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[Silence, Stillness and the International Competition for the Arvo Pärt Centre.](#)

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**Submission for *Architecture and Culture*, Vol. 4, Issue 2**

Title: Silence, Stillness and the International Competition for the Arvo Pärt Centre

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Figure 1 caption: Nieto & Sobejano Arquitectos. Program Layout Diagram (Courtesy of Nieto & Sobejano Arquitectos).

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Figure 8 caption: Nieto & Sobejano Arquitectos. Diagrammatic Unfolding of the Tower's Design. (Courtesy of Nieto & Sobejano Arquitectos)

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## **Abstract**

The paper examines how and why a number of entries to the International Architectural Design Contest for the building of the Arvo Pärt Centre at Laulasmaa, Estonia, sought to transpose Pärt's music into built – or potentially buildable - form, emphasizing the conditions of silence and stillness in it. Marginally included in the twentieth century movement of musical minimalism and deeply influenced by Russian Christian Orthodox faith, Pärt explores the translation into music of notions like ritual repetition and silent prayer through his *tintinnabuli* method: the combination of triadic arpeggios with melodic lines. The comparative investigation of their further translation in the competition entries aims to explore the design possibilities of silence and stillness examined as important material conditions of the understanding of architecture and natural landscape.

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**Keywords:** Silence, Stillness, Architectural Experience and Representation, Music and Architecture.

## **MAIN BODY of TEXT**

**Title: Silence, Stillness and the International Competition for the Arvo Pärt Centre**

The Competition

On 25 November 2013, the Union of Estonian Architects and the Arvo Pärt Centre announced an international architectural competition for a new building for the Arvo Pärt Centre. The Centre was founded in 2010 by composer Arvo Pärt (b. 1935) and his family to preserve Pärt's archive and make it available for future study by academics and other musicians. On-site research and creative work, music master-classes, thematic lecture series and seminars related to Pärt's music are to be held there. Official receptions and art exhibitions are also included among the possible future uses. The proposed site is on a peninsula covered by a pine forest, 35 kilometres away from Tallin (Estonia). The area is a characteristic example of Estonian landscape, a place where Pärt used to go for holidays at a young age, and where several well-known musicians, writers and artists spend the summer in small cottages. The current Arvo Pärt Centre is also in Laulasmaa, near the proposed site for the new building. The land for the latter is owned by the state, which has granted a lease to the Centre for 99 years. The winning project is now being further developed to meet all the site and structural criteria. Construction of the building is planned to start in April 2016. The Arvo Pärt Centre's vision for the new building is a small private university that should be:

- a means to keep alive and interpret **the creative legacy of Arvo Pärt**;
- a place to learn, teach, study, create and express one's creativity;
- a living environment, not a museum;
- growing and developing as is **Arvo Pärt in his work**;
- unconventional;
- a place where Christian values are expressed in a discreet, yet courageous, manner.<sup>i</sup>

Seventy-one entries were received initially. Twenty of these were shortlisted for the second stage, of which seventeen were re-submitted. The criteria for the second stage stressed the symbolic value of the building, which was to be "iconic in a humble way," and its interrelation to the surrounding forest environment; they also emphasized the importance of the practical effectiveness and flexibility of the room layout, with special focus on the auditorium.<sup>ii</sup>

Of the seventeen short-listed entries, twelve appeared to address the question “how can we design a place in which silence plays a key role?”<sup>iii</sup> In his music, Pärt celebrates silence, which he associates with stillness, conveyed through the careful combination of triadic arpeggios with melodic lines. This paper is concerned to understand how the design proposals interpreted his musical ideas to imagine potential architectural experience of silence and stillness. In the other five entries silence/stillness was not included in the intentions of the project.<sup>iv</sup>

The paper focuses in particular on three entries which are divided into two categories deemed characteristic of the entries as a whole. One category is that of proposals based on a mathematical, algorithmic, transposition of Pärt’s compositions. In them, musical structure is imagined as the geometrical structure of built form. These proposals often employed computational design methods – a mainly morphological translation of the structural characteristics of Pärt’s music – and reflect to a great extent current trends in architectural design. The entries in this category tend towards an architecture of *spectacle*, in which the buildings proposed are treated as objects, not as embodiments of symbols or sites of experience. The second category is of proposals which sought to translate Pärt’s music taking into consideration both its mathematical structure and its embodied qualities and spiritual metaphors. In these, musical effect is imagined as architectural effect. The winning scheme by Nieto and Sobejano is an example of the first category. The proposals of AZPML and Allied Works fall into the second.

Analysing the translation process between architectural representation and the building itself, Robin Evans underlines the significance of the drawing as an agent of diverse meanings – it carries ideas and relevant context: social, cultural, artistic and architectural. For Evans, the drawing is something more than a mere visual pre-figuration of a building. It is an active projection towards the building, unfolding the dynamics of “the relation between ideas and things” that is “mutable and inconstant”.<sup>v</sup> What this paper emphasises is an earlier translation, in which Pärt’s musical ideas are

transposed into the proposals of both the categories identified above, through a combination of drawings, renders and physical models. This translation is conveyed through the drawing, as it moves from the architect's imagination to the imagination of the observer. The competition opens, therefore, a "locus of conjecture"<sup>vi</sup> in which an entry suggests a translation the result of which might be an idea or an image rather than an actual building. Through a drawing, a model or other representational medium the competition entry opens a space for imagination to be expressed.

