

INTERFERENCES BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNITY IN THE SYMPHONIC AND CONCERTO WORKS BY ADRIAN POP – (3) *SOLSTICE* FOR ORCHESTRA

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SUMMARY. The current study is part of a series of analytical approaches undertaken on the symphonic-concerto oeuvre of Cluj composer Adrian Pop. Following the chronological order of the works and keeping as a reference their common source of inspiration – namely the Romanian folklore –, the conclusion seeks to highlight the way in which the composer's individuality relates to both the trends of contemporary language and the European cultured musical tradition, without attenuating the signs of the local stylistic matrix. Like the other works under analysis so far, *Solstice* is based on a melody taken from the Romanian local repertoire, namely that of *Pomuț răzmurat*, a "Carol of the Sun". The carol's ritualic background is linked to the most significant moment in a farmer's life – the winter solstice – also pointing to the idea of the repeating year, a recurring theme in folklore and mythology. The coordinates of the *mioritical* space described by Blaga's philosophy are also present, the undulating motion, the taste for the ornamental and picturesque, the preference for the manifestation of the organic finding their musical correspondences in parameters such as form, writing, tempo, timbre etc. Last but not least, the programmatic dimension of the ideate substratum is captured by the composer Adrian Pop with an extraordinary power of suggestion, through interferences of tradition and modernity.

Keywords: folklore, program music, tradition, modernity, aleatorism, texturalism, heterophony, timbrality.

Adrian Pop. Sources and resources in shaping the artistic message. The folkloric vein

The placement of the melodic parameter at the basis of Adrian Pop's compositional language – explicitly argued by the author from Cluj through

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statements that describe melody as “the minimum necessary and sufficient condition of music”² and music as “the art of melodies”³ – is far evident in his oeuvre, characterized by variety and derived from multiple inspirational sources. Here we refer to works based on the folkloric vein – genuistically configured in a choral, chamber and symphonic setting –, music based on poetic texts from Romanian and universal poetry⁴, to which may be added “instrumental works of so-called «pure-music» in which the writing techniques related to genre, structure and formal innovation, idiomatic solutions, timbral modelling represent a first goal in the creative process – but even these are not plotted without a poetic argument, whether hidden or subconscious”⁵.

As for the approach to the folkloric source, the sensitivity and predominantly monodic-modal character of Romanian folk song – whose incompatibility in relation to the “characteristic forms of Western European «scholarly» musical culture”⁶, of tonal-functional essence, has proved to be “style-generative” in the process of compensation and affirmation of national culture – this is manifested in the works of Adrian Pop by the technique of processing folkloric quotations, which can be identified in numerous choral and symphonic works, as well as in the form of *imaginary folklore*⁷, which is not based on folk quotations but is constituted by the use of specific idioms and elements (modes, rhythms, intonations, effects). This is not surprising if we take into account, in addition to the creative abilities of the author from Cluj, the in-depth studies of folklore that he undertook under the guidance of Professor Traian Mârza, whose burning passion, “contaminated by the rural

² Sirbu, Anca, *Adrian Pop sau despre ideal în muzică (Adrian Pop, or about the music ideal)*. In *Actualitatea muzicală* Magazine, no. 4 / 2017, p. 34.

³ Apostu, Andra, *De vorbă cu Adrian Pop (Conversation with Adrian Pop)*. In *MUZICA* journal, No. 3/2017, U.C.M.R., Bucharest, <https://www.ucmr.org.ro/Texte/RV-3-2017-1-AApostu-De-vorba-cu-APop.pdf> (retrieved 15.08.2024).

⁴ Lyrics by authors such as Lucian Blaga, Pablo Neruda, Salvatore Quasimodo, Christian Morgenstern, Rainer Maria Rilke, Tristan Tzara, Paul Celan, Tudor Arghezi, Alexandru Macedonski, Ion Minulescu, Alfred de Musset.

⁵ Adrian Pop. In Țiplea-Temeș, Bianca, *Ricorenze – de vorbă cu compozitorul Adrian Pop, la 70 de ani, (Ricorenze – Conversation with Adrian Pop at his 70th anniversary)*. In *Muzica* journal, No. 8/2021, pp. 17-18.

⁶ Herman, Vasile, *Formă și stil în noua creație muzicală românească (Style and form in the new Romanian music creation)*. Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 1977, p. 30.

⁷ In his article *Probleme de limbaj în muzica românească contemporană (Language matters in contemporary Romanian music)*. In *Musicology Papers*, „G. Dima” Conservatory of Music, Cluj, 1965, p. 17), the composer and musicologist Vasile Herman underlines the significance of „the creation of folk melodies representing melodic inventions of the composers” in the formation of the musical language, emphasizing the complexity of the process, which involves “a thorough knowledge of a large number of popular melodies, a perfect mastery of many folk melodic formulas and twists, as well as of the modal thought and structure of the autochthonous folk melos”.

universe”, generated, along with “revelations in the area of folklore of customs, of ancient, ritual layers”⁸, “a cultural and identity revelation”⁹.

Although we will also identify in the composer’s oeuvre marks of the *parlando-rubato*¹⁰ style characteristic to Enescu – fundamentally defined by the primacy of melody over all other parameters of compositional language and which incorporates “the instrumental recitative style (especially the fiddlers’) or the ornamental cantabile style from songs and *doina*”¹¹ –, his favourite genre remains the carol, which he uses in original ways. Ancient songs of greeting and good wishing, performed during the winter holidays – the carols – set within the giusto-syllabic system, feature “the most important rhythm of Romanian folk music”¹², while the carol singing custom of various groups and types, singing according to a ceremony that varies from one part of the country to another represents, according to the folklorist and ethnomusicologist Tiberiu Alexandru, “the most important winter folk tradition”¹³. The choral titles known as *Colinde laice (Secular Carols)*¹⁴ are enlightening in this regards, of which *Vine hulpe di la munte (Here comes the fox down from the mountains*, dated 1974, based on a melody taken from the village of Treznea, Sălaj county) enjoyed resounding success due to its humorous component (the melody belonging, in fact, to a parodic subgenre of the carol, that of the “reason

⁸ Apostu, Andra, *Op. cit.*, <https://www.ucmr.org.ro/Texte/RV-3-2017-1-AApostu-De-vorba-cu-APop.pdf> (retrieved 15.08.2024).

