them both. In general, there is a search for better/greater/more specific detail in certain points, or to adjust the nuances in a more realistic way. We can see this in the following excerpt:



Example 18.a. 1958 edition, hash marks 7-10

🔊 Audio file 16.



Example 18.b. 1992 edition, 2nd system

In the example of the first edition we start with *ff*, which is not very realistic since it gives us little margin to play a remarkable *crescendo*, and we will achieve it due to the register increase rather than the dynamic. On the other hand, the second edition presents a *crescendo* from *f* to *ff* without writing the *Sffz* because this occurs naturally when you play *fortissimo* and *staccatissimo* a G of the third octave of the flute.

Another example of more realistic writing in terms of dynamics is the writing of *ff* instead of *Sffz* followed by a line that proposes for it to be maintained over time. The *sforzando* is a kind of attack, and “prolonging” it over several notes makes no sense. These details show how Berio’s experience as a composer improved throughout the years.



Example 19.a. 1958 edition, hash marks 1-2



Example 19.b. 1992 edition, 1st system



Example 20.a. 1958 edition, hash mark 26



Example 20.b. 1992 edition, 4th system

3. CONCLUSIONS

As we have already commented, *Sequenza I* for solo flute is one of the most representative works of the 20th century flute repertoire. The interest of its composition, that presents a less common type of notation such as proportional notation, has generated a lot of research about it.

After studying the aforementioned bibliography, having reviewed the differences between both editions, as well as the issues that each one has presents to the interpreter, and having performed both editions, these are the conclusions that I have obtained.

Regarding the two versions, I consider that one could not say that there is one which is better or more advisable than the other, since both have advantages and disadvantages when it comes to interpretation. Before facing the piece and doing this study, I assumed that the second edition sought to solve the problems of the first and because of that one could say it is an improved version of the score, however currently I do not think that this statement can be made so emphatically, since the feeling of lack of flexibility and straight-jacketing caused by traditional rhythmic notation seems to me a negative psychological factor. In any case, I must emphasize that these approaches and conclusions obtained are something very personal and that it varies depending on the interpreter, as we can see in the second appendix of this work.

After this research process, this is my proposal regarding the interpretation of the piece:

As a base, my material is the score with proportional notation, since I consider that it gives the flutist certain “flexibility”. Of course, it does not mean that this is an excuse to play as you want, since the level of detail, both rhythmic, dynamic and in terms of articulation is really high, but despite everything there is a feeling, possibly more psychological than real, of flexibility when you see this score. For this reason, I use the first edition when performing in a concert, the one published by the editorial Suvini Zerboni. However, it includes some annotations and changes from the 1992 edition.

Regarding the issues that 1958 edition has and that have been presented in the discussion of this thesis, this is how I have solved them. First of all, using a metronome is essential for me to be sure that I don’t change the tempo. Although the approach of this type of notation is a continuous time line in which events happen, in my opinion the metronome helps us to distribute and organize them, keeping the right proportions. Setting the metronome to 70 could be our goal but I usually play the piece a bit slower (around 64) since it is not so important the speed but the relations, as Berio said to Aurèle Nicolette in one of his letters.

Of course, listening to recordings as a reference is very helpful, especially when facing a piece with proportional notation. I would recommend to explore and listen to many recordings critically, taking the best of every of them. For instance, I personally think that the version of Silvia Caredu, available on Youtube, presents a great balance between the internal proportions and the freedom in the expressivity. Another interesting example would be the recording of Peter-Lukas Graf, available in his CD *Music for solo flute*, since

he chooses a slower tempo that allows him to be very precise in relation to articulation and dynamics.

Another problem mentioned was the ambiguity of this type of writing and how it affects the location of the first note within each space delimited by hash marks. To solve this problem, I have taken the 1992 score, checked how the pulses are organized (*Example 21*) and used that as a reference in my score. (*Example 22*)

Example 21. 1992 edition, beginning, first and second systems

Example 22. 1958 edition, beginning, hash marks 1-15

🔊 Audio file 17.

In relation to the rhythmic differences, I follow the 1958 edition, keeping the proportions as they are written and without adding any semiquaver as we can find, for example, in the beginning of the 1992 edition. However, I have decided to change the excerpts that have a modification in the phrasing because of the duration. From my point of view the second edition provides more coherence and fluidity:



Example 23. 1958 edition, hash marks 127-141

🔊 Audio file 18.

I have also updated my score with the articulations and dynamics that are proposed in the traditional rhythmic notation edition since, in my opinion, they are better adjusted to the reality of the instrument and the interpreter

Regarding the differences of articulation that we can find between both scores, two of the most relevant changes in this field would be the use of *frullato* in the following excerpt (Example 24) and the addition of more key slap groups in the second excerpt (Example 25):



Example 24. 1958 edition, hash marks 104-108

🔊 Audio file 19.