### Design Transpositions

The winning project by Nieto and Sobejano, entitled *Tabula*, is based on the combination of pentagonal forms whose size and dimensions change to create a synthesis of closed and open spaces, allowing all the pine trees on the site to be preserved [Figure 1]. The architects aimed to translate "the purity of the mathematical laws through which Arvo Pärt is capable of generating powerful poetical emotions by means of the simple permutations of a limited number of sounds."<sup>vii</sup> Two long wooden walls in the interior envelop the more private spaces, while the auditorium is perceived as a flexible space that adjusts to the needs of each communal activity (musical performance, conference and so forth). The single roof unifies everything into a whole, suggesting a platform that follows the internal organisation and adds a new layer to the landscape. The facades express a "free architectural representation of Arvo Pärt's compositions"<sup>viii</sup> through a changing sequence of columns, with varying distances between them reflecting the programmatic organization of the interior. Working on the interrelation between emptiness and fullness, the architects sought to translate the interaction between silence and sound. In the statement accompanying the entry we read:

*"To keep alive and interpret in architectural terms the creative legacy of Arvo Pärt means to find a balance between the intimacy of his musical compositions and the powerful beauty of the Estonian landscape. The radical decision of preserving all the pine trees, generates an unexpected dialogue between the unitary structure of the roof*

*and the playful disposition of the courtyard voids. After all, aren't void and silence the hidden protagonists of architecture and music?"<sup>x</sup>*

[Figure 1: somewhere here]

Using different tones of green on black and white plans the architects deployed a series of diagrams emphasizing the programmatic and spatial organisation of the proposed buildings (cores and spines, public and private spaces, internal zones, views and programme layout) [Figure 2]. No process drawings were included in the submission except for a series of diagrams connected to the observation tower, a "light-tower" based on the algorithmical translation of a sequence from Pärt's setting of the psalms [Figure 8]:

*"Just like those musical structures that reflect one theme in another – a Spiegel im Spiegel, or a never-ending story – we imagine the new building as a geometric pattern, originated in a repeated pentagonal form, which will contain the existing pines in courtyards of variable dimensions."<sup>x</sup>*

[Figure 2: somewhere here]

A characteristic example of the second category, recognizing the metaphysical qualities of Pärt's *stillness*, the AZPML entry seeks to "transcend the sensorial perception and its phenomenological experience and project it towards a trans-subjective, essential state, akin to the circularity of Pärt's work".<sup>xi</sup> Ambitiously, AZPML's aim involved the translation of a spatio-temporal *circular experience*, in which sound and light reverberate. Paying attention to the specificities of Pärt's music, they suggested a complex that is based on "the varied repetition of a unit that has been distilled from the traditional Estonian farm" and is modified each time to meet the acoustic and lighting requirements of its role [Figure 3]. AZPML produced a "system" that allows for further growth and adaptation to changing environments.

The spaces are organised around a central foyer with a roughly cruciform plan that allows for all the public requirements and connects the four wings: office and archive

(south east), workshop and storage (north east), library (north west), auditorium (south west). A dialogue between the public space and the more private spaces is suggested through moving screens, adjustable depending on the needs of each occasion. Four courtyards are created. The most important is the eastern one, around which we find Arvo Pärt's private rooms, the archive, and a tower containing a chapel. The ascent to the top of the tower, where a platform is placed to provide a panoramic view of the forest, is considered an integral part of the chapel. It offers "a sort of vertical pilgrimage where the Tower will elevate the faithful for the contemplation of the landscape."<sup>xii</sup> Remaining relatively clear and simple, the plan has a flexibility produced by careful organisation of the different units. This flexibility leads to interesting semi-open spaces, a result of the emphasis on the circulation zones, the *in-between*. These are treated as parts of a journey-like experience from one unit to the other, which also includes the element of *the unpredictable* and combines movement with *stasis*. The courtyards become places of stillness and more static human interaction. The eastern one emerges as the most still or "silent" part of the complex, in with the archive placed at its heart.

[Figure 3: somewhere here]

Black and white process diagrams describing the conceptual path that led to the design proposal are included in the submission [Figure 4]. In them the unit of the Estonian farm is combined with light and acoustic factors to lead to a synthesis of different open and closed spaces. Programmatic and "view reflection" diagrams are also included in the entry, as well as a set of plans, elevations and renders focusing on the interconnection of the closed spaces and the courtyards.<sup>xiii</sup>

[Figure 4: somewhere here]

Although based on geometry, the repetition of the same unit in this case is not dominated by its logical, formal, potentialities, allowing other ideas and spatio-temporal qualities to enter the design process. One might compare it favourably to the dogmatic

emphasis on geometry in entries such as that of Nieto and Sobejano, or the proposal of Schneider and Schumacher that suggested a re-interpretation of Pärt's hallmark, a repetitive musical triad, through the repetition of a triangle.

