

An Attempt at Creating Total Theatre: *Scene del potere* by Domenico Guaccero

Simone Caputo

Università degli Studi di Roma “La Sapienza”

When approaching *Scene del potere* – ‘azione scenica’ conceived and developed by Domenico Guaccero over the span of nearly a decade (1961–1968) and staged for the first and only time on 30 December 1968 at Palermo’s Teatro Biondo – there is a high risk of being overwhelmed by the preparatory materials alone.¹ The bulk of the textual and scenic-dramaturgical preliminary materials that leads from the first draft, tentatively titled *Il potere*, to the 1965 *Scene del potere*² and its Palermo debut, is of a multifold entity. Its amount of sources, formative elements and programmatic intent is both fascinating and confusing in its labyrinthine combinations. Let it suffice to point out that the textual and scenic-dramaturgical preparatory materials consist of more than one hundred pages of handwritten and typed notes, summaries, sketches, drawings, newspaper and magazine clippings. The Fondo Domenico Guaccero also preserves letters regarding the inception and outcomes of the project,³ a ‘skeleton’ score of the preliminary draft *Il potere* and a handwritten copy of 1968’s final score of *Scene del potere*. Among these sources we can also find a photocopy of the score with side-notes by Egisto Macchi.⁴ It is therefore no wonder that the essays written on *Scene del potere* have mainly focused on the groundwork and on the composer’s programmatic intent.⁵

Given such considerations, the present article aims at offering an in-depth examination of *Scene del potere*, seen not as its initiatory process but observed in its completion: the final version of 1968. Through a detailed study of the score,⁶ it is possible to determine whether and how the composer's programmatic intent found its fulfilment in the ultimate outcome of his work.

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF *SCENE DEL POTERE*

Before proceeding with the examination of the score, it is necessary to unveil the theme that lies at the very core of *Scene del potere* and of Guaccero's programmatic intent.⁷

The theme: power, its dynamics, the ways it is maintained, what legitimises it and, to a certain extent, deems it necessary. In Guaccero's work, power is carefully dissected from the inside.

The founding characteristics of the stage action: Guaccero divides his material into three parts. In the first, power is collective – the result of political, economic and social actions. In the second, these issues are joined by an insinuating presence of a more individualistic nature, while in the third part power is represented only by the body and the mind. This structure determines the 'spazializzazione [spatialization]' of the action,⁸ which in the first part takes place completely on stage, in the second also seeps into the hall and foyer, whereas in the third, we witness a complete abolition of the stage as it opens up to the 'outside' world.

The programmatic intents: Guaccero envisions a partitionable musical theatre devoid of precise narrative directions, which relies on the audience's potential for improvisation and intervention. The absence of a scenic-spatial focus is paralleled with the absence of a narrative focus: the places where the action takes place are diversified (the stage, the stalls, the foyer) in order to better engage the spectator.

Music, dialogue, action, scene and images also contribute in the making of the action by means of implementing subsequent or simultaneous 'contrappunto [counterpoint]' of elements.⁹ This happens because Guaccero believed that when art is embodied by its correspondent physical medium, it becomes art only by historical convention, thereby limiting its potential and depriving it of its essentiality.

None of the featured characters, not even the historical ones (De Gaulle, Hitler, Fischer, Rajk, Oppenheimer), is ever placed at the centre of the plot. Performers and characters do not coincide: the performers (actors, singers,

musicians, dancers) are asked to play more than one role. Guaccero pursues a very precise concept of de-specialisation that aims at broadening the spectrum of technical solutions available to the performer.¹⁰

In the score, the actors' gestures and declamations are enhanced by a music also made of actions and words. This dramatic twist in the musical plot assures vocal effectiveness: the composer experiments with the numerous methods of voice emission in relation with words. Guaccero downgrades other sound elements (magnetic tape, instruments, prepared piano, noises, etc.) to the same level of the vocal score: they are meant to either support or create an opposition.

Guaccero sees the performance as a chance to do things ('fare dramma [...] vivere dentro un'azione') as opposed to seeing things.¹¹ He envisions a theatre founded on performance work, a catalyst for a community able to actively involve and absorb the audience.

THE COLLECTIVE POWER

The score for *Scene del potere* was jotted down on 45 sheets of tracing paper: 28 for the first part, 14 for the second, 3 for the third.¹² The three parts show graphic discrepancies, which indicate that the work was completed in different moments and situations over a long period of time. The second part – subsequently merged with the revised and corrected 1965 version of *Scene del potere* – was composed using a lettering guide and is therefore very clear and well-organised, while the first and third were handwritten, indicating that they were added later as the Palermo premier approached. Guaccero introduces the score as follows:

FIGURE 1. Partial transcription of Guaccero's introduction to the score (translation from Italian is mine). Fondazione Giorgio Cini (Venezia), Fondo Egisto Macchi

Introduction: Audiovisual actions give life to an ever-open opera: the opera of POWER. The subject can be developed ad infinitum in the framework of numerous other performances, as a series of documentaries focused on the same theme. To unveil its internal workings, it is observed from the standpoint of those (men, groups) who somehow bear this power: those who own it, those who achieve it and those who lose it; the mythization of idols (ideal tool for domination); extreme bestiality; the uncontrollable rampage of the occult, the black sorcerer; historical figures similar to ancient heroes whose stories are known and retold by all, both history and fantasy; transiting from "heavy" matter (physical science, economic and political laws) to "subtle" matter (the individual and the power of the mind).

Theatre = élite (performers) and mass (audience) actions (drama), sometimes opposed, sometimes entwined. All elements of theatre are involved: logic/sound element (words), visual element (set, lights, projections), kinetic element (gesturality);

Music = everything that goes from noises (voices and instruments) to tuned sounds. The word "music" cannot be univocal, for our concept is different from that of Aristosseno or Mozart. We're in need of a more adequate terminology.

Initial directions

SCENA 1 On the left side of the stage: harpsichord, a small table, a flowering plant, a birdcage on a perch (all characteristic elements of a bourgeois interior). At the centre of the stage, a transparent plastic panel secured to a rotatable central axis. On the top left of the panel, the word "ABFÄLLE" is accompanied by a quantitative index (= 10.000), while the rest of the surface is covered in similar smaller numbers. In one of the panel's top corners there is a printing calculator, whose numbers are visible even at a distance while it keeps progressively spouting paper. On the right side of the stage: a desk and a chair. **Complete duration approx. 45'**

SCENA 2 There are 5 scenes: 3 take place inside the theatre room (A, B and C) while 2 exit the scene (foyer or other locations: α and β). Each group of scenes can take place in whatever order is preferred (ABC, BCA, CAB and $\alpha\beta$, $\beta\alpha$ etc.). If necessary, scenes A, B and C can also be read backwards (ex. C₂₁ instead of C123). Nevertheless, the following rules are to be observed:

- | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1. fixed montage: | external scenes | First scene | Second scene |
| | in-house scenes | First scene | Second scene |
2. in-house scenes start: 2'30''/5' after external scenes
 3. first external scene: 2'/3' before the end of the first in-house scene.
 4. second external scene: 2'/3' before the end of the second in-house scene.
 5. third external scene: 2'/3' before the end of the third in-house scene.

At the end of the third in-house scene, insert an interval: immediate and sudden DARKNESS (duration 1'/2'). Guitarist. FULLY LIT stage: 15"/30" break. Then the conductor walks in.

Scenic elements: (a) in-house scenes (with traditional stage or platform): above the proscenium, a large congress-like banner bears the phrase "THE MANAGER MUST STAY SANE"; on stage, at the centre there is a conference table with a cloth, a chair, a glass, and just to the right the tape recorder is propped on top of a stool. To the left of the stage, the harpsichord (or harp) is positioned under a noosed rope dangling overhead, while on the right side of the proscenium there is a 1934-style clothes hanger next to a folding ladder; at both sides of the stage, two small staircases lead to the audience's seats.

(b) external scenes: a grand piano waiting to be prepared; on a table lie the necessary props for the ceremony: cross, rhombus, black mask with red lips, paintbrush with cup, object (blood-stained rag with little radio): object and cups are to be covered with nylon.

