EDE TERÉNYI – THE MONO-OPERA "LA DIVINA COMMEDIA" – CONTENTS AND FORMS (I. PART – "INFERNO")

GABRIELA COCA*

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 also 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: monoopera, Dante, Divina Commedia, Inferno, Terényi, structure, form, density, geometrically, chromatic, symmetrical.

"For thirty years I am followed (tempted) the great work of Dante, DIVINA COMMEDIA.

I was 37 years old when I met his fantastic theatre play. I was stricken the beginning line: 'He arrived on the middle step.' YES, I arrived here, too, surrounded by the frenzy of the scenic game that assaulted in the same time the spirit with the physic. In addition, I 'found myself into a dense wood' – this new revelation tore me out. The third line has been more painfully: 'since I was wondering I have lost the right way.'

Suddenly, I felt it very closed to me, I felt Dante to be very human: as if he had come after me!"(...)

I started to understand better the world, the man, and, at a certain moment, everything that surrounded me. I looked at the being differently; the objects that came close to me were looked at in the same different way. Then I have not suspected yet, that this is just the preparation of Dante towards the understanding of some superior worlds."

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Terényi, Ede, *Dantesca*, Ed. Echinox, Cluj, 2004, p.69.

In the year 1972, as he was under the influence of the reading of the *Inferno* chapter of Dante's work, the composer conceives the musical work entitled *Terzine of Dante* – a sonata that was written for the baritone, the piano and the trombone. This sonata is taken by the author with some modifications as a first act – *Inferno* – in the mono-opera *La Divina Commedia*.

The mono-opera *La Divine Commedia* as the poetic creation of Dante is made of three parts: I. *Inferno* (that is composed in 1971-72 and it was revised in 2004), II. *Purgatorio* (2004), III. *Paradisio* (2004).

Each part is structured in three composing parts that offers the sonorous image of three songs of *Divina Commedia* of Dante (with three exceptions: *Inferno III* and *Purgatorio II* – where the author takes stanzas from two songs), in the following way:

Table 1

Ede Terényi – *La Divina Commedia* – songs that are sonorous transposed

| Inferno | Purgatorio | Paradiso |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| I. Canto III. | I. Canto IX. | I. Canto XXI. |
| II. Canto XXX. | II. Canto XVIII. | II. Canto XXX. |
| III. Canto XXXII. | (+ a few stanas of XIX.) | III. Canto XXXIII. |
| (+ a few stanzas of XXXIV.) | III. Canto XXVII. | |

The instrument-vocal assembly of the three parts promotes the symbolic of the cipher three that has the following components:

Table 2



The metric of the parts are also based on the symbol of the cipher three. Therefore, the part *Inferno* in the debut section (*Canto III*) contains mainly temporal structures of the bloc of three and six sounds. The median section (*Canto XXX*) is dominated by pulsations of four, three and two repeating sounds respectively. The third section (*Canto XXXII* + XXXIV) contains a latent ternary pulsation.

The part **Purgatorio** is already structured in the traditional metric. The first section ($Canto\ IX$) is conceived in the measure 6/8. The second section ($Canto\ VIII + XIX$) is in a measure that is less used - 8/2 (with three possible commutation variants: 3+2+3, 3+3+2 and 2+3+3). The third section has the same metric as the second section, 8/2 respectively.

The part *Paradisio* promotes on a metric plan multiples of three that are as follows: the section one (*Canto XXI*) – 9/4, the section two (*Canto XXX*) – 12/8, and section three (*Canto XXXIII*) – the measure 12/4.