Another example of the second category, in which musical effect in is imagined as architectural effect, is the second prize project by Allied Works Architecture. Entitled *Between Stone and Sky*, it is based on the idea of the building as a zone between the earth and the heavens. Organized by four sheltered courts, the building comprises an entry foyer, an auditorium, a library and archive, providing spaces for gathering and performance as well as for intimate reflection and study [Figure 5]. Honoring the ethics, life and work of Arvo Pärt, the new Centre, we are told, is a place between the individual and community, sound and silence, earth and sky, life and remembrance.<sup>xiv</sup>

[Figure 5: somewhere here]

Stone walls demarcate the courtyards, creating spatial qualities that recall traditional cloister-like complexes. They are positioned in the site like fragments of architectural narratives, synthesized to facilitate the given programme. Dome-like wooden roofs are placed over the public spaces that open as fields of communal musical performances and education, while the private spaces exude a sense of intimacy.

*“The building finds its order in the land and forest: the field of vertical pines, the diffused light of the forest canopy, the surface of the earth extending to the sea. Four courtyards organise the building. The entry Foyer is an open terrace, inscribing the earth and marking the domain of **community** and arrival. The Auditorium centers the realm of performance and education within **a labyrinth of stone**, spinning inwards and outwards while held by a wooden shell of mystical light above. The Library is a space of **intimate stone rooms**, providing places of introspection and release, where the light is brought down to the earth and the page. The **private Cloisters**, housing the work rooms and offices, are formed around the **stone chapel** with each office looking both inward to the landscape court and outward into the forest. Finally, the Observation Tower is set beyond the courts, reaching up into the canopy and beyond”.<sup>xv</sup>*

While the walls are not made of solid stone but of in-situ reinforced concrete clad in local stone, the project conveys the morphological and atmospheric qualities of stone architecture. It manages to evoke the characteristics of solid stone construction, in which even the thinnest of walls inscribes a strong boundary in place, and the wall's thickness tells us something about the relative proportions of each space it bounds. The use of wood for the domes emphasizes, by contrast, the solidity and weight of the walls, adding its reverberating qualities to the acoustic events and allowing light to enter smoothly: "A silent light without source, except at the heart, where the light is brought to the ground and a bed of ferns, the forest floor within".<sup>xvi</sup>

Different kinds of drawings and images are carefully synthesized to express the architects' ideas. Three black and white hand-drawn sketches depicting the idea of the building as an *in-between zone* are placed next to an image of Pärt's hands expressing the two "voices" of his method (the triadic arpeggios and melodic lines) [Figure 6]. Key diagrams, black and white again, depict the intentions of the architects in the representation of the four programme domains, the interior and the exterior gathering courts. Black and white plan and sections are placed next to the elevations and external and internal renders in which the black and white stone building is crowned by wooden roofs shown in light brown. A similar approach is followed for the physical model where two different kinds of wood are used to express the stone walls (earth) and the wooden domed roofs (sky) [Figure 9]. This juxtaposition of polarities in colour, material and media of design communication enhances the expression of the building as a liminal zone between different entities, a creative discourse between diverse "voices."

[Figure 1: somewhere here]

In both of the categories a geometrical translation of Pärt's music or a quite formalistic approach to architecture was deployed underlining the structure of his technique that is based on a relatively austere mathematical model deeply influenced by his desire to express his religious intuitions. In the entries examined here, the architects argue either directly or indirectly about the importance of silence and stillness in their proposals. But

why did the entries for a building for the archive of a musician enter into a process of working with these ideas? To answer this question one should first touch upon Arvo Pärt's work, the translation of which was so important to the design process.

### *Arvo Pärt*

Arvo Pärt is one of a number of composers, including John Cage, Philip Glass and John Tavener, who sought to translate in their works the reciprocal interaction between silence and sound as expressions of religious ideas. In their compositions silence articulates diverse aspects of the individual's perception of the world: stasis/stillness, emptiness, rhythmical repetition, and abstraction. Commenting on the role of silence in his work, in an interview with the musicologist Enzo Restagno, Pärt characteristically argues:

*"This reminds me of something I said earlier that approaches the thinking of John Cage. I can't remember the exact words, but I said it more or less like this: "How can one fill the stillness, the silence that follows, with notes that are worthy of this silence – this stillness that has just passed?" There is no doubt about it. Rests are rich in sound".<sup>xvii</sup>*

Marginally included in the twentieth century movement of *musical minimalism*, Pärt has developed his own compositional technique to address the above ideas.<sup>xviii</sup> In particular, around 1976, Pärt gave birth to his 'tintinnabuli' method. Etymologically stemming from the Latin word for "little sounding bell", Pärt's tintinnabuli involves "two musical lines, one of which moves in largely stepwise motion (M-Voice) and the other which moves through the notes of a principal triad (T-Voice)" [Figure 7].<sup>xix</sup> Combining these basic simple elements, Pärt proposes a process that opens up a great compositional variety and allows for different modes of listening, which he describes as follows:

*Tintinnabulation is like this. Here I am alone with silence. I have discovered that it is enough when a single note is beautifully played. This one note, or a silent beat or a moment of silence comforts me. I work with very few elements – with one voice, with two voices. I build with the most primitive materials – with the triad, with one specific tonality. The three notes of a triad are like bells.<sup>xx</sup>*

[Figure 7: somewhere here]

What Pärt finds in the ringing of this “little sounding bell” is a “unified, pure sound that can permeate both the ear and external space,” preserving its natural tonality.<sup>xxi</sup> It is a single tonality that echoes the static qualities of monophonic chant and can convey the spiritual ideas that he seeks to communicate. In contrast to a literal transfer of the sound of ringing bells, Pärt translates this natural acoustic purity through his triads, “the merging of three single notes to one ‘pure’ harmony that is perceived as a unit and is self-contained”.<sup>xxii</sup> Repetition is significant in this process, performed not as a mere reproduction of the same elements, but as a deeply thought and systematically orchestrated changing of repetitive sounds that are gradually absorbed in the general musical context. Silence and sound keep changing in a regular tempo, creating this sense of stasis or stillness. Pärt suggests a stillness through the combination of sound with the silences before and after the execution of a piece and the careful orchestration of silent gaps within it,<sup>xxiii</sup> a stillness that is actually more evocative of silence than silence itself understood as mere lack of noise.

