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Melding Religious Metaphors into an Instrumental Musical Drama: Gubaidulina's *Dialogue: I and You*

Kheng K. Koay
National Sun Yat-sen University

RESUM

Dialogue: I and You ofereix una interpretació diferent en el disseny musical, aportant-nos un significat programàtic i expressiu en la música de Gubaidulina. Els modes del diàleg i els sentiments psicològics dels personatges operen a nivell teatral. La història de Gubaidulina demostra un espai distint creat entre el "personatge" solista/principal i Deu, basant-se en la relació entre ells. Això no obstant, altra capa més profunda d'interpretació ens mostra que "Jo" també pot interpretar-se com Gubaidulina i "Tu" com Deu. Ella ha creat la frontera entre el món religiós i el mundà.

La composició és una obra rica en metàfores i missatges religiosos. No solament hi ha més d'un missatge que es pot escoltar a cada idea i presentació, sinó que també s'utilitzen en altres de les seues composicions diversos enfocaments musicals i idees religioses de manera diferent. El simbolisme musical s'empra per a representar els elements religiosos de la història. Aquest estudi examina on ubica Gubaidulina els elements i idees musicals, i com fa servir el material musical per a representar a Deu. Se presenta l'ús del silenci, el número Tres i certs gestos musicals que tenen un significat en la música. El disseny de la música ens mostra la ment creativa i imaginativa de Gubaidulina que li aporta singularitat a la música.

Paraules Clau: Sofia Gubaidulina; música del segle XXI; símbols religiosos; *Dialogue: I and You*

RESUMEN

Dialogue: I and You ofrece una interpretación diferente en el diseño musical, aportando un significado programático y expresivo en la música de Gubaidulina. Los modos del diálogo y los sentimientos psicológicos de los personajes operan a nivel teatral. La historia de Gubaidulina demuestra un espacio distinto creado entre el "personaje" solista/principal y Dios, basándose en la relación entre ellos. Sin embargo, otra capa más profunda de interpretación revela que "Yo" también puede interpretarse como Gubaidulina y "Tú" como Dios. Ella ha creado la frontera entre el mundo religioso y lo mundano.

La composición es una obra rica en metáforas y mensajes religiosos. No sólo hay más de un mensaje que se puede escuchar en cada idea y presentación, sino que también se utilizan varios enfoques musicales e ideas religiosas de manera diferente a sus otras composiciones. El simbolismo musical se utiliza para representar los elementos religiosos de la historia. Este estudio examina dónde ubica Gubaidulina los elementos e ideas musicales, y cómo se utiliza el material musical para representar a Dios. Se presenta el empleo del silencio, el número Tres y ciertos gestos musicales que tienen significados significativos en la música. El diseño de la música muestra la mente creativa e imaginativa de Gubaidulina que le da singularidad a su música.

Palabras Clave: Sofia Gubaidulina; música del siglo XXI; símbolos religiosos; *Dialogue: I and You*

ABSTRACT

Dialogue: I and You provides a different interpretation in music design, providing a programmatic and expressive meaning in Gubaidulina's music. The dialogue manners and characters' psychological feelings operate at a theatrical level. The storyline by Gubaidulina demonstrates a distinct space created between the soloist/main "character" and God, drawing on the relationship between them. However, another deeper layer of interpretation reveals "I" can also be interpreted as Gubaidulina her own self and "You" as God. She has created the boundary between the religious world and the mundane.

The composition is a work rich in religious metaphor and message. Not only is there more than one message that can be heard in her every idea and presentation, but also various musical approaches and religious ideas are used differently from her other compositions. Musical symbolism is used to represent the religious elements in the storyline. This study examines where Gubaidulina locates musical elements and ideas, and how the musical material is used to represent God. The employment of silence, the number Three, and certain musical gestures that have significant meanings in the music are presented. The design in the music shows Gubaidulina's creative and imaginative mind that gives uniqueness to her music.

Keywords: Sofia Gubaidulina, 21st century-music, Religious symbols, *Dialogue: I and You*

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Since her early compositions for the concerto genre—such as *Hour of the Soul* for mezzo-soprano and orchestra (1974), *Introitus* for piano and orchestra (1978) and many others—Gubaidulina has never ceased to challenge the typical, traditional concept of concerto and our listening experience. Much is happening in her one movement work *Dialogue: I and You* (2018) for violin and orchestra: Gubaidulina searches for a different interpretation of soloist and orchestra, providing a programmatic and expressive meaning in the music. Different ideas are also developed that make reference and give shape to the structure and symbolic meaning in the composition.

Dialogue maintains what is often traditionally conceived as dialogue occurring through the alternative playing between a soloist and an orchestra concerto, which also can be heard in many of her compositions such as *Two Paths: A Dedication to Mary and Martha* (1998) and *Concerto for Bassoon and Low Strings* (1975). Gubaidulina continues to explore, convey and create her own drama, unfolding a series of events in the life of a primary “character”. Various effective ways are experimented with, and this is particularly significant in the melodic lines of the solo violin.

In her *Dialogue* Gubaidulina plays the role of a storyteller, developing her own description of a musical “story” and character(s) through instrumental parts. However, there is no chronological series of events, nor is there detail of particular persons, times and places of the events; it is a condensed abstract “story” of events and a primary character’s states of mind that are presented in the composition. Various significant ideas are experimented with, creating coherence and unity within the work.