The text of the mono-opera is in Italian. From the above-mentioned songs, the author takes selectively just a few stanzas. It is interesting to follow successively the stanzas that are in the whole those which are inspired by the composers. By their apparition in the musical work, the stanzas that are processed by the composer in the Inferno are the following:

Table 3

"INFERNO – I.2 Canto III. - "Who lived without being blamed or applauded." 14 Here you must give up all irresolution; All cowardice must here be put to death. "We are come to the place I spoke to you about Where you shall see the sorrow-laden people, Those who have lost the Good of the intellect." *(…)* 22 Here heartsick sighs and groaning and shrill cries Re-echoed through the air devoid of stars, So that, but started, I broke down in tears. *(…)* 34 And he told me: "This way of wretchedness Belongs to the unhappy souls of those Who lived without being blamed or applauded. (...) "These people have no hope of again dying, 46 And so deformed has their blind life become That they must envy every other fate. *(…)* 64 These wretches, who had never been alive, Went naked and repeatedly were bitten By wasps and hornets swarming everywhere. The bites made blood streak down upon their faces: Blood mixed with tears ran coursing to their feet. And there repulsive worms sucked the blood back.

² Dante, Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, Translated by James Finn Cotter, Web Edition by Charles Franco.

| | INFERNO – II. Canto XXX – "To choose to hear such barbs is a base choice." |
|-----|--|
| 0.4 | |
| 91 | And I inquired, "Who are those two drudges, Steaming like wet hands in wintertime? |
| 07 | () |
| 97 | "She is the wife who falsely accused Joseph, |
| | The other is false Sinon, the Greek from Troy. |
| | Their burning fever makes their bodies reek." |
| 100 | And one of them, appearing to take offense, |
| | Perhaps at being named so negatively, |
| | Punched his fist at Adam's stretched-out paunch. |
| 103 | The paunch reverberated like a drum, |
| | And Master Adam smashed him in the face |
| | With a hook just as hard, telling him, |
| | () |
| 109 | To this the other answered, "When you marched |
| | To the fire, it wasn't so ready then: |
| | But it was plenty ready when you coined!" |
| | And the one with dropsy: "That's telling the truth! |
| | But you were no such witness to the truth |
| | There, when asked to tell the truth at Troy!" () |
| 121 | "And thirst that cracks your tongue torture you," |
| | Cried back the Greek, "and the foul bilge swell up |
| | Your guts to hedge-size right before your eyes!" |
| | () |
| 127 | "You've gotten burning heat and an aching head! |
| | For you to lap up the mirror of Narcissus |
| | You wouldn't need a lot of words of coaxing!" |
| 130 | I was all involved in listening to them |
| | When my master said, "Now keep on looking |
| | A little longer and I'll quarrel with you!" |
| | () |
| 145 | "If ever again fortune should find you |
| | Where people loiter for such wrangling, |
| | Then realize that always I am with you: |
| | "To choose to hear such barbs is a base choice." |

INFERNO – III. (Canto XXXII + XXXIV) Canto XXXII – "I struck my foot hard on one of the faces."

73 Now while we walked onward toward the center To which the whole weight of the world pulls down And while I shuddered with the eternal chill,

Whether it happened by will or fate or chance I don't know, but, moving among the heads, I struck my foot hard on one of the faces.

Through tears he screamed, "Why do you kick me? (...)

My guide stood still, and I said to the shade Who swore and cursed with hardened bitterness, "Who are you, insulting other people?"

"Who are you who stroll through Antenora Kicking the cheeks of others?" he responded, "Were you alive, I wouldn't take that from you!"

90

"I am alive, and it may be worth your effort, Should you seek fame, that I would now note down Your name with the others." This was my reply.

And he cried, "I want just the opposite!

You have a poor grasp of how to flatter us!

Get out of here and give me no more trouble!"

At that I grabbed him by the scruff of his neck And said, "Either you give me your name now Or you won't have a hair left here on top!" (...)

103 I had already twisted his hair in my hand And pulled out more than a full hank of it, While he yelped on and kept his eyes down low,

When someone else shouted, "What's with you, Bocca? Don't you sound off enough with your clattering jaws But now you have to bark? What evil's got you?"

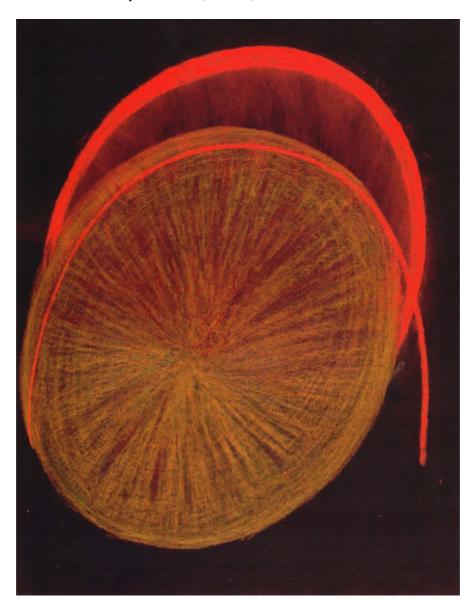
(...)

