

A Trajectory of Sound: Domenico Guaccero's *Iter inverso* (1962)

Alessandro Mastropietro
Università di Catania

Within the often unfortunate performance history of the works of Domenico Guaccero (1927–1984),¹ *Iter inverso*, for 16 instruments, is among the pieces most affected by adverse circumstances.

Completed at the end of October 1962, *Iter inverso* originated primarily within a publishing context, as a work intended for a parallel performance debut and discographic release² by Edizioni Mercurio in Rome. Between 1961 and 1963, the publisher systematically focused on concert music by more or less prominent living composers (Luciano Chailly, Virgilio Mortari, and Ennio Porrino, among others).³ Particularly noteworthy is the name of Goffredo Petrassi, whose *Seconda Serenata–Trio* had been published by Edizioni Mercurio in 1963. Together with Firmino Sifonia (a fellow student of Guaccero under Petrassi), he may have helped bring about the contractual agreement.⁴

As the planned recording was never realized, the only performance of *Iter inverso* during the composer's lifetime took place on 28 May 1965, at the annual festival of the International Society for Contemporary Music held that year in Madrid.⁵ It was not until that occasion that Guaccero and Edizioni Mercurio proceeded to finalize the contract and prepare the materials for printing and dispatch to Spain.⁶ The publisher subsequently showed diminishing interest in contemporary music – as evidenced by the transfer of Petrassi's work to another publisher – whereas Guaccero's remained in Mercurio's catalogue.

ARCHIVAL NOTES

Source Studies in Twentieth- and Twenty-First-Century Music, No. 10 (2025)

© Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venezia | ISSN 2499-832X | DOI 10.69125/AN.v10.n06.125-154

Ten years later, Guaccero advocated for a performance of *Iter inverso* at the Incontri Musicali Romani, whose artistic programme accommodated both newly composed works and earlier pieces, provided they reflected the composer's current artistic concerns.⁷ In his reply, Guaccero gave *Iter inverso* priority among the completed works with which he continued to identify, despite the temporal distance – both in view of its Italian première and the originality of its instrumentation.⁸ In the end, however, the work was not selected,⁹ nor was *Iter inverso* performed in the monographic concert of the 1983 season of Nuova Consonanza, whose programme underwent substantial revisions.¹⁰

The decision to forgo that performance may also have been due to difficulties in obtaining adequate materials, even from the composer himself. When, following the death of Guaccero the following year, Nuova Consonanza dedicated its entire festival to him and rescheduled *Iter inverso*, the organising team – presumably drawing on the composer's archive – was able to supply the conductor Vittorio Parisi with no more than a proof copy of the score.¹¹ This proof lacked the improvisational schemes envisaged for many formal sections and had not yet been finalized in certain semiographic details; nevertheless, the individual parts had to be newly prepared from it. As no other copy of the Mercurio edition was found in Guaccero's personal archives, this solution was adopted out of necessity and in good faith. The result was a performance that, albeit unwittingly incomplete with respect to the text, remains to this day the only aural reference to assess certain aspects of the stylistic and sonic conception of the work.¹²

The precarious condition of the source material has unfortunately discouraged both new performance projects for *Iter inverso* and sustained or extensive musicological inquiry.¹³ Nonetheless, a close examination of the complete score still reveals the work to be a significant one (as it evidently remained for Guaccero many years after its composition), while its title establishes a clear intertextual link with another of his important, slightly earlier works. *Iter inverso* engages broader compositional issues within Guaccero's output and that of the neo-avant-garde movements around him: the relationship between notation and improvisation, at times resolved through hybrid modes of 'regulated improvisation'; experimental inquiry into sound; the conception of form; and the activation of sonic space as a parameter of both construction and listening.

OVERALL STRUCTURE AND SOURCES

Guaccero drafted a single, brief presentation of the work, preserved on a typescript sheet with autograph corrections following a short curriculum vitae:

The title *Iter inverso* refers to the earlier work ...*un iter segnato* (1959–60), which constitutes its most immediate constructive basis. Whereas the former traced a 'determined

path' (*segnato*) from the extremely rapid and aleatory movement of sonic 'atoms' toward monody, *Iter inverso* (1962) begins from monody and proceeds toward the formation of permutable sonic fields, or 'sound spheres'. Along this trajectory, as the lines crystallize into 'melody', 'harmony', and 'rhythmic section', the work briefly approaches mass music through linguistic modules derived from Jazz. No ideological or eschatological meaning is implied in this 'journey'; it is intended solely as a description of phenomena. The work also stems from another line of research, namely timbral-spatial investigation. The spatial arrangement of the instruments causes the sonic events to move from a maximum (the two percussion groups) to a minimum (flute, celesta, electronic instrument, and tuba) of 'acoustic spectrum' complexity, from the sides toward the center; and from a minimum (flute and tuba) to a maximum (percussion, marimba, and electric guitar) of attack complexity, from the front and the back toward the center.¹⁴

This text should be supplemented with the opening lines of the *Annotazioni* (Performance Notes), written earlier:

Iter inverso is to be performed *Foglio* by *Foglio*, beginning with *Foglio* 1 of the first part. Each *Foglio* constitutes a self-contained structural unit; however, the performance should not reveal discontinuities between one *Foglio* and the next unless this is expressly indicated.¹⁵

The work was thus conceived with a precise formal design: the alignment of a sequence of autonomous sound situations, not permutable in order, whose trajectory was governed – according to the composer's choice – by purely sonic characteristics, without superimposed implications. Guaccero already applied this idea in the aforementioned *...un iter segnato*, where the final panel presents a feature (the unfolding of monody) that, here, is placed at the beginning of the trajectory instead. In light of substantial differences in the writing of the individual episodes and in the overall shaping of the sonic trajectory, *Iter inverso* cannot be regarded as a simple retrograde reinvention or permutation of *...un iter segnato*, although it does take up two similarly connoted situations (monody and jazz allusion). Nevertheless, the monodic situation, placed at the opposite end of the trajectory, establishes a strongly explicit – and perhaps slightly polemical – link between the two scores, especially if one considers the reception of the Palermo première of the earlier work.

That performance of *...un iter segnato* elicited contrasting judgments and a range of aftereffects – self-criticisms, explanations, and personal clarifications – within the circle of figures promoting the inaugural Settimana Internazionale Nuova Musica.¹⁶ This circle included, alongside Guaccero himself, his Roman composer friends (above all Franco Evangelisti and Egisto Macchi), critics particularly attentive to the neo-avant-garde composers, the conductor – and artistic director of the first edition – Daniele Paris, and various cultural agents in Palermo, among whom, those closest to Guaccero were Francesco Agnello and, especially, Antonino Titone.¹⁷ To Titone, Guaccero addressed lengthy, often impassioned let-

ters¹⁸ that – alongside other points of friction among the close yet restless associates of the Roman neo-avant-garde – deal extensively with the vicissitudes of the performance (with which, despite acknowledging the exceptional efforts made to realize it together with the entire *Settimana*, he could not declare himself satisfied), his emotional ‘flight’ at the end of the concert (which gave rise to misunderstandings), and the aesthetic judgments that subsequently emerged.

Much of these outpourings focused precisely on the stylistic and linguistic force of certain episodes, above all two: the *sprazzo jazz* (jazz flare)¹⁹ generated – through a rhythmic framework based on a *chronos protos*, a certain prominence of the double bass, a recurrent use of glissandi, and the tendency of instrumental groups to become caught in synchronous or iterative figures – in the section beginning at b. 128, along which, moreover, eight of the ten instruments move away from the ensemble’s initial compact disposition; and, indeed, the ‘monodic’ finale, following shortly thereafter (from b. 176):

I am deeply committed to that ending, and certainly not for reasons of facile populism, as may have appeared in the Palermo performance. Better than anyone, I know that it is a risky ending, somewhat ‘descriptive’ and somewhat ‘practical’, though not in the sense of an *embrassons-nous*, but rather as the abrupt interruption of an ingenuous *embrassons-nous*.²⁰

Guaccero’s counter-observations seem aimed precisely at questioning the projection of facile ‘dramatic’ or even nostalgic meanings onto that finale, instead assigning it the role of a sonic – and linguistic – surprise (a rupture of the horizon of orthodox serial expectation),²¹ and thus an intrinsic value within the musical process.

The decision to place such an episode at the opening of the work, in *Iter inverso*, may have served several purposes for Guaccero: to mitigate the risk of a reading oriented toward the finale, whether in an ideological sense or in the evocation of a dramatic-rhetorical directionality of form (its ‘eschatology’, as suggested in the presentation cited above); to shape nonetheless clear transformations in the states of the sonic materials, proceeding from a condition strongly recognizable to the listener; and to refocus attention on sonic phenomenology as such, by virtue of its relocation to a different formal position.

