

**From sublime to hysteria:
Semantic dissolution and animality in contemporary singing**

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Abstract:

We study using the concepts of aesthetics, philosophy and psychoanalysis, the posture of the singer and what the linguistic heritage of the voice implies. Based on physiological observations, the study of spectrograms and examples from the repertoire, we then study the consequences of such a posture and its use in the contemporary repertoire.

What does this new vocality tell us about the animality inherent in man and his place in post-modern aesthetic questions? We will also tackle the subject of the ambivalence between “instrumentality” and “animality” in the contemporary singer.

Contemporary vocality, hysteria, semantics, animality, proprioception.

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Introduction:

Singing has always had a distinct status in what is commonly called formal music. Beyond the emotions, it tells, it narrates, it voices the speaking, the language, a character. This is what makes it drastically different from the instrument. Since the turn of the twentieth century, we have observed a slow deconstruction of syntax, of the status of the word, of the signifying object.

Initially trained as an instrumentalist, I was led to ask myself the following question: “should we approach the contemporary repertoire differently depending on whether we are a singer or an instrumentalist?”

Following the recurring reactions of my fellow singers on contemporary vocality such as: “it’s very uncomfortable”, “it’s dangerous”, “outside”, or very “far from our technical territories”, “it’s not the same job”, I tried to understand what made it so divisive in singers. I was therefore curious to discover what the “singer” literature offered as a tool to approach contemporary vocality and simply to support the reflection of this memory. That literature is scarce, and above all it is difficult to find a complete book. No technical solution is really provided, or else completely disconnected “from the heart” of the effect. So, if you are lucky, you will find a sentence telling you that it is safer to “put straight sounds at nose level” but the explanations will stop there. No indication is offered on the places of resonances (pharynx, nasal cavities...), the phonation tools to use (velum, openness...) and even less on their genesis (of which sounds of the current phonation are they derived). At no time is there any reference to things that are primordial to me such as animality, the primary cry, the deep muscular masses, or the reasons for the mutation of this vocality. So I had to seek many and varied sources, from fields sometimes outside singing or even musicology, such as psychoanalysis, philosophy, aesthetics, psycho-acoustics, phonetics...

This new vocality calls up fundamental questions for singers and composers:

- What do these different choices of composition languages tell us about the positioning of composers on the major challenges of art in the 20th century?
- Is there a mutation in the role of the singer?
- How and why to convey a subject without the bias of literal semantics?
- What do these new tools tell us about the ambivalence between “instrumentality” and “animality” of the contemporary voice?

Also, we will first examine the aesthetic evolution of language and its symbolic significance in Art, which will then lead us to observe the evolution of its very medium, here the sung voice and that of the singer’s posture. Then we will question the physiological implication of this posture as well as its impact on contemporary musical language. Finally, we will observe how this shift in

meaning towards a more animal and emotional part feed contemporary writing today, leading us to question the function of the “voice” tool as an instrument.

I. Towards a post-modern artistic language

The 20th century seems to mark the end of the sublimation of the work of art, in favor of primacy given to the animal part of humans. This movement which crosses the 20th century will have consequences in numerous artistic fields, including contemporary music and more especially singing. The discovery of the concept of hysteria at the end of the 19th century lifts the veil on the strength of the unconscious and the cathartic power of the person who is the singer and who gives themselves to be seen and heard.

We can ask ourselves how we arrived historically at this form of desublimation of the artwork, with the major consequences that this rupture had on contemporary *vocality*. Indeed, the questions, the *parti pris* and the musical languages developed by the composers of the 20th century are not thoughts disconnected from their history. They are the result of a long process of artistic thinking. Thus, the notions of truth, purpose, subjectivity and symbolism in art played a key role in the emergence of this reflection. In the twentieth century, it will also be necessary to add to them the question of the place of the accursed part of humans that of them animality, and the one of language and its symbolic force—taken in the radical sense of the word symbol as “that which connects”. These questions echo the transformation executed by post-modern humanity.