SCENA 3 The stage is completely covered with chairs arranged in a precise planimetry of asymmetric groups spaced out by passageways. Hanging from the chairs, simple musical instruments (woodwinds, strings, percussions). Walkways can be found among the audience, on the rows of seats. From the ceiling, a rope ladder can be lowered in order to make sure that the performer is visible to all. An instrumentalist armed with keyboard or percussions is on stage or in the stalls. Bright light everywhere, in the room and on the stage. **Duration: 23'**

Section B of the first part opens with the singers (two sopranos and one tenor) carrying out a melody – one of the few present in the performance – with lyrics inspired by Novalis’s *Sehnsucht nach dem Tode*. The singers are wearing middle-class clothes; they repeatedly perform the typical gestures of daily life.

The previous chaotic texture is opposed by the vibrant lyricism of this fragment. The singing, reveals the words in minute detail, while the melody flows calmly and gives rise, at 3’30”, to a linear rhythmic chorale: the syntactic structure of the parts somehow requires the performers to proceed with solemn rigour. At 4’38” the powerful choral climax clashes with the entrance of a new melody played to the words: ‘es rauschten leis’ die Wälder, so sternklar war die Nacht [the forest softly rustled, how starry was the night]’.

This fragment sees the first soprano and the piano taking up bars 36–44 of Robert Schumann’s *Lied Mondnacht* (text by Joseph Freiherr von Eichendorff), while at the same time the second soprano recites verses from Giovanni Pascoli’s poem *La mia sera* and the tenor tackles Virgil’s first eclogue. The nocturnal atmospheres evoked by the voices inject a dramatic sense of irony into the death imbued sequences previously seen on stage (a corpse left in the middle of the scene, the showgirl alternately busy flaying the dead body and parodying Hitler). This contrast prepares the stage for the entrance of the baritone’s voice – recorded on magnetic tape and accompanied by brief billowing instrumental waves and bursts of flash photography lights – which recites chosen passages from the dictator’s speeches.¹⁶

In section A of the second part, political power leaves the spotlight to economic power, embodied in this case by the bleakness of stock market gamblers. A chaotic moving mass of amplified voices and overlapping words, where meaning cannot immediately be perceived,¹⁷ generates a sort of sound nebula, which functions as a comment to a quote from Marx’s *Capital*, a message carried on by unamplified voices:¹⁸ ‘La teoria diventa forza materiale non appena conquista le masse [Theory becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses]’. The action takes place in near darkness; light beams rapidly cutting through the shadows.

Section B of the second part describes the stock market crash: this refers to the Black Tuesday of 1929 that witnessed the downfall of Wall Street. The crash slowly takes form through the boisterous stage entrance of the businessmen’s wives, the noisy presence of the percussionists as they arrange their instruments, a recorded voice that proclaims: ‘Suona la campana a morto per la proprietà privata [Sound the death knell for private property]’.

Section C, which seals the second part, shows the effects caused by the stock market crash through the interaction of three businessmen, a scene which

culminates with one of them committing suicide. The scenic spaces are of a composite nature: the action takes place contemporaneously in different areas of the stage and the stalls area, sometimes directly addressing the audience.

The interval between the second and third parts of *Scena 1* is significant: the body of the suicide businessman is carried away from the scene; the score leaves room to possibly fit a 2/3-minute solo performance by the dancer. This choice is motivated by the fact that there is a clear switch from an action which takes place in the past to one which belongs to a possible future, thus discussing the elusive dynamics through which the power of the collective influences the individual.

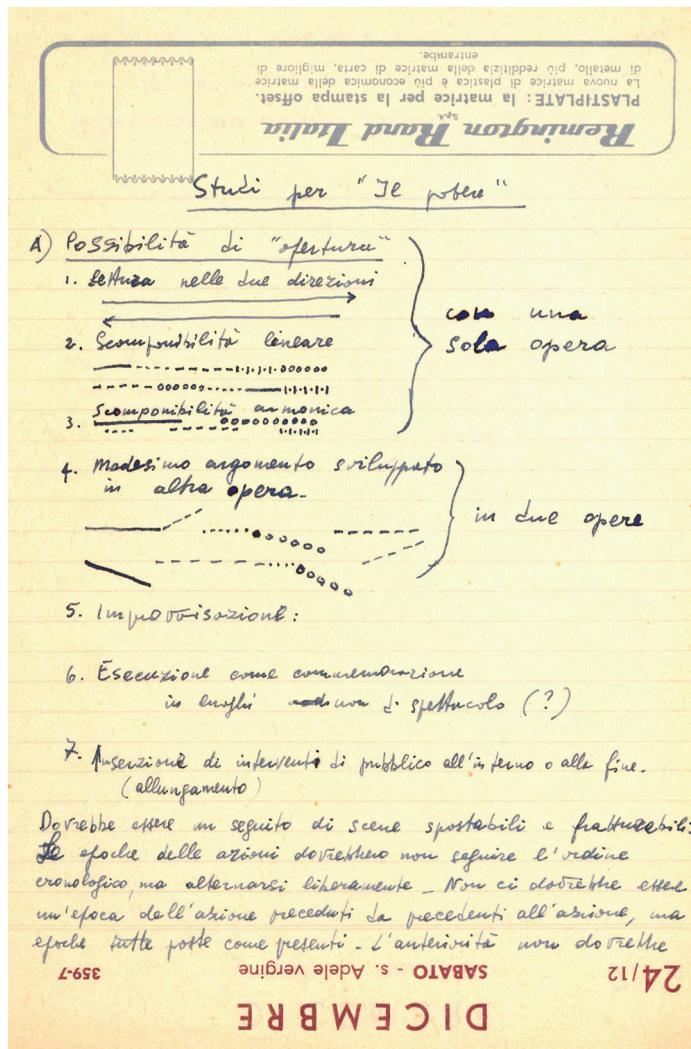
Guaccero decides therefore to entrust this shift in perspective to an almost entirely theatrical action completely based on the performer's acting skills. The moment is also characterised by the constant presence of a film that acts as counterpoint to the theatrical action, enveloping both stage and projection with intense atmospheric continuity.

To better dominate this mechanism, in the score Guaccero accurately indicates the counterpoint among the elements involved in the action. The score is more similar to the storyboard of a movie than a music score (EXAMPLE 2).¹⁹ Two narrative units, marked with precise chronometrical recommendations, all run across the same strip: the predetermined one (overlapping slides, recorded sounds on tape and phrases written on signs) and one that takes place at the moment of the performance (action, sound, words).

THE INDEPENDENT AND PERMUTABLE NATURE OF THE PARTS

Scena 2, which is also divided into 5 scenes, is built according to a precise pattern meant to enhance the ‘open’ nature of Guaccero’s project. It should however be noted that from the very first outline of the work (first titled *Il potere*), it was clear that the idea of a non-directional theatrical narrative was pivotal for its development – as proven by some of the preparatory notes (FIGURE 2), and especially by the first framework conceived for *Il potere*.

FIGURE 2. *Scene del potere*: preparatory materials. Hand-written notes entitled *Studi per “Il potere”*. Fondazione Giorgio Cini (Venezia), Fondo Domenico Guaccero



Getting back to *Scena 2*, while scenes A, B and C take place in the theatre hall, scenes α and β are simultaneously staged in the foyer. Since there are no precise narrative criteria to dictate a consequential order, the performers can alternate each scene in accordance with their own will. Even the segments constituting each scene can be put together in a variety of combinations. The score, on the other hand, is well-defined when it comes to indicating intervals between the conclusion and beginning of the scenes. Another important element is the expanding concept of Guaccero's performing space: stage, foyer and stalls all become part of a whole. In conclusion, the audience's participation is not exclusively emotional, for *Scene del potere* adds a physical component: from *Scena 2* onwards, the actions take place amongst or near the audience, directly engaging with it in an attempt to transform the viewers into actual active participants.²⁰

Scena 2's fragmented nature is made clear from the beginning of Scene A: the curtains opened wide to reveal the entire set, while the speaker sits on stage (A1) advocating ideologies which speak 'nel nome dell'umanità, del popolo, della razza, di Dio [in the name of mankind, population, race, and God]' and presenting the audience, who have yet to settle into the theatre, with a few tracks by Mozart played with the aid of a tape recorder.²¹ Suddenly (A2) the tenor, rising from the stalls as if he were part of the audience, sings a tune that Guaccero calls *Il canto dei poeti dell'età presente*. This flowing lyrical melody is opposed shortly after by the rough harsh voice of the first soprano who – tightly engaging with guitar, clarinet, saxophone and percussions – directs accusations towards Rajk: 'Egli è passato nel campo del capitale straniero e della reazione [He now stands in the land of foreign capital and reaction]'.

