

SEMIOGRAPHIC ASPECTS IN ROMANIAN PIANISTIC WORKS OF THE 20TH CENTURY*

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SUMMARY. The 20th century musical culture, due to its various aspects, has configured the endless creative force of man. Researches and experiments manifested during this century have proven the intense need of creators for a new image of man, with multiple feelings and emotions. The varied potential of this culture, the variety of structures, the complexity of created languages and its spiritual message – of development of the humane substance – stand as proof in this respect. The renewal of musical art can also be noticed in its expressive structures. We witness a reformulation of the manners of expression, starting from simple improvements or changes of the existent ones and leading to the invention of new sound structures.

Keywords: semiography, pianistic art, visual, experiments

The complexity of the creative phenomenon in 20th century music could no longer be rendered with the help of traditional notation elements. According to the new composition techniques, the contemporary score acquired a large number of semiographic procedures, which consist either in new symbols (lines, geometric figures, ideograms), or in an appeal to mathematical figures or relations, frequencies, algorithms and other similar elements which have almost completely driven usual notation signs out of the score. The Romanian pianistic works, characterized by a diversification of the musical expression, manifested an interest in the exploitation of timbrality and stood out by approaching the piano from a new perspective: that of an instrument capable of many timbral colours and of a large expressive variety attainable through:

- the utilisation of all physical and acoustical resources of the instrument;
- comprising along with the piano sounds the sounds and noises from the surrounding nature;
- the tendency to incorporate in the field of affective states an ever increasing range of human psychic states and aspects of contemporary life evoked in their temporality or atemporality;
- attempts to suggest the movement, the visual, the spatiality of musical events.

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The fact that our century's music knows no precise boundary in the relationship between the composer and the performer offers the possibility of integrating the musical message in an original vocabulary, so that in order to receive the musical message the performer must resort to an informational baggage gathered along an entire musical, social, human and affective practice. At the same time, contemporary semiographic communication faces the necessity of discovering its meanings through an association with other arts, phenomena or experiences.

Significant Moments in the Evolution of Semiography

During its development, Romanian music has exhibited a rich dynamic of stylistic currents that influenced the formation of entire generations of composers and of some remarkable personalities. As its own experience increased and its contacts to the universal creative environment became richer, new creative individualities stepped forward, causing a permanent renewal and enrichment of the genres and of the expressive possibilities. Since its beginnings, which date back to the first decades of the previous century, Romanian pianistic art has known a continuous evolution, the climaxes of which are attributed both to George Enescu's works and to those of some composers of the following decades.

George Enescu, [1] was a composer "deeply integrated in the ancestral sonorous background and at the same time in the highly elevated climate of modern art" who adopted with a great amount of sensitivity and fantasies the melodic and the rhythmic features of the folk music.

His piano works range along several distinct compositional stages, during which the methods of instrumental approach undergo, from the first works to the mature ones, obvious transformations. In his first pieces we notice the influences of impressionist music, which are nevertheless organically assimilated in his specific language: *Suite no. 2 op. 10 in D* (1903); *Suite no. 3* (without opus number) written between 1913-1916. Later on we can notice features of Romantic music, concretised in passages of instrumental bravery, such as in *Variations for Two Pianos on an Original Theme Op. 5* (1899); *Prelude, Scherzo and Impromptu* (1900).

Enescu's piano works find their own track in the *Piano Sonatas op. 24*, written between 1924-1934, which reflect a stage of crystallization of his quests in piano music, obvious in his synthetic power and in the personal mode of elaborating style elements.

The following works mark important moments regarding the improvement of his pianistic art: *Sonata no. 3 for Piano and Violin and the Suite Childhood Impressions*. These works include elements specific to his general instrumental style which belong with predilection to violinist writing such as: unisons, trills,

tremolos, the improvisational character (rubato), abundant melisma (especially in the slow parts), the preference for dimmed sonorities produced with the help of the pedal play etc.

The richness of the interpretation clues in his piano works has facilitated sonorous ventures in the timbral plan (subtly varied), concretized in effects which were later explored throughout the 20th century. For this reason, Enescu may be considered a forerunner of the sound innovations developed in 20th century music, even if as far as notation is concerned these configurations are clad in the traditional procedures.