While his work is composed as concert music, not liturgical, Pärt is deeply influenced by Russian Christian Orthodox culture. He translates into his music important religious ideas, such as the presence of the divine and the role of silent prayer in understanding this presence. It is no coincidence that a number of scholars have dealt with the spiritual qualities of his music, as according to the musicologist Robert Sholl, it “embraces both a secular spirituality (understood as a personal experience of communication with, or belief in the divine) as well as such experiences within the context of institutional religion”.<sup>xxiv</sup> The musician Paul Hillier, who has often collaborated with him, characterises Pärt’s music as a *sounding icon*. In icon painting, “stylized elements” are combined to represent different faces of saints and scriptural events, aiming to depict the mystical, contemplative and almost transformative character of religious life. Pärt’s music seems to have absorbed these qualities, seeking to reach a transcendental, nearly mystical, result that goes beyond “exclusively aesthetic or subjective goals”.<sup>xxv</sup>

Silent gaps are synthesized with the carefully ordered sonorous parts of his compositions into *sonorous transpositions* of a vibrating stillness.

The ritualistic dimension of Pärt's compositions is also connected to the importance of the interdependence between vocal silence and sound/speech in hesychasm, a Christian Orthodox ascetic way of life with intense meditational qualities.<sup>xxvi</sup> Hesychasm derives from the Greek word for calmness or tranquility (*ἡσυχία-hesychia*). Its scope is the achievement of a state of stillness that involves the inner (silent) ceaseless invocation of the Jesus prayer ('Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me the sinner'), a kind of an inner monologue that aims at a communication with God (*theosis*).<sup>xxvii</sup> It may be individually practiced at specific periods of the day (akin to a personal meditational technique), during communal rituals, or it may occur in a more spontaneous way, freely repeating the prayer during the course of the day.<sup>xxviii</sup>

Hesychast tradition has impregnated Pärt's work. In one of his discussions with Hillier, Pärt underlined that while the M-voice symbolizes "the subjective world, the daily egoistic life of sin and suffering", the T-voice is a metaphor for "the objective realm of [prayerful] forgiveness." Both are dynamically interrelated, echoing the undeniable interconnection between body and spirit, earth and heaven, a "twofold single entity," described by Nora Pärt (the composer's wife) as:  $1+1=1$ .<sup>xxix</sup> These religious associations inflect the spatio-temporal situations that are unfolded in the *performance of* and the *listening to* his compositions: stasis, rhythm, circularity, order, polarity and union, to mention only a few. Pärt's musical compositions can be seen as aural maps of these events that can greatly inform architecture. This potential is manifested in a number of the entries submitted for the architectural competition for the centre commemorating the composer.

### *Silence / Stillness, Architectural Experience*

Distinct from the absence of sound, *silence*, therefore, is a material condition incorporated in the experience of both architecture and natural landscape.<sup>xxx</sup> It involves

a synaesthetic interaction with the environment; it is organically interconnected with the other phenomena taking place around it. It might be understood as either **human** or **atmospheric**. Human silence is concerned with the silencing of the voice (though it may also involve internal recitation of a phrase as in the case of the hesychast meditational technique). Atmospheric silence relates to a multi-sensory phenomenon that creates a sense of solitude and sensual opening to the surrounding environment. For architect Juhani Pallasmaa:

*“Silence is not merely an auditory experience of the absence of sound; it is a multi-sensory and existential experience of being, rather than of listening. It is this existential “thickness” and richness of silence that gives it its poetic authority. Silence reveals the essence of things, as if it were perceived by the human senses for the first time. Silence is an atmospheric and qualitative perception that fuses the percept and the perceiver”.*<sup>xxxix</sup>

Silence is therefore reciprocally interrelated to both ambient sound and human discourse. **Human silence** always carries the possibility of a sound’s birth, and sound is always open to a possible silencing,<sup>xxxix</sup> while atmospheric silence cannot be a totally soundless event. As the art theorist Susan Sontag argues: “...one must acknowledge a surrounding environment of sound or language in order to recognize silence. Not only does silence exist in a world full of speech and other sounds, but any given silence takes its identity as a stretch of time being perforated by sound.”<sup>xxxix</sup> Human and atmospheric silence are both fundamental to our embodied understanding of place, something Arvo Pärt sought to express in the stillness of his works, and that also informs the competition entries examined here.