Scene B sees the two singer-actors (the tenor plays Rajk, the soprano plays the prosecution) engage in a *concertante* exchange based on the different timbres, tone and nuances of the two voices: urged by the prosecution (B1), Rajk addresses the audience by singing his confession. Once Rajk is deceased, Oppenheimer bursts onto the scene (B2), using onomatopoeic sounds to express Einstein's equation, 'E=mc²'.

The scene ends with section B3; the sound score is completely recorded and is based on the interaction between three elements: Hitler's voice (ranging from acute to medium and low registers), sounds of various types,²² and a male choir comprising of 6 voices. The lyrics are drawn from *Ein deutsches Requiem* (by Jorge Louis Borges) and *Hitler speaks* (by Hermann Rauschnig).

With a 2'45"-long sequence, Guaccero forces the audience to experience what can be described as the vision of a horror movie without the sense of protection one can usually enjoy and rely on when inside the theatre space.

Scene C appears more like a sort of ritual than a theatre performance and is characterised by an increasing use of improvisation. Alogical elements are organised within a compartmentalised structure. In C1, the stage is fully lit: the harpsichordist enters the scene and begins to play, imperturbably, almost as if he were performing a recital – thus enters the actress donning a black mask and furiously screaming ‘L’oggetto! [The object!.]’ showing a radio to the audience.

Section C2, which is about 4 minutes long, does not have a score and is built on stage directions alone (EXAMPLE 3). This is the part that better exemplifies Guaccero’s conception of music as an element that, although formative, does not have a dominant role in his work: music must abandon its leadership and admit its own insufficiency. Being part of a dialectic process, music must make space for what he sees as theatre’s original unifying tradition which considers sound-word-action-vision as a whole.²³ It is therefore no coincidence that before the action begins, all those participating affirm with determination ‘cold happening’.

EXAMPLE 3. *Scene del potere, Scena 2, C2, approx. 4’*. Fondazione Giorgio Cini (Venezia), Fondo Domenico Guaccero

(SCENA C₁) L'attore s'impadronisce. Distingue verso l'oggetto. L'attrice ha la maschera sul volto e porge l'oggetto all'attore. La radio emette il suo nell'oggetto. L'attore immagina il viso nell'oggetto. Inizia. Il flautista comincia a dar segni d'impazienza. Batti il pugno sulla mano. Il flautista dice a voce bassa: "Oppressi, oppressi" e ripete, girando in tondo e battendo il pugno. Tutti mirano verso lo scrittore. "Oppressi, oppressi."

220'ca. (40'ca.)

(SCENA C₂) (4'ca.) Tutti dicono con decisione e serietà: "cold happening," poi:

AZIONE Agiscono: soprano, tenore, attrice, attore, flautista, pianista, clarinetista e sassofonista. La clavicembalista (pianista), il percussionista e il chitarrista fanno azioni esclusivamente sonore. Il contrabbasso e il direttore sono attenti all'azione. E' dato, per ogni attore, un campo di tre azioni fra le quali ciascuno sceglie al momento la propria azione. Vi aggiungerò un'azione inventata al momento. Quando qualche non fosse possibile seguire dai azioni del proprio campo. In genere i movimenti saranno frenetici, ma senza veloci spuntamenti (velocità data). Per tutto il brano le luci (effluvi, colori) si muoveranno ad intervallo e velocemente in sala e sulla scena.

SOPRANO: 1. Sbatte un uovo nel piatto
2. cavala l'attesa frustandola,
3. ride soffocata e flogorata dal pubblico, con flaghes.

TENORE: 1. Pista del vetro in un piatto
2. punga altri con uno spillare
3. lo schiuma con detergivo

ATTORICE: 1. Sventola un stacco, con una ventagliata sugli altri;
2. sospira un legno con cura vetrata.

ATTORE: 1. Tira il macchinetta in grandi fagioli di carta;
2. fa un omaggio, si cala i pantaloni e dice: "mammi pipi";
3. fa commuovere le dita sul proprio corpo e si soffoca.

FLAUTISTA: 1. Dice "Oppressi"
2. cerca di respirare un fuso morto, poi lo lancia via;
3. crista un palloncino gonfio.

PIANISTA: 1. Lancia qualche coltello e lo manda in platea;
2. si cala le scarpe e opera piedi e calzini;
3. fugga e si scioglie i capelli con phon.

CLAVINETTISTA: 1. smonta lo strumento e suona, in parti di esso;
2. si siede sulle ginocchia di qualcuno (anche in platea o forse del relatore) e lo bacia;

SASSOFONISTA: 1. Lancia dalla chitarra lentamente;
2. cerca di vomitare;
3. si strappa i peli.

SUONI I suoni derivanti dalle azioni indicate raggiungono al massimo l'intensità media, e devono essere in generale nel campo del piano. Gli altri suoneranno anche spuntati, graditi, con almeno una azione sonora ciascuno.
- La clavicembalista fa arpeggi, suonerà con preparazioni e sulla cordata;
- Il chitarrista accorderà lo strumento;
- Il percussionista farà cadere per terra, con fracasso, gli strumenti di metallo.
Ai O' qualcuno dirà: "Covè il Taa?.. E un altro risponderà: "La vita quotidiana è il vero Taa."
Verso la fine (a 30' ca.) clarinetto, sax, chitarra, e percussioni improvvisano un basidi di reduce. l'attrice si lancia nelle danze, mentre gli altri terminano la loro azione. Il gridi acquiescono un loro disimpegno sessuale. Tutti acquiesceranno immediatamente il proprio aplomb, non appena si sarà alzato il relatore (4,25 ca.).

(SCENA C₂) Il relatore si alza, mette in moto la registrazione e contemporaneamente legge la relazione. Gli "attori", attraverso la clavicembalista, se non rispondono all'attore per esigenze di azione, sono attenti al relatore, nei momenti della ripetizione ritmica di quanto ascoltano. Essi sono i relatori, fanno segni di attesa durante la lettura. Qualche profumo, almeno, sempre fermo sino alla fine. Le entrate di suonati si riferiscono ai suoni C₁, sono indicate nel frammento. L'attrice, dalla voce registrata, è sempre uguale. Nella lettura della registrazione.