Dialogue demonstrates a variety of emotions in a single work, which is uncommon to her other works. In this piece Gubaidulina portrays the exuberant emotions and abstract thoughts of the “character” through solo violin. Emotions unfold as the music progresses, enhancing dramatic musical dialogues and projecting the desire of the prayer. Gubaidulina knows how to accurately employ specific musical idioms of a singer to shape and present her “character”. Every idea is carefully designed and creatively presented, keeping the attention of the listeners and leading them through the events of the musical “story”.

Throughout the composition, musical symbolism is used to represent the religious elements in the storyline. The music is generally linear in design, with various instrumental roles treated as different characters’ “voices” as if they occurred in dramatic or operatic works. Although theatrical ideas are employed and experimented with, giving dramatic effect in the music, the composition is beyond an instrumental music drama. Rather, it shows a deeper level of Gubaidulina’s aspiration that connects between herself and God. She searches to find a musical language that is capable of signifying God. In believing that God communicates with one indirectly, she has chosen compositional decisions and techniques that make her *Dialogue* intriguing. This study therefore traces the relationship between instrumental roles, and examines what Gubaidulina offers in the composition in relation to God.

External influences can easily be found, even with reference to the title and subtitle in the composer’s compositions. The use of the title “I and You” (*Ich und Du*) can be found in the tenth movement of her vocal chamber work, *Perception* (1981-1983), which draws from the poems by Francisco Tanzer. Her selection of the title *Dialogue: I and You* is also associated with the title of Martin Buber’s *I and Thou*, which raises some expectation of its association with religion. Nevertheless, Gubaidulina has her own way of delivering her distinct musical messages and perception of God. Thus, this study researches her music that shows her religious messages.

“Whenever I’m composing, I pray, no, I actually speak to God,” said Gubaidulina (cited in Niederschlag, 2021).

In *Dialogue*, dialogues are created in various forms. They demonstrate a distinct approach of Gubaidulina's unconventional and personal way of creating an intimate relationship with God, including a dialogic relationship with God. Different musical thoughts and means are also explored, demonstrating her connection to God, not previously discussed by scholars. While many of her compositions present certain musical gestures—for instance her use of the shape of a Cross, a representative symbol of God in her *Seven Words* (1982)—here in her *Dialogue* Gubaidulina communicates with God through other approaches besides the Cross motif. This has led to the exploration of other possible means associated with religion, which makes the composition unique.

Religion has always played an important part in Gubaidulina's life. She had experienced encountering “a simple icon of Christ” at a very young age while spending a summer time in Nizhny Usslon (Western Russia) (Kurz, 2007: 13). Much of Gubaidulina's music shows her deep spiritual qualities, and she entrusts her messages to different interpretation levels in her compositions. Gubaidulina believes that music is a form to honor God: “I am convinced that serious art can be distinguished from the ephemeral by its connexion to God...any convincing form of worship is a path to His Throne. Music is a form of worship” (Polin, 1994: 16). She also claims that her religiosity is a “purely artistic phenomenon” (Gasser, 2012). The value and intention of her works is in correspondence with the mystery she aims to express:

The implementation of the religious requirements of the Spirit in compositional practice is a completely different type of indwelling of the soul in spirit, a type that differs significantly from that on the everyday level. For it is imagination, works of art, and art itself, which are different from nature. In art, there is the power of imagination, where I can move into an area that lies between the conscious and the unconscious, between dream and reality... (Gasser, 2012).

Dialogue: I and You is a work that is rich in religious metaphor and message. Gubaidulina draws on different aspects and ways of presenting “spaces” to create dialogue. She interprets the main violin soloist to represent “I”, and the other instrumental soloists, including groups of instruments, as “You.” Indeed, there are various meanings and representations established by Gubaidulina, creating dramatic scenes in the composition. Nevertheless, there is also a deeper layer of interpretation: “I” can also be interpreted as Gubaidulina her own self and “You” as God. The composition is bound up with these relationships that hold them together, significantly enriching the musical context and meaning.

Gubaidulina has experimented with “space” in her music, which “is that which holds things both apart and together in some sort of order” (Carpenter, 1988: 344). Perhaps with this concept in mind, Gubaidulina's music allows simultaneous objects and matters to remain both unified and distinct; for instance, her experimentation with twelve-semitonal space, and twelve-semitonal space a quarter tone higher in her *Quarternion*, for four cellos (1995), and *Music for Flute and Strings* (1995). As early as her *Introitus* (1978), Gubaidulina has explored four different intervallic modes (micro-intervallic, chromatic space, diatonic space and pentatonic) representing four different spaces (Lukomsky and Gubaidulina, 1998: 30). Although they are distinct in musical sound characteristics, they still can be thought of in terms of musical unity in that composition.

Gubaidulina's experiment with musical space is also strengthened and extended to her perception of human beings and God in her *Dialogue*. She challenges the two distinct spaces (Human and God) that are separated, yet are simultaneously held and closely tied together in the composition. In addition, there are explorations of many possible religious aspects. Musical materials are built representing her personal idea of God.

The number Seven is an important, “mystical” number for Gubaidulina, and can be found in several of

her compositions such as *Stufen* (1972/1986/1992) and *The Seven Last Words*. She describes that, “it was when I was writing...*The Seven Last Words* that I began working with the number 7. For me it was a symbolic number, a sacred number, and working with it was in a way a sacred process.” (Beyer, 2018). In 2018 she claimed that the “mystery of numbers is a challenge today,” and that “I can see that many composers—not only myself—are preoccupied with this challenge. These are composers who love numbers. We are continuing what is not only a medieval tradition, but a Pythagorean tradition. I am extremely interested in the mystique of numbers, and since 1983 it has been a source of inspiration for me” (Beyer, 2018).