For example in *Novel Works* (1915), the piece *Melancholic mazurka* brings the notation of the effect of prolonging the vibrations of a sound (intervals, tunings etc) through legatos without a fixed stop-point (*quasi ad libitum*); pedal indications differentiated through particular signs.

In the *Sonata III for Piano and Violin*, beside the chromatic cluster with specified limits (notated with note heights, not with special symbols), we encounter frequent oscillations of two sounds or tunings, as well as the extremely rapid repetition of a single sound, such effects being characteristic of string and percussion instruments.

In the *Piano Sonata in F-sharp minor* (1924) the author uses the symbol specific to string instruments (from where it is taken) to notate flageolet sounds, which necessitate an execution *en resonance, sans frapper l'acord*.

In the *Sonata III for Piano and Violin*, as well as in the *Suite Childhood Impressions*, Enescu accomplished a maximum enhancement of the expressive virtues of the *doina* and the ballad by means of improvisational configurations unrestrained by rhythmical symmetries, which are clad in richly ornamented forms combined with features of the recitative, evoking on the whole characteristics of Romanian folk music. To this purpose he often synchronizes different expressive plans such as: *ben sostenuto cantabile, con grave espressione, ben piano armonioso* (in the first of the two previously mentioned works), which necessitate simultaneity in a *tempo con slancio, ma ben sostenuto*.

In the first decades of the 20th century, together with George Enescu, musicians such as Mihail Jora, Mihai Andricu, Sabin Drăgoi, Marțian Negrea, Paul Constantinescu, Sigismund Toduță brought Romanian music to the level of the European art, their main impulse being the creation of a balanced relationship between the national aspirations and the inner requests of the sonorous art. Within their works one witnesses an evident modernization of the musical language, which nevertheless preserves its relation to the folkloric element, even though the latter undergoes a substantial transfiguration.

The piano works belonging to the composer Sigismund Toduță “characterized by exceptional educational qualities (...), occupy the front row both in the concert and in the didactic repertoires”.^[2] The pieces called *Passacaglia* (1943), *Three Sketches* (1944), *Sonatina* (1950), *Suite of Romanian*

Songs and Dances (1951), *Threnia* (1970), *Three Pieces: Prelude, Choral, Toccata* (1974), *Triplets* (1975), conceived for solo piano, reveal varied technical and expressive modalities, focussing on quoting and processing the folkloric material. Beside the authenticity of the themes we also notice: minutely expressed dynamic gradations (for instance, *Passacaglia* requires a varied dosage of intensities, from barely perceptible sounds come un soffio to **fff** possibile), the graphic differentiation of the phrasing through dotted lines (compared to the traditional articulation), scripts developed over three and four staves, timbral variations (through the subtle utilisation of the pedals and of the attack manners), the exploitation of the different colouring of the sonorous registers.

With a view to asserting the national character within the context of universal musical values, a path opened by G. Enescu, Mihail Jora, Marțian Negrea, the pianistic repertoire became considerably rich due to works of an amazing diversity such as: Marțian Negrea: *Sonatina for Piano op. 8*; Mihail Jora: *13 Preludes for Piano op.42 and Sonatina for Piano op. 44*; Tudor Ciortea: *Sonata no. 3 and Sonatina for Piano*; Dumitru Bughici: *6 Pieces for Piano*; Alfred Mendelssohn: *Comments for Piano*; Sabin Drăgoi: *12 Miniatures for Piano*.

The evolution of the Romanian piano works reveals thus not only transformations of the musical language, but also technical, colouristic and implicitly expressive innovations. Their value however does not arise from the degree of folkloristic authenticity (the authors had no such ends in view), but mainly from sonorities foreshadowing particular stylistic elements due to confer a certain specificity to the patrimony of the Romanian piano works.

Through valuable musical pages, the Romanian composers participated in the adding of new aspects to contemporary music: Zeno Vancea in *Toccata for Piano* (1959) with an obvious tint of virtuosity through the richly ornamented tunings which denote an improvisational character; Mihail Andricu in *Suite for Piano op.81* (1959) with distinct signs for *quitez et laissez vibrer*; the same effect in Aurel Stroe's *Piano Sonata* (1955); a large dynamic diapason with the differentiation of *bp – mp – p – pf – bf – mf – f* in Stefan Mangoianu's *Burlesque; Expression study* (1958.)