⁹ Adrian Pop. In Țiplea-Temeș, Bianca, *Op. cit.*, pp. 17-18.

¹⁰ Described by the composer Ștefan Niculescu in *Reflecții despre muzică (Reflections on Music*, Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 1980, p. 83) as “the winded, *rubato* execution, the free and varied blending of simple rhythmic groups, frequent in *parlando giusto*, the emergence of new rhythms resulted from the free execution (rushing or prolongation of values, etc.), the division of the basic unit into a multitude of other rhythmic figures, the use of a rich ornamentation, the absence of periodic accents and their replacement by expressive accents produced by changes in duration or by melismatic groupings”, features found specifically in George Enescu’s Violin Sonata No. 3, “in Romanian character”. Also referring to Enescu’s earlier works, such as the *Prelude in unison* from his *Orchestral Suite No. 1* or the *Pavane* from *Piano Suite No. 2*, Clemansa Liliana Firca states, in *Direcții în muzica românească [Directions in Romanian Music (1900-1930)]*, Editura Academiei Române, Bucharest, 1974, p. 27], that “Enescu’s approach to the area of Romanian free song, the principle of free structuration and melodic-rhythmic unfolding of the *doina*” deeply marked the composer’s later work and “through it, Romanian composition in general”.

¹¹ Niculescu, Ștefan, *Op. cit.*, p. 83.

¹² Alexandru, Tiberiu, *Folcloristica. Organologie. Muzicologie (Folkloristics. Organology. Musicology*, vol. I), Grafoart, Bucharest, 2023, p. 12.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 21.

¹⁴ Which includes, in addition to the famous *Vine hulpe di la munte*, *Fată dalbă de-mpăratu* (1975), *Slobozi-ne gazdă-n casă* (1975), *Trecu-mi-și mai mărgu-și* (1978), *Pă dealu cu stinjenile* (1981), *Cine nu ne-a lăsa-n casă* (1981), *La ce lină de fântână* (1984), and later *Hora miresii* (1987).

carol”), as well as by the original way of processing the melodic material, with the help of heterophony (a technique of great efficiency in rendering the gaps and the effects of “stuttering” occurring in the text).

Speaking about choral creation, I continued after this success [Here comes the fox down from the mountains] with other works of various types in the carol genre, several in number, it is in fact the genre that fascinated me. In terms of its symbolism, its spiritual value, it is something different than the music you listened to on the loudspeaker as a child, it is a layer which, if you approach it with the necessary attention, scientific study and depth, opens another dimension, and this traditional genre has left a very deep impression on me. Not only in my choral music, but also in my symphonic music and later in my chamber music – later because, initially, I couldn’t find a common ground between chamber music and the rather pronounced folklorism that I cultivated. In symphonic music I found the right environment for integrating the folk ethos, using sound textures that were very fashionable at the time and which suited my way of feeling and approaching music.¹⁵

The viability of the symphonic genre in relation to some of the achievements of the second half of the 20th century (dodecaphonic serialism, modal serialism, rhythmic resulting from mathematical calculation, modal or geometric harmony, texturalism, heterophony, cluster, the diverse sound articulations, quotation, collage or aleatorism) and some “phonic discourses of folkloric origin”¹⁶ was also confirmed by other Cluj composers (such as Vasile Herman, Cornel Țăranu, Eduard Terényi, Valentin Timaru), the 1980s providing them with the context for deepening and incorporating “these accumulated experiences into a personal style, in which the data of musical technology are subsumed, are organically integrated into a specific way of expression”.¹⁷

As for Adrian Pop, that symphonic environment suitable for the integration of the folkloric ethos materialized in works such as *Concerto for cello and orchestra* (1975, rev. 2015) – based on an archaic Romanian carol melody from the collection *303 carols with text and melodies collected and*

¹⁵ Adrian Pop. In Apostu, Andra, *Op. cit.*, <https://www.ucmr.org.ro/Texte/RV-3-2017-1-AApostu-De-vorba-cu-APop.pdf> (retrieved 15.08.2024).

¹⁶ Vasile Herman, In Oleg, Garaz, *Poetică muzicală în convorbiri (Music poetics in conversation)*, Editura Casa Cărții de Știință, Cluj-Napoca, 2003, p. 118.

¹⁷ Mercean-Țârc, Mirela, *Articularea formei în simfoniile compozitorilor clujeni – compuse în cea de-a doua jumătate a secolului XX (Form articulation in the symphonies of Cluj composers written in the second half of the 20th century)*, Editura Universității din Oradea, 2007, p. 11.

notated by Sabin Drăgoi –, and *Etos I* for orchestra (1976, rev. 1984) – starting from an authentic Romanian melody belonging to the ancient repertoire of Transylvanian carols, a “Mioriță” from Sălaj –. Analytical studies carried out on these works¹⁸ so far have revealed the almost organic adequacy of language techniques such as heterophonic syntax, clustering, polymetry, pointilism, texturalism, elements of popular organology (obtained with the help of specific ways of sound articulation, etc.) in processing carol quotations. The chamber sector is no less revealing in relation to carols’ peculiarities.