REL. (col. teatro) 12 20 28 36 44 52 60 68 76 84 92 100 108 116 124 132 140 148 156 164 172 180 188 196 204 212 220 228 236 244 252 260 268 276 284 292 300 308 316 324 332 340 348 356 364 372 380 388 396 404 412 420 428 436 444 452 460 468 476 484 492 500 508 516 524 532 540 548 556 564 572 580 588 596 604 612 620 628 636 644 652 660 668 676 684 692 700 708 716 724 732 740 748 756 764 772 780 788 796 804 812 820 828 836 844 852 860 868 876 884 892 900 908 916 924 932 940 948 956 964 972 980 988 996 1004 1012 1020 1028 1036 1044 1052 1060 1068 1076 1084 1092 1100 1108 1116 1124 1132 1140 1148 1156 1164 1172 1180 1188 1196 1204 1212 1220 1228 1236 1244 1252 1260 1268 1276 1284 1292 1300 1308 1316 1324 1332 1340 1348 1356 1364 1372 1380 1388 1396 1404 1412 1420 1428 1436 1444 1452 1460 1468 1476 1484 1492 1500 1508 1516 1524 1532 1540 1548 1556 1564 1572 1580 1588 1596 1604 1612 1620 1628 1636 1644 1652 1660 1668 1676 1684 1692 1700 1708 1716 1724 1732 1740 1748 1756 1764 1772 1780 1788 1796 1804 1812 1820 1828 1836 1844 1852 1860 1868 1876 1884 1892 1900 1908 1916 1924 1932 1940 1948 1956 1964 1972 1980 1988 1996 2004 2012 2020 2028 2036 2044 2052 2060 2068 2076 2084 2092 2100 2108 2116 2124 2132 2140 2148 2156 2164 2172 2180 2188 2196 2204 2212 2220 2228 2236 2244 2252 2260 2268 2276 2284 2292 2300 2308 2316 2324 2332 2340 2348 2356 2364 2372 2380 2388 2396 2404 2412 2420 2428 2436 2444 2452 2460 2468 2476 2484 2492 2500 2508 2516 2524 2532 2540 2548 2556 2564 2572 2580 2588 2596 2604 2612 2620 2628 2636 2644 2652 2660 2668 2676 2684 2692 2700 2708 2716 2724 2732 2740 2748 2756 2764 2772 2780 2788 2796 2804 2812 2820 2828 2836 2844 2852 2860 2868 2876 2884 2892 2900 2908 2916 2924 2932 2940 2948 2956 2964 2972 2980 2988 2996 3004 3012 3020 3028 3036 3044 3052 3060 3068 3076 3084 3092 3100 3108 3116 3124 3132 3140 3148 3156 3164 3172 3180 3188 3196 3204 3212 3220 3228 3236 3244 3252 3260 3268 3276 3284 3292 3300 3308 3316 3324 3332 3340 3348 3356 3364 3372 3380 3388 3396 3404 3412 3420 3428 3436 3444 3452 3460 3468 3476 3484 3492 3500 3508 3516 3524 3532 3540 3548 3556 3564 3572 3580 3588 3596 3604 3612 3620 3628 3636 3644 3652 3660 3668 3676 3684 3692 3700 3708 3716 3724 3732 3740 3748 3756 3764 3772 3780 3788 3796 3804 3812 3820 3828 3836 3844 3852 3860 3868 3876 3884 3892 3900 3908 3916 3924 3932 3940 3948 3956 3964 3972 3980 3988 3996 4004 4012 4020 4028 4036 4044 4052 4060 4068 4076 4084 4092 4100 4108 4116 4124 4132 4140 4148 4156 4164 4172 4180 4188 4196 4204 4212 4220 4228 4236 4244 4252 4260 4268 4276 4284 4292 4300 4308 4316 4324 4332 4340 4348 4356 4364 4372 4380 4388 4396 4404 4412 4420 4428 4436 4444 4452 4460 4468 4476 4484 4492 4500 4508 4516 4524 4532 4540 4548 4556 4564 4572 4580 4588 4596 4604 4612 4620 4628 4636 4644 4652 4660 4668 4676 4684 4692 4700 4708 4716 4724 4732 4740 4748 4756 4764 4772 4780 4788 4796 4804 4812 4820 4828 4836 4844 4852 4860 4868 4876 4884 4892 4900 4908 4916 4924 4932 4940 4948 4956 4964 4972 4980 4988 4996 5004 5012 5020 5028 5036 5044 5052 5060 5068 5076 5084 5092 5100 5108 5116 5124 5132 5140 5148 5156 5164 5172 5180 5188 5196 5204 5212 5220 5228 5236 5244 5252 5260 5268 5276 5284 5292 5300 5308 5316 5324 5332 5340 5348 5356 5364 5372 5380 5388 5396 5404 5412 5420 5428 5436 5444 5452 5460 5468 5476 5484 5492 5500 5508 5516 5524 5532 5540 5548 5556 5564 5572 5580 5588 5596 5604 5612 5620 5628 5636 5644 5652 5660 5668 5676 5684 5692 5700 5708 5716 5724 5732 5740 5748 5756 5764 5772 5780 5788 5796 5804 5812 5820 5828 5836 5844 5852 5860 5868 5876 5884 5892 5900 5908 5916 5924 5932 5940 5948 5956 5964 5972 5980 5988 5996 6004 6012 6020 6028 6036 6044 6052 6060 6068 6076 6084 6092 6100 6108 6116 6124 6132 6140 6148 6156 6164 6172 6180 6188 6196 6204 6212 6220 6228 6236 6244 6252 6260 6268 6276 6284 6292 6300 6308 6316 6324 6332 6340 6348 6356 6364 6372 6380 6388 6396 6404 6412 6420 6428 6436 6444 6452 6460 6468 6476 6484 6492 6500 6508 6516 6524 6532 6540 6548 6556 6564 6572 6580 6588 6596 6604 6612 6620 6628 6636 6644 6652 6660 6668 6676 6684 6692 6700 6708 6716 6724 6732 6740 6748 6756 6764 6772 6780 6788 6796 6804 6812 6820 6828 6836 6844 6852 6860 6868 6876 6884 6892 6900 6908 6916 6924 6932 6940 6948 6956 6964 6972 6980 6988 6996 7004 7012 7020 7028 7036 7044 7052 7060 7068 7076 7084 7092 7100 7108 7116 7124 7132 7140 7148 7156 7164 7172 7180 7188 7196 7204 7212 7220 7228 7236 7244 7252 7260 7268 7276 7284 7292 7300 7308 7316 7324 7332 7340 7348 7356 7364 7372 7380 7388 7396 7404 7412 7420 7428 7436 7444 7452 7460 7468 7476 7484 7492 7500 7508 7516 7524 7532 7540 7548 7556 7564 7572 7580 7588 7596 7604 7612 7620 7628 7636 7644 7652 7660 7668 7676 7684 7692 7700 7708 7716 7724 7732 7740 7748 7756 7764 7772 7780 7788 7796 7804 7812 7820 7828 7836 7844 7852 7860 7868 7876 7884 7892 7900 7908 7916 7924 7932 7940 7948 7956 7964 7972 7980 7988 7996 8004 8012 8020 8028 8036 8044 8052 8060 8068 8076 8084 8092 8100 8108 8116 8124 8132 8140 8148 8156 8164 8172 8180 8188 8196 8204 8212 8220 8228 8236 8244 8252 8260 8268 8276 8284 8292 8300 8308 8316 8324 8332 8340 8348 8356 8364 8372 8380 8388 8396 8404 8412 8420 8428 8436 8444 8452 8460 8468 8476 8484 8492 8500 8508 8516 8524 8532 8540 8548 8556 8564 8572 8580 8588 8596 8604 8612 8620 8628 8636 8644 8652 8660 8668 8676 8684 8692 8700 8708 8716 8724 8732 8740 8748 8756 8764 8772 8780 8788 8796 8804 8812 8820 8828 8836 8844 8852 8860 8868 8876 8884 8892 8900 8908 8916 8924 8932 8940 8948 8956 8964 8972 8980 8988 8996 9004 9012 9020 9028 9036 9044 9052 9060 9068 9076 9084 9092 9100 9108 9116 9124 9132 9140 9148 9156 9164 9172 9180 9188 9196 9204 9212 9220 9228 9236 9244 9252 9260 9268 9276 9284 9292 9300 9308 9316 9324 9332 9340 9348 9356 9364 9372 9380 9388 9396 9404 9412 9420 9428 9436 9444 9452 9460 9468 9476 9484 9492 9500 9508 9516 9524 9532 9540 9548 9556 9564 9572 9580 9588 9596 9604 9612 9620 9628 9636 9644 9652 9660 9668 9676 9684 9692 9700 9708 9716 9724 9732 9740 9748 9756 9764 9772 9780 9788 9796 9804 9812 9820 9828 9836 9844 9852 9860 9868 9876 9884 9892 9900 9908 9916 9924 9932 9940 9948 9956 9964 9972 9980 9988 9996 10004 10012 10020 10028 10036 10044 10052 10060 10068 10076 10084 10092 10100 10108 10116 10124 10132 10140 10148 10156 10164 10172 10180 10188 10196 10204 10212 10220 10228 10236 10244 10252 10260 10268 10276 10284 10292 10300 10308 10316 10324 10332 10340 10348 10356 10364 10372 10380 10388 10396 10404 10412 10420 10428 10436 10444 10452 10460 10468 10476 10484 10492 10500 10508 10516 10524 10532 10540 10548 10556 10564 10572 10580 10588 10596 10604 10612 10620 10628 10636 10644 10652 10660 10668 10676 10684 10692 10700 10708 10716 10724 10732 10740 10748 10756 10764 10772 10780 10788 10796 10804 10812 10820 10828 10836 10844 10852 10860 10868 10876 10884 10892 10900 10908 10916 10924 10932 10940 10948 10956 10964 10972 10980 10988 10996 11004 11012 11020 11028 11036 11044 11052 11060 11068 11076 11084 11092 11100 11108 11116 11124 11132 11140 11148 11156 11164 11172 11180 11188 11196 11204 11212 11220 11228 11236 11244 11252 11260 11268 11276 11284 11292 11300 11308 11316 11324 11332 11340 11348 11356 11364 11372 11380 11388 11396 11404 11412 11420 11428 11436 11444 11452 11460 11468 11476 11484 11492 11500 11508 11516 11524 11532 11540 11548 11556 11564 11572 11580 11588 11596 11604 11612 11620 11628 11636 11644 11652 11660 11668 11676 11684 11692 11700 11708 11716 11724 11732 11740 11748 11756 11764 11772 11780 11788 11796 11804 11812 11820 11828 11836 11844 11852 11860 11868 11876 11884 11892 11900 11908 11916 11924 11932 11940 11948 11956 11964 11972 11980 11988 11996 12004 12012 12020 12028 12036 12044 12052 12060 12068 12076 12084 12092 12100 12108 12116 12124 12132 12140 12148 12156 12164 12172 12180 12188 12196 12204 12212 12220 12228 12236 12244 12252 12260 12268 12276 12284 12292 12300 12308 12316 12324 12332 12340 12348 12356 12364 12372 12380 12388 12396 12404 12412 12420 12428 12436 12444 12452 12460 12468 12476 12484 12492 12500 12508 12516 12524 12532 12540 12548 12556 12564 12572 12580 12588 12596 12604 12612 12620 12628 12636 12644 12652 12660 12668 12676 12684 12692 12700 12708 12716 12724 12732 12740 12748 12756 12764 12772 12780 12788 12796 12804 12812 12820 12828 12836 12844 12852 12860 12868 12876 12884 12892 12900 12908 12916 12924 12932 12940 12948 12956 12964 12972 12980 12988 12996 13004 13012 13020 13028 13036 13044 13052 13060 13068 13076 13084 13092 13100 13108 13116 13124 13132 13140 13148 13156 13164 13172 13180 13188 13196 13204 13212 13220 13228 13236 13244 13252 13260 13268 13276 13284 13292 13300 13308 13316 13324 13332 13340 13348 13356 13364 13372 13380 13388 13396 13404 13412 13420 13428 13436 13444 13452 13460 13468 13476 13484 13492 13500 13508 13516 13524 13532 13540 13548 13556 13564 13572 13580 13588 13596 13604 13612 13620 13628 13636 13644 13652 13660 13668 13676 13684 13692 13700 13708 13716 13724 13732 13740 13748 13756 13764 13772 13780 13788 13796 13804 13812 13820 13828 13836 13844 13852 13860 13868 13876 13884 13892 13900 13908 13916 13924 13932 13940 13948 13956 13964 13972 13980 13988 13996 14004 14012 14020 14028 14036 14044 14052 14060 14068 14076 14084 14092 14100 14108 14116 14124 14132 14140 14148 14156 14164 14172 14180 14188 14196 14204 14212 14220 14228 14236 14244 14252 14260 14268 14276 14284 14292 14300 14308 14316 14324 14332 14340 14348 14356 14364 14372 14380 14388 14396 14404 14412 14420 14428 14436 14444 14452 14460 14468 14476 14484 14492 14500 14508 14516 14524 14532 14540 14548 14556 14564 14572 14580 14588 14596 14604 14612 14620 14628 14636 14644 14652 14660 14668 14676 14684 14692 14700 14708 14716 14724 14732 14740 14748 14756 14764 14772 14780 14788 14796 14804 14812 14820 14828 14836 14844 14852 14860 14868 14876 14884 14892 14900 14908 14916 14924 14932 14940 14948 14956 14964 14972 14980 14988 14996 15004 15012 15020 15028 15036 15044 15052 15060 15068 15076 15084 15092 15100 15108 15116 15124 15132 15140 15148 15156 15164 15172 15180 15188 15196 15204 15212 15220 15228 15236 15244 15252 15260 15268 15276 15284 15292 15300 15308 15316 15324 15332 15340 15348 15356 15364 15372 15380 15388 15396 15404 15412 15420 15428 15436 15444 15452 15460 15468 15476 15484 15492 15500 15508 15516 15524 15532 15540 15548 15556 15564 15572 15580 15588 15596 15604 15612 15620 15628 15636 15644 15652 15660 15668 15676 15684 15692 15700 15708 15716 15724 15732 15740 15748 15756 15764 15772 15780 15788 15796 15804 15812 15820 15828 15836 15844 15852 15860 15868 15876 15884 15892 15900 15908 15916 15924 15932 15940 15948 15956 15964 15972 15980 15988 15996 16004 16012 16020 16028 1