Innovating sonorities are rendered in the 50s and 60s by the composer Alexandru Hrisanide in the works *Klavierstücke 1-3* (1956), where the author approaches within an extended setting (of 3, 4 staves) such effects as: clusters (within precise boundaries), sounds with prolonged vibration, varied and differentiated operation of the pedal system, using individual symbols and notations with ligatures. In the *3 Piano Sonatas* (I between 1955-56, II – 1956-64, III-1959) the same author gives up inscribing the musical text on the staff and lets the performer decide how to play certain parameters (height, rhythm, form). For instance, for *Sonata I* the author mentions that: the interpreter may perform the sonata wholly or partially, as the succession of the parts is not compulsory. The dynamic plan is exigently fixed, through such indications as:

senza colore, obscuro, sombrio, *fff* olimpico, *ff* durabile etc. and in order to render an expressive execution that remains faithful to the text, the composer sometimes annexes sonorous correspondents for the timbre which needs to be rendered (horns, oboes) or expressive ones in textual form: *flames ...dualities* etc. As he considers solving the problems linked to the timbral parameter to be essential, the author sometimes claims a certain construction of the instrument: ped. III Steinway.

Tendencies to develop, in a creative manner, the conquests of modern art, to fructify them according to the specific features of our music are highlighted in such works as: *Modal Piano Inventions for Two Voices* (1963) by Gheorghe Costinescu; *Sonata No.2* (1966) by Liviu Glodeanu (with original differentiations in the pedal symbols); *Suite II for Piano* (1966) by Remus Georgescu (abundant use of the glissando); *Piano Sonata* (1966) by Dan Constantinescu; *Sonatina for Piano op. 55* (1966) by Mihail Andricu; *Eight Small Pieces for Piano* (1964) by Vasile Herman (who exploits the grave register and often lets sounds resonate) and *Music for Piano, Percussion and Brass* (1968) by Aurel Stroe, a reference work due to the great variety of procedures in which the keyboard is operated (by different parts of the human body), as well as the highlighting of new sound effects.

In the *Piano Sonata* (1969) composer, Myriam Marbe frames in a complex writing on three staves sounds allowed to resonate along extended fragments or clusters written with note heights. We notice the volume *Piano Pieces* [3] (1962) belonging to the above mentions authoress, in which "the purpose of the work is the gradual preparation of the student towards the understanding of modern music [...] opening the taste towards a profounder analysis, towards a multilateral musical culture."

We must mention that in order to achieve this purpose the authoress conceives pieces with differentiated gradations, to which she annexes the indications necessary for understanding and deepening the works. The volume was meant to be a theoretical and practical guidebook for 20th century music, with the didactic purpose of initiating the beginner in the following issues: *A Few Words on Interpretation; About Modes; Some Harmonization Possibilities; The Simultaneous Use of Several Modes or Tonalities; Legato and Staccato; Rhythmic and Melodic Variations; Several Aspects of Polyphony; Examples of Polymetry.* [3]

In the 20th century music, serialism had a forceful influence on the predetermination of sounds, which was technically initiated by the parameter of height and continued with the other parameters: duration, intensity, timbre etc.

The art of the Romanian composers subordinated these characteristics to the necessities of their own style, more precisely serialism of a modal essence, in which we encounter transfigurations of the autochthonous musical heritage. Composers such as: Ștefan Niculescu in *Inventions for Clarinet and*

Piano (1963), Cornel Țăranu in *Contrasts I and II*, *Sonata ostinato* (1961), developed a labour that was essentially serial in nature, based on the principle of the maximum organization of the detail and concretized in special sound effects, with new graphic correspondents.