Example 25. 1958 edition, hash marks 200-206

🔊 Audio file 20.

I have also considered advisable to write down the durations of the *fermatas* that were previously *ad libitum* since, in the second edition, Berio decided to specify in seconds their approximate durations.

Finally, as a summary I could say that my interpretation of Sequenza I for flute is based on the score published in 1958 but with the support and reference of the 1992 edition. In other words, when I study the piece, the proportional notation edition is on my music stand but on my desk, the traditional rhythmic notation is open to solve doubts and help me to achieve a more precise interpretation.

Furthermore, I would like to pose the following question as a last reflection on this work: If a person who knows or has studied the piece listens to a flute player playing it, can he or she really differentiate which edition is being used? My personal answer would be negative, at least not before the passage of *frullato* that we previously mentioned. Even so, it would be possible that, as in my case, the flutist was taking details from both editions to create his own version of the piece. Although the differences that we have found between the two editions and that have been exposed during this work are important, in the end these changes mainly influence the notation-interpreter relationship. However, they do not transpire into the interpreter-listener sphere, except in a subconscious way, since the choice of the flutist of one or the other edition will allow him to carry out a more fluid, convincing and coherent interpretation.

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APPENDIX I

Differences in dynamics and articulations between the two editions of Sequence

SEVERI



SEQUENZA

PER FLAUTO SOLO

LUCIANO BERIO
(1968)

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[S. 5511 L.]

Handwritten musical score with various dynamics and performance markings. The score consists of ten staves of music. Key markings include:

- Staff 1:** $\Delta 5''$ above the first measure, ppp below the first measure, f below the fifth measure, $\Delta 6''$ above the sixth measure, pp below the sixth measure, and ppp below the seventh measure.
- Staff 2:** $\Delta 7''$ above the first measure, $pp < ff$ below the first measure, $ff < ff < ppp$ below the fifth measure, and $\Delta 6''$ above the sixth measure.
- Staff 3:** p below the first measure, mf below the second measure, p below the third measure, pp below the fourth measure, mf below the fifth measure, f below the sixth measure, p below the seventh measure, f below the eighth measure, mf below the ninth measure, and f below the tenth measure.
- Staff 4:** pp below the first measure, mf below the second measure, pp below the third measure, mf below the fourth measure, p below the fifth measure, mf below the sixth measure, pp below the seventh measure, and a red 'X' below the eighth measure.
- Staff 5:** p below the first measure, pp below the second measure, ppp below the third measure, pp below the fourth measure, p below the fifth measure, $p > pp$ below the sixth measure, mf below the seventh measure, and ppp below the eighth measure.
- Staff 6:** (ppp) below the first measure, p below the second measure, a circled mf below the third measure, ff below the fourth measure, mf below the fifth measure, a circled sfz below the sixth measure, pp below the seventh measure, ppp below the eighth measure, and mf below the ninth measure.
- Staff 7:** mf below the first measure, p below the second measure, mf below the third measure, a circled ff below the fourth measure, and ff below the fifth measure.
- Staff 8:** $(ff) \times \times \times$ below the first measure, mf below the second measure, pp below the third measure, and ppp below the fourth measure.
- Staff 9:** $\Delta 5''$ above the first measure, ff below the first measure, ppp below the fifth measure, f below the sixth measure, mf below the seventh measure, and p below the eighth measure.
- Staff 10:** mf below the first measure, ff below the second measure, mf below the third measure, ff below the fourth measure, mf below the fifth measure, and ff below the sixth measure.

[H. 5831 L.]

Sullato

The musical score consists of ten staves of music. The first staff begins with a dynamic marking of *ff* and includes the tempo instruction *molto* and the performance instruction *"il massimo"*. The second staff features a circled '2' above a note and dynamic markings *p*, *f*, *mf*, *pp*, *mf*, *f*, *p*, and *mf*. The third staff starts with *ppp* and *pp*, followed by *p* and *pp*. The fourth staff has a circled *ff* with a red triangle $\Delta 8''$ above it, and dynamic markings *f*, *pp*, *ppp*, and *ppp*. The fifth staff begins with a red 'X' and has dynamic markings *p*, *pp*, and *mf*. The sixth staff starts with *pp* and *mf*, followed by *pp* and *f*. The seventh staff has a circled *ff* with a red triangle $\Delta 5''$ above it, and dynamic markings *ppp* and *ff*. The eighth staff has a circled *ff* with a red triangle $\Delta 4''$ above it, and dynamic markings *mf*, *p*, *pp*, *mf*, *p*, and *ppp*. The ninth staff has a circled *ff* with a red triangle $\Delta 4''$ above it, and dynamic markings *ppp*, *pp*, *f*, *p*, and *mf*. The tenth staff has dynamic markings *pp*, *f*, *p*, and *mf*.