Despite the fact that most of the works of folkloric essence are of a more recent date – for example the piece *Gordun* (2005), whose title clearly alludes to a Transylvanian folk instrument and whose content also includes a Transylvanian carol melody, the suite *Cântece de stea* (*Transylvanian Christmas Carols*, 2006), which incorporates carol processings in six of the eight parts of the work in a succession meant to capture the ancestral tradition in its Romanian form –, the titles that open the list of Adrian Pop’s compositions also include a *Colindă a soarelui* (*Sun Carol*, 1974) for flute, percussion and magnetic tape, written in the Bayreuth studios and which highlights the composer’s ingenuity and openness in terms of combining the folkloric dimension with some methods promoted by the European avant-garde (mathematical, probabilistic calculation).

A carol “of the Sun” – entitled *Pomuț răzmurat* – also lies at the basis of the symphonic piece *Solstice* (1979, revised in 2013), whose ancestral roots can be traced even from the title, which makes direct reference to the celebration of the Sun and the day of its symbolic birth, that preceded the “great winter celebration” – Christmas, making its transition from pagan to Christian times.

E.g. 1



The carol tune *Pomuț răzmurat* lying at the heart of the symphonic work *Solstice*

¹⁸ Regarding the first two articles of the series *Interferences of tradition and modernity in the symphonic and concerto works by Adrian Pop*, published by the author in Special Issue 2/2023, and No. 2/2023.

Originating in Bihor, the carol used to be sung by the congregation gathered in the church, “with their heads thrown back, and their voices raised high. The text, much of which will have been lost in the oblivion of the ages, speaks of a tree with golden apples that pours its fruit on a spinning table: it is a gift from the mighty Sun”¹⁹. The ritual subject of the carol is thus linked to the most significant moment in the farmer’s life – the winter solstice, which in the northern hemisphere marks “the moment when the sun returns, and the day begins to grow longer than the night”²⁰. The idea of a renewable year is recurrent in folklore and mythology, being reinforced by the importance that people have attached to the phenomenon of nature revival, the observation of the cosmic elements associated with this cyclical nature, and the customs practiced to celebrate and influence the process of “rebirth” being “some of the best preserved over time, this category also including the practice of carol singing”²¹. The overlapping of the pre-Christian celebration of the birth of the Sun with the date on which Christmas is celebrated brought with it the intertwining of the custom of carol singing, which in Roman times was strictly associated with New Year festivities, “largely linked to harvests and agricultural prosperity”²², and the biblical events of the Nativity of the Lord. Popular practice mainly preserved secular elements.

The inspirational background of the symphonic piece can also be viewed in the context of artistic archetypally, an idea that appeared in Romania at the end of the 1960s in the plastic arts, literature and music “causing a great spiritual effervescence, a multiple adherence (at least conceptually) among intellectuals eager for authentic values”²³. The main trends of the archetypal attitude – the action of recovering universality, opposing the dimension of “permanence and stability to that of change, instability, successive revolutions [...] and hence the relativity of modernist doctrine”²⁴, the placement in the core of things and phenomena, the access to essence, etc. – are based on scientific approaches in psychoanalysis, the history of religions, and anthropology.

¹⁹ Pop, Adrian, *Solstice for orchestra* (1979), Presentation.

²⁰ Mizgan-Danciu, Ciprian, *Colinda Baladă – din folclor spre creația corală* (*The Ballad-Carol – from folklore to choral works*), MediaMusica, Cluj-Napoca, p. 15.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 32.

²² *Ibidem*

²³ Anghel, Irinel, *Orientări, Direcții, Curente ale muzicii românești din a doua jumătate a secolului XX* (*Orientations, Directions, Trends of Romanian Music from the Second Half of the 20th Century*), Eikon, 2018, p. 183.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 184.

“Seen by Jung²⁵ as general supra-personal emotional and behavioural patterns or models existing in the unconscious of the human species, by Mircea Eliade as absolute values, paradigms of all human endeavours, sacred, mythical, unhistorical models, and by Gilbert Durand as expressions of the depths existing in the field of the imaginary, as organizational centres and, furthermore, anthropological constructs, archetypes are assimilated by the act of artistic creation in similar ways”²⁶.

An intellectual with a fine sense for “authentic values”, a promoter of tradition as a main source of inspiration and of art built by “craftsmanship” rather than by “experiment”, Adrian Pop lays at the base of his symphonic work *Solstice* a theme of cosmic resonance, a symbol whose perennial nature has been confirmed from mythical times to the present. Some four decades later, when asked how he sees the future of contemporary music, the composer reiterated the validity of Mircea Eliade’s analysis in the context of the invasion of the profane and the exile of the sacred (with the associated risks) in today’s society, concluding that “we are always reborn at «New Year», however technologically and scientifically advanced we may be.”²⁷

The moment of revival on “New Year” (Winter Solstice), as well as the climax marked by the Summer Solstice – both symbolized by the unique appearance of the carol melody – flank the symphonic discourse of the piece *Solstice*, conceived monolithically, based on a discursive logic configured according to the principle of variation and the recapitulation form. While emphasizing the economy of means in the achievement of plasticity and the corresponding programmatic substratum, the musicologist Carmen Plaian identifies from the very beginning of her analysis dedicated to this work²⁸ several techniques involved in rendering the coefficient of cosmic majesty: sound textures resulting from various polyphonic and heterophonic settings as well as unique timbral effects or aleatoric manifestations. Without limiting ourselves to the consistent theoretical support offered by the Cluj author yet

²⁵ According to the Romanian composer and musicologist Corneliu Dan Georgescu (b. 1938), to whom we owe the theorization and establishment, in the early 1980s, of the concept of musical “archetype”, the meaning of the term in Carl Gustav Jung is the one that best corresponds to the archetypal function in the art of sounds. Cf. Valentina Sandu-Dediu, preface to *Muzică atemporală. Arhetipuri. Etnomuzicologie. Compozitori români, vol. I* (*Atemporal Music. Archetypes. Ethnomusicology. Romanian Composers, vol. 1*) – Studii și eseuri de muzicologie (Studies and essays in musicology) (Ediție îngrijită de Olguta Lupu/ Editor Olguta Lupu), Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 2018, p. 14.