Nevertheless, in *Dialogue* there is another essential number she explores: the number Three is closely associated with the Trinity and the Christian ceremony of the Eucharist in which bread and wine are consumed as a way of showing devotion to Jesus Christ: communion (“The Eucharist”).

Eucharist plays an important part in Gubaidulina’s life and works. She said, “all my works are my fantasy - this is how I imagine my Eucharist. The feast of the Eucharist means a lot for me...I come to the church especially to experience this grace” (Lukomsky and Gubaidulina, 1998: 31). An obvious creation of her own fantasy can be heard in *Dialogue*. It is through the feast of the Eucharist that Gubaidulina experiences a strong connection between God and herself. It is at the Eucharist that human need can be fulfilled by divine provision; there is a claim that “the joining of heaven and earth is nowhere more evident than in the rite of the Eucharist” (Tiegreen, 2021: 18). The “point about the communion that is the Trinity is that in God the three persons are such that they receive from and give to each other their unique particularity” (Gunton, 2003: 16).

The idea of employing Trinity in her composition can be found in *The Seven Last Words*, but it is presented differently in *Dialogue*:

At the centre for me was the idea of the Trinity. So I used instruments which to a certain degree can manifest this idea, or the substance of it. The cello has a particularly high degree of expressiveness, so it is suitable for characterizing Christ. The bayan (instrument) personifies the anger of the Father, and the string orchestra is well suited to the depiction of the Holy Spirit (Beyer, 2018).

What is intriguing in her *Dialogue* is that Gubaidulina approaches different aspects challenging her idea of Trinity; she experiments with the spatiality of God’s tri-unity, in which God can be both three and one. Thus, it is worthwhile to explore the constructive manner and presentation of God and the number Three in her *Dialogue*, revealing how they are technically presented in music and how God is being shaped in Gubaidulina’s “story”.

Gubaidulina’s experimentation with “space” is also beyond hearing tone; it is especially so when dealing with silence, which provides a different point of view in her composition, by which she intends her audience to perceive musical silence differently. Expressing different forms of musical silence has been explored both in Gubaidulina’s compositions and the title of her works such as *Rumore e silenzio* (1974), and *Silenzio* (1991). Gubaidulina does not treat silence as the absence of sound. “For me silence is the foundation from which something grows,” (“Program notes” to Sofia Gubaidulina: *Fachwerk, Silenzio*, 2011). Indeed, other than the number Three that is explored in *Dialogue*, silence also plays an important part in the music. Her use of silence is not to exaggerate and distort the musical flow, nor is perceived silence some trivial occurrence in the music, but as a metaphor for and symbol of implying a certain meaning and to provide various functions in the formal structure of the composition. Silence also signifies her privative with God. Bernhard Christensen writes that “religiously oriented individuals have throughout history insisted that silence is frequently a, if not the, communicative vehicle for linking man and his God” (Jensen, 1973: 251). In exploring different musical ways of presentation, Gubaidulina has created space

between God and humans. How does she bring musical silence to the forefront of the listener's attention in the composition? Moreover, what musical handlings and sounds have been used to effectively express religious elements?

In her *Dialogue*, musical gestures also play a role in delivering a message that can be associated with God, and she uses symbols that may be perceived as heavenly. She communicates to audiences with different approaches and perspectives. Thus it is important to examine how silence is presented in Gubaidulina's "story", and how silence and possible sounds are expressed and represented in the music.

Different time phases of Gubaidulina's composing give rise to different emphases in her compositional focus. In her later compositional perspectives, she places music beyond sound colors. She claims that "art does not need so much richness. There was a period in my life when I was actively involved in a search for new timbres, new textures, new types of articulation. Now I am calmer about it" (Lukomsky and Gubaidulina, 1999: 28). Indeed, in her recent compositions Gubaidulina has tended to turn more towards finding her own inner essence through musical material and ideas to express the inner meaning rather than emphasize experimenting with sound colors and articulation. Thus, how Gubaidulina turns her expression of inner essence to external forms of composition will be examined in *Dialogue*.

Dialogue: I and You

Silence is one of the hallmarks in Gubaidulina's music. Various kinds of musical fermatas and rests are experimented with in her compositions such as her string quartets. She also uses silence to create contrasting and oppositional ideas in her music. In *Dialogue* the role of musical silence is treated differently. Her devotion to religion adds to her understanding of the importance of silence in her work.

Gubaidulina learned to hear silence at a young age. She recalls:

Everything begins with a walk alone because it is a moment of the greatest concentration. Back in Kazan I liked walking around the city. I first walked with father. He worked as a geodesic engineer. Suppose an airfield is being built – the geodesist is the first to work. He will walk across everything and mark what will be constructed where. He would take me with him whenever he went to work. I learned to listen to silence at the time (Desiateryk, 2012).

