

## A HERMENEUTICAL APPROACH TO IN SOLEMNITATE CORPORIS CHRISTI BY EDUARD TERÉNYI

ANAMARIA MĂDĂLINA HOTORAN<sup>1</sup>

**SUMMARY.** In the organ play *In solemnitate corporis Christi* (1993), the variational principles aims to a macro and micro-structure as well. The first part represents the pattern for the next two parts, it becomes a sort of “theme – personage” in the mind of the author through the preservation of the algorithm of the three segments A, b, c that are characterized through different syntaxes: A - melody, b - chords/figurations, c – unison/eighths/chords. The first strophe A is a melodic line of a neo – Gregorian style that is partially inspired from the *cantus planus* variant of *In solemnitate corporis Christi* from *Cantionale Catholicum*. The b and c segments are, in fact, stylemes that can be found in other Terényian musical works as well, as they metaphorically reflect God’s voice or “the divine reality”. The stylistic benchmark of the b segment is represented by the third part of the musical play *L’Ascension* by O. Messiaen, which, through the title and its *motto* corresponds to the spiritual ideas of *In solemnitate corporis Christi*. The c segment is the second styleme as parallel octaves in long rhythmic values and it has the connotation of the divine voice. This leitmotif in itself presents in the Terényian creation some variants, as a sacra emblem. It can be a row of three – four parallel chords or octaves in extreme nuances (*ppp* or *fff*), or alternating abrupt contrasts of the dynamics (*fff* → *pp* → *fff* and so on). We can meet it in the organ plays of the author, in contexts that have the same *theophany* meaning: a revelation of the divine in the person of Christ (*In solemnitate corporis Christi*, *Epiphania Domini*), the celebration of God in a cosmic liturgical frame (*Glocken*) or in the middle of the monumental cathedral of the nature (*Stella aurorae*, *The Birds*), the divine light and word (*Semper felice*, *Introitus*), Christ’s sadness (*In solemnitate corporis Christi*), God’s wrath (*Die Gottestrompeten*), or even Holy Mary’s image (*Stella aurorae*, *Glocken*). *In solemnitate corporis Christi* depicts “a sonorous fresco of the last Supper that precedes the suffering and the death of Christ. It is a commemoration of the scene in which the Saviour talks about himself and the mission He has to fulfil onto the earth” (E. Terényi). Taking as a basis the interview with the composer (February 2008), we will follow the transformation of the three paradigmatic models A, b, c, as linked to the succession of the ideas/images that the author himself has set, without affecting the autonomy of the sonorous image.

**Keywords:** Eduard Terényi, *In solemnitate corporis Christi*, music hermeneutics, musical form, variation in music, musical styleme, contemporary organ music

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<sup>1</sup> Associate Professor, Emanuel University of Oradea, Musical Pedagogy Department, str. Nufărului no. 87, 410597, Oradea, Jud. Bihor. E-mail: hmaddy@yahoo.com

E. Terényi's organ music is the artistic expression of the sacra values through diversified thematic: plays that are dedicated to Mary (*Septem dolores, Stella aurorae, Stabat Mater*), meditations on the birth of the Saviour (*Intritus, Semper felice*), the suffering of Christ and their significance (*B. A. C. H – composition for organ, Die sieben Worte des Erlösers am Kreuz, Stabat Mater, In solemnitate corporis Christi*), meditations above the person of Christ (*In solemnitate corporis Christi, Epiphania Domini, Chaconne – Hommage à Messiaen*), dialogue with God, mystic experiences (*B.A.C.H – composition for organ, Glocken, Messiaenesques, Dialogues mistiques, The Birds*), the vision of the Apocalypse (*Die Gottestrompeten*), the closeness to the silence and the simplicity of the spiritual truths (*Octo felicitatis*). The musical dramaturgy is usually subordinated to the ideate vision that is suggested by the title, without affecting the autonomy of the sonorous image. The predominance of the ideate - conceptual plan on the musical discourse determines us to take *In solemnitate corporis Christi* from a hermeneutics perspective.

If *Glocken* (1991) begins with an interval symbol (the perfect fourth) that becomes the basis for an entire cycle of micro-variations, on the contrary, in *In solemnitate corporis Christi* (1993), the reference theme is represented by the first part entirely in a variational macro form that regards the whole musical work. Between the three parts there is a relationship of similarity regarding the structure of the form (strophic with a varied and incomplete reprise) as well as it is through the musical material (ex. 1). The variational principles aim to a macro and microstructure as well. The first part becomes a sort of "theme – character, personage"<sup>2</sup> in the mind of the author through the preservation of the algorithm of the three segments (A, b, c) and, in the same time, through the micro-units that come back, having different transformational coefficients.

