

TODUȚĂ'S "ANTIQUES"

ECATERINA BANCIU*

SUMMARY. Delightful musical pages, the *Concerto no. 3 for string orchestra "in stile antico"*, *Old engravings for string orchestra* and the *Sinfonietta "in antico stile"* by Sigismund Toduță are among the "classical" works due to the ingenuity of the modal, poly-metric themes, with a local, jovial or elegy-like air, imprinted on the most elaborate patterns of variational forms, imitative polyphonic or with refrain and rendered by extremely refined orchestration. The purpose of the present paper was to reveal the relation between these works and the universality of their language.

Keywords: Sigismund Toduță, Stile antico, old engravings, danza, string orchestra, sinfonietta, sonatina, folkloric, rhetoric, ostinato, variations

Concerto no. 3 for string orchestra "in stile antico"¹ (1974)
Old paintings for string orchestra (1974)
Sinfonietta "in antico stile" (1977)

This is the diachronic succession of the works labeled by Sigismund Toduță as "antique" or "old", in the chronology of his symphonic and concert works. The study of the three scores revealed the first argument for the author to give them the air of "antique" art pieces: their meticulous elaboration and the appreciation of the maestro.

Another reason for naming them *antique* or *old* could be a self-irony, as only the first part of *Concerto no.3* represents the new element of the classification, while the theme of the second part, *Aria*, is a different orchestration of the second part belonging to an earlier work - *Divertimento* for string orchestra (1951) and the *Old engravings*² is the renaming of the third part of the *Concerto* mentioned above – that of the *Danza. Sinfonietta "in antico stile"*, in her turn, is the orchestral version of a two decade piece, *Sonatina for piano* (1950).

* Lecturer professor, Gheorghe Dima Academy of Music, Address: 25, I.C. Brătianu, Cluj-Napoca, Romania. E-mail: kati_banciu@yahoo.com

¹ Antique, from the past; ancient, belonging to ancient peoples, culture and civilization; or in the style of ancient creations.

² The engraving is an image imprinted with a wooden or copper plaque having a drawing on it. According to *Dicționar de neologisme (Dictionary of Neologisms)*, Editura Academiei, Bucharest, 1978.

1. Chronologic circumscription of pieces belonging to the same genre

Comparing the three *antiques of Toduta*, we note that they were composed at a mature age, being preceded by most of the works belonging to the genre, among which we mention: concerto no. 1 for piano (1943), the five symphonies and the first two concertos for string orchestra (1951 and 1972-73). Following the pieces mentioned above and named “antique” or “old”, Toduță will compose only four works in the concert genre: *Concerto no. 4* for string orchestra and organ (1980) and the concertos for flute (1983), piano (no. 2, 1986) and oboe (1989).

2. Works composed during the same period, but different as a genre

The first two works, *Concerto no. 3 for string orchestra “in stile antico”* (1974) and *Old engravings* for string orchestra (1974), were composed after *Prelude – Choral – Toccata for piano* (1973-1974) and *At the river of Babylon* for mixed choir. Meanwhile, the author had published, together with Hans Peter Türk, the first two volumes of *The musical forms of the Baroque in the works of J. S. Bach* (1969, 1973) and the study *The Inventions and Sinfonias of Bach*, in the *Muzica* magazine (1975). Volume III of *The musical forms of the Baroque in the works of J. S. Bach*, written together with Vasile Herman would be published after the “antique pieces”, in 1978, followed by *Terzinas for piano* (1975), *Insomnias*, lieds on the verses of L. Blaga (1977), *At the courtyards of longing* - 3 madrigals on L. Blaga’s verses (1978) and *Joko* – 4 pieces for harp (1978)

3. Other opuses with ancient resonance

Until the three works, we can mention *Archaisms* for mixed choir on the verses of Mihai Celarianu (1942) and *The 3rd Synmphony „Ovidiu”* (1957); the analysis of the message of the latter was presented by the author of the present paper at the conference dedicated to the composer in 2005.

