

Performance of a Garden

*Walter Branchi*¹

*When you are born
you don't come into the world,
but from the world.*

Alan Watts

To experience the performance of a garden three elements are necessary: an order that is man-made, nature that is dynamic and unpredictable and the presence of an observer or listener.

Order that is man-made is created with the organization of space, with masonry, the distribution of trees, hedges, flowers, walkways, the presence of water, vantage points, statues, columns, etc.. Whereas in nature the unexpected happens, the flight of a bird, or the currents of the winds that make things vibrate, the dissolve of fog, or the gradual sunset.

The simultaneous occurrence of both natural and man-made events can spark an artistic and spiritual experience in the observer and listener. This is the sensation I feel when I am in a garden of order and beauty.

The same thing happens during the performance of my music, where my work is magnified by the presence of the environment and the environment is magnified by my music.

My music creates a realm of diversified order that reveals the unexpected of the environment in which we live.

¹ The New York "Clocktower" wrote about Walter Branchi: "*Called a spiritual idealist, the Italian composer creates ambient music without borders that grows from the space and time of the moment and aspires to be inseparable from it.*" (clocktower.org/show/walter-branchi) - walter.branchi@libero.it
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I have learned in my work as a gardener and composer of the phenomena of the happening of time, where one becomes an active part of the flow of events by listening. I call this ‘*open listening*’.

By ‘*open listening*’ I mean that, when you are in a garden, the perception of things is not a predetermined sequence, each individual is free to invent his own perceptual experience.

Being able to choose where to begin and end your sequence is the active process of perception: the observer’s relationship with the environment is built through personal choices as to where to focus one’s attention.

Regarding one’s relationship to, and the perception of a garden, there is no prescribed order to follow. One’s perception is multi-sensorial, all the senses are active. Conversely, when we are in the presence of "objects" that are in front of us, such as a painting or a piece of traditional music, one’s perception is focused mostly on a single sense that requires our attention. In a garden as well as in my own music, the complexity of the experience requires one’s active participation and attention of multiple senses. The music that I compose is like the experience of a garden, because the things to see and / or hear are many and often overlapping, and always unpredictable.

To be aware of the complexity of events requires an understanding that the organism and the environment are inseparable. The environment is not an imposed structure, our perception of the world is our own creation. Human beings are not independent, we are part of the biology of all species: There is no organism without the environment, both are interdependent, one does not exist without the other. “*Man is in nature and nature is in man...*” (J. Dewey).

A man, a garden, a piece of music, and all the other elements that make up the environment are connected and, in different forms, made of the same matter – energy. Any event, that happens in the environment, surprising us at different moments, involves us through all the senses is an unexpected form of the same matter - energy.

When we experience a garden, we live the extraordinary of ourselves, when we moved by a piece of music, we hear the unheard, of ourselves. When one experiences a garden one can lose the sense of separation of things, and when this happens, you are out of yourself you become "one" with nature. Is this ecstasy?

Music that I compose is transparent, it weaves in and out of the threshold of our hearing, it allows you to listen freely, to listen to the environment that we are part of; we are connected.

Our culture has taught us that things are separate. I maintain that there is no difference between ourselves, a garden, or a piece of music.

The performance of a garden happens when the magic that underlies all things is perceived.

Walter Branchi (Orvieto, April 2014)
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