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EDE TERÉNYI – THE MONO-OPERA *"LA DIVINA COMMEDIA"* FORM AND CONTENTS (III. PART – *"PARADISO"*)[*]

GABRIELA COCA[1]

SUMMARY. Ede Terényi had come across the poetical work *La Divina Commedia* for the first time at the beginning of the 1970's. As it was a turning point in his life as well, the work of Dante had a very sensitive influence in his own life as along thirty years of his life, the composer came back thorough his creations to this subject. His impressions were transposed both in a colour visual form – by creating a series of twenty-five pictures that were entitled *Dantesca*, and in a musical sonorous form by composing the mono-opera *La Divina Commedia*. Not only this musical work but also many other musical works from the 1971-2004 have the print of the work of Dante. This study has the short and the analytical presentation of the mono-opera *La Divina Commedia* by the mirroring of the pictures in the series *Dantesca* that were signed by the composer.

Keywords: Ede Terényi, Divina Commedia, Paradiso, form, structure

"*The three parts of the **Paradiso** 'draw' in the tones of the three portraits of Dante entering the spiritual world. In the first part, Dante notices that **The Golden Steps** that «**running up so high That my sight could not trace it to the top»**[2]"*

*In our imagination, **the predictive** face of Dante is enlightened. The sonorous world of the part is built from glittering of the light. Dante is **alone with the light:***

> *«And I was so inflamed with the new vision*
> *That — however luminous the light —*
> *60 My eyes could have withstood the sight of it..»*[3]

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[*] This work is the continuation, and the end part of the analysis that was started in the 2/2008 number of our magazine (Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai, series *Musica*).

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[2] Dante, Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, Translated by James Finn Cotter, Web Edition by Charles Franco, Paradise, Canto XXI, ***I saw a ladder, glimmering like gold***

[3] Idem, Canto XXX (verse 58-60)

*The third part is **The Divine Vision***
«O everlasting Light, you dwell alone
125 In yourself, know yourself alone, and known
And knowing, love and smile upon yourself! »[4]

*Through the eyes, the glittering light of the exterior world penetrates in our soul. After seeing the blinding **Light**, our eyes go toward the interior, towards the visualizing of the interior light. Moreover, in the third place, we find behind the inner light the EVERLASTING LIGHT. (...)*

***Paradiso** as a spiritual world overpasses the terrestrial attracting circle and it conquers freely the supremacy of the gravitational forces that go higher as an arrow in Endlessness. This is the place where we, the people arrived on the Earth. That is why **Paradiso** is a special world that has no connection to those two parts of the Dantescian creation either with the **under-world** or the **world of the above**. The earth with all its problems, having the lows and the highs is a lonely tiny planet if we 'regard it from the point of view of the stars'. It is a speck of dust in the Endlessness of the Cosmos. It is a TERRESTRIAL COMEDY in THE COSMIC DIVINA COMMEDIA. But our spirit before flying again freely in the Cosmos is embodied on the Earth, by going in every circle of the spiral that goes down into the abyss and then it goes up in an enflamed rising."*[5]

This part of the mono-opera is made for voice and piano.

The text in the Italian language is selective and it is musically processed as the previous parts have been processed. The composer extracts the following lines from the contexts.

Table 13

PARADISE – I.[6]
Canto XXI – *I saw a ladder, glimmering like gold*
I saw a ladder, glimmering like gold
Lit by a sunbeam, running up so high
That my sight could not trace it to the top.
I saw so many splendours stepping down
On all its rungs that I thought every star
In heaven was cascading down from it,
(…)

[4] Ibidem, Canto XXXIII, (verse 124-126.)
[5] Terényi, Ede, *Dante: La Divina Commedia*, in: *Zene – Költői világ (Music – Poetical World)*, Ed. Grafycolor, Cluj-Napoca, 2008, p. 133.
[6] Dante, Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, Translated by James Finn Cotter, Web Edition by Charles Franco.

"And tell me why within this wheeling sphere
The sweet symphony of paradise is silent,
Which through the spheres below sounds so devoutly."
"You have the sight and hearing of a mortal,"
He answered me; "there is no singing here
(…)

"Down on the holy ladder's rungs I stepped
So far to offer you warm-hearted welcome
With my talk and the light that mantles me:
(…)

"Divine light comes to focus here on me
By piercing through the beams embracing me:

"Its power, fusing with my sight, uplifts
My soul so high above itself, I see
The Supreme Being from which it flows out.

"From this sight comes the joy with which I flame,
For as my seeing sharpens, so I match
The sharpness of my flame to equal it.
(…)

"The mind is light here, on earth it is smoke.
Consider, then, how it can do down there
What it cannot do up here with heaven's help."

PARADISE – II.

Canto XXX - *From out this river shot up living sparks*

From out this river shot up living sparks
That dropped on every side into the blossoms,
Like rubies in a setting of pure gold.

Then, as if intoxicated by the fragrance,
They dove once more into the wondrous flood,
And as one sank, another spark shot out.

"The flame of high desire driving you
To gain more knowledge of what you see here
Pleases me the more the more it surges.

"But first you are required to drink this water
Before your burning thirst can be relieved."

PARADISE – III.

Canto XXXIII – *"Virgin mother, daughter of your Son,*

(*Ave Maria gratia plena!* – added text in front by the composer)

1 ***"Virgin mother, daughter of your Son,***
Humbler and higher than all other creatures,
(…)

4 *"You are the one who lifted human nature*
To such nobility that its own Maker
Did not disdain to be made of its making.

"Within your womb was lit once more the flame
Of that love through whose warmth this flower opened
To its full bloom in everlasting peace.

10 *"To us up here you are the torch of noon*
Blazing with love, and for the mortals down there
You are the living fountainhead of hope.
(…)

124 *O everlasting Light, you dwell alone*
In yourself, know yourself alone, and known
And knowing, love and smile upon yourself!
(…)

142 *Here powers failed my high imagination:*
But by now my desire and will were turned,
Like a balanced wheel rotated evenly,

*By the Love that moves the sun and the other stars.**"****

The First part (Paradiso I) – (Canto XXI.) is subdivided into three sections of decreasing measures: 61 + 25 + 10 measures (*Andante* ♩=72-84, *Allegretto grazioso, Tempo I. + Coda*).

The first section adopts a rondo form of the following scheme:

A	**+**	**B**	**+**	**A_{var1}**	**+**	**C**	**transition**	**A_{var2}**	**transition**
(m.1-25.)		(25-33.)		(33-46.)		(47-54.)	(54-56.)	(57-61.)	(61-62.)
24 m.		8 m.		14 m.		7 m.	3 m.	4 m.	1 m.

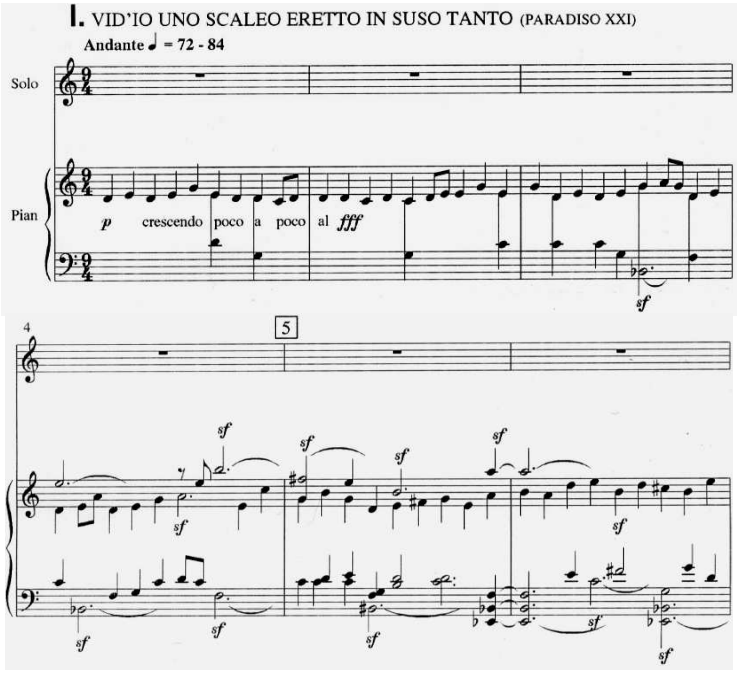
The Structural Conception of the Composing Parts of the Musical Work: Paradiso – I. (Canto XXI.)