²⁶ Anghel, Irinel, *Op. cit.*, p. 186.

²⁷ Apostu, Andra, *Op. cit.*

²⁸ The analysis, entitled *Solstice*, is based on the original version of the work and was published in *Corpus of Musical Analyses from the Aleatoric creation of the Cluj composers*, MediaMusica, Cluj-Napoca, 2022, pp. 228-259.

keeping it as a reference in shaping our own analytical perspectives, the process of exploring the interferences of tradition (the folkloric vein) and modernity requires a deeper study of the main language parameters. Also, this paper focuses on the revised version of the work, dated 2013.

Adrian Pop. *Solstițiu* (*Solstice*, 1979, rev. 2013)

The structure of the work for big orchestra²⁹, as well as the principles of discursive development are defined by economy of means, the sound material being built through a variational process applied to incipient motives or those originating from the carol melody, whose repetition in various settings will ensure the technical-expressive cohesion. Although at the macro level we notice the gradual amplification trend, of dynamic accumulation and on the writing level, justified by the inspirational plan (i.e. the relation of the Winter Solstice – as the moment of birth / rebirth of the solar day – with the Summer Solstice – the climax of energetic development), the resulting contrasts between some formal sections successfully “complement” the evolution of the symphonic magma, often marking, almost in an explicitly sensorial form, the night-day / darkness-light or heat-glacially relationship.

The incipit (m. 1 – m. 16) is under the sign of glacially, the first motif α – tritonic, mostly descending, involving a chromatic step *la-la b*, with a “strange”³⁰ expression – being exposed quasi-heretophonically by the 3 flutes and articulated in a *frullato* manner under the indication of “wind sound”. The resumption of some cells from the α motif and the addition of new sounds as the discourse continues results in a second motif, β (m. 6 – m. 7) – related to the first through the chromatic step, the fourth (oscillating between perfect and augmented forms) and minor sixth leaps – which “can be considered an inverted (and varied) replica”³¹ of the original one. Also contributing to the icy, harsh atmosphere is the propensity towards chromatic totalization of the sound universe, through constant addition of sounds.

²⁹ Winds: 3 flutes (including *Piccolo*), 3 oboes, 3 Bb clarinets (as well as 3 Bb bass clarinets), 2 bassoons, 4 F horns, 3 Bb trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba; Percussion 1 (3 timpani, 3 tomtoms), Percussion 2 (2 *piatti sospesi*, 3 *temple-blocks*, clapper, chimes), Percussion 3 (vibraphone, gong, 3 *wood-blocks*); Strings: 12 violins I, 10 violins II, 8 violas, 8 cellos, 6 double bass;

³⁰ Plaian, Carmen, *Op. cit.*, p. 230.

³¹ *Ibidem*

E.g. 2

The image shows a musical score for 'Adagio e lontano' starting at measure 56. It features three staves for Flutes 1, 2, and 3. The notation includes various dynamic markings such as *p* (piano), *pp* (pianissimo), *fr* (forzando), and *ord.* (ordinario). There are also sound effect notations like 'wind sound'. Two specific motifs are highlighted: motif α (measures 1-2) is enclosed in a red box, and motif β (measure 6) is enclosed in a blue box. A section marker 'S' is visible above the second staff. The tempo/mood is indicated as 'Adagio e lontano'.

The two initial motifs, α (m. 1 – m. 2) and β (m. 6)

The second phrase (m. 7 - m. 13), initiated by the C sharp sound that concludes the β -motif, preserves the heterophonic technique in the three flutes, this time constituted in a *stretto* that emphasizes the linear progression on the ascending minor thirds (totalized as a diminished seventh chord). The heterophonic layer is doubled by a melodic one, attributed to the clarinets (*B b* and bass) which subject the β motif to variation. Then, with the appearance of the strings in m. 13, the symphonic discourse is presented in another unusual setting, that of the polyphony of attacks, “developed in a fan shape based on the ratios of the diminished chord used by the second phrase”³². The gradual dynamization of the sound universe, achieved by the expansion of the modal-chromatic conglomerate, by the rhythmic configurations resulting from the application of writing techniques and the subtle diversification of the timbral substance, is also enhanced by the sound articulation modalities, found – as well – under the sign of glacially: *frullato* (wind sound) and *tril*. All language parameters contribute to the tension against which the carol tune will emerge, following a **linking episode (m. 16 – m. 23)** assigned to the strings, consisting of a chromatic cluster sliding downwards and folding upwards.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 232.

E.g. 3

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INTERFERENCES BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNITY IN THE SYMPHONIC AND CONCERTO WORKS BY ADRIAN POP – (3) *SOLSTICE* FOR ORCHESTRA

The musical score is for Adrian Pop's *Solstice* for Orchestra, measures 24 to 35. The score is written for a large orchestra, including Flute (Flg.), Cor Anglais (Cor. F), Trumpet (Tr. Sib), Trombone (Trn.), Percussion (Perc. 2, 3), Violin (V.1, V.2), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vic.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The score is marked with various dynamics such as *mf*, *f*, *mp*, *p*, and *dim.*. A red box highlights the first appearance of the carol tune (m. 24 – m. 35). The score is written in a complex, polyphonic style, featuring multiple staves for each instrument, with a focus on the woodwinds and strings. The tempo is marked *Allegretto*. The score is written in a complex, polyphonic style, featuring multiple staves for each instrument, with a focus on the woodwinds and strings. The tempo is marked *Allegretto*. The score is written in a complex, polyphonic style, featuring multiple staves for each instrument, with a focus on the woodwinds and strings. The tempo is marked *Allegretto*.