109 "Now," I said, "I don't need you to blab more, Canto XXXIV

133 Along that hidden path my guide and I Started out to return to the bright world.

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

Table 4
Ede Terényi: Dantesca, Inferno, "The Gate of the Inferno"



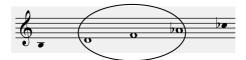
³ Terényi, Ede, *Dantesca*, Ed. Echinox, Cluj, 2004, p. 13.

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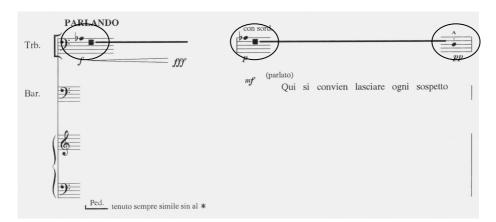
The song that is structured in four musical segments makes its debut in the first segment with a static picture – Parlando – where the composer suggests the sensation of being far through echo effects that are obtained through the linking of some extreme dynamics degrees: f cresc. fff, p – pp, f – pp.

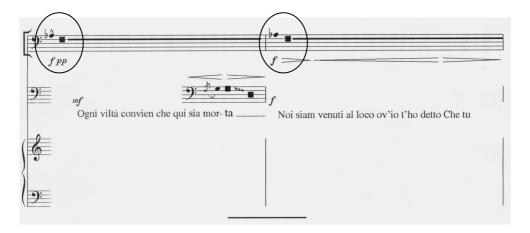
The musical material of the first picture gravitates in the tonic F axis that adopts as a nucleus the tonic sounds and those of the intra-axial dominant: F-A b.

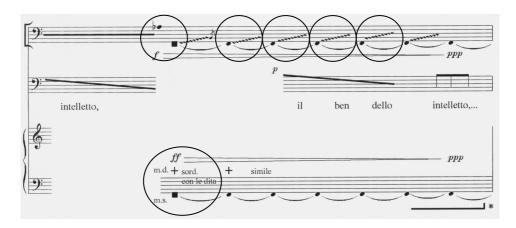
Ex. 1



The Axis of the Tonic

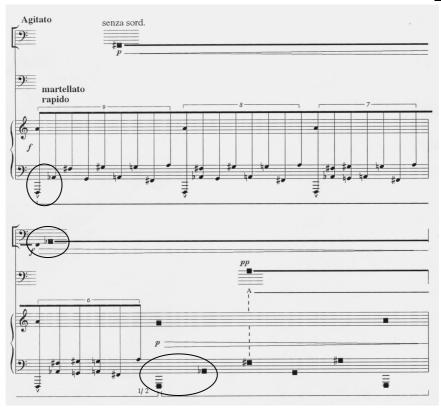






The second segment of the form keeps the same nucleus as a gravitational centre through the grave register that suggests the deepening sensation – through the illustrative programmatic – the depth of the *Inferno*.

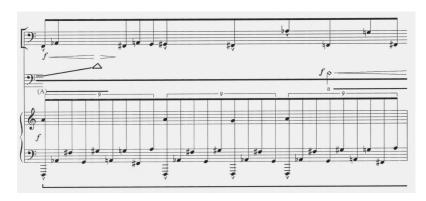
Ex. 2



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The third segment creates a sonorous density that constitutes the centre of this first picture.

Ex. 3



The fourth segment rounds the first section of the form through an effect of calm that is marked through sonorous twinkle.