Ede Terényi: *Dantesca, Paradiso, "The Golden Steps"*

As we can see from the scheme of the form, the proportionality of the composing segments is very flexible. The composer allows an ampler development for the thematic segments **A** except for $\mathbf{A_{var2}}$ that in the four measures have the roles to remind of the main thematic material before the musical approach of a new section.

The Segment A involves only the party of the piano. In this way, it constitutes an ample introduction for the entire **Paradiso**. Its own highlighted chords on one hand, by the *sforzando*, and on the other hand, by their prolongation under the form of the pedals in the acute and the low register that frame the flow of crochets of the inner voices. They suggest the tolling of the bells.

Ex. 54



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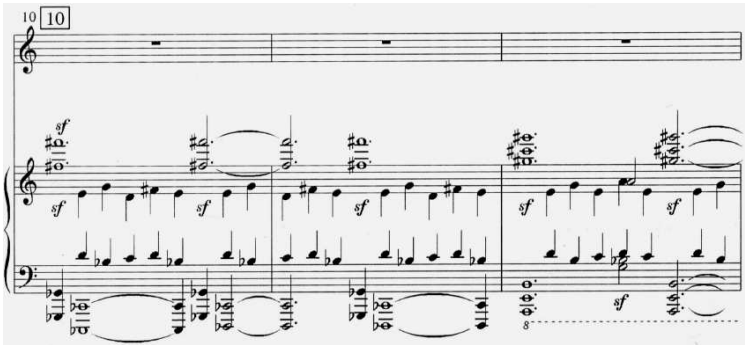
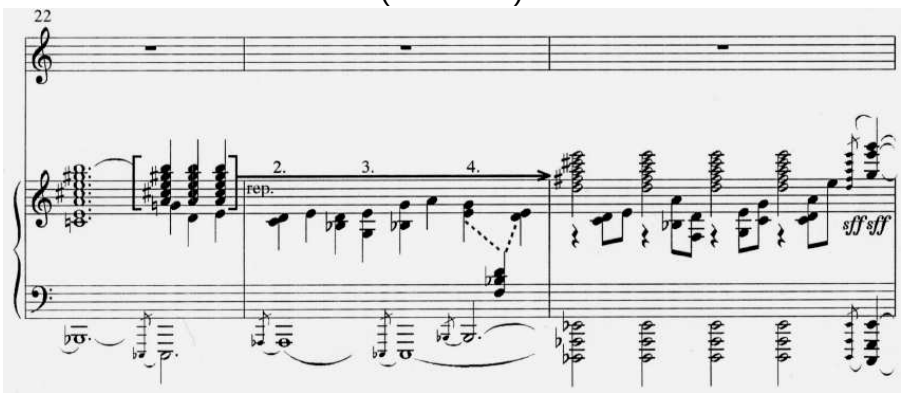


Alongside the sinusoidal oscillation or the ascendance under the shape of a scale of the crochets and the pedals that are prolonged, we can come across a harmonic procedure that is adopted by the composer as the chorded repetition under the form of a rhythmic pedal.

Ex. 56

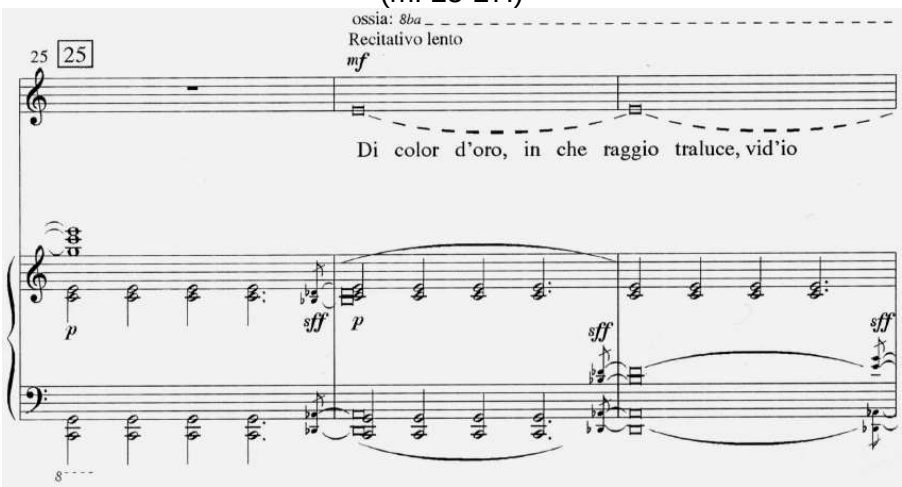
(m. 22-24.)



The Segment B imposes in a forefront the tone *C* and the chord *C major* as a symbol of the golden glittering light, which is the way through which Dante perceives the ascending steps of a wonderful scale.

Ex. 57

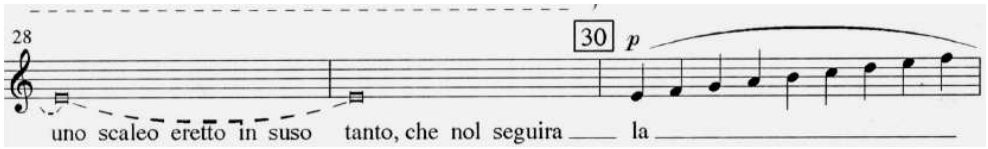
(m. 25-27.)



In this segment, the solo voice intervenes through a *recitativo parlato lento* on the *E* tone. This recitativo is suggestively ended through an illustrative programme music on an ascending Phrygian scale.

Ex. 58

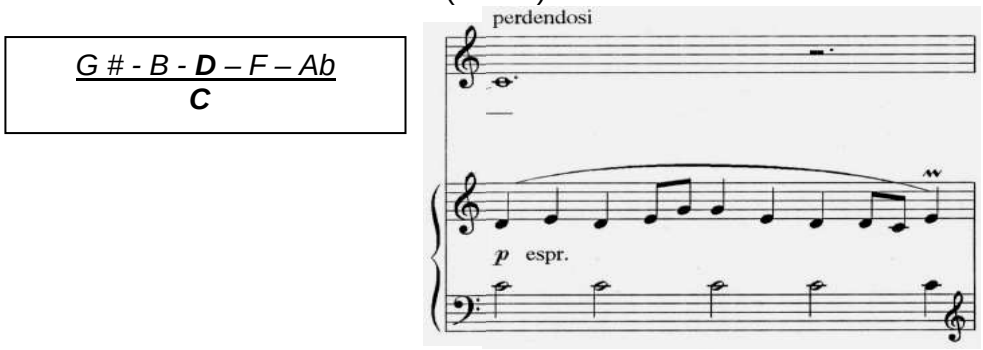
(m. 28-30.)



The following segment $\mathbf{A}_{var1}$ brings back the ascending suggestive motifs as some synaesthetic counterparts of the golden scale. The central *C* tone is imposed as a rhythmic pedal from the first measure of the tone already (see m. 33). Alongside the segment, the musical discourse circumscribes the following axis:

Ex. 59

(m. 33.)



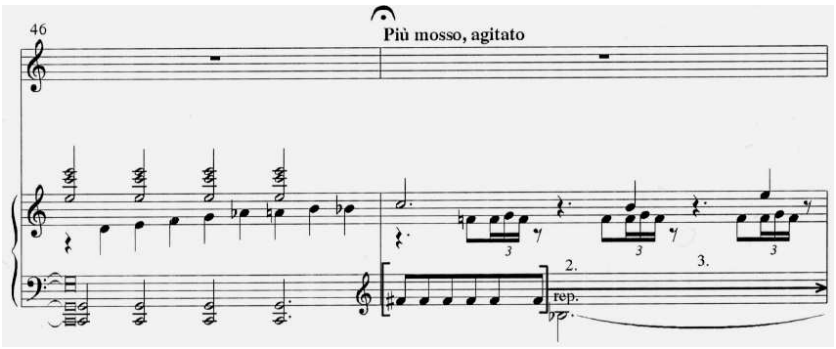
$$\underline{G\,\#\,-\,B\,-\,\mathbf{D}\,-\,F\,-\,Ab}$$
$$\mathbf{C}$$

This *D* axis is overlapped as a shadow on the tone C – a tone that dominated the two previous parts (*Inferno* and *Purgatorio*)[7]. The presence of the tone *C* can be found in the melodic line of the solo, too; however, it is seen in a latent form.

The Segment C brings as a novelty in the first place the modification of the tempo in *Più mosso, agitato*. In the case of the light symbol, closed to the tone *C,* the anti-pole is imposed in a forefront in the axial system, which is the tone *F#.* This tone appears to medium voice of the instrument under the form of a rhythmic pedal that is coated with its own scordatura (the tone *F* that alternatively appears in the Triplet) of Semiquavers. We can mention the fact that, so far, in this part, the composer has not used any values of the semiquavers or any exceptional metrical divisions either.