Gubaidulina's creative experimentation with silence in music has impressed many of her contemporaries. Gennady Aigi, a Chuvashian poet, "was much impressed by Gubaidulina's ability to integrate music and silence, as well as her ability to combine music and poetry" (Valentine, 2007: 690). Gubaidulina first met Gennady Aigi (1934-2006), a native of Chuvashia, when she was a first year student (Kurtz, 2007: 98) and became more acquainted with Aigi in 1971 (Valentine, 2007: 689). Many of Aigi's poems are associated with silence, for instance his *Silence, Evening in Denisova Gorka*. Many reviews address Aigi's poetics of silence, and he himself has been called the 'poet of silence' (Valentine, 2007: 675). Gubaidulina showed interest in Aigi's poems and has set her music on Aigi's poems in her early compositions such as *Roses* for soprano and piano (1972), *Now Always Snow* (1993), as well as *And: The Feast is in Full Progress* (1993).

Silence also has a role in religion. Nevertheless, there are different perspectives about silence. Although in some aspects silence may be negatively perceived as death, "unsettling" and "sinister" (Pauley, 2013: 25), "the Orthodox,

Catholic, and High Church Anglican theological perspectives developed...the notion that silence is a form of divine communication” (Pauley, 2013: 22). In early Christianity, in the *Acts of Peter* (2nd C. B.C.), Peter teaches that the divine voice is ‘heard through silence’ (cited in Dinkler, 2012: 16). To many, silence has become the source of our spiritual experience. Michael Ramsey, Archbishop of Canterbury (1961-1974), attests that “silence enables us to be aware of God, to let mind and imagination dwell upon his truth...” (cited in Pauley, 2013: 33). Sir Robert Anderson, a theologian, writes that “the far-off heaven where, in perfect peace and unutterable glory, God dwells and reigns, is SILENT!” (Anderson, 2018: 9-10). Others believe that God presents within us through silence: “God dwells in silence, and the Word comes forth from silence” (cited in Dinkler, 2012: 16). Since the past centuries, the prominent role of silence in association with religion has also gradually developed and been expressed in music.

There are many possible interpretations in Gubaidulina’s use of silence. In her *Dialogue*, musical silence may be associated as an acoustically inaudible sound of God, whereas audible sounds of instruments are signaling humankind. To an extent, Gubaidulina has created the boundary between the religious world and the mundane. Nevertheless, at a deeper level of interpretation, it is through her creative compositional thought and imagination that Gubaidulina incorporates silence in the music to create a connection and perhaps a dialogic relationship between “I” and God. She intends to demonstrate that God’s presence is not always palpable and there are different ways to perceive and present God in her compositions. In the composition she interiorizes her voice or speech into music pitches, whereas silence acts as the presence of God, which is a distinct space that Gubaidulina creates in the music to represent God. Indeed, not only is there a significant connection to God in her music “story”, but also Gubaidulina experiences unity between her soul and God through encountering silence in the composition.

Gubaidulina’s compositional handling and music presentations often contain two or more meanings and ways of interpreting. In music structure a full measure of silence can be ‘heard’ as to separate two distinct musical ideas and “sections”/“scenes”. A full measure of silence also indicates the end of a complete opening musical statement of the soloist. Although there are four occurrences of full silent measures employed throughout the composition, three are significantly used to differentiate the sections of the music. Through the use of silence Gubaidulina unifies both her personal devotion to religion and the design of the music, structuring them into the composition.

Moreover, in *Dialogue* silence is not merely functioned in association with God and music structure, but also is employed for other purposes. There are several techniques Gubaidulina uses to make instrumental lines significant as “vocal” lines in the music. For instance, a long, lyrical solo violin melodic line is often constructed with rests inserted in the middle, breaking up and dividing the lengthy melody into short phrases, which is similar to spoken words. It is also often claimed that “breaking up the quick-flowing stream of words would be natural in speech; so too in singing” (Pauley, 2013: 51). Similarly, Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenological philosophy interprets silence as “a background to speech, preceding and succeeding the spoken word, and also closely interwoven with language, giving meaning to utterance” (Maurice, 1968: *passim*, cited in Bassett, 2016: 34). Short moments of silence created by rests and pauses throughout the composition make one aware of the different musical presentations and ideas of Gubaidulina.

Throughout the composition the melodies used are intended to imitate the different lengths and lyric phrases that occur in songs and arias of opera, as if they contain words to tell, and are written for a singer. It is also as if in her mind there was an attached poem or text, and each instrument is treated like a vocal part for a singer. In other words, each instrument is a sort of a “wordless-actor/character.” Moreover, short breaks are used as if they may

give singers a chance to catch their breath, allowing them to sustain long vocal lines. A moderate tempo presented in the melodies is also used to enhance its similarity to the pace of natural speech or singing. Other than using big leaps to produce a question-like manner, the melody often moves in step-wise, chromatic and small leaps motions that are reminiscent of traditional vocal melodic lines. All these create a dramatic effect in the music. What Gubaidulina has done is not only convey her intended purposes, but also has provided an operatic or theatrical way for a listening experience, making the music persuasive and approachable.

Gubaidulina introduces the solo violin accompanied by a deep sound of double bass and harp, not only signaling the beginning of the “plot” in her *Dialogue*, but also demonstrating the opening dramatic monologue of the soloist “I.” Gubaidulina divides the slow, solemn melodic line into short phases, which is similar to “talking” characteristics. The melodic line gradually moves upwards, ending in a soft dynamic high pitch register B-flat 6 (based on middle C as C4). It is designed as if a vulnerable “vocal character” is saying a prayer to God, wishing his/her hope is to be ‘heard’ by Him, begging for His love, or pleading to God for an answer. Nevertheless, creatively, a silent moment is inserted after the end of the melodic line. Here, the silent moment may be representing a divine space of God; perhaps, as it is claimed, “God’s being has its own kind of spatial structure...” (Stearns, 2006: 173). A silent moment here may also be treated as a kind of “dialogue” with God, in a way that does not react in exactly the same ways as human dialogue partners do. It is a moment that can be treated as a response from Him, a Spirit of God speaking to the “character”. In the music Gubaidulina illustrates the presence of God in various ways, and in her personal ways.