Guaccero assigns three actions to each participant, giving them the power to choose both the action and the moment to carry it out on stage – while a fourth action is meant to be ad-libbed. Even the lights move according to improvised dynamics.²⁴ From a musical standpoint, the section is based exclusively on the sounds produced by the specified actions, all except for one instance fixed by Guaccero at approx. 3'20": 'clarinetto, sax, chitarra e percussione improvviseranno un twist veloce. L'attrice si lancia nella danza, mentre gli altri terminano la loro azione. I gesti acquisteranno un tono chiaramente sensuale [clarinet, sax, guitar and percussions will improvise a quick twist. The actress will leap into a dancing frenzy while the others are busy bringing their actions to a close. The gestures will take on an explicitly sensual tension]’.

The non-focused narrative style that characterises scenes A, B and C of *Scena 2* is paralleled by an undetermined use of space and scene, which finds its highest expression in scenes α and β : if in A, B and C the locations are different (the stage, the last rows of the stalls area, the corridors) – so as to engage the audience with the actions taking place in their vicinity – the choreographies conceived for scenes α and β take place in the foyer and adjacent areas.²⁵ The composer's intent is to break through the 'fourth wall', progressively reducing the degrees of separation between performer and spectator. It is not the performance in itself, but the audience's own actions that drive the audience towards a more critical and conscious approach to the work.

Scene α 's choreography sees a big open piano placed at the very centre of the foyer, which the pianist is called upon to prepare. This is how Guaccero desemanticises the classical instrument and opens up new worlds of unprecedented and alienating sonorous possibilities to the viewer, who therefore becomes acquainted with a ritual that has little to do with a 'classical' concert. It is a passageway to another dimension. The actor is the first to enter the room (after being 'dressed', as required by any formal rite of passage), followed by the flutist and the audience, who are now able to move freely. At this point, Guaccero indicates that pianist and ballerina should perform an interlude in the foyer; if the room is empty, the interlude should be performed for the bar staff or theatre staff: the traditional conception of scenic spaces is thus completely wiped out.

In scene β ,²⁶ one can clearly sense the underlying idea of theatre conceived as a process in which the audience is no longer confined to merely listening and watching but also become an active part of the ritual – as Guaccero had hoped for in his preparatory materials. The ritual begins before the action: the pianist and dancer prepare the 'arredi sacri [sacred vestments]'. They lay a cloth on the ground, at the end of the piano, and place a cross, a percussion

mallet, a rhombus and a cup filled with red liquid all around the music stand, on which a black mask is placed inside the grand piano, towards its tail, they position the 'object' (a small radio wrapped in a blood-stained rag).

