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# **STUDIA UNIVERSITATIS BABEȘ-BOLYAI MUSICA**

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# **S T U D I A UNIVERSITATIS BABEŞ-BOLYAI MUSICA**

**Special Issue 1**

**MUSICAL STYLISTICS & MUSICAL ANALYSIS**

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## STYLISTIC-INTERPRETATIVE ASPECTS IN THE MUSICAL REPERTOIRE SPECIFIC TO BAROQUE VOCAL SINGING

VIORICA DAUD<sup>1</sup>, IGNÁC CSABA FILIP<sup>2</sup>

**SUMMARY.** These arias, which played an important role in the history of music, leading to the flowering of the Italian bel canto school and vocal virtuosity, occupied a leading place in all the genres of vocal music that were beginning to develop: opera, cantata, oratorio. The characteristic feature of the vocal arias is that they express new, secular, humanistic content, reflecting faith in human strength, love of life, love of nature, etc. as opposed to religious music. The arias, which are analyzed in this work, represent a stage when the exaggerations of vocal virtuosity had not yet left their mark on musical discourse. We will therefore note that between the lyrics and the expressive melodies, full of naturalness and singing ability, there is perfect unity, perfect interweaving, designed to convey the richness and diversity of the content. The soft imagery, the gentleness and at the same time the exaltation of the love verses - echoing the echoes of troubadour poetry with its tendency to idealize wo'men and the feelings of love - give rise to the melodic ardor and sincerity much adored by Gluck. The pathos of the lyrics of Handel's *Let me mourn my cruel fate, and sigh for freedom* also permeate the dramatic accents of the melody. Many of the old arias were destined for the opera house, with the representative composers (Alessandro Scarlatti, Paisiello, Caldara, Carissimi, Handel, Gluck and others) being recognized masters of the genre. Even though most of the works for which they were intended have not been performed for centuries, the wonderful arias still delight listeners all over the world today, and the musical education of young singers is inconceivable without their substantial contribution. The performance of ancient arias requires serious vocal technique, finesse and elegance of expression, restrained interpretation, without excesses of intensity, but with intonational precision, especially in the delivery of specific ornaments. Through their high artistic qualities, they contribute to the formation of good taste in music lovers and to the enrichment of their knowledge of the heritage of pre-classical music.

**Keywords:** Belcanto, arias, baroque, Georg Friedrich Händel, coloratura, drama for music.

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## Introduction

A careful analysis of research into the history of European civilization and culture reveals that between the end of the 16th century and the middle of the 18th century we can distinguish an era whose dominant features are encompassed under the name of baroque style (preclassic). It was spawned by the Renaissance and moved further away from its equilibrium.

While the Renaissance literature of the 14th century flourished through the famous Italian poets Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Giotto and Botticelli, the music of the time, dominated by the polyphonic tradition, began to develop timidly a popular trend.

From the end of the 16th century, as Renaissance art reached its peak, courtly and religious music was characterized by grandiloquence and emphasis, driven by social and political causes. In the life of the Church, the Reformation shook Catholicism, which sought to recover and fight Protestantism, a political struggle which even led to wars, but which did not resolve the crisis of the Catholic Church.

The Council of Trent (1545-1563) recommended the Jesuit order and the Inquisition to control culture and strengthen ties with the Catholic monarchies as methods of attack. In addition to the repressions of the Inquisition and the tactical actions of the Jesuits, attempts were made to attract the faith by building monumental churches, where spectacular processions were held with music capable of moving and captivating people.

Another factor that created the stylistic features of Baroque was the absolutist monarchy. The bourgeoisie, eager to gain more economic power, had to contend with the feudal lords, whose opposition hindered the development of trade and new economic relations. To stifle resistance from the aristocracy, the bourgeoisie supported the absolutist monarchy in forming a centralized state, which limited the rights of the lords. In the eyes of its subjects, the monarchy imposed itself on the monarchs with a pomp like that displayed by the church. The royal court lived in opulence, manifested in solemnities and grand receptions. Hence the need for sumptuous buildings, with rich ornamentation and grand music to give the impression of power and splendor.

Through the rationalist thinkers - Fr. Bacon, Th. Hobbes, Pierre Gassendi, Benedict de Spinoza, John Locke, R. Descartes - and the followers of Morus's Utopia, the role of the church was reduced, and the new secular culture was stimulated. (1562-1625), Calderon de la Barca (1600-1681), Carlo Goldoni, Tirso de Molina (1585-1648), Pierre Corneille (1606-1684), Blaise Pascal, Jean Racine (1639-1699), J. B. Molière (1622-1693), La Fontaine (1621-

1695), Nicolas Boileau (1636-1711), La Rochefoucauld, La Bruyere (1645-1696),<sup>3</sup> the aesthetics of classicism were established.

The Baroque style dominated, in particular, architecture, characterized by monumentality and rich ornamentation, represented by Francesco Borromini and Gian Lorenzo Bernini. In painting, Rubens (1577-1640), Rembrandt (1606-1669), Jordaens, Van Dyck, Vermeer, Poussin, Caravaggio, Velasquez (1599-1660). The Baroque style has influenced clothing and furniture, and in music it has certain features that contrast with the simplicity and naturalness of the Renaissance. The name "baroque" comes from the Italian painter Federico Barocci, or from the Portuguese word "barucco", meaning an asymmetrical pearl.

In royal courts and princely palaces, music played an important role in the festivities. Court life sometimes gave a conventional character to many creations, as the richly ornamented interiors of the palaces influenced the music through rich melodies or musical genres (opera, ballet), the performance of which required pomp and rich ornamentation. The court's precious atmosphere also stimulated instrumental music without a rich emotional content, but also the development of opera and ballet, thanks to the material possibilities for staging grand performances. At the same time, the artistic refinement of the court made it possible to evoke subtle psychological portraits in harpsichord music and to cultivate the court music of popular (rustic or urban) origin, which brought a new life into the musical culture of the French aristocracy.

The tendency towards the solemn and festive was due not only to the aristocratic courts, but also to the church hierarchs who built large, lavish cathedrals adorned with impressive paintings and majestic sculptures. Solemn processions and intricate rituals were performed by priests dressed in gilded vestments.

The impressive music at the divine services of the Catholics contrasted with the sober music of the Protestants. Naturally, the music written for these cultic events took on their emphasis, sometimes characterized by an outward brilliance. The church was responsible for stimulating the development of organ genres, and thanks to the timbral possibilities of this instrument great progress was made in musical drama.

The bourgeoisie was also responsible for the development of musical culture in the Baroque period, as it spurred the development of manufacturing, which in turn led to the perfection of instrument construction. The family of

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<sup>3</sup> Ștefănescu, Ioana. *O istorie a muzicii universale (A History of Universal Music)*. Vol. 1,2, București, Ed. Fundației Culturale Române, 1996.



violins was established as the only stringed bowed instruments, gradually replacing the lyres and violas, and the invention of the piano would later replace the harpsichord.

Their refinement of instruments gave impetus to musical creation both in opera, a genre created in the Renaissance spirit, and in instrumental music, broadening the expressive power of music and stimulating the creation of musical genres and forms, which were detached from words and dance.

From the Baroque period onwards, music freed itself from the tutelage of the other arts, becoming capable of expressing human feelings through its own means in generalized images superior to the other arts. The development of the sciences and the continuation of Renaissance tendencies to explain musical phenomena scientifically led to solid acoustic research and the theorization of harmony, which would become, at the end of the Baroque, a fundamental element of musical expression.

Since the 16th century, theorists have scientifically determined the laws of harmony and tonal organization. After Henricus Glareanus, who, in *Dodecachordon* (1547), emphasized the importance of the major-minor modes and added the Ionian and Aeolian with their plagal to the eight modes, in 1555 Nicola Vicentino took up the Greek theory in his *Ancient Music Reduced to Modern Practice*. In 1582, Sethus Calvisius' *Melopoeia* or the *Rationale of the Construction of Melody* appeared, and Gioseffo Zarlino laid down the laws of harmony in his treatises: *The Fundamentals of Harmony* (1558) and *Demonstrations of Harmony* (1571).

The stylistic features of Baroque, characterized by grandiosity, festivity, rich and ostentatious ornamentation, are not entirely specific to Baroque music, as they are not general in music. Music has stylistic aspects which are in keeping with the spirit of the Renaissance and the new artistic climate of the time in general.

From a stylistic point of view, Baroque music will enrich the means of expression and deepen the musical drama through broader sound constructions. If the chain of phrases of the Renaissance genres represents a succession of snapshots of isolated, static images, to a certain extent, the Baroque genres are characterized by structures which tend to depict life in movement and human experience as it unfolds.

The path between the early Renaissance and the late Baroque is of decisive importance for the development of all the fundamental disciplines in the art of music. In essence, it represents the process of the affirmation and crowning of the contrapuntal concept of polyphony. Here the process of the great vocal-instrumental symbiosis, as evidenced by musical practice, unfolds, and here the division of music into vocal and instrumental genres takes place.

The spatial expansion of forms of expression and the coexistence of different<sup>4</sup> styles will influence the variability of the Baroque's temporal boundaries, marking the complexity of Europe's spiritual and cultural life for around 150 years.<sup>5</sup>

The Baroque blends in with the Renaissance, giving it a faster pace and a more pathetic tinge, sometimes upsetting the balance and replacing it with a more tumultuous and more complex expression, which only seldom does it find its way into the rigorous mold of Classicism, which also makes its appearance in the culture of the 17th and 18th centuries.

The Baroque style, whose name has often carried a nuance alluding to the over-emphasis on the effects through which one communicates, or to a fashion detail of the time - the wig, defines an era of an explosion of shapes, lines, colors and sounds that even ostentatiously reveal the frenetic spirit of the time. It was to be seen not only in the art of the time - architecture, sculpture, music, theatrical performances - but also in the way of life, with everything from the adornment of palaces and churches, stages and instruments, to gardens and parks, carriages and carriages, all bearing the stamp of pomp and pageantry.

As far as the art of sound is concerned, we cannot speak of Baroque music in the sense in which we attribute this stylistic feature to the architecture or sculpture of the time.

However, we can recognize traces of the Baroque (pre-classicism) in the development of music throughout the period, both in its indigenous forms and in the syncretic genres - opera, cantata and oratorio - in which the language of sound was associated with verbal or visual means of communication. In both cases, the presence of the Baroque will describe a sinuous line, often difficult to demarcate from the features of the Renaissance, as well as from those of Classicism, which is now making its way. The first half of the 17th century, while leaving room for the configuration of musical genres specific to the Baroque era, is still dominated by the serene spirit of the Renaissance, both in vocal and instrumental music. In the latter, which was to reach its first culmination, genres such as concerto grosso and orchestral suites developed from the Middle Baroque (1630-1680).

The musical language used in the instrumental genres is in the same aura of the Baroque style, with the swirls of the melodic line. Thus, the melody breaks out of the rectilinear framework of the previous era. Not only the melody, but also the polyphonic and harmonic structure will change by restricting the

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<sup>4</sup> De Cande, Rolland. *Histoire universelle de la Musique ((Universal History of Music)*. Tome 1, Editions du Seuil, 1978.

<sup>5</sup> Hofmann, Alfred. *Drumul operei (The Road of Opera)*, Ed. Muzicală, București, 1960.

Renaissance modes to the two - major and minor. These lose their step mobility, becoming stable horizontal structures and creating a complex called tonality.

Together with the definition of the tonal-functional system comes modulation, which is not merely a coloration of the unitary modal flow, but an opportunity to confront contrasting elements - two or more different tonalities.

In keeping with the Baroque spirit of the time, the musical discourse is now organized by a succession of contrasting movements (fast and slow) in instrumental works such as concertos, sonatas and suites.

Of course, the vocal-instrumental field is growing with the development of all the arts. The first half of the 17th century, while leaving room for the configuration of musical genres specific to the Baroque era, is still dominated by the serene spirit of the Renaissance, both in vocal and instrumental music. In the latter, which was to reach its first culmination, genres such as concerto grosso and orchestral suites developed from the Middle Baroque (1630-1680).

The musical language used in instrumental genres enters the same aura of Baroque style, through the volutes of the melodic line. Thus, the melody comes out of the rectilinear frame of the previous age. Not only the melody, but also the polyphonic and harmonic structure will change by restricting the Renaissance modes to the two major and minor – They lose the mobility of the steps, becoming stable horizontal structures and creating a complex called tonality.

With the definition of the tonal – functional system, the modulation will appear, which is not just a unitary modal flow coloring, but an opportunity to confront contrasting elements – two or more different tonalities.

Consistent with the Baroque spirit of the era, the musical discourse is now organized through a succession of contrasting movements (fast – slow) in instrumental works such as concert, sonata or suite.

Of course, the vocal-instrumental field increases with the development of all the arts. The opera was, at the time of its appearance, an act of maturity of an artistic process that had begun long before, leading to the definitive separation of secular music from religious music, mastered by the strict canons of the church.

At the beginning of the 16th century, this new trend was manifested in art and literature in the form of the revival of ancient traditions. The spirit of the Renaissance was particularly strong in Florence, because of the existence of the *Camerata Fiorentina*. by turning the tabs of the history of music, we must remember that Florentine city was, was, since the fifteenth and fifteenth centuries, the cradle of refreshing the polyphonic tradition, of the so-called *Ars nova* (new art).

From the desire to revive the ancient tradition of the symbiosis between word and music, but also from the need for more accessible art, musicians from the end of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the XVIII-th century oppose polyphony, considering it too complicated and often formal art, militating for the accompanying monody. Therefore, the accompanied monody has come to the forefront of the predilections, taking advance towards polyphony, outlining two distinct melodic types: vocal and instrumental, "between the two having no essential differences, both highlighting their own physiognomies given by the progress made in the construction of musical instruments technique and the interpretative resources specific to voices and instruments, both preserving, at first, the features of the Palestinian melos".

A first step in the crystallization of instrumental music is the transition of the practice of polyphony from vocal music to instrumental music, which will be used as a means of configuring complex musical images.<sup>6</sup> Released by word and gesture, instrumental music has a brown development, and the richness of images and content have required the creation of various musical forms, such as running, theme with variations, suite, monothematic sonata, overture and concerto grosso, some going to more complex forms.

In the previous century, the vocal polyphony added harmonic writing, accompanying monody and "concerting style" (concerted), in reaction against polyphonic complications and sophisticated utilitarian. The composers preferred the accompanied monody, considered closer to the natural and more accessible, because by the recitative approach, the text became intelligible. At the same time, the recitative monody represented better the feeling of expressing the poetic sense, from which comes the name *rappresentativo* style, given to the monody style, in which the vocal line, following the natural rhythm of the words, has melodic undulations that translate the affective states.

In opera music, in oratory, sung, miss, the modalities of writing were very diverse, but it dominated the accompanied monody, in which the accompaniment was done with a continuo basso, to harpsichord, organ or lute.

In vocal music, monodies are recitative, open and closed symmetrically. Thanks to the verse, canzonettas, arias and ariettas will have symmetrical structures. Under the influence of instrumental music, we find vocal lines that lend motivational structures, based on arpeggios and passages of instrumental technique. The taste for virtuosity will stimulate the development of the technique of bel canto, dominant at the end of the XVII-th century. In Baroque, the vocal style is determined by the crystallization of opera and oratory.

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<sup>6</sup> Iliuț Vasile. *O carte a stilurilor muzicale (A Book of Musical Styles)*, vol. II, București, Editura Muzicală, 2011, pp. 15-16.

Just as Gluck at his time considered “I thought most of my work should be limited to looking for a beautiful simplicity”, so today, we, teachers, guide students to the same search for simple things.