In the composition Gubaidulina projects that God exists in an unlimited space, and one’s relationship to God is personal. As Buber writes in his book *I and You*, God never ceases to be with us: “only one You [God] never ceases, in accordance with its nature to be You for us. To be sure, whoever knows God also knows God’s remoteness and the agony of drought upon a frightened heart, but not the loss of presence” (Buber, 1970: 147). Similarly, Kaufmann explains that “God does not define Himself, but assures us of His divine presence” (cited in Welz, 2019: 10). As in past centuries, silence is a way of being with God. This can also be seen in “Pseudo-Dionysius writing in the fifth or sixth century [who] discerned God’s presence in silence” (cited in Bassett, 2016: 38).

Another significant aspect of this composition is demonstrated in Gubaidulina’s use of the number Three as a symbol for one of her musical sources in *Dialogue*. It is her hidden message in the music. The number Three has a religious connotation. It is widely claimed that “the number Three has been viewed since antiquity as a basic creative number for the whole being, and the art of music specifically” (Danova, 2015). Apart from painting, number Three has been a symbol in many composers’ creative works and a carrier of messages; suffice to mention Franz Liszt and J. S. Bach, whose musical structures and pitch groupings can be associated with the number 3. The number Three gives invocation of the Holy Trinity, that one God exists in the three equal divine persons – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is also claimed the number is a symbol for holiness: “according to numerology practices of the past two millennia it was a symbol for Holiness or Trinity” (Rumsey, 1996: 9). The symbol represents God being as love with the inseparable relatedness of the three: as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, “as so bound together in being that love is the very essence of who God is” (Stearns, 2006: 177). Although the word Trinity does not appear in the New Testament, “the doctrine of the Trinity is considered to be one of the central Christian affirmations about God” (Petruzzello).

Gubaidulina has a strong devotion to religion and religious subjects, and they are freely used in her music. To her, a relationship with God can be built up and established by the music. How she implies the presence of God and

forms the number Three in the composition is interesting. It is initially formed at the opening of the violin solo by adding one pitch after another as the music flows (Example 1).

Example 1

The number Three is also presented in different ways to make its significance in the music throughout. Melodic lines tend to build on groups in various versions of three-pitch patterns such as rhythms of triplet units, groups of three notes, a tie connecting three same-pitches, and many others. Most often three pitches are bound up together under a slur that they are un-confusedly one in being.

Moreover, although the music is generally linear in design, Gubaidulina ends the composition with sustaining D minor chord accompaniment in strings. The three notes, in the form of a chord design, can also be associated as a symbol of the number Three. Apart from the concluding sustaining chord, there are many moments where triple stops that are used to create triad sounds are introduced in different instrumental parts, which serve to strengthen the Trinitarian connection. In his book, *The Principles of Theology: An Introduction to the Thirty-Nine Articles*, William Thomas, an Anglican cleric and theologian, writes that, in Western music of the past “the only perfect concord of music is a trinity, consisting of the fundamental note with its third and fifth which proceed from it and from the complete chord, known as the Perfect Triad” (Thomas, 2005: 75).

Throughout the composition, certain pitches take on special significance. For instance, the music tends to stress on three pitches (occasionally in enharmonic spelling) with each pitch occurring individually and separately at the beginning or ending of essential phrases and sections. Taken together it forms the pitch designed: G#/A flat – A – B flat/A#. This is another use of the number Three. These pitches often occur in the solo violin throughout the composition, representing their eternal presence in the Holy Trinity. In addition, the number Three is heard in the numbers of “questioning and responding” conversation-manner from measures 155 to 165 between violin solo/main “character” and a group of instruments (piccolo, flute and trombone) alternatively. The tension accumulates through the use of dynamics crescendo from forte to fortississimo on the three consecutive moments of “questioning and responding”, which significantly add to the dramatic tension of the story.