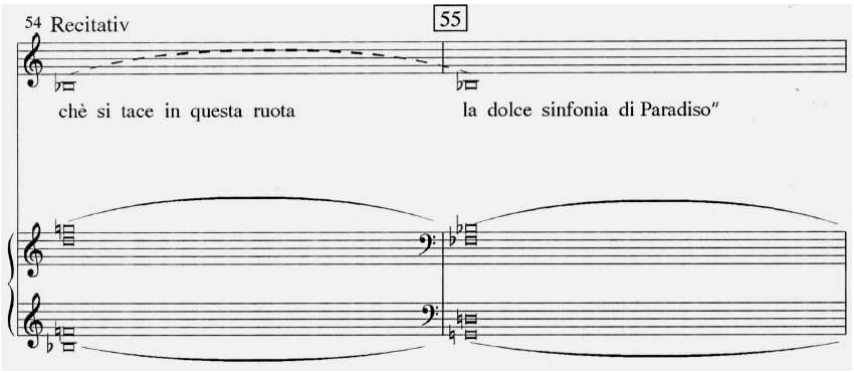
[7] See the analysis of these parts in the previous numbers of the magazine.

Ex. 60



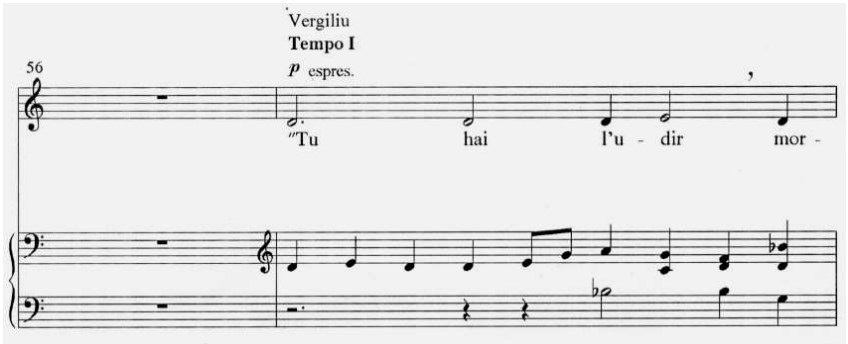
The transition of a *recitativo secco, parlato* type of two measures that is followed by a measure of a general pause that connects the second thematic comeback **A_{var2}**:

Ex. 61



The Section A_{var2} has the dimension of a simple musical phrase of four measures. It reproduces the main thematic material under a varied form.

Ex. 62



A transition of the dimension of a sole measure under the form of a *recitativo recto-tono* and one that belongs to the mixture of the chorded oscillation of the piano makes the connection towards **the second section of the form of this first part.** It is a ***Quasi trio*** in an ***Allegretto grazioso*** tempo**.**

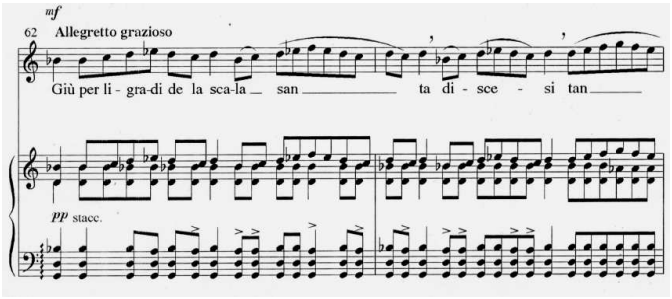
This new section of the form develops using the following scheme:

A	**B**	**A_{var1}**
(m. 62-69.)	(m. 70-72.)	(m. 73-86.)
8m.	3m.	14m.
(a + b)		$[a_{var1} + b_{var1} + a_{var2}$ (tranz) $+ b_{var2}]$
4 + 4m		5 + 3,5 + 1,5 (1) + 3

From the dimensions of the composing segments of this second section, we can see the freedom that the author uses for this musical period.

The Segment A makes its début with a melodically line that goes beyond some random arpeggio chords. By this procedure of harmonic support, we can find the author to allude subtly to the sonority of the harp.

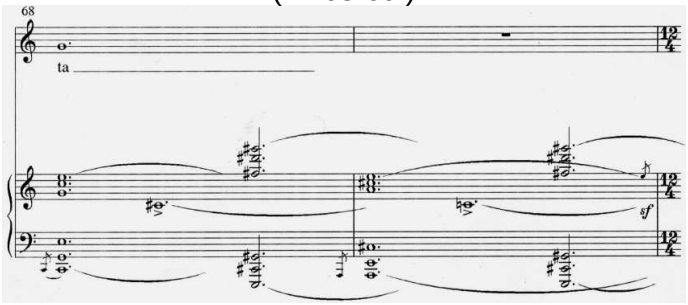
Ex. 63



Here, the tone *G* is imposed as it represents the human dimension. The segment **A** is ended through chords of longer duration and, by using the *legato*, it suggests the bangs of the bells through an illustrative programme music:

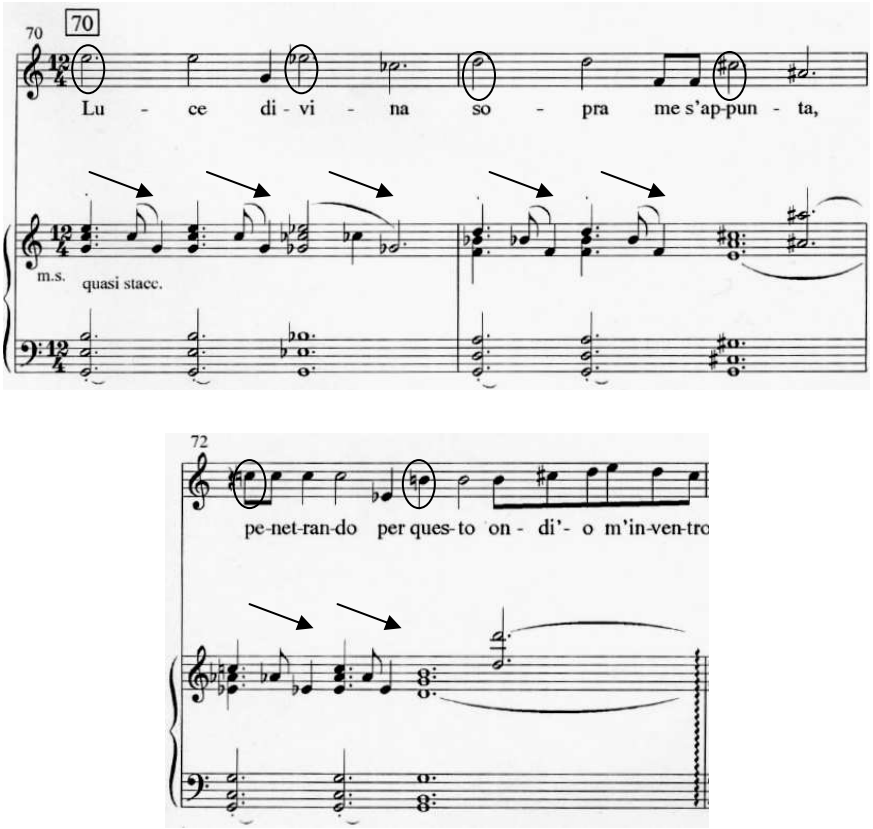
Ex. 64

(m. 68-69.)