The simplicity of which the composer speaks is the ideal of the whole epoch, marked by the influence of Enlightenment philosophy, the principles underlying the reform of the musical drama, aiming at the realization of this ideal. One of these principles refers to the treatment of operatic recitations. If until now the dramatic action was just a pretext to compose a music meant to delight the audience and to remain in their memory for as long as possible, the accentuation of the importance of the dramatic subject and the use of librettos with a real literary value will change this.

The importance that the creators of the work of the spoken word have given, that recitation *cantando* gradually loses its importance. At the height of the Baroque era, the recitative comes to be treated somewhat like a link between areas or duets. Gluck wishes to revive this ideal of ancient drama, to convey generally valid feelings through his music, which served the word and has adapted to its hidden meanings. In his attempt to purify the genre of the work, the German master brings back to the fore the importance of the recitative and strives to eliminate definitively that striking contrast between the recitative and the sung parts, preferring in this respect the use of the accompanied recitations the accompaniment completing what the word can only name and penetrating into the essence of the feelings and states that it wishes to convey.

The trend of decorating the vocal melody with virtuosity passages (trills, game, staccato, etc.) has existed since ancient times and will develop fulminant starting with the 16th century. The appearance of instrumental works with an expressive sound palette much larger than the vocal one and of the soloist song that emphasized the virtuosity of the performer, it stimulated the vocal singing in the search and exploration of new interpretative techniques and the conquest of new heights in terms of virtuosity, expressiveness, ambience, nuance, etc.

Starting with the 16th century, the emancipation of the accompanying soloistic song, instrumental or vocal in front of the polyphonic one, will lead to the appearance of the areas, executed either independently or as an integral part of a much larger work (oratorio, opera, passion, singing). The term **aria** derives from the Latin word *area* and appears for the first time in correlation with music in the 14th century, then designating a way to sing or perform. Within the areas are distinguished two singing manners: **canto spianato** (song stretched) and **canto fiorito** (song blooming<sup>7</sup>). Areas written

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<sup>7</sup> Eremia Ramona. *Funcția expresivă a coloraturii vocale (Expressive Function of Vocal Coloring)*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Vremii, 2007, p. 15.

in the *canto spianato* manner are developed on high values of notes (half-notes, whole notes), while areas created in the style of *canto fiorito* show values of low notes (eighths, sixteenths, thirty-seconds) and various vocal ornaments (trills, appoggiaturas, mordents, etc.) This ornamental enrichment leads to the coloring of the melody, hence the term *color soprano*. The term vocal coloring is first defined in several old dictionaries such as<sup>8</sup> :

- Musicum - Michael Praetorius (1618);
- 1703 Dictionaire de musique - Sebastien de Brossard;
- *The Musicalisches Lexicon* by Johann Gottfried Walther (1732).

From its very beginning, vocal coloration has intertwined two aesthetic directions: one being the – **ornamentation** that highlighted the virtuosity and vocal qualities out of the ordinary and the other – **expression** the most accurate embodiment of the feelings and passions of the portrayed character. At the beginning of the history of this model of singing there were a number of voices - among them that of G. Caccini - which was against the use of coloring by human voices, considering it suitable only for instruments, claiming that due to its vocal coloring, the words no longer understood each other and proposed its use only in the final cadences, when the instruments had to intone long notes. With all these opinions to the contrary, vocal coloring has become a mandatory style requirement in the era. Trillo, appoggiatura, portamento, glissando, gruppetto, mordent, tremolo, cadenza are a series of means by which coloration could be achieved. To describe the ways of achieving these virtuosity elements, various treatises dedicated to vocal art will be elaborated, signed by Pier Francesco Tosi, Giambattista Mancini, Manuel Garcia.

Dramatic performances of vocal music, dance and pantomime had existed in Europe since ancient times. The ancient Greek tragedy itself, with choir, presented many aspects that can be considered as precursors to the work. Closer to the era to which we refer, elements of the work existed in the religious mysteries of France and those sacred *rappresentazione*, sacred performances, from Italy of the fifteenth century, in which dramatic and musical means had been used by the church to attract believers to Catholic worship.

Throughout the 16th century, the trend towards a "new musical art" has translated into the ever-increasing appearance of the song accompanied by the monody style, in which a single voice is embossed, being accompanied by the fairly simple agreements of the ciphered bass, which complete the harmony.

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coloratura> accessed on February 17, 2025.

The general orientation of the Fiorentina Chamber was to create a perfect fusion between poetry and music. This is the basis for the evolution of the opera genre. *Euridice* (1600), composed by Jacopo Peri (1561 - 1633), perfectly embodies the ideals of "Camerata Fiorentina".

Claudio Monteverdi (1567 - 1643) is the first great name in the history of opera, giving the new genre of dramatic-musical a brilliance and also a depth that could hardly be overcome – **opera series**. The difference between him and his predecessors is that the Florentines were primarily theorists, while he opened new perspectives to the genre. Claudio Monteverdi proved to be a musician first, his grandiose and colorful imagination, the inexhaustible richness of melodic inspiration, the inclination towards the tension of dramatism were looking for the most appropriate expression element.

At the beginning of the 18th century, the city of Naples is unanimously recognized as the world center of lyrical theatre. Here we will find the apogee and sunset of severe and ceremonial art, with all its patrimonial atmosphere, but also the birth of the slag and sharpness in the tongue of the **comic opera**, which leaves the world of legendary and conventional heroes and is heading towards the actuality.

If Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632 - 1687) had founded the solemn French court overture, consisting of three sections after the scheme of slow - fast - slow movements, Alessandro Scarlatti (1660- 1725) it blurs the form of the Italian overture, of course, much closer to the vivacity of its people, reversing the succession of movements: quickly - slowly - quickly. The most important achievements of the great composer are those in the field of the actual means of dramatic expression, of the interweaving of the word with music, in which he establishes three distinct forms: the first is that of the *secco* recitation, of the quick musical speech, used in passages of maximum dynamism of the action, of, in which the lively unfolding of the phrases is supported only when and when by the plated agreements of the harpsichord. But when it comes to expressing pathetic feelings, deeply dramatic, Scarlatti introduces the accompanied recitative (*stromentato*), the recitative accompanied by the orchestra, in which the meaning of the words is emphasized and commented on by the wide and diverse language of the orchestral passages, more or less developed. Where the mood of the characters is rendered in larger monologues, the aria brought to its consecrated form, called the aria da capo (A-B-A), appears.

From those comical intermezzi of the works the series developed the genre of **opera buffa** in its own right. Its sources are "*commedia dell'arte*" and the Spanish theatre. Having debuted as a cartoon of the *fumed* opera series, the new Italian musical comedy was soon advanced from the rank of a light hoax to that of true satire of mores, encompassing the increasingly real reflection of the age, in its various aspects.

From this moment on, the castrated voices disappear from the stage, defending the male voices, among which, especially the bass voice takes on an important role. The recitative and the aria are now delineated as forms of expression, the former being used as a basic musical means for the playback of lively dialogues, while lyrical feelings flourished in the area.

**Aria *Lascia ch'io pianga* from *Rinaldo* opera -  
Georg Friedrich Handel**

One of the most imposing masters of the late Baroque musical, Georg Friedrich Handel (1685-1759) represents a whole epoch of opera history before Viennese classicalism.

"If in the XVII century the Italian opera still dominated a large part of the European musical life, through Handel, the musical theater knows a special development, a synthesis of various influences and currents of the time. His creation combines elements of French, Italian and German opera, offering the most illustrious painting of the Baroque musical theatre, in which we meet the nobility of the great concert areas (transpositions of parts of the preclassical instrumental suite), the vocal brilliance of the belcanto, the, the subtlety of the accompanied recitative (mainly cultivated by Rameau) and the spectacular complexity of the Lully"-style mountings"<sup>9</sup>.

Handel<sup>10</sup> was born in 1685 in Halle and proved very early to be the possessor of exceptional gifts for music. Determined to make him a jurist, his father, a tenacious and severe person, refused around 1694 as the Duke of Saxe, then King Friedrich I of Prussia, whom he met in Berlin in 1696, to take care of his son's musical education. However, he agreed to entrust his child to Zachow, the outstanding musician of Halle, who taught him the flight, counterpoint, composition and practice of several instruments. Handel continued his high school studies and became an organist of the Halle Cathedral in March 1702; eager for wider horizons, in 1703 he terminated his contract and went to Hamburg. Matthewson introduced him to the musical and cultured environments of the city at St. Mary Magdalene, where she will become an organist, and especially at the Opera Orchestra where, after playing as a violinist and harpsichordist, she wrote *The Passion for John*, then his first opera, *Almira*, and so on, followed by *Nero* (1705). Faced with the failure of this last work and dissatisfied with the musical situation in Hamburg, he went

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<sup>9</sup> Constantinescu, Gabriela, Caraman-Fotea, Daniela, Constantinescu, Grigore, Sava, Iosif. *Ghid de operă (Opera Guide)*. Editura Muzicală a Uniunii Compozitorilor, București, 1973, p. 180.

<sup>10</sup> Nicolescu, Mircea. *Händel (Handel)*. București, Editura Muzicală a Uniunii Compozitorilor din R.P.R., 1959, p. 3.



to Florence (1706), then to Rome (1707). From this era there are many religious or profane compositions, in which Handel displayed his entire talent as a melodist.

Before Handel left for Naples in 1708, he wrote *Rodrigo*. In 1712, the composer went to London to become an official composer of the Crown. Here are some works including *Ode* for the anniversary of Queen Anne, opera *Amadigi*, two *Te Deums*. Following his sovereign in Hanover, Handel returned to Germany in the summer of 1716 and composed the *Passion*. Since the end of December 1716, the composer has been back in London.

Focusing only on the stage, attracted only by the opera, he established an academy, the Royal Academy, under the patronage of the king and aimed at assembling works. Since then, Handel has fought to impose himself, to modernize, to harmonize the work, making it a total creation, in which the music expresses, through a language of remarkable evocative force, the drama lived by exceptional characters in extreme situations. Among his best-known works are *Rinaldo* (1711), *Teseo* (1712), *Giulio Cesare* (1724), *Rodelina* (1725), *Tolomeo* (1728), *Ezio* (1732), *Serse* (1738), *Arianna* (1734), *Atalanta* (1736), *Imeneo* (1740), pastorale *Acis and Galathea*.

The composer remains imprinted in eternity by memorable psychological portraits, outlined primarily through the *da capo* aria form, which will become *the established form of the opera aria*<sup>11</sup>, and secondly by the originality of the musical language with inspiration from ancient history.

Handel, on the other hand, focuses on the composition of secular orators and instrumental music in the tradition of Henry Purcell's English music. He composed the oratorios *Athalia* (1733) and *Saul* (1739), as well as the 12 *Concerti Grossi*, op. 6 (1739).

In 1742 the famous *Messiah* oratorio was brought to light, as well as *Israel in Egypt* (1739), *Samson* (1743), *Judas Maccabeus* (1747), and *Solomon* (1749). It also includes *Fireworks* (1748), which together with *Water Music* (1717) will gain great popularity. While working on the *Jephtha Oratory* (1751), Handel loses his sight. He died in London on 14 April 1759, being buried with special honors in *The Poets' Corner*, in Westminster Abbey.

One of the operas of Georg Friedrich Handel is *Rinaldo*, drama per musica in three acts. The libretto is by Giacomo Rossi from a screenplay by Aaron Hill, inspired by the *La Gerusalemme liberata* ovvero *il Goffredo*, by Torquato Tasso. It premiered in London at the Haymarket Theatre on February 24, 1711.

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<sup>11</sup> Constantinescu, Gabriela, Caraman-Fotea, Daniela, Constantinescu, Grigore, Sava, Iosif. *Op. cit.*, p. 181.

Through the opera *Rinaldo*, Handel manages to compose areas in the ornate rich style of Neapolitans, as well as simple areas, specific to the opera buffa. At the same time, it also uses melodic lines whose specific rhythmic formulas come from dance music.

The recitative is secco and has a monologue character<sup>12</sup>. It is supported instrumentally by harmonic type accords, which lead to the idea of basso continuo, specific to time. The tonality chosen by the composer for this segment is minor soil, with a strong hue of forces, to create scenic gravity for the character Almirena. The pauses in melodic speech have an increased expressive meaning, highlighting the pain and anger of the character at the loss of love.

One of the most famous areas of the Baroque period, *Lascia ch'io pianga* is a reference page in the soprano repertoire, capitalizing on vocal technique with stylistic-interpretative specific of any performer at the beginning of his career.

The text imprints the suffering experienced by the character of Almirena, in his tumult and pain, at the loss of love, symbolically embossed by deprivation of liberty, being constrained "in inferno", in "eternal uryg":

**Figure 1**

A	B	A
a a <sup>1</sup> a a		a a <sup>1</sup> a a

As you can see, the repeated joint (A) is identical to its half. The phrasic arrangement of **a a<sup>1</sup> a** contains elements prior to the classical compositional the accordion arrangement with harmonic support role. Melodica has a profound lyrical character, the fusion between the meaning of lyrics and the soloistic line being the foundation of the construction of the entire work. Surprisingly the tonality is not minor, as we might have thought, but major, the composer building a flowing, warm and expressive melodic line *ch'io pianga la dura sorte, eche sospiri la liberta*, but at the same time crossed by regret, and suffering, as the verse asks: *Lascia*.

<sup>12</sup> Parisoti, A. *Arie antiche (Ancient Arias)*. vol. 3, Ed, Ricordi, Milano, 1984.

E.g. 1

ARIA.  
*Larghetto.*

*p* La - scia ch'io pian - ga la du - ra sor - te e che so - -  
*Lass mich dir kla - gen, dass mir hie - nie - den mein Loos be - -*

*p*

spi - ri la li - - ber - - tà;  
*schie - den, ver - bann! zu - sehn,*

Georg Friedrich Handel: Aria *Lascia ch'io pianga*,  
 opera *Rinaldo*, m. 1-8, tempo *Andante*<sup>13</sup>.

The ternary measure of 3/4, together with the Andante tempo, on a predominantly equal rhythm, with some cadential exceptions, interspersed by expression breaks, contributes not only to the creation of the moment, but also to the creation of the moment, a state of suffering, but also comes to the support of the soloist, in the correct execution of breaths, emission, diction. The median phrase of the first period, *a*<sup>1</sup>, brings a dramatic note through the modulation towards the dominant C Major, but also through the melodic arrangement in the acute, yet penetrating the initial motivating elements.

<sup>13</sup> Handel, Georg Friedrich. *Lascia ch'io pianga* (Let me mourn my cruel fate, and sigh for freedom).

STYLISTIC-INTERPRETATIVE ASPECTS IN THE MUSICAL REPERTOIRE  
SPECIFIC TO BAROQUE VOCAL SINGING

E.g. 2

spi - ri la li - ber - tä; e che so - spi - ri, e che so -  
schie - den, ver - brennt zu sein, dass mir nie - den mein Loos be -

spi - ri la li - ber - tä!  
schie - den, ver - brennt zu sein.