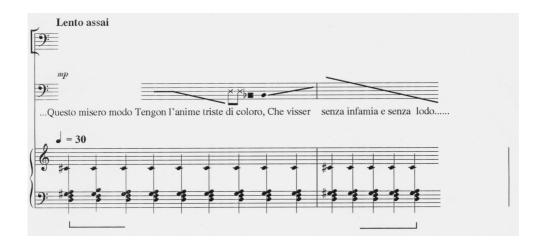
Ex. 4



The entire first section has a feminine Yin feature; the sonorous colour is sombre as it is profusely marked by the small third: F - A b. The second section is profiled under the form of an epic discourse that is developed on the ostinato repetition of the basic chord.



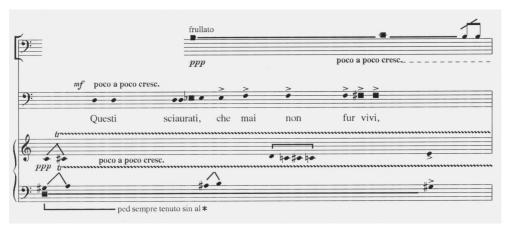




The basic chord is structured in two strata: a stratum – tritone D minor and a geometric stratum – C# β : C# β D minor

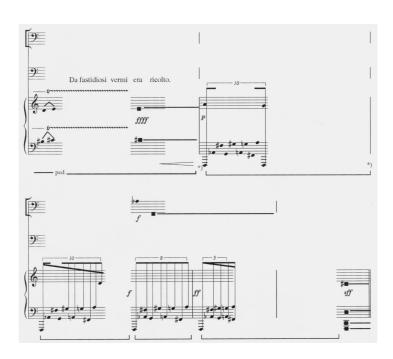
The third section brings with itself an evolving structure of an actionable profile, the tremolo of the piano that will have a trombone later on attached to it with a tremolo that amplifies the atmosphere of a perpetual continuum.

Ex. 6



Having in mind the rounding of the first song, the fourth section brings back the static image of the first section. The nucleus of the musical discourse comes back as well in the following structure: F - Ab and also the author brings back repeats of the motif from the second segment of the first section (see comparatively the example number two).

Ex. 7

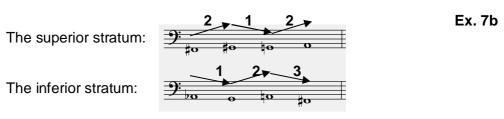


After the finalisation of the section three in *fff* with a crescendo, the fourth section suddenly reduces the dynamics to the *piano*. By training a few groups of exceptional divisions (*the decimole, the octuplet, the quintuplet*) in a crescendo we have the dynamics to be once again amplified to *f*, *ff*.

The intervallic evolution that is developed under a fan shape and it is marked by turned chromatic formulae. These formulae are developed in the chromatic pentachord that can be found between the sounds F - A.



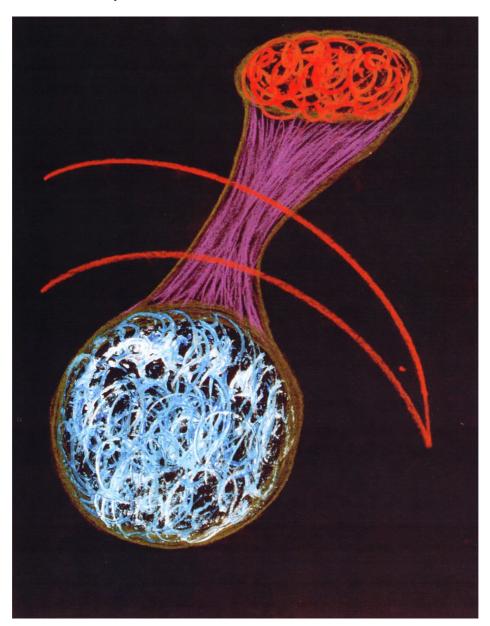
The latent polyphony that is detached from these divisions is made geometrically after the following patterns:



"INFERNO - II. (Canto XXX)

Table 5

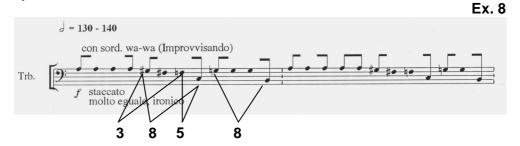
Ede Terényi: Dantesca, Inferno, "On the Back of the Monster"⁴



⁴ Terényi, Ede, *Dantesca*, Ed. Echinox, Cluj, 2004, p. 19.