The Segment B brings the first meter change of this part. The meter 9/4 that was a steady meter until this time, it is transformed now in 12/4. However, the tempo stays unchanged as an *Allegretto grazioso*. The entire segment, along the three measures is in fact, a melodic circumscription of a chromatic descendant scale between the tones that are situated to the pole - anti-pole, namely, *E – Bb*. In the party of the piano, above a *G* pedal that is chord amplified, the right hand develops an arpeggio of a descending chromatic six-four chord. The sustaining chords are interpreted into a *Quasi Staccato*:

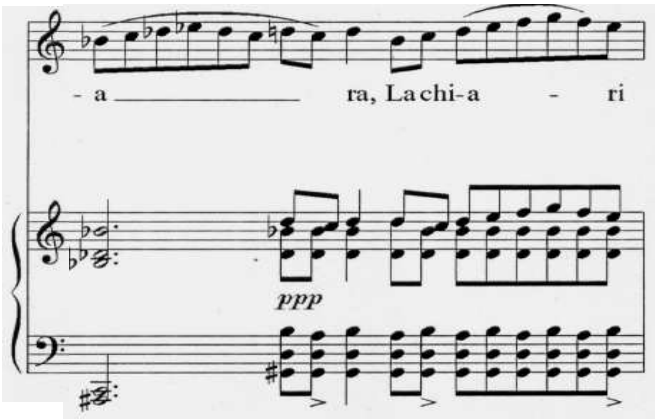
Ex. 65



The Segment A_{var1} rounds the section *Quasi Trio* amplifying the segment **A** to an almost double value (14 measures as opposed to 8) and it adopts the following processing scheme of the musical material: **a_{var1} + b_{var1} + a_{var2} (tranz.) + b_{var2} [**5+3,5+1,5 (+1) +3 measures**].** Regarding the symmetrical structure (4 + 4 measures) of the segment **A**, in the segment **A_{var1}** we notice the preponderant tendency of avoidance of the quadrant

section by using asymmetrical motifs and phrases. From a tonal point of view, one of the most interesting solutions is offered in the measure 81 at the beginning of the segment $\mathbf{A}_{\mathbf{var2}}$. Here, in the moment of the apparition of the **a** motif under a varied form ($_{\mathbf{var2}}$) the basic *G minor* tonality of the previous segments this is changed through $\frac{Bb}{G\#\text{-}D\text{-}B.}$

Ex. 66



Compared with the human dimension that is expressed through the tonal centre *G* of this section, the tonal ethos of the previous sections express the passion (*F minor*) the death (*Ab*), the demonic (*D*) and the transcendental (*B*)

The Section 3 has a role of a repeat. Regarding the sixty-one measures of the first *Andante* section, this coming-back to the first tempo (*Tempo* I.) it totalizes just eight measures that are followed by two *Coda* measures. It is conceived as a rounding of the musical form that has the role to re-equilibrate the musical discourse.

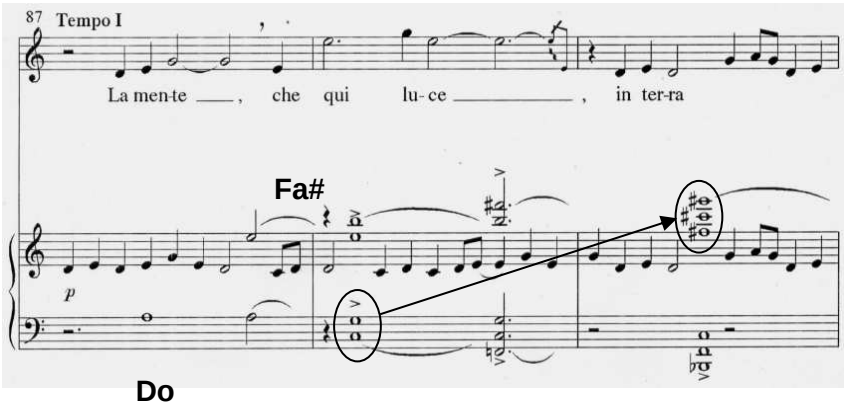
"The mind is light here, on earth it is smoke.
Consider, then, how it can do down there
What it cannot do up here with heaven's help."[8]

- as the poetic text admits.

In the same section, the basic musical motif of the first section, comes back in the same tonal context, *C – F#*.

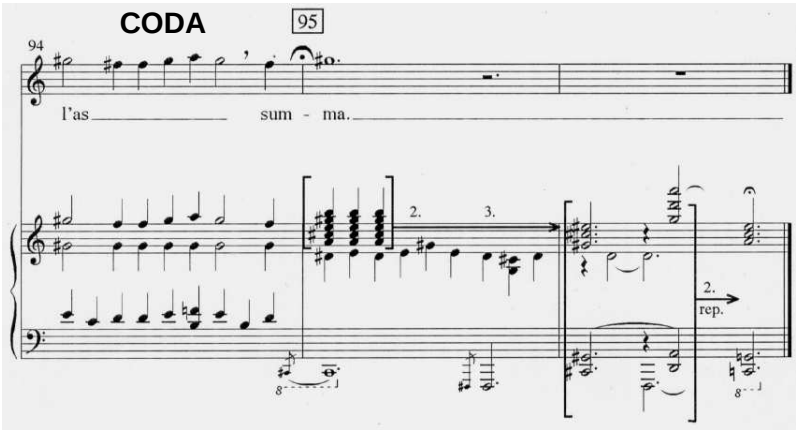
[8] Dante, Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, Translated by James Finn Cotter, Web Edition by Charles Franco, Paradise, Canto XXI.

Ex. 67



Following a pause (fermata) that suspends the musical discourse for a few moments, the two measures of the *Coda* develops above a *C* pedal a sonorous pallet that, in the vision of the composer, symbolize the colour spectre of the white light. The median sonorous stratum brings back into an intervallic distorted form the debut musical motif of the first part of the *Paradiso*.

Ex. 68



We have to imagine the entire first part as sonority of the pianistic accompaniment that seems to be electronically amplified. These effects are recommended to be made with the use it the electronic apparatus in the concert hall, as they will bring an advantage to the interpretation. If the interpretation is made by the use of a traditional piano, the piano player has to appropriate an attack of the keys that would suggest electronically sonorities.

Paradiso – II. (Canto XXX.)
Ede Terényi: *Dantesca, Paradiso, “The Dante's Rising Towards the Sun”*

In **the Second Part (Paradiso II) – (Canto XXX) – *"E di Novella Vista mi Raccesi"*,** we find the image of the stream a clear, incandescent light from the depths of which the golden and the silvery sparkles go out. The composer through a **scherzo** of 84 measures that is conceived for the piano, percussion and the solo voice transposes this into music. The second part has a three-quarto-strophic sectioning as it is made of three form sections when the middle section is divided into two ample segments. The basic tempo of the part is *Presto*, which the composer will slow down in the median section through *Poco sostenuto*. The metric of this part is alternative as the composing sections are delimited through changes of the measure. In this way, the following measures are in a succession: 12/8, 9/4, 12/4, 8/4, 12/4, 9/4.

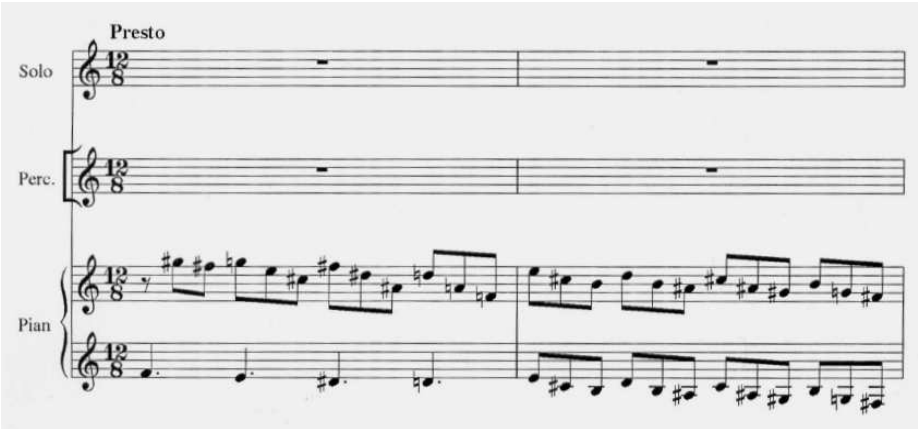
The scheme of the form is as follows:

Section 1	**Section 2**		**Section 3**
***Presto* (12/8)**	***Poco sostenuto***	⟶	
(m. 1 – 28.)	**A**(9/4)(12/4)	**B** (8/4; 12/4)	(m. 73 – 84.)
28 measures	(m. 29 – 44.)	(m. 45 – 72.)	11 measures
	16 measures	28 measures	

Out of the composing sections of the form, only the **B** segment is a vocal – instrumental segment, the rest of the part is of a pure instrumental form, either a piano, or piano + percussion part. The dimension of the sections is alternated as an extension (28 + 16 + 28 + 11 measures).

