

Life in the Fermata

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Abstract : Fermata, from fermare, means to be on hold, conjoining contenere (contain), fissare (fasten), and rimanere (stay). It is a musical indication that a note should be (that is, calls to be) prolonged beyond the "normal duration" the note value would indicate. To be "held up" is to be held impractically in the lunga pausa, where the breath "is to be taken," taken in, but the release is impeded. In this pause of unspecified length, life is being prolonged against your discretion but given to you to inhabit. That is why the note value, the recognized "normative value," does not "accept" the significance of the prolongation. The value is interested in "saving time." The query at the heart of "Life in the fermata" will therefore be: is this life on hold, or rather, life holding. The paper shall meditate, via musical notation, on the significance of experience "inside": namely, the hold.

Keywords : fermata, experience, significance, the hold, prolongation

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