Kant, in his aesthetic philosophy, insists both on the artist’s freedom and on the impossibility of explaining beauty by correspondence with any purpose. Beauty is seen there as offering an impression of completeness, of entirety, without any idea being able to justify this feeling. So, it is clearly the establishment of the principle of subjectivity in art that emerges here in the background. This subjectivity is also nowadays inseparable from any work of art. But Kant also sets up the distinction between artist and craftsman, formalizing by this the notion of genius.

Although the Kantian aesthetic represents a breaking point insofar as it establishes a principle of subjectivity, it does not, however, eliminate the notion of *beauty*. The artist is not more emancipated than he was before from the shackles of the aestheticizing finality of his work.

We had to wait for **Hegel** to intrude the question of the symbolic in art. Hegel indeed sees in the piece of art a tangible reality but endowed with meaning. The truth becomes perceivable there in a *beautiful shape*. Hegel then formalizes art as a symbolic object. But here again, the question of *beauty* in artistic creation remains indivisible from the role of the artist.

Then, a little later, **Nietzsche** no longer sees art as a search for truth. According to him, this quest would lead us to give up on velleity to improve humanity, to save it. For Nietzsche, art is a joyful illusion which enables us to live *despite everything*. This salutary illusion takes the form of an eternal return: a necessary attitude with a reality that not any progress improves. The piece of art is then the witness of the lucidity of which humanity is capable. It takes manifestations into the

desire to reaffirm life beyond the absurdity of the world's pain. Nietzsche discerns in the work of art all its potential as a tool of resistance. By the way, this audacity will inspire Albert Camus, almost a century later, in *L'Homme Révolté* (The Rebel).

For Adorno, the art of the 20th century presents the symptoms of withering, of the crisis of meaning. How can we understand the self-destruction of reason which seems to characterize the century of all fascisms? What should be done when reason, which was first of all, let us recall, the tool of human domination over nature, becomes the instrument of human domination by humans? For Adorno, aesthetic feeling and artistic creation are the last ways of resistance. An ardent defender of modernity in art, he is above all concerned with giving all its value to the physical, to the practice, by challenging the primacy of thought alone.

Hannah Arendt, finally, by introducing the definition of a “radical evil”, explains that during the 20th century evil has revealed itself to be deeper than anything one could dare to predict, because the human being, rendered suddenly useless, was then disembodied by humanity himself. In the concentration camps, every act, every emotion was inherently meaningless. In these places where we strove to create, precisely, nonsense, the evil was absolute because it was not attributable to human motivations. It is indeed totalitarianism that has brought to light the radical nature of evil, this desire to deny the humanity of some and thus justify their mass elimination mechanically by another mass without a will of its own. However, faced with the immense disappointment—or even the revolt—provoked by the sudden exposure of what humanity has most radically dark, the fantasy is great among postwar artists to definitely get rid of the aestheticizing form and its symbolic function, and to show a human close to his own truth. In doing so, it is also the sublimated part of art that vanishes.

The emergence of **psychoanalysis** at the turn of the 20th century allows us to take a renewed look at the place occupied by the “symbolic”, especially in the singer. The psychoanalytic revolution formalizes the singular position of humans as speaking beings, exchanging symbols among themselves. This linguistic capacity distances humans from their animal nature, allowing them to no longer simply be in symbiosis with things. As

Jean-Pierre **Lebrun** says, to speak is to consent to void, to the loss, to negativity. It is to come straight to the point: to say what we are forced to because of our human condition. We are beings of language, of symbols, this is even what distinguishes us from the rest of the animal kingdom. This ability enables us to come out of the astonishment of our relationship to the violence of reality.

The psychoanalytic tools thus allow us to understand what founds our specificity of post-modern beings: the artist of the 20th century no longer operates in the symbolism of the tale—with what this allows of distancing and imagination in the spectator—, but on the contrary throws us the emotion to the wolves, in a form of obscenity. This symbolic revolution echoes to the one operated in the theater or in contemporary art with the emergence of performative art.

*“Language is not just a tool, it is what subverts the biological nature of humans and makes our desire for language dependent.”*Lacan.

“We are constrained by the law of language” Lebrun.