The form (ex. 1) is transparent both in the clarity of its structure and through the correspondence and, sometimes the resemblance, which is imitative of the composing elements, between the parts. The alternating, the imitation, the metamorphosis, the transfiguration, the increase into the complexity, these labour procedures can be followed on the paradigmatic axis regarding the three models A, b, c that are characterized through different syntaxes:

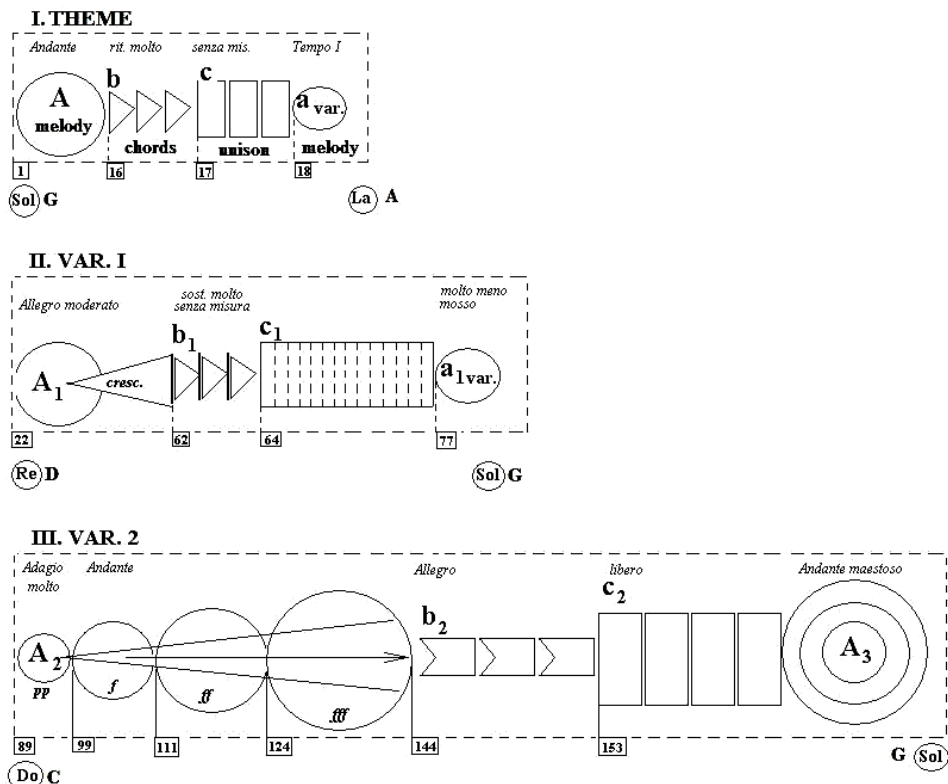
- A** - melody,
- b** - chords/figurations,
- c** – unison/eighths/chords

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<sup>2</sup> interview with the composer in February 2008

Ex. 1

The form of *In solemnitate corporis Christi*



The central tones (keynotes) go round the three fifths: C – G – D – A, and G is the basic tone of the entire musical work.

The first part depicts “a sonorous fresco of the last Supper that precedes the suffering and the death of Christ. It is a commemoration of the scene which the Saviour talks about himself and the mission that He has to fulfil on the earth.”<sup>3</sup>

The author starts from the commemorative liturgical frame of the Last Supper that is suggested by the melodic line of a neo – Gregorian style that is partial inspired from the *cantus planus* variant of *In solemnitate corporis Christi* from *Cantionale Catholicum* (ex. 2).

<sup>3</sup> An interview with the composer in February 2008

The original melody in *Cantionale Catholicum*IN SOLEMNITATE CORPORIS  
CHRISTI.

320.

NOTA: KYRIE MAGNE DEUS, ETC.

KY - RI - E, JE - SU Christe, Cor - pus tu - um  
tra - di - di - sti, Per quod Mundum re - de - misti,  
sal - vas - ti. E - lei - son.  
CHRI - STE, pa - nis vi - tae, REX Coe - li - ce,  
Mun - di sa - lus, et vi - ta.  
E - lei - son.