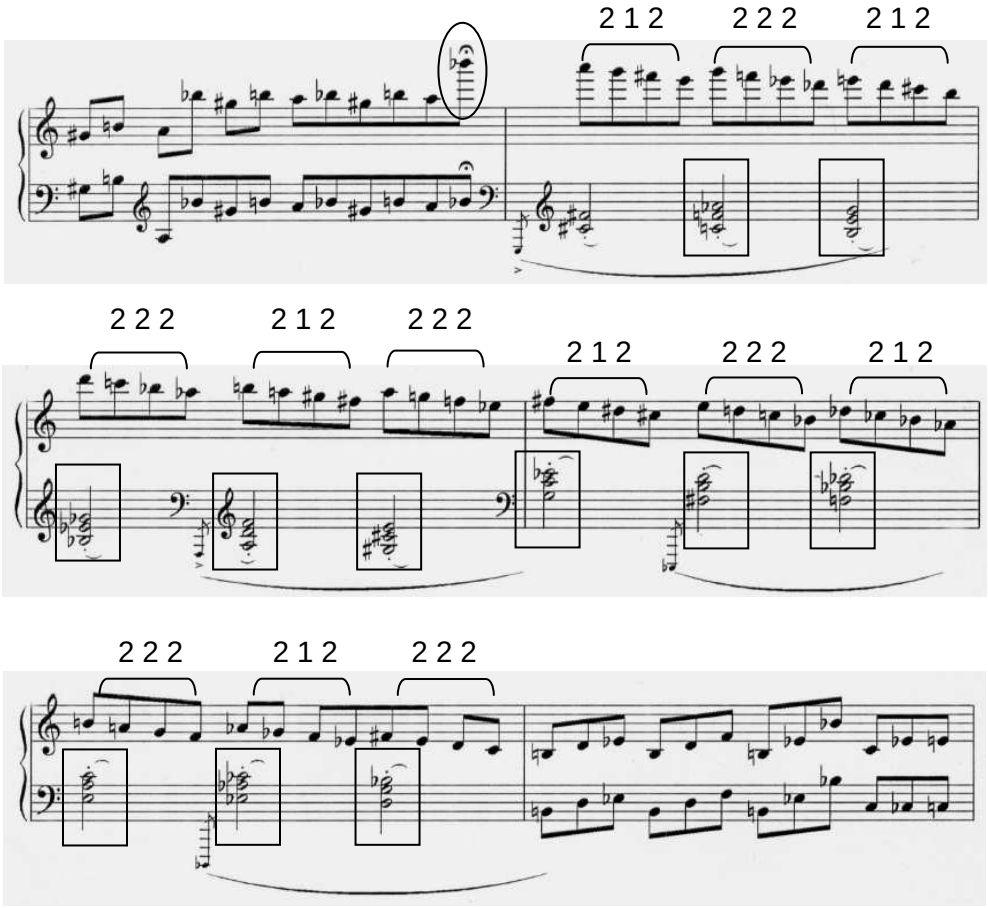
Section 1 makes its debut on the basic tonal axis of the musical work: *F – G#.*

Ex. 69



Along this first section of the form, the tonal centre is very unstable as it can be found in a permanent transformation. The continuous broken arpeggio, the semi-chromatic descending and ascending passages of the piano shape an evolving form. There is a genuine action music, a continuous rush in *veloce*, that have just one moment of respire, a stop on a pause (fermata) that is situated on a quaver, the tone *Bb7* is a culminating point as an ambitus in this section (see measure 19).

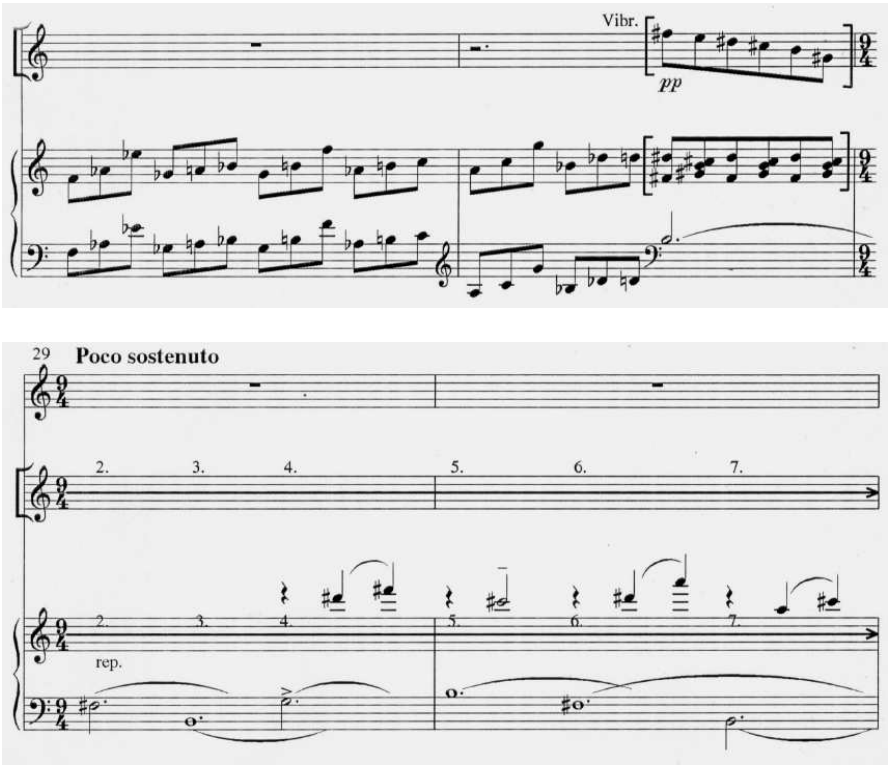
Ex. 70



The descending scale that follows the culminating point is reeled under the form of a geometrical scale of a Bartókian type: 2+1+2 / 2+2+2 / 2+1+2 / 2+2+2 and so on. The chromatic descending six-four chord mixtures sustain this scale of the models. At the end of this first section of the second part, we have the vibraphone to come near the piano in a short transition (half a measure) towards the second section that brings a slow motion into the movement: *Poco sostenuto*.

The second section is made of two segments **A** and **B.** On a **B** pedal, the second section starts in the measure 29 through decomposing chords that remind of the tolls of the bells through the prolongations of the *legato*.

Ex. 71



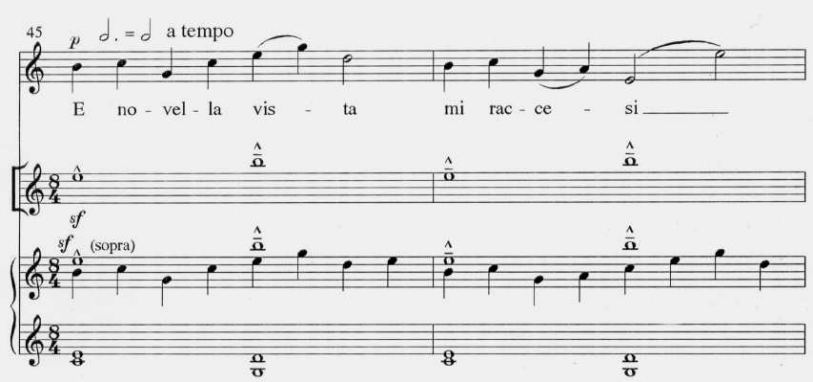
This segment presents a series of the models **2:3, 1:2, 2:1, 5:1.**

The *ostinato* repeated harmonies realize the fusion of the musical material of the segment that actions as a force to unify the entire instrumental discourse.

Taking into consideration the debut of this segment, **the segment (B)** intervenes with an ascending scordatura – on the tone *C*, as it is finished on the *D* tone that is prolonged as if a pedal is pressed.

In this frame, there are binary and ternary metrical pulsations, **1:3** model-scales, and strata-chords. The evolution of the musical discourse that is made in sequences is also a feature of the segment.

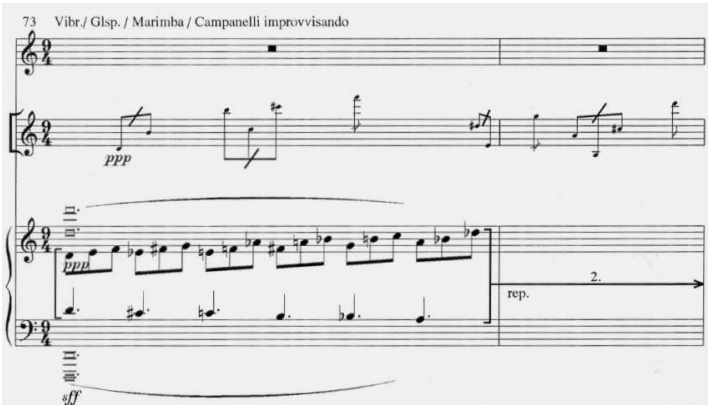
Ex. 72



In this **B** segment, the solo voice intervenes. The melodic line of the right hand of the piano player permanently doubles its discourse as it created the impression of a shadow that permanently accompanies the light.