**Georg Friedrich Handel: Aria *Lascia ch'io pianga*,  
opera *Rinaldo*, m. 9-14, tempo *Andante***

After resuming the initial sentence, the composer resorts to an instrumental moment **a'**, which will acquire cadential valences at the end of the area, but also of connection for period **B**, which will follow. The contrast of the median period is achieved by modulation to the relative D minor, then deriving to C Major with direct cadence on its relative minor - in the minor:

E.g. 3

*Fine* *f*

Il duol in - fran - ga  
Der Fret - heit Won - ne

*p* *Fine* *f*

que - ste ri - tor - te de' miei mar - ti - ri sol per - pie - -  
schwand mei - nem Le - ben; könne' ich mit - Thrd - nen den Tod - er - -

tà, si, de' miei mar - ti - ri sol per - pie - - tà!  
seh - nen, er brängt Er - lö - sung von at - ter - Pein. *Dal segno*  
*al Fine.*

**Georg Friedrich Handel: Aria *Lascia ch'io pianga*,  
opera *Rinaldo*, m. 31-42, tempo *Andante***

As it is noted, melodic tension intensifies through various elements of language: contrasting shades f-p-f, with indicated accents, the accompaniment is doubled in octaves, the melody contains higher jumps and sensitizations of harmonic fundamentals.

From a technical-interpretative point of view, we encounter some problems that need to be mentioned. In the first sentence, the first sound from the measure has a slight settling, the next withdrawing easily, later an

anacrusis is led to the cruises. The second phrase has as climax the syllable *pi*, from the word *sospiri*, the anacrusis formed exceptionally from the triplet will be led to it.

In the median section **B**, the long-breath phrases and the leaps in the legato, are some of the problems that will be solved by suspending the base of the interval for a correct achievement of the peak, considering the flow of the phrase, taking care of the incidence of unwanted accents.

Being a baroque area, in the educational process we must strictly follow the rhythm, as well as its indications. Dynamics, in the Baroque score in general, is terraced, based on the transmission of emotions and the tension of phrases. The score of the area *Lascia ch'io pianga* has indications of dynamics in terraces, but we can also be guided by the text, depending on it we will identify certain dynamic tensions of the score.

The Baroque melody, compared to the Renaissance one, is instrumentalized, being more varied and richer in expressiveness and enlarged and diminished intervals, which in the Renaissance were not used. This area is still at the level of non-instrumentalization, keeping the syllable-note relationship approximately intact, but the melodic exigency and diction must not be respected in any way. The melody of the area must have suppleness, the sounds must be equal in sound intensity throughout their duration, well-articulated and detached from each other. The criteria for phrasing and interpretation of melodic lines are based on instrumental style, namely the violin style, and the music requires very good vocal support, due to the execution of the sounds in the detachment. The interpretation retained is another aspect related to the perniculations of pre-classical areas.

Large intervals must be performed correctly from an intonational point of view and must be expressive. In this case, the interpreter must give them greater importance in the study of the score. In this area, the difficult intervals are of perfect ascending quart (even from the onset of the area), small ascending and descending sexta, descending great sexta.

Leaps of this type are executed by putting the first sound on the second position (at the position of *fa2*), on the column of air, support, and with opening of neck and mouth relaxed. Also, the sounds of the jump must be linked to each other to avoid chipping the throat before the acute sound, and for the accuracy of the intervals, we will take care to intonate them directly, not underneath.

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## INNOVATIVE PROCESSES IN 20TH-CENTURY MUSIC: FROM THE AVANT-GARDE TO THE DIGITIZATION OF MUSIC

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**SUMMARY.** The musical art of the twentieth century is characterized by the rapid evolution of styles, genres, and expressive means, inspired by the development of technology, including in the field of sound recording and electronic musical instruments. The purpose of this paper is to provide a generalized overview of the innovations that appeared in music during the twentieth century and determined its stylistic diversity. The research methodology is based on an empirical approach that includes the analysis of musicological literature and the analysis of scores by composers from different countries who worked in different musical genres and made the greatest contribution to the introduction of the latest compositional techniques. It has been found that innovations in the music of the twentieth century affect the timbral palette and peculiarities of the pitch organization of the musical fabric. The renewal of timbral diversity is primarily associated with the development of electronic sound synthesis, which opens up opportunities for generating sounds inaccessible to acoustic musical instruments. By the end of the twentieth century, special synthetic sounds became the basis of electronic dance music, such as techno and house. Innovative methods of pitch organization refer to composers' searches aimed at expanding or introducing

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alternatives to the classical tonal system. Such alternatives include modality, serial technique, and microintervals. These updates concern not only the author's material, but also the methods of composer's work with folk music - the combination of folk melodies with innovative harmonic and timbral solutions became the basis of neo-folklorism.

**Keywords:** harmony, timbre, 20th century music, tonality, modality, serial music, electronic music, musical education, training of musicians, media, mediatization, digitalization, cultural discourse.

## Introduction

Throughout the twentieth century, various art forms experienced rapid renewal. The catalyst for these processes was scientific, technical, and technological progress, in particular the emergence of sound recording, video recording, and electronic computing. Music technologies, including recording equipment and new musical instruments, have "shaped the way music is created, performed, distributed, and consumed"<sup>6</sup>. The latest technological tools are unattainable with traditional means and thus expand the artist's possibilities. Collaboration between science and art helps to expand the boundaries of knowledge and fosters creativity<sup>7</sup>.

It should also be noted that the numerous trends and events that occurred in music education during the second half of the twentieth century allowed the profession to remain a diverse and dynamic component of education, particularly in the United States, thanks in large part to the leadership of the Music Educators National Conference<sup>8</sup>. The sharply increased dynamics of scientific and technological progress, urbanization as a cultural phenomenon that left its mark not only on architecture but also on people's lifestyle and artistic thinking, extreme radicalism in the search for means of artistic expression, leading to a deliberate, emphasized break with tradition, as well as the interest of artists (musicians, painters, writers) in mythology, and on the other hand, in

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<sup>6</sup> Lerch, Alexander. "The Relation Between Music Technology and Music Industry." In *Springer Handbook of Systematic Musicology*, edited by Rudolf Bader, Springer, 2018. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-662-55004-5\\_44](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-662-55004-5_44)

<sup>7</sup> Nyakayo, O. A. "The Intersection of Science and Art: Collaborative Approaches." *Newport International Journal of Engineering and Physical Sciences*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2025, pp. 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.59298/NIJEP/2025/511600>

<sup>8</sup> Mark, Michael L. "Music Education since Mid-Century: The Role of the Music Educators National Conference." *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, vol. 33, no. 3, 1999, pp. 79–92. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3333703>.

cosmology, in metaphysical principles, in themes related to space - all this together determined the genetic sources of avant-gardism, was reflected in its aesthetics, and led to a departure from excessive pedagogic conservatism in music education.

Musical art has its own arsenal of expressive means related to the pitch and timbre characteristics of sound. And since music, unlike the visual arts, is a temporal art<sup>9</sup>, the peculiarities of the unfolding of sounds in time also play a significant role. These characteristics have also been influenced throughout the history of art, and this influence became especially noticeable with the development of technology in the early twentieth century. Social media and virtual reality<sup>10</sup>, which began to develop at the turn of the XX-XXI centuries, also significantly expand the scope of musical expressive means<sup>11</sup>.

Thus, the purpose of our article is to investigate which expressive means and forms of sound organization have become the latest in the twentieth century.

## Literature review

An analysis of the literature of recent years shows the predominance of research on the use of computer technologies for the creation or analysis of musical material at the present stage. These studies can be divided into several areas: research on digital workstations (DAWs) designed to create music, research on analytical technologies for music information retrieval (MIR), and the study of the possibilities of creating musical compositions by artificial intelligence.

Among the most recent DAW studies is<sup>12</sup> work, which provides a comparative analysis of modern software - Apple Logic Pro X, Cubase 12, Ableton Live Lite 11. The author notes that choosing a DAW is a difficult task for independent producers, as each of them has its own advantages and disadvantages<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Stambaugh, J. "Music as a Temporal Form." *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 61, no. 9, 1964, pp. 265–280. <https://philpapers.org/rec/STAMAA>.

<sup>10</sup> Fan, Y. "The Practical Guidance of Music Aesthetics in Musical Art Practice." *Journal of Education and Educational Research*, vol. 11, no. 3, 2024, pp. 22–25. <http://dx.doi.org/10.54097/mxk9w068>.

<sup>11</sup> Marynin, A. Ye. "Transformation of Digital Technologies in the Music Industry at the End of the 20th – Early 21st Century." *Bulletin of National Academy of Managerial Staff in Culture and Music*, no. 2, 2024, pp. 311–315. <https://journals.urau.ua/visnyknakkim/article/view/308417/300073>.

<sup>12</sup> Yang, Y. "Analysis of Different Types of Digital Audio Workstations." *Highlights in Science, Engineering and Technology*, vol. 85, 2024, pp. 563–569.

<sup>13</sup> Yang, Y. "Analysis of Different Types of Digital Audio Workstations." *Highlights in Science, Engineering and Technology*, vol. 85, 2024, pp. 563–569.

Research on analytical programs has been of continuing interest over the past two decades. Among the most recent works is the research by Rentana WuYixiao Pan, which demonstrated the high performance of the newly developed derivative-free optimized refined random forest (DFO-RRF) technology, which allows to “assign a track to certain styles of electronic dance music based on timbral and metrical characteristics”<sup>14</sup>. In a similar study,<sup>15</sup> used convolutional neural networks (CNNs) and recurrent neural networks (RNNs) to recognize music genres. Audio files were analyzed using Mel-spectrograms. According to the researchers, the use of machine learning in genre classification reflects a “broad shift” in the music industry<sup>16</sup>. Some studies are devoted to attempts to apply analytical technologies to analyze folk music, including videos of ritual music from the West African Akan tribe<sup>17</sup> and recordings of Indian classical raga<sup>18</sup>.

Music creation with the help of artificial intelligence is also one of the most relevant areas of research. For example, Sampada<sup>19</sup> investigates the use of deep learning to generate music in ABC notation format using recurrent neural networks (RNNs). The author proposes a system that learns from a large dataset of ABC notation, generates new musical compositions, and converts them to MIDI and WAV formats for easy playback.

Corbelli<sup>20</sup> raises ethical, aesthetic, and legal issues of using AI to create music. The author believes that AI can be “a powerful tool capable of supporting, assisting, and facilitating the work of the composer”, but the shortcomings

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<sup>14</sup> Wu, R., and Y. Pan. “Providing Music Selection and Matching Suggestions for Dance Creations Using Music Information Retrieval and Artificial Intelligence Techniques.” *Journal of Computational Methods in Sciences and Engineering*, 2025. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14727978251318807>.

<sup>15</sup> Naidu, P., et al. “Classification of Music Genres Using Multimodal Deep Learning Technique.” *E3S Web of Conferences*, vol. 616, 2025, 02012. <https://doi.org/10.1051/e3sconf/202561602012>.

<sup>16</sup> Naidu, P., et al. “Classification of Music Genres Using Multimodal Deep Learning Technique.” *E3S Web of Conferences*, vol. 616, 2025, 02012. <https://doi.org/10.1051/e3sconf/202561602012>.

<sup>17</sup> Moore, S., N. Asare, and S. Kubiti. “Ndworm: A Multimodal Music Information Retrieval Dataset for Akan Musical Videos.” 2025. <https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-5876078/v1>.

<sup>18</sup> Jayanthi, J., and V. Upendran. “Raga Recognition of Indian Classical Music Using Meerkat Optimization Based MFCC and Fine Tuned BILSTM-XGBOOST.” *Circuits, Systems, and Signal Processing*, 2025, pp. 1–29. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00034-025-02999-w>.

<sup>19</sup> Sampada, K. S., et al. “Algorithmic Orchestration: Deep Learning Techniques in Music Generation.” *PowerTech Journal*, vol. 49, no. 1, 2025, pp. 802–813. <https://powertechjournal.com>.

<sup>20</sup> Corbelli, Andrea. “Beyond the Algorithm: Ethical and Aesthetic Challenges of AI in Music.” *Itinera*, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.54103/2039-9251/27842>.

of AI [...] still “require the intervention of musicians, who are and will remain indispensable to give the musical object the status of a work of art”<sup>21</sup>.

The development of more traditional music, composed for symphony or vocal groups, has received relatively less attention from researchers, which is a sign of the vacuum being filled.

## Methods

The study is based on empirical research methods. In order to identify innovations, the musicological literature on innovative compositional techniques and scores by composers from different countries who worked in different musical genres and made the most significant contribution to the introduction of the latest compositional techniques, in particular P. Hindemith, A. Schoenberg, B. Liatoshynsky, O. Messiaen, K. Stockhausen, and W. Lutosławski, was studied. Particular attention is paid to such aspects as the tonal and atonal organization of the sound space, the use of micropolyphony, sonorous effects, aleatorics, electroacoustic elements and other techniques that have become crucial in the music of the XX-XXI centuries. The results obtained allow not only to systematize the latest compositional techniques, but also to outline the main vectors of their further development, which is important for understanding the contemporary musical language and the processes of its transformation.

## Results

The fundamental musicological work that allows us to systematize and summarize the latest compositional techniques used in the first half to the middle of the twentieth century is Kohoutek's “Techniques of Composition in the Twentieth Century”<sup>22</sup>. The analysis of this book allows us to present the main innovations of this period in the following table (Table 1).

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<sup>21</sup> Corbelli, Andrea. “Beyond the Algorithm: Ethical and Aesthetic Challenges of AI in Music.” *Itinera*, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.54103/2039-9251/27842>.

<sup>22</sup> Kohoutek, Ctirad. *Novodobé skladební směry v hudbě*. Praha, 1965.

**Table 1**

Innovation	Composers
Expansion of the tone system	B. Bartók, B. Britten, B. Liatoshynsky, B. Martinu, O. Messiaen, C. Debussy, J. Enescu, A. Onegger, F. Poulenc, M. Ravel, I. Stravinsky, K. Szymanowski, R. Strauss, P. Hindemith.
Modal system (artificial modes)	O. Messiaen, B. Bartók, B. Liatoshynskyi.
Micro intervals	A. Haba, C. Ives
Serial and serial technique	A. Schoenberg, A. Berg, A. Webern, Boulez, K. Stockhausen, L. Nono, E. Krshenek
Pointillism	A. Webern, K. Stockhausen, P. Boulez,
Concrete and electronic music	P. Schaeffer, K. Stockhausen
Aleatorics	K. Stockhausen, P. Boolez, J. Cage

**Major innovations in music from the first half to mid-20th century**  
**Source: author's elaboration**

Let us briefly characterize the trends presented in the table.

The expansion of the tonal system, which began in the works of nineteenth-century composers, is reduced to the following basic techniques or their combinations

- the widespread use of polytetrachordal chords, both in their primary and inverse forms.
- the use of altered chords (in some cases, chords with split tones).
- the formation of modulation chains without being fixed in certain keys.
- polytonality.

The use of polytertian chords (nonaccords, undecimals, terdecimals) was widely used in the works of C. Debussy, M. Ravel, L. Revutsky, and later in jazz music, where their use was the most consistently theorized.

As an example of the use of polytetrachylic structures, let us take a fragment from the Prelude Op. 44 #2 by B. Liatoshynsky (E.g. 1). The chord sequence in this example looks like this:  $G_{maj7} - E_{m9} - C_{maj13} - D_{maj9} - E_{m9} - G_{maj7} - F\#_{m7} - A_{m9}$ .

E.g. 1



**B. Lyatoshinsky. Prelude Op. 44 No. 2, measures 5-9,  
as an example of the use of polytetrachytic harmony**

In some cases, especially in jazz music, polytertiary structures are used in rotations or in a modified arrangement, as a result of which individual tones are arranged in quarters or tritones, which gives rise to C. It is difficult to interpret such structures as quartal (for example, the tertiary decimals c-e-g-b-d-a in jazz piano music are usually performed in the arrangement c-b-e-a-d-g, which acoustically forms a quartal structure, but functionally remains a tertiary decimals).

