March 7, 2014

Dear Mathius,

Thank you for your letter and for sharing your ideas and concerns. Here my maybe too long and verbose response to your stimulating thoughts and ideas.

I left Italy and Europe because I was very tired of the competitive and ideologized environment where politics was rotting under the corrupted vestiges of pretentious cultural values, and culture was rotting in an over intellectualized framework of thoughts which I could barely understand. I was disgusted by the ego-driven paranoia of intellectual property and copyrights, by the irrelevant presumptions of self-inflating and self-centered egos surfing the romantic crap of the *sentimental man*. I could not stand anymore the fascistic atmosphere of my own country and its constant procrastination to face its own failures.

Main issues for me were then, and still are, the exclusiveness of the *avant-garde* (still a very militaristic term), its fragmentation, its indifference to the real situation in the world, its individualistic outlook and not least its class character. Collective work and experience for me stood against what was (and has) being promoted on all fronts as the "*me*" culture, where the issue, for example, becomes that art has importance because it expresses "*my*" life, "*I*" did this first, or it gratifies "*me*", and in general with any idea of "originality". This I think has only contributed to the general crisis of society and humankind. The question then for me arises, as it does in an acute form at the moment, as to what is the role of art, music and other forms of culture in this political environment. Generally speaking, it has to embody those emotions and aspirations consistent with a possible – if though utopian – renewal.

The very notion that there is a society, that people exist as human beings within this society and as collectives with their own existence, is being taken away, is being negated. To demand that society shoulder its responsibility is even being portrayed as extremism and that we should be moderate. I've been producing (or I'm supposed to be producing), fostering and presenting *experimental new music*, while all this is of really *very scarce* if of *no interest* at all to the larger population and communities.

It's true that we might need art orientated towards the people's concerns, not towards those who look for geniuses and stars, but the social forms where people on a mass scale are drawn into art making, with professionals serving and working with amateurs, will only take shape if we are able to redefine *functions*, and *roles*. How can there be mass participation, direct participation, in the art making? What is the art of the future? Do we really need audiences to endlessly entertain? I don't think so and this questions for me, this vision of a music/art of the future is actually an exciting and driving one. But to envision the art of the future, one needs to begin to envision also the society of the future and begin to push for that now. Meanwhile, everybody gets on with making the art they feel passionate about.

I have gradually become tired of fighting the *big* games because where I work and live and in the things I treasure, there is no space for (meaning I wouldn't let space for) games or trickeries. So I started asking myself a few questions and trying – in all the years I have been finally away from the rotten culture of the old Europe, his fancy history paved on blood and its monumental cultures cemented by slavery and demagogy – to find or attempt to articulate answers through my own activity and work. What are the conditions of performance, of social form, that will ensure art as an activity has a future as a meaningful praxis?

The question "*for whom*?" now, when an acute problem is posed about the political renewal of society, and the role of culture in this renewal, has to be answered by saying that modern culture has to be based on humanity and on inviolable rights; a culture serving modern political requirements and serving the development of the productive forces and I believe we need to foster a trusting environment versus a fearful one – dialogue versus monologue. We need to foster dialogue/collaborative works/interconnectedness to make possible the creation of renewed creative/artistic knowledge. I believe that artistic intellect and knowledge live and grow inside artistic

practices. They are in fact more inside the process of making art than in the final object or artifact. This knowledge embodies the attempt to articulate the different ways in which creative process unveils itself: composing, writing, interpreting, playing, listening and interacting.

This knowledge also implies a *naming* or *defining* process. The naming process creates discourse on previously non-existing things and phenomena. The discourse creates words, phrases, names and enunciations. Finally, this knowledge creates new *languages* able to resonate within the new principles and ideas that emerge in new artistic practices.In the context of dialogic experimentation in the arts I believe that radical works of art are lived experiences based on contextual reciprocity (the context of the experience is reciprocal, i.e., it enables one to take the initiative to interfere and alter the experience and my ideas spring from the need to integrate the physical space in the performance in various ways and different contexts.

In the past this has often meant a retreat from the traditional concert hall, which proved too static a place to change the relationship between the audience and the performed work. I also wish to foster work and research in the direction of an artistic practice intended more as *behaviour* and a vehicle of group meaning where *beauty* is an activity rather than an entity. This direction is also supported by the awareness that we don't have enough spaces (at least here where I live now) for people to exercise creative powers and that our models of art are not about participation in a social order – our models seem instead a way to escape from it. We have become so individualized and conditioned to experience ourselves as separate. Again, we need to foster dialogue, collaborative works and interconnectedness in order that a broader range of people might explore the territory of performance and its creative space. New tools, new ideas and new sounds demand a new context in which artistic practices can be elastic, malleable, inclusive, and exchanged and generated in real-time. This open-ended ambiguity contradicts the one-way logic of an event (concert, exhibition, performance) and suggests *other* sociologies of art and performance where performers are replaced by a workshop *for* performers.