4. The ethos of the “antiques”

Sigismund Toduță’s preference for *antique* subjects is rooted in the theme of his doctoral thesis: *Analisi di Responsoria feriae quintae, sexte et Sabathi in Hebdomada Sancta quator vocibus, una cum duabus Passionibus Matthaei et Joannis: e della Missa Lateranensis septem vocibus concinenda opera giovanili sconosciute di Giovanni Francesco Anerio* (1938)

As well as in his later words: “...I have had two maestros who marked my beginnings ...I am talking about Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, who taught me about vocal polyphony durin Renaissance’s golden years and the second

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one, whom I will venerate as long as I live, is Johann Sebastian Bach who taught me about the upbringing, sublime, replaceable art word, in the area of instrumental music."³ Moreover, this devotion for the great Baroque composer will materialize in a *Passacaglia* for *piano* (1941), a study about *The instrumental polyphony of the Baroque* presented at a conference in Timișoara (manuscript 1944), *Sonatina for piano* (1950), culminating with *The B-A-C-H Symphony* for organ (1984).

Concerto no. 3 for string orchestra "in stile antico" (1974)

Composed in 1974, *Concerto no. 3 for string orchestra* entitled by Toduță "in stile antico" is structured in three parts:

Part I: *Ostinato* - p. 1-27 (Theme with var. 1-26, Coda) – a solemn part, with the character of a ballad

Part II: *Aria* 28-34 (A + B) – with a warm, interiorized lyrical character.
(a + a₁)

Part III: *Danza* 35-67 – expansive, with a motor-like character.

A + B + C + trans. + $\begin{matrix} A \\ C \end{matrix}$ + Coda
(fugato) (fugato) (fugato) (fugato)

Due to the popular character of the theme of the *Ostinato* and including it in an elaborate variational form, allows two interpretations:

a) folkloric – the chromatic mode 1, the most widely spread in our country (Doryan on b, with the fourth degree altered ascendingly), with the vocal rhythm accommodated to the steps of the ceremony march (according to the study of the folklore specialist Traian Mîrza, a distinct type of Romanian folk rhythm). The melismas of the first measure and the cadence on the second degree give the theme the archaic air of the Transylvanian language⁴;

b) rhetoric – the theme presents in the beginning (the first measure) melodic figures also found, in this order, in the second volume of *The musical forms of the Baroque in the works of J. S. Bach*, at page 91, as follows: *Anabasis (Ascensio)* "not only that it projects a graphical image, but it is also

³ Sigismund Toduță in a dialogue with Pavel Pușcaș (1991).

⁴ Oprea, Gheorghe - Agapie, Larisa, *Folclor Muzical Românesc (Romanian Musical Folklore)*, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, Bucharest, 1983, pp. 127, 323.

doubled, in an evolved sense, by the feeling of *elevation*, of *ascension*.⁵ Then (the following three measures) *Katabasis* (*Decensio*) “gradually descending curve” often associated with the feeling of “relaxation and repose”. In the last two measures we find two chromatic leaps, *Saltus duriusculus* (*Hypotyposis*), the first one with inferior support. Comparing the end of the theme with its beginning, we note the figure *Epanalepsis* (*Symploke*), that is, the reprise of an *incipit* figure in the end. In the second measure we have *Anaphora*, the non varied repetition of a figure. This proves that Toduță, under the impression of the Baroque *ethos*, created a theme in accordance with the rules of that style, but with the archaic *affectus* of a Transylvanian man;

Ex. 1



c) From the point of view of form, the author warns us about the *obstinatus*⁶ character of the theme along the 26 variations. His preference for variational forms, especially *passacaglia*, has been analyzed by his former students, nowadays recognized composers and musicologists.⁷ After the success of *Passacagliei* (1941) and of the *Sonatina for piano* (1950, in the second part) the symphonic transposition of the form in the finale of the *Third Symphony „Ovidiu”* (1957) and of the Fifth Symphony (1962-1976), or in the vocal-symphonic works *Miorița* (ballad-oratorio 1957-1958), *The ballad of the flag* (1960), *Following in the footsteps of Horea* (1978). In the instrumental concert genre, the *Ostinato* in the fourth part of the *Concerto per stromenti a fiato e batterie* (1960) comes before the *Ostinato* of the *Concerto no. 3*. The difference of the previous concerto stands in the frontal position of the *Ostinato* in Concerto 3 and the four measure theme (the theme of the Concerto was of two measures). In the 26 variations, the theme will be repeated twice