First appearance of the carol tune (m. 24 – m. 35),
featuring a polyphony of attacks

Driven by the intervention of the *piatti sospeso* and the gong strike (m. 24), **the first appearance of the diatonic carol tune (m. 24 – m. 35)**, configured by two melodic lines in Ionian hexachord, is also made using the technique of interrupted pedals, following the principle of polyphony of attacks. In addition to the new timbral colour provided by the brass and bassoon apparatus, its steps are marked by *crescendos* on the rhythmic pedal units. The resulting effect is that of a melody perceived “as from a great distance, with the contours almost dissolved in the sound flow of cosmic suggestion, the syllabic rhythm being thus subject to minimal distortion, somewhat aleatoric due to the fact that there are no attacks.”³³ The main melodic plain is seconded by a contrasting, dissonant layer, a sonic string canvas generated by the suspension, in overlapping pedals, of the cluster glided along the connection episode. The effect created by this overlapping of the bright, diatonic line in the carol melody over that of the strings’ tense discourse reflects the “ray of hope” brought into the circuit of the seasons by the winter solstice, which will be rendered throughout the following section by an increasingly poignant manifestation of “solar energy”.

The transition (m. 36 – m. 47) involves, once again, a timbral mutation from the warm – albeit dissonant – sound of the string section, which repeats the chromatic cluster in the descending-ascending *glissando* of the linking episode, to the airy, icy one, established by the interventions of the three flutes, which reiterate, in a varied form, cells of the α and β motifs, as the discourse becomes increasingly rarefied. The appearance of the vibraphone (m. 45) is no coincidence.

The first phase of the **Development (m. 48 – m. 233, *Moderato fluido*) – A (m. 48 – m. 94)**, unfolding in a contrasting, alert tempo, is conceived as a *chaconne* variation, the theme being exposed by the vibraphone in an increasingly compressed metro-rhythm. Equally, the entire orchestral progression – dominated at first by *tremolo* pedals and slow glissandos of the violins – agglomerates into a sound texture built on the principle of free³⁴ heterogeneous polyphony in a pointillist manner. The chaconne theme, anchored by the C fundamental, is based on cells originating from the initial motifs α and β , while the parts engaged at the textural level (flute, oboe, clarinet) take on their turn motivic cells from the chaconne theme. As the variations evolve, there are interventions of strong idyllic resonances in the oboe (from m. 62) and bassoon (from m. 89), whose ornamental motifs are taken from the carol melody and ensure, in addition to energizing the discourse and emphasizing the archaic dimension, the fusion of the symphonic block.

³³ *Ibidem*, p. 233.

³⁴ Described by Dan Voiculescu, in *Polifonia secolului XX (Polyphony of 20th Century)*, Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 2005, p. 22.

INTERFERENCES BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNITY IN THE SYMPHONIC AND CONCERTO WORKS BY ADRIAN POP – (3) *SOLSTICE* FOR ORCHESTRA

E.g. 4

The image displays a page of a musical score for Adrian Pop's 'Solstice' for Orchestra, specifically measures 65 through 71. The score is written for a large orchestra, including Flutes (Fl.), Oboes (Ob.), Clarinets in B-flat (Cl. Sib.), Vibraphone (Vibrafono), and Violins (V.1, V.2). The tempo is marked 'tutti cresc. ed accel. poco a poco'. A blue box highlights a melodic line in the Oboe part at measure 67, and a red box highlights the Vibraphone part at the same measure. The score includes various dynamic markings such as 'mp', 'ppp', 'p', 'mf', and 'f'. The measures are numbered 65, 67, and 70.

The first phase of the „Development”. Variations on a chaconne theme (vibraphone). Idyllic ornaments (oboe, m. 62, m. 67, m. 70 – m. 71)

The second section of the Development, **B (m. 95 – m. 112, *Più mosso*)** brings a mutation of the previous sound texture on the timbral level, by relocating the melodic theme, respectively the variational base, to tom-toms,

but also by joining the brass and *piccolo* flute compartment to the pointillistic texture that accompanies the pointily rhythmic formulas of the new soloistic layer. The writing gradually gains a textural aspect.

E.g. 5

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Fl. 1. *ff* stacc. *microscopicamente loco, frull.*

Fl. 2. *ff* stacc. *ff loco, frull.*

3. Piccolo *ff* stacc. *ff loco, frull.*

Ob. 1. *ff*

Ob. 2. *ff*

Ob. 3. *ff*

Cl. Sib. 1. *f*

Cl. Sib. 2. *ff* muta in Cl. Basso *f*

Cl. Sib. 3. *ff*

Fg. 1. *ff*

Fg. 2. *ff*

Fg. 3. *ff*

Cor. Fa 1. *mf cresc.*

Cor. Fa 2. *mf cresc.*

Cor. Fa 3. *mf cresc.*

Cor. Fa 4. *mf cresc.*

Tr. 1. *mf cresc.*

Tr. 2. *mf cresc.*

Tr. 3. *mf cresc.*

Trn. 1. *mf cresc.*

Trn. 2. *f*

Trn. 3. *mf cresc.*

3 Tom-toms *ff*

Perc. 1 *ff*

Perc. 2 *ff* Frusta

The conclusion of the second section of „Development”. *Improvisando* effects on flutes + *piccolo*, trombone *glissandos* and *oiseau-like* garlands (m. 111)

