This paper provides an analysis of Quartetto III, composed by the Italian musician Franco Donatoni. Quartetto III, unlike the other quartets, was produced, under the guide of Marino Zuccheri, at the “Studio di Fonologia” in Milan, by using only electronic instruments.

We’ve studied the musical, historical and technological context in which this work was conceived by using different historical sources. This paper whose aim is a critical re-appraisal of Quartetto III, highlights some specific ideas of this work, the composer’s originality and importance not only in his work, but also in the the production of the Studio of Fonologia and in the history of electroacoustic music.

Quartetto III has been analysed under different points of view: ministructural level; mesostructural level and rhythmic articulation ; macroformal level. We have pointed out the relationship between ministructure and macroform, underlining the progressive aggregation process, from “elements” to “Groups” and “Columns”. This objective has been achieved by means of: a) a genetic Analysis by using PWGL; b) a listening Analysis, by following different musicological approaches: F.Bayle; D.Smalley and the spectro-morphology; Functional Analysis; T.S.U. ; Perceptive and cognitive studies.

Much attention has been paid to polyphonic structure and the structural use of quadraphonic spatialization. Quartetto III seems to pave the way for the later electroacoustic works because of the use of spatial figures and “structured” electronic gestures.