However, is this distancing allowed by the symbolic power of language still possible after the Second World War, or did this conflict literally left us speechless? Singing makes full use of what, as human beings, sets us apart from the rest of the animal kingdom: language and its symbolic force. Language is left to us as a heritage, passed on by previous generations, it is not innate. It is the fruit of what precedes us, of what we come from. But when at the end of the worst conflict that the twentieth century has known we are in a state of absolute astonishment, of disgust for Humanity, is it not understandable that this same language becomes an object of questioning and criticism? Considering the political function of art, is it still adequate in this state of post-modern bewilderment to use words to convey an artistic discourse?

Artists will no longer be satisfied with a conception of speech and language that would have reduced them to a simple communication tool. The contemporary artist will find in the inexpressible carried by the language a new modality of expression. These paths of thought will lead to the search for a semantic universalism of speech and will lead to rethinking the word as a vector of this universalism. Contemporary language then explores sound symbolism, its carnal truth, its deep semantics.

II. The singer’s “posture”: lyrical singing as a hysterization of the call of the other.

While trying to dissect the tools of contemporary vocality, I could not avoid the question of the singer’s posture in general and his place in the use made of it by contemporary composers. To study this very special posture, we are going to rely on some emblematic concepts of post-modernity, such as narcissistic neurosis, otherness, histrionism, or even hysteria; these concepts relate in particular to psychiatry and psychoanalysis and they are the ones which will lead us to carefully examine the physiological implication of this posture as well as its impact on contemporary musical language.

The singer is alone facing “the other”. He does not use an instrument as an intermediary but the communication tool par excellence, speech. By means of speech, of the text, he has the faculty to work as well on the literal semantics as on the deep semantics, “the call of the other” by the text or by the music. What is most remarkable about the voice is its relationship to otherness. Contemporary composers are not mistaken and they happily exploit these specificities.

The common point between the singer, the actor, the showman or the political tribune is a narcissistic neurosis whose stake is to find at every moment of life the enjoyment that the loving, admiring and desiring gaze from the mother provided at the first moments; to replay eternally the game of seduction of the infant with his mother.

The singer's role requires being in the center, exposing your body on stage, playing someone else and putting yourself on a performance. De facto, he absolutely needs the gaze of the other to exist as other than himself, hence his close relationship to seduction. This close relationship that the singer maintains with seduction necessarily appeals to an object of desire, to otherness, to what is external to him:

-the great Other (higher entity—divine figure)

-the dialogue between the self (consciousness, desire, action) and the superego (the unconscious, guilt, prohibition, acceptance of constraints linked to life in society).

—the spectator or more simply the nine billion “others” on earth. It is therefore an unvarnished appeal, which disregards the norm or decorum. For the singer, the scene gives an acceptable form, a place, a social justification to his/these emotional outbursts.

We can thus say that **lyrical song is the hysterization of the call of the other.**

We can hear “the call of the other” as the call for help from each human to ward off his loneliness, this appeal can take various forms, the most dramatized of which is hysteria. Hysteria is a neurosis, both feminine and masculine, which results from the psychic conflict between a strong superego (too strong?), so guilt-inducing, and a repressed and invading desire. It is expressed through physiological manifestations (see Flaubert and the figure of Madame Bovary, archetype of the hysteric as eternal dissatisfied). So, the body becomes a sensitive plate, it shows emotional torments. Desire “overflows”. Added to this is the key element of *somatization*, which is a way of saying without saying, of expressing one's desire without having to accept verbal violence towards the outside world. Etymologically the term “hysteria” comes from the Greek word “hyster” which certainly designates the uterus but also the womb and especially the bowels. For Plato hysteria was “the call of the womb, the cry of its indignation at its uselessness”.

Today the DSM (*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, American reference manual for psychiatric diagnosis) qualifies it as “histrionic personality disorder”. It is characterized by emotional overload, eroticization and hypersexualization of communication; and so by a very close relationship to seduction. In order to avoid any misunderstanding, and although reference has been made to the DSM above, we will not understand neurosis in this document except the psychological structure and not the associated pathology.