Composers of the twentieth century inherit the creation of modulation chains from the works of Wagner. This is explained in the context of the idea of “infinite melody” as an embodiment of the idea of “tension of forces” or “psychic energy”. An example of long chains of modulations without anchoring in intermediate keys is, for example, B. Lyatoshynsky’s romance “On Jasper Steps”, whose harmonic sequence is presented as follows: H<sub>m6</sub> – Cis<sub>7</sub> – A<sub>m6</sub> – F<sub>6/4</sub> – Cis<sub>2</sub> – B – D – Ges – Es<sub>m</sub> – G<sub>6/4</sub> – H<sub>13</sub> –> E<sub>maj7</sub> – Cis<sub>9</sub>.

Polytone is interpreted as the simultaneous use of more than one harmonic function<sup>23</sup>, and it was used in the works of B. Bartók, I. Stravinsky, and early works of W. Lutosławski. As an example, let us cite the beginning of Paganini’s Variations on a Theme, the original theme of which begins in A minor with alternating tonic and dominant functions, the composer imposes harmonies Fmaj7, D(add6), Hm.

The modal system involves the use of artificial sound systems with an arbitrary number of sounds. An early example of the modal system is the use of whole-tone scales in Debussy’s preludes (E.g. 2)<sup>24</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> Leeuw, Ton de. *Music of the Twentieth Century: A Study of Its Elements and Structure*. Amsterdam University Press, 2005. ISBN 978-90-5356-765-4.

<sup>24</sup> Benward, Bruce, and Marilyn Saker. *Music: In Theory and Practice, I*. 7th ed., McGraw-Hill, 2003, p. 39. ISBN 978-0-07-294262-0.



**C. Debussy. Prelude “Voiles” as an example of the use of the whole-tone mode.**

The most consistent embodiment of the modal system is O. Messiaen’s “modes of limited transposition”, which the author not only implemented in many of his works, but also substantiated in his scientific treatise “The technique of my musical language”<sup>25</sup>. While O. Messiaen used mainly static modal models that involved the observance of certain sound systems for a long time, a different approach to modality is observed in the piano works of B. Liatoshynsky, characterized by the use of dynamic modal structures that undergo constant transformations during the unfolding of the musical texture<sup>26</sup>. In some cases, modal and non-functional harmonic systems are also found in jazz<sup>27</sup> and metal<sup>28</sup> music.

Serial and later serial technique is considered as a technique of composition or a method based on the use of a series of sounds as the main constructive material<sup>29</sup>. The origin of serialism is considered to be the technique developed by A. Schoenberg (see E.g. 3), known as dodecaphony, which the author himself characterized as “a method of composition with twelve notes related only to each other”<sup>30</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> Messiaen, Olivier. *Technique de Mon Langage Musical*. Paris, 1944.

<https://www.rem.routledge.com/articles/technique-de-mon-langage-musical>.

<sup>26</sup> Bezborodko, O. A. “Interaction of Composers and Performers Means of Expressiveness in the Second Sonata-Ballad by Borys Lyatoshynskyi.” *Scientific Bulletin of P. I. Tchaikovsky National Music Academy*, vol. 122, 2018, pp. 110–124.

<sup>27</sup> Susanni, Paolo, and Elliott Antokoletz. *Music and Twentieth-Century Tonality: Harmonic Progression Based on Modality and the Interval Cycles*. Routledge, 2012.

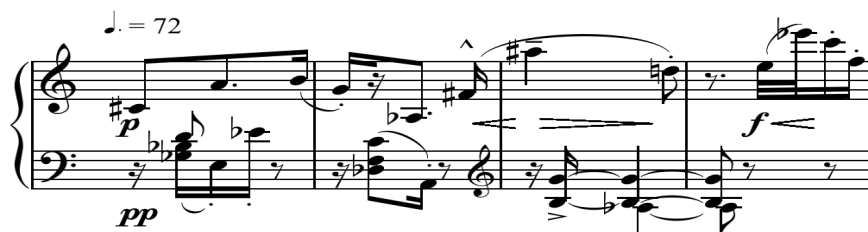
<sup>28</sup> Lulja, E. “Harmonic Function and Modality in Classic Heavy Metal.” *Metal Music Studies*, vol. 5, no. 3, 2019, pp. 355–378. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1386/mms.5.3.355\\_1](http://dx.doi.org/10.1386/mms.5.3.355_1).

<sup>29</sup> Griffiths, Paul. “Serialism.” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., edited by Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell, vol. 23, Macmillan, 2001, pp. 116–123.

<sup>30</sup> Schoenberg, Arnold. *Style and Idea: Selected Writings of Arnold Schoenberg*. Edited by Leonard Stein, translated by Leo Black, University of California Press, 1975. ISBN 0-520-05294-3.

Initially, the idea of a series of sounds was applied to the pitch parameter, so that the 12 sounds of dodecaphony correspond to 12 possible notes within the 12-step sound system used in European music. Later, the idea of seriality was extended to other parameters of musical sounds, such as dynamics, timbre, and duration. This extension of the serial principle became known as integral serialism or seriality <sup>31</sup>.

### E.g. 3



### A. Schoenberg. Piece Op. 23, No. 5, as an early example of a dodecaphoneï

Kohoutek<sup>32</sup> notes that elements of dodecaphony, following the composers of the New Music school (A. Schoenberg, A. Berg, A. Webern), are also found in the works of composers who generally did not consider appropriate to completely abandon the tonal principle of organizing the musical fabric, such as I. Stravinsky or D. Shostakovich.

While serial and, especially, serial compositional techniques lead to a significant role of algorithms in the formation of musical integrity, aleatorics, on the contrary, involves a certain degree of randomness and freedom of the musician when performing such compositions. By definition, a process is considered to be aleatory “if its course is determined in general but depends on chance in its details”<sup>33</sup>. The most interesting from the aesthetic point of view is “controlled aleatoric”, examples of aleatoric are the late compositions of W. Lutosławski<sup>34</sup>. In these compositions, aleatorics can be combined with polytonal structures.

<sup>31</sup> Iddon, Martin. *The Cambridge Companion to Serialism*. Cambridge University Press, 2023.

<sup>32</sup> Kohoutek, Ctirad. *Novodobé skladebné směry v hudbě*. Praha, 1965.

<sup>33</sup> Meyer-Eppler, Werner. "Statistic and Psychologic Problems of Sound." *Die Reihe*, vol. 1, 1957, pp. 55–61.

<https://www.scribd.com/document/834230296/Meyer-Eppler-W-1958-Statistic-and-Psychologic-Problems-of-Sound-Die-Reihe-1-Electronic-Music>.

<sup>34</sup> Rae, B. C. *The Music of Lutosławski*. 3rd ed., Omnibus Press, 1999. ISBN 978-0-7119-6910-0.



The twentieth century also saw attempts by composers to go beyond the 12-tone system by trying to use alternative sound systems, usually with more steps within an octave. Such attempts are called microintervals or microtonality<sup>35</sup>. Although alternatives to the 12-tone division of octaves were noted by theorists in the musical cultures of individual nations as early as the musicologists of the 19th century, European composers turned to experiments with micro-interval structures only in the 1920s, including the first composers Alois Hába and Ivan Wyschnegradsky, C. Ives<sup>36</sup>.

The difficulty of introducing micro-intervals lies primarily in the technical limitations of traditional instruments, especially keyboards, which provide for a fixed division of the pitch scale. Although attempts were made in the 1920s to design quarter-tone pianos<sup>37</sup>, such instruments remained the domain of experimentation and did not become widespread.

Microintervals have found their application in spectral music (J. Grise, T. Murray) and sonority (K. Penderecki, W. Lutosławski). In spectral music, its use is associated with the desire to form consonances based on the calculations of the sound spectrum<sup>38</sup>. In sonoristics, on the other hand, there was a desire to form the densest possible sound arrays, denser than semitone clusters<sup>39</sup>.

To a large extent, innovations in twentieth-century music are associated with the invention of electric instruments and electronic sound processing. The invention of electric instruments contributed to “the establishment of the concept of ‘artificial’ (synthesized) sound, a significant enrichment of the timbre palette of music of the non-academic tradition and the formation of a decentered timbre space. It also resulted in the transformation of the traditional communicative model “performer - instrument”, the emergence of electronic dance and experimental music”<sup>40</sup>. Electronic music is being formed as a separate

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<sup>35</sup> MacLagan, Susan J. *A Dictionary for the Modern Flutist*. Scarecrow Press, 2009, p. 109. ISBN 978-0-8108-6711-6.

<sup>36</sup> Haas, Georg. “Mikrotonalität und spektrale Musik seit 1980.” In *Orientierungen: Wege im Pluralismus der Gegenwartsmusik*, edited by Jörn Hiekel, pp. 123–129, Schott Musik International, 2007. ISBN 978-3-7957-1837-4.

<sup>37</sup> Lindstedt, Iwona. *Sonorystyka w twórczości kompozytorów polskich XX wieku*. Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2010. <http://dx.doi.org/10.31338/uw.9788323510024>.

<sup>38</sup> Fineberg, Joshua, editor. *Spectral Music: History and Techniques*. Overseas Publishers Association, 2000. ISBN 90-5755-131-4.

<sup>39</sup> Lindstedt, Iwona. *Sonorystyka w twórczości kompozytorów polskich XX wieku*. Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2010. <http://dx.doi.org/10.31338/uw.9788323510024>.

<sup>40</sup> Kushch, Y. V. *Electromusical Instruments as an Evolutionary Factor of Musical Culture in the 20th – Early 21st Century*. PhD dissertation brief, Kyiv, 2013.

musical trend, the main material of which is “characteristic electronically synthesized or electronically dissected sounds”<sup>41</sup>.

What is also important is that already in the early twentieth century, the landscape of music education underwent a revolutionary shift. A symphony of inventive characters and events transformed the way music was taught, opening up new possibilities and laying the groundwork for contemporary music education as we know it today. The early twentieth century also saw the introduction of technology into music teaching. Phonographs and radio broadcasts enabled students to listen to classical music and performances by well-known performers, extending their musical horizons. This technology enabled a more immersive musical experience.

The paradigm of musicians training underwent significant change in the second half of the 20th century, particularly in the final third.<sup>42</sup> begin with a discussion of the relationship between developmental psychology and music education, describing the mid-1980s as the emergence of the three primary subfields of music psychology: cognitive, developmental, and social. The writers then continue on to the present and beyond, arguing that a significant shift has been the addition of a social perspective and sensitivity to musical style, which, in turn, has further impacted avant-garde music landscape.

In the 1940s and 1950s, electronic music developed in two competing directions – “concrete music” (P. Schaeffer) and electronic music itself (K. Stockhausen). While the former was aimed at recording and subsequent combinations of sounds of the natural or man-made environment, the latter was actually aimed at synthesizing sounds with the help of electronic technologies. From the point of view of modern electronic music technology, these approaches should be seen as complementary - sampling and synthesis. In the 1970s, electronic music gradually entered the sphere of popular music. By the end of the XX century, the original sound of TR-808 and TR-909 became the basis of such dance electronic music trends as techno, house and their variations.

Dance music and electronic music mostly remain within the classical tonal system. However, it is the search for timbral solutions that is becoming the main driving force behind creative innovations in electronic music. The introduction of combinations of timbres that cannot be produced with traditional

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<sup>41</sup> Bondarenko, A. *Electronic Music in Ukraine in the Last Third of 20th – the Beginning of 21st Century*. PhD dissertation, Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts (KNUKiM), 2021.

<sup>42</sup> Hargreaves, David, Nigel Marshall, and Adrian North. “Music Education in the Twenty-First Century: A Psychological Perspective.” *British Journal of Music Education*, vol. 20, no. 2, 2003, pp. 147–163. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0265051703005357>.

musical instruments is becoming a distinctive feature of electronic music and the basis for the diversity of its trends. Timbre is becoming a key characteristic of sound, one of the leading means of expression in the musical arts<sup>43</sup>.

However, electronic music does not exclude the use of innovative harmonic systems. For example, Stockhausen's Etudes uses a serial technique in combination with an 81-step octave division<sup>44</sup>, which makes this work innovative both in timbre and harmony. Electronic music has provided additional opportunities for the development of microintervals due to the fact that synthesizer programming imposes virtually no technical limitations on the calculation of sound frequencies, and thus on the possibilities of arbitrary division of the sound system<sup>45</sup>.

Innovations in the music of the twentieth century also affected the work of composers with folklore material, which received the generalized name of neofolklorism. Neo-folklorism of the first half of the twentieth century is mostly associated with the use of "songs of archaic folklore origin, which were developed on the basis of repetition and variation, often with blurring the contours of the folklore theme"<sup>46</sup>. Among the representatives of this trend are B. Bartók and I. Stravinsky, and partly the early works of B. Liatoshynsky and V. Liutoslavsky. The second folklore wave, associated with the postmodern era, is characterized by "a bolder use of folklore in its 'pure' and 'pristine' form, along with the latest means of expression"<sup>47</sup>. This wave is characterized by ethnophonisms, which are defined as "the timbre and sound aspect of folk instrumentation"<sup>48</sup> for instrumental music or the use of folk singing styles<sup>49</sup> for vocal music. This approach is most widespread in Ukraine, thanks to the tradition of, on the one hand, the academicization of such folk instruments as the bandura, and, on the other hand, the cultivation of folk choral singing as an alternative to academic singing, which ensures "the formation of an

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<sup>43</sup> Reshetnyk, D. "Timbre in Music: Problems of Concept Definition." *Young Scientist*, no. 11, 2020, pp. 76–79. <https://doi.org/10.32839/2304-5809/2020-11-87-17>.

<sup>44</sup> Stockhausen, Karlheinz. *Texte 2: Aufsätze 1952–1962 zur musikalischen Praxis*. Edited by Dieter Schnebel, Verlag M. DuMont Schauberg, 1964, p. 37.

<sup>45</sup> Lindstedt, Iwona. *Sonorystyka w twórczości kompozytorów polskich XX wieku*. Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2010. <http://dx.doi.org/10.31338/uw.9788323510024>.

<sup>46</sup> Derevianchenko, O. *Neofolklorism in Musical Art: Statics and Dynamics of Development in the First Half of 20th Century*. PhD dissertation brief, National Music Academy of Ukraine, 2005.

<sup>47</sup> Bondarenko, A. *Electronic Music in Ukraine in the Last Third of 20th – the Beginning of 21st Century*. PhD dissertation, Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts (KNUKiM), 2021.

<sup>48</sup> Broiako, N. "E. Stankovych's «Symnoi Drimbi Zvyki» in the Aspect of Embodiment of the Neofolkloristic Tendencies." *Music Art and Culture*, vol. 1, no. 30, 2020, pp. 19–24, <https://doi.org/10.31723/2524-0447-2020-30-1-3>.

<sup>49</sup> Bondarenko, A. *Electronic Music in Ukraine in the Last Third of 20th – the Beginning of 21st Century*. PhD dissertation, Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts (KNUKiM), 2021.

individual musical sound, which is realized through the appeal to the song folklore of different regions”<sup>50</sup>. The appeal to folklore motifs gives researchers grounds to talk about “opposition to cultural assimilation and globalization”<sup>51</sup> and “acquires the features of genre-style and semantic duality”<sup>52</sup>.