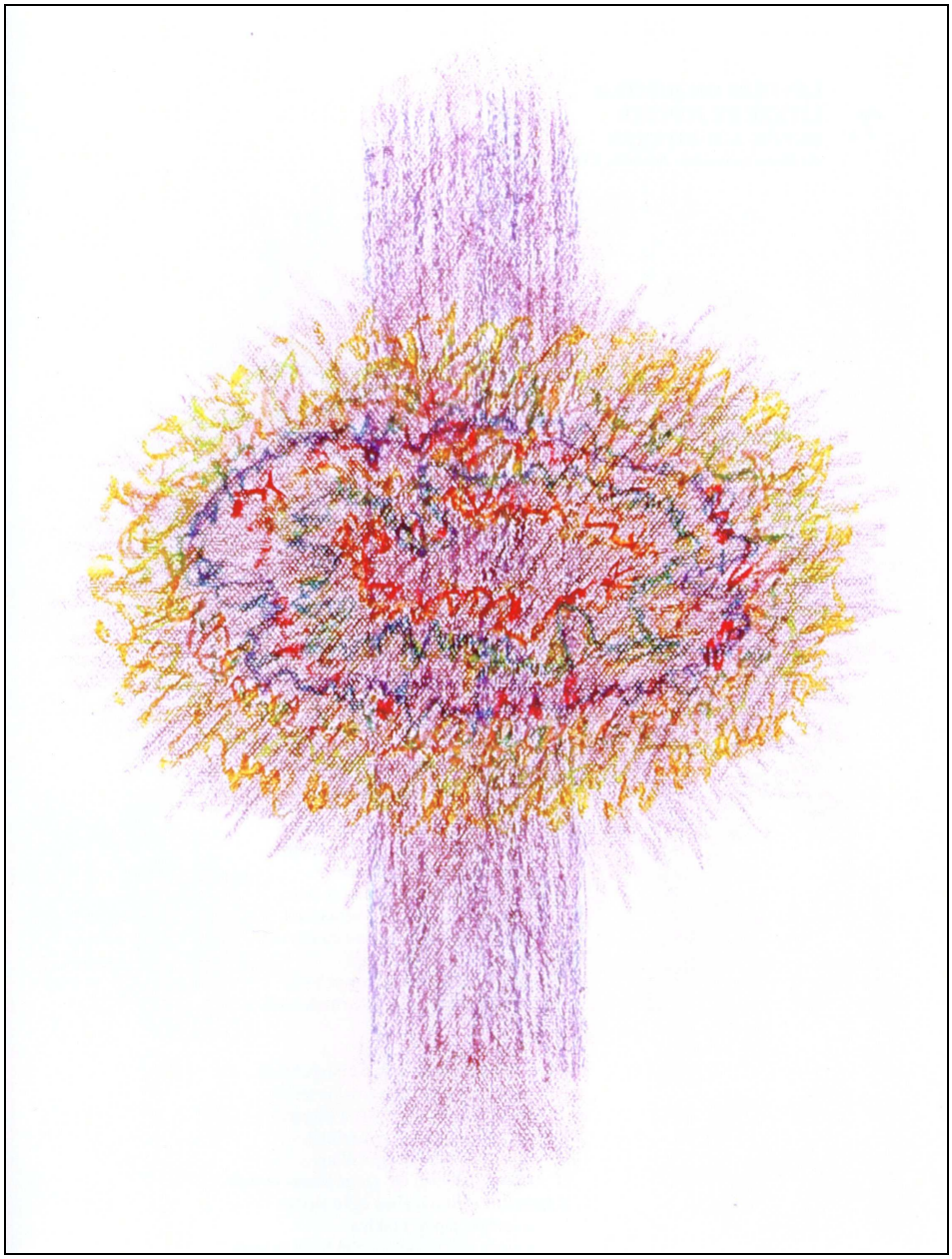
The Third Section of the form makes its debut in the measure 73 as it totally contains twelve unitary measures as a conception. The percussion instruments have the main role (Vibraphone, Glockenspiel, Marimba, Campanelli improvised). These are sustained by the *ostinato* formulae of the piano, which are framed by two pedals *D* that are played in an octave. They are semi-chromatically opened under the shape of a fan. The sonorous effects of the percussion instruments would suggest here short glittering of the light.

Ex. 73



The tone *D* constitutes the main axis of this section whose sonorous material highlights in the first plan, the subdominant, the dominant and the intra-axial anti-tonic of the basic tone (*G # – B –* ***D –*** *F – Ab*)

Paradiso – III. (Canto XXXIII.)
Ede Terényi: *Dantesca, Paradiso, „Light and Cross"*



The third part (Paradiso III) – (Canto XXXIII) is structured under a bi-strophic form (**A + A_{var1}**), the musical work ends with a Coda in five measures.

The scheme of the form of the part is outlined in the following way:

A **Avar1** **trans + Coda**

a + a_{var1} **a_{var2} + a_{var3}** 𝅝 𝅝 𝅝

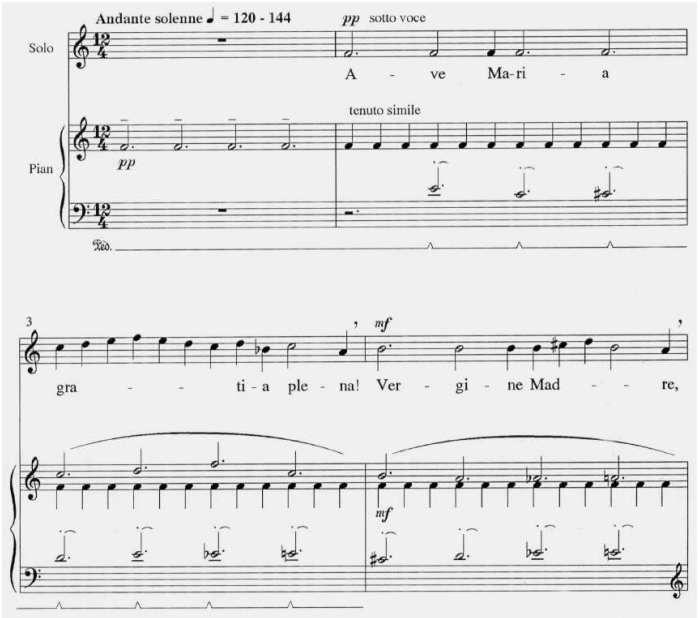
(m. 1-12.) (m. 13-21.) (m. 22-32.) (m.33-41.) (m. 42-43.) (m. 44-48.)

The text of the third part makes its debut with the phrase: *Ave Maria gratia plena!,* a phrase that does not belong to the text of the *Divine Comedy* of Dante, as there is a supplement of the composer.

As it was conceived for the piano and the voice, this part has a metric that is established by 12/4 (4 X 3) until it reaches the moment of the Coda when, through a succession of four duplets (𝅗𝅥. = 𝅗𝅥) the composer creates the impression of a measure 8/4 that was not declared.

Section A (*Andante solenne* ♩ = 120-144) reminds of the tolls of the bells from the first part of the musical work. The sinusoidal melodic line of the solo voice is accompanied by three pedal strata of the piano. The middle strata would be a rhythmic pedal that results from the assiduous repetition of a tone.