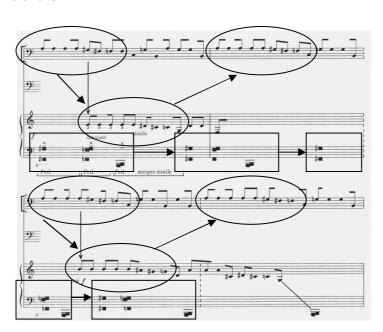
The second song of the *Inferno* adopts the profile of a rondo form that has three episodes and a coda.

The theme of rondo has a style of an ironic scherzo. There are repetitions of equal and staccato sounds of the trombone that draw a descending, semi chromatic melodic line that is marked by numerological symmetries.



The theme is restarted in the first form section of the Allegro type under the form of ostinato this time in the same way, as are the chords of the piano accompaniment.

The superior voice of the piano accompaniment takes back in a transposition the rondo theme to a perfect fifth, to a superior ninth respectively. Through the altered thematic restarts, the musical discourse receives a polyphonic allure.



Ex. 9

The first episode is a musical section of a reduced extension that is made of two contrasting segments as a profile and interpretative manner. The first segment is a recitativo recto-tone made on the sound D#.

There is an exception on the first sound, which is the first sound, which in this case is C#. The Dynamics of the segment is the steady mezzo forte when the tempo is a continuum accelerando that is indicated by the composer through a horizontal arrow.

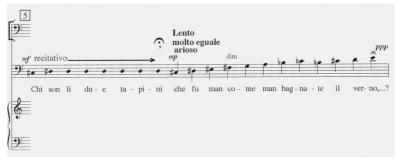
The two segments are visually delimited through a column that is situated on a respiratory sign. As opposed to the first segment, the second segment is melodically developed on an ascending semi-chromatic scale having a single coming back of a descending semitone along the way.

The intervallic patterns by the semitones content are the following:

22112121212

The tempo also creates a contrast towards the first section of the accelerando from the first segment the composer opposed to it a *Lento molto eguale arioso*. The dynamics as opposed to the steady mezzo forte of the first segment is an *mp dim*. to a *ppp*. Through this dynamic *decrescendo*, we can find the composer to counterbalance the ascending scale:

Ex. 10



The composer is preoccupied in this musical work by the graphic image of the score. The replacement of the interpretative breaks by white noise are made not only to overload the score with deranging graphic elements but they also represent the overlapping of two musical dimensions, namely, the basic sonorous dimension of the silence.

The rondo theme comes back as *subito* in the basic tempo of the part in the thematic section that promotes a polyphonic discourse on an accorded background of basso ostinato. The author uses coloured sonorous effects in the vocal party; these effects are the ones of *falsetto* and the descending *glissando*.

EDE TERÉNYI – THE MONO-OPERA *"LA DIVINA COMMEDIA"* – CONTENTS AND FORMS (I. PART – *"INFERNO"*)

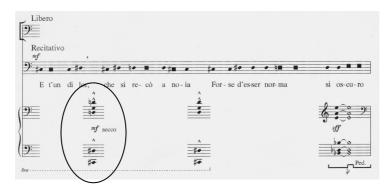






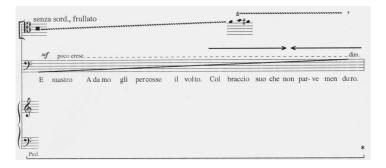
The episode two is a partial *recitativo secco* and the other part is a dialogue between the solo voice and the trombone in a *tempo libero*. This episode represents a variation of the first episode. The base of the harmonically sustaining is made of a chord between two strata that are distanced to a diminished eighth.

Ex. 12



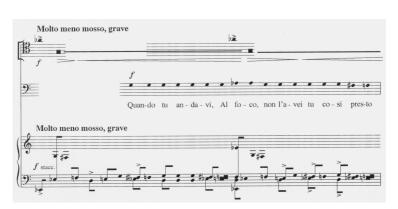
The episode is closed by a special sonorous effect of *frullato* for the trombone and a spoken intonation on an increasing higher tone for the solo voice.