Silence as a material condition has greatly informed different religious traditions.<sup>xxxix</sup> Its spiritual associations are connected to ideas such as the sublime, the paradox, emptiness and unification, influencing the expression of various religious arts including music, chanting, painting and, of course, architecture. Meditational techniques that involve bodily movement are also included in its material manifestation (as in the case of Zen-do meditational hall in Zen Buddhism or the role of the religious images “murti” in Hindu yoga tradition).<sup>xxxix</sup> It is often in the silence and solitude of deserted areas that

hermits have found the ideal environment for ascetic practice since early Christian times.<sup>xxxvi</sup> The silence of the monastic cell is traditionally considered as an arena for personal prayer, but silence is also manifested in the places of communal worship of different religious traditions, for example in Greek Christian Orthodox monasteries.<sup>xxxvii</sup>

An interesting connection between **silence**, **listening** and environmental perception can be found in the two types of human attunement to sonic atmospheres defined by philosopher Gernot Böhme.<sup>xxxviii</sup> One refers to the idea of “listening as such,” the other is about our “listening to” an acoustic event coming from specific sources. Silence opens up a space for “listening as such,” a mode of listening which compels the individual to keep silent and to cultivate an awareness of his/her surroundings. Silence and listening are combined in an opening-up to the surrounding context as a whole. In “a listening which does not leap over (...) sounds to the sources where they might stem from, listeners will sense (...) sounds as modification of their own space of being. Human beings who listen in this way are dangerously open: they release themselves into the world and can therefore be struck by acoustic events”.<sup>xxxix</sup> Silence is a kind of *waiting* for sounds, inviting the individual to *listen to* them.

Thinking of silence, architecture and natural landscape in this way brings forth diverse ideas about design possibilities, about the creation of places that communicate an atmosphere of silence. It suggests a critical revisiting of established approaches to acoustics with their technical and formalistic relations between sound/music and buildings, emphasizing instead the phenomenal qualities of architectural experience and representation. An open discussion between the neuroscientist Robert Zatorre, the musician and theologian Peter Bouteneff and the architect Steven Holl, held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in June 2014 explored how Pärt’s compositions unfold spatio-temporal qualities that enhance the *immersive experience* of the listener.<sup>xl</sup> For Bouteneff, “the spiritual is experienced in a physical body and it is experienced through sound in physical space”, leading to a special “visceral experience.” The individual is

immersed in the music's "space within," to use Steven Holl's words, interacting with the specificities of each composition, and feeling the pulse of the performed stillness.<sup>xli</sup>

Besides its atmospheric materiality, music shares with architecture a *tectonic materiality* that also allows the creative interpenetration of sound and space. Steven Holl emphasized the importance of mathematics in bridging music and architecture, an idea that has been explored since antiquity.<sup>xlii</sup> As well as the algorithmic bridging of music and architecture, Holl's work highlights the importance of the experience of the body-subject in architecture, in which both concrete and aural elements play a significant role.<sup>xliii</sup> Pallasmaa, in his explorations on silence, distinguishes between two kinds of contemporary architectural responses to it: "the architecture of form" and the "architecture of essence", arguing that the poetic dynamic of the latter "emancipates our senses and awakens an attending receptiveness and quietude".<sup>xliv</sup> And while the competition entries for the Arvo Pärt Centre of both of the categories identified communicate elements of an "architecture of form," it is only in the category in which musical effect is imagined as architectural effect that we also find qualities of an "architecture of essence."

The specific reasons why the architects responsible for each of the entries examined chose to work with qualities of the composer's music is hard to pin down, either from the material submitted or from the interviews conducted for the purpose of this research. What is clear is that the projects in the second category did not only take into consideration issues of tectonic materiality and technical details of acoustics, they also involved the interpretation of the meaning embodied in Pärt's work in order to suggest spaces that breathe atmospheric conditions of silence and stillness – in order to explore the mood of a place, as an integral part of the design process. All this must be communicated through texts and drawings created to be read both by the jury and a wider audience. An interesting analogy can be made here with the way composers have sought to transpose silence and/or stillness through experimentation with notational systems. Pärt does not enter into such a process, using conventional musical

representation that does not attempt to visualise the depth of his intentions, or to communicate the spiritual associations of his music. In contrast, John Cage explores different notational systems that can more effectively express the meaning behind his music.<sup>xlv</sup> Musical and architectural notations become sites of construction and interpretation, projections or materialisations of the imagination to be taken up through their reading and performance – a performance which, in the case of architecture, is the building itself.

The competition entries for the Arvo Pärt Centre enable a reflection on the effectiveness of drawing and modelling as tools of imagination and communication. In figures 1 and 2, by Nieto and Sobejano, the diagrams mainly focus on the geometrical and structural qualities of Pärt's music. The diagrams of figure 4, by AZPML, go beyond the geometrical characteristics of Pärt's method to ask us to engage in a new interpretation of them that plays with the notion of stasis. Allied Works also go further, seeking to depict the significance of the ideas of "polarity" and "unification" in the interpretation of Pärt's stillness, through a combination of computer drawings and hand-drawn sketches, renders and models, using colour coding and differentiated materials to ask us to read, then engage with and interpret, their strategies.

