

BOOK REVIEW

VALENTIN TIMARU: *MUSICAL STYLISTICS* MEDIAMUSICA PUBLISHING HOUSE, CLUJ-NAPOCA, 2014 (2nd EDITION)

Maestro *Valentin Timaru* is one of the most important Romanian music teachers, composers and musicologists. Any encounter with him is a surprise as it affords more than meeting one of the most important Romanian musicians of all times: it is an opportunity to learn more about his musicological concepts – original and interesting for all of us -, but also to get to know a personality whose amazes through its delicacy and naturalness. It is an even greater challenge to examine his ample and complex musical creations, real treaties such as the three rich volumes of *Musical Stylistics (vol. 1, vol. 2 – tome A, vol. 2 – tome B)*, published in 2014 by MediaMusica in Cluj-Napoca (2nd edition).

The volumes contain over 1100 pages which represent the content of the lecture with the same name he taught at Emanuel University of Oradea. The great epochs, styles and creative models in the history of music are highlighted in a way that includes explanations, rich examples, esthetical exegeses that contribute to drawing a concise and complex picture of each aspect he approaches with proverbial gravity.

The book clearly reflects the investigation of a composer who knows how to manage his own creation; the reader can notice his analytical, musicological experience, but also his ability to see the work of art (and, implicitly, the style) from within the phenomenon – a privilege enjoyed especially by those who have direct, personal contact with the creation process. This is reflected throughout the entire treaty, starting from the introductory chapter of the first volume: *Stylistic prolegomena in the crystallization of the creator's consciousness*.

The complex approach of such vast and diverse topics is also impressive: volume 1 tackles the area of stylistics from the idea of Orality and tradition in the musical practices of the first Christian communities (the Byzantine and the Gregorian monody), while investigating the Ars Antiqua and Ars Nova epochs, through the professionalization of laic music and the beginnings of polyphony, up to the Palestrina and the Monteverdi style, and Bach's stylistic expression, but also the most representative classical styles.

The Romantic creation covers Schubert's art, but also the art of the great virtuosi of the 19th century, as well as the elements of classicization of the European Romanticism (Schumann-Brahms), including the features of late Romanticism (Berlioz, Wagner, Verdi) and the Russian musical culture of that period (Tchaikovsky, Mussorgsky).

The second volume (tome A) opens with the stylistic description of the dissolution of European Romanticism (Franck, Dvorak) and the late Romantic echoes (Grieg, Rachmaninov), without omitting the confrontation between Romanticism and the new stylistic approaches (Puccini, Mahler, Wolf, R. Strauss), ending with musical Impressionism (Debussy, Ravel) and Expressionism (Schoenberg, Berg, Webern).

The 20th century composers are examined in the personalized stylistic area (Williams, Respighi, Bartok, Enescu, Stravinsky, Varese, Prokofiev), next to the creators of the group of French composers Les Six (The Six) and of modern European art (Honegger, Orff, Hindemith, Messiaen, Toduță, Britten, Xenakis).

For me, tome B of the second volume was the most important surprise, as it deals with a complex repertory which is difficult to approach and analyze (both from an interpretative and musicological point of view): the liturgy-inspired one. The author offers a musical and theological analysis of the Eastern Church Mass (Hubic, Toduță, Comes and Jarda), of the Roman-Catholic Mass, The liturgical music from innovative perspectives (Stravinsky), the Requiem (Faure), The Lamentations at the Tomb (Negrea, Vancea and Stefan Niculescu). The end of the volume offers an exceptional view of several innovative approaches present in the musical tradition of the Eastern Church, as well as of the synthesizing visions of contemporary Neo-Byzantinism (Paul Constantinescu).

The appendix of the last volume represents an esthetical and hermeneutic monument of great depth, which investigates stylistic complementarities such as the artistic expression, specific differences, medieval art, and possible chronological correspondences among the most significant styles, stylistic interferences in the architecture of the Romanian space, the avant-garde, the style and manner, the close or open style.

The graphic presentation of the volumes is also impressive, the musical examples are expressive and the colour images (photographs) of very high quality, a stylistic illustration of the associated musical realities. "The long journey undertaken by a musical score is the most sublime aspect of music"¹ (my translation) – Maestro Valentin Timaru stated in one of his previously mentioned books, and the consistent volumes of the *Stylistics* demonstrates this once more.

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¹ Timaru, Valentin, *Muzica noastră cea spre ființă* (The music of life), Ed. Galaxia Gutenberg, Tg. Lăpuș, 2008, p. 90.