In *Iter inverso*, the sequence of episodes – more or less discontinuous with one another – is distributed across two movements titled according to their respective trajectories (I. From monody to lines; II. From line to sphere),²² each articulated into five *Fogli*. By this term, in my view, Guaccero did not mean the physical unit of notation, but rather a distinct sonic and formal episode, akin to a *Blatt*. The synoptic plan of these *Fogli* for each movement, including specific and overall durations, is set out within an organized group of autograph sketches (hereafter ‘macro-sketch’)²³ under point ‘E’: ‘Struttura del pezzo’ (hereafter *SdP*, see FIG. 1).²⁴

E. Struttura del pezzo

1^a parte. da monodia a linee

1 Monodia dur. 2'5"	2 Suoni fermi dur. 1'45"	3 Pause dur. 3'10"	4 Linee con sintassi dur. 90"	5 7'40" circa
------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------	----------------------------------	---------------

2^a parte. da linea a sfera

6 linea conduttore a 4'47"	7 superficie conduttore 2'16"	8 superficie sovrapposti 53"	9 sfera - 38"	10 totalità - con suddivisione di piccola sfera - ripresa suoni fermi per monodia pausa - ripresa - pausa - ripresa circa 5'
-------------------------------	----------------------------------	---------------------------------	------------------	--

Introduzione di alea:

- n. 2. possibilità di lettura inversa - senza intervento delle disposizioni dei frammenti
- n. 3. possibilità di scegliere una velocità e seguire secondo le indicazioni
- n. 5. improvvisazione su schema jazz
- n. 6. ripresa di n. 2 all'inverso di come eseguito la prima volta
- n. 7. Velocità diverse per diversi gruppi d'accenti. gruppo guida controllato dal direttore (scritto per tutto)
- n. 8. composizione di gruppi diversi ("superfici") sovrapposti - alea interna al gruppo - capo gruppo interno
- n. 9. totalità di esecutori con schema di frequenze: improvvisazione totale in pianissimo - suggerimenti visivi (intente scritte)
- n. 10. continuazione numero precedenti

n. 9 indicazione iniziale con singoli suoni per ogni accentre - poi indicazione di "campi" (per gli esecutori) o "altre" - poi di "curve" - indicazione di varianti sulle dimensioni (intens, timbro, altezza).

n. 10 formazione di punti fermi



con suoni fermi nel maggiore

FIGURE 1. Guaccero's 'macro-sketch' for *Iter Inverso*, point E.
Venice, Fondazione Giorgio Cini (FGC), Guaccero Collection.

The definitions of the *Fogli*/episodes will be discussed later, in relation to the musical substance of the work. It is worth emphasizing that, in the lower portion of the *SdP* sketch, Guaccero focuses exclusively on the 'introduction of [elements of] alea' in as many as eight of the ten *Fogli*, and in fact in all those of the second movement.

For the last three *Fogli* of the latter, the notation is entirely non-conventional and highly indeterminate, resulting in three distinct regulated improvisations. The final *Foglio* of the first movement (no. 5) opens with a 'jazz-schema improvisation', graphically rendered as a rose window²⁵ – or rotated eye – and moves toward its conclusion through a phase of dissolution into a haloed monody. This yields a highly differentiated semiographic configuration, ranging from relatively 'ordinary' *Fogli* to strongly atypical and aleatoric ones. Even within the former, however, there is oscillation between the mensural indication of durations and

their spatial notation: musical figures are proportionally spaced along the horizontal axis and placed within temporal boxes defined by barlines between the staves, as in modern score transcriptions of pre-tonal polyphonic sources originally transmitted in separate parts (see FIG. 2 for the first page so configured, I.5:A, in the published edition).²⁶



FIGURE 2. *Iter inverso*, first movement, p. 5:A. © 1965 Edizioni Mercurio (EM). Photocopy. FGC, Guaccero Collection.

A variety of notational configurations across relatively autonomous episodes – and thus a sometimes composite status of the scores²⁷ – is, however, among the least significant reasons for the incompleteness of certain sources for *Iter inverso*. All the sources are listed below:

- **AM:** autograph manuscript, written freehand on large oblong sheets with 16 staves, written on both sides (FIG. 3 shows page II.1:A).²⁸ The source is incomplete, lacking two sheets (no. 9 of the first movement, corresponding to *Foglio* 4:C of the printed edition, and no. 5 of the second movement, corresponding to *Foglio* 2:B of the same movement), as well as the diagram of the improvisational schema for I.5 and all material – rules and notation – relating to *Fogli* II.3, 4, and 5.²⁹ From this source, Guaccero began preparing a fair copy aimed at better aligning

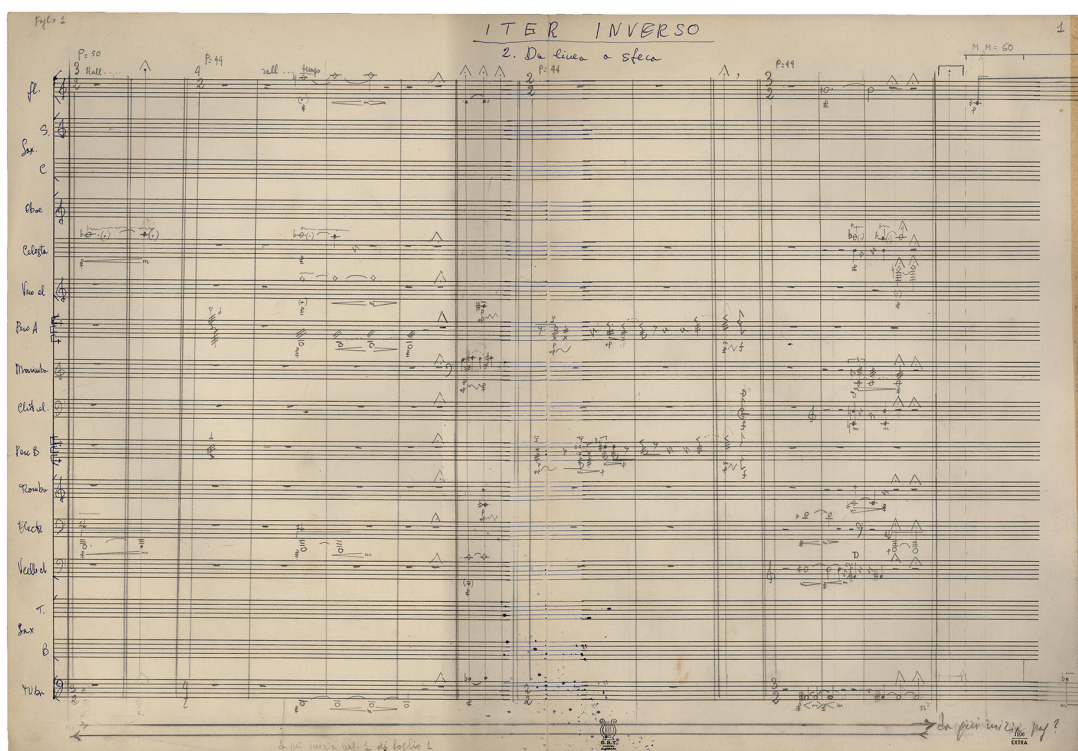


FIGURE 3. *Iter inverso*, second movement, 'Foglio 1', AM. FGC, Guaccero Collection.

the *Fogli* (i.e., formal episodes) with whole numbers of oblong musical pages.³⁰ The source also includes the first draft – partly typescript, partly manuscript – of the *Performance Notes*, as well as the *Performance Rules* specially for the jazz improvisational schema, written up on a sheet that also contains sketches for the twelve-tone row used in that schema (FIG. 4).³¹

- **PP:** print proof, incomplete with respect to the improvisational *Fogli* (as well as the general *Performance Notes*), produced as a heliographic copy from fair drafts on transparent sheets intended as the master for the Edizioni Mercurio edition (EM). The proof already bears the publisher's copyright, but with a date (1963) preceding the actual SIAE registration date (1965) indicated on the final print. The document was formerly held in the composer's private archive in Rome but was removed in preparation for the 1984 performance at Nuova Consonanza, and was not returned. The original is absent from the Guaccero collection at the Fondazione Cini, however a 36-page xerographic copy sent to the conductor of that performance, Vittorio Parisi, survives instead.³² In addition to the absence of the *Fogli*/improvisational schemas, this source differs from EM in the physical separation of landscape sheets into two vertical half-sheets intended to be reassembled (FIG. 5 shows p. 3, i.e., the right half of I.1:B). The proof also lacks certain details

[illegible]

FIGURE 4. ‘Regole d’esecuzione’ [performance instructions] and serial sketches for jazz improvisation, AM. FGC, Guaccero Collection.

Handwritten musical score for "The Song of the Lark" by Maurice Strakosky. The score is written on ten staves, with the first staff marked with a circled "10". The tempo is marked "♩ = 68/72". The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like "f" and "p". The piece concludes with a double bar line and a final key signature of one flat.

FIGURE 5. *Iter inverso*, first movement, p. 3 = right half of 1:B, PP. Vittorio Parisi private collection. Reproduced by kind permission.

added later, which are present in the final edition; it nonetheless still preserves some courtesy markings that were later removed, as well as the stamp of the Roman heliographic printing house. Closely related to this source is the incomplete set of manuscript parts for the 1984 performance (FIG. 6),³³ obviously lacking the improvisational sections and possibly copied by a former student of Guaccero.