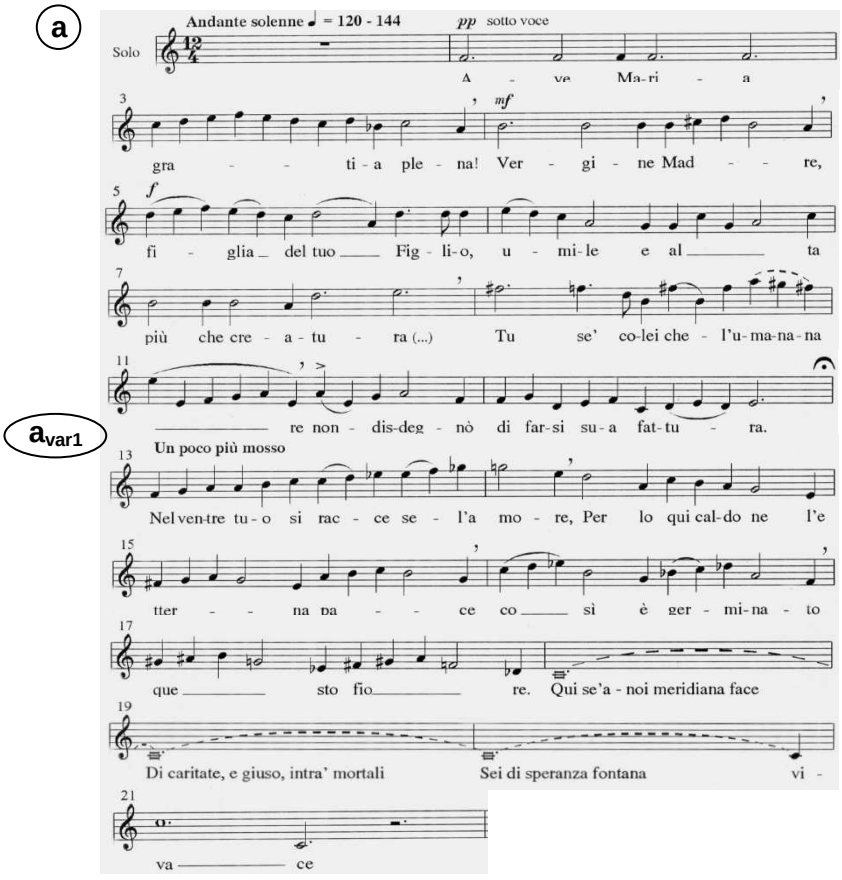
Ex. 74



The central tone of the first section of the form is *F.* Through the pedal tones that are repeated the composer circumscribes an inverted chromatic formula: *F – D – E – F#.* The *F* central axial tone (the tones of the axis is powerfully inclined towards the anti-tonic and the intra-axial sub-dominant – *F – B - D*) is solved in the segment **a$_{var1}$** on the tone *C.* The segment **a$_{var1}$** brings an idea of a rapid stillness when the indication of the composer was *Un poco più mosso.*

The fluent, evolving melodic line that is almost uninterrupted of the soprano reminds us of the "infinite" melodic drawings that are typical to the musical Baroque.

Ex. 75

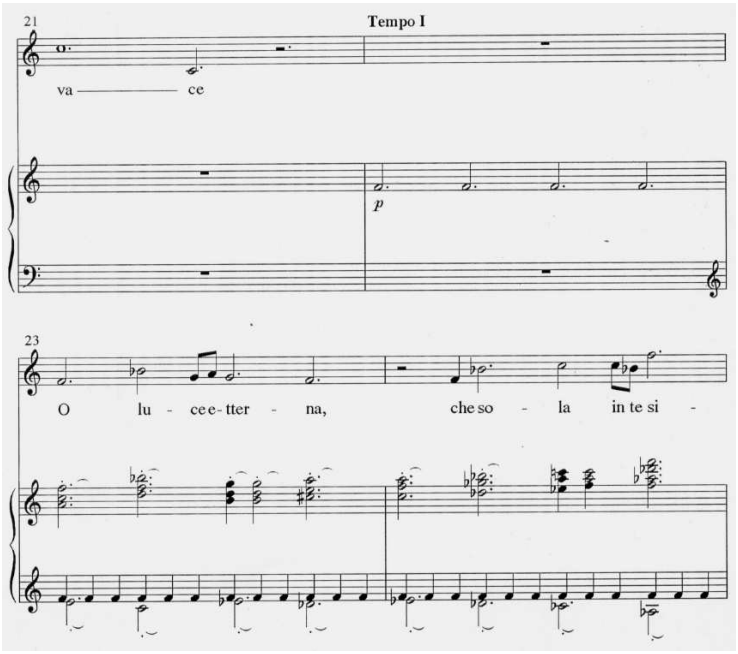


Both in the **a** segment and also in the **a$_{var}$** segment**,** we find the melodic line to get an ascension that is followed by a grouping and an establishment into a medium register.

Section Two (A_{var1}**)** comprise twenty measures that is with only one measure less than the section **A.** The equilibrium feeling of the composer tends towards the symmetry. The section is subdivided into two segments, $\mathbf{a_{var2} + a_{var3}}$ (11+9 measures).

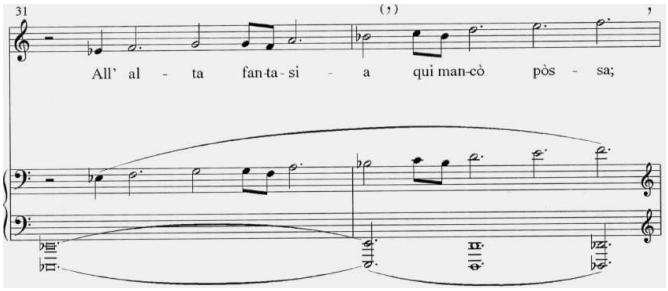
The sonorous process of **the first segment (**$\mathbf{a_{var2}}$**)** makes its debut in a similar way as the beginning of the third part, by using four tones of the pedal *F* – solo of the piano.

Ex. 76



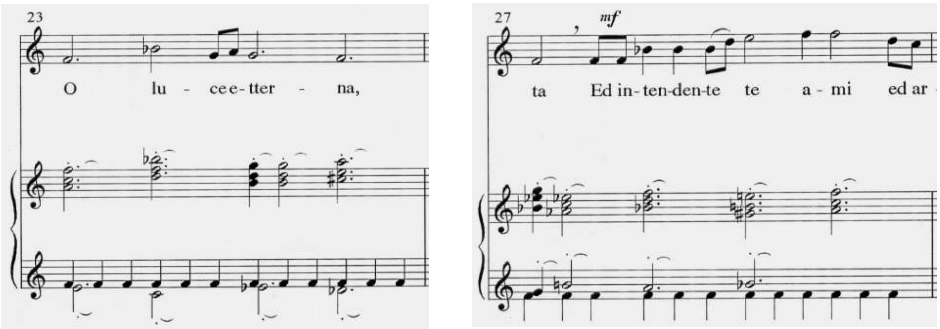
The pedal is taken over then in a rhythmic way with equal crotchets (4x3) along the entire segment, except for the last two measures. Here the ascension of the solo voice is doubled to an inferior octave of the right hand piano player. This effect is maintained by a deepening of the pedal notes that are kept in the low register.

Ex. 77



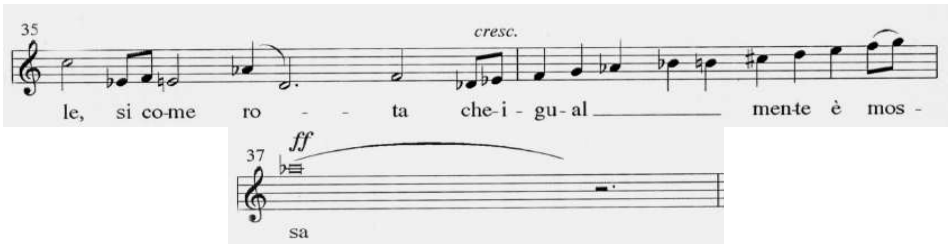
From the melodic line of the tones that imitate the bells and through the melodic line of the chords of the right hand we can easily find hints to the BACH motif and also to the permutations and their transpositions.

Ex. 78

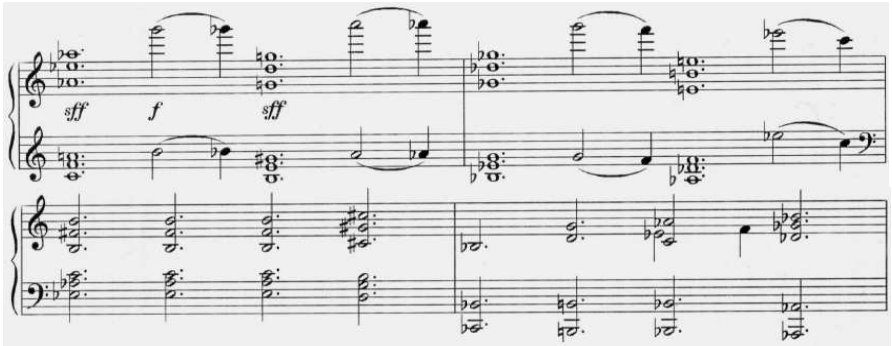


The following segment drops out the rhythmic *F* pedal and it replaces it with pedals of six-four chords and descending octaves, that are prolonged for the entire three crotchets. The ascending semi-chromatic scale of the solo voice from the measures 36 – 37 that stop on the *ff* on the high *Ab* tone already foretell about the end of the musical work.