⁵ Toduță, Sigismund - in cooperation with Türk, Hans Peter, *Formele muzicale ale barocului în operele lui J.S. Bach* (*The Musical Forms of the Baroque in the works of J.S. Bach*), vol. II, Editura muzicală a Uniunii Compozitorilor, Bucharest, 1973, p. 89.

⁶ “Stubborn, perseverant, persistent” *ostinato*, term used ever since 1700, initially synonym with *obligato*; “continuous repetition of a theme with a permanently varied counterpoint” (H. Riemann), is related to the *bourdon*, *organ point* or *ison*.

⁷ Türk, Hans Peter, *Variatiunile pe ostinato în creația lui Sigismund Toduță* (*Variations on ostinato in the works of Sigismund Toduță*), in: *Lucrări de muzicologie* (*Musicology Papers*), vol. XIV, Cluj-Napoca, 1979.

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for the same group of instruments and in the medial and acute register (violas, 2nd and 1st violin) in the form of a tonal response (a reference to the fugato in the final part). Variations 13 - 14 will bring the expansion of time in pentatonic *parlando-rubato* archaic on e flat. Variation 15 will reprise the original theme, but in a slower tempo;

d) The cantability of the *Aria* makes us think of the proper song, even if the name suggests a slow part in a Bach suite:

Ex. 2



The serenity of the melopoeia in an Ionian d and the dim dynamic even in the case of a *ben forte*, by the indication *con sordino* kept along the entire part, will contrast with the frenzy of the final part, *Danza*;

e) Begun with *Esitando*, almost unnoticeably, *Danza* will transform in a nearly unstoppable whirl, resembling the *tarantella*. The rhythmic and melodic pattern *ostinato*, reminds of an ancestral *toccata* and forces are unleashed by the chords in *divisi*, the theme being supported by very effective heterophonic writing. Stravinski's wild, ritualic character, we think of *Sacre du printemps* (1913) will be interrupted by a *Baldanzoso*, probably a girls' swinging dance and it seems that we even hear them in the *glissandos* of the medial and high strings;

Ex. 3



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Ex. 4

The musical score for 'ANTIQUES' by Toduță is presented in two systems. The first system includes Violin I (Vn. I) and Violin II (Vn. II) parts, with measures 1-4. The Vn. I part is marked 'mf con ritmo' and the Vn. II part is marked 'mf leggero'. The second system includes Percussion (P.) parts for P. 1-4, P. 5, P. 6, and P. 7-8, with measures 5-8. The score is in 3/4 time and features a 'Trio' section. The Vn. I part has a melodic line with slurs and accents, while the Vn. II and Percussion parts provide a rhythmic accompaniment with triplets and slurs.

The latter (C) will overlap over *Danzei* (A), when it reappears, the initial theme being doubled in the grave register by its augmented version.

Ex. 5

The musical score for 'ANTIQUES' by Toduță is presented in two systems. The first system includes Flute I (Fl. I), Flute II (Fl. II), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Fg.), and Cello/Double Bass (Cb.). The second system includes Violin I (Vn. I), Violin II (Vn. II), and Percussion (P.). The score is in 3/4 time and features a 'Trio' section. The woodwinds and strings play a melodic line with slurs and accents, while the Percussion part provides a rhythmic accompaniment with slurs and accents.

Approaching the finale, the exuberance of the dance increases by ascending and descending *glissandos*, suggesting the whistling of the young men, while the last four measures of the main theme end the concerto in unison in *forte-fortissimo* and *sforzando staccato*.