To the welding of the “syntonic”³⁵ block contribute new timbral touches achieved by combining the *glissando* and *improvisando* techniques, in the form of ascending and descending slides in *ff*, *molto rapido*, *agitato*, quasi *istericamente* somewhat disordered, “but with the indication of the starting and ending points”, in fact “some ornaments with a binding role within the respective texture”³⁶, distributed to the flutes (+ piccolo) and clarinets. The trombone’s interventions are also unusual: on the background of a continuous dynamic amplification, it enhances the fluency of the discourse through *glissandos* combined with *vibratos* suspended in accents. The noise effect resulting from the superposition of various manners of sound articulation (including aleatoric) is well emphasized. From an aural point of view, we witness nature’s “coming to life”, whose spring-like rustle is depicted with a great degree of suggestiveness throughout the orchestral conglomerate, concluded in m. 111 with a garland similar to Messiaen’s *oiseau*-like effects, created through the elaboration of the motivic β -cell (minor second + diminished fifth / augmented fourth), featured in three variants – inverted form, original form and recurrence.

Although contrasting to the previous section by the minor modal universe, strongly chromatinized (having the E sound at its centre) and by the tempo reduced to half – allowing melodic formulations in *rubato* character – the following variational section **C (m. 113 – m. 137, *Adagio*)** continues, at macro level, the evolutionary process preceding the “Winter Solstice” that will manifest itself in the recapitulation. The marks of the “undulating plain”, of the “mioritic” space described by Lucian Blaga in connection with the unconscious, unique, persistent horizon, from whose echoes resound “the spiritual creations of the individual”³⁷, as well as those of a cultural community – in our case the Romanian one – are quite visible in the writing of this segment. The clarinet *cantilena* initiated at the beginning of the segment, having the expression of a “bucium” (alpenhorn) signal and being also built on the motivic β -cell (minor second + diminished fifth / augmented fourth), provides the starting point for the imitative polyphony developed afterwards. This is incisively interposed, in the flutes, by the same *oiseau*-like garland from the end of the previous section, which returns as the polyphonic material is joined by a heterophonic

³⁵ A word formed from the Greek element of composition *syn*, meaning “together” and the Latin *tonus*, meaning “sound”, syntony is described by Andrei Cozma, in *Texturalismul sau sintonia muzicii din cea de-a doua jumătate a secolului XX (Texturalism or syntony of music in the second half of the 20th century)*, Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 2019) as “the sensation of imperceptibility of detail that stands out as an inherent characteristic of perceptive units specific to texturalism” (p. 12), respectively “a quality that appears as a result of the association of several sounds, which are therefore perceived together” (p. 13).

³⁶ Plaian, Carmen, *Op. cit.*, p. 239.

³⁷ Blaga, Lucian, *Trilogia culturii (The Trilogy of Culture)*, Humanitas, 1994, 2011, p. 65.

accompaniment layer consisting of rhythmic or oscillatory pedals (tremolos rhythmically varied at intervals of a minor second) in polyrhythmic overlaps in the string section (starting with m. 124) and, later, in the wind section (starting with m. 126). The pulsating layer provides the ground for the dynamic amplification and relaxation at the end of the fragment, when the symphonic discourse becomes rarefied, leaving the syncopated oscillations of the double bass “uncovered”. The meter-rhythmic parameter follows a process of augmentation, both in the soloistic and in the accompanying sector.

A short **linking episode (m. 138 – m. 151)** begins on the same double bass pedal, bringing the string layer (dominant in the following section) back to the auditory foreground in a cluster of nineteen distinct sounds (which does not, however, comprise the chromatic total), restated after two measures. The dissonant suspension goes dynamically through a poignant crescendo-decrescendo, being soon “disintegrated” by violent, short, *pizzicato* downward *glissandos* (m. 145, m. 148), doubled by seemingly aleatoric outbursts in bassoon and brass, as well as percussive interventions, all concluded by a C-sharp pedal attacked in *sforzando* by the double bass. Suggestive for the elasticity of this cadential moment is the tempo indication *Moderato volubile* (starting at m. 145). In addition to the chordal pillars, we recognize other melodic-timbral elements of the symphonic discourse with which we are already familiar from the previous sections. This is the ornamented *oiseau*-like motif, exhibited here by the clarinet in reverse motion and continued by the airy interventions of the flute couple. The *oiseau* manner is also found in flute 1, whose *frullato* is changed to a *trill* on a minor-second interval. The second flute returns the motif α (m. 141 – m. 142).

In contrast to the abrupt sound “disruptions” – which the musicologist Carmen Plaian likened to “flashes of distant lightning”³⁸ – played by the strings in the linking episode, the *glissando* effect is presented in a much extended form in the **D segment (m. 151 – m. 179)**, being launched on cluster pedals on the strings in the high register, which gradually glide at semitone intervals throughout the segment. We recognize here another texturalist setting, namely that of the cluster “dynamization”, through the interweaving of sustained *glissandos* which, according to Andrei Cozma, has defined “the texturalist concept of sound masses”³⁹ along with the recognition of syntony as “an inherent feature of any cluster-type structural configuration”⁴⁰. The impression of aural “dissolution”, of cosmic resonances – if we refer to the ideational ground – is more and more striking as the flutes articulate

³⁸ Plaian, Carmen, *Op. cit.*, p. 246.

³⁹ Cozma, Andrei, *Op. cit.*, p. 36.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*

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“motifs decorated with trills and multiple melismatic appoggiaturas”⁴¹ in a *rubato*, quasi-aleatoric manner, and the double basses insert “melodic arches” made up of ascending and descending *glissandos* interrupted by *pizzicato*.

