

MTO 25.1 Examples: Bertolani, Improvisatory Exercises as Analytical Tool

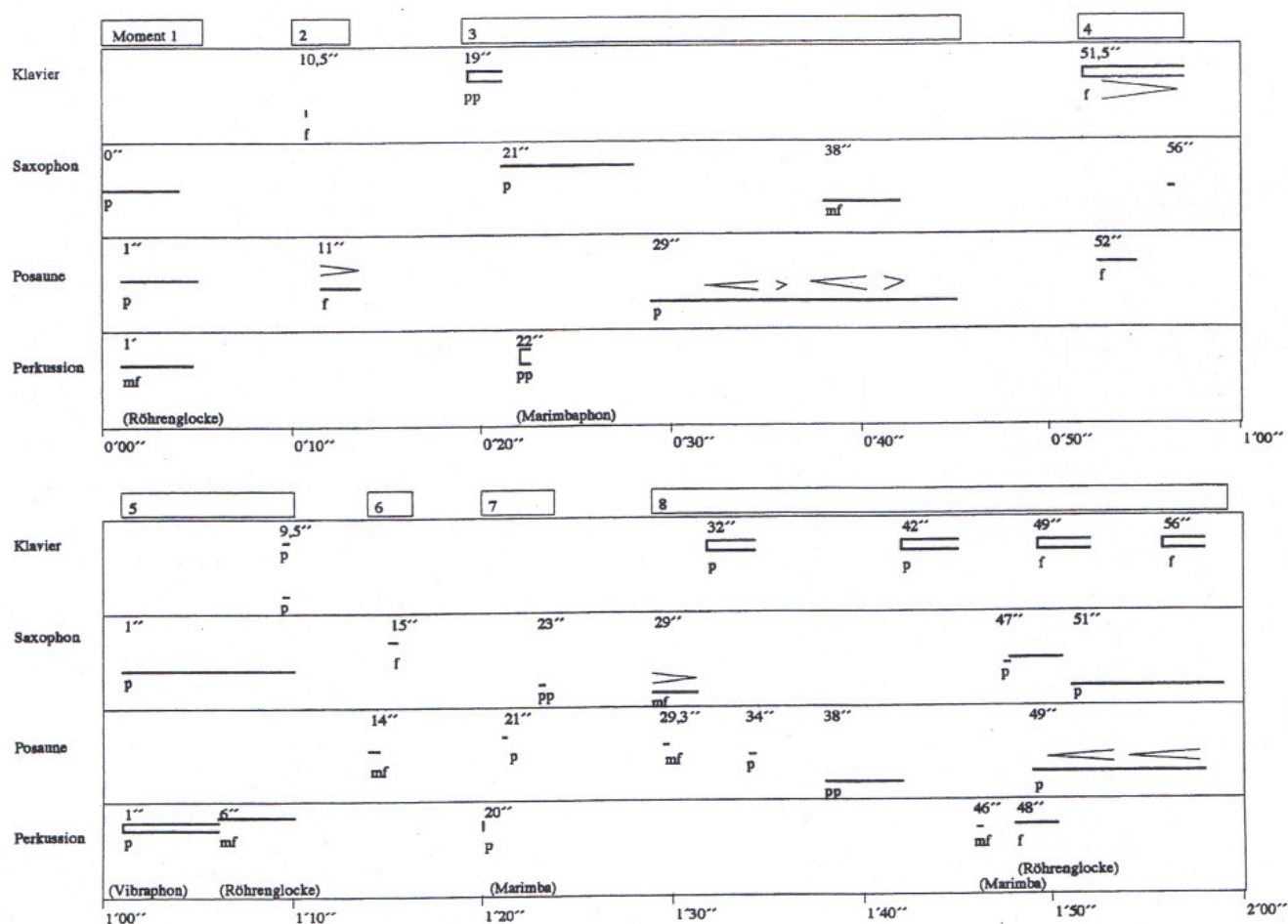
(Note: audio, video, and other interactive examples are only available online)

<http://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.19.25.1/mto.19.25.1.bertolani.html>

Examples 1a and 1b. Graphic rendition by Thorsten Wagner of “Quartetto” and schema with the description of sections (Wagner 2004, 242, 237)

1a.