Old engravings (1974)

That same year, Toduță detaches this final part of the Concerto, *Danza*, and suggestively names it *Old engravings*, referring to engravings made with a pattern (the engraving is an image imprinted by a copper or wooden plaque with an image on it). It is faithful to the original, but the finale is more elaborate.

Sinfonietta “in antico stile” (1977)

Sinfonietta “in antico stile” is the orchestral version of the *Sonatina for piano* (1950). About the *Sonatina* Vasile Herman said that he considered it “a delightful work with a very solid pattern of form construction, almost neoclassical and with a predominantly polyphonic pianistic writing” where “the composer engaged, here and there, typically modal sequences of chords, which supported the melody in the moments of temporary abandon of the counterpoint.”⁸

a) Part I, *Sereno, un poco giocoso* is full of charm, *gracefully*, in 4/8, for String orchestra: in *divisi*, mode Dorian g, with chromatic elements; *coda*- Lydian g, the serenity of the major being overshadowed by the final Phrygian cadence.

Ex. 6

⁸ “In the past, most of the Romanian composers and musicians studied in France (especially at the Schola Cantorum),” in this context “the personality of the maestro appears as a novel phenomenon in the landscape of Romanian music”. The idea of “harmonic verticality coming from the almighty French current”, will be replaced by the Romanian musician with “linearity controlled by the modal relations suggested by Romanian folklore”. Acc. Herman, Vasile, *Formă și stil în creația compozitorului Sigismund Toduță (Form and style in the works of Sigismund Toduță)*, in: *Studii toduțiene (Studies on Toduță)*, Editura MediaMusica, Cluj-Napoca, 2004, p. 19.

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b) Part II: *Semplice* 6/8, *Theme with 7 variations*, was compared by Hans Peter Türk⁹ with the theme of the *Passacagliei* by Toduță, due to its “descending Aeolian” modal character and the “bone structure of the ciaccona base” and also with the theme of the *Passacaglia* in c minor BWV 582 by Bach, by the “iambic pulsation”.

Ex. 7

The image shows a musical score for 'Semplice' 6/8, Theme with 7 variations. It is divided into two systems. The first system is for strings (Violins I and II, Violas, Cellos, and Double Basses) and is marked 'ppp' with the instruction 'ppp sempre calore'. The second system is for woodwinds and brass (Cornets, Clarinets, Bassoons, and Trumpets) and is marked 'pp' with the instruction 'pp con sord.'.

Orchestra consists of: Fl. 1, 2 (anche Fl. picc.), Ob.1, 2, Cl. 1, 2, Bassoons 1, 2 (anche Cfg.), Horns 1-2-3-4 in F, Tr. 1-2 (notazione reale in C).

The orchestration of the slow part can be surprising due to the addition of the woodwinds and the brass, especially considering the fact that in the first part the composer only used strings. But the use of the trumpets and horns *con sordino* even in supporting the theme, dilutes the tragic *ethos* of the ciaccona creating an effect from ironic and comic, even to the grotesque. Just as surprising can be the *Giocoso* in variation 5: similar to the *Giocoso* in *Danza*, in the super-acute register, this time a piccolo flute will enliven the melodic discourse, while the horns in an undertone treat the thematic bassoon with irony. The seventh variation ends the ciaccona part by sonorous and dynamic dispersion in *pppp*.

c) Part III, *Gaio rustico* (Rondo: ABACABA) in a fast tempo, with alternate measures (6/8 - 5/8 - 6/8 - 4/8 - 8/8) begins with a playful theme (A) in Lydian g. The alternate returns of the first idea (A), remembers the theme of the rondo in major modes: Ionian on g or Lydian on g flat (scordatura on the initial mode). The beginnings in *stretto* of the theme, in parallel trisons at the horns, remember of the fugato writing of the *Danza* in the Concerto for strings.

The contrasting, lyrical B, in a slower tempo (meas. 5/4), intonates minor modes: Dorian f sharp or Aeolian b flat.

⁹ Türk, Hans Peter, *Op. cit.*, p. 124.