In hysteria, there is, from the start, identification in the subject of a desire for possession, of a pleasure proceeding from a projection, of a *fantasy of possession* more than of the possession itself.. Hence the fact that there is an enjoyment in eternally replaying the same game, without end, without resolution. Lyrical singing responds then to a histrionic scheme (that is to say of continual seduction) because it uses musculature and sounds usually linked to the sexual act. This

scheme, the singer implements it without risking its resolution since in a way he knows (or rather his unconscious “knows”) that one does not fall in love with the public, with the crowd; at worst one becomes dependent on it. Not only does he not lose control of his desire, but fills the hysteria, he can even repeat it every night. Now the loss of control of one’s desire would mean that in the resolution, that is to say in the passage to the act resulting in the possession of the object of the desire, there would arise the anguish of the absence of the lack. As Lacan says, desire is, first of all, backed up by “the anxiety of the lack of lack”, that is to say, the anxiety that the lack which creates the desire, itself comes to lack, by being “filled”.

Why does histrionism or hysteria fascinate non-hysterics so much? Because it allows the non-hysteric to replay by proxy the same original game of seduction without having to bear the emotional cost. This is the essence of live performance. The histrionic being that is the actor or the singer is therefore a perfect facilitator because we are fascinated to look at him and to project oneself in him. It responds to our ambivalence in the face of the attraction of passion: we ardently desire to live it but it terrifies us. We rather prefer, comfortably safe in our chair, to have someone do the dirty work on stage. This fascination will be very useful to composers, when in the 20th century in particular, the purpose of the work surpasses the importance of its form in itself. This is the principle of the Catharsis.

III. Physiological implications:

What is particularly powerful about the contemporary singer is that he makes the symptoms of the histrion the weapons and the tools of his art. These are all elements that composers exploit in the 20th century. They make the torments of this time visible and intelligible through the singer’s body. They use it as an element of language.

The singer has in common with the actor to be the one who gives himself to see, but in addition he amplifies his voice. This amplification involves many things. We will discover, through experimentation, that the physical effort necessary for the emission of this striking call, as well as the resulting sounds, are hypersexual histrionic acts or at least very animal as much from a point of view physiological view than of its sound resultant.

I offer below some observations and feedback from my career as a singer.

During the lyrical vocal effort, the muscles put into action, in particular the perineal engagement, are only matched by their involvement during the sexual act. The vocal act and the sexual act have in common the use of contractions of the three areas of the perineal bolus (urinary, vaginal/testicular, anal), lumbar, dorsal...

Pelvic floor front and side view

The conscious use of this “muscular chain” is essential for the construction of an “amplified” vocal gesture. It is necessary to control the **air column**, the maintenance of anatomic **posture** conducive to good phonation, to make a **powerful** sound but also **adjoined** to a “clean and comfortable” vocal cords, and then an intelligible **diction**.

More precisely:

- expiration management => perineal contraction
- air intake => perineal relaxation
- the counterbalance of the “thrust” implied by this amplification, postural stability => mobilization of the entire perineal chain, lumbar, dorsal...
- A good mastery of the lower musculature also enables to add a functional diaphragmatic mobilization to it, the diaphragm not being an autonomous muscle. This diaphragmatic dexterity is useful for the support of the sentences but also for the staccato, among others...
- A finer motor skills of the lower musculature also optimize the emission of consonants:
 - T, D, S, Z, N, (dental consonants) mobilization, contraction of the front (urinary) area of the perineum.
 - P, B, F, V, M, (labial consonants) mobilization, contraction of the central area (vaginal or testicular) of the perineum
 - Q, G, CH, J, R, (palatal consonants) mobilization, contraction of the rear (anal) area of the perineum.

P / B / F / V / M

T / S / Z / NQ / G / Ch / R

Knowledge of the “perineal geography” of consonants explained above also promotes another essential phenomenon in the lyrical voice, **co-articulation**. Co-articulation is the “contamination” of the vowel by the consonant that precedes it. The consonant alters the configuration of the vocal canal, which involves a distortion of the vowel that follows it.

This phenomenon of co-articulation is essential for the intelligibility of the text for the listener but it also allows the good “behavior” of the phonemes in the resonators, therefore its lyrical amplification as well as the efficiency of the driving of the sentence.