Abbildung 59: *Quartetto*, 0’00’’–2’00’’



Quartetto – Momente

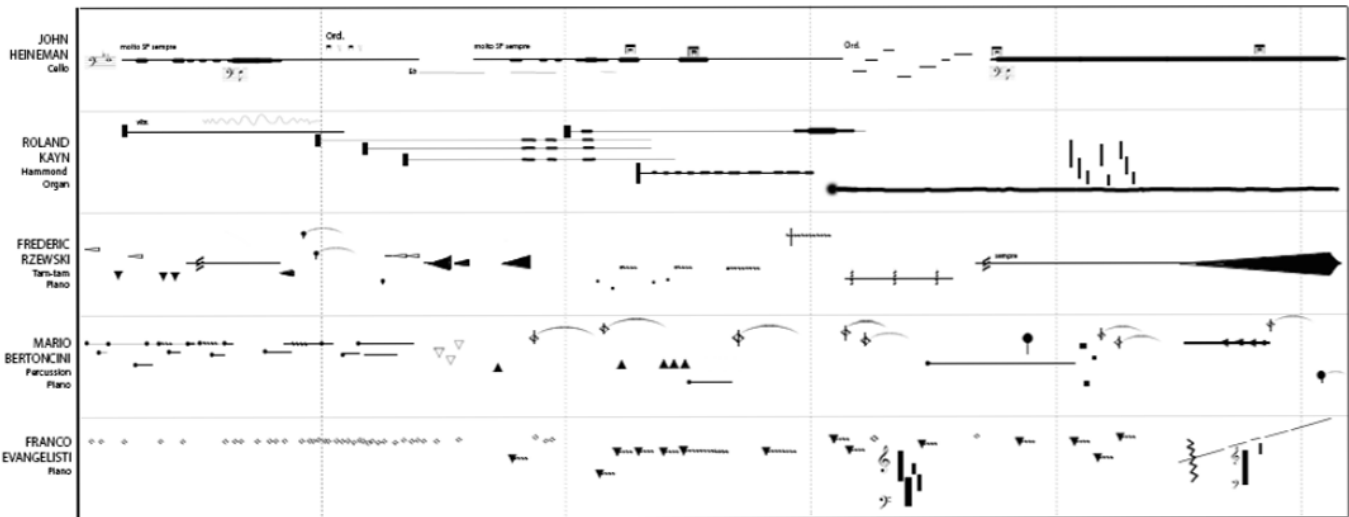
<i>Moment (Pause)</i>	1 – K (Ä) –	2 – K –	3 – K / Ä (E) –	4 – Ä –
Dauer	5'' (3'')	3'' (6'')	26'' (6'')	6'' (4'')
Texturtyp	Klangband	punktuell	Klangband	Klangband
Texturelemente	3 lange Klänge	2 kurze Klänge	4 lange, 1 kurzer Klang	2 lange, 1 kurzer Klang
Bewegung	statisch	statisch (bewegt)	statisch (bewegt)	statisch
Ereignisdichte*	0,6	0,6	0,19	0,5
Lautstärke	p/mf	f	p/pp (mf)	f
<i>Moment (Pause)</i>	5 – K / E –	6 – Ä (K) –	7 – E (Ä / K) –	8 – E / Ä –
Dauer	10'' (4'')	2'' (5'')	3'' (6'')	30'' (4'')
Texturtyp	Klangband	punktuell	punktuell	punktuell und Klangband
Texturelemente	3 lange, 1 kurzer Klang	2 kurze Klänge	3 kurze Klänge	8 lange, 6 kurze Klang
Bewegung	statisch	bewegter	bewegter	statisch und bewegt
Ereignisdichte	0,4	1,0	1,0	0,46
Lautstärke	p (mf)	mf/f	pp/p	p < f
<i>Moment (Pause)</i>	9 – K –	10 – K –	11 – Ä –	12 – Ä / E –
Dauer	38'' (6'')	21'' (4'')	8'' (1,5'')	4,5'' (1'')
Texturtyp	unterbrochenes Klangband	punktuell → Klangband (2x)	Klangband	Klangband
Texturelemente	11 lange, 4 kurze Klänge	10 kurze, 1 langer Klang	1 langer, 4 kürzere Klänge	1 langer, 1 kürzerer Klang
Bewegung	statisch	bewegt	statisch	statisch
Ereignisdichte	0,39	0,52	0,37	0,16
Lautstärke	ppp < p (einzelne sfz)	mf/f	p	pp
<i>Moment (Pause)</i>	13 – E / Ä –	14 – Ä / E (K) –	15 – Ä / E –	16 – K (E) –
Dauer	12'' (6'')	15'' (9'')	13'' (5'')	14'' (2'')
Texturtyp	Klangband und punktuell	Klangband	punktuell → Klangband	Klangband → punktuell
Texturelemente	3 kurze, 3 lange Klänge	3 lange, 1 kurzer Klang	5 lange, 2 kurze Klänge	3 lange, 3 kurze Klänge
Bewegung	statisch u. bewegt	statisch	statisch	statisch (bewegt)
Ereignisdichte	0,5	0,26	0,53	0,42
Lautstärke	p (mf/f)	p (mf)	f/mf > p	mf > p

Examples 2a and 2b. Graphic rendition by Ingrid Pustijanac of “RKBA 1675/I” and schema with the description of sections (Pustijanac 2016, Example 6, 13, and Example 8, 14)

2a.