Ex. 13



After a short section of a varied coming back of the rondo theme, we have **the third episode** coming back – *Molto meno mosso*, of a larger respiration. In its recitativo structure and the dialogue between the trombone and the voice, we have the composer to interweave some returns of the rondo theme. On a musical plan, this episode makes a synthesis of the first two episodes of this part.

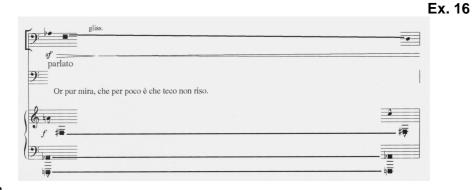
Ex. 14



After a last thematic section that is marked by imitations through a transition segment of *recitativo secco Libero*, we find the passing towards the coda.



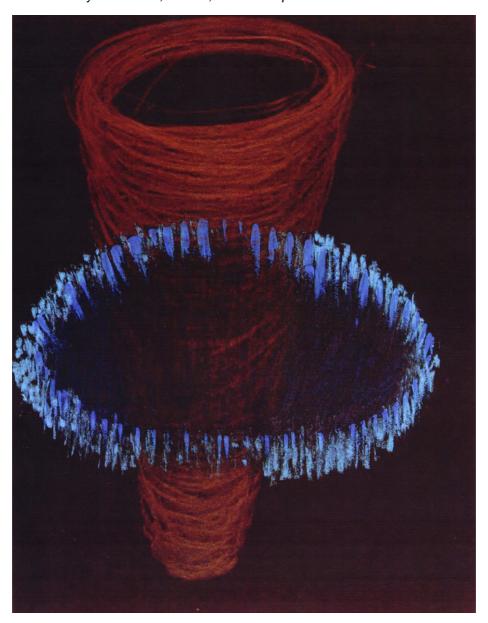
The coda creates a motive connection to the beginning of the musical work bringing back the small third interval of the debut from the first part (*Inferno I*), in this way it will round its form. *The Parlato* of the solo voice is counter pointed sporadically by motive fragments that are recommended along the part. As there is the first part this second part, this has a YIN character.



INFERNO - III. (Canto XXXII + XXXIV)

Table 6

Ede Terényi: Dantesca, Inferno, "In the Deepts of the Inferno-Cocis Lake"



⁵ Terényi, Ede, *Dantesca*, Ed. Echinox, Cluj, 2004, p. 21.

The third song of the Inferno is a chain form that alternates the slow sections of the monologue that have the *recitativo libero* of the dialogue. The seven sections of the composing form that have a very short coda added to them are unwounded after the following scheme. The building of the form is a symmetrical and a concentrically one, the essence of the whole is made by the second dialogue when the vocal soloist seems to be in a delirium.



The Section I is a ballad – monologue whose central sonority has the tone C as it already can be seen in the solo voice party of the first measures of this section.

Ex. 17



Having a Yang character, this first section is harmonically sustained by fourteen accord blocks (that are made of 3 + 3 or 3 + 2 musical tones).

Ex. 18



EDE TERÉNYI – THE MONO-OPERA *"LA DIVINA COMMEDIA"* – CONTENTS AND FORMS (I. PART – *"INFERNO"*)

We find the fourteen chords to be *ad libitum* repeated in a forte dynamics. In these chords, one element of the six (or five) chromatically slides down. The remarkable interval from the chords is made by the major third. Above these chords, the trombone intones glassy sonorous effects of *glissando* and *con sordino*.

Ex. 19



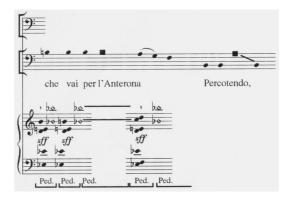
In the soloist party, after the monologue that has sonorous heights that are precisely determined, we find the author to note in the score that modulation of the vocal intonation that finalize this section through a descending vocal *glissand*o.