Spectrogram of/ki/kou/si/sou /

Spectrogram of/ki/kou/si/sou /

Simplified spectrograms for/b/and/d/depending on the vowel that follows it.

Simplified spectrograms for/b/and/d/depending on the vowel that follows it.

All these elements combined are essential for the appearance of the **formant said “of the singer”**, the cornerstone of the lyrical voice. Indeed, the voice is produced by the association of a source sound, the laryngeal voice, and a filter, the pharyngo-bucco-nasal cavity. If the laryngeal voice proceeds from the vibration of the vocal folds, and has a rich harmonic spectrum, it is the pharyngo-bucco-nasal cavity which is responsible for the production of the vowel timbre: it acts as a set of resonant filters that strengthen or attenuate certain harmonics of the laryngeal voice. The vocal tract has 4 or 5 of these filters, called formants because they enable “forming” the vowels.

First forming (F1): 500Hz Second forming (F2): 1500Hz
Third forming (F3): 2500Hz Fourth forming (F4): 3500Hz

A change in the section of the vocal tract causes a shift in the frequencies of the formants, or even the disappearance of one of them in some cases.

Each formant corresponds to a resonance mode of the pharyngo-bucco-nasal cavity: thus, the first forming, F1, corresponds to the fundamental mode, such that the wavelength of the sound produced is equal to 4 times the length of the cavity. The following three formants, F2, F3 and F4, correspond to wavelengths equal to respectively $\frac{4}{3}$, $\frac{4}{5}$ and $\frac{4}{7}$ of the cavity (then at frequencies going towards the high-pitched).

In this way, I was able to observe that my jaw influenced the position of the **first formant** (“pharyngeal”), the body of my tongue rather played on the position of the **second formant** (“buccal”) and the tip of my tongue on **the third**. The first two forming (called F1 and F2) are sufficient to describe a vowel. The other two (F3 and F4) bring nuances from one individual to another.

The formant of singers, or **singing formant** is “on top” of the 4 others. It is located around 3000Hz between F3 and F4, so in the zone of maximum sensitivity of the human ear (see resonance of the auditory canal around 3kHz and Fletcher graph of ear sensitivity with a bump at 3kHz). It enables the singer’s voice to pass above the orchestra (whose average frequency is located around 450Hz), the gain provided by the singer’s form being about 20dB in the 3kHz zone.

In addition, I could see that the more I opened my mouth, the more the formant F1 moved towards the fundamental frequency of the sound being sung, which increased the range of the voice. On the other hand, we could observe a slight decrease in the intelligibility of the vowels.

IV. The sound consequences:

How is the lyrical voice a gendered, primitive, animal voice, that we have in a way *civilized*? A “pretty cry” as vocal teachers often call it. The work of the pharynx, the opening of the throat and the positioning of the soft palate essential to lyrical phonation, are solicited in “normal life” only in moments of emotional exacerbations or primal reactions (cries, sobs, sexual act...). For example, if we slow down recordings of newborn cries, which are by definition primary cries, uncultivated, one will hear, to be mistaken, a human voice emitting sounds close to the hooks of “lyric” sound or sounds used in contemporary music.

For obvious reasons of conservation of the species, natural selection has caused the human ear to become extremely sensitive and receptive to the frequency zone corresponding to calls. It is located around 3500 hertz. The lyrical voice emits in the same frequency bands. This similarity clearly shows that the lyrical voice has a very strong link with screaming. She would sort of be its cultivated form.

As shown in this spectrogram, sounds such as high treble are to be attached to the category of the cry, whether it is pain, pleasure or alarm: high resonating zones, larynx in rear position, large mouth opening.

The chest sounds, for their part, are to be compared to the realm of the flesh: low resonating zones, lowered the soft palate, large pharyngeal opening.

V. The effects on musical language:

The evolution of musical language and in particular the enlargement of the orchestral mass, the use of an increasingly extreme musical writing for the voice, have only made more acute this need for total physical engagement, even if only to *pass* the orchestra. This inevitably leads to the use of very “animal” areas of the voice and a different kind of relationship to the body for the singer. The frame becomes too small and the body will have to follow anyway.