The tetra-chordal nucleus (G – A – B - C) is preserved, as it will be moved around, in the tri-chordal variant, on different tones (ex. 3) that have the change of the modal centre. The A strophe has, in this way, the continuous melodic variation of a tri – tetra - chorded cell as a basis which, together with the inverted chromatic formula of the first measure (B – C – B *b*) and the vaulted melodic movement will be found in the following parts, in the corresponding strophes A<sub>1</sub> and A<sub>2</sub> and their reprises.

In the measures 10-15 (ex. 3), through the figurative repetition of this nucleus above a bass that evolves descendent and chromatically (*lamento - bass*), as carrier of the *affectus* of the pain we see a *quasi cadenza* to be made by the highlighting of the E tone as a central tone. The E tone is the *finalis* (final) of the original melody as well, that is written in *authentus deuterus* (authentic Dorian) with *corda da recita* (cofinalis) on the descending sixth (ex. 2).

Ex. 3

E. Terényi: *In solemnitate corporis Christi*, part I, strophe A

I. Andante  $\text{♩} = 72 - 84$

5

8

11 accel. molto, quasi CADENZA

The major – minor character of the melody is preserved through the oscillation between the two finals, G and E (similar to those popular songs that have a pentatonic substrata whom, the minor inferior third is situated under the major tri-corded substratum and it gives them a major – minor aspect).

This also constitutes the first **strophe A**, which is followed by two contrasting segments (b and c) and then, the melody of a Gregorian inspiration ( $a_{var}$ ) comes back – ex. 4. **The b and c segments** are, in fact, stylemes that can be found in other Terényian musical works as well, as they metaphorically reflect God’s voice or “the divine reality”. The chorded cell that is chromatically descending is repeated ternary and it signifies the sorrow of Christ (ex. 4).

Ex. 4

*In solemnitate Corporis Christi, part I, segments b și c and  $a_{var}$*

The stylistic benchmark of **the b segment** is represented by the third part of the musical play *L’Ascension* by O. Messiaen (ex. 5) which, through the title and its *motto*<sup>4</sup> corresponds to the spiritual ideas of the musical work *In solemnitate corporis Christi*.

<sup>4</sup> *Transports de joie d’une âme devant la gloire du Christ qui est la sienne („Rendons grâces à Dieu le Père, qui nous a rendus dignes d’avoir part à l’héritage des Saints dans la lumière, ... nous a ressuscités et fait asseoir dans les cieux, en Jésus Christ” – Saint Paul, épîtres aux Colossiens et aux Ephésiens)*

Ex. 5

*Messiaen, the incipit of the third part of L'Ascension*

16 **Vif**  
Quiet

*fff* *staccato sempre*  
*staccato*

Ex. 6

*E. Terényi's Die Gottestrompeten, the bowl 4 - stylistic replica to Messiaen*

113

Stylistic reference: *L'Ascension* by O. Messiaen

136

*marcato*  
*stacc.*  
simile

The composer uses it again in 1995 in *Die Gottestrompeten* where it means the pouring onto the earth of the fourth cup of the God's anger (ex. 6).

The **c segment** (see ex. 4) is the second styleme as parallel octaves in long rhythmic values and it has the connotation of the divine voice that belongs to what is named by the composer as "the third reality". In *Course of Musical Dramaturgy*<sup>5</sup>, E. Terényi deals with the problem of what he calls "the three realities" and their reflection in music: (1) the first reality – the natural world, (2) the second reality – the artificial world, (3) the third reality - the celestial world.

The leitmotif in itself presents in the Terényian creation some variants. It can be a row of three – four parallel chords or octaves in extreme nuances (*ppp* or *fff*), or alternating abrupt contrasts of the dynamics (*fff* → *pp* → *fff* and so on). We can also meet it in other organ plays of the author (ex. 7), in contexts that have the same *theophany* meaning: the revelation of the divine in the person of Christ (*In solemnitate corporis Christi, Epiphania Domini*), of celebration of God in a cosmical liturgical frame (*Glocken*) or in the middle of the monumental cathedral of the nature (*Stella aurorae, The Birds*), or even Holy Mary's image (*Stella aurorae, Glocken*).

The b and c segments are a reflection of a mystical feeling and also of the axiological thinking which are paradigms that seem to correspond as an *affectus* to the phrase *mysterium tremendum* that is used by Rudolf Otto in order to define that "answer of the soul in front of the numinous", as "that part of the sacra (...) that is manifested under the form of a specific accompanying feelings"<sup>6</sup>, "the mystical blossoming that provokes inside the conscience as a secondary reflex, the feeling of the creature state of being (...), the feeling of letting go of oneself in front of Him whose great and maestros character, one can feel through the fear"<sup>7</sup>.

