

ASPECTS OF THE WRITING IN LIVIU COMES' WORK *MĂGURI II**

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SUMMARY. Liviu Comes' work, entitled *Măguri II* explores the clarinet's specific musical tone quality based on a special intervallic sound discourse. The small - big interval type combinations (second-sixth, second-ninth) are the fundament of the entire variational development of the work. As a particularity of this work there are intense using of simple, double and multiple appoggiaturas, presented on big intervals – making a special chromatic on the sound canvas. The character and tempo mention (Andantino rubato) and the structure of this work sustain the title suggestion. Every 9 section of it may suggest an element of the hill landscape; the sound atmosphere is completed by the continuing evolution of the sound development.

Keywords: Clarinet, Sound quality, Analysis, Variation

Born on December 13, 1918 in Serel village of the Hateg County, Liviu Comes started by attending the Medical Faculty in Cluj, later decided to return to his first passion – music and concluded his musical studies at the Conservatory in Cluj. He also graduated the Faculty of Philosophy. On December 13, 1998 on his 80th birthday, he received the title of Doctor Honoris Causa of the "Gheorghe Dima" Music Academy in Cluj.

His musical works go through different stylistic stages, the composer trying to find his own way. Educated in an era of limitations and directions imposed by political doctrine, Liviu Comes had the opportunity to study with Zeno Vancea, in Tirgu Mures, getting to know Bartok's music, the French Impressionism and the Second Viennese School. He was taught by great names of those times, first the maestro Sigismund Toduta (musical forms and composition), Iuliu Muresianu (orchestration), Ana Voileanu-Nicoara (piano) and Antonin Ciolan (orchestra conducting). He worked privately with F.X. Dressler and Martian Negrea.

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His first works, during his apprenticeship, have a very strong modal-diatonic character, in a folkloric style. It is the case of the *Sonata for piano*, *Sonata for violin and piano* and *Divertimento for orchestra*. Starting with *Divertimento for woodwinds quintet*, written in 1964, the melodic language transcends from the modal-diatonic melody to the modal-chromatic one. Though we still distinguish sounds of folkloric inspiration, they are more and more vague, slowly becoming abstract.

The year 1965 can be considered a stylistic turning point for the composer. With *Four poems for baritone and piano „My forehead leaning against the sky”*, Liviu Comes forever relinquishes the diatonic melodic lines in favour of a chromatinized modalism, using serial techniques. From the point of view of the composer, the series becomes not only an element in the construction of the melody, but also a source of the thematic material, which will later benefit from developments in a traditional note. The series are built in such a way as to offer traditional modal frames, in drawings easy to recognize, with thematic features. This is the case of *Three Pastels for Women’s Choir* with lyrics by George Lesnea.

After more than a quarter of a century Liviu Comes got to know the essential Romanian musical language, he walked into a different creative stage, the stage of modal construction based on archetypes. The work marking the beginning of this stage is the cycle *Maguri* written from 1977-1984, the work we are referring to in this paper – *Maguri II* – being part of it. This cycle is followed by *Dialogues for clarinet, bassoon and percussion*, *Trio with woodwinds*, *Sonatina for oboe*, *Sonata for violin solo* and *String quartet*. To sum up, we can say that Liviu Comes’ stylistics is shaped as a curve, starting from the clear and “obedient” diatonic, reaching a chromatic with a climax of serial impact and, in the end, transforming itself in archetypal models.

We will touch a few aspects of the second work of the cycle *Maguri*, written for a soloist instrument – the clarinet.

The programmatic nature of the title, also supported by tempo and character (*Andantino rubato*), is to be found in the structure of the work, thus each one of the 9 sections can suggest an element from the theme of the hillside scenery, the atmosphere being completed by the continuous evolution of the acoustic levels.

The first section begins with a musical motive of the “signal” type

Ex. 1



containing the sounds generating the musical mode:

Ex. 2



- (the note *b* is the final note of the motivic evolution in this section). The free variation, the play with sounds and accumulations resulted from the repetition of internal structures are the main processes present.

Ex. 3

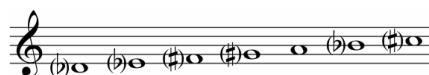
Andantino rubato ♩=63 LIVIU COMES

L. in Si b

Both here and throughout the entire work, we can notice the author's preference for the sixth or for the wide intervals.

The variation of the steps in this mode brings an enrichment of the acoustic material, but keeping the ending on *d*:

Ex. 4



The acoustic material of the third section is an evolution based on variations of the cell:



Ex. 5

The fourth section brings forth the free and continuous variation of a new musical motive:

Ex. 6

Example 6 consists of three staves of musical notation. The first staff is marked 'a tempo, ancora più mosso' and contains a melodic line starting with a forte (*f*) dynamic, marked 'leggero', and ending with a piano (*p*) dynamic. It features a triplet of eighth notes. The second staff continues the melodic line, marked 'mf', and includes a 'rit.' (ritardando) marking. The third staff shows a bass line with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a 'a tempo' marking. Green arrows indicate the flow of the melodic line across the staves.

The fifth section is divided into two distinct segments emerging from the evolution of an x cell, by variation:

Ex. 7

Example 7 consists of two staves of musical notation. The first staff is marked 'sostenuto' and 'f', followed by 'a tempo' and 'p sub.'. It features several 'x' cells labeled 'x^{v1}', 'x^{v2}', and 'x^{v3}', with arrows indicating their evolution. The second staff continues the melodic line, marked 'p sub.' and 'pp', and includes a 'rit.' marking. The 'x' cells are further annotated with 'x^{v2a}' and 'x₁'.