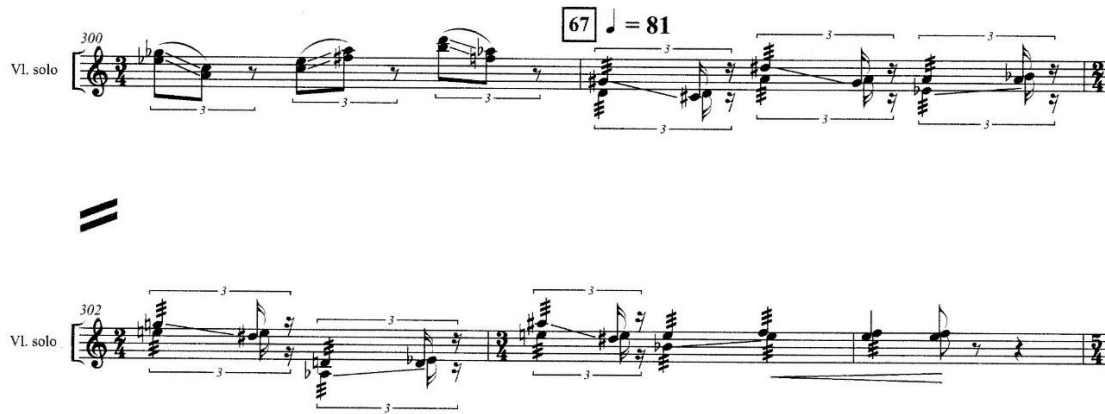
The pitch A, which is one of the pitches that links to and strengthens the connection of the Trinity or number Three, is emphasized at the opening and ending of the music. The composition begins with A3 and Gubaidulina ends the composition by employing soft dynamic in solo violin A7 in an octave higher and on a harmonic pitch. This gradually decays into silence as the music approaches the conclusion, which is an ideal representation of reaching up to God in divine peace. Gubaidulina intends to conclude her “story” and “drama” by creating an emotional stage that is different from the previous despairing, striving and yearning emotions of the “character”. In addition, a short drone-like texture passage, which consists of thin texture of less rhythmic activity in timpani, playing along with the solo violin and static strings sound, also evokes a sense of calmness moving towards an eternity of boundless quiet, a serene, contemplative and holiness atmosphere, with no sadness. It is like a biblical imagery where heavenly home is a place of peace. Indeed, static drone-like or long tie-notes sounds are often heard towards the conclusion of pieces that are liturgical works, or works that contain extra-musical association with religious subjects. Examples can also be heard in vocal works of composers such as Sir Charles Villiers Stanford’s *Magnificat in A Major*, Herbert Howells’ *Hymnus Paradisi*. The former work uses long tie-notes in all parts, singing out sweet heavenly sounds, and the latter work employs drone-like texture towards the end of the composition.

Indeed, towards the end of her *Dialogue*, Gubaidulina creates not only a “sacred space” as a place where it connects with the divine, but also as a place where it is perceived to be an expression of Heaven. The musical interpretation of Earth and Heaven is also portrayed in her *St. John Passion*. In that piece, “one line comments on what is happening on the Earth and the other on what is going on in Heaven, which makes a cross, my favorite symbol,” said Gubaidulina (Desiateryk, 2012). On the other hand, what she does in her *Dialogue* also enhances the dramatic effect in the music to give a greater weight in conveying her “story”.

Although in liturgical settings human voices are often used to represent angelic sound, there are nevertheless divine links that can be created by instrumental handlings. Other than a sustaining triple-stop that creates a D minor chord, which represents the symbol of number Three in the viola toward the end of her *Dialogue*, Gubaidulina also employs a sustaining open fifth and octave playing in cello and double bass, respectively. This event differs from other earlier music passages of the composition that stress on semitone, sixth and seventh. Perhaps the use of the fifth and octave idea can be connected to medieval theory. In his *De institutione musica* (Fundamentals of Music), Boethius claims that octaves, fourths and fifths were considered the strongest consonances that serve as heavenly order and are in God’s-given design. In his introductory passage to the English translation of *De institutione musica*, Calvin Bower writes:

An explanation of the set of pitches constituting the ancient Greek musical system is found in every ancient musical treatise. In *Fundamentals of Music* (1.20), this exposition has religious overtones. Music began in a state of grace, as it were, with four strings sounding intervals of the octave divided by a fourth and a fifth.... In this age of gods and demigods nothing discordant was found in music (Boethius, 1989: xxii).

In *Dialogue*, glissandi pitch occurs between two dyads forming a Cross-motif motive, heard beginning at measure 301 (rehearsal number 67) (Example 2). The top pitch tremolo G#4 of the first dyad uses glissando gliding down to the second dyad’s bottom pitch C#4, crossing over the first dyad’s D4 repeating pitch, leading the overlapping of pitches occurring in the second dyad to create a Cross motif. The presentation here is slightly different from her early demonstration of the Cross motif in *Seven Words*, in which the sound of an open string is “cut off” by the use of glissando that is performed on the neighboring string. Gubaidulina called it “the ‘crucifixion’ of a string” (Lukomsky and Gubaidulina, 1998: 20).



Example 2

Certain use of musical sound in the composition conveys extra-musical meaning. Bell sounds are often employed to create familiarity and association with religion, the European church, and Western and Eastern traditions. An expression of the heavenly environment is also created through bell sounds. “Village bells, the use of sacred or vernacular language, and various forms of music (whether monophonic or polyphonic) suggested some need to find a correlation between perceptions of heaven and earthly auditory experiences” (Tiegreen, 2021: 17). The Sanctus bell is rung at the consecration process of the Holy Eucharistic during mass. Bell sounds are used for many purposes, for instance, to celebrate life and marriage. On the other hand, bells can be associated with death and despair. It is generally claimed that “bells were key components of communication networks and tools for symbolic expression” (Lubken, 2012: 825) for community, catching public attention and conveying messages. Composers such as Sergei Rachmaninov, Thea Musgrave and others also incorporate different manners and presentations of bell sounds into their music, delivering emotional messages and to create and add dramatic effect.