E.g. 6

The musical score for Adrian Pop's (3) *Solstice* for Orchestra, measures 155-160, is presented. The score includes parts for Flute 1 and 2, Percussion 1 (Timpani), Percussion 2 (P-tti sosp.), Percussion 3 (Gong), Violins 1 and 2, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The score shows various musical notations including dynamics (pp, p, f), articulation (div., piz.), and performance instructions (1. Solo, 3. Solo piz.). Blue arrows point to the Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Violoncello parts. Red arrows point to the Double Bass part, highlighting specific melodic arches.

⁴¹ Plaian, Carmen, *Op. cit.*, p. 246.

The image displays a musical score for a developmental segment D, spanning measures 160 to 165. The score is written for a large ensemble, including Flutes (Fl.), Oboes (Ob.), Percussion (Perc.), Timpani, Gong, Violins (Vla., Vlc.), and Double Basses (Cb.). The segment is highlighted with a red box. The notation includes various dynamic markings such as *p*, *pp*, *mp*, and *f*, as well as performance instructions like *ord.*, *loco*, *cresc.*, and *pizz.*. Blue arrows point to the Violin staves, and red arrows point to the Double Bass staff, indicating specific areas of interest or emphasis.

Developmental segment D. Textural settings built through cluster dynamization on strings. *Oiseau* style in flutes. Melodic arches in double basses.

In this section, too, we witness a timbral mutation: the gradual change of register by the sliding of the strings is doubled in the melismatic “soloistic” layer by the transposition of the *oiseau* writing from flutes to clarinets and bassoons, while the pedals of the percussion compartment and the presence of the brass become more and more evident, in anticipation of the *sforzando* that ends the stanza (m. 179).

The broad “plunging” and the apparent sense of disintegration takes a somewhat unexpected turn during what will be the last variational phase, **section E (m. 180 – m. 233)**, the *glissando* layer of the strings being “reoriented” in a generally ascending direction and dynamized by *tremolo*. At the upper level, the wind players take on an imitative polyphonic writing in *stretto* (brass), while the percussive division marks the rhythmic skeleton, along a sustained *crescendo* whose climax corresponds with the adoption of a symphonic discourse marked by rhythmic pedals. The frenzy soon extends to the entire symphonic apparatus, being crowned, in flute and piccolo, by ornamental figurations that amplify the “bucolic exuberance”, as well as by brass effects, a novel intervention in the economy of the discourse featuring the trumpet 1 through the ascending harmonic *glissando* in m. 199.

In fact, the climax of the stanza (m. 207 – m. 215) is also exposed by the trumpets (doubled by the flutes) and melodically corresponds to one of the cadential motifs of the original carol melody, transposed one tone higher and presented in a heterophonic setting. The cadence of the section and, in fact, of the entire variational chain again takes the form of a “deconstruction”, but the *glissando* gesture with which the composer has already accustomed us in cases of sound “silencing” is replaced here by a generally descending ornamental “train” in the strings. The conclusion is made by a double bass cantilena built by the elaboration of the motif α (m. 230 – m. 233). The low B-flat pedal, in tremolo, of the same instrument (m. 233) provides the background over which the next segment is introduced, with a preparatory role for the Recapitulation.

225 Timpani

Perc. 1 *ppp*

Perc. 2 *Piatto sosp.* *p* *l.v.*

V.1 *div.* *ppp legatissimo*

V.2 *div.* *ppp legatissimo*

Vla. *div.* *ppp legatissimo*

Vlc. *div.* *ppp legatissimo*

230

1. Cor. Fa *p*

2. *p*

Timpani

Perc. 1 *Piatto sosp.* *pp* *l.v.*

Perc. 2 *pp* *p*

V.1

V.2

Vla. *div. al pont. legatiss.* *ppp*

Vlc. *div. al pont. legatiss.* *ppp*

Cb. *1.2 al pont.* *ppp* *no ord.* *ppp*

[illegible]

Featuring the carol melody in a fragmented, *rubato* style, the extensive moment of **retransition (m. 234 – m. 265, *Andante molto*)** marks, along with the timbral expansion from the chordal compartment – engaged in mixtures, then in a heterophonic writing in which a motif built on the initial α and β cells is taken up unisonally – to the percussive one – the vibraphone being again assigned a soloistic role (m. 247 – m. 255) – and the wind players, an apotheotic growth. The figurations and pedals, which cover an impressive ambitus, are embedded towards the end of the section in a texture with pronounced sensory effects for the fullness of warmth and light, the tension generated by the clustered pedal in m. 265 – amplified by the trills of the flutes and violins – finding its “resolution” with the onset of the Recapitulation, respectively of the solar carol theme.

The Recapitulation of the carol tune (m. 266 – m. 283)

134

diatonism amplified by the timbral resonances of the brass section, doubled by the woodwinds, the full manifestation of the “Summer Solstice”. We note, once again, the polyphonic technique of attacks (also present in the first exposition) which creates a cosmic, timeless and spatially distanced effect, while the jubilant, aleatoric accents of the bells and the vibrating strokes of the gong amplify the auditory impact of the segment. At the same time, the string parts contribute significantly to the harmonic tension, outlining – as in the first quotation display – a dissonant layer, in clustered pedals, the divisions of the violins increasing as they migrate into the higher register. The full ending (in accordance to the *pian* indication applied to all the wind parts on the final cadence, but also to the dynamic nuance *ff* that places the brass sonority in the foreground), confirmed by the last interventions of the percussion instruments, gradually brings the harmonic resolution, as the *tremolo* pedals of the whole orchestra converge towards the explicit establishment of the major C, the tonic chord.