Duration	5:12
Formal shape	Two accumulation processes separated by “silence”: 0’00”-2’38” accumulation process 2’38”- 3’07” acceleration in noise texture (2’45”), than reduction to Hammond Organ 3’07”-3’35” ‘silence’ coloured by low register after a short sound by a cello 3’35”-4’31” maximum developing of all elements 4’31”-5’10” final glissando in crescendo
Sound material	Textural continuum dominated by Hammond, tam-tam, piano strings, cello harmonics or scratched sound.
Pitch definition	Few pitch classes emerge accidentally by noise-oriented actions or from the texture-pedal (C, F, C#), individually and successively, without being developed in any intervallic or melodic relationship.
Dynamic shape	1-4-2-2-5 / some moments of full saturation with final crescendo.
Velocity of situation change	The building and deconstructing processes are gradual and slow.
Directionality of interaction’s processes	Building gesture: short harmonic sound as initial gesture in a process of gradual accumulation in time; cluster-pedal element with increasing density; scratched sound as contrast and acceleration of increasing dynamic; dynamic oscillations for stationary phase.

2b.



Example 3. Collective exercises used by GINC

Exercises	
Exercise 1	“a musical / sonic idea was proposed to each one of the participants... with the precaution that this idea could not be surpassed by other participants in terms of sound volume... in terms of presence... meaning everyone was forced to respond to this idea within these limits. Clearly this happened in turns, that is... I put forward my proposition but then it is up to you and to the others who could not exceed the volume of the proposition (e.g., play louder, impose themselves, etc...), but you were forced to respond. This [exercise] had a variant inasmuch as you could respond either with something similar or with something contrasting (always within the limitations of volume, etc.).” (Branchi 2014) ¹
Variant of Exercise 1	Same as above but one could choose not to respond to the idea (mostly by staying silent).
Economy of the material	“We could only avail ourselves of a couple of elements, or even just a couple of sounds. So the whole improvisation... the whole exercise had to be based on these sounds only.” (Branchi 2014) ²
Intensity exercise	Similar to “exercise 1”, but limited to the intensity of the sound. This, too, had a variant, as your intervention could be contrasting: in a general <i>piano</i> , you could break in with a <i>fortissimo</i> .
Ending in forte	As the name says, in this exercise everybody had to finish the improvisation <i>forte</i> . According to Branchi (interview with the author), this was the hardest exercise as usually one finishes improvisation by depletion of sonic material.
Improv duration	“This was very interesting. We decided, for instance, to play a one-minute or 15-minute long improvisation. And what did that entail? From a compositional point of view, this was crucial, as you picked the material based on the playing time. You could not use material that was resolved in one minute for a 15-minute improvisation. You had to pick material suitable for the form, suitable for the playing time. So it was an issue of playing time/form.” (Branchi 2014) ³