The emphasis of a solo bell sound only occurs once in *Dialogue*. Gubaidulina uses *campane* to produce bell sounds in her association with religion and to set the environment of the “character”/soloist. Nevertheless, it is not presented as imitating the way of actual and consistent bell tolling; rather, Gubaidulina interprets it differently. It is a melodic line with various rhythms, in which she nevertheless stresses rhythms of triplet. Every choice made in the music has her hidden meaning and representation. Triplet may represent the symbol of the Trinity and the spirit of God. For instance, in the third movement, “Aria”, of Bach’s cantata *Es ist ein trotzig und verzagt Ding*, BWV 176, he uses triplet motive to associate the Spirit of God with the vocal phrase *Gottes Geist muß auf ihm ruhn* being sung.

On the other hand, one may also interpret differently the use of the bell sound in the composition. Gubaidulina may employ the bell to portray and emphasize the environment, location and ambience in association with her “story” as if in an operatic or theatrical work. Despite the fact that no specific evidence and information is given, the music is able to lead her listeners into the “character’s” world in the “story” of the composition.

In her *Dialogue*, each melodic line of the violin soloist/main “character” is clearly delivered and emphasized. Although there are fewer moments where all instruments/“characters” sound together as if imitating many people speaking at once, groups of instruments in contrasting ideas with the violin soloist are in fact presented. Dialogues often take turns between the soloist/main “character” and groups of many other instruments/“characters” in the music. The instrumental groups can also be seen as the “crowd” that is often found in opera. There are also moments where a short break is inserted to create dialogue space and conversational pause between the violin soloist and other instrumental groups. Gubaidulina is able to bring all attention to the soloist/main “character”

and his/her various emotional stages. Not surprisingly, then, that theatrical design is experimented with here. In many moments the music expresses the deepest and intense emotional state of the soloist/main “character”, singing out the “character’s”/soloist’s own feelings of longing, hope, desire, despair, anguish, sorrow and doubt, which also separates the earthly from the divine. To some extent, although without verbal comprehension to assure intelligibility of what is being portrayed and told in the composition, the music contains an expressive quality that is able to transmit the feelings of the “character”/violin soloist to listeners. Gubaidulina presents one with an abstract way of describing the “character’s” life, a human life.

Throughout the composition Gubaidulina’s music communicates meaning, which makes it intriguing. Other than there always being interaction between the soloist and other instruments, echoing also is employed, illustrating a form of dialogue among instruments. Dramatic sense is produced through adding echo effects to create distant sound in the dialogue. It occurs as if the other “character(s)” is echoing, restating and emphasizing the statement of desire of the primary “character”/violin soloist. In addition, to increase the dramatic sense in the music, full orchestra sound colors are occasionally used as background music for setting moods, and to assist and propel the progress of the “story”. Through all her design in the composition, Gubaidulina intends to create an imagined and abstract “context” in her instrumental work.

A continuation of musical gestures, such as different upward gliding glissandi, continually appear one after another, which occurs in the solo violin beginning at the up-beat to measure 155 to evoke a sense of question-like gesture that is urging for answers. Gubaidulina presents such musical gestures in crescendo and loud dynamics to create tension and dramatic impact, emphasizing the emotion of the “character” (Example 3). She intends to develop a dramatic effect by designing the soloist as asking whether his/her prayer has been answered. However, the music leads from one emotion to another. In responding to the “question-like” gesture musical event, Gubaidulina applies a short break of silence before the vulnerable “character”/soloist expresses a moment of despair in soft dynamics and descending motions in semitones beginning at measure 166. The “story” proceeds into a different emotional stage, capturing the complex feelings of the “character”.

[illegible]

Example 3

Rising musical gestures are emphasized throughout the composition. Gubaidulina emphasizes their importance at the opening by introducing a musical gesture in the violin solo. By inserting rests in between, separating different groups of rising musical gestures, she in fact draws attention to the gesture. An ascending musical gesture also symbolizes the reaching for holiness and to ascend spiritually to Heaven, seeking eternal light, eternal joy and approaching God. Such musical gestures are reminiscent of the images of approaching God in Heaven, which are often depicted in paintings and church ceiling frescoes. In addition, the rising gesture expresses a path that leads to optimism and hope.

Drums and gongs are often used to give meaning and references in ritual practices and religious customs of different cultures. In “myths and legends of cultures around the world...the rhythm of the drums could not only awaken the creative energy of the human soul, but it was also the key to the rhythm of the universe” (“The symbols of Drums and Percussion Instruments”) The employment of deep sound quality also reflects a means by which Gubaidulina conveys her spirituality and soul, and a tightening of the tension of the music. For instance, in her *Hour of Soul* (1974), percussion is used to represent the soul of Marina.

In her *Dialogue*, Gubaidulina uses the gong, the bass drum *piatti sospesi*, and other instruments to capture the deep sound quality. Indeed, percussion instruments are essential in her music and have been included in many of her compositions such as *Detto I* (1978), *Galgenlieder à 5* (Gallows Songs) (1996), *Glorious Percussion* (2008), and others. Gubaidulina claims that,

The 20th century strives to find the soul. This inescapable longing forces artists to go inside sound. For this reason we composers are preoccupied with glissandi, harmonics, and reverberation. All of these are attempts to penetrate into the depth of sound, as if it were a metaphor of the soul. And percussion instruments let us penetrate into the depth of sound (Lukomsky and Gubaidulina, 1998: 33-34).

She further explains that the acoustic sound of percussion instruments “...enter into that layer of our consciousness which is not logical, they are at the boundary between the conscious and the subconscious. This subconscious contains information beyond logic, perhaps in the soul. It is the space of the soul” and “music has to have its soul free in order to arrive at God, it cannot be stopped” (Moody, 2012: 33-34).