The segment  $a_{var}$  (ex. 4) ends the first part, and the tetra-chorded nucleus has a descendent direction, finally stopping, through the scordatura, on the central tone A that has, in the inner dramaturgy, some Christ connotations that point to the presence and the person of Christ:

*"For me, the person of Christ is associated to A major or A minor – it represents the inner power to bear, the spiritual quality to follow without losing direction, of a holy end."*<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Terényi, E., *Course of Musical Dramaturgy*, The Academy of Music Gh. Dima of Cluj-Napoca, 2008

<sup>6</sup> Otto, Rudolf – *Sacral (The Idea of the Holy)*, Editura Dacia (Dacia Publishing House), Cluj, 1992, pag. 19

<sup>7</sup> *Idem*, pag. 26

<sup>8</sup> A fragment from the interview given by E. Terényi in February 2008



Ex. 7

**The divine voice in the organ creation of E Terényi**

1988	<p><b>Stella aurorae, ms. 42-47</b></p>
1991	<p><b>Glocken, ms. 54-56</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Divine reality/voice</b></p>
1993	<p><b>In solemnitae corporis Christi, part I, ms 16-17</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Stylistic reference: <i>L'Ascension</i> by Messiaen</p> <p style="text-align: center;">rit. molto</p> <p style="text-align: right;">The divine reality/voice</p> <p style="text-align: right;">senza misura</p> <p style="text-align: right;">pppp (misterioso)</p>
	<p><b>In solemnitae corporis Christi, part III, ms. 153</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Rapido</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">senza misura CADENZA</p>

1997	<p><b>Epiphania Domini, introduction to part II</b></p> <p><b>Maestoso</b> ♩ = 60 (48) etc.</p>
2007	<p><b>Epiphania Domini, Ending of part II</b></p> <p><b>Libero</b></p> <p>5. 6. 7. 8. lunga <b>fff</b></p> <p>attacca</p> <p><b>The Birds, part III (Hymn to the nature)</b></p> <p>The divine reality/voice</p>

The second part (*Alllegro*) represents the first variation, in dimensions and greatness that increase comparatively to the first part. The expression of A, b and c segments is metamorphosed and intensified in the sense of character variations ( $A_1$ ,  $b_1$ ,  $c_1$ ).

Taking into consideration the basis of the modal centre G of part one, we can see the part two to take shape on the D dominant whose *ethos* is preserved on the previous consideration of a symbol of the suffering and the death, implying a spiritual dimension as we can find along the *passio*<sup>9</sup> music history from the liturgical tone of the catholic service of the Suffering, through

<sup>9</sup> See: Hotoran, Anamaria Mădălina, *Patimile și moartea Domnului în viziunea componisticii secolului XX. Genul pasiunii (The Dolorous Passion and Death of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the Works of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Composers. The Genre of the Passion)*, Editura Risoprint, Cluj-Napoca, 2008

the D minor of W. A. Mozart's *Requiem* and to the XXth century in the *Byzantine oratory Lord's Sufferings and Ressurrection* by Paul Constantinescu, where it symbolizes the Christ's death.

This symbolism illuminates the ideate – affective programme that belongs to the second part and which is inspired from the scene that is spoken about in *The Gospel after John*, in the chapters 12 and 13, where Christ talks about the significance of His death.

The A<sub>1</sub> strophe – as the author himself confesses – is an instrumental meditation upon the text of *John 12:44 – 50* when, sitting at the supper with his disciples, Jesus reveals Himself as The One that was sent by The Father, the embodied Word (ex. 8).

Ex. 8

Part II, strophe A<sub>1</sub>

**Allegro moderato**

**A<sub>1</sub>**

22

26

stille

ff

The sadness that the traitor is the one of the twelve apostles<sup>10</sup> is expressed through the dramatic agglomeration (*poco a poco accel.*) of the inverted chromatic figures (ex. 8) towards the climax of the b<sub>1</sub> segment (ex. 9), a moment when Judas goes out<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> *John 13:21* "Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me"

<sup>11</sup> *John 13:30* „And so after receiving the morsel he went aut immediately; and it was night"

Part II, strophe A<sub>1</sub>, *Christ's sadness*

**John 13:21**  
**"One of you will betray Me"**

52 a tempo Allegro poco ppp

56 poco accel.

rit. molto esp. molto

The solving of the tension in the  $c_1$  segment comes as an apotheosis (ex. 10), the glorification of Christ who, after Judas' departure affirms: *"Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him; if God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and will glorify Him immediately."* (*The Gospel according to John 13:31-32*)

The significance of the text that is reflected by the sublime character of the music is that, beyond the tragic of the events, there is the divine plan of saving the world, which is great through the sacrificial love. In the pedal, the central tone A comes back as a symbol *Agnus Dei* (God's Lamb).