Many Romanian composers approached textures (the glissando effect is compared to the phenomenon), and the following composers wrote works of text - like nature: Liviu Glodeanu, Mihail Moldovan, Ștefan Niculescu, the origin of which is attributed to the act of group singing, where the repetition of a melodic formula, of a «*mode*» made up of several sounds, "(...) gives the impression of a plurality of voices. The origin must therefore be sought in improvisation, unison, the world of modes (diatonic or chromatic), the chanting repetition of formulas of folkloric essence."^[4]

Starting with the 70's, the works of all composers exhibit a phenomenon of assimilating the initiated effects and techniques either through individual notations (unique symbols), or through traditional semiographic elements. Works comprising such effects: Nicolae Brânduș – *Sonata for Two Pianos* (1978); Diamandi Gheciu – *Piano Suite* (1975); Ștefan Mangoianu – *Three Pieces for Piano* (1972); Liviu Comes – *Melody* (1970).

However, individual graphical solutions also gained ground, embodied by symbols which confer the performer improvisational liberties, as in the works of: Cornel Țăranu – *Dialogues II* (1972), who uses particular signs for *lasciando vibrare* or involves the performer in actions such as *criard*, *come une exclamation*; Vasile Herman – *Sonata II for Piano* (1971) who uses values within clearly stated limits or *ad libitum*, varied types of *glissated* clusters, actions inside and outside the piano; Eduárd Terényi – *Pianistic games* (1974) with pages that contain graphical elements as well as varied sound effects.

Composer Adrian Ratiu in the work *Piano Music* (1971) which includes several independent pieces: *Accordic Study*, *Monodic Interlude*, *Toccata*, *Monosonata I and II*, *Constellation*, resorts to numerous new symbols, timbral combinations, liberty of form. For *Constellation* for instance the author states: the piece may be executed in three forms: piano for two hands, 2 pianos (for four hands) and piano + tape recorder.

Aurel Stroe in *Three Pieces Synchronized for Clarinet, Violoncello and Harpsichord (+piano)* reunites 3 different works, each of which is entrusted to one instrument – clarinet, harpsichord (+ piano) and violoncello – which evolve independently. The only means of synchronization is given by the indication of the duration in minutes and seconds, which is written for every voice. Rigorously abiding by these indications, the ensemble synchronizes on its own.

In Liviu Dandara's *Sonata for a Single Piano* (1974) the author fructifies the effects deriving out of the direct action on the instrument's chords, stipulating repeated (and variedly notated) glissandi, combinations of chord actions (pinched, blocked, struck, plucked etc.). He ingeniously transposes the flageolet in the piano technique: blocked grave chord and emission with the help of the key.

The interference of the sound effects originating in the piano-orchestra relationship is revealed by Dan Constantinescu in *Concert for Two Pianos and Small Orchestra* (1979), an impressive work due to the associating modalities of the sounds and the ingenious use of the timbral colours.

The interpreter's freedom of improvisation is reflected by composer Nicolae Brandus' notation in his work *Phthora* (a term meaning *power*), where the five component pieces involve an elasticity of the formulas of instrumental ensembles: *Durate* – for an indefinite number of instrumental groups; *Match* – for two teams of instrument players; *Cantus arts firmus* – for piano and other instruments; *Ideophonie* – for voices and instruments; *Soliloque* – for any kind of structure.

The matters researched by Nicolae Brânduș are present under a different form in Octavian Nemescu's work *Concentric*, which comprises within six concentric circles all the degrees between the absolute invariability and the total variability of the four sound parameters (height, durations, intensity and timbre), notated by the initials H, D, I, T. All the moments represented by rectangles (which include one or more parameters) constitute border cases of certain improvisational situations to be found in contemporary creative works.

These works have revealed a new sound parameter – order [5] – that the composer may choose to pre-establish or not, both in the case of micro- and macrostructures. We find similar moments in Alexandru Hrisaniade's *Soliquium X 11* where the elements established by the composer constitute two types of structures: immobile sonorous fascicle and mobile, directed sonorous fascicle; the same can be said about Ștefan Niculescu's work *Heteromorphy*, where new elements of compositional technique are ably handled. Important mutations take place inside these musical languages, determined to a certain extent by the proximity and the fusion of different arts.

The complex musical thinking, the serializing and modal chromaticization procedures, the creation of circuits in micro and macro-structure determined music's evolution towards open formulas. Out of the desire to promote of a new generation of Romanian composers, the Musical Publishing House (named: Editura Muzicală) printed in 1983 a volume of *Pieces for Piano by Romanian Composers*, which includes the following works: Doina Nemțianu-Rotaru: *The Poppy Crossroads*; Fred Popovici – *Concentrics*; Marina Vlad – *Rondo*; Mihai Vîrtosu – *Toccata*; Irina Hasnaș – *Melismas*; Maia Ciobanu – *Da suonare*; Christian Alexandru Petrescu – *The Bagpipes of the Old, Tropota for Piano*.