Ex. 79



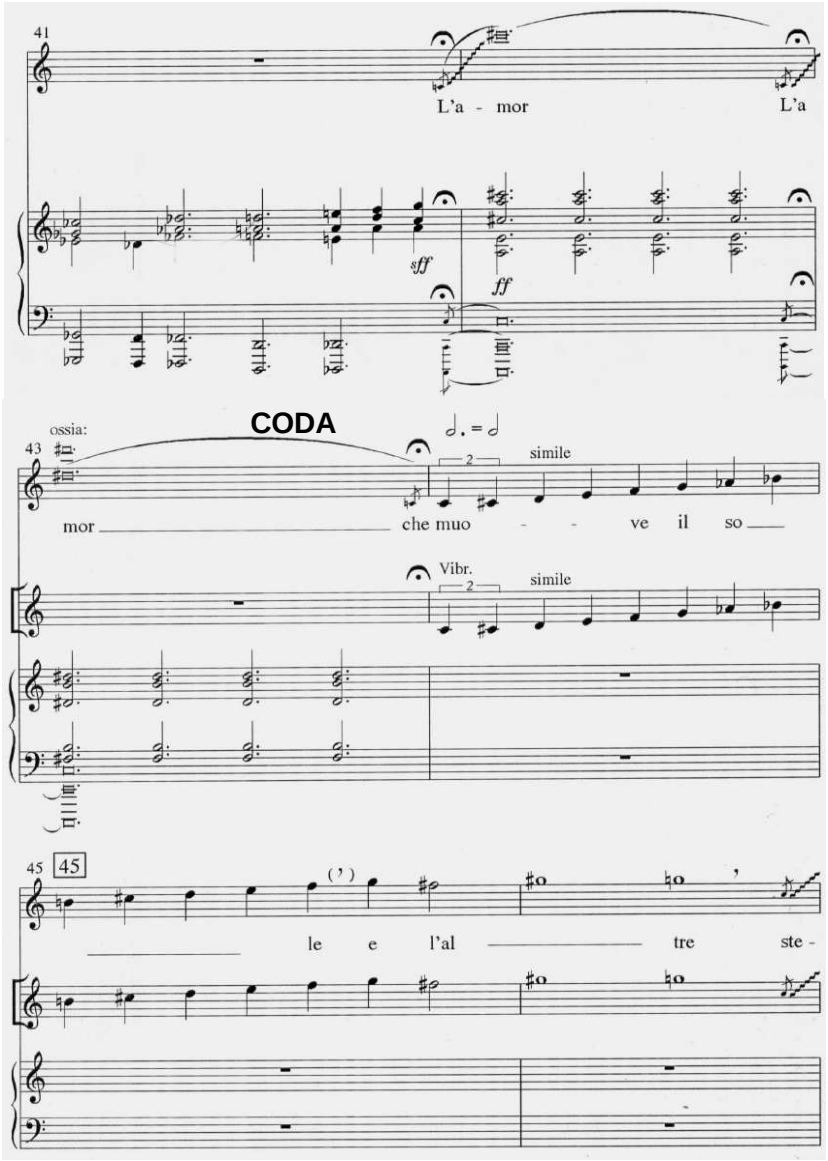
(m. 37-40.)



The transition rearange the tonal centre on the tone *C.* That is imposed on a pedal. However, the composer overlaps to the same pedal, in the same context, the augmented octave *C#*, which is also in the high register. Then, it forces up the note which climbs until it reaches *D#.* The *glissando* effects of the voice create a special sonorous impression to the audience.

Ex. 80

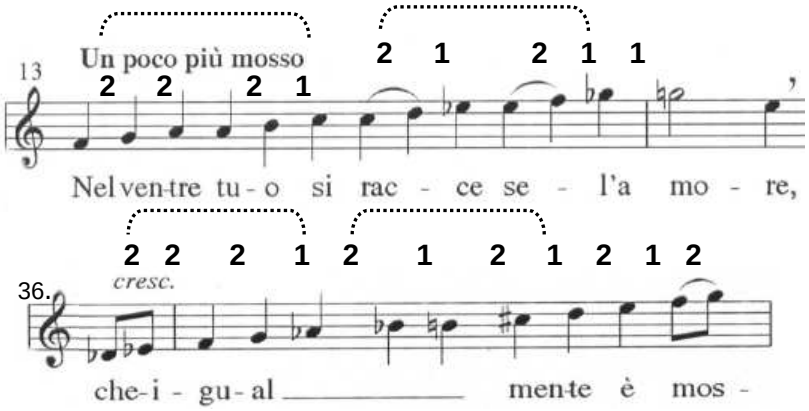
Transition



The ascending scale of the **Coda**, which evolves along two octaves, will symbolize the infinite. The *ostinato* repetitions, the rhythmic pedals, the melodic lines of a rocket type, the equal pulsation of the rhythm are also a live expression of the absolute that is permanently stable. The transition towards the Coda, together with the *C* tonal centre would impose as a forefront the *A* tone, as it shapes an *A major* chord (see the measure 42 from the example 80). *A major* appears as a symbol of the everlasting and pure love which, by the combining with the symbol of the light (*C major*) express the belief of the author that the world of the *Paradise* EXISTS as a permanence! It does not evolve or perishes!

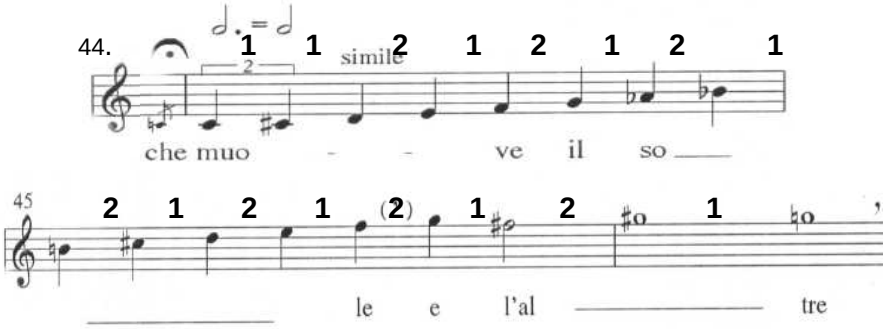
If we analytical look as a comparison to the ascending scales of this part, we can notice the following geometrical similitude: 2221 / 2121.

Ex. 81



In the segment of **a Coda** these combinations of the models are transformed on a 99% symmetrical scale (except for the distances between the three beginning notes). This model is: **12 12 12 12 ... .**

Ex. 82



By the synthesis of the sonorous world of the three parts of *Divina Commedia* of the composer Ede Terényi:

- The first part - *Inferno* is based on a geometrical, axial sonorous system, which is mainly diatonic. The gravity centre of its musical articulations often coincides with the moment of the golden section.
- In the second part - *Purgatorio* is partially based on a chromatism that comes from the diatonic and it is partially on a geometrical diatonic.
- The third part - *Paradiso* is, on the one hand tonal – modal diatonic and on the other hand, it is tonal – modal chromatic.

*****

The composer Ede Terényi talks about the sonorous universe of *Divina Commedia:*

"The sonorous universe of LA DIVINA COMMEDIA is a varied one.

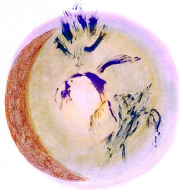
*The **Inferno** offers the outnumbered descriptions for the million variants of the human voice. Moreover, the **Sonata – Dante** is made by me in this sonorous world. It is a harsh world **The Inferno**, it is a harsh in its sonorous affirmation.*

*The **Purgatory** is the thesaurus of the God songs with a Latin text; There are outnumbered referring to the holy songs.*

*The music sound in the **Paradiso** is too (although there are here very many Dantian references to the Gregorian melodies). Nevertheless, the sonorous source goes further and further of the human voice that is sung even from the sonority of the spoken world on the lips of that people to whom Dante addressed to in **Paradise**. The dialogue of the thoughts takes the place of the sonorous communication. THE MUSIC IS ALSO A DIALOGUE OF THE THOUGHTS".*[9]

*

As a conclusion for the analyse of the three parts of the musical work *La Divina Commedia* of Ede Terényi, I want to specify that the target of my work is to make other interprets take an interest into playing it as my intention was to convince them of the special savour of this music. In this respect, I made my presentation to be descriptive-analytical and I hope that I raised the interest for *La Divina Commedia* to be looked upon in the future.



[10]

(Translated by Maria Cozma)

[9] Terényi, Ede, *Dantesca*, Ed. Echinox, Cluj, 2004, p. 73.
[10] Terényi, Ede, *Spots on the Moon*, in: *Dantesca*, Ed. Echinox, Cluj, 2004, p. 51.

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