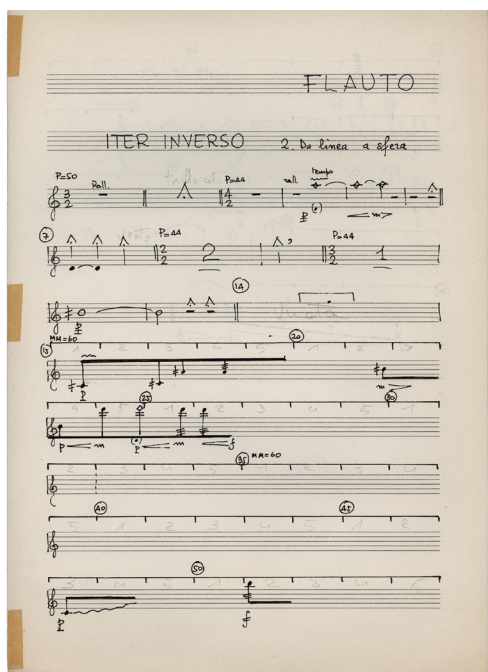


FIGURE 6. *Iter inverso*, flute part, page from a set of manuscript parts. FGC, Guaccero Collection.

- **EM:** the Edizioni Mercurio edition of the score, with copyright 1965, complete with all improvisational sections and their explanatory notes, final pagination, general *Annotazioni* (FIG. 7), and the performance instructions added to the musical sheets after the production of the first proof. The only complete copy (23 sheets) with cover – however without any inscriptions – is held at the Archivio Musicale della RAI in Turin, sent there as a free copy by the publisher. Guaccero possessed, until an unspecified date, at least one complete heliographic copy of the edition: this is the source – without a cover – currently preserved in the archive of the Fondazione Isabella Scelsi, within the Michiko Hirayama collection.³⁴ Its provenance is confirmed by the specific code, ‘3 A 25’, on the first oblong sheet. This code was assigned and signed by Guaccero on all his scores during a reorganisation of his personal archive around 1970.³⁵ An incomplete xerographic copy was later produced by Guaccero’s heirs: it lacks two sheets (I.1.C and I.5.B), and the margins are cropped in several places.³⁶

A N N O T A Z I O N I

ITER INVERSO va eseguito foglio per foglio, incominciando dal FOGLIO 1 della prima parte.

Ogni foglio è un'unità strutturale conclusa: l'esecuzione non deve far avvertire, però, soluzioni di continuità tra foglio e foglio, a meno che ciò non sia espressamente indicato.

STRUMENTI (come indicati in partitura):

FLAUTO
SAXOFONO SOPRANO
SAXOFONO CONTRALTO
OBOE
CELESTA
VIOLINO ELETTRICO
PERCUSSIONE A
MARIMBA
CHITARRA ELETTRICA
PERCUSSIONE B
TROMBA (in do)
STRUMENTO ELETTRONICO
VOLONCELLO ELETTRONICO
SAXOFONO TENORE
SAXOFONO BARITONO
TUBA

(usare uno strum. a valvole elettroniche con suoni sinusoidali monodici)

Disposizione degli strumenti sul podio:

	TROM.	SAX. T	STR. EL.	SAX. B	V. CELLO EL.	
PERCA		MAR.		CHIT. EL.	V. NO EL.	PERC. B.
	OBOE		CEL.			
	S	SAX. S.	FLAUTO	SAX. C.		

PARTICOLARITA' DELLA NOTAZIONE:

ALTEZZE: $\sim$ alti, oscillante,
 f = gruppo contiguo di altezze
 ff = pizzicare la corda contemporaneamente sopra e sotto il punto di intonazione
 fff = dia messe di piatto su tutte le corde (archi e chit.)
 f = il più forte possibile
 Le intensità non mutano sino a nuovo segno. Esse possono essere puntuali o per campi.

INTENSITA': ppp = il più piano possibile
 pp
 p
 m = intensità media

TIMBRI:

A = sord. (archi) e sord. cup (tromba)
 O = sord. "palla" (trom.)
 S = " " " semichiusa
 + = " " " chiusa e colpo di chiave (flauto)
 X = colpo su cassa (archi, chit.)
 v = scatto e rimbalzo di corda
 ~ = vibrato tirato
 --- = non vibrato tirato
 v = battuto

||||| = ribattuto (e loro combinazioni)

CORDE: A = arco, D = dita (pizz.), U = unghia, P = plettro, L = legno
 --- = tastiera
 --- = centro
 --- = ponticello
 --- = oltre pont.

FIATI: U = ughia, P = parlato, L = labbra

PERCUSSIONE: SACCHETTE: 1. di feltro morbido (A) e gamma (Y)
 2. di feltro duro (A) e legno (Y)
 3. di metallo (Y) e spazzola (A)

PERCUSSIONE: DISPOSIZIONE E GRAFIA:

PERCUSSIONE A

1. Glass chimie
 2. Maraca acuto
 3. Block cinese acuto
 4. Temple block grave
 1. Triangolo preparato
 2. Piatto cinese (a gang)
 3. Piatto charleston
 4. Plat. susp. grave
 1. Holstrommel grave
 2. Tom tom grave
 3. O. Cassa media a ped.
 4. Timpano

PERCUSSIONE B

1. Wood chimie
 2. Maraca grave
 3. Clave
 4. Quero grave
 1. Holstrommel acuto
 2. Tom tom acuto e pedale
 3. Tamburo militare
 4. Timpano
 1. Lastra media preparata
 2. Campana/piatto (a pedale)
 3. Gang cinese grave
 4. Tam tom grave

TIMPANO = grafia normale

* PREPARAZIONI: (1) Triangolo: avvolgere del filo di ferro intorno allo strumento
 (2) Lastra: appendere del filo di ferro
 (3) Campana/piatto: attaccare un piatto piccolo alla campana e colpirlo con pedale di cassa jazz.

* Con corde (c.a.) e senza corde (s.c.)

DURATE: M.N. 80 = eseguire i suoni a seconda della loro disposizione entro i tratti uguali.

9 = pausa brevissima (1/8 o 1/3 di secondo)
 A = durata prima (cca. 1 secondo)
 A = corona breve (cca. 2 secondi)
 A = corona media (3/4 secondi)
 A = corona lunga (cca. 5/6 secondi)
 A = corona lunghissima (cca. 7/8 secondi)
 ∞ = durata "infinita" (cca. 9 o 11 osecondi).

FIGURE 7. 'Annotazioni' [performance notes], EM. Photocopy. FGC, Guaccero Collection.

As the Edizioni Mercurio edition (EM) is, naturally, the primary musical source for the analysis of the work, a synoptic foliation is provided below in relation to the formal segmentation (the concise description for each *Foglio*, as set out in Guaccero's formal plan *SdP* at section E of the autograph 'macro-sketch', is used), adopting the final foliation wherever possible:³⁷

<i>Fogli</i>	<i>Indicazioni on the 'macro-sketch'</i> (p. 2, section E)
<i>Annotazioni</i> [1 landscape page, not included in the page numbering]	
I. [first movement] <i>Da monodia a linee</i>	7'40" circa [jazz improvisation not included]
<i>Foglio 1</i> : A–B–C [3 landscape sheets]	<i>Monodia</i> 2'5"
<i>Foglio 2</i> : A–B [2 landscape sheets]	<i>Suoni fermi</i> 1'45"
<i>Foglio 3</i> : A–B [2 landscape sheets]	<i>Pausa</i> 3'10" [description/duration include also the following episode in <i>Foglio 4</i>]

<i>Foglio 4</i> : A–B–C [3 landscape sheets, the third page not entirely devoted to this episode]	<i>Jazz</i> [actually within <i>Foglio 5</i>]
<i>Foglio 5</i> : improvisation scheme (<i>rosone</i>) with specific performance instructions, followed by a short connecting passage in the final portion of <i>Foglio 4</i> ; then A–B–C [3 landscape sheets and one fragment]	<i>Linee con intorni 40"</i> [duration excluding jazz improvisation]
II. [second movement] <i>Da linea a sfera</i>	<i>circa 5'</i>
<i>Foglio 1</i> : A–B–C [3 landscape sheets]	<i>Linea conducente a 1'47"</i>
<i>Foglio 2</i> : A–B [2 landscape sheets]	<i>Superficie conducente a 1'16"</i>
<i>Foglio 3</i> : performance instructions on a separate sheet, followed by one sheet in musical notation (Sections I–II–III)	<i>Superfici sovrapposte 53"</i>
<i>Fogli 4–5</i> : performance instructions for both episodes on separate sheet, followed by one sheet in musical notation: <i>Foglio 4</i> on the left-hand end, <i>Foglio 5</i> on the rest of the sheet	<i>Sfera 38"</i> <i>Totalità – con enucleazione di piccole sfere – ripresa 27"</i>

COMPOSITIONAL STRATEGIES (1): TIMBRAL, SPACE AND FORMAL TRAJECTORY

Although the formal foreground of *Iter inverso* lies in the succession of episodes in trajectories indicated by the movement titles, another decisive level for both local and global sonic configurations is the sound space, organized according to timbral criteria. Not by chance, this level is articulated in the first two sections of the ‘macro-sketch’ (FIG. 8), the second of which (B) explains the strategies underlying the non-standard spatial disposition of the instruments outlined in A. The diagram, through the term ‘evolution’, refers not only to an abstract paradigm but also to the concrete unfolding of syntagms, as reflected in the choices of instrumentation and musical figures within them.

Guaccero organized the timbral space along two axes oriented with respect to where the audience is facing: a front-to-back axis (a), defined by the complexity of attack transients, ranging from a minimum at the two extreme instruments (flute, front; tuba,³⁸ rear) to a maximum of complexity and non-linearity in the four performers positioned at mid-depth (percussion A–B, marimba, electric guitar); and a left-to-right axis (b), determined by the richness and variability of obtainable spectra, from a maximum in the two percussion setups placed at the extremes to a minimum in the four instruments aligned along the central line facing the conductor (flute, celesta, electronic instrument,³⁹ tuba).