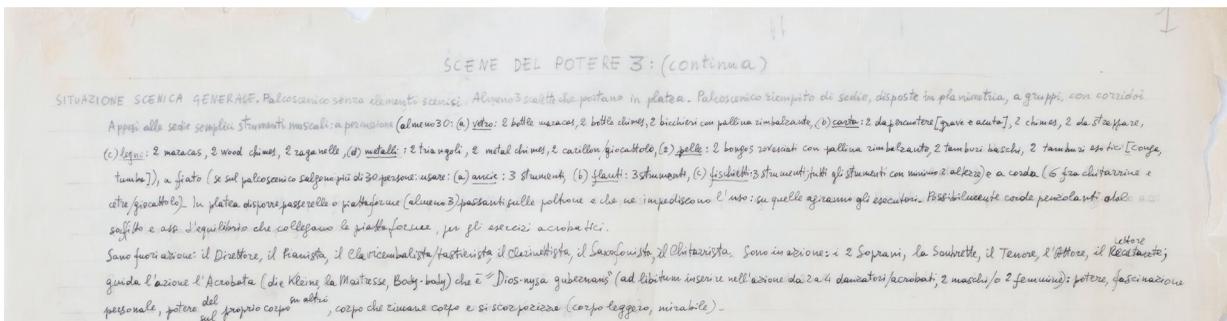
The action opens with the orderly entrance of the hooded figures (singers, musicians and actor). As if in a state of trance, the hooded flock is ordered to throw itself towards the audience, uttering piercing shrieks in an attempt to wrap the hoods around some of the spectators' heads. While the whole action is out of control, the dancer grabs the 'object' from the actor's hands. The latter lets out a cry and desperately heads towards the audience, closely followed by the singers and musicians who in the meantime have interrupted their deranged dancing.

Although this specific moment of Guaccero's work might appear to have drawn inspiration from the contemporary happenings of the 1960s, scene β cannot be fully associated with this type of performative situation, for the composer never loses sight of his rigorous parameters when it comes to regulating the action's duration and coherence. It is as if he were some kind of God able to shape matter from chaos.

FROM 'INSIDE' TO 'OUTSIDE', FROM THEATRE TO REAL LIFE

The course undertaken by Scenes 1 and 2 comes to an end in *Scena 3*, the third and final part of *Scene del potere*. This action features an utterly obsolete set design: the stage is cluttered with randomly gathered chairs where instruments are propped ('Palcoscenico riempito di sedie. [...] Appesi alle sedie semplici strumenti musicali [...]'). FIGURE 3). The intentionally random disposition is designed to give greater emphasis to the lighting and movements of the performers, in order to achieve a complete unity among elements.

FIGURE 3. *Scene del potere, Scena 3, initial caption: general scenic situation. Fondazione Giorgio Cini (Venezia), Fondo Domenico Guaccero*



Light is to the scene what music is to the score: an expressive element beyond the symbol. Brightly effulgent and shining everywhere, the light becomes gradually feebler as the action continues, only to intensify once more towards the end, interrupted by rapid and unexpected spurts of darkness. In short, light significantly contributes in animating the performer and functions as a unifying element with the scenic space. Here, the performer can contemporaneously explore him/herself and his/her surroundings. In the score for this last part of the scenic action, words and movements are more central than sounds (the notes written on the sheet are but a few and at undetermined pitches).

The action begins as the audience is taking their seats – those who do not find a seat are invited to sit on the stage. The acrobat, Dios-nysa, mimics the destruction of power, which at this moment is represented by the stage in its dual role of authority and taboo. The audience is invited to play the instruments, continuously encouraged by the galvanised shouts of the sopranos and the dancer. Accompanied by *fortissimo* recorded sounds, dancers and mimes perform ‘sempre più meravigliosi [increasingly wonderful]’ exercises of acrobatic possession, trance and drug-fuelled bliss. Guaccero’s hope is that the audience will also become part of the ritual, swept into a rhythmic frenzy of both body and soul. Suddenly, the on-stage lights go out and the ‘shapes-bodies’ of the performers leave the room. The dancer invites the audience to go outside, while the flutist starts playing from the theatre’s threshold: at this point, the performance can take place elsewhere, even in the street.²⁷ For a sacred ritual to be complete, the procession (ministrants and faithful alike) must walk beyond the confined spaces of the temple. Similarly, Guaccero’s theatrical action is meant to only partially take place inside the theatre: the work’s completeness depends on its exiting the scene and breaking the divide between actors and spectators.²⁸

30 DECEMBER 1968: PALERMO’S FIASCO

The overall constitutive complexity of the scenic action, along with circumstantial causes due to the production difficulties of the set, made 30 December 1968 a failure as the date of *Scene del potere*’s official debut in Palermo.²⁹

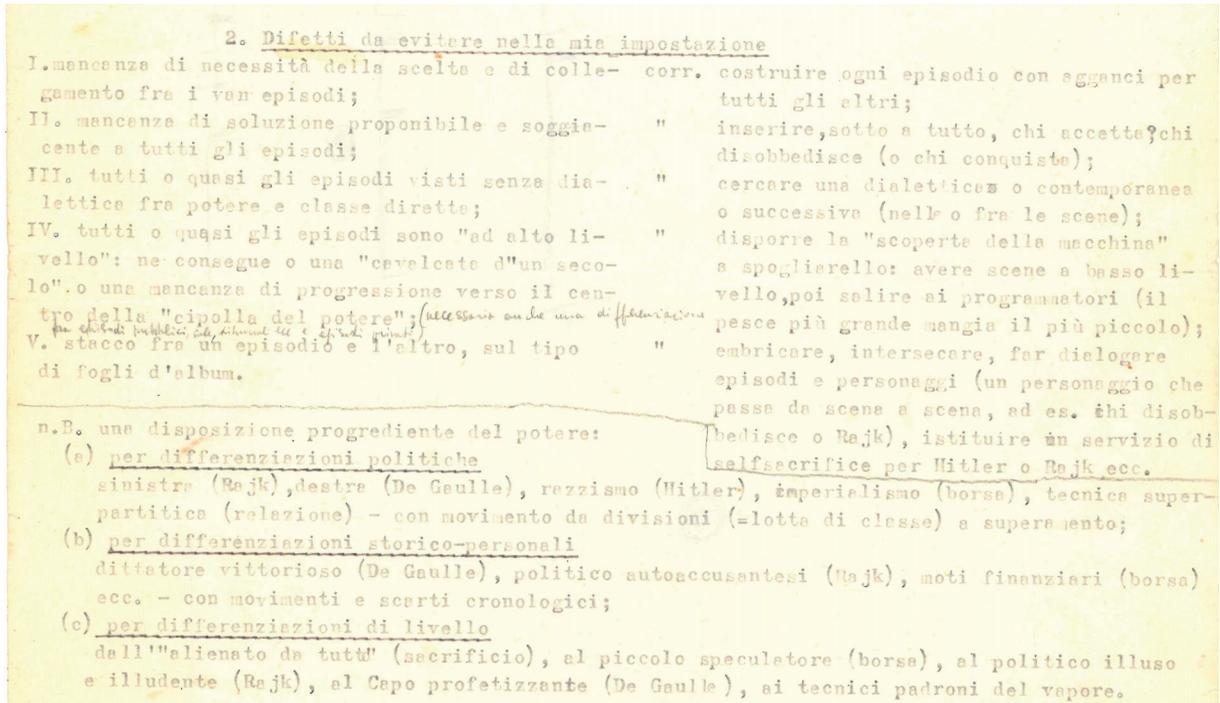
Mastropietro has extensively tracked down the tormented relationships between Guaccero, the producers (the Teatro Massimo and the 6th Settimana Internazionale di Nuova Musica) and the workers involved in the realisation of the project.³⁰ The organizational issues can be briefly summarised as follows.