Starting with the 80s many of the composers' preoccupations were oriented towards the simulation of an explosive sound. The notation is virtually contained in the discourse mutation, when one ascertains the privilege offered by qualitative accessories such as:

- the spatial distribution of the sounds,
- the density of the writing associated to obvious visualizing tendencies,
- the involvement of the performer in the creative act.

The systematization of the notation procedures became hard to accomplish due to the original suggestions offered by the composers (leading to multiple solutions for the same sound phenomenon). We notice such works as: *Preludes for Piano* (1989) by Vlad Opran, *Triplum III for Clarinet, Violoncello and Piano* by Ștefan Niculescu, in which the piano parts are struck, beaten, handled rapidly, struck with varied positions of the hand: with the palm edge, with the open or circular palm etc. Numerous composers were attracted by intermediary solutions: Myriam Marbe: *Music for Harpsichord and Choral Ensemble* (1985); Irina Odăgescu-Țuțuianu: *The Torch Battle* (choreographic poem) 1980; Vasile Spătăreanu: *Pieces for Piano*; all these are works in which not the search for sound language or for sound effects contribute to the renewal of the piano music, but the presentation, in the sphere of artistic thinking, of elements meant to transform certain emotional experiences.

Aiming at initiating children in the compositional craft of 20th century music, at stimulating their imaginative-improvisational capacity and even their acting skills, composer Dan Voiculescu notated a cycle of piano works *A Book with no End* (1988) where the title suggests the objective proposed: *Atonal Piece; Symmetry; Heterophony; Three Storeys* (Scheme of a Composition); *Improvisation* (Let's Make a Composition); *Actions; Imaginative Piece; Points* (Free Durations), *Piece with Speech, Figured Accords* (One Should Figure) etc.

Another timbral aspect intended by the modern composers became known in connexion to the choice of instrumental combinations, which foreshadowed the sonorous colour – a parameter intensely explored in 20th century music. For instance Cornel Taranu writes *Mosaics for Saxophone in B flat or Clarinet, String Quartet, Piano and Percussion* (1994); Constantin Rîpă: *2P+2p* (2 pianos+2 percussions) (1997); Mihaela Stănculescu-Vosganian: *Trio for Piano, Bassoon and Violoncello* (1989), *Trio for Saxophone, Percussion and Piano* (1993), Ștefan Niculescu – *Duplum for Violoncello and Piano with Synthesizer* (1989) etc.

Tendencies of Comprising Visual Notions in Music

Whereas visual arts and literature absorbed into their configuration features belonging to science and philosophy, musical art connected its particular means of representation to dimensions belonging to other arts, especially to the visual ones. Therefore musical **time** itself is subjected to a radical change, even though it is a notion specific to music both in a general meaning (music is a primarily temporal art) and in a restricted sense (where it is merely a projection in the receiver's mind that corresponds to its unfolding).

A new time direction is noticeable in the 20th century creative repertoire – **atemporality** – a concept opposed to temporality. Since this aspect refers to a meaning inappropriate for the art of sounds, 20th century aestheticians named

the concept **trans-temporality**, by means of which “the creators’ look was directed towards the archaic civilizations, whose rule or life norm was the non-change regarding their aspiration to eternity.” [6]

This aesthetic orientation gave birth to the non-evolving music, whose constitutive model relied on musical formulations belonging to E. Satie. He requested in his work *Vexations* that 32 measures be played without variation 840 times.

The adepts of this vision processed the idea in their particular languages, by means of traditional notations or with new symbols. Among the works relevant for this genre, we can mention Aurel Stroe – *Concert Music for Piano, Percussion and Brass*; Horațiu Rădulescu – *Astray for Saxophone and Prepared Piano*; Corneliu Dan Georgescu – *Eight Static Compositions for Piano*.

