

THE MODERNITY OF AUREL STROE'S CONCERTANTE SPIRITUALITY

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SUMMARY. The last three concerts composed by Aurel Stroe are a further proof of his compositional maturity. The fact that they belong to the last period of his life proves that the three concerts are a round up specific to the climax of a career, which leads to *spiritual dimensions* difficult to be assimilated.

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The three concerts composed by the great Romanian musician Aurel Stroe are a further proof of his compositional maturity and they can be included into the same musical genre. Once the masterpiece is staged, it becomes the subject of the critics, which *turns its value into account* depending on its artistic qualities: the *Concert for the Violin and Soloists Ensemble*, the *Concert for the Saxophone and Great Orchestra* and the *Concert for the Accordion and Soloists Ensemble*.

These works can provide *a unitary perspective on the stylistic characteristics*, which had an impact on Aurel Stroe's whole symphonic thinking in the last years.

We aim to present *an analysis of the stylistics and dramaturgy of the concertante compositional work* in the genre works composed by the Romanian musician, which share the specific character of *his symphonic thinking*. The intrinsic dramatic pattern of his concertante works is the general framework, which allows the collection of all the analytical data collected for the research. Aurel Stroe approached the soloist discourse from new perspectives in the European music and our aim is to analyse the coordinates on which it is structured.

Our musicological approach on Aurel Stroe was facilitated by the permanent contact – during the last ten years – we had with the one who composed the Concerts, which allowed an as authentic and pertinent analysis as possible, subsequently included into the present context of the Romanian music school as well as into the evolution of concert as an important instrumental genre in the history of the sonorous art.

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The topic was selected on the basis of the spiritual and musical value of Aurel Stroe's music – one of the most important composers of the Romanian culture in the twentieth century; to these considerations we add the idea that Aurel Stroe's art is representative for the musical masterpieces composed in the second half of the twentieth century against the Romanian cultural background.

The individualism manifested in the twentieth century describes the individual who "remakes the community by his loneliness; it is the exception which makes the rule"². The modern spirit of *freedom* ignores responsibility (first the moral and cultural responsibility); without taking the responsibility of the aesthetic act (first of all, as this is the aim of our research), "freedom remains strictly individual"³.

The individualism developed in the last decades brought man to the point of neglecting the unity of phenomena, of ignoring to bring value to what is common to all of us: "nowadays it is the part that dominates"; the situation becomes dramatic if we think about turning thinking into geometry – which dominated the artistic expression of the previous century – which ignores the fact that unity is not an elementary algebraic act, that it cannot be found by unifying the separate individualities: "the whole is not the sum of the parts". Once lost, unity can be found with overwhelming spiritual efforts and the modern man is likely to – irresponsibly – take upon himself the risk of breaking this unity.

Aurel Stroe stands out in the area of an originality that situates him among the most valuable composers of Romania in the last fifty years, but he affiliates to a trend, which guarantees the value of *a vision built collectively* – during a generation: the modern thinking, with spiritual amplitude. But in most cases we can notice the – more or less confessed – conformity with the spirit of the age contemporary to the composition work: "the truth belongs to the man, the error – to the age"⁴. The artistic message of the musical work will always bear the spiritual signature of the individual who created it and it is unlikely to be considered a document of the contemporary age; we think this is also Aurel Stroe's case, who signs his art with the initials of his own soul and conception.

The composer and musicologist Liviu Dănceanu categorically describes the characteristics of the new art: "the stylistic pulverization, which is the result of diversifying the philosophical systems, of turning the religious doctrines into different sects, of the appearance of the non Euclidian geometries or of the logics with infinity of values in science."⁵ *The relation with the values promoted by tradition* has always been endangered by the inconsistency with which it has

² Noica, C., *Jurnal de idei (Diary of ideas)*, Ed. Humanitas, Bucharest, 1991, p. 321-322.

³ Idem, p. 377.

⁴ Goethe, J. W., *Maxime și reflecții (Judgements and Reflections)*, Ed. Univers, Bucharest, 1972, p. 64.

⁵ Dănceanu, L., *Eseuri implozive (Implosion Essays)*, Ed. Muzicală, Bucharest, 1998, p. 10.

related to the excellence of the past: past seems to be worn in the avant-garde thinking within the limits of "a saturated present."⁶ The age of "the recent man" became more obvious in the last half of the previous century when "the centrifuge of fall"⁷ magnified its destroying effect of *absorbing and standardising the values*.