With respect to the cross of inverse values produced by the combination of the axes for eight of the sixteen instruments, the remaining eight are arranged so as to

fill linear fronts of two to three instruments, generating a rhomboid figure at the sides. The four saxophones form a square characterized by a lower attack complexity and reduced spectral richness; the outer square traced by the remaining four instruments (oboe and trumpet on the left side, electric violin and electric cello on the right) may have been suggested by the instability of the attack transient, intensified – in the strings – by amplification pickup.

The placement of the staves within the score system (FIG. 2) ultimately reflects the arrangement of the instrumental fronts from front to back (according to the criterion of sound attack), in groupings of 1–2–3–4–3–2–1 instruments, combined with an implied left-to-right reading of the fronts (according to the spectral criterion). The result is a thoroughly atypical disposition on the page that is not intelligible without the criteria outlined above.

From today's perspective, one could raise a number of physical-acoustic objections to these criteria, not least in light of the expansion of sound-production techniques which, in certain instruments, have radically transformed the timbral palette – an expansion in which Guaccero himself was, paradoxically, a tireless experimenter, and which also emerges in *Iter inverso*. In conceiving the work, however, Guaccero may have been concerned with outlining an average timbral behavior, schematically presented only in certain – mostly initial – zones of the piece, and then progressively complicated and destabilized as the music moves toward more chaotic configurations of sonic texture.

A comparable process can be observed precisely in the opening formal gesture of the first movement of *Iter inverso*: *Foglio I.1* consists, from b. 3 (Lento, FIG. 9),⁴⁰ of two successive monodic curves, developed in *Klangfarbenspiel* with partial overlapping of adjacent sounds. The gradual emergence of pitches through a subtle mutability tends, at least in the first curve, progressively to exhaust the chromatic total, which is saturated by b. 12. This exhaustion seems to configure a series:⁴¹ if timbral decompositions are disregarded, the reappearances of previously stated pitches (confined to the final bars of the section) function as expansions of the prevailing monodic line toward more or less adjacent notes, with particular thickening – extended to unpitched percussion sounds – for the final two elements of the series (bb. 10–13 in FIG. 5).

In the second monodic curve (bb. 14–26), the filling of the total chromatic aggregate proceeds without strict control, with numerous returns of elements before its completion. This second curve also begins from spectrally 'poor' configurations: the first three pitches (A $\flat$, C, A, bb. 14–15) are exchanged among tuba, electronic instrument, and flute—that is, three of the four instruments belonging to the spectrally most basic set; the saturation here is strongly oriented toward the timbral spectrum, with a massive contribution of percussion from bar 24 onward.⁴²

DOMENICO GUACCERO

ITER INVERSO

1. Da monodia a linee

Foglio 1: A

Velocità
quanto maggiore Lento (♩ = 56)

FLAUTO
SAX. SOPRANO
SAX. CONTRALTO
OBOE
CELESTA
VIOLENO
ELETTRICO
PERCUSSIONE A
MARIMBA
CHITARRA
ELETTRICA
PERCUSSIONE B
TROMBA
STRUMENTO
ELETTRONICO
VCELLO ELETTRICO
SAX. TENORE
SAX. BARITONO
TUBA

© Copyright 1965 by Edizioni Musicali - MERCURIO - Roma
Stampato a Roma - Febbraio 1965

Foglio 1: A

FIGURE 9. *Iter inverso*, first movement, p. 1:A, EM. Rome, Archivio Fondazione Isabella Scelsi (hereafter AFIS), Hirayama Collection, series 3, folder 19/48. Reproduced by kind permission.

Whereas the two curves of *Foglio* I.1 evoke, in the textural evolution of the monody, a dimensional ascent in the direction suggested by the movement title, *Foglio* I.2 (FIG. 10 shows page A) calls the monodic sound configuration into question by other means. Sparsely distributed sounds, often sustained at length; dynamics never exceeding a medium level (with slow [de]crescendi or sudden flexuosities); microintervals; two brief panels (bb. 30–32 and 38–39) reserved for percussion alone; and, in the remaining panels, a focus on aggregates of superimposed sounds;⁴³ all contribute to a sense of emptying, suspension, and stasis (the ‘still sounds’ of *SdP*). Guaccero had already envisaged in the ‘macro-sketch’ the «possibility of reverse reading» for the entire *Foglio*, conceiving it as non-directional: ultimately, he chose to employ it twice, as I.2 and II.1, allowing in I.2 the option of either forward or reverse reading, while prescribing – so as to avoid the exact repetition of episodes – the use of the alternate reading in II.1.

Foglio I.3 (bb. 45–66) continues, in a more linear manner, the process of sonic depletion – *Pause* in *SdP* – and the substitution of pitches with unpitched percussion sounds or analogous effects (strikes on the body of the electric guitar, *battuto*

FIGURE 10. *Iter inverso*, first movement, p. 2:A, EM. AFIS, Hirayama Collection.

oltre il ponticello on the electric cello). Here, Guaccero employs – not considering refractions onto adjacent pitches – a variant of the series presented at the beginning of I.1, incomplete owing to the extreme rarefaction of the texture.⁴⁴

In *Foglio* I.4 (bb. 67–85), the sonic material passes through phases of coagulation around melodic hints (e.g., ex. 1, bb. 68–69) or around even highly massive vertical events (ex. 2, bb. 74–76). These figural extremes of density, which nonetheless do not exclude the presence of silences and rarefactions, lend the episode a formal function as a bridge toward the final *Foglio* (I.5), opened by the *Jazz Improvisation*.⁴⁵ Assigned to eight instruments only,⁴⁶ this section is to be carried out on the basis of a schema (FIG. 11) that synthetically defines the materials: for pitch, two twelve-tone series readable in both treble and bass clefs; for rhythmic sequences, notated as values outside strict meter but referable to a gently syncopated style derived from classical swing; for dynamic levels, whose central image inverts – within the diagram of maximum–medium–minimum values – the star-shaped figure associated with the timbral aspect. Certain prescriptions (serial organization, fragmentation of rhythmic modules in the melodic instruments, partial permutability, and differentiation of dynamics) suggest an aim of estrangement in the sonic result with respect to the jazz stylistic horizon, toward which no more than an ‘approximation’ is intended.

EXAMPLES 1-2. *Iter Inverso*, first movement, excerpts: (left) bb. 68–69; (right) bb. 74–76. EM, photocopy. FGC, Guaccero Collection.

After a brief connective passage involving once again almost all the instruments over a rapid percussion improvisation, the *Foglio* resumes and reaches its epilogue within a time = space notational framework. The situation is comparable to that of *Foglio* I.1: two large arcs of sonic densification culminate in corresponding intensity climaxes around *forte* (the second with the concluding participation of the percussion in a constellation – together with marimba and electric guitar – of maximal attack complexity). The handling of the pitch parameter traces a trajectory toward a refracted linearity ('linee con intorni', lines with surroundings, in *SdP*): the notion of 'lines' (in the plural), toward which Guaccero directs the transformations of sonic configurations, appears to be related more to the stitching of textures and to timbral articulation than to a concept – albeit reconsidered – of polyphony.

The first *Foglio* of the second movement reintroduces, in its opening section (II.1:A, FIG. 3 in the AM source), *Foglio* I.2 in a reading reversed with respect to that chosen in the first movement (cf. FIG. 10). The process thus resumes one step back from the arrival point of the preceding movement – the illusory multiplication of lines – returning to a condition of a single 'line', essentially a mon-

SCHEMA

IMPROVVISATIVO

REGOLE PER L'IMPROVVISAZIONE

L'improvvisazione è condotta, accontentandosi ai moduli jazz, da 8 strumenti: sax. c. / sax. t., mar. e tr. (sez. mel.) e perc. A e B, chit. e cello della sez. ritm..

ALTEZZE: servono anche per chit. e cello della sez. ritm.. Esse sono segnate come doppia serie dodecafonica sull'esagramma e sono leggibili in ogni verso, in chiave di violino o di basso. Alterazioni: $\sharp = \flat$, e $b = \sharp$.

INTENSITA' E TIMBRE: le int. sono segnate, come campi all'interno dell'esagramma. Per i due gruppi di tre timbri (chit., cello, percuss. B e mar., tr., sax. t.) esse sono da scambiare all'interno del gruppo: es. sax. t. $\sharp$, tr. $\flat$, e mar. $\flat$, opp; sax. t. $\flat$, tr. $\sharp$, mar. $\sharp$. Il sax. c. e la perc. A sono a intensità indipendente e fissa.

DURATE: sono segnate fuori dell'esagramma e si eseguono in serie, totalmente da parte della sez. ritm., parzialmente da parte della sezione melodica.

FIGURE 11. *Iter inverso*, first movement, the 'rose window' for the jazz improvisation, EM. AFIS, Hirayama Collection.

ody thickened and timbrally refracted. This solution plays on the idea of a 'false repetition', as a recapitulation of the sonic trajectory prior to its further development: the continuation of II.1 (folios B–C, notated in a time = space system) is in fact identical to the second arc (beats 33–52) of I.5, up to the entry cue of the percussion across the entire front of complex attacks (from beat 19 in II.1:C). This idea (EX. 3) is then extended and enriched with further events, all characterized by a strong noise component in attack-timbre and by indeterminacy of pitch (two-finger pizzicato, strikes on the instrument body, clusters).