The new philosophical, aesthetic and scientific concepts that evolved in the 20th century (connected to the idea of time, space and universe) gradually become known in the musical field as well and result in a fertile communion between different arts. The created interrelations such as music - visual arts - literature triggered the appearance of new orientations or even of radical changes of the creative concept (for example text-composition, photocomposition, kine-composition, electronic music). As a natural consequence of the above mentioned interrelations, certain notions pertaining to the visual world – space, colour, form – penetrated music, leading to the formation of a new system of symbols.

Space, the pair-notion of time (used especially in the works of the serial music representatives, such as Pierre Boulez) was considered an abstract element, inexistent in the musical reality, which is primarily a temporal art. Space was initially approached from a theoretical viewpoint, in the sense of an imaginative projection of the musical processes that can unfold in the creator’s, the performer’s or the listeners’ mind.

The conception of some notational elements led to the formation of a new semiographic system, within which space-placed symbols were foreshadowed that each composer treated in a particular manner. The notation of the spatiality-connected elements was accomplished by the adding of such terms as: up-down (indicating heights) or close-far (for intensity). In some composers’ writings the spatial aspect was dealt with by means of stereophonic sonorities. Such an effect can be obtained through a certain placement of the instruments inside the score, which may be chosen depending on their position on the stage or in the room.

The formation of the spatial dimension is facilitated by the use of electro acoustic devices, by means of which sonorities can be distributed in multiple directions, so that the listener is under the impression of being in the middle of the sound sources. Stereophony, an electro acoustic technique for the spatial reproduction and the direct transmission of sounds, knows new aspects thanks to electronic music and facilitates thus the creation of the spatial dimension in the art of sounds.

Many works of the universal literature have been created following this concept that is to say they are based on stereophonic effects: K. Stockhausen – *Gruppen für drei Orchester* or I. Xenakis – *Terretektorh*, and in Romanian music: Aurel Stroe: *Arcades* și M. Istrate: *Concert for Two Stereophonic Orchestras*.

The projection of spatiality in pianistic notation was done on two levels:

a) an **elementary** one – considered to be abstract and concretized in graphic symbols conceived and understood by means of distances and elements of spatiality such as:

- approximate heights in relation to a given intoning mark: Liviu Dandara – *Sonata for a Single Piano* ;
- the limit of register use: Eduard Terényi *Pianistic Games*
- bigger or smaller distances between the various note values, depending on which duration is shorter or longer: Hans Peter Türk – *Resonances for 24 Wind Instruments, Celeste, Vibraphone and Glockenspiel*;
- a duration equivalent to the length of a horizontal line: Ștefan Niculescu – *Tastenspiele für Klavier I*;
- ornaments (glissandi) of an approximate duration related to a visual mark given in the score's legend: Aurel Stroe – *Concert Music for Piano, Percussion and Brass*;

b) a **general**, concrete one, manifested in the composers' attempts to obtain the *spatial sound* through: the different placement of the piano or of the public in the concert hall (on the left, on the right, square-shaped, circularly or amphitheatre-shaped), all of these being compositional techniques conceived in order to create the sensation of space.

The **colour** effects were concretized in 20th century music in different techniques of articulation and of operating the instrument, through technical procedures that permitted the attainment of such contrasts as: light-darkness, ferocious, brutal, transparent sonorities etc. Noticing the multitude of terms used in order to obtain colour contrasts, we can assert that: whereas initially this task belonged to the pianist, who by varied operating techniques had to differentiate the sound timbre (even for the same degree of sonorous intensity), later on the accomplishment of the timbral colour was substantially facilitated by the presence of some exterior elements (such as objects added to the instrument) capable of creating sonorous contrasts.

The preparation of the piano proper, its handling with numerous intermediating articles (rubber, wood, glass, paper, sticks, electro acoustic elements) gave the possibility of obtaining new sonorities regarding the colouristic aspect: plain, dimmed, brutal, glassy sonorities, different noises.

The idea of colour concretely associated to the musical text does not surprise in the contemporary works, as the synchronization of light and colour to the musical execution constituted one of the directions adopted in the world

of musical representations in the 20th century. To this purpose, composer Liviu Dandara uses in his piece *Sonata for a Single Piano* reflectors of different colours (green, red and yellow) fixed in the piano's resonator and oriented towards the big lid, and asks that they be operated differently (according to the colours) and only in certain moments of the piece.