Ex. 20



The Section II is a section where the vocal soloist talks to the trombone in a *recitativo libero*. *Either the recitativo libero is* a spoken one – *parlando* or it is intoned with some determinative heights although without having a precise rhythm. The rhythm is suggested by the form of the head of the musical note – with a square shape (longer), or rounded (shorter). The harmonic sustaining relies on stratified chords that gravitates around two eighths: E b - B b. These chords are coloured enriched by *ajouttée tones*.

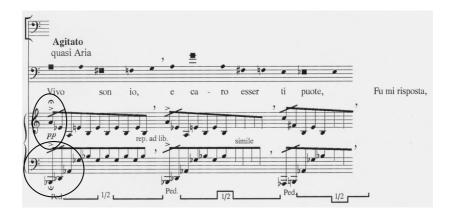
Ex. 21



The Section III is an *Arioso* (*quasi Aria* – that is noted by the composer) where the spoken text alternates with the song. The alternations of a long – short duration are graphically expressed in the similar way to the previous sections, namely, through square notes and also through round notes respectively. The piano accompanies this short arioso through chorded axial figurations of 11, 7, 16, and 10 tones.

As opposed to the steady *Andante* tempo of the previous sections, the *Agitato* of this section comes in surprisingly, by making a contrast of the character regarding the previous discourse.

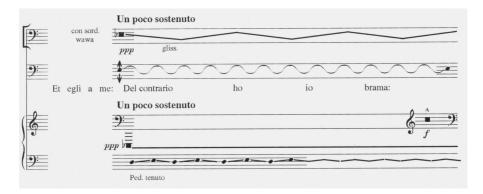




The Section III brings a contrast on a dynamic plan as well by promoting the dynamics pp as opposed to the f-ff dynamics with sfff accents of the previous sections.

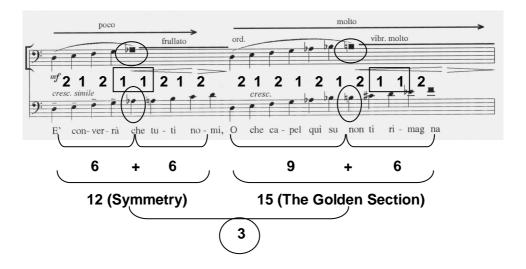
The Section IV constitutes the symmetry axis of the entire third part of the Inferno. In the tempo Un poco sostenuto — we find a dialogue between the solo voice and a trombone that is developed under the form of a recitativo libero. The intonation of the trombone $(con \ sordino \ - \ wawa)$ starts from the sonorous centre of the whole section — the tone Eb that oscillates in a sinusoidal way under the form of a glissando. The solo voice party starts from the E tone and it is developed also under an oscillatory style but it has a much more dense profile. The piano accompanies the entire discourse through the tones and the intervals that are pointed in some extreme dynamics degrees — some of them are the forte ones in an acute register. Some of them are of a pp register in the grave register that has as a central tone that of the E b contra that is made on a pedal background of the tremolo tenuto (the tones D - E in a minor eighth)

Ex. 23



The closing of the section is contrasting in the musical discourse to the material of the section that has been presented so far. The oscillatory continuous line of the trombone and that of the vocal soloist is transformed in two ascending semi-chromatic, geometrical scales that start in the *unisono* from the sound *D* of the minor eighth and they are developed in the *accelerando*. The trombone accompanies the voice for a part of the scale only and then it maintains the *frullato* under the form of the pedal and then under the *vibrato molt*o we find the tones of *A b* and *B*.

Ex. 24



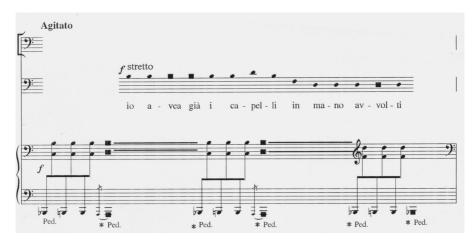
The first geometrical scale that is above-presented develops its elements by using **the symmetry principle** and it adopts the model: 2121 / 1212. The tone A b where the trombone is stopped makes the symmetry axis of the D E c - D1. Both the segments of the scale include in itself six semitones.