Gubaidulina designs the music to portray the psychological development of the “character” in different presentations. Other than the dialogue manner presented in the composition, recitative-and-aria-like styles are employed, which are reminiscent of an operatic style of vocal accompaniment. Gubaidulina had experience writing operas in her early career. “I wrote operas in my youth,...I gave up on the genre when I realized that opera involves too many external, material elements, and it is the inner life that interests me most” (“The BBVA Foundation distinguishes Sofia Gubaidulina for the spiritual,” 2022). In her *Dialogue*, the recitative-like solo melodic line is punctuated by a chordal-like accompaniment. There are also moments where different instrumental characters also “sing”/“speak” among themselves. Gubaidulina creates room and imagination for her listeners. Not surprising then that she relates her Concerto-composing ideas to operatic writing, as the music contains a combination of speech-like and song characteristics.

Cadenzas are also inserted to show the virtuosity of the soloist; nevertheless, they are treated as if to imitate aria singing. They occur in different lengths throughout the composition. Early cadenza was a virtuoso passage traditionally occurring in vocal works, especially opera. “In the course of the development of opera in the late 17th and early 18th centuries the popularity of virtuoso singing increased considerably, and with it the importance of improvised embellishment” (Badura-Skoda and Jones).

Conclusion

In *Dialogue: I and You*, Gubaidulina conveys her own deepest, most intimate thoughts and feelings, and provides us with a greater understanding of the needs of the composer. In the composition, Gubaidulina communicates with her listeners at different levels, in terms of her personal style, sensitivity, expressiveness and imagination. Other than a theatrical and operatic way of presentation that shapes her instrumental musical “story”, Gubaidulina

has found also a clear, constructive and concrete metaphor for God, which allows her to create a mutual connection between herself and God. Although there are various characteristics demonstrated in the music, she carefully designs and brings forward her intended message on religious aspects, which leads her to structure and shape the music in a particular way.

The unique quality of the composition is demonstrated in Gubaidulina's exploration of the divine and human spaces. She achieves coherence by employing different ideas together and by bringing out connections between them, making the two worlds coincide with one another. In the storyline a space is created between the soloist/main "character" and God. But, despite the different spaces, she has created a sense of togetherness through different compositional crafts and ideas.

Although what had happened before to the "character" in Gubaidulina's imaginative "story" that caused such sorrow and melancholy is never directly told, messages are nevertheless delivered through instruments, rather than being expressed in words by singers. Gubaidulina recounts the "story" from a different point of view and emphasizes particular events, giving different interpretive progress. The soloist's continuous yearning and the musical elements used are directed towards dramatic purpose. Different moods are created, demonstrating complex emotional states of the "character". In the composition, the "character" communicates through a compelling succession of inner emotions, bringing one closer to a living human life.

Gubaidulina portrays the "character's" encounter with God. Not only does the "character" have a personal quest for God, but also his belief in God's existence in any time and any where is shown in the various occurrences of the "character's" prayers throughout the composition. The complex feelings of the "character" are creatively delivered, establishing richly expressive and meaningful work.

As a "storyteller" Gubaidulina is situated outside the story; nevertheless, the music expresses the inner essence of Gubaidulina in association with God. There are examples of musical symbolism representing Christianity found in the music. Silence is one of the powerful tools for Gubaidulina in *Dialogue*. Her use of silence is a means of conveying a message that God has His own kind of space and He can draw near to human space. On the other hand, silence also plays a role in the musical structure of her abstract "story".

There is always more than one message that can be heard in her ideas and presentation. Silence is also given to make a change to a new musical idea and perhaps a new "section/scene" as the music and the "story" progress. Gubaidulina also employs short breaks of silence to create dialogue space and demonstrate the "communication" process between instruments. Every compositional move she makes intends to provide the listener a better understanding and interpretation of her "story". Similarly, Gubaidulina's use of bell sounds also conveys religious symbolic meaning.

Indeed, the musical design contains many meanings, which can lead to different interpretations. The use of the number Three is one of the important musical ideas associated with religion. Selected pitches are employed to show the significance in creating the number Three. Gubaidulina projects in the composition that God is the same as the God who eternally exists as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and they should never be separated.

In the composition, a diverse characteristic and idea is explored to establish the dramatic pace and tension. The dialogue manners operate at theatrical or operatic level, rather than simply a traditional concerto. Along with such idea of compositional writings there are representations of religious meaning delivered in the music, for instance,

her use of rising gestures and high pitch in harmonics. All these are often thought as portraying various kinds of heavenly symbols and “sacred space”. Gubaidulina’s creative and imaginative mind is reflected in her compositional experimenting, which not only gives the music distinctiveness, but also a complete whole.

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Kheng K. Koay

kkhengk@yahoo.com
kkhengk@mail.nsysu.edu.tw

Kheng K. Koay is a Professor of Musicology in the School of Music at National Sun Yat-sen University, Taiwan. Her research interests focus on late 20th-and-early 21st centuries- music. Koay's articles and chapters appear in numerous scholarly journals and books and have been presented at several international conferences. She is the author of *Tracing the Beats: The Fusion of American Vernacular and Western Art Music* (2012), *The Kaleidoscope of Women's Sounds in Music of the Late 20th and Early 21st Centuries* (2015), and *Female Recreation of Music Traditions: Women's Sounds of the Past and Present* (2023).

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