Only after the summer of 1968 were they able to find the right space

to host the performance, which according to Guaccero had necessarily to be architecturally fit to allow forms of interaction between performers and spectators. The Teatro Biondo seemed suitable: despite being structured as a traditional Italian theatre, it was equipped with a large foyer, essential to Guaccero's project. By the end of November, light plots, props and tools were not ready and the score had yet to be completed. According to Guaccero, by the beginning of December the rehearsal schedule was dangerously compromised, as he writes in a letter to Francesco Agnello reporting 'situazione all'insegna [...] del dramma [a situation on the verge of tragedy]'.³¹ On 5 December the performers refused to sign the rehearsal calendar; finally, on the 30th, the date set for the debut, the designated conductor Daniele Paris sent a formal request to the superintendent (and to Guaccero and Agnello just for reference) to replace the staging of the performance with an *esecuzione all'italiana*, in order to protect the work and wellbeing of the performers.³² In the end, Guaccero chose to present the work in the form of a 'prova aperta [open rehearsal]', given that the action was still far behind on its production schedule, especially from a theatrical standpoint.

The comparison between the score and the recorded television footage confirms that during the debut many scenic actions were cut out, that the counterpoint between elements was only partially employed (to the detriment of the plot's scenic elements), that the impact of certain images and lighting choices was minimised and that *Scena 3* was transformed and deprived of its ritualistic conclusion.³³ A comparison between the preparatory materials, the score and the television footage shot at the *première* reveals that, ever since its inception, this project had been overly dominated by the scenic dimension: a stage whose only wish was to be consumed by non-theatrical events, to be reborn as a collective ritual. It is therefore no coincidence that this tension underlies most of Guaccero's preparatory materials, forcing the composer to come up with the 1968 version of *Scene del potere*, where he pays more attention to the resolution of theatrical issues than to those related to music, steering away from his initial programmatic intent. This is what he wrote, for example, about the avoidable errors encountered while re-elaborating the 1965 draft into the final version of 1968 (see FIGURE 4 and the English translation in footnote 34).³⁴

FIGURE 4. *Scene del potere*: preparatory notes. Fondazione Giorgio Cini (Venezia), Fondo Domenico Guaccero



Guaccero's intent was to use music in the framework of theatre in order to attain certain levels of psychological experimentation involving both performers and audience – jumping over the very concept and boundaries of theatre. This attempt was in part unsuccessful, as is clearly shown by the visual footage, because of its significantly amputated scenic and performative dimension.

Reviews were particularly harsh: the *Giornale di Sicilia*'s critic Renato Chiesa (31 December 1968) stigmatised the outcome of the final happening, stating that 'il "non teatro" ha mostrato tutto il suo squallore, la sua inutilità, la sua follia ["non-theatre" has here proven all its squalor, futility and madness]', while Mario Messinis of the *Gazzettino* (3 January 1969) described the performance as 'caotico, velleitario, realizzato con un infantile "bric à brac" scenico [chaotic and unrealistic, the result of a childish theatrical "bric à brac"]'. Filippo de' Rossi of the *Momento Sera* (4 January 1969) compared *Scene del potere* to 'un centone di suoni e immagini assolutamente incomprensibili [an absolutely incomprehensible jumble of sounds and images]' and Felix Aprahamian of the *Sunday Times* (5 January 1969) stated that 'a pathetic attempt at "total theatre" was incomplete and abandoned successively before the end of each part'.³⁵

These considerations draw attention to certain aspects of the score that were perhaps among its endogenous causes of failure. Although an overabundance of information and dense elemental counterpoint represent the composition's richness, they were also quite problematic. As per Guaccero's own choice, the very nature of *Scene del potere* was 'inorganic': even if the composer had managed to punctually deliver on the scheduled premiere date, the scenic action would in any case have been inextricable. The proliferation of materials was necessary to provide an objective perspective on power. Organisational issues backfired making an already unsolvable project unsolved and incomprehensible for most.

The theme of power played a central role in Sixties theatre production, characterised by its striving towards linguistic renewal and political engagement. Guaccero however decided to approach the subject from another perspective, distancing himself from contemporary works like those of Berio, Nono, Maderna and Manzoni who mainly focused on denouncing the opposition between those who have power and those who suffer its consequences. In a historical moment such as the one that Italy was experiencing in those years, when everything was charged with tension and anything could be simplified in terms of antagonism and opposition, Guaccero's choice to prefer an objective vision of power did not help him secure a future for the performance after its debut. Although the idea of observing power in its possible technocratic and financial declinations might appear to us now as quite far-sighted and necessary, it did not make an impression on the commentators of the time. Just like other composers of his era, and maybe even more so, Guaccero thought of 'theatre' as a form of rediscovering the reasons behind music's insufficiency, experimenting with 'the primordial tradition of unity between sound-word-action-vision'.³⁶ What made *Scene del potere* truly unique, however, was the fact that music was assigned a non-primary role. Guaccero went beyond theory and actually created a theatre based on the counterpoint between the various elements of a work of art – as can be observed in the score itself – thus diving headfirst into the complexity of such an experience.

Through a careful examination of the score, one can spot two other possible endogenous causes of the action's fiasco: first of all, it presents itself as a perpetually endangered mechanism, for it can turn out to be extremely complex and ineffective whenever the management of the space is not perfectly handled and calibrated by the performers and fundamental elements. Secondly, the precisely marked timings, the over-detailed directions and the taste for symmetry that dominate the entire structure of the sections profoundly clash with the idea of a theatre of 'action' that is supposed to be built as each synergy takes place

between the performers and the audience. Through the interpretation of the score, Guaccero emerges as a sort of panoptic eye, simultaneously controlling all the elements under his watch.³⁷

Then, as previously stated, the RAI television footage provides further information that must be taken into consideration: on the evening of 30 December 1968, a few fundamental elements of Guaccero's original design were discarded (some partially, others completely), thus distorting the very founding principle according to which *Scene del potere* was supposed to stand, that is on the equal coexistence of the elements and not on music's predominance. The filmed footage brings about further considerations regarding Guaccero's idea of a theatre founded on stage work: in his writings, he envisioned the spontaneous generation of a community of performers, engaged in an intense experience of interpersonal bonding and skill exchange. The relationship with the audience was to be considered an essential part of this community. In the images however most of the performers appear insecure, uncoordinated with each other and not fully familiar with the project's execution. This result was actually predictable: rehearsals had started only a few weeks before 30 December, and so the cast had not been able to establish the collaborative workshop dynamics that Guaccero had strongly hoped for – plus the performers were co-opted, so there was no true adhesion to the project and its aims. Similar theatrical experiences of the same years – such as the Living Theatre – were based on the performer's profound conscious participation in the artistic project: this approach assured real cooperation throughout the whole artistic development of the work, along with a different relationship with the audience, founded on the communication between two non-artificial communities. Last but not least, at the time, Guaccero did not fully understand that a radical project such as *Scene del potere* could not take place in a theatre or be included in a well-defined playbill such as the Settimana Internazionale Nuova Musica.³⁸ The composer did invest much time in choosing the right location, but it was not enough: the Teatro Biondo was a theatre *all'italiana* and the sharp separation between its elevated stage and the stalls below was not suitable for the scenic-spatial non-centrality required by the actions. However, it must be said in Guaccero's defence that it was only a few years later that radical works like his left the theatre spaces for other, more suitable locations. In the mid-Seventies, for example, theatrical productions were staged in the civic spaces of the Santarcangelo di Romagna Theater Festival, while from the 26th to the 28th of June 1978 trains travelling from Bologna to Porretta Terme hosted *happenings* organized by John Cage in collaboration with Walter Marchetti, Juan Hidalgo, Demetrio Stratos and Daniel Charles. Two other noteworthy

events that truly marked this important passage in time were Carmelo Bene's reading of *Lectura Dantis* from the top of Bologna's Torre degli Asinelli on July 31st 1981, and *Prometeo. Tragedia dell'ascolto* played by Luigi Nono in Venice's Chiesa di San Lorenzo during the month of September 1984.

Permission to reproduce documents and images was granted by all the traceable copyright holders.