Performance is a technology; performance uses technology. As a technology it can play the role of medium, tool or metaphor. Historically, it holds a special place for communicating between audience and performer. Interaction technologies for example seems to offer a complex new performance space where audiences become performers and performers become audiences, supporting new forms of interaction between performers, instruments and audiences but again it is barely sustainable within the current economic and political environments and definitely still very "exclusive". The art though seems to be in this complex interactions.

I strongly believe that the interplay of artistic and technological innovation only reaches its full potential in the relatively under-explored area of interactive performance spaces. New or emerging forms of performance are deploying technology to dissolve conventional separations between narrative and metaphor and between performer and audience. Theories and principles about human interactions derived from these events might, in turn, inform the human-centred design of new interactive technologies with creative, artistic, intellectual and social capabilities.

New social forms where the people on a mass scale are drawn into art making, with professionals serving and working with amateurs, will take shape if we are able to redefine functions of artistic performance while fostering a trusting environment versus a fearful one, dialogue versus monologue and direct participation in the creative process. Finally, the relationship between the roles of the creator, the performer and the audience changes when the latter has the ability to interact with and change the course of events. The role of the artist thus changes fundamentally, becoming a facilitator of audience participation in creation rather than the author of a work that is passively experienced. These new roles create the possibility of wider and more direct participation in multiple and interrelated artistic practices. How to give a crucial place to the people in the culture that is produced and recognize the diversity of their cultures and practice, poses additional and difficult challenges for design.

I have been living these last 20 years trying to figure out way to make all this things part of my everyday practice, from writing music, teaching, playing, experimenting with sounds, images, movement, spaces,

environments, people and very different cultures and traditions. I have been trying to articulate possible answers, give a chance to, or attempt observations, working to understand how *to make things visible*, is more about understanding this statement from *Voice of Tyranny, Temples of Silence* by R. Murray Schafer and come up with some ideas: "*The great revolutions in art history are changes of context rather than style. The first big contextual change in Western art music occurred when music left the outdoors and entered the cathedral; the second occurred with the appearance of the concert hall and opera house; the broadcasting and recording studio is responsible for the third.*" We are now possibly in the 4th, 5th…n^{th} step of those changes; within a society best represented by a myriad of individuals, all wearing ear-buds, touching tablets and talking to cell phones while selecting and distributing their personal choices of music, sounds, noise, video and images. A highly fragmented group of people, a massive mash-up segmented if not in real social classes, in tribes of likeminded humans of many kinds and flavours. All of them, generally out of touch with, and dismissing what's happening in any other tribe, pretending or assuming that their position is inevitably the best no matter what other people's likes and dislikes might be. Alienated not only from "*today*" (an impersonal one) but alienated from what has been happening around and to the planet for a couple of centuries and more. Extending these ideas to a larger intellectual and economic perspective, at times I seem to get "*a*" point.

The point might be that given the complexity and chaotic articulation of everything, a working strategy might be only and minimally *contextual.* As creative people often fight for the right to be exclusive or "original", I instead love finding ways to lose a certain *footprint* as I'm not really sure that what I'm doing is in fact of any use (according to a generalized idea of productivity), and I would not expect to be able to project any kind of powerful and transformative energy too far away from where I am. Furthermore, any kind of reception outside this localized "realm" is totally and vastly unpredictable – maybe also irrelevant.

The question seems then not about what kind of results I generate but rather how if at all, they harmonize themselves with *nature*: the "engine", *Gaia*, the one working continuously in spite of everyday harassment, destruction, wounds and distress. And yes, I wish to invite affective responses while confronting the complex considerations of our predicament, but I also wish to ignite imagination and stir emotions, while acknowledging the limitations of what is possible as art. Ultimately, I believe that being able to embody contradiction seems to hold at times most promise: an attempt to not sacrifice the *aesthetic* in favor of social change but to foster or reveal contradictions in art as an inherently productive process; and because of my aging brain and body I like thinking to these my late years, the "*style*" of my late years. What does it means though? How does or would it play out? The world will still be unreconciled, like in the late years of Beethoven, when he refused to reconcile into a single image what is not reconciled – *Ode an die Freude…*

Salut,

G.