## Conclusion

Innovations in the music of the twentieth century were most clearly manifested in the harmonic and timbral spheres. The harmony of the music of the twentieth century is diverse and, depending on the creative guidelines of the author, can be characterized as extended tonal or polytonal (C. Debussy, M. Ravel, jazz music), modal or in combination of modal and tonal principles (O. Messiaen, B. Liatoshynsky) and atonal, in particular serial (A. Schoenberg, A. Berg, A. Verben) and serial. Some attempts to update the pitch organization of musical material concerned the introduction of micro-intervals within the tonal logic (A. Gaba), as imitation of sound spectra (J. Grise, T. Murray) or sonority (K. Penderecki).

The expansion of the timbral palette of musical art in the twentieth century was mainly due to the emergence of electric instruments that allowed synthesizing sounds that were unattainable for traditional instruments. By the end of the twentieth century, timbre, along with harmonic means, had become one of the most important means of musical expression, and in electronic music, a key distinguishing feature of its individual styles.

Innovations also concerned composers' work with folklore material. Unlike nineteenth-century composers, early twentieth-century composers tried to combine folk song melodies with the latest methods of harmonic and polyphonic development, and in the late twentieth century folklore also became a source of timbral enrichment for opera and symphonic music, and later (at the beginning of the twenty-first century) for electronic music.

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<sup>50</sup> Skoptsova, O., and S. Palyha. “Folk Choral (Song) Art Development Strategy in All of Modern Ukraine.” *Bulletin of KNUKIM. Series in Arts*, vol. 46, 2025, pp. 133–137. <https://doi.org/10.31866/2410-1176.46.2022.258626>.

<sup>51</sup> Marchun, O. “Folk Revival as a Means of Expressing Identity and Promoting Folk Motives.” *Modern Engineering and Innovative Technologies*, vol. 4, no. 32-04, 2024, pp. 92–99. <https://doi.org/10.30890/2567-5273.2024-32-00-094>.

<sup>52</sup> Zlotnik, O. “The Intertextual System ‘Composer–Folklore’.” *Kyiv Musicology*, no. 57, 2018, pp. 243–253. <https://doi.org/10.33643/kmus.2018.57.21>.

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## THE VIOLIN MINIATURE ON THE BORDER OF THE 20TH-21ST CENTURIES: ON THE PROBLEM OF CYCLIZATION

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**SUMMARY.** The miniature is a conceptual genre of musical culture that performs its cultural-forming and socio-cultural functions within a small form. At the turn of the centuries, the tendency to combine miniatures into cycles is spreading, and therefore the problem of studying the principles of cyclization and stylistic features of violin miniature cycles becomes relevant. The aim of the research is to consider the principles of cyclization of violin miniatures at the turn of the 20th-21st centuries on the example of creative work by Ukrainian composers. The cyclic compositions by Yuriy Ishchenko, Yevhen Stankovych, Valentyn Sylvestrov, Lyudmyla Shukailo, and Oleksandr Stanko have been analyzed. As the result of the research, the miniatures cycles classification, stipulated by their content, has been proposed: 1) the cycles with signs of program nature, which does not limit the composer's imagination to a specific direction of images; 2) the genre sketches with specification of images in the title; 3) the composer's musical diary – the author's own thoughts and impressions; 4) the cycles of compositions generalized as a "school of playing" – with artistic and methodological functions.

**Keywords:** genre, violin miniature, principle of cyclization, program nature, Ukrainian instrumental music, cycle.

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## **Introduction**

The miniature is a conceptual genre of musical culture, which also performs, like other genres (such as, for example, symphony, opera, cantata), its cultural and socio-cultural functions within a small form. The musical miniature is a historically established genre in musical culture, a self-sufficient form of creative activity of contemporary artists, in which through miniaturism as a principle of artistic thinking the concept of Man in the whole picture of the world is reflected. Miniaturism is a systemic principle of modelling in artistic practice, which concentrates on the psychology of the subject through the reflection of his/her inner world. At the turn of the centuries, the tendency to combine miniatures into cycles is spreading, and therefore the problem of studying the principles of cyclization and stylistic features of the violin miniature cycles becomes relevant.

The miniature, particularly the violin one, is a kind of a laboratory of composer's creativity and reveals the sensitive and operative reaction of artists to changes in aesthetic and stylistic vectors of a particular time and the search and testing of the appropriate expressiveness. Artistic and aesthetic dimensions, poetic imagery, enchanted by its emotionality and extremely romantic reproduction of reality, as well as interesting findings in the field of form and means of expression provide the best compositions of this genre with self-sufficiency and artistic value.

The miniature, like other genres of musical art, reflects the modern type of compositional thinking. Thus, the characteristics of the genre coincide with the artistic trends of the era – a synthesis of different arts, styles, elements of various genres, compositional techniques and more. That is, the miniature has absorbed all modern trends, which has contributed to the improvement of its own typical features.

## **Method**

The research methodology is based on the genre, comparative, system-analytical and structural-functional methods and the method of historical-typological analysis. In modern musicology, the study of the genre is based on an interdisciplinary approach based on the synthesis of musicology, culturology, musical aesthetics, and the theory of artistic creativity.

## Results and Discussion

The genre of miniature composing and performing creativity is inherent in almost all types of music. According to the method of performance and composition of performers, the miniature is divided into instrumental, vocal, choral, orchestral ones. Each of them has its own genre specifics, related to the performance features, the conditions of music-making, which depend on the purpose of life. Thus, the genre of the miniature has a multifunctional orientation of musical existence. In terms of style, the genre of the miniature is very diverse and multifaceted. This emphasizes the specific feature of the genre – its universal nature, flexibility, compliance with the change of stylistic paradigm of culture and human awareness.

The works by Boris Asafiev and Viktor Bobrovsky are devoted to the problem of revealing the form of the miniature as a carrier of artistic meaning. Scientists emphasize the content of the miniature as a characteristic means of world cognition and reflection of the picture of the world. Boris Asafiev, in particular, emphasizes the dependence of the genre on the size and properties of the space which is filled with sounds and determines both the acoustic component and the means of sound production, the ratio of sounds and, accordingly, the image sphere. As the example, the scientist cites the samples of intimate lyrics by F. Schubert and “Songs without Words” by F. Mendelssohn<sup>3</sup>.

The works by Leonid Zaks, Vyacheslav Medushevsky, Irina Snitkova, and Victoria Sukhantseva reveal the interspecific specificity of the miniature as a systemic phenomenon in art which lays in the synthetic nature of genre content and is concretized in various moods and feelings, types of musical expression and so on.

The fundamental studies of the genre of the musical miniature are the works by Konstantin Zenkin – the monograph “Piano Miniature and Ways of Musical Romanticism” and Evgenij Nazaikinsky – “Poetics of Musical Miniature”. Leonid Kadtsyn addressed this topic in the manual “Musical Art and Creativity of the Listener”, Aleksandr Nikolayev – in the monograph “Tchaikovsky’s Piano Legacy” and Lev Raaben – in the study “Violin and Cello Compositions by P. Tchaikovsky”. According to Lev Raaben, in essence, the miniature is a lyrical genre, extremely “convenient” for capturing a variety of emotions. The scientist notes the flexibility of the genre of the miniature and the conditionality of its boundaries owing to the special diversity of the content of varieties and forms of musical compositions that occur in it<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Asafiev, Boris. *Musical form as a process*. Book 1 and 2. Edition 2, Leningrad, Muzyka, 1971.

<sup>4</sup> Raaben, Lev. *Violin and cello compositions by P. I. Tchaikovsky*. Moscow, Gos. muz. izdatel'stvo, 1958.

The researcher of piano creative work by P. Tchaikovsky Aleksandr Nikolayev emphasizes that most lyrical miniatures of any genre are characterized by the composer's desire to convey intimate moods and mental states, inspired by time, fleeting impressions, and simplicity of musical images<sup>5</sup>.

Konstantin Zenkin defines the principle of the miniature as "a way of creativity based on a simultaneous contemplation of the lyrical image"<sup>6</sup>. The scientist emphasizes that the miniature has no direction of time from the past to the future. Instead, there is a time of lyrical experience, which stays psychological in the present. According to Evgenij Nazaikinsky, the miniature is a microcosm. Reflecting reality, it must inevitably embody something complete in the fragmentary, the known and the natural – in the light and the refined. The leading characteristic feature of the miniature, as noted by Evgenij Nazaikinsky, is the instantaneity of worldview, the concentration of feelings and emotions.

Historical and stylistic interpretation of the genre of the miniature in the context of the development of Ukrainian music is presented in the studies by Nataliya Ryabukha and Olena Gargay.

Olena Gargay's dissertation research "Individual author models of violin miniature in the creative work of composers of Western Ukraine (the end of the 19th – 70s of the 20th century)" is devoted to the dynamics of enrichment of the national musical style on the example of individual author interpretations of the violin miniature. The scientist systematically researches the violin miniature in the creativity of representatives of the Lviv composing school of the 20th century. Olena Gargay studies the poetics of instrumental miniature and clarifies the key concepts: "miniature", "program miniature", "genre-conditioned miniature". This dissertation highlights the main factors that influenced the development and flourishing of the studied genre – genre diffusion, cyclization, and transcription. The conclusions reveal the figurative and semantic potential of the violin miniature as a genre that can reproduce the individual world of the artist<sup>7</sup>.

The violin miniature as a holistic genre system of musical creativity is presented in Alla Melnyk's dissertation. The author provides criteria for the genre of the violin miniature and analyses the main trends in the development of this genre in the Ukrainian musical culture of the second half of the 20th –

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<sup>5</sup> Nikolaev, Alexandr. *Tchaikovsky's piano legacy*. Moscow; Leningrad, Gos. muz. Izdatel'stvo, 1949.

<sup>6</sup> Zenkin, Konstantin. *Piano miniature and ways of musical romanticism*. Moscow, Znanie, 1997.

<sup>7</sup> Gargaj, Olena. *Individual author models of violin miniature in the creative work of composers of Western Ukraine (the end of the 19th – 70s of the 20th century)*. Unpublished candidate dissertation thesis, National Music Academy named after M. V. Lysenko. Lviv, Ukraine, 2013.

early 21st centuries. In the dissertation research she has proposed the first classification of the genre of the violin miniature by the following features – the purpose, conditions of performance and the composition of the performers, the genre basis, the character of program nature, and the form and dramaturgic bases. She has compiled the intra-genre typology based on instrumental genres (waltz, humoresque, burlesque, improvisation, intermezzo, etude, caprice, poem, prelude, rondeau, and dance) and song-vocal genres, which is an indicator of the development of the arioso-song way of the statement (aria, arioso, vocals, elegy, lullaby, nocturne, song, and romance)<sup>8</sup>.

Today the violin miniature is one of the most popular genres of academic music. Cycles of violin miniatures occupy a special place in the creative legacy of modern Ukrainian composers, as evidenced by the presence of compositions of various ideas and scales – from minicycles to macrocycles.

As it is known, in the era of the formation of romantic miniatures two types of the cycle of program miniatures – a “free” (suite) one and a “strict” one – formed. The free cycle involves combining several plays with a common theme or common name, but each composition here is distinguished by wholeness and completeness, which allows it to be removed from the cycle, for example, “Seasons” by P. Tchaikovsky, or “Fantastic Plays” by R. Schumann. The strict cycle does not provide for the possibility of a separate performance of one of its components and is a holistic composition, outside of which a separate performance of movements can change their content. These two types of miniature cycles have survived to the present day. In our opinion, the problem of compositional integrity of program cycles and the principles of combining individual miniatures into cycles are considered insufficiently researched.

Yuriy Ishchenko’s cycle “Watercolours” (1970) consists of nine miniatures. The composition is built on the principle of contrast, which is the basis for the organization of the cyclic form. In this composition one can find genre, thematic, dynamic and figurative types of contrast that binds the form. The miniatures of the cycle resemble picturesque sketches, reflecting the capricious artistic fantasies of the artist, who seeks to comprehend the flow of time.

The first miniature – *Andantino con eleganza* – represents a thematic complex that develops throughout the cycle. First, the tone “a” is singled out; it is a supporting one for the composition as a whole. In the first play it sounds twice as an organ point, in the second – it is found in the piano part, in the third – it begins the two-part exposition of the theme in the violin part, in the

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<sup>8</sup> Melnyk, Alla. *Tendencies of genre and style dynamics of the Ukrainian violin miniature of the second half of the 20th – the beginning of the 21st centuries*. Unpublished candidate dissertation thesis, Kharkiv National University of Arts named after I. P. Kotlyarevsky, Kharkiv, 2016.

fourth – there is a shift of tone “a” halftone down, i.e. major-minority can be traced. The support on “a” is also felt in the fifth and the sixth plays, and in the last one the tone “a” is played by the major-minor combination of A-dur – a-moll. The main motive of the seventh play is a-moll. In the next two miniatures, the theme formed in the previous movement of the cycle, is rethought in genre, but again sounds based on a-moll. Thus, such a pitch organization, based on various tonal modifications which are leaning on the tone “a” (A-dur, a-moll, As-dur), is a compositional element that binds the cycle.

The first miniature is a graceful “transparent” image, created in high register, in the dynamics of *p* – *mp*, against the background of the organ point in the piano part. The genre basis of the miniature, written in a simple two-part form, is a waltz with an emphasis on a strong beat in the part of the piano or the violin.

The second miniature has a scherzo character, as indicated by the tempo mark *Allegro scherzoso*. The strokes, their change (*pizzicato*, *arco*), articulatory techniques, metric variability, where the main beat is equal to the eighth, the ascending direction of movement create an image that “flutters”. The main motive of the scherzo, which contains three stages of the variant development, sounds and develops in the piano part, and the fourth – in the violin part. In the latter case, there is a counterpoint ratio of the violin and piano parts, that is, the composer uses the technique of vertical-movable counterpoint. The culmination of the play, which is contained in the third phase of the form development, is represented by complicated sound complexes: three- and four-sound clusters (in the piano part) and three-tone intonations of the ostinato repetition of the ascending motive (in the violin part).

The third miniature – *Adagio misterioso* – sounds elegant, ephemeral, and mysterious owing to the sustained dynamics of *pp*, muted timbre under the mute, polyphonic interweaving of voices in the violin part. The complementarity of melodic lines is also observed in the ensemble thematic dialogue in the parts of both instruments. In a simple three-part form of a miniature, the middle section develops the main theme by changing the texture, namely – there is an expansion of the overall timbre range, against which the nucleus of the theme of the seventh miniature of the cycle is being conceived.

The second miniature of the cycle is related to the scherzo-dance character of the fourth play – *Viva giocoso e molto semplice*, which is characterized by unidirectional movement of the eighth durations. The middle of its simple three-part form sounds in the antithesis of the first. In the reprise, which sounds more transparent owing to the sparse texture of the piano, the motives from the first part are recognizable. At the end of the play, the original motive is exactly repeated, which gives the composition a compositional completeness.

The fifth miniature – *Moderato con moto alla balata* – is close to the story, to the ballad genre. The connection with speech intonation is indicated by a variable meter and rhythmic variability. As if setting the listener to the meaningful story of the soloist, there is a long piano introduction with characteristic stops on sustained sounds and caesuras, which can be positioned as the first movement of the three-part form. The further development of the theme takes place in the second movement of the violin part. The most dynamic is the third movement, where the development of the material is entrusted to both instruments. The end of the play is reminiscent of the sound of the third miniature of the cycle with identical intonation inversions (es – as; f – dis) in the flageolet exposition, which are emphasizing the thematic connections between the plays.

The sixth miniature – *Presto* – belongs to the “motor” genres and resembles a toccata. The composer uses stretto passage of the motives in the violin and piano parts. The author proposed an interesting timbre-texture solution: the initial entry of voices began from the upper “g” of the low octave of the piano through the “g” of the high octave to the violin part – “g” of the low octave. In the reprise we see the opposite sequence, based on a stretto statement. The stretto polyphonic approach is used throughout the miniature. The three-phase development, which closes the motives in continuous versions, is emphasized by the chromatic movement in the solo violin part and the pauses in the piano part.