The placement between past and future is *the crisis of the modern culture itself*, breaking off the connection with the immediate past is an extra-temporal connection to a remote past; here is the first symptom of loosing the connections, which ensured the continuity of developing some values whose persistency in the memory of humanity, was proved. Although anaesthetised by the risks of every moment associated with modernity, man still experiences the effect of moving away from the spiritual values: "satisfied with their own modernity, blindfolded by the passion of being as recent as possible, recent people of a more and more recent world"⁸.

At a certain moment, modernity becomes the territory of the explosive manifestation of the most unfavourable *paradoxes and extremes* for the evolution of humanity: *materialism* coexists with *lack of measure*. Modernity is built on the basis of concepts like "visibility", "body", "matter", but the one who is nothing but matter is doomed to be nothing else but material in view of some goals of which he cannot benefit without being his slave."⁹ In the modern age there has been "the alienation of man by *possession*, due to the terrible adventure of the verb "to have"¹⁰. The concern of the past for "the middle course", for keeping balance in everything has been constant since the Old Age; "exhausted by the merciless requirements of a never failing modernity, the modern people exceeded all the limits long time ago; modernity exceeded its own unlimited barrier"¹¹.

Temporality of the modern man is vitiated by the haste in which he acts: "the modern man thinks that if he goes faster, he gets further, but not only does not he get anywhere, but he gets nowhere if he goes unceasingly"¹². The open *infinite universe* of the modern people is a universe limited to a single dimension: the unlimited space.

Spiritually, the infinite openness of space gets back to a dramatic horizon closure, which visibly affects the work of the twentieth century. Aurel Stroe eludes this risk by the attention and the conceptual complexity with which he approaches the temporal factor in the light of his musical pieces – which make proof of a strange, limpidity, atypical for the works composed at the end of the twentieth century.

⁶ Patapievici, H. R., *Omni recent (The recent Man)*, Ed. Humanitas, Bucharest, 2001, p. 15.

⁷ Idem, pag. 16-17.

⁸ Idem, pag. 12.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰ Noica, C., *Jurnal de idei (Diary of ideas)*, Ed. Humanitas, Buc., 1991, p. 111.

¹¹ Patapievici, H. R., *Omni recent (The recent Man)*, Ed. Humanitas, Buc., 2001, p. 11.

¹² Noica, C., *Jurnal de idei (Diary of ideas)*, Ed. Humanitas, Buc., 1991, p. 367.

As demonstrated by the three concerts analysed (but especially by the concert dedicated to the soloist violin), Aurel Stroe did not lose touch with both major meanings of evolution, as what we call "evolution", the Greeks called "degeneration" and "distortion". By his inner thoroughness, Aurel Stroe noticed that the world of being is superior to the world of becoming.

The ways to knowledge are the ones which first contributed to the depreciation of the mentalities specific to the creators of this century of modernity: they ignored the fact that the true knowledge cannot be either taught or learned and they promoted – in an unbalanced way – the technical (disorganised, existentially irrelevant, apparent) knowledge, moved away from knowing the being. The essential knowledge starts with the being and it is integral, by throwing away the barrier between the world of essence and the world of appearance.

The old Greeks called *knowledge* that process capable of raising the soul to superior values, as they knew that the true knowledge, settled as sediment in spiritual and cultural paradigms cannot be reduced to the discursive proceedings of knowledge. That is the birth of the contrast between the fake knowledge of the one who believes that knowledge can be taken from books and the knowledge founded by the moral ideals (not by the deviated knowledge ideal promoted by the modern rationalists).

In our world, "the spirit has left less and less room for the soul and performing arts profanely keeps the human soul away from the true philosophy"¹³. What Aurel Stroe's music takes from the spirit of the morbid modernity is its essences, not the way they manifest; his art is protected by the irreverence of the age by the type of human personality he has developed: his way of being as a man protected his art from the precarious hypostasis of "the context free text"¹⁴.

For this very reason the music composed by the great Romanian composer is capable of being "a cultural phenomenon which can be a turning point meant to determine our way of being"¹⁵. This is the true finality of a masterpiece, which Aurel Stroe never failed.

(Translated by Professor Marciana Streza)

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¹³ Idem, p. 23.

¹⁴ Noica, C., *Jurnal de idei (Diary of ideas)*, Ed. Humanitas, Bucharest, 1991, p. 371.

¹⁵ Foucault, M., *Hermeneutica subiectului*, Ed. Meridiane, Bucharest, 1983, p. 21.