With the seamless transition into *Foglio II.2*,⁴⁷ the overall situation appears transformed, particularly in II.2:A. The density of the sound actions is very high, and almost all instruments exhibit an aggressive denaturation of their ordinary timbre, producing a general effect of distortion. This should realize – according to the 'macro-sketch' – the passage from line to surface ('linea conducente a | superficie', subsequently affirmed in II.2:B (EX. 4). At the beginning, sonic events coagulate into synchronous attacks, whose ensuing duration is cued by the conductor according to the general fermata signs. These surfaces combine the timbral fronts in different ways, with a minimum of two

or three instruments;⁴⁸ the final gesture of densification involves all instruments except those of the central front characterized by maximal attack complexity. Beyond capturing a kind of 'negative' of many nodal situations, the event brings the behavior of the other instruments closer to that front, as their sound production becomes increasingly destabilized and chaotic.

Handwritten musical score for Example 3. The staves are labeled: VNO EL, PERC. A, MAR, CHIT. EL, PERC. B, TR, STR. EL/NICO, and VC. EL. The score includes various musical notations, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings such as *f* (forte) and *p* (piano). A tempo marking *M.M. = 60* is visible. The text *sulla ginocchio* is written above the VNO EL staff.

EXAMPLE 3. *Iter inverso*, second movement, *Foglio 1:C*, beats 17-28. EM, photocopy. FGC, Guaccero Collection.

Handwritten musical score for Example 4. The staves are labeled: FL, SAX. S, SAX. C, OB, CEL, VNO EL, PERC. A, MAR, CHIT. EL, PERC. B, TR, STR. EL/NICO, VC. EL, SAX. T, SAX. B, and TUBA. The score includes various musical notations, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings such as *f* (forte) and *p* (piano). A tempo marking *M.M. = 60* is visible. The text *Più forte, reattivo, in tempo* is written at the bottom right.

EXAMPLE 4. *Iter inverso*, second movement, *Foglio 2:B*, beginning. EM, photocopy. FGC, Guaccero Collection.

The final three *Fogli* coincide with three semi-improvisations, which are tightly regulated in both material and performance rules. *Foglio* II.3 (FIG. 12), in three sections I–II–III, instructs the conductor to cue, for each section, the successive entry of four groups of four instruments, in a different way each time. However, the metronomic tempo to be applied to the time = space notation is entrusted to a designated group leader, indicated in turn – twice for six instruments – by a circled mark in the sketches and in the score. The overlapping surfaces consistently correspond to polytimbral configurations defined by [non-]coincidence within a given spatial front: in section I, the fronts are the unitary ones of maxima/minima; in section III, maxima and minima are combined in a nonetheless symmetrical arrangement, which also governs the mixtures in section II.

These combinations are visible in the section rotated by 90° within the area of the ‘macro-sketch’ assigned to no. 8 (FIG. 13).⁴⁹ Other sketches from this area appear to have served Guaccero as a reservoir of ideas; they were not exploited in *Foglio* 3 but used in the subsequent one. This applies particularly to point 5 of

FIGURE 12. *Iter inverso*, second movement, *Foglio* 3, EM. AFIS, Hirayama Collection.

N. 8
Regole d'esecuzione

- Gli strumenti sono rivisti in elementi (segnati con numeri arabi da 1 a 4); gli elementi sono rivisti in gruppi (segnati da numeri romani da I a III). Le combinazioni (50 gruppi) di 3 elementi senza strumento in comune possono darsi o all'interno d'ciascun gruppo, o fra gruppi diversi (secondo il seguente progetto):

I	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{3}$	$\frac{3}{3}$	$\frac{1}{3}$	$\frac{1}{3}$	$\frac{2}{4}$	$\frac{2}{4}$
II	—	—	$\frac{4}{4}$	—	$\frac{2}{4}$	$\frac{4}{4}$	$\frac{4}{4}$
III	3	4	1	3	—	—	—
- Iniziare da qualsiasi elemento, disponendoli successivamente o simultaneamente = possono darsi da 2 a 4 combinazioni; ove gli elementi presentino uno strumento in comune, questo apparterrà all'elemento che ha avuto inizio per primo.
- Il direttore ordinerà l'entrata degli elementi indicando i numeri dei gruppi con la mano sinistra (da uno a 3) e quelli degli elementi con la mano destra (da 1 a 4).
- Il capogruppo, segnato da un cerchietto, indicherà con la mano la velocità d'esecuzione prescelta (60, 90 o 120).
- Il singolo esecutore sceglierà: valori d'altezza, intensità e timbro entro il campo indicato:

Campo di altezza

Campo d'intensità
(sotto il pentagramma)

1	[f]
2	[p]
3	[mf]

Campo di timbre
(sopra il pentagramma)

1	[O, □, △, ▽, -]
2	[A, D, L, P, U]
3	[—, m, v, n, u, w]
- Durata d'esecuzione del foglio: 53'' - 55''. Ad ogni ripetizione i singoli elementi devono presentarsi con alta velocità e alto volume di lettura; ritardando, inverso e ritardando inverso (rotolandosi il foglio).

Nelle parti indicare:

 - Capogruppo
 - Le guide
 - Le possibili velocità
 - Le indicazioni di gruppo e elementi (nel bel mezzo)

FIGURE 13. ‘Macro-sketch’ for *Iter Inverso*, point n. 8. FGC, Guaccero Collection.

the sketch, which is decisive for *Foglio 4* (*Sfera* in the *SdP*, left part of FIG. 14): the five cues given by the conductor, at strictly specified temporal values, involve progressively larger portions of the ensemble (up to the full group) in the realization of fields of sonic behaviour outlined in the three upper lines for each of the remaining parameters. The prescription of maximal articulation speed aims to pulverize parametric oscillations, simulating a sonic sphere that is both swarming and constantly changing at every moment, leading to a form of ‘total improvisation’ in which individual events are absorbed into a chaotic texture.

The final *Foglio* – right-hand portion of FIGURE 14 – once again sets the two customary extreme timbral fronts in opposition, within an episode shaped by a

FIGURE 14. *Iter inverso*, II. mov., Fogli 4–5, EM. AFIS, Hirayama Collection.

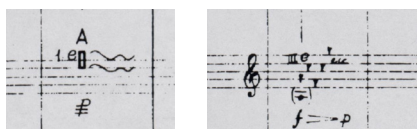
subdued sonority (ranging from possible *ppp* to medium level) and by the representation of the underlying sonic materials through graphic devices. The four graphic variants of the signs (filled, hollow, dotted, dashed) are freely permuted by the individual performers of the three groups;⁵⁰ meanwhile, the fourth group is cued by the conductor – at intervals marked by extended pauses – to provide auxiliary materials, within which the pitch G₄ is both polarized and redundant.⁵¹

COMPOSITIONAL STRATEGIES (2): NOTATION AND TIMBRAL RESEARCH

From the sketch stage onward, Guaccero organized a timbral palette linked to a synthetic semiography: signs which, apart from a few graphic-analogical ones, encode a performance instruction through a conventional element that is as simple as possible, combinable with others of the same kind, and usable with different meanings across different instrumental families: see the *Annotazioni* in EM (FIG. 7) and point C (FIG. 8, bottom) on the first page of the ‘macro-sketch’.

The timbral solutions partly draw on those consolidated from the early twentieth century to the more material arsenal of the informal neo-avant-garde: for the strings (here, moreover, amplified), harmonics, pizzicato with string rebound (the so-called Bartók-pizzicato) or with the fingernails, rubbing with the wood of the bow, use of the plectrum, excitation of the strings at various points – fingerboard, center, bridge – up to battuto or pizzicato beyond the bridge, and hits on the body of the instrument; for the woodwinds, excitation of the air column by means of the uvula, spoken voice, or tightened lips; for percussion, excitation – where possible – at the center/semi-center/edge/beyond the edge of the sounding body, with different beaters,⁵² and with possible interference between sounding bodies (e.g., a cymbal placed upside down on a timpano); for all, flexibility of intonation, tremolos/reiterations, and vibrated or steady sounds.

Alongside these, and the lexicon of pitch-based figures with timbral implications (trills, clusters, glissandi), experimental solutions likely tested empirically by Guaccero appear, such as pizzicato with two fingers of the left hand on the stopped pitch.⁵³ Some were drawn from a trusted performer, named in the sketches: the ‘manner of striking [...] or scraping’ on string instruments learned through the cellist Italo Gomez, or the ‘blown sounds’ emerging from discussions with the violist Dino Asciolla, noted with the intention of using them in the second movement.⁵⁴ It is unclear whether these refer to two semiographies absent from the initial annotations, yet in fact employed in the cello in II.2:B (EX. 5A–B) and in the violin elsewhere.⁵⁵



EXAMPLE 5A-B. *Iter inverso*, second movement, *Foglio 2*:B, cello staff, beats 13 and 26. EM, photocopy. FGC, Guaccero Collection.