In the sixth section, a musical scale made up of two successive intervals in the form of an “acoustic garland” – minor third and minor second (a 3-1 model, where the semitone is the unit). There are also diversions from this model and the succession is not strictly followed 3-1-3-1-3-1, anomalies being also possible 3-1-3-3-1-3-1-1:

Ex. 8

Example 8 shows a single staff of musical notation. It begins with 'ad lib.' and a triplet of eighth notes. The scale is marked with dynamics 'ff' and 'rit.'. Below the staff, a sequence of numbers indicates the interval patterns: 1, 3, 1, 3, 1, 3, 1, 3, 1, 1. The scale is written in a key with one flat and a common time signature.

The following section (7) is built on the continuous evolution of certain small acoustic incisions developing by repetition or alteration of the constitutive

intervals. In the mean time, distinct acoustic levels appear simultaneously with rhythmic agglomeration, everything tending towards the climax of the work:

Ex. 9

The musical score for Ex. 9 consists of three staves. The first staff is marked "a tempo, un poco rubato" and contains a melodic line with notes highlighted in orange and yellow boxes. The second staff is marked "sempre cresc." and contains a rhythmic accompaniment with notes highlighted in yellow boxes. The third staff is marked "sostenuto" and contains a melodic line with notes highlighted in blue boxes. The score includes dynamic markings such as *p sub*, *f*, *ff*, and *pp*, as well as performance instructions like "vibr." and "ratt.". The first staff ends with an ellipsis [...].

In the eighth section, structured into two segments, the presence of the motive in the beginning determines a quasi-reprise. In the second segment, we find an idea that conceals the constitutive interval – the sixth, leaving it exposed at the end of the segment by essentialization:

Ex. 10

The musical score for Ex. 10 consists of two staves. The first staff is marked "Tempo I" and contains a melodic line with notes highlighted in a red box. The second staff contains a rhythmic accompaniment with notes highlighted in a blue box. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mf*, *quasi f*, *p*, *mp*, and *pp*, as well as performance instructions like "ratt.". The first staff ends with a double bar line.

The final section is also shaped based on the idea of variation and a pentatonic mode is clearly established $f\#-a-b-c-e-f\#$. Variation and repetition are the most used methods here as well, while the sixth is also the interval that gains a very substantial expression.

Ex. 11

The musical score for Ex. 11 is presented in five systems, each with specific performance markings and annotations:

- System 1:** Starts with *a tempo*. A red box highlights a section with *ff* dynamics. A red arrow points from this box to the start of the second system.
- System 2:** Features a *tr* (trill) and a deceleration marking *rit.*. A red box highlights a section with *p* dynamics. A red arrow points from this box to the start of the third system.
- System 3:** Includes a green box highlighting a section with *f* dynamics and *affrettando* (accelerando) marking.
- System 4:** Contains an orange box highlighting a section with *ff*, *f*, and *mf* dynamics, and a *sostenuto* marking. Another orange box highlights a section with *p dolce* and *pp* dynamics.
- System 5:** Starts with *rit.* and *tranquillo*. A teal box highlights a section with *ppp* dynamics and *morendo* marking. The system concludes with *lunga* and *1980*.

From a rhythmical point of view, *Maguri II* doesn't present to the audience the rhythmical formulas contemporary music had familiarized us with it. Rhythmic simplicity, in this case, serves the very expressive musical discourse. The indication of tempo and character *Andantino rubato*, gives freedom to the interpreter to alter somewhat the precise development of the rhythmic score, giving flexibility to the melodic flow, molding it on the expressive needs it serves. The tempo is very clearly indicated, both by the usual notation and dynamically, by arrows, showing acceleration or deceleration.

In this work, the timbral chromatics doesn't bet on the specific acoustic effects (frullato, gorge, slap-tongue, yellow tremollo etc.), but on the judicious use of the ranges of the instrument with the help of special intervals. Therefore,

we don't have wide discourses with low ambitus, but rather short incisions rapidly passing through the entire range of the instrument with different acoustic intensity, which can sometimes test the musician's control over the instrument. Nevertheless, the work respects the technical, expressive and acoustic possibilities of the clarinet and it doesn't create real difficulties for an experienced interpreter. Another chromatic touch is the author's insistence in using the *appoggiaturas* as an attack element. They can be simple, double or multiple, but a special characteristic is that these ornaments are always at least a minor third apart. This way of attacking a note rapidly, preceded by a major interval, exploits a special property of the timbral colour of single reed instruments – the listener perceives the combination between the real note and its ornament as a unique acoustic result, with an uncommon attack and not as two distinctive sounds. It is well known that most of the timbre of an instrument is given by the first part of the produced sound, that is the attack (in case the attack is missing, confusions can occur between the timbre of instruments). Here, the attack of the sound is being very much influenced by the *appoggiatura* as it changes the acoustic colour, the composer thus proving a subtle knowledge of the effects that can be created without the use of special attack techniques. In the third section there is a very interesting moment from the point of view of the timbre: an attack (with the dynamic indication *sfpp*) of the note *a*, with an *appoggiatura* from *c*², continued with a *tremollo* on these two notes in *pp* with *decrescendo*, this acoustic element having a particular effect when played by a clarinet.

The dynamics' score is very well noted, so that there is no moment left without indication. The dynamic area of this work is wide, from *ppp* to *ff*. *Crescendos* and *decrescendos* are noted, on the short notes articulated with *staccato* inclusively.

Although written for a solo instrument, the work *Maguri II* manages to convince, to transpose the listener in an atemporal scenery, where the accuracy of the structure, of the horizontal and vertical planes are rendered in a fascinating, though calming, manner.

(Translated by Roxana Huza)

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