

The year 1966 was an uneventful one in my personal history (I was still in school). But it did see the creation of three works that were to become staples of the trombone repertoire, and that have played a decisive role in my professional life. I therefore decided to include them here for the semicentennial of 1966.

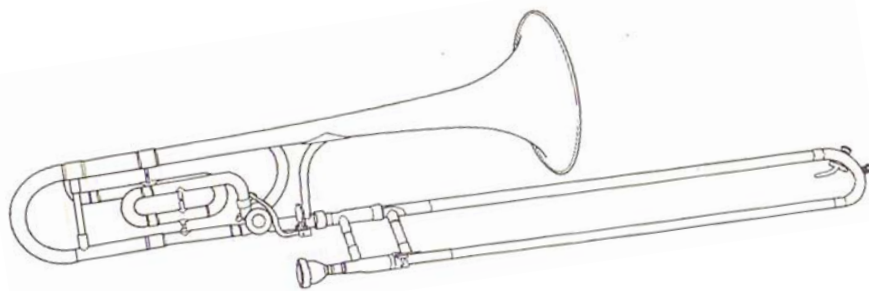
I discovered *Sequenza V* in 1976, while completing my studies with Vinko Globokar in Cologne. I subsequently played it at the Tel Aviv Museum. An encounter a few months later with Luciano Berio in La Rochelle was of utmost importance for my research concerning both the style and the theatrical aspect. I have since had the chance to play the *Sequenza* in Salle Pleyel and Théâtre de la Ville in Paris and La Scala in Milan, among many other venues. Particularly memorable was the performance of the complete *Sequenzas*—albeit not yet the full series of fourteen—with the poems of Edoardo Sanguineti, and the Deutsche Gramophone recording at IRCAM in 1995.

Even before my first encounter with Jacob Druckman in early 1980s, on the occasion of the premiere of his *Animus IV* at Centre Pompidou in Paris, I had frequently played *Animus I*. Those were the days of analogue tapes, and throughout the performance I carried a Revox in addition to the trombone! I have since chosen to play this piece for several concerts (including at the ICSA International Conference on Audio Spatial in 2011) with the WFS (Wave Field Synthesis) System. On this occasion, the electronic tape part was “exploded” in order to fill the hall dotted with an extraordinarily modern distribution system. The work was

performed in a very musical manner by members of IRCAM’s “Acoustic and Cognitive Spaces” research group.

Solo by Stockhausen is a work that has inspired me since 1986, thanks to the encounter with Barry Anderson, his mastery of electronics, and his realizations, which I use on this CD. I subsequently began pioneering work to design a computer system to simplify the performance of this family of works. Aided by Cort Lippe and Carl Faia, among others, this achievement has been the subject of several demonstrations, performances, and conferences. Particularly important was the scholarly publication¹ of this research and its demonstration with Stockhausen in attendance in 1998. In January 2016, at the *Philharmonie de Paris*, I participated in the reconstruction of the historical versions of *Solo*, which were used at the premiere in Tokyo in 1966.

Benny Sluchin
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¹ *A Computer-Assisted Version of Stockhausen’s Solo for a Melodic Instrument with Feedback*. *Computer Music Journal*, vol. 24, no. 2, (Summer 2000), pp.39–46.

TROMBONE 1966

INTERVIEW WITH BENNY SLUCHIN

What was it about the year 1966 that, in terms of the history of your instrument, made you decide to dedicate this disc to it fifty years later?

I do not know exactly what happened in 1966. It was by chance, in the early 2000s, that I realized that the three pieces recorded here, were all written in 1966. These three works haunted me for years (in one case for almost forty). Was this a coincidence? Or was there something in the musical air that year that was conducive to the creation of these three key pieces, each the antipode of the others? It is impossible to say.

The three were created in three different parts of the northern hemisphere: *Animus I* by Jacob Druckman on the east coast of the United States, *Sequenza V* by Luciano Berio, with the assistance of Stuart Dempster, in San Francisco (and a subsequent second version in London, by Vinko Globokar, who was studying composition with Berio at the time), and *Solo* by Stockhausen in Tokyo under the auspices of the world's fair...

These are moreover three composers of different nationalities and backgrounds; three musicians who did not necessarily know each other, and were not necessarily close to each other (on an aesthetic or personal level).

While Luciano Berio and Karlheinz Stockhausen are well-known personalities in the music of the twentieth century, this is less true of Jacob Druckman.

In my opinion, Jacob Druckman is unjustly underestimated and still remains to be discovered. One mainly hears his solo or chamber pieces, such as those in the *Animus* series or *Valentine* for solo double bass. But he was a pioneer: *Animus I* is one of the first mixed pieces for trombone and tape. His work in the area of electronics is one of the reasons why I became interested in it.

By nature, he was undeniably an American composer. In spite of having spent several years in France, his activities were mainly concentrated in the US.

When considering such a program, the question arises: How did these composers approach the trombone? What special instrumental challenges does each work pose?

First, it should be noted that *Solo* by Stockhausen is not specifically intended for the trombone, but rather for any melodic instrument. It nevertheless had a double world premiere: a trombonist and a flutist performed two different versions of the work.

But also in the case of the works by Berio and Druckman, these questions would be difficult to answer. The technical issues are very similar—even though one finds no reciprocal influence between the two compositional universes, and each instrument is approached in the appropriate manner with unique demands.

However, I would like to point out the differences in the musical thought processes. In *Sequenza V* Berio focused on writing very precisely; he endeavored to write a piece in which each performance would be different. This was achieved by using a proportional notation for the durations and positions in time. The performer's breathing is notated in a very free manner. Thus, even if the player were to follow the instructions with the utmost accuracy, it would be virtually impossible to produce the same interpretation twice. It is a fairly short piece, and yet one finds variations in duration ranging up to 50% (from six to nine minutes) from one interpretation to another!

In *Animus I*, however, Druckman alternated very free passages from the agogic perspective (slight changes in rhythm or tempo) and others that must be perfectly synchronized with the tape. In this case, the performance will certainly be proportional, but its accuracy and tension result directly from the synchronization with the tape. Druckman developed a set of questions and answers that give the interpreter a kind of freedom, but within precise limits—this is, by the way, a fairly common feature of pieces with pre-recorded tape.

Exactly, *Animus I* and *Solo* both use electronics, but with diametrically opposite approaches...

That's right, and not just because the two have a very different aesthetic: *Animus I* confronts the trombonist with a tape that was generated by the composer in a laboratory, the Electronic Music Center of Columbia-Princeton (United States). The tape is based partly on