[B. 5531 2.]

Musical score featuring ten staves of notation. The score includes various dynamic markings such as *ff*, *f*, *p*, *mf*, *fff*, *ppp*, *ppppp*, and *ppppp sempre*. Performance instructions include *dim. molto col fiato*, *sparte*, *cresc. con le chiavi*, and *largo*. Red annotations include circled notes, arrows, and markings like *FX*, *ff*, and *ff*. The bottom section contains three staves with dynamic markings *sf (il possibile)*, *dim.*, and *ppppp*, and notes marked *A4ⁿ*, *A3ⁿ*, and *A5ⁿ*.

H. 5531 2.

Musical score with ten staves. Dynamics include *ppp*, *p*, *pp*, *pppp*, *mf*, *f*, *ff*, *ppp sempre*, *(dolce)*, and *(P)*. Performance instructions include *più p ancora*. Tempo markings are *60 M.M.* and *72 M.M.*. Red annotations include *A 8"*, *A 8"*, and *A 6"*.

APPENDIX II

Opinions of professional flute players regarding the two editions of *Sequenza I* for flute

This is a compilation of the responses that several renowned and professional flutists sent via email for the publication of the book *Berio's Sequenzas Essays on Performance, Composition and Analysis*.⁵

FABBRICIANI:

- “The first edition is better because it corresponds to the original compositional thought but surely presents greater difficulty interpretatively, while the second explicit edition obviates these difficulties and supplies a path to execution that is more detailed.”
- “The first edition motivates the fantasy and the inventiveness of the interpreter. It favours the interpretive freedom that is an actual parameter of the aesthetics to which the *Seuenza I* belongs.”

DICK:

- “The “old” edition is the piece. The new edition exists only because flutist have played the original so badly. Berio himself told me this at IRCAM in Paris in 1978.”
- The proportional notation in the original gives rhythmic life that can't be notated traditionally, while the new edition smothers this and makes the phrases much harder to see.”

ANDERSON:

- “Although there is in fact very little margin for freer interpretation with spatial [notation], due to all the activity in the piece, I see the score as more of a sound AND visual landscape that I am operating in, compared to the traditional score, Particularly after learning from the spatial score, I find the measured one confining and almost “patronizing” ...
- “The original score is quite clear and exacting, and I believe that anyone who wouldn't take pains to learn it accurately would do the same with a notated score. And you would have the added problem, with measured notation, of not seeing the forest through the trees of notes, counting and subdividing and rearranging duples and triples, etc. “

MONSON:

- “The new edition, besides being rhythmically verbose unnecessarily, changes some of the phrase structures, changes drastically the nuance of some notes

⁵ Folio, Cynthia. Brinkman, Alexander (2007). Rhythm and Timing in the Two Versions of Berio's *Sequenza I* for flute solo: Psychological and Musical Differences in Performance. Appendix B. Pages 35-37. In: Halfyard, Janet (Ed.). *Berio's Sequenzas: Essays on Performance, Composition and Analysis*.

because of their now strong to weak placement and the need to fit them into a more traditional rhythm.

- “[Berio] started a little historical cell in our repertoire [because of the spatial notation] ... and then so many years later he takes the history out of the piece?”

BLEDSOE

- “... The only advantage of the new version is to see a possibility of interpretation of the original.”
- ... having a spatially notated score in front of you (or even in your head if you are playing from memory) would make for a different performance entirely, the differences would be psychological and therefore musical (I’m not sure there can be such a separation in this case)”

BEZALY:

- “The [proportional] version takes a lot of getting used to, and so the exact version could be helpful when learning the piece. However, the precise [version] is restrictive while performing.”

E. GRAF:

- “[Sam Baron showed me] a rewrite he had made of Berio’s Sequenza in 6/8 meter. I thought at the time that it might be a fine “teaching tool”, but could compromise the extemporaneous Baroque-ornamentation quality of the piece that Berio was attempting to achieve.”

HEISS:

- “I find the new version tense and stiff. In a masterclass on the piece, my students thought they could hear the difference between those who used the old edition and those who played from the new one.”

SOLLBERGER:

- “The great thing about the original version was just the very fact that the player was called upon to play very precise rhythms without all the tuplets and hair-splitting that minute subdivisions in conventional notation engender. In my experience, though, very few flutist did really look closely enough at the visual placement of the notes and their relations to each other as notated in the original version.”
- “I had to warn my students that this new notation didn’t really make the piece easier to play it just made it different.”

O’CONNOR:

- “... When playing off of the new version, having a pulse is very grounding for my students and for me.”
- When studying the old edition, I remember sitting down with [Sam] Baron and a ruler to measure where things were each “measure” and what value each note should have. He had a very systematic approach to the piece.”