Notes

- 1 The preparatory materials are kept and preserved in Venezia, Fondazione Giorgio Cini (FGC), Fondo Domenico Guaccero (FDG).
- 2 26 April 1965, Rome (Teatro delle Arti), 3rd Festival of Nuova Consonanza.
- 3 The letters are addressed to Francesco Agnello, Mario Bortolotto, Paolo Emilio Carapezza, Minsa Craig Burri, Antonino Titone, Italian newspapers and press.
- 4 The handwritten copy dates back to the 1980s, when Macchi and Titone attempted to unsuccessfully put on a performance of *Scene del potere* in Palermo. The Fondo Egisto Macchi at the FGC still preserves a newspaper clipping (*L'Ora*, 17 December 1985) which summarises the reasons behind the tentative effort.
- 5 See Alessandro Mastropietro, 'L'interno/esterno della voce: su *Scene del potere* di Domenico Guaccero', in: *Voce come soffio, voce come gesto. Omaggio a Michiko Hirayama*, a cura di Daniela Tortora, Roma: Aracne, 2013, pp. 123–172.
- 6 The study will also make reference to a number of preparatory materials. A more detailed overview is provided in Simone Caputo, '«Musica, parlato, azione, scena, film: teatro lirico con film»: *Scene del potere* di Domenico Guaccero', in: *Teatro di avanguardia e composizione sperimentale per la scena: 1950–1975*, a cura di Gianmario Borio, Giordano Ferrari and Daniela Tortora, pp. 259–301.
- 7 Guaccero's programmatic intents have been extrapolated from: *Scene del potere's* dramaturgic-textual preparatory materials; Domenico Guaccero, *Scene del potere*, untitled introduction (3rd Festival of Nuova Consonanza Theatre Program, 22–27 April 1965); Guaccero's writings on musical theatre ('Un'esperienza di teatro musicale', *Il Verri*, 21, 1966, pp. 126–140; 'Postilla sul teatro musicale', *Duemila*, II/6, 1966, pp. 79–84). The quoted texts are part of the Domenico Guaccero collection, "*Un iter segnato*". *Scritti e interviste*, a cura di Alessandro Mastropietro, Lucca: LIM, 2005, pp. 470–471, 143–160, 161–171.
- 8 A few of the technical solutions implemented by Guaccero (spatialisation, active audience, etc.) mentioned here were not his prerogative and can even be found in works by other contemporaneous authors.
- 9 Guaccero conceived up to 29 different combinations of music, spoken parts, action, scenes and motion pictures.
- 10 The concept of 'de-specialization' was further explained by Guaccero in 'Sulla tradizione del teatro musicale', in: *di Domenico Guaccero. Prassi e teoria*, Roma: Nuova Consonanza, 1984, pp. 180–192: 187–192 (also in Guaccero, "*Un iter segnato*". *Scritti e interviste*, pp. 172–182: 178–182).
- 11 See Guaccero, 'Postilla sul teatro musicale', pp. 166–167.
- 12 A detailed synopsis of *Scene del potere* was written by Mastropietro, 'L'interno/esterno della voce: su *Scene del potere* di Domenico Guaccero', pp. 151–154.
- 13 *Scena I* is divided into four parts (some of which are further articulated into sections); each part is marked with a distinctive letter.
- 14 The images are taken from the book *Think of this, man!*, a cura di Pietro Caleffi e Albe Steiner, Milano: Feltrinelli, 1960, p. 166.

- 15 Falsettos, harmonic progressions, vibrato, blown sounds, applying glottal or tongue strokes, etc.
- 16 Guaccero drew some elements of Hitler's speech from *The morning of the magicians*, a 1960 book by Louis Pauwels and Jacques Bergier.
- 17 The text, extracted from Marx's *Capital*, recites: 'Il movimento contraddittorio della società capitalista si rende manifesto attraverso il suo ciclo periodico, il cui punto culminante è la crisi generale [The contradictory movement of capitalist society shows itself in the completion of its periodic cycle which culminates in general crisis]'.
- 18 Guaccero indicates the precise pitch for both the single voice and the group of voices, giving the performers the possibility to invert the syllable order.
- 19 The third part of *Scena 1* lasts approx. 8' (half the duration of the previous scenes, all approx. 15' long) and it is not divided into sections.
- 20 Guaccero explains his concept of 'teatro di partecipazione [participatory theatre]' – one of the central driving themes of 1960s avant-garde – in 'Postilla sul teatro musicale', pp. 168–170, underlining the important influence of John Cage's reflections (see his 'Experimental music' in: John Cage, *Silence*, Middleton Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1961, pp. 7–13) and the entire *oeuvre* of Living Theatre (see Julian Beck, *The Life of the Theatre. The Relation of the Artist to the Struggle of the People*, San Francisco: City Lights, 1972).
- 21 The songs are from the first *finale* of the *Zauberflöte*, while the other works mentioned by the speaker are the Fantasy in C minor K 475 for solo piano and the Quartet K 465 n. 19 in C major.
- 22 A pack of dogs; the ebb and flow of the sea; a mill; a machine gun; an organ; slow steps; a slamming door; breaking glass.
- 23 '[...] all'originaria tradizione dell'unità di suono-parola-azione-visione'. Guaccero, 'Scene del potere', p. 471.
- 24 Guaccero instructs: 'Per tutto il brano le luci (riflettori, colori) si muoveranno ad libitum e velocemente in sala e sulla scena [Throughout all the piece the lights (floodlights, colours) will move ad libitum and rapidly across the scene]'.
- 25 Guaccero's very score is made up of steps, movements and figures that only partially rely on the pre-existing musical and rhythmic structure.
- 26 The scene is divided into 7 actions and one prologue, which are seamlessly combined.
- 27 See Guaccero, "Un iter segnato". *Scritti e interviste*, pp. 470–471: 471.
- 28 See Guaccero, 'Sulla tradizione del teatro musicale', p. 176.
- 29 The staff and cast of the Palermo debut are listed in Mastropietro, 'L'interno/esterno della voce: su *Scene del potere* di Domenico Guaccero', pp. 142–143.
- 30 See Mastropietro, 'L'interno/esterno della voce: su *Scene del potere* di Domenico Guaccero', pp. 162–172.
- 31 Date-stamped 1 December 1968 (FDG, fasc. 'Corrispondenza').
- 32 Date-stamped 30 December 1968 (FDG, fasc. 'Corrispondenza').
- 33 The Roman headquarters of the RAI Archives preserve a 57'12" recording of the Palermo premiere (Display case Na 77088).

- 34 '2. Mistakes to avoid during my preparation I. lack of need for choices and connections between the various episodes; II. lack of feasible solution underlying all episodes; III. all or almost all episodes devoid of a dialectic between power and subjected class; IV. all or almost all episodes are "high level": the result is a "century-long horse-ride" or a lack of progression towards the central's layer of "power's onion" [...]; V. an interval between each episode, like the pages of a photo album.'
- 35 Most of the reviews spawned from the 1965 debut of *Scene del potere* were of a different nature: Everett Helm (*Die Weltwoche*, 15 May 1965) wrote of the performance's successful ridiculing of the audience; Alberto Pironti (*Veltro*, 3 June 1965), described it as 'un movimentato spettacolo d'avanguardia [an eventful avant-garde performance]'.³⁶
- 36 See footnote 23.
- 37 Reflecting on new theatre's attempt to foster a new dynamic where performers and audience are co-authors and co-performers, Guaccero often stressed the importance of avoiding an intrinsic risk factor: the composer's complete loss of control over his work. See Domenico Guaccero, 'Musica sperimentale', in: *La Musica. Enciclopedia Storica*, Torino: UTET, IV, 1966, pp. 459–468, now in Guaccero, *"Un iter segnato". Scritti e interviste*, pp. 210–224: 223.
- 38 And yet, Guaccero wrote in 'Un'esperienza di "teatro musicale"', p. 149: 'A quale "pubblico" mi rivolgo? Per chi scrivo? Per chi non vuole essere più soltanto "pubblico". [...] Niente routine di festivals aperti solo agli intimi o di manifestazioni del bel mondo, con belle signore compiacenti [Which audience am I referring to? Who am I writing for? I write for those who want to be more than simple "spectators". [...] No more humdrum festivals open only to few or élite events crowded with beautiful women eager to please]'.³⁷