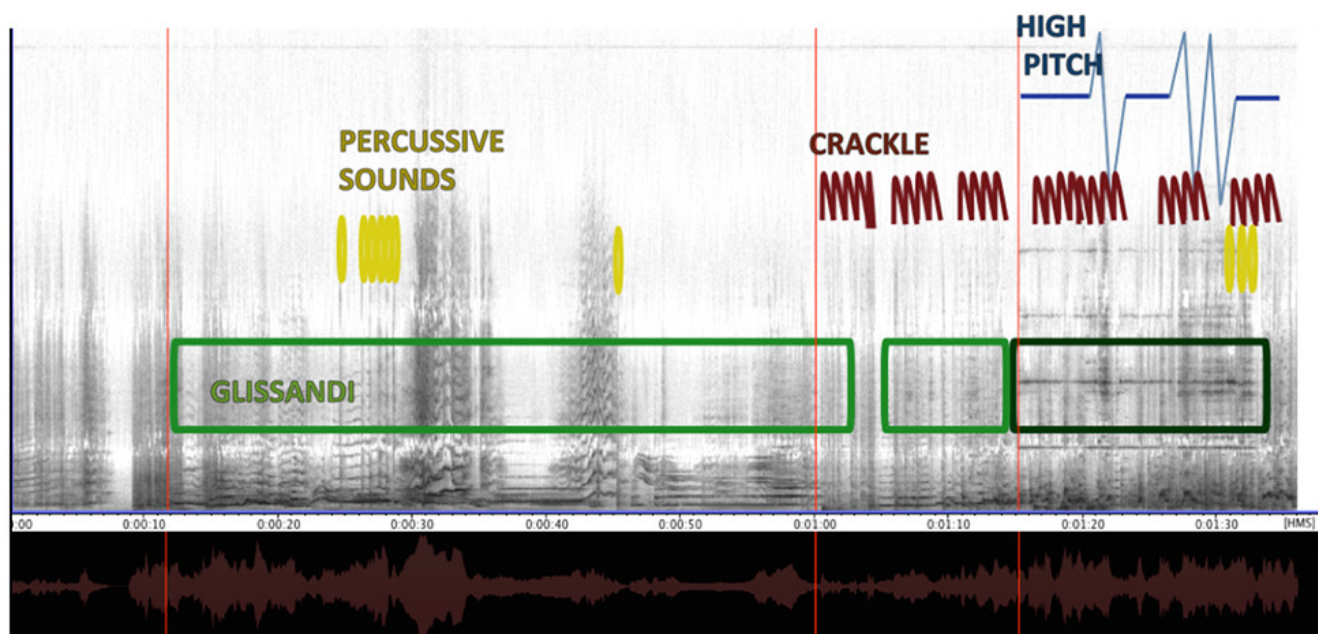
¹ “L’esercizio 1 consisteva nel proporre ad ognuno dei partecipanti un’idea musicale... sonora... con l’accorgimento che questa idea non poteva venir superata dagli altri partecipanti in termini di volume sonoro... in termini di presenza... e allora ognuno era obbligato a rispondere a questa idea secondo questi limiti che ti ho detto. Chiaramente questo avveniva a turno, cioè... io facevo la mia proposta poi stava a te e agli altri che non potevano superare di volume la tua proposta, cioè suonare più forte, cioè imporsi, ma erano costretti a rispondere. Questo [esercizio] aveva una variante cioè si poteva rispondere con una cosa simile oppure contrastante (sempre nei limiti del volume ecc).”

² “Consisteva nell’avere a disposizione due-tre cose, due-tre suoni e basta. Quindi tutta l’improvvisazione... tutto l’esercizio doveva essere fatto basato solo su questi suoni.”