Another dimension of 20th century music refers to the field of **form**, since creating a structure outside of time was the desire of many musical works. [8] This domain gives birth to ideas that will generate diverse orientations. Some composers, after Iannis Xenakis' model, follow objective laws of structural transformation by applying certain modern mathematical theories to music (for example Anatol Vieru, Dinu Ciocan). Others, through their tendencies of score *graphicization*, brought to light new constructive aspects, bringing into the present dimensions used in music centuries ago. Starting from the necessity of placing sonorous objects in a balanced, symmetrical manner in relation to an (imaginary) axis, musical language will converge to distinctive temporal and spatial delimitations of the sonorous events.

20th century music started from the rediscovery of the old principles, for instance that of symmetry, and the composers manifested interest in this idea in multiple directions: in the architectural construction, language, dynamics etc. The series construction itself (in serial music) relies on symmetrical fragments, which permit recurrences or related inversions. The consequence of this phenomenon is the large number of works written in arch form or with arched interior sections, in which symmetry was a basic principle, necessary for the equilibrium. (Eduard Terényi, in: *Study by Czerny*).

The form symmetry can also be noticed in the contour of the **oblique** dimension, (frequently met in contemporary music) which is used as technical support in order to accumulate or attenuate some sound tensions. Approaching this dimension involves the incidence of two different parameters (for example height and rhythm) in an inclined plan. The use of obliquity is possible in all syntactic categories; its constitution involves such factors as: density, agogic, musical dynamics. Such moments can be found in Aurel Stroe's works (for example *Arcades*).

A new manner of distributing the sound objects (in the monodic, homophone, polyphone or heterophony framework) refers to the dependence of the sonorous material on the **density** of the sonorous events. Three zones relevant for defining the musical syntax stand out:

- the zone of the detail,
- the zone of the agglomeration – concretized in textures (to be perceived globally),
- the rarefied zone – which refers to the distribution of the sonorous objects in the wide space and creates sensations of discontinuity in the perceptive field.

As regards the textures (the zone of maximum density), we mention that the genre imposed semiographic procedures (associated to dense, agglomerated visual images), contouring a new type of writing. The appearance of textures in music is closely connected to the introduction of the mathematical notions, which facilitate the way to constructions of this type.

Out of the desire to find new ways of expression, composers have often approached **open forms** in their works. By means of visual factors or with the help of the text, they gave the performers suggestions on the possibilities of articulating the form of the works. We highlight several ways in which the architectonic structures implying the improvisational factor can be constituted: Adrian Rațiu in the work entitled *Monosonata I* writes: "The performer can choose the starting point out of any of the 15 sections of the piece. Then one must follow the succession of the following sections until the end of the piece, after which one goes on to the execution of the first sections and arrives back at the starting point. The performer is also allowed to set the tempo: slow fast slow, or the other way around, so that several successive sections may develop in a unitary tempo. Optionally, after the entire musical material has been played, one of the sections can be resumed as a conclusion, but in a tempo opposed to the one used in the first performance." [7]. In our opinion, the author creates a circular form in this work.

The composer Mihaela Stănculescu Vosganian introduced circular permutations in *Trio Contrasts for Saxophone, Piano and Percussion*, where the opposing groups (continuous-discontinuous; in time-out of time) are concretized in rhythmic categories (Aksak I, II, III – rubato I, II, III) and are alternated either simply (A.R.A.) or complexly (AI RI All RII Alll RIII). However the authoress' desire is that, for the complete perception adequate to this opus, the work should be integrated into a concert and alternated with other pieces between the mentioned sections.

Eduard Terényi in *Staccato e tenuto* approaches different geometrical shapes (triangle, trapezoid) from the intersecting of which arise many possibilities of combining the elements foreshadowed in the cassettes constituted in this way. The form is open, similarly to other parameters (height, tempo, dynamic) which unfold within border frames.

In 20th century music the renewal of musical art is also revealed in the expressive structures, in the new sonorities which tried to capture the vastly extended contemporary world. We witness a reformulation of the manners of expression, starting from simple improvements or changes of the existent ones and leading to the invention of new sound structures.

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