The second geometrical scale that is above-presented as opposed with the second scale adopts as a developing principle of the elements **the positive golden section** and we find its pattern as follows: $212121 / 21\sim12$. the B tone where we find the trombone to be stopping make the golden section of the ascending scale of a D Ec - F 1 decime.

The two geometrical scales that are synthesized here rely on multiples of the cipher three: **3**, **6**, **9**, **12**, **and 15 semitones**. The symbol of the cipher three can be decoded from the building of the logic of numerous elements along the musical work.

The Section V brings with itself a tempo exchange (Agitato), where the musical discourse is sustained only by the solo voice and the piano as it voiced an arioso that has its corresponding in Section III. We find a dynamic contrast between the two sections. As opposed to the steady pp of the Section III, we find this section to maintain a steady forte that collapse only when there is the final of the section in an mf and in the piano. The sinusoidal melodic oscillation of the arioso is sustained by an alternative of the basic tones (Bb - natural B) of the section that have septima intervals, a repeated sixth respectively.

Ex. 25



In the end of the vocal *arioso* section that is transformed in *the parlando*, we have the alternating oscillation of the piano accompaniment that is in two prolonged maintained chords.

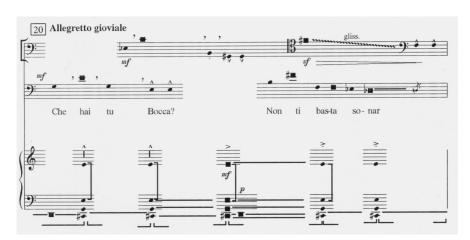
EDE TERÉNYI – THE MONO-OPERA *"LA DIVINA COMMEDIA"* – CONTENTS AND FORMS (I. PART – *"INFERNO"*)

Ex. 26



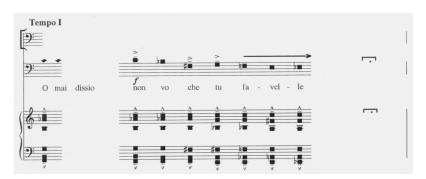
The Section VI has a dialogue that is developed under the form of a recitativo *libero secco* in the tempo *Allegretto gioviale* that is sustained by repeated pillars of the chords on the scheme *E/axial E*.

Ex. 27



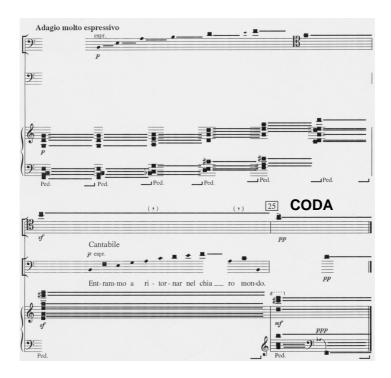
In the closing of the section, we find the author to come back to the *Tempo I* by the chorded counter pointing of each syllable. The seven accented successive chords bring with themselves through a permutation one or two elements that are descending alternated and which evolve in *an accelerando*. The section is finalized on a long general pause with a crown.

Ex. 28



The Section VII slows down the initial Andante tempo into *an Adagio molto expressivo*, by equilibrating the descending chorded profile of the previous section through a chorded long-spun ascension that is made through a "heterophonic" parallelism of the piano and the trombone. The solo voice intervenes in the Cantabile in the last prolonged chord that is maintained that way. In addition, from these graphic images of the score we can poignantly see the two overlapped dimensions of the music: the sonorous dimension and the pause dimension.

Ex. 29



The Section VII together with the entire part III of the *Inferno* is closed by a Coda, whose sounds are grouped from a chorded point of view, and they die out in a *pp* and a *ppp* that are prolonged maintained. The intervallic structure of the final sonority is presented in the following way:

Ex. 30



The symbolic of the cipher three is also distinguished in this final, geometrical context of a Yin and Yang chorded combination.

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

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

(Translated by: Maria Cozma)

The follow-up of this study will be published in the number three of the *Studia Musica* Magazine.

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⁶ Terényi, Ede, *Dantesca*, Ed. Echinox, Cluj, 2004, p. 73.

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