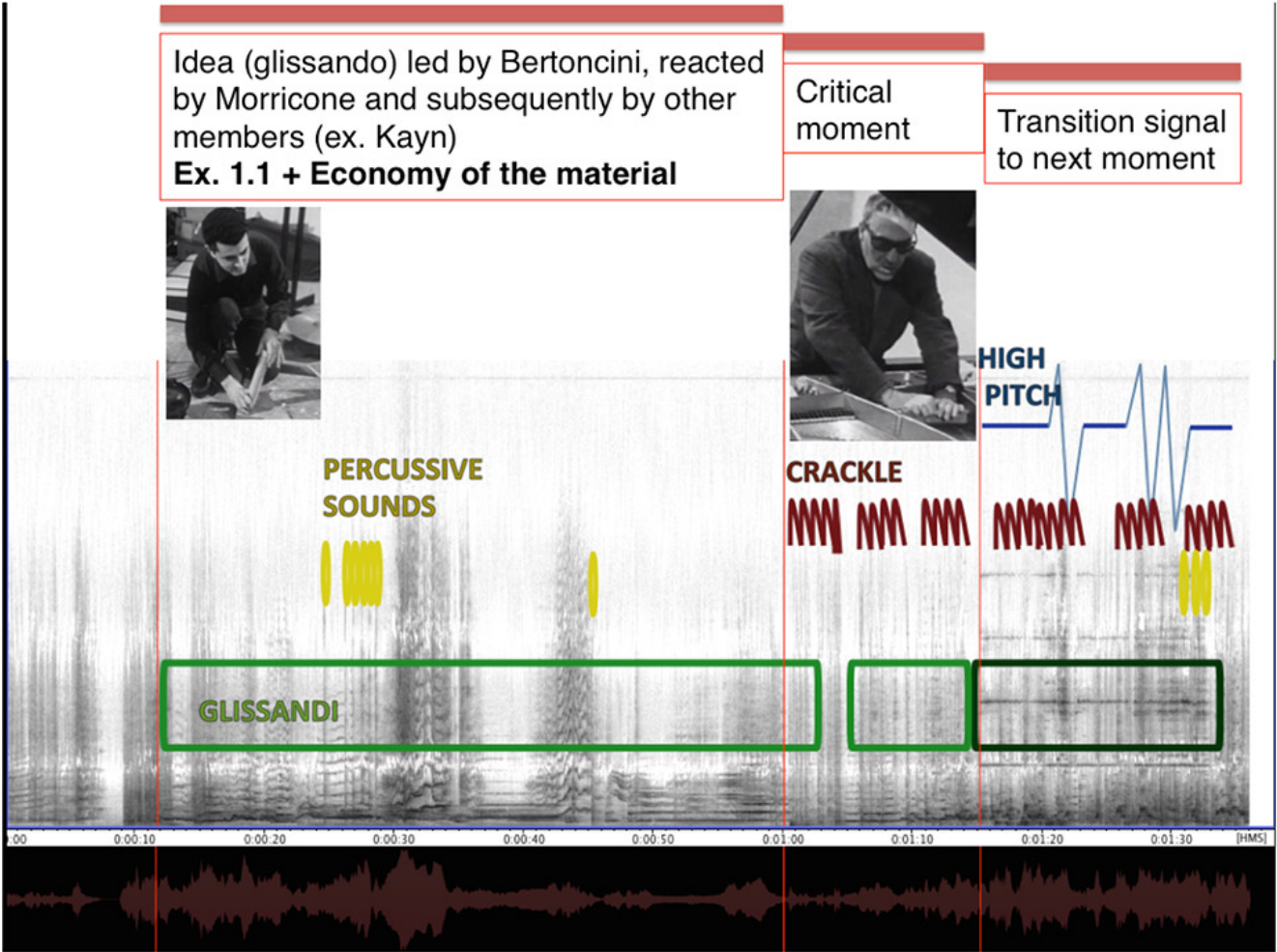
³ “Era molto interessante. ‘Facciamo una improvvisazione lunga un minuto, o lunga 15 minuti’. E allora cosa comportava questo? Dal punto di vista compositivo era fondamentale, perché in base alla durata, tu sceglievi il materiale. Non potevi fare il materiale che si risolveva in un minuto in 15 minuti di improvvisazione... dovevi scegliere un materiale adatto alla forma-adatto alla durata. Quindi era un problema di durata/forma.”

Example 4. Video 1—DVD excerpt: 14:40–16:15

Example 5a. Video rendition of video-example 1 created with Acousmographie, GRM



Example 5b. Visual rendition of video excerpt with major group dynamics and decision-making process



Example 5c.

TIME	WHAT HAPPENS	EXERCISES
Up to 14:38	Ennio Morricone (trumpet) is completing a previous section. In the background other performers, among them Mario Bertoncini (tube rubbed against the floor). The episode dissolves.	
14:39	After a moment of transition from a previous section, Mario Bertoncini finds a glissando sound by friction of a tube against the floor.	EXERCISE 1: Proposition
14:50	Other members (such as Vandor on the sax, Morricone on the trumpet and Kayn on the electric organ) react to that clue.	EXERCISE 1: Nobody gets louder than Bertoncini ECONOMY OF THE MATERIAL: They all work with glissando sounds (exception: occasional percussive sounds in the background)
15:38	Franco Evangelisti (on the piano) introduces a different sound: a scrub brush against the piano strings.	CRITICAL MOMENT
15:55	High pitch (maybe Morricone's mouthpiece) is added	EXERCISE 1: Proposition ended (high pitch is more intense than Bertoncini)

Example 6. Video 2—DVD excerpt: 26:22–27:50

Example 7. Description of *Example #2* with association to exercises

TIME	WHAT HAPPENS	EXERCISES
Up to 26:18	Transition moment, the previous episode dissolves.	
26:23	After a moment of transition from a previous section, John Heineman (trombone) starts impulsive sounds	EXERCISE 1: Proposition
26:29	Other members, such as Ivan Vandor (sax) and Bertoncini (percussions) react to that clue. Evangelisti (piano) makes suggestions to Heineman (the proposer at this turn). Evangelisti eventually reacts at around 27'03''.	EXERCISE 1, variant (as not everybody in the room reacts) ECONOMY OF THE MATERIAL: They all work with impulsive sounds
27:18	Saturation, with sounds covering in volume Heineman's proposition	EXERCISE 1: Proposition ended
27:28	Transition to a new proposition by Ivan Vandor (sax)	

Example 8. Video 3—DVD excerpt: 17:46–20:25