The closing segment,  $a_1$  var (ex. 10) corresponds to the text of *John 13:33 – 35* where Jesus gives to His apostles the love commandment: *"Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You shall seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, I now say to you also, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*

From a tonal point of view, the fragment starts in *D minor* gradually descending on the axis of *G* (through *C#* and *B flat*) to the basic central tone, *G*.

Ex. 10

The second part, **b<sub>1</sub>**, **c<sub>1</sub>** and **a<sub>1var</sub>** segments

The musical score consists of four systems of piano accompaniment, each with a circled label above it:

- b<sub>1</sub>**: Starts at measure 87. Tempo: *Sostenuto molto*, *senza misura*. Dynamics: *fff*.
- c<sub>1</sub>**: Starts at measure 61. Tempo: *Allegro*,  $\text{♩} = 120$ . Dynamics: *pp*, *ppp*, *ff*.
- a<sub>1var</sub>**: Starts at measure 67. Tempo: *molto meno mosso*. Dynamics: *ff*, *p*.

The score is written for piano with treble and bass staves. The **b<sub>1</sub>** segment features a prominent melodic line in the right hand with a *fff* dynamic. The **c<sub>1</sub>** segment is characterized by a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the right hand and a steady bass line. The **a<sub>1var</sub>** segment shows a more active right hand with eighth-note patterns and a simpler bass line.

79

84 rit. molto ppp

The Third Part (ex. 11) brings back a slow tempo (*Adagio molto* – as opposed to the second part which was an *Allegro*). The melodic ideas in A are transformed into an  $A_2$  and it will be a free polyphonic writing and bimodal fragments as well. As the composer states<sup>12</sup>: “the third illustration, which is under the form of a scene in movement comes back in time, before the Last Supper when Mary Magdalene pours the expensive chrism on the feet of Christ to show her appreciation and the reconnaissance of His divinity (John 12:1-8)”.

Ex. 11

Part III, strophe  $A_2$ 

III. Adagio molto ♩ = 48 - 36

 $A_2$ 

89 pp

97 Andante ♩ = 96 - 84 legato

<sup>12</sup> Interview with E. Terényi in February 2008

In the  $b_2$  segment, the accumulative varied repetition in *accelerando* of the descending figures (four tones in thirty-minims), metaphorical drops of chrism, reaches the culminating point in the four statuary fermatas (on the octaves, and the chords respectively) which is the leitmotif of the divine reality / voice (ex. 12) and a reply of the c segment of the first part.

Ex. 12

Segments  $b_2$  and  $c_2$

91

$b_2$

145 accel. molto 2. - 8. 2. - 8. 2. - 8. 2. - 8. 2. - 8.

rep. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12.

150 Rapido senza misura CADENZA

$c_2$  harmonic interference

rep. 4 volte rep. 4 volte rep. 8 volte

13. 14.

The negative harmonic interference of the last two structures (the leap from C to A minor flat) forecasts the death of Christ (John 12:7-8: “Let her alone, in order that she may keep it for the day of My burial. For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have Me”).

The returning in *Andante* for an  $A_3$  (ex. 13) into a final apotheosis of the musical discourse represents a height toward the greatness, the sublime sonorous image of Christ as the King of kings. The Gregorian cantilena is re-knotted on the basic initial G tone in mixtures of chords then, it is in parallel thirds, and finally, in unison that has poignant inverted chromatics at the end of the melodic segments (ex. 13).

The melody is gradually diminished through the elusion of small fragments till it reaches the last two monumental chords as the musical work is closed in the same atmosphere of the liturgical frame, that of the commemoration of the Christ’s sacrifice from the original strophe A, of a silent contemplation of the halo of the divine brightness.

## The final reprise

**A3** inverted chromatism

Andante maestoso ♩ - 72

154 *ff*

quasi tremolo  
rep. ad libitum

158

(Translated from Romanian by Maria Cozma)

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