Borrowing from Edward S. Casey's theory of mapping,<sup>xlvi</sup> Alberto Pérez-Gómez and Angeliki Sioli underline two different approaches to architectural drawing. On the one hand, there are modes of representation that depict the building almost as an independent object, based on a *geometrical, isotropic and homogeneous* understanding of space that plays down any eventual/experiential particularities of place.<sup>xlvii</sup> On the other hand, there is an approach to architectural drawing that the authors characterise as "critical/poetic" that focuses on the qualities of place, "where the feeling of a room changes radically when it is full of sunlight or under the spell of the moon, or when you are in love and in anticipation of the beloved's arrival or depressed and bored".<sup>xlviii</sup> Without denying the merits of the first category, Pérez-Gómez and Sioli underline the significance of the second. In an echo of Pallasmaa, they urge that "[t]he issue is to

skillfully master all the design media available in view of an expressive intention that recognizes the primacy of the world of experience, the meanings already given in the natural and cultural worlds”.<sup>xlix</sup>

In the case of Nieto and Sobejano’s entry, then, while the proposed analogy between emptiness and silence and the suggestion of a “quiet” zone entail the possibility of the expression of places that exude a sense of silence and intimacy, the algorithmic approach to Pärt’s work prevails over these qualities. The result is a balanced synthesis of open and closed spaces that have the potential to open a field in which the experiential and existential qualities of Pärt’s compositions (especially the idea of stillness captured in the harmonic repetition of a simple unit) can be communicated. Yet this is not expressed in this design translation, in which every form is determined, even over-determined, by the basic geometrical unit. The diagrammatic approach to representation does not attempt to convey any experiential qualities that might suggest, even in an abstract way, the different possibilities of space. Nieto and Sobejano’s is a graphic encoding of music that displaces the aural and atmospheric into the merely visual [Figure 8].

[Figure 8: somewhere here]

If we return to Böhme’s distinction between “listening as such” and “listening to,” it is as though projects like those of Nieto and Sobejano put more emphasis on the transposition of ideas connected to ‘listening to’, less on the way in which we become open to it through ‘listening as such.’ Whereas “listening to” can be specified, prefigured, and even to some extent measured (because it is connected to a specific acoustic event), “listening as such” relates to a more complex multi-layered process, the experiential spatiality of which is impregnated with qualities that are both tangible and intangible, visible and invisible, mental and concrete, spiritual and profane.

Because of this, proposals of the category in which musical effect is imagined as architectural effect tend to be driven by Arvo Pärt’s *tintinnabuli*, basing their concept on

the repetition of a simple unit that is changed depending on the requirements of the programme and/or the relation of the building with the environment. The repetition of the same unit as expressed in these cases suggests a morphological *stillness* that is not masked by the dominance of geometry, allowing experiential qualities to enter the design process. In AZPML's project, the arrangement of the courtyards does not rigidly follow the geometry of their chosen unit, the abstracted Estonian farm (which itself is not a fixed form – each repetition is a different interpretation). AZPML's project offers a thoughtful understanding of the conditions of journey and silence, a sensibility that the character of a space like this requires. Their drawing, modeling and textual descriptions communicate a desire to grasp the symbolic meanings that Pärt's work embodies. This is in contrast to approaches like the aforementioned one by Schneider and Schumacher, or that of Coop Himmelb(l)au that transforms the main sequence of the spectrogram of Pärt's composition *Spiegel im Spiegel* computationally, to produce a cloud-like form.<sup>1</sup> Emphasizing the proposed building as an iconic vision, enhanced by computational and rendering graphics, the “tonality” of these entries plays over any eventual and poetic qualities they could have suggested.

Allied Works' concern with the materiality of their proposed building suggests an approach similar to that of AZPML. Besides the reverberating aural qualities of its acoustics, *stone architecture* suggests spaces of special character whose qualities of sound often contribute to the creation of an otherworldly atmosphere, familiar in churches and cathedrals. Silence is usually an integral component of these places, affected by the natural and cultural qualities of the specific material: what Kaia Lehari calls the “mythopoetics of stone.”<sup>ii</sup> Allied Works do not literally translate Pärt's compositions, but emphasize on the idea of an environment of silence that transposes Pärt's “twofold single entity” (1+1=1) through the character of its material form, rather as Pärt translated the key qualities of the sound of a ringing bell. In this way, the proposed complex explores conditions in which “listening to” acoustic events is enmeshed with “listening as such.”

Parts of the complex seem to be carved from solid stone, others emerge from the opposite process of laying stone walls on the site. The former relate to situations of sound-silent events, the latter to more open and public ones in which sound outbalances silence. This reminds us of Juhani Pallasmaa's argument about the importance of materiality: "Geometry and formal reduction serve the heroic and utopian line of architecture that rejects time, whereas materiality and fragile form evoke a sense of humility and duration," opening towards an "architecture of experiential events."<sup>iii</sup> This quality is conveyed in the drawings and models: the grayscale plans highlight the significance of the polarity *solid-void* in the synthesis, which is echoed in the two different kinds of wood of the model [Figure 9]. While in the case of Nieto and Sobejano the distinction between solid and void plays also a key role, Allied Works' proposal suggests a care for the experiential qualities of the proposed spaces, something that conveys the idea of stillness in a more convincing way.