The bel canto favored the beauty, the homogeneity of the voice. The melodic lines and the intervals were there, relatively joint, with the exception of a few jumps of sevenths, octaves or ninths, with rare exceptions during moments of extreme emotional tension, of climax. The work of prosody, tonic accents was often at the center of the concerns. Areas not conducive to understanding the text were avoided.

Conversely, expressionist music, for example, aiming to highlight the torments, subjectivity, the accursed part of humanity, composers like Schönberg cannot be satisfied with a pleasant vocal gesture, or resign himself to only use a tessitura or prosody compatible with the intelligibility of the text: the emotional research is found elsewhere. The vocal lines become angular, tense, the ambitus widens, the ranges are more and more extreme. This leads to certain contingencies necessary for the intelligibility of the text to take a back seat: take into account the tonic accents, prosody, or even, not expose anything essential for the understanding of the text in the high-pitched voice, are no longer a priority. There is even almost “exploitation” of this voice coming out of its comfort zone.

Schönberg, *Erwartung*, mes 43–46.

Schönberg, *Erwartung*, mes 43-46.

Bellini, *Beatrice di tenda*, Act II.

Bellini, *Beatrice di tenda*, Act II.

What do these sounds tell? The voice cannot be beautiful all the time since it reflects the torments of the soul. It is then a new vision of the vocal instrument. We expect something else from the voice than being a “good pupil of the text” or a pretty color. Questions of textures, semantics, linked to the timbre of the voice become central. So here is the gateway to a new vocality!

“Musicalize the vocal, by operating a sufficient detachment from the everyday, to somehow lead to that ‘sublime of the everyday’ so desired”. M.Guillot.

VI. Has the contemporary singer become an instrumentalist like any other?

It is clear that the singer has been relieved of many of the functions that were previously assigned to him. He is no longer necessarily the vector of a literary narration, of a text, of a character. The form of the works in which he intervenes no longer necessarily revolves around him as before in the opera, oratorio, ... For example, the singer no longer necessarily occupies the front of the stage, which is not without offending some colleagues... (See spatialized writing *Coro L Berio*.)

Instrumental voice? :

Vocal writing is enriched with very “objective” elements that have been present in instrumental writing for a very long time such as attack modes, effects... We also perceive that the language requires greater autonomy from the singer, for example in *Coro* by Luciano Berio, the score being extremely dense, it is impossible for the conductor to give all the starts to the singers who are consequently forced to count their bars like an orchestra musician. At best 10% of the entries will be given to him, which would be unthinkable in any other repertoire. However, has the instrument that is the vocal organ, for all that, freed itself from its link with speech? Is the imprint of the linguistic imagination still present?

Let's go back to some examples of the repertoire:

- In **Berio's** *Sequenza III*, the material is the “carnal sound palette”. We believe we are guessing words and yet only “expressive charges” reach us. Berio works on the expressive capacity, the sound symbolism of the voice.

“The voice always carries with it an excess of connotations. From the more unbearable noise to the more exquisite song, the voice always means something ... ‘...’ It was necessary to fragment and, at least in appearance, to ravage the text, in order to be able to recover the fragments afterwards on different expressive plans by recomposing them as musical units and no longer linguistic.” L. Berio.

- In the *Aria* by **J. Cage** the words are present but the scope of the speech is conveyed here by the “deep semantics” of the voice, the semantic envelope of the song line. Understanding the text is secondary, it’s the way you say the text, how you convey it, that matters. The text becomes a pretext.

- In works like *La Fabbrica illuminata* by **L. Nono** or *Omnia Tempus Habent* by **A. Mellnas** the word is also present but extremely worked, sculpted, but not always understandable.

What is highlighted is rather all its emotional charge. We will feel the horror of the camps more than we will understand its literary description (See Nono),

or we will hear more a burst of laughter than we will understand the word *laugh* (See Mellnas).

Moreover, the reverse is also true. There are more and more indications of effects linked to human phonation. Playing indications like “whisper” ... are not uncommon. The explanatory notes are often more complex for the instruments than for the voice. No fingering. Pictorial indication but not freed from language because we go through the words “images”.