Conclusion

Starting from the melodic parameter, which he considers essential in the shaping of any musical creation, and from the autochthonous background – also represented in the form of a melody, namely that of the carol *Pomuț răzmurat*, whose pre-Christian ritual background refers to the winter solstice – Adrian Pop creates, despite a surprising economy of means, a musical landscape of great expressive power. The pronounced programmatic component – the discourse depicting, by means of a suggestiveness that transcends the auditory sensory, the evolution of terrestrial and cosmic nature from the glacial moment of the Winter Solstice to the explosion of solar energy during the Summer Solstice – does not overshadow the folkloric essence of the symphonic development, whose reference points are represented by the two statements of the original melody, at the beginning and at the end of the work.

The formal parameter, based mainly on the process of motivic variation applied to the two entities featured from the very beginning of the work (the α -motif and the β -motif, which descends from α), ensures the symphonic development flanked by the two melodic Solstice-moments (winter, summer), both in the main sections of the monolithic structure and in the connecting or transitional episodes. The very chaconne theme on which the first two sections of the symphonic evolution (A and B) are built, displayed first by vibraphone, then by tom-toms, incorporates cells deriving from the initial α and β motifs. Of course, the microstructure of the carol melody is also engaged in the variational approach, the climax of the last stage of the developmental process – E – corresponding to one of its cadential motifs.

In fact, the timbral dimension, combined with the various ways of sound articulation – of which the *glissando* plays a significant role – constitutes a determining resource in the evolution of the symphonic magma and in the rendering of the ideational substratum. From the *wind sound* and the opening *frullato* of the flutes – evoking the glacial atmosphere of the winter season – or the glassy effect of the vibraphone in the first variation segment, to the apotheosis-like energetic explosions of the strings in the retransition preceding the carol tune, timbrality is exploited with refinement, in accordance with the harmonic language, standing out as the main resource in shaping the sensory dimension of the artistic message.

No less revealing in the rendering of the inspirational source is the tonal language, affiliated to the diatonic modal, modal-chromatic or marked chromatic systems (without, however, reaching the dodecaphonic total). Thus, the two solar moments of the “solstices” provide a diatonic contrast, emphasized by the technique of polyphony of attacks, which generates a unique spatial effect (“from afar”) and amplifies the timbral brilliance of the brass. On the other hand, the chromatic essence of the two motives at the basis of the variational evolution maintains the glacial, dark, hostile atmosphere, featuring at times tragic or even apotheotic resonances, while the multiple cluster-type structures on *glissando*, mainly distributed in the string division evoke – in a textural setting – the alternation between “dissolution” and “energetic accumulation”. No less important are the idyllic ornamental interventions in the variational series or the *oiseau*-type configurations, constituted in modal or modal-chromatic idiom, also based on α and β motifs.

In addition to the tonal language, which falls within the folkloric dimension of the work, but also within the modern, strongly chromatic one, another parameter that involves the fusion of the two trends in *Solstice* is the writing. And if the heterophonic syntax – defined by both Pierre Boulez and the Romanian composer and musicologist Ștefan Niculescu as “an intermediate sound phenomenon between monody and polyphony”⁴², extremely common in Romanian popular music – is noticeable from the very beginning of the piece, just a few bars later, a polyphony of attacks is manifested, built in a fan shape on the same chordal structure. Moreover, the technique of polyphony of attacks is also applied to the carol melody, throughout both expositions. The evolutive section is opened by variations on the theme of the chaconne, a setting that gradually acquires textural valences, following the agglomeration

⁴² Koter, Peter, *[H]eterofonia. Considerații teoretice și analitice ([H]eterophony. Theoretical and Analytical Considerations)*. In *Lucrări de muzicologie (Musicology Papers)*, vol. XXXVII/2, 2021, https://www.musicologypapers.edituramediamusica.ro/images/Reviste/LM_2021_XXXVI-2_08_Peter_Koter.pdf (retrieved 24.02.2025).

on the principle of free heterogeneous polyphony in a pointilist manner, generating, at a certain point, a noise effect resulting from the overlapping of the various ways of sound articulation. Other aleatoric manifestations of timbrality can be spotted, to varying degrees, in the melodic moments of the carol, which create slight rhythmic distortions due to the lack of proper attacks of the pitches, in the second phase of the variational development (B), where slips into *improvisando* on a dynamic background in *ff* and a restless agogic contribute significantly to the welding of the textural block and the production of the noise effect, or in the fourth phase (D), where, against the background of an aural dissolution, rubato, quasi-aleatoric, the flutes articulate the *oiseau*-ornamental motifs.

The analytical study of *Solstice* reveals a permanent interdependence between modern language techniques and Romanian traditional elements. The ancestral resonances of the carol melody are emphasized by the polyphonic technique of attacks, which also gives it – at the timbral level – quasi-aleatoric effects, the idyllic interventions are often part of a symphonic magma with textural tendencies, the cantilena resembling the “bucium” (alpenhorn) signal in the variational section C marks the beginning of an imitative polyphonic evolution, then heterophonic, whose oscillations and polyrhythmic overlapping recall the shapes of the Blagian mioritic plain. The discourse develops organically, being based on a variational process manifested at the motivic level (the preference for the organic being one of the coordinates of mioritic spirituality), while the “taste for the picturesque and ornamental”⁴³, respectively the signs of “living in beautiful” preserve the idyllic resonances throughout the whole symphonic development.

The interferences between tradition and modernity that can be detected on a technical level, with powerful expressive echoes, reflect the mastery by which the author from Cluj “translates” his inspirational sources and his ideational substratum, *Solstice* individualizing itself both by the programmatic dimension of the cosmic phenomenon evoked with an undeniable power of suggestion, and by its mythological, religious implications residing in the universe of the Romanian village, revealed by the lyrics and melody of the carol *Pomuț răzmurat*.

⁴³ Rîpă, Constantin, *Ideea mioritică în creația muzicală cultă românească (The mioritic concept in Romanian art music)*, MediaMusica, Cluj-Napoca, 2022, p. 12.

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