The final case described appears particularly significant. On the one hand, it confirms the neo-avant-garde compositional tendency to probe the sonic domain with the assistance – regarding performance techniques – of an expert performer equally inclined to explore new paths, in a constant feedback between composition and performance;⁵⁶ on the other hand, it reinforces in Guaccero the idea of a formal planning grounded largely in the metamorphosis of timbre, oriented here toward a departure from ordinary behaviors. The ‘blown sounds’ were intended to characterize the second movement, that is, the process of textural complexification, together with other strategies for increasing sonic entropy: the continuous and structural (no longer merely signaletic or coloristic) intervention of the per-

cussion–marimba–electric guitar group, and progressively more distorted timbral mixtures.

COMPOSITIONAL STRATEGIES (3): ALEA AND FORM, EARLY 1960s

Immediately below the plan for the structure of the work in the ‘macro-sketch’ (section E; see FIG. 1), Guaccero set out aleatoric procedures, in a series of numbered points up to 10, to be applied to the work’s ten individual *Fogli*. One notes, first of all, the sheer number of indications: no fewer than eight of the ten sections were to involve aleatoric procedures of various kinds and with increasing impact. The first two situations – respectively for I.2, with implications for II.1, and for I.3 – are limited, the former by the choice of the sheet’s reading direction, the latter by a choice (by the conductor) among three possible metronome progressions in specific measures. The situation for I.5, involving improvisation on a jazz schema, and the remaining sheets of II, entails a higher degree of unpredictability in the details, while still resolving into instructions that shape the overall configuration.

In relation to the list in the sketch, Guaccero introduced various changes in the second movement: some ideas were omitted or substantially transformed (no. 7); others are more clearly recognizable, as in no. 8 = *Foglio* II.3 (‘composition of different groups (“surfaces”) capable of superimposition – internal alea within the group – internal group leader’). Although the elaborate performance rules sketched in full under no. 8 (FIG. 13) were streamlined, retaining the idea of a group leader marked with a small circle, but transferring to the following section (no. 9⁵⁷ = *Foglio* II.4) the strategies of indeterminacy outlined in point 5 of no. 8, with further adjustments. Finally, the use of visual suggestions is confined to no. 10 = *Foglio* II.5 for the three groups free to manage their own entries.

The engagement with aleatory technique here should be understood within several contextual perspectives, revolving around the composer’s own reflection, his Roman intellectual and compositional circle, and the international horizon. The first to introduce the problem in the Roman context was Franco Evangelisti.⁵⁸ Initially practiced as a local indeterminacy of sonic material (*Proiezioni sonore*, 1956), aleatory procedure gradually extended to the overall organization of composition, leaving open yet predetermined certain permutation processes – parameters, entries, and succession of sections – and treating time as a variable resolved in performance (*Proporzioni, Aleatorio, Random or not Random, Die Schachtel*, between 1958 and 1963).

In those years, Guaccero addressed aleatory technique through a series of critical essays, the most substantial of which (1961)⁵⁹ falls precisely between the two *Iter*. In it, the composer attempts a systematization based on the increasing autonomy of the sign from the sound, with implications for the relations between

compositional thought, performative action, and sonic result. In the general framework he proposes,⁶⁰ the basic type of disjunction between sign and sound is that which was already practiced at the outset of ...*un iter segnato*: figures not precisely performable due to their excessive speed and technical difficulty, but grasped in their overall, statistical effect. Subsequent types, exemplified in coeval works and further developed in *Iter inverso*, include: choice of reading direction (Stockhausen's *Zyklus*); non-metric performance outcomes (space-time notation – as in Berio's *Sequenza* for flute – or sequences of fermatas of variable duration); displacement or ad libitum ordering of articulated formants (Boulez's *Troisième Sonate*); displacement or reordering of blocks (Stockhausen's *Klavierstück XI*, Otte's *Tropismen*); and improvisation prompted by graphic figures that relinquish exhaustive parameter control, focusing instead on selected aspects (Kagel's *Tran-sición II*).⁶¹ In his own work, however, Guaccero avoids the more radical forms: autonomous pictographic notation with musical or mimetic value, chance operations, and formal disintegration (the 'scattered sheets' of Cage's *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*). At the time, the same ethical and poetic imperative articulated years earlier by Boulez still applied to him: to avoid recourse to chance as a shortcut or abdication of formal responsibility, or as mere delegation to the performer, and instead to compel aleatory processes to provide an account.⁶²

The use of graphic notation may appear to the composer particularly consistent with the metaphors of a dimensional leap in space, central to the epilogue of the formal trajectory toward a kind of three-dimensionality, which is indeed realized – according to an intentional semiographic plan – in II.5 of *Iter inverso*.⁶³ By 1962, Guaccero had not yet adopted strictly graphic-analogical solutions of the kind already explored by Sylvano Bussotti (whom he certainly knew):⁶⁴ the geometric layouts in *Schemi* or *Verglenzboysuchos* concerned matrices to be filled or partially filled with notation, whereas in ...*un iter segnato*, *Improvvisazione per viola* and *Studio per un quartetto* the notation is closer to that of *Iter inverso* in its fully notated sheets.

In the compositional debates of the time, aleatory technique in Guaccero also functions as a means of super-organizing the sonic construct in a dimensional sense. In articles published in *Ordini*, both Guaccero and his colleague Titone⁶⁵ emphasized a multidimensional conception of sound, describing it in the traditional terms of 'counterpoint' among the four fundamental parametric dimensions. Titone's text, in its conclusion, already approached the problem of parametric indeterminacy; a year later, Guaccero would use the concept of alea to explain to Titone, in multidimensional terms, the much-discussed opening of ...*un iter segnato*: the aim was, consciously, to achieve a chaotic, statistical, and nebulized sonic construct, pushing the pitch parameter toward an indeterminacy enforced by execution speed, and bringing perceptual factors such as dynamics (as soft as possible) and articulation to the foreground.⁶⁶

In conclusion, in *Iter inverso*, aleatory technique is embedded within a network of compositional solutions, and a project of transformation and sonic ‘scanning’ including spatial listening – of materials, which are essentially informal.⁶⁷ This network operates both as a device for parametric characterization, and for relational control among syntactically relevant sonic information (i.e., capable of generating higher-order dimensional configurations), and as an activator of perceptual eclipses or emergences, as well as a generator of complex yet recognizable textures defined by specific sonic traits. The aleatory component within such a network is also linked to the contemporary concept of the *opera aperta*, which Guaccero, in turn, did not fully subsume under the informal poetics.⁶⁸ The work thus appears to be situated – both theoretically and practically – within a post-serial horizon:⁶⁹ the trajectory of interconnected configurations, compositional techniques and traces of notations in an almost didactic manner, a step-by-step phenomenology of sound exiting the orbit of serialism, while nevertheless retaining combinatorial processes.

Notes

- 1 On Guaccero: *Numero monografico – Domenico Guaccero*, Archivio Musiche del XX Secolo, Palermo, CIMS, 1995; *Domenico Guaccero. Teoria e prassi dell'avanguardia. Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi, Roma 2–4 dicembre 2004*, a cura di Daniela Tortora, Roma: Aracne, 2009.
- 2 Cf. the letter from Edizioni Mercurio to Guaccero, dated 2 March 1964 (FGC, Guaccero Collection, Corrispondenza, 641), which laments the inability to complete the materials for publication – particularly the *rosone* for jazz improvisation – and the resulting delay in both inclusion in the catalogue, then being reorganized, and the production of the recording, which was to include, in addition to *Iter inverso*, works by Goffredo Petrassi and Firmino Sifonia.
- 3 Edizioni Mercurio, active since at least the 1940s with light music recordings, was later absorbed by the Gruppo Editoriale Bideri, Rome. According to a verification carried out some years ago at its offices, the acquisition of the catalogue rights does not appear to have been accompanied by the transfer of musical materials. The contractual documents concerning the edition were sent to Guaccero between 24 and 31 October 1962 (FGC, Guaccero Collection, Corrispondenza, 641, Edizioni Mercurio to Guaccero, 636–639), together with a request for a copy of the score, which had not yet been delivered.
- 4 In addition to his involvement in the recording project, Sifonia is mentioned in another letter (Edizioni Mercurio to Guaccero, 8 February 1964; FGC, Guaccero Collection, Corrispondenza), which refers to a verbal reminder he addressed to Guaccero concerning the signing of a contract sheet, thus attesting to Sifonia's involvement in editorial management.
- 5 The first part of the closing concert included, alongside *Iter inverso*, Ginastera's *Cantata Bombarzo*, *Combat T3N* by René Koering, and the *Stabat Mater* by Krzysztof Penderecki. Only this part of the concert was conducted by Enrique García Asensio, leading the Orquesta Filarmónica de Madrid; the second half was devoted to a staging of *El retablo de Maese Pedro* by Manuel de Falla (FGC, Guaccero Collection, Programmi, 1965). The inclusion of *Iter inverso* in the Festival programme may have resulted from contacts between the leadership of the Società Italiana di Musica Contemporanea – particularly Vittorio Flegara, with whom Guaccero was associated – and musicians active in Madrid, above all his friend Luis de Pablo. Evidence of de Pablo's involvement can be found in García Asensio's letter to Guaccero of 9 May 1965 (FGC, Guaccero Collection, Corrispondenza, 641), which refers to de Pablo's assistance with local arrangements concerning the amplification of the violin and cello.
- 6 The Edizioni Mercurio copies bear the year 1965.
- 7 Letter from Almerindo d'Amato to Guaccero, 20 October 1975. FGC, Guaccero Collection, Corrispondenza, 590.
- 8 Draft of a letter from Guaccero to Almerindo d'Amato, after 20 October 1975. FGC, Guaccero Collection, Corrispondenza, 590.
- 9 By contrast, the complete version of *Kardia* (30 October 1976), encompassing all three layers (winds, voices, and strings), received its world premiere, whereas only two of its instrumental layers had previously been performed at the Festival de Royan in 1973. On *Kardia*: Alessandro Mastropietro, 'Il ciclo *Descrizione del corpo* di Domenico Guaccero: una composizione multipla tra immateriale e culturalmente trasversale', *Siculorum Gymnasium*, 75 (nuova serie VIII), 2022, pp. 321–343.
- 10 Concert on 6 December 1983 at the Auditorium RAI at Foro Italico, Rome: Gruppo Strumentale Musica d'Oggi conducted by Angelo Faja, with external soloists, and Coro dell'Aureliano conducted by Bruna Liguori Valenti. The final programme, printed on a separate leaflet, included the substitution of three works, among them *Iter inverso*, effectively replaced by *Sinfonia 2*.
- 11 Concert on 18 December 1984 at the Auditorium RAI at Foro Italico, Roma: Gruppo