One of the most revealing things and which, in my opinion, perfectly illustrates the duality between the need to become more instrumentalist and the need to exacerbate the singer’s “posture” for the contemporary music performer is the evolution of the “vision of the ear”: in the

contemporary repertoire, the harmonic positioning of the ear has become a fairly secondary tool. For example, in masses close to the cluster, poly-tonal pieces, electronic works with height recognition, or simply in solo a cappella works (which tend to multiply nowadays) the singer must be perfectly autonomous ... so more "instrumentalist". Where the ambivalence lies is that in order to respond to this technical, instrumental demand, only a physical, almost animal approach to height can respond. Acquiring what we could call a proprioceptive or kinesthetic ear becomes essential: an excellent physical anchorage becomes non-negotiable.

"Non esiste altra soluzione, devi averlo in gola"
(*"There is no other solution, you must have it in your throat!"*) Luisa Castellani.

VII. On the impact of the use of the singer's histrionism as an example of the use of the entire carnal sonorous palette in contemporary music:

When listening to two recordings of the Traviata a trained ear can distinguish the voice of the Callas from that of the Tebaldi or the Crespini, but one will have little (or no) idea of the color of their uncultivated voice. It is not unusual, during a master class or an interview, to be surprised by the spoken voice of singers whom one has never heard but singing.

Contemporary music takes the singer and the listener a step forward: when you listen to a piece by composers such as Berio, Nono, Cage, Aperghis, Stockhausen, Manoury ... you are able to 'hear' in a very empathetic, very physical way, the body of the singer who is exposed to the ears of all, cry, talk, laugh, sigh... No one shouts, whispers, or howls in the same way, and contemporary vocality does not aim to erase what makes these sounds unique to everyone, quite the opposite.

We thus have a much more intimate, whole (mind, heart, body) knowledge of the singer. It is the sounds of this body that are exploited, the listener can then fictionalize, live, the whole carnal sound palette of the singer.

VIII. Conclusion:

Throughout this journey we have seen that ‘the hysterization of the call of the other’ was an integral part of the lyrical voice. It persists through the ages and becomes preponderant in contemporary vocality, both in its psychological impact but also in what it implies in the body of the singer. It is fascinating to see how composers after Second World War appropriated ‘what singing entails’ and made it a powerful cathartic tool as well as a formidable artistic medium. One of the major lessons is undoubtedly that these new tools of the contemporary vocal palette come, to a greater or lesser extent, from known gestures in their ‘uncivilized’ state. These primary rales, which everyone utters during their life, are harmless to the voice instrument. They are part of our essential baggage: the body knows them perfectly.

Also, for a sound to be as comfortable and rich as possible at the sensitive level, it is essential to understand from which uncultivated vocal gesture comes the element of musical language to be sung; both in its semantic scope, and in the way the body instinctively emits it. It is therefore essential to look at how these uncultured sounds are physiologically, technically created. The contemporary voice can take on some of the finery of instrumental writing and require skills hitherto reserved for instrumentalists; however, it remains intimately linked to its linguistic past as much as to its animality. Experience even shows that, the more the singer has to do a work similar to the instrumentalist, the more he will have to use his animal part to fulfill it.

What prospects does this new vocality open up? This new profound, animal, carnal semantics of the voice clearly shows that it is the instrument that best betrays the irrational and sexuality, inseparable from the human being. The artistic perspectives opened up by this new vocality are immense. The impact of vocal art on the upheavals occurring in our society, at a time when the relationship between humans and nature is so questioned, finds a renewed artistic place in it, but also all its political dimension. They could, among others, lead us to question ourselves on the illusion of the myth of the omnipotence of humanity thanks to the machine. However, can we imitate humans without taking their animal part into account? Can we reproduce it mechanically? While we are currently unable to emit a ‘human’ voice by artificial means, could a machine experience or translate feelings? But even more, would we accept ‘sensual machines’? Would they still be machines? It is this question of transhumanism that I wanted to raise through my *Echo x Echo* project, where I will sing this year wearing an exoskeleton which, thanks to an artificial intelligence algorithm based on the emotions expressed by my voice, will move by itself, according to them..

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