The seventh, the eighth and the ninth miniatures sound attacca. They can be considered as a cycle within a cycle. The seventh play – *Andante* – contains a contrast in the middle of the exposition at the level of the violin’s theme presentation, which is duplicated in an octave with accompaniment enriched with chord complexes. The opposition is also contained at the level of two constructions – a monodic song theme, conditionally defined by the author of the dissertation research as “kolomyika”, and a dance theme based on scherzo nature. The form of this miniature is verse-variation, with a song introduction and a dance chorus. The elements that separate the first verse from the second verse and the small coda are the grand pauses. The author uses textural variation – in the violin part the stroke changes (from *legato* to *tremolo ricochet*), thus giving the violin an accompanying function, uses *col legno*, *pizzicato*, blows on the sounding board, imitating percussion and plucked instruments in the spirit of folk tradition. The seventh and the eighth miniatures of the cycle have a thematic affinity.

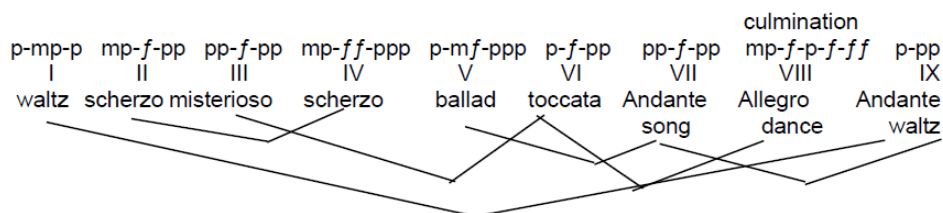
The eighth – *Allegro* – can be seen as a transformation of the seventh, and it is created in the character of a fast dance based on three beats, accentuated syncopated rhythm, tremolo, which evokes associations with the genre of capriccio – a virtuoso whimsical play. The miniature ends in a high

emotional tone, in the dynamics of *ff*, in octave ascending movement with the major third A-dur, which is the culmination top of the whole cycle.

In the context of the dramaturgic plan of the cycle, the ninth miniature is a variant of the first play, which is emphasized by the nature of the melodic development and the reliance on the waltz genre. In the context of the “small” cycle (the seventh – ninth miniatures), the final play is associated with the genre of a mourning song, embodied in the monodic sounding of the solo violin, its muted timbre with the author’s indication *con dolore*. The play is a philosophical summary of the whole opus.

The scheme below demonstrates the symmetrical organization of the cyclic composition, in which the first and the last plays have thematic affinity, lyrical character, and waltz nature; the second, the fourth, the sixth and the eighth miniatures have the reliance on motor nature and a scherzo beginning; the third, the fifth, and the seventh are combined by a vocal-song ground based on declamation nature.

**Figure 1**



**Compositional and dramaturgic patterns of the cycle “Watercolours”  
by Yuriy Ishchenko**

Having analyzed the dynamic plan of the cycle, we can identify the following logic: all the miniatures start with the nuance *p* and end in various dynamic gradations. The culminating eighth miniature stands separately with its dynamic profile and the final *ff*. The last play of the cycle, which sounds at *p – pp* and plays the role of the postlude, and the third, written in the character of *misterioso*, where the sustained dynamics of *pp* creates the effect of ephemeral sound space, are also distinguished.

The unity of the pitch organization of all the miniatures has a point of attraction to the tone “a”, which allows us to consider the cycle as free variations of the theme presented in the first miniature. The author of the dissertation research sees a genre transformation in the affinity of the composition with a cycle of free variations based on a single thematic complex.

Yevhen Stankovych's triptych "In Verkhovyna" (1972) is an example of a "free" cycle. Each play has its own name: "Lullaby", "Wedding", and "Improvisation". The famous concert performers perform them both in a cycle and separately. The program miniatures, which make up the links of a single chain, are bright compositions, rich in national coloring. Based on the intonations of Ukrainian folk songs and instrumental motives, the plays represent the neo-folk tradition in the development of the violin literature. The cycle is built on the principle of genre and tempo contrast: "Lullaby" (*Andante con moto*), "Wedding" (*Allegro assai*), and "Improvisation" (*Senza tempo*). The tempo is not specified in the last miniature, but the author's remark on the metronome (the quarter is 48) indicates a slow movement of music.

The first play, "Lullaby", belongs to a lyrical-psychological type of expression. The genre basis of the lullaby is embodied by various texture means and specific articulation in the piano part. The special internal accentuation of motives is caused by metro-rhythmic variation, reflected in the various interval-motive formations formed in the triplet, quadruplet, quintol, and sextole. Combining the interval consonances in the accompaniment with one bind creates the effect of "rocking", contributes to the detailing and melodization of the texture development.

The piano texture varies throughout the play. The six structural phases of the composition, which are marked by the composer himself with numbers, have different types of presentation. The first phase of the thematic development is characterized by smoothness, legato stroke and a clear accentuation of unaccented beats of the bar. In the second phase, the violin part represents a variant of the theme, and the piano part provides melodic complexes – this time equal in number, which adds a calmer algorithm of melodic-rhythmic breathing inherent in the lullaby. But already in the third phase there are signs of tension and excitement (fluctuations of small durations and dynamic contrasts in the piano part, wide interval moves in the violin part). The fourth phase contrasts with the previous one by expressive sounding of the violin in the middle register, the role of the piano part is minimized to the level of sustained *fis* tone. This ostinato solution of the piano sounding resembles the playing of triple music with its inherent presentation of the melody of the solo instrument against the background of the ostinato-long sounding of the accompanying voices. The fifth phase of the development is most in line with the lullaby genre, which is reflected in the measured triplet texture with the author's mark *Molto cantabile*. The piano part is full of cluster complexes and polyrhythm, in which the initial triplet "rocking" remains the priority, which gives the music a certain charm.

The song beginning, laid down in the violin part, tunes to a quiet, calm imagery, however, the lyrical and psychological tension of the music is provided by reduced and increased intervals, chromatisms, low-second chanting of



tones, grace notes. Subtle psychologism is revealed in the continuous change of texture and dynamics, the use of intense intervals. The motive construction, divided by caesuras, creates a declamatory type of melody. Metro-rhythmic freedom is manifested in metrical variability, rhythmic variability of the musical material development and embodies the connection with Ukrainian musical archaism.

The complex musical language with subtle detailing of each intonation is inherent in a certain type of imagery, which is identified in this research as philosophical based on declamation, which is primarily found in the violin part, which not only sings but also “speaks” the language of sounds. Thus, the genre of the lullaby, enriched by the intonation tension of modern musical language, reveals the stylistic dynamics of the violin miniature at the present stage.

The second play of the triptych – “Wedding” – a folk scene, full of humor and irony, has a through thematic development and unfolds as a kaleidoscope of events. The inflammatory rhythm, emphasized by capricious syncopations, accents, glissando, as well as the fast tempo indicate the improvisational-instrumental beginning of the miniature and create a bright dance character. Each of the contrasting sections of the form is characterized by a certain type of movement. The first section is set out in the violin part with double notes in the form of wide dissonant intervals by a syncopated rhythm with irregular accentuation, which creates a certain festive coloring. The theme itself sounds in the piano part in the high register and is distinguished by rhythmic and textural diversity. In the second section, the instruments change roles and this relationship is maintained until the end of the play, although, in general, the parts are equal and have a dialogical connection. The culmination section is based on the background of the main thematic complex of the play (based on intervals of the reduced octave and second moves). The semantics of the lyrical melody that appears after it reminds the theme of “Lullaby” with grace notes, triplets and fourth intonation. The enlightened coloring in the final section of the play is created by flageolets in the violin part in the volume of a major six-four chord.

If “Lullaby” is a lyrical and psychological miniature, “Wedding” is a genre sketch, then the third play – “Improvisations” – is characterized by drama, emphasized by the rhetorical nature of the material presentation (repetitions of the same tones, their articulatory emphasis with accents, with marcato stroke and also with dynamics *f*). The triplet nature and variable meter, characteristic of the cycle as a whole, acquire a dramatic coloring in this miniature. The title of the play marks the freedom of musical development; however, the type of imagery and the nature of the dramaturgy indicate the deep meaning of the

miniature. In Yevhen Stankovych's "Improvisation" various shades of complex, deep compositional worldview are represented.

All the plays contain a micro-thematic organization of the development, which convincingly reveals the individual artistic image of each of them. The versatility of the content of "Lullaby" is marked by lyrical and philosophical orientation and intimacy of expression. In the proposed classification it is a miniature with a genre basis of the song type. According to the type of imagery, this play combines two types – the philosophical one, based on declamation and speech intonation, and the lyrical and psychological one. The second miniature – "Wedding" – is based on motor nature and certain types of movement, which change in different sections of the form. The third play – "Improvisation" – is an example of a miniature marked by a philosophical worldview.

Neo-folklore features of the triptych are clearly manifested in the national coloring, reflected in the intonation folklore basis – increased and decreased intervals, border chromaticization of melodies, fourth-fifth consonances, melismas and complex rhythmic structures that have sound-depicting nature (in particular, the imitation of bird's voices), and the modern means of expression, enriched in a creative way, – clusters, altered consonances, complex rhythms.

The element that binds the triptych is the interval complex, embedded in the intonations of the theme of "Lullaby", which are based on the pure fourth, reduced fifth and small second in various variants-solutions (small second intonation in the form of clusters in the piano part in "Improvisation" and "Wedding"; fourth-fifth intonations – the beginning of "Improvisation").

A special kind of cyclicity is observed in the creative work of Valentyn Sylvestrov, namely – a macrocycle that combines individual cycles in one great composition. That is, it is possible to state the emergence of "super-genre" – "genre hybrid", according to the musicologist Marina Lobanova<sup>9</sup>. Valentyn Sylvestrov's macrocycle "Melodies of Moments" (2004) consists of seven separate cycles of miniatures for the violin and piano, which, as a kind of a diary, retain the impressions of communication with the prominent musicians of the era:

- "Five Plays". Dedication to G. Kremer (Elegy, Serenade, Intermezzo, Barcarole, Nocturne);
- "Three Plays". Dedication to A. Bazhenov (Serenade, Barcarole, Pastoral);
- "Three Plays". Dedication to H. Mustonen (Lullaby, Barcarole, Lullaby);

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<sup>9</sup> Lobanova, Marina. *Musical style and genre: history and modernity*. Moscow, Sovetskij kompozitor, 1990.

- "Melodies of Moments". Dedication to O. Rexroth (Lullaby, Barcarole, Minuet);
- "Two Elegies". Dedication to E. Edelchuk;
- "25.10.1893. In memory of P. I. Tchaikovsky" (Prelude to the "Birth of Melody", Lullaby, Serenade);
- "Songs without Words". Dedication to B. Pivnenko (Elegy, Barcarole, Musical Moment).

According to the author's idea, the large cycle of seven components must be performed continuously. Therefore, let us attribute this composition, rather, to a strict cycle.

The performing "reading" of the form of the composition is somewhat different from the author's and musicological concepts. In performing practice, the components of a macrocycle and even some play from the cycles often sound separate from each other; for example, "Musical Moment" from the cycle "Songs without Words" is often performed on the concert stage as a self-sufficient composition. According to the well-known interpreter of Valentyn Sylvestrov's music Bohdana Pivnenko, the author's interpretation of the composition provides for 72 minutes of music sounding, which is more than a section of the concert. Thus, it is not easy for listeners to perceive the macrocycle as a whole attentively, which is the reason for providing only some parts-cycles and individual plays from them at concerts.

As the example, let us consider only one violin miniature from the macrocycle "Melodies of Moments" – a demonstration to understand the author's interpretation of the genre and to identify the composing style of Valentyn Sylvestrov. "Musical Moment" is the third play from the cycle "Songs without Words", dedicated to Bohdana Pivnenko. The composition is based on numerous exact repetition of the main theme, which is reminiscent of the baroque era gavotte, and its elements. The genre nature is emphasized by the accentuation of dual beats, the peculiarities of the articulation of paired binds. The precise sequencing of motives prevails in the development, thus creating static procedurality and uneventfulness of musical time. The peculiarity of phrasing is the isolation of each intonation, which "breathes" independently, acquiring semantic significance. The nature of sound production in the violin part, according to the author's marks (alternation *pizzicato* – *arco* – *pizzicato*), creates a compositional three-part. Extremely clearly the stylistic principles of Valentyn Sylvestrov's composing writing were manifested in the most subtle gradations of the organization of the piano texture. Its peculiarities lie in the specific quality of sound, which the author defines as *leggero*, and in the means of pedalling (the emphasis is placed on each change of interval connections in the part of the left hand). The clarity and severity of the

composition determine the neoclassical direction of the play. The search for a “new simplicity” is stipulated by the minimization of artistic means of expression in the field of melody, harmony, texture and articulation.

The conceptual novelty of the violin miniature genre in the creative work of Valentyn Sylvestrov is manifested in the originality of stylistic, compositional and textural solutions. Minimalism is observed in the use of means of artistic expression, saturation of plays with musical micro-events. The sketch nature of the composer’s idea in this case must be adequately reproduced in the performing decisions. The interpreter’s attention should be focused on the flexible intoning of the smallest details of the author’s text. A separate task is to search for timbre diversity stipulated by the individual performing scenario. The form of many violin miniatures of the macrocycle “Melodies of Moments” is open, which creates an allusion to infinity and is characterized by dots and harmonious incompleteness. The compositions are distinguished by the thoroughness of the author’s remarks, which corresponds to the aesthetics of the miniature genre with its inherent extreme detailing of the text. The author considers them as essential, important, such that not only play an emotional and expressive role in music, but also organize the compositional form of the composition.

Liudmyla Shukailo’s cycle of miniatures “10 Plays for the Violin and Piano”, formed on the principle of a “school of playing”, according to the degree of technical complication of the miniatures. The names of the plays characterize the stylistic traditions of different epochs: baroque – passacaglia; romanticism – elegy, scherzino, waltz, intermezzo, and burlesque. Some plays have specific program names: “Ballet Scene”, “Variations”, and “Spring Duet”. The first play “Passacaglia” is simple for the performer, as it covers a narrow sound range, does not contain rhythmic “inconveniences”, provides a moderate tempo, rarely goes beyond the strings “a” and “e” and “comfortable” positions – the first and the third. The main means of performance is the stroke *détaché* with its use in different parts of the bow.

The second miniature of the cycle is “Ballet Scene”. The ascending direction of the motives, the frequent use of wide intervals along with accents, and various strokes add to the play’s theatricality and expressive dance orientation. The capriciousness of the rhythm, frequent changes of dynamics and articulation in combination with numerous alterations require considerable concentration of attention from the young performer. The task of pure intoning will come to the fore. In addition to intonation, there is a problem of combining triplet nature with register switching in the tempo of *Alegretto* (respectively – a clear change of the strings in the right hand). *Détaché*, *legato*, *staccato* and their combinations are used from the stroke arsenal.

The next play is variations on the theme of the Ukrainian folk song "Oh, Willow, Willow". The first variation resembles waltz, the second stylizes the Ukrainian dance "Little Cossack" (characteristic rhythmic formula: two quarters, two eighths and a quarter); the third variation is associated with the genre of toccata. This play can be recommended to beginners as an introduction to the variation form. Similar to "Passacaglia", "Variations" do not contain special technical difficulties. It is possible to perform the composition without going beyond the first position. In the register way the most used strings are "d" and "a". *Détashé* and *legato* are used from the stroke technique.