- Nuova Consonanza di Milano conducted by Vittorio Parisi, whom I warmly thank for having provided the proof copy from his personal archive.
- 12 A recording of the performance, preserved in the Nuova Consonanza archive, was issued on a vinyl disc accompanying issue no. 3 of *1985 la musica*, March 1985, together with *Kardia* in its version for strings alone.
 - 13 Sergio Rendine and Alessandro Sbordonì, 'Note al disco. Due composizioni di Domenico Guaccero', *1985 la musica*, 3, March 1985, p. 29; Stefania Gianni, 'Iter inverso', in: *Numero monografico – Domenico Guaccero*, pp. 94–95.
 - 14 'Il titolo di *Iter inverso* fa riferimento al precedente ...un iter segnato, del 1959/60, che ne costituisce la più immediata base costruttiva. Come quello percorreva un "cammino obbligato" (= segnato) dal movimento velocissimo e aleatorio di "atomi" sonori, sino alla monodia, così *Iter inverso*, del 1962, parte dalla monodia per giungere alla formazione di campi sonori – o di "sfere" sonore – permutabili. Lungo il cammino, ove le linee si enucleano in "melodia", "armonia" e "sezione ritmica", viene sfiorata la musica di massa con moduli linguistici del Jazz. Nessuna indicazione ideologica o escatologica è contenuta in questo "cammino", solo la descrizione dei fenomeni. Ma il lavoro parte anche da un'altra ricerca, quella timbrico-spaziale. La disposizione degli strumenti in sala fa muovere gli eventi sonori da un massimo (le due percussioni) a un minimo (flauto, celesta, strumento elettronico e tuba) di complessità di "spettro acustico", dai due lati verso il centro; e da un minimo (flauto e tuba) a un massimo (percussioni, marimba e chitarra elettrica) di complessità d'attacco, da avanti e da dietro verso il centro'. Guaccero Collection, fasc. *Iter inverso*. From the biographical details it contains, one may infer that the text was intended for the programme notes of the premiere in Madrid.
 - 15 '*Iter inverso* va eseguito foglio per foglio, incominciando dal Foglio 1 della prima parte. Ogni foglio è un'unità strutturale conclusa: l'esecuzione non deve far avvertire, però, soluzioni di continuità tra foglio e foglio, a meno che ciò non sia espressamente indicato'. The *Performance Notes* constitute page zero of the score and also include explanations regarding spatial disposition and overall reading procedures (with a legend of specific signs). Copied out in manuscript for the printing of EM, an earlier draft – combining typescript and autograph manuscript – survives in FGC, Guaccero Collection, fasc. *Iter inverso*.
 - 16 Performance given during the opening concert, 13 May 1960. On the history of the festival: Floriana Tessitore, *Visione che si ebbe nel cielo di Palermo*, Roma: Cidim/Amic – Nuova Eri, 2003.
 - 17 Antonino Titone (1934–2013), a musicologist, painter, and composer who studied under Luigi Rognoni, was at the time president of the Gruppo Universitario Nuova Musica of Palermo (where Agnello served as secretary) and one of the promoters of the Settimane.
 - 18 In particular, the two letters sent from Rome on 15 and 28 May 1960, published in 'Dieci lettere ad Antonino Titone', a cura di Dario Oliveri, in: *Numero monografico – Domenico Guaccero*, pp. 145–150.
 - 19 Letters from Guaccero to Titone, 28 May 1960, in: 'Dieci lettere', p. 148: 'Lo sprazzo jazz non è affatto "recupero" e tanto meno "sentimentale": il jazz lo abbiamo sotto gli occhi ogni giorno e non vedo perché non si possa assumerlo a materia d'arte, scomodando i facili e ingenui concetti di "moderno", di "progresso" e simili. Certo il linguaggio jazz (latamente tonale) è oggi una forma di linguaggio più facile o più di consumo di linguaggio (quando lo è e quando non è meccanismo grezzo) "strutturale". Quello che mi ha sollecitato in quel pezzo è stato di accostare, provocando più che una "frizione" uno slittamento [*shift*], diversi "universi di linguaggio". In a previous letter dated 15 May 1960 ('Dieci lettere', p. 146), Guaccero referred to this episode with the epithet 'canzone': it is therefore worth considering which styles and forms of contemporary jazz he may have had in mind when conceiving such a shift.
 - 20 'A quel finale io tengo e niente affatto per facile populismo, come è potuto sembrare dall'esecuzione di Palermo. So meglio di qualunque altro che è un finale rischioso, alquanto "descrittivo", alquanto "pratico", ma non nel senso dell'*embrassons-nous*, sibbene in quello di una interruzione repentina di un ingenuo *em-*

- brassons-nous* (letter from Guaccero to Titone, 28 May 1960, in: 'Dieci lettere', p. 148).
- 21 'Ho la coscienza di aver scritto un lavoro dignitoso e "interessante", che non è nemmeno una esercitazione di "materiale", ma ha pretese di "opera", con punte polemiche (belle o brutte non so) e fuori dal cliché zeitmassiano che è il verbo di oggi' (letter from Guaccero to Titone, 15 May 1960, in: 'Dieci lettere', p. 145).
 - 22 In both the autograph and published scores, the movements are numbered with Arabic numerals, whereas in the sketches they are mostly indicated with Roman numerals. For ease of reference, the latter solution has been adopted here, as it allows one to distinguish clearly between the indicators of movement, *Foglio*, and the individual page of a *Foglio* (marked by uppercase letters), e.g., I.1:A.
 - 23 FGC, Guaccero Collection, fasc. *Iter inverso*. The date and timespan of this group of sketches are difficult to establish. All are written on a single folded sheet comprising four pages. The sketches are subdivided and indexed (A–E) up to the section discussed here, at the end of p. 2; on pp. 3–4 they remain compartmentalized and provided with headings. This 'macro-sketch' may have been conceived as a summary document at the beginning of the drafting process (Part I), while being subsequently corrected and expanded—notably through the addition of the sonic configuration and durations of the *Fogli* in section E—and then progressively continued as compositional issues and solutions emerged for Part II.
 - 24 For details of the divergences, see below in the text. Significantly, the durations of the *Fogli* (episodes) remain largely unchanged in the final score. The overall temporal span of the *Fogli* in the second movement is noteworthy, as it produces a progressive contraction toward the conclusion.
 - 25 The term 'rosone' was coined by Guaccero. See FIG. 11.
 - 26 The fair copy shows such barlines only above and below the active instrumental staves; in the autograph manuscript, by contrast, the barlines are omnipresent but drawn in a much lighter stroke.
 - 27 This feature is, moreover, widespread in contemporaneous works of the neo-avant-garde: following the exemplar of Cage, numerous cases can be found in Italy in compositions by Maderna, and, for the Roman milieu, in those of Evangelisti, Macchi, Bertoncini and Gelmetti.
 - 28 FGC, Guaccero Collection, fasc. *Iter inverso*.
 - 29 The foliation suggests that Guaccero began writing the source by placing two sheets side by side and proceeding with the notation in page pairs, initially gluing only the first two pages. Once these were detached, he continued to notate on two adjoining pages, turning the left and right halves separately but simultaneously.
 - 30 The layout plan for the fair copy is summarized in the four-page note referenced in footnote 23 (p. 3).
 - 31 Guaccero Collection, fasc. *Iter inverso*.
 - 32 See footnote 13.
 - 33 Guaccero Collection, fasc. *Iter inverso*. Parts of percussion A, electronic instrument and tenor saxophone are missing.
 - 34 Folder 19, file 48, together with numerous other works – mostly performance scores used by Hirayama, a singer – by Guaccero. On the collaboration between them: Francesca Scigliuzzo, 'Searching for Something *other* than Sound: Domenico Guaccero and Michiko Hirayama's *Esercizi per voce sola* (1965; 1971)', *Archival Notes. Source Studies in Twentieth- and Twenty-First-Century Music*, 8, 2024, pp. 69–90.
 - 35 The transfer of the copy to Hirayama likely occurred during the 1970s, when it is plausible that the singer – a longstanding and close collaborator of Guaccero and a member of the ensemble Nuove Forme Sonore, which repeatedly took an interest in performing his works – requested the material. On that ensemble: Francesca Scigliuzzo, *Nuove Forme Sonore, 1970–1980: una pratica collettiva tra scrittura e improvvisazione*, PhD thesis, Università di Udine, 2025.
 - 36 Document in the Guaccero Collection, fasc. *Iter inverso*.
 - 37 Excluding the movement headings (followed by their overall duration, as in *SdP*), the left-