[Figure 9: somewhere here]

### *Conclusions*

This examination of silence/stillness in Arvo Pärt's work, as translated in these design proposals, underlines its importance in the experience of architecture and the natural environment, and explores different potentials of its performative and design expression. The categorization of the design proposals transposing Pärt's music elucidates both the *tectonic materiality* that his music shares with these projects and a more complex design interpretation involving a thoughtful consideration of the embodied as well as the immaterial, spiritual, and imaginative qualities of the musical compositions. The paper highlights the value of an event-focused approach to music in the design interpretation of silence and stillness. Taking this into account, the entries of the category in which musical effect is imagined as architectural effect communicated the spirituality of Pärt's work in a more holistic way than did those of the other group; they opened up the possibility of a balanced position between *spectacle* and *event*. The "tonality" of the suggested buildings allowed for a more attuned unfolding of the

specificities of the composer's work, interpreting *tintinnabuli* not only as a system, but as a generator of multi-layered, meaningful, and immersive spatio-temporal events.

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<sup>i</sup> *International Two-stage Architectural Design Contest for the Building of the Arvo Pärt Centre. The Jury's Report. Final Result of the Open Competition in two stages*, url: [http://www.arhliit.ee/files/APCentre\\_Jury\\_Assessment\\_veebi.pdf](http://www.arhliit.ee/files/APCentre_Jury_Assessment_veebi.pdf) (Date of Access: Thursday, 12 February 2015), p. 3.

My emphasis.

<sup>ii</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>iii</sup> The entries of the offices: COOP HIMMEL(B)LAU, Schneider and Schumacher, Nieto and Sobejano, Ofis Arhitekti, Kavakava OU, AZPML, Kersten Geers and David van Severen (OFFICE), Arhitektibüroo Emil, Kolm Plus Uks, Claudio Silvestrin Architects, Allied Works, Henning Larsen Architects.

<sup>iv</sup> The entries of the offices: Ricky Joy, Alver Arhitektid, Jensen and Skodvin Architects, Koko Arhitektid, Salto AB OÜ.

<sup>v</sup> Robin Evans, *Translations from Drawing to Building*, AA Documents 2, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1997), p. 154.

<sup>vi</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>vii</sup> Explanatory Text for the Competition, Courtesy of Nieto & Sobejano Arquitectos.

<sup>viii</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>ix</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>x</sup> *Ibid.* 'Spiegel im Spiegel' is one of Arvo Pärt's characteristic compositions, based on his method.

<sup>xi</sup> Explanatory Text for the Competition. (Courtesy of the Union of Estonian Architects and AZPML Architects).

<sup>xii</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>xiii</sup> An important idea of the proposal was to bring views of the forest into the building by using the roofs as reflectors, something that greatly affected the angle of their slope.

<sup>xiv</sup> <http://www.alliedworks.com/projects/arvo-part-centre/>, (Date of Access: Thursday, 12 February, 2015).

<sup>xv</sup> Explanatory Text for the Competition. My emphasis.

<sup>xvi</sup> *Ibid.*, p.7.

<sup>xvii</sup> Enzo, Restagno, "Arvo Pärt in Conversation", in Enzo Restagno, Leopold Brauneiss and Saale Kareda (eds), *Arvo Pärt in Conversation*, (Champaign, Dublin, London: Dalkey Archive Press, 2012), p. 68.

<sup>xviii</sup> Musical minimalism was a label given to the work of certain American composers during the late 1960s. Its most representative musicians include Philip Glass and Steve Reich. In Europe, composers such as John Tavener and Arvo Pärt are considered as greatly influenced by the movement.

<sup>xix</sup> Andrew, Shenton, *The Cambridge Companion to Arvo Pärt*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 1.

<sup>xx</sup> Arvo Pärt, as quoted in Marguerite Bostonia, 'Bells as inspiration in tintinnabulation' in Andrew Shenton, *ibid.*, p. 128.

<sup>xxi</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

<sup>xxii</sup> Leopold Brauneiss, "Analyzing Pärt", in Andrew Shenton, *ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>xxiii</sup> Peter C. Bouteneff, *Arvo Part: Out of Silence*, (New York: SVS Press, 2015), especially chapter II, 'Out of Silence', pp. 93-135.

<sup>xxiv</sup> Robert Sholl, "Arvo Pärt and spirituality", in Andrew Shenton, *ibid.*, p. 140.

<sup>xxv</sup>

<sup>xxvi</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6-12.

<sup>xxvii</sup> George Florofsky, *Issues of Orthodox Theology*, (Athens: Artos Zois, 1973), pp. 160 – 162.

<sup>xxviii</sup> Kallistos Ware, Introduction, Ighumen Chariton of Valamo, *The Art of Prayer: An Orthodox Anthology*, (London Faber & Faber, 1966), pp. 22-26.

Fr Joseph Wong, 'The Jesus Prayer and Inner Stillness'. *Religion. East and West*, Issue 10, October 2010, p. 45.

<sup>xxix</sup> Paul, Hillier, *ibid*, p. 96.

<sup>xxx</sup> On the idea of soundscape, its different qualities and types, please see: R. Murray Schafer, *The Soundscape. Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World* (Vermont: Destiny Book, 1994. First edition in English: 1977).

<sup>xxxi</sup> Juhani Pallasmaa, "Voices of Tranquility. Silence in Art and Architecture", in Marc J. Neveu and Negin Djavaherian (eds), *Architecture's Appeal. How Theory informs Architectural Praxis*, (New York: Routledge, 2015), p. 197

<sup>xxxii</sup> Bernard P. Dauenhauer, *Silence. The Phenomenon and Its Ontological Significance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980).

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Susan Sontag, "The Aesthetics of Silence" in Susan Sontag *Studies of Radical Will*, chapter 1, (New York: Anchor Books, 2002), pp. 3-34.