The romance-song composition of the "Spring Duet" melody will encourage the student to hone the ability to "sing" on the instrument, by working on the reproduction of a smooth sound, filled with beautiful timbre, which involves, in particular, the use of various vibrations and smooth movements of the bow.

The next "Allegro" puts before the young performer a specific technical task, namely – the mastery of a stroke of *détashé* in the rapid motion, which requires clear coordination. In the middle movement of the composition, against the background of a melodic theme in the piano part, the soloist demonstrates a new, jumping stroke – *sautillé*.

The lyrical and psychological "Elegy" fully corresponds to the genre of a sad song. Its intensive development requires the performer to work diligently on the cantilena, which is able to fill the music with a special heartfelt content. The main tasks in the work on "Elegy" will be the high-quality sound production, the mastery of a "wide" bow, its appropriate distribution and smooth changes. In addition, the performance of the composition involves the student's ability to reproduce subtle shades of dynamic gradations, mastery of qualitative changes in the positions in the left hand and, of course, impeccable intonation.

The next play, "Scherzino", is in contrast to the previous one. Scherzo mood is embodied in the alternation of ascending and descending melodic movements, staccato stroke, and sudden stops. Impeccable adherence to metro-rhythmic structures and accurate reproduction of articulatory means of expression – these are the main tasks facing the student in the work on the play.

The cycle is continued by "Waltz", marked by the improvisational nature of the development and virtuosity. In order to adequately interpret this play, a young violinist must already have certain performing skills – technical training, artistry and the ability to convincingly embody the oppositional emotions.

The next "Intermezzo" is of a song and declamation composition and has a pronounced lyrical and dramatic orientation. The development of the melodic line is divided between the violin and piano parts, which are characterized by equal functionality. The parity forces the soloist to listen to

the accompaniment, which contributes to the formation of skills of playing in an ensemble. The ensemble music develops the ability to listen to oneself and the partner. When performers are simultaneously immersed in the world of the same emotions – a special spiritual contact arises between them, and that contributes to the adequate reproduction of music.

The last miniature – “Burlesque” – acts as a bright finale. Saturated with dynamic contrasts, textural switches and a variety of violin stroke techniques, the play has a bright virtuoso orientation. The solo cadence with rapid passages and double notes, as well as the brilliant coda become an exam for mastery. Thus, a full-fledged interpretation of the miniature can be embodied only under the conditions of technical mastery of all the previous material.

Liudmyla Shukailo’s penetrating lyrics of the cycle of violin miniatures “10 Plays for the Violin and Piano”, the sophistication and ease of his musical images, as well as the construction by the degree of complexity contribute to the development of professionalism of the instrumentalist and full formation of various performing features.

Oleksandr Stanko’s cycle “8 Etudes for the Solo Violin” demonstrates the use of the genre of etude as an instructive material in the educational process. The author uses a certain technical means throughout the composition and one rhythmic formula, which lasts a long time.

Etude No. 1 G-dur develops the technical capabilities of the right hand and aims to improve the smooth singing connection of two and three strings by ligating eight notes on one bow. In etudes No. 2 and No. 8, the composer set the performer the task of developing the technique of double notes in different combinations. Etude No. 3 e-moll is aimed at improving changes in the adjacent positions, as well as complex intoning of intervals. The fourth etude is aimed at improving the movements of the right hand in the triplet movement. Etude No. 5 C-dur is aimed at developing the change in the position of the left hand. From the middle of the etude the task is complicated by the appearance of a new rhythmic formula and deviations into other keys. Etude No. 6 g-moll – *Andante* – in its features is close to the capriccio, which is manifested in a stark contrast between the extreme movements and the middle section (*Allegro*): along with the change of tempo, the legato stroke gives way to *sautillé*. Etude No. 7 a-moll approaches the polyphonic composition. Its first section (*Andante*) is laid out in double notes, the middle section (*con moto*) is written in a homophonic-harmonic style: the tremolo in the lower voice accompanies the expressive melody in the upper. The cycle ends with a virtuoso etude D-dur (*Allegro giocoso*), aimed at developing the technique of double notes in combination with a combined stroke (*legato* and *staccato*). Thus, each etude of the cycle is aimed at improving certain technical skills.

The program nature is present in all the cycles; it is an important component of the principle of cyclization of the presented compositions. But this program nature has different facets. Thus, in Yuriy Ishchenko's "Watercolours" these are moods-images, in Yevhen Stankovych's cycle these are folklore sketches, in Valentyn Sylvestrov's macrocycle these are creative portraits, in Liudmyla Shukailo's cycle these are plays with genre features of different stylistic traditions.

Yuriy Ishchenko's violin cycle "Watercolours", built on the principle of contrast, presents itself as moods-images embodied in a certain genre nature of each miniature. The compositional elements that bind the cycle are:

- the clear thematic affinity of the first and last miniatures, which create an arch at the level of the cycle;
- the hidden thematic affinity of all plays of the cycle, which is based on a variant repetition of the intonation-thematic complex represented in the first miniature;
- the general tonal organization of the cycle, based on the major-minor ligaments of the sound organization from the tone "a";
- the organization of the plays on the principle of contrast-comparison.

The unity of the pitch organization of all the miniatures, which is characterized by the tendency to the tone "a", is one of the principles of combining individual plays into a cycle.

The thematic complex represented in the first miniature, which is developed throughout the cycle, serves as a theme that allows one to compare this cycle of miniatures with the genre of free variations.

Yevhen Stankovych's triptych "In Verkhovyna" is an example of a "free" cycle. The author fills it with a deep meaning, imbued with the spirit of music of the 20th century, with its achievements in the field of musical language: laconicism, subtle nuance, a variety of timbre sound, complex metro-rhythm, the intensity of dissonant intervals.

The macrocycle "Melodies of Moments" by Valentyn Sylvestrov highlights the features of the lyrical worldview of the postmodern era, which are manifested in meditation and postlude of musical thinking. The melody of the miniatures is fragmentary, contains hidden transformations, voids that reflect the aesthetics of the composer's artistic thinking, with meditation and metaphor nature typical for his creativity.

Liudmyla Shukailo's cycle "10 Plays for the Violin and Piano" is aimed at step-by-step formation of not only technical skills, but also at mastering the specifics of adequate reproduction of the figurative and semantic content of a musical composition. It can be performed as an indivisible composition or use the plays of varying degrees of complexity separately for methodological purposes. In these plays, designed for brilliant, bright performance, the

musician is given a chance to demonstrate his/her own technical capabilities, which should be aimed not only at solving complex virtuoso tasks, but also at revealing the artistic content of the composition.

Oleksandr Stanko's cycle "8 Etudes for the Solo Violin" imitates the etude in its "pure" form (i.e., an etude-exercise) and is built on the principle of contrast – the tempo, texture, and technical one. The most characteristic of the etude is the texture and tempo uniformity, clear formation. Some etudes are written in a simple three-part form with contrasting middle parts. The composer continues the Western European tradition, combining in one collection etudes-exercises and artistic etudes, as was done by, for example, the recognized masters of the Romantic era – G. Venyavsky, A. Vyetan. Etudes can be used by performers both as a technical exercise and as a concert play – the artistic-meaningful and vivid one.

As a result of the research, the classification of cycles of miniatures is proposed, stipulated by their content: 1) the cycles with signs of program nature, which does not limit the composer's imagination to a specific direction of images; 2) the genre sketches with specification of images in the title; 3) the composer's musical diary – the author's own thoughts and impressions; 4) the cycles of compositions generalized as a "school of playing" – with artistic and methodological functions. We see prospects for further research in the identification of new genre varieties of the modern violin miniature and its systematization.

## Conclusions

The artistic concept of the musical miniature is aimed at revealing the spiritual world of the artist, because it is a special genre that embodies the complex processes of artistic thinking on a micro scale. The miniature as a kind of concentration of the genre method is a unique phenomenon, and therefore relevant for various approaches to its study, namely theoretical and historical research.

During the period under study, among the violin compositions of Ukrainian authors, there is a preservation of the romantic tradition of cyclization of miniatures. The modern miniature, sharpening the fundamental unspoken nature of the romantic art form, seeks to find replenishment in the cyclization. The basis for the creation of cycles is the desire to reflect the completeness of the artistic idea, which goes beyond the miniature and demonstrates a more detailed author's concept. The cycles of violin miniatures unite functionally identical parts: each of the play reveals one of the facets of the artistic idea, while illuminating and complementing certain aspects of it.



The modern violin miniature is a self-sufficient genre of “new music” and is able to expand the cultural and performing space, to interest performers and to aesthetically satisfy listeners. The conciseness of the form contributes to the process of improving the performance qualities by forcing the interpreter to find new textured lines in order to clarify the image characteristics, to enrich the stroke and dynamic palette, and to diversify the timbre nuances.

Creativity of Ukrainian composers in the genre of the violin miniature is an integral part of the national musical culture of the second half of the 20th – early 21st centuries, whose stylistic features are based on the synthesis of Ukrainian, Eastern and Western European traditions, which determined a new artistic quality of the compositions analyzed in the present dissertation research. The study of the genre has a certain scientific interest, as it helps to identify various trends in the formation and evolution of the Ukrainian violin composing and performing school. Further development of the genre of miniature is seen against the background of constant improvement of violin performance and joint creative efforts of authors-composers and performers-interpreters.

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## INTERTEXTUAL DIALOGUE IN *PARERAGON ZUR SYMPHONIA DOMESTICA* BY RICHARD STRAUSS. REFLECTIONS ON 100 YEARS OF MUSICAL HERITAGE

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**SUMMARY.** In the 20th century, as war injuries profoundly affected the future of many young individuals including musicians, a new image of the performing artist emerged: the one-handed pianist. An urgent need arose for a new keyboard repertoire, resulting in the creation of piano literature for left hand and orchestra. 2025 marks one hundred years since the completion and premiere of *Parergon zur Symphonia Domestica*, op. 73, Richard Strauss's first piano concerto for the left hand. Commissioned by the one-armed Austrian pianist Paul Wittgenstein, the resultant work drew attention for its distinctive title, referencing Strauss's autobiographical tone poem written twenty-two years prior. By virtue of its title, Strauss's op. 73 implies that its meaning is not inherent to the work itself, but rather shaped by its connection to *Symphonia Domestica*, engaging in an intertextual dialogue with it. The purpose of this article is to highlight the relationship between the new composition and its original model, by examining how the borrowed musical material was integrated and transformed in *Parergon*, with old musical ideas reshaped and given new expressions.

**Keywords:** Richard Strauss, *Symphonia Domestica*, *Parergon zur Symphonia Domestica*, intertextuality, Paul Wittgenstein, left-hand piano music

### Paul Wittgenstein. Transcending Limitations and Redefining Pianism

Within the musical landscape of the 20th century, Paul Wittgenstein (1887-1961) stands out for his significant impact on the development of the piano repertoire and performance techniques. The brother of the famous

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20<sup>th</sup> century philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, Paul was born into one of Vienna's most distinguished families. Well known for their wealth and influence, the Wittgensteins had strong ties to the world of art, providing their children with an ideal setting that fostered their development in a vibrant musical environment. Their home, also known as *Palais Wittgenstein*, was a gathering place for notable figures including scientists, diplomats, artists, and composers like Brahms, Clara Schumann, Richard Strauss, and Mahler, who all attended its renowned musical soirées.<sup>2</sup>

As a leading figure in the iron and steel industry, Paul's father, Karl Wittgenstein, was also a talented bugle and violin player, and possessed one of the finest collections of original handwritten music manuscripts. Leopoldine, Karl's wife, exhibited a keen musical inclination, beginning piano lessons at an early age. She was the primary influence in introducing their son, Paul, to music, frequently engaging in duet performances with him. Eventually, Paul became a student of Malwine Brée, and then joined Theodor Leschetizky's classes, the most esteemed piano pedagogue of the time. Additionally, he pursued music theory under the guidance of the blind composer and organist Josef Labor. By 1910, Paul was performing with the prominent musicians of his era, accompanying Joseph Joachim, his great-uncle, and playing duets alongside Richard Strauss.

Although his father wanted him to be an engineer or a successful entrepreneur, Paul's dream was to become a pianist. On December 1, 1913, his debut concert took place in the *Grosse Musikvereinssaal*, where he performed alongside Tonkünstler Orchestra, conducted by Oskar Nedbal. Soon after his successful performance before the Viennese audience and critics, the outbreak of World War I led the young pianist to join the military, an experience that would profoundly alter his plans and entire life forever. As Fred Flindell remarked in his article, the acclaimed debut and subsequent recitals "were but a prelude to an unexpected calamity."<sup>3</sup>

In 1914, five years after completing his military service, the young pianist joined the Austro-Hungarian army. During a mission in Galicia, he was shot in his right elbow by a Russian sniper, and his right arm had to be amputated. This was followed by a period of intense hardship as a prisoner of war (POW). Wittgenstein was forced to undergo a significant transformation to adapt to the harsh conditions and ensure his survival. As an amputee, he adjusted to daily life, using only his left hand's five fingers for tasks like eating

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<sup>2</sup> Waugh, Alexander. *The House of Wittgenstein: A Family at War*. Anchor, New York, 2010, pp. 30-31.

<sup>3</sup> Flindell, Fred. "Paul Wittgenstein (1887-1961): Patron and Pianist." *Music Review* 32, no.2, 1971, 112.

and dressing. Additionally, he developed phantom limb pain, a common condition in amputees, where pain is felt in the missing limb despite its absence. During World War I, it is said that soldiers feared coming home mutilated more than dying.<sup>4</sup> Those who lost a limb had to mentally cope with the shift from being respected, able-bodied soldiers to individuals confronting physical disability. After a traumatic period as a POW, Paul Wittgenstein returned to Vienna on November 21, 1915, now one-armed.

Upon his return, Wittgenstein sought out pieces to expand his concert repertoire, exploring antiquarian music stores in Vienna, Berlin, Paris, and London. His extensive search resulted in approximately 270 compositions, though only a select few met his standards. Consequently, he began creating his own Lisztian-style arrangements and transcriptions, in addition to a number of original exercises and études, later compiling them into the three-volume<sup>5</sup> *School for the Left Hand*. The aim of the works released in this piano method was for Wittgenstein to devise and enhance novel techniques for his only functional hand.

Although he discovered the pieces for five fingers mentioned above, Wittgenstein was discouraged as he only considered a few of them truly valuable for his concert repertoire. He decided to allocate part of his significant wealth to commission piano concertos and chamber music from the leading composers of his time, including Korngold, Hindemith, Richard Strauss, Ravel, Prokofiev, Britten and others.

Strauss contributed two concert pieces to the left-handed Austrian pianist, written at a brief interval. Both exhibited a shared feature concerning the unconventional nature of their titles: *Parergon zur Symphonia Domestica*, op. 73 (1925) and *Panathenäenzug* 'symphonische Etüden in Form einer Passacaglia'<sup>6</sup>, op. 74 (1927). In light of the fact that 2025 marks the centenary of the completion and premiere of *Parergon*, the subsequent pages will be devoted to delving into various distinct aspects of this composition.

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<sup>4</sup> Anderson, Julie. "Jumpy Stump": Amputation and Trauma in the First World War." *First World War Studies* 6, no. 1, 2015, p. 10, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19475020.2015.1016581> (Accessed December 5, 2024).

<sup>5</sup> Wittgenstein, Paul. *School for the Left Hand*. Universal Edition, Vienna, 1957.