- hand column lists the formal episodes/*Fogli* with regard to their page layout in EM, while the right-hand column outlines their formal/musical content – also clarifying in square brackets certain divergences from the final output – through the very short descriptions sketched in *SdP*, from which the individual durations are likewise taken.
- 38 To judge from the range indicated in the ‘macro-sketch’, here Guaccero appears to have had a B-flat contrabass tuba in mind.
- 39 It remains difficult to determine with certainty which instrument Guaccero had in mind here. Identified in the ‘macro-sketch’ as *Gen[eratore] sin[tetico]* and in AM as *Electr[onic] syn[thesizer]*, the instrument – monophonic, with the possibility of producing vibrato – would appear to require an extraordinary range, especially if the indications 1↓ and 2↑ are to be understood as one octave below and two octaves above (thus exceeding an overall span of eight octaves). Instruments such as the Ondioline or the Ondes Martenot can therefore be excluded. It may be hypothesized that, in 1962, Guaccero was instead thinking of the Fono-synth, recently built in Rome by Paolo Ketoff with the assistance of Giuliano Strini, on the initiative and design of Gino Marinuzzi Jr.; by 1965, the role might also have been fulfilled by the Synket, likewise developed by Ketoff (Luigino Pizzaleo, *Il liutaio elettronico. Paolo Ketoff e l’invenzione del Synket*, Roma: Aracne, 2014).
- 40 The onset of the first monodic curve is preceded by a brief ‘curtain-raiser’ (FIG. 9, I.1:A, bb. 1–2) marked by a strongly contrasting timbral behavior: first, rhythmically irregular bursts (percussion, marimba in glissando up to a cluster, electric guitar with strikes on the body, amplified strings *battuto oltre il ponticello*), followed by the release halos of the flute (sustained tone) and trumpet (with closed mute and vibrato), featuring a masked – or, in the flute, already neutral – attack transient and a corresponding flattening of the spectrum.
- 41 The series is as follows (in parentheses are the satellite pitches employed, alongside the structural pitches, toward the conclusion of the first wave): C, B♭, A, B, F, C♯, D, G, E, G♭ (F), A (B♭, B, D) || E♭.
- 42 Earlier in the curve, a percussion instrument – a Chinese gong in tremolo – had merely colored the G♭ of the electronic instrument at b. 20.
- 43 In these panels, the use of instruments belonging to the axis of minimal spectral value predominates, particularly at the beginning (bb. 27–28, flute and electronic instrument) and at the end (b. 44, celesta, electronic instrument, and tuba) of the *Foglio*.
- 44 As to the metronomic oscillation, see *infra* ‘Compositional Strategies (3): Alea and form, early 1960s’.
- 45 In *SdP*, the jazz [improvisation] belongs in fact to *Foglio* I.4, rather than to the subsequent one.
- 46 For the ‘melodic’ section: alto and tenor saxophones, marimba, and trumpet; for the ‘rhythmic’ section: percussion A–B, electric guitar and cello.
- 47 The time = space notation continues across the two *Fogli*, without resetting the count of beat-units (II.2:A occupies beats 34–50); in the transition, only four instruments present measured values for two beat-units, amounting to a single bar of 2/2.
- 48 Among the more recognizable aggregates in EX. 4, one may note the eleventh unit: a dissonant complex with microtonal oscillations, assigned to the four instruments belonging to the axis of lower spectral complexity.
- 49 This is the lower section of p. 3 of the ‘macro-sketch’ (see footnote 23).
- 50 The four successions must be completed within the duration of the *Foglio*, between 25” and 28”, with the possibility of repeating materials if this total duration has not yet been reached: the reading of a single system – four units at a metronome marking of 50 – takes approximately 5 seconds, followed by a brief pause.
- 51 Specific sketches for *Foglio* II.5, titled *Ultimo numero* (dur. 27”), appear in the ‘macro-sketch’ on p. 4 (upper section). The choice of a polarized and redundant sound corresponds with the verbal annotation ‘un suono fisso’, already deriving from the note drafted at the bottom of section E (FIG. 1): ‘formazione di punti fermi [drawing], con suoni fermi nel magma’.

- 52 Among those initially envisaged in the ‘macro-sketch’ was also a whip (see the crossed-out indication at no. 12.d of point C in FIG. 8).
- 53 In point C of the ‘macro-sketch’ (FIG. 8), the sign is drafted just above number 13, perhaps because it was initially intended to denote a hit on the instrument’s body.
- 54 These two solutions are listed, together with the performer’s names, in the field ‘In seconda parte’ within the ‘macro-sketch’, p. 4.
- 55 The two examples refer respectively to beat-cells 14 and 26 of the sheet; in the second case (also present in the violin at cell 12 of the sheet, EX. 4, i.e., the possible ‘blown sounds’), one may infer a light *picchettato* on an atypical harmonic of the third string.
- 56 Among the extensive musicological literature on this topic, cf. ‘Archival Research and Performance: Perspectives on Twentieth-Century Music’, ed. by Alessandro Cecchi and Ingrid Pustijanac, *Archival Notes*, 7, 2022.
- 57 See FIG. 1, under letter E: ‘totalità di esecutori con schemi di frequenza : improvvisazione totale in pianissimo – suggerimenti visivi (niente scritto)’.
- 58 Cf. Franco Evangelisti, ‘Ambiguità e opera’ [1960], in: *Dal silenzio a un nuovo mondo sonoro*, Roma: Semar, 1991, pp. 27–44. Guaccero was aware also of the debate within the Milanese circle of Berio and Eco – whose aesthetic categorisation as *opera aperta* was just about to be coined – by the collection of writings published in *Incontri musicali*, 4, 1959.
- 59 Domenico Guaccero, ‘L’“alea”, da suono a segno grafico’ [1961], in: *Un iter segnato. Scritti e interviste*, a cura di Alessandro Mastropietro, San Giuliano Milanese: Ricordi-LIM, 2005, pp. 60–80.
- 60 Guaccero, ‘L’“alea”, da suono a segno grafico’, p. 74.
- 61 These four correspond roughly to the ‘three degrees’ summarized earlier in: Domenico Guaccero, ‘Alea, lingua ed interpretazione musicale’ [1961], in *Un iter segnato*, p. 56.
- 62 Pierre Boulez, ‘Aléa’, *Nouvelle Revue Française*, 59, November 1957, pp. 839–857: 845 (cited – in Italian – in: Guaccero, ‘Alea, lingua’, pp. 55–56). Boulez’s text, translated in Italian in 1968, could at that time have been known by Guaccero at the Darmstadt Ferienkurse, a context where an intense compositional reception and aesthetic debate on aleatory technique had been developing (Pascal Decroupet, ‘Aleatorik und Indetermination – Die Ferienkurse als Forum der Europäischen Cage-Rezeption’, in: Gianmario Borio–Hermann Danuser, *Im Zenit der Moderne*, 4 voll., Rombach: Freiburg im Breisgau, 1997, v. 2, pp. 189–275).
- 63 For this episode, Guaccero drafted specific sketches in the ‘macro-sketch’, p. 4.
- 64 Three of his *Piano Pieces for David Tudor* had already been performed in Rome in 1959, in their Italian premiere, as part of an event associated with the launch of the journal *Ordini*, of which Guaccero was an editor (Daniela Tortora, *Nuova Consonanza. Trent’anni di musica contemporanea in Italia (1959–1988)*, Lucca: LIM, 1990, p. 30).
- 65 Domenico Guaccero, ‘Problemi di sintassi musicale I’, *Ordini*, 1, 1959, pp. 27–41; Antonino Titone, ‘Ordine e quadrimensionalità’, *Ordini*, 1, 1959, pp. 42–47.
- 66 Cf. the letter from Guaccero to Titone, 28 May 1960, in: ‘Dieci lettere’, pp. 149–150: ‘Perché [chiami] “inutile casino” quello che invece vuole essere un “casino” ma utile, cioè non pretende di essere altra cosa da un casino? [...] il casino è soltanto temporale, mentre le altezze, anche se estremamente fratturate nei singoli strumenti, hanno una coerenza di ritorni nei medesimi “luoghi”, cioè in quei punti cerco di attuare la famigerata quadridimensionalità con la indistinzione ritmica e la distinzione delle frequenze e delle intensità’.
- 67 Gianmario Borio, *Musikalische Avantgarde um 1960. Entwurf einer Theorie der informellen Musik*, Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 1993.
- 68 Guaccero, ‘L’“alea”, da suono a segno grafico’, pp. 71–72.
- 69 Within this horizon, key composer-theorists of reference include Xenakis (Iannis Xenakis, ‘La crise de la musique sérielle’, *Gravesaner Blätter*, 1, 1956, pp. 2–4, and following writings) and Ligeti (György Ligeti, ‘Wandlungen der Musikalischen Form’ [1958], *Die Reihe*, 7, 1960, pp. 5–17, now in: *Gesammelte Schriften*, hrsg. von Monika Lichtenfeld, Basel–Mainz: Sacher Stiftung-Schott, 2007, pp. 85–105).