<sup>xxxiv</sup> On the spirituality of silence see: Max Picard, *The World of Silence*, translated by Stanley Godman, (London: The Harvard Press), (first published in German in 1948).

<sup>xxxv</sup> On this see:

George Kalamaras, *Reclaiming the Tacit Dimension: Symbolic Form in the Rhetoric of Silence*, (New York: State University of New York Press, 1994).

Stephanie Kaza, 'Buddhist Views on Ritual Practice. Becoming a Real Person'. *Buddhist-Christian Studies*, 20, (2000), pp. 45-53.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> On Silence and Christian Religion see:

Silvia Montiglio, *Silence in the Land of Logos*, (Princeton University Press, 2012). Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Silence. A Christian History*, (London: Penguin Books, 2013).

On the role of the Desert:

Bauman, Zygmunt "From Pilgrim to Tourist – or a Short History of Identity" in Stewart Hall and Paul du Gay, *Questions of Cultural Identity*, (London: Sage Publications, 1996).

On silence and sound as a response to the sublime atmosphere of Renaissance Cathedrals and their liturgical inhabitation see also:

Howard Deborah and Moretti Laura, *Sound and Space in Renaissance Venice*, (Yale University Press, 2009).

<sup>xxxvii</sup> Christos Kakalis, 'Silence and Communal Ritual in an Athonian Coenobitic Monastery', in Alberto Pérez-Gómez & Stephen Parcell (eds), *Chora 7: Intervals in the Philosophy of Architecture*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016), pp. 163-189.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> Gernot, Böhme, 'Acoustic Atmospheres. A Contribution to the Study of Ecological Aesthetics'. *Soundscape: The Journal of Acoustic Ecology*, 1(1), (2000), pp. 14-18.

<sup>xxxix</sup> *Ibid*, p. 18.

<sup>xl</sup> "Spark: Spirit, Sound and Space: A Conversation Inspired by Arvo Pärt", url: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O\\_1frt-zogw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O_1frt-zogw), (Date of Access: Friday 13 February 2015).

<sup>xli</sup> Kaire Maimets-Volt. 'Mediating the "Idea of One": Arvo Pärt's Pre-Existing Film Music.' Ph.D Dissertation, Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre, 6 May 2009, p. 105 as quoted in Maeve Louise, Heaney, 'Can Music "Mirror" God? A Theological – Hermeneutical Exploration of Music in the Light of Arvo Pärt's *Spiegel im Spiegel*'. *Religions*, p.367.

On the relation between music, the soundscape and environmental aurality see also: R. Murray, Schafer, *ibid*, pp. 103-119.

On the challenging of visual connotations of music (and musical notation) and the significance of a more phenomenological understanding of it, please see: E Joseph Smith, *The Experiencing of Musical Sound*, (New York, London, Paris: Gordon and Breach Science Publishers, 1979), especially the pages: 11-64.

<sup>xlii</sup> Stephen Holl's *Stretto House* (1989-91) and *Daeyang Gallery and House* (2008-12) both use musical compositions as a source of inspiration.

On the possible mathematical relationship between architecture and music, see: Charles, Jenks, "Architecture Becomes Music", *The Architectural Review*, [Online], 6 May 2013, accessed 10 June 2015. Mikesch W. Muecke and Miriam S. Zach (eds), *Resonance. Essays on the Intersection of Music and Architecture*, (Armes: Culicidae Architectural Press, 2007).

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See also <http://architectonicsofmusic.com/gsap-2009>, (Date of Access: Wednesday, 11 February 2015)

<sup>xliii</sup> See: Philip Kennicott, 'Music Hall: A Copper Clad Pavilion in Seoul'. *Dwell*, 8 April 2013, url: <http://www.dwell.com/house-tours/article/music-hall-copper-clad-pavilion-seoul#3>, (Date of Access: Tuesday, 10 February 2015).

<sup>xliiv</sup> Juhani Pallasmaa, *ibid*, pp. 200-201.

<sup>xliv</sup> John Cage, *Silence. Lectures and Writings*, (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), pp. 109-145. See in particular his 'Lecture on Something' and 'Lecture on Nothing'.

<sup>xlvi</sup> Edward S. Casey, *Earth-Mapping: Artists Reshaping Landscape*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

<sup>xlvii</sup> Alberto Pérez-Gómez and Angeliki Sioli, "Drawing with/in and Drawing Out: A Redefinition of Architectural Drawing through Edward S. Casey's Meditations on Mapping", in Azucena Cruz-Pierre and Donald A. Landes (eds), *Exploring the Work of Edward S. Casey. Giving Voice to Place, Memory and Imagination*, (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), p. 157.

<sup>xlviii</sup> *Ibid*, p. 158.

<sup>xlix</sup> *Ibid*, p. 160.

<sup>i</sup> On notational visualisations of soundscapes (like spectrogram), see: R. Murray Schafer, *ibid*, 123-132.

<sup>ii</sup> Kaia, Lehari, 'Mythopoetics of Stone'. *Phenomenology and Existentialism in the Twentieth Century, Analecta Husserliana* Volume 104, 2009, pp.393-402.

<sup>iii</sup> Juhani Pallasmaa, *Encounters. Architectural Essays*, (Helsinki: Rakennustieto, 2005), pp.324-327.