<sup>6</sup> *Panathenäenzug*, 'symphonic studies in the form of a Passacaglia' for Piano (left hand) and Orchestra. Strauss, acknowledging Wittgenstein's concerns about the performance potential of the *Parergon*, was reportedly prompted to compose this new piece in the form of variations on an ostinato bass theme.

## Exploring the Meaning of “Parergon”

The story and the underlying message of *Parergon zur Symphonia Domestica* extend beyond the apparent simplicity of Strauss’s response to Paul Wittgenstein’s commission. Almost four decades had passed since the German musician last composed any concert piece, *Burleske in D minor*,<sup>7</sup> (1886), the sole work he had written for piano and orchestra. As Georg Predota writes, “for Strauss, the Wittgenstein commission meant a rather uneasy compositional return to the piano concerto, a genre he himself had declared obsolete.”<sup>8</sup>

Music critics were impacted by the title of Strauss’s piano work, leading to less favorable assessments of the composition. Upon a preliminary and cursory evaluation, the association of the tone poem’s title with the Greek word *parergon* may have cast the work in a less favorable light and provoked skepticism regarding its musical worth.<sup>9</sup>

The term “parergon” [πάρεργον], along with its plural form “parerga” [πάρεργα], originates from Greek, where “para” [παρά] means “beside” or “alongside” and “ergon” [ἔργον] means “work.” The *Oxford English Dictionary*<sup>10</sup> defines “parergon” as “a piece of work that is supplementary to or a by-product of a larger work; an opusculum.” According to *Webster’s New World College Dictionary*, the Greek term is described as “a shorter or less detailed musical or literary composition that is produced at the same time as, derived from, or complementary to a larger work”, while *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*<sup>11</sup> defines it as “something subordinate or accessory especially: an ornamental accessory or embellishment.” It is a rare designation both historically and in contemporary times, yet the term has been integrated into philosophical discourse, where at least two eminent thinkers have applied it to the areas of aesthetic theory and the philosophy of art. In Kant’s aesthetics, particularly in his work *Critique of Judgment* (1790), the “parergon” denotes external elements, such as frames or decorations that are not integral to the artwork’s core meaning or structure but serve to enhance its overall

<sup>7</sup> Composed between 1885-6 under its original title *Scherzo in D minor*, *Burlesque* is a work for piano and orchestra designed in the form of a single grand movement that Richard Strauss dedicated to Hans von Bülow. It can genuinely be regarded as Strauss’s only true piano concerto (for two hands).

<sup>8</sup> Predota, Georg. “Paul Wittgenstein’s Voice and Richard Strauss’s Music: Discovering the Musical Dialogue Between Composer and Performer.” *Fontes Artis Musicae* 61, no. 2, 2014, p. 112.

<sup>9</sup> Predota, p. 110.

<sup>10</sup> According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, “parergon” has cultivated meanings and uses across different disciplines, including literary (early 1600s), painting (early 1600s) and music (1920s). See: <https://www.oed.com/search/dictionary/?scope=Entries&q=parergon> (Accessed January 18, 2024).

<sup>11</sup> See: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/parergon> (Accessed January 18, 2024).

presentation. Almost two decades thereafter, Jacques Derrida further explored this concept in his four-part essay entitled “The Parergon” published in *The Truth in Painting* (1978).<sup>12</sup> The French Algerian philosopher asserts that the “parergon” is pivotal to our understanding of the artwork, as it delineates the work’s boundaries, while concurrently destabilizing the very distinction it is intended to define. He employs this issue to examine the boundaries of the aesthetic concept and the role of truth within the realm of art.

Shifting our attention back to Strauss’s left-hand piano work, along with Walter Werbeck, we agree that this association in the title is not intended to undermine the current work, but, as the musicologist himself suggested, to nostalgically celebrate the success of the earlier tone poem of the same name.<sup>13</sup>

### ***Symphonia Domestica*, a wellspring of inspiration**

A deeper understanding of *Parergon*, op. 73 relies on one’s familiarity with *Symphonia Domestica* – the “ergon”, the reference work – to fully grasp the connections between the two compositions.

Strauss started working on *Symphonia Domestica*, op. 53 during the early summer of 1902 and completed it in 1903 while taking a holiday on the Isle of Wight. It was not until March 21, 1904, during the German musician’s first North American tour, that the world premiere<sup>14</sup> took place with the Wetzler Symphony Orchestra at Carnegie Hall, New York.<sup>15</sup> Following its success, two more performances were held at Wanamaker’s Department Store in New York in April. A sales floor was cleared for the orchestra, drawing an audience of 6,000.

Although not a symphony *per se*, one could tell it follows the outline of a 19th-century Romantic Symphony, displaying a multi-movement structure<sup>16</sup>,

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<sup>12</sup> Derrida, Jacques, and Craig Owens. “The Parergon.” *October*, vol. 9, 1979, pp. 3–41. JSTOR, <https://doi.org/10.2307/778319> (Accessed February 3, 2025).

<sup>13</sup> Predota, p. 110.

<sup>14</sup> This tone poem stands as one of Strauss’s few compositions to be performed in the United States before his home country.

<sup>15</sup> Holden, Raymond. *Richard Strauss: A Musical Life*. Yale University Press, New Haven, 2011, p. 126.

<sup>16</sup> Views on the number of sections in the tone poem are varied, with some asserting, for example, that it consists of one movement and three subdivisions: “After an introduction and scherzo there follow without break an Adagio, then a tumultuous double fugue and finale.” See: Peyser, Herbert F. *Richard Strauss*. The Philharmonic-Symphony Society of New York, 1952, p. 26, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/50227/50227-h/50227-h.htm> (Accessed February 20, 2025).



presented as a single continuous movement: I. *Introduction*, II. *Scherzo*, III. *Adagio*, and IV. *Finale*.<sup>17</sup>

Dedicated “to my dear wife and our son,” the large-scale tone poem is an autobiographical work. As its title suggests, the work serves as a musical depiction of a day spent within the Strauss family, celebrating the joy that family life brings.<sup>18</sup> Each of the three characters (Richard Strauss, *husband/father*, Pauline Strauss, *wife/mother*, Franz (known in the family as Bubi) Strauss, *child*) is attributed a main musical theme or group of themes.<sup>19</sup> The distinct musical theme of each protagonist is introduced in the opening section of the composition, with Strauss skillfully portraying their interactions as if in real life. Once the thematic groups for the Father<sup>20</sup> and Mother<sup>21</sup> are established, the energetic and brisk musical discourse is interrupted to allow for the presentation of the third, and last, main theme of the tone poem. The Child’s theme is played by oboe d’amore, an instrument defined by a gentle and lyrical tone, yet distinguished by a unique richness, capable of faithfully conveying the warmth and delicacy of Bubi’s theme. It is noteworthy to examine the harmonic development throughout these eight bars. The Child’s theme is assigned to the key of D minor, being closely related to the Father’s theme (F major), as it is its relative minor. Strauss, in his full ingenuity, finds a way to link it with the theme of the Mother (B major), despite being distantly related keys. We notice an ascending progression towards the end of the theme, which ultimately resolves on a B major chord.

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<sup>17</sup> Schmid, Mark-Daniel, editor. *The Richard Strauss Companion*. Praeger Publishers, Westport, CT, 2003, p. 132.

<sup>18</sup> It is said that Strauss remarked the following in reference to his 1903 composition: “What could be more serious than married life? Marriage is the most profound event in life and the spiritual joy of such a union is elevated by the arrival of a child.” Source: <https://www.bso.org/works/dreaming-by-the-fireside-from-four-symphonic-interludes-from-intermezzo-op-72> (Accessed January 18, 2025).

<sup>19</sup> Hurwitz, David. *Richard Strauss: An Owner's Manual*. Amadeus Press, 2014, p. 57.

<sup>20</sup> According to Lawrence Rapchak, there is a group of five thematic appearances related to the character of the Father, a “multifaceted portrait” or “the many moods of Papa”, as he denotes them: 1. *Good-natured*, 2. *Dreamy*, 3. *Disgruntled*, 4. *Fiery*, and 5. *Lusty* – all presented in the key of F major. Source: THE ARCHITECTS OF MUSIC. “Richard Strauss - Symphonica Domestica Op.53.” *Youtube*, December 15.2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=evmncilPncg> (Accessed January 18, 2025).

<sup>21</sup> The second thematic occurrence is that of the Mother, who, likewise, is depicted in various forms, in the key of B major: 1. *Very lively* (the first three notes are an inversion of the first three notes of the father’s theme), 2. *Grazioso*, 3. *Graceful*. The specific keys of each parent’s theme are far apart, positioned six steps away from one another in the harmonic framework. Source: THE ARCHITECTS OF MUSIC. “Richard Strauss - Symphonica Domestica Op.53.” *Youtube*, December 15.2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=evmncilPncg> (Accessed January 18, 2025).

E.g. 1

The image shows a musical score for Richard Strauss's *Symphonia Domestica*, measures 156-164. The score is in D major and 3/4 time. The top staff is labeled 'III. Thema.' and the bottom staff is labeled 'Ruhig. 14 sehr zart'. A blue box highlights a melodic phrase in the bottom staff, and a red box highlights a corresponding phrase in the top staff.

Richard Strauss, *Symphonia Domestica*, bb.156-164

*Scherzo* begins and is predominantly based on the Child's theme, which is now presented in the parallel major key of D major. Naturally, musical interactions emerge between Bubi's theme and those of the parents. This second movement presents a new variation of the Child's theme, derived from the initial melody. In this instance, it is articulated in a ternary meter, with a rhythmic, dance-like character, capturing the essence of childish play. As part of the variation process, Strauss applies the technique of diminution to the first half of the original theme, leading to a melodic contour consisting of shortened time values of the notes.

### Echoes of *Symphonia Domestica* in *Parergon*, op. 73: An Intertextual Exploration

Although brief, such a musical digression into the intricate realm of *Symphonia Domestica* is essential to facilitate a more in-depth comprehension of *Parergon*, op. 73. Upon initial observation, even without exploring the content of the two pieces, one can discern that the title of the left-hand piano work entails intertextual references. As implied by its very designation, "intertextuality"<sup>22</sup> denotes the full spectrum of relationships between distinct

<sup>22</sup> The concept of "intertextuality" was coined by French semiotician Julia Kristeva in the late 1960s, particularly through her influential essay "Word, Dialogue and Novel" (1969).

texts or bodies of work. It operates across various fields, including literature, philosophy, theater, visual arts, music, and architecture, just to name a few. According to J. Peter Burkholder, this concept emerged in musicological discourse beginning in the 1980s and is considered a broader term than the notion of “musical borrowing.”<sup>23</sup> By embracing everything from direct quotation to stylistic allusion and use of conventions, an intertextual approach can address the entire range of ways a musical work refers to or draws on other musical work(s).

As stated above, the message of Op. 73 transcends the mere association of the two works suggested by the title. As will be shown, the key strategy and prevalent form of intertextuality encountered in this composition is self-quotation, with Strauss selecting the Child’s Theme from *Symphonia Domestica* as the foundational theme for *Parergon*. It is generally understood that quotation in literature and art may be altered and can create new meanings. In this manner, the excerpt from the tone poem serves as a segmental text built upon a pre-text (or source material – a preceding text that serves as a reference or influence for a later text). Consequently, *Parergon* emerges as a new text in which the self-quotation is employed within an entirely different and novel context, thereby generating a new, self-contained musical text. We can thus refer to the dialogical phenomenon, an interactive connection between the two texts, where meaning is not exclusively extracted from the new text itself, but also from its interaction with and response to its pre-text.<sup>24</sup>

### **Parergon zur Symphonia Domestica, op. 73 (1925)**

With regard to the genesis of the two left-hand piano works composed by Strauss for Wittgenstein (including *Panathenäenzug*, op. 74), scholars have approached these concert pieces with a sense of intrigue, exploring Strauss’s motivations for composing two concertos for Wittgenstein between 1924 and 1927<sup>25</sup>, as well as the possible influence the one-armed pianist had on the titles and programmatic concepts of the pieces.

<sup>23</sup> Burkholder, J. Peter. “Intertextuality.” *Grove Music Online*, Oxford University Press, 2001, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.52853> (Accessed January 20, 2025).

<sup>24</sup> Mihkelev, Anneli. “The Time of Quotations: How do we communicate with Quotations in contemporary culture and literature?” *Proceedings of the 10th World Congress of the International Association for Semiotic Studies (IASS/AIS)*, Universidade da Coruña (España / Spain), 2012, p. 1617.

<sup>25</sup> Strauss’s op. 73 and op. 74 were written the interval between his two operas *Intermezzo*, op. 72 (1918–1923) and *Die ägyptische Helena*, op. 75 (1923–7).

Georg Predota includes in his article a copy of the contract, dated December 22, 1923, between Wittgenstein and Strauss regarding the commissioned work, *Parergon*.<sup>26</sup> The contract explicitly stipulated that the German composer was to complete the concerto for the left hand with orchestral accompaniment by January 1, 1925. A subsequent clause provided that the exclusive performance rights would be granted to the Austrian pianist for a period of three years from the date of the premiere. In addition to that arrangement, a new agreement was signed on June 18, 1925, with the pianist extending his exclusive performing rights to six years from the date of premiere.<sup>27</sup> One final point outlined was Richard Strauss's commitment to inserting a cadenza for piano solo between the two sections of the work, *Leiden* and *Genesung*.

1924, which also marked Strauss's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday, was a year full of significant events for the German musician. This year witnessed the long-awaited marriage of his only son, Franz, to Alice von Grab-Hermannswörth, on January 15<sup>th</sup> in Vienna. In the latter part of the same year, following conflicts with his co-director Franz Schalk and the Austrian government, Richard Strauss decided to resign from his position as joint director of the Vienna State Opera, a role he had held since 1919, providing him with additional time to devote to music writing.<sup>28</sup>

Strauss composed a short and distinctive piece for his 27-year-old son's wedding, marking a unique addition to his *oeuvre*, although it is "scarcely a composition of any consequence"<sup>29</sup> as Norman Del Mar expressed. What is particularly notable about this short piece entitled *Hochzeitspräludium* in B flat major (TrV 247), aside from being composed for the unconventional combination of two harmoniums, is its predominant reliance on themes from *Symphonia Domestica*, as well as from his operas *Guntram* and *Der Rosenkavalier*.<sup>30</sup>

Later that year Strauss returned to the tone poem that had been inspired by his deep affection for his family, now composing for Wittgenstein.

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<sup>26</sup> Georg Predota, p. 117.

<sup>27</sup> This agreement prohibited the composer from rearranging the work for piano two-hands or other instruments.

<sup>28</sup> Werbeck, Walter. "Richard Strauss und Paul Wittgenstein - zu den Klavierkonzerten »Parergon zur Symphonia domestica« op. 73 und »Panathenäenzug« op. 74." *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift*, vol. 54, no. 7-8, 1999, p. 16, <https://doi.org/10.7767/omz.1999.54.78.16> (Accessed January 10, 2025).

<sup>29</sup> Del Mar, Norman. *Richard Strauss: A Critical Commentary on His Life and Works*. Vol. 2, Chilton Book Company, Philadelphia, 1969, p. 283.

<sup>30</sup> Schmid, Mark-Daniel, editor. *The Richard Strauss Companion*. Praeger Publishers, Westport, CT, 2003, p. 217.

Yet, what could have been the underlying motivation behind his attempt to compose a left-hand piano concerto dedicated to Wittgenstein? Strauss employed the third main theme of *Symphonia Domestica* (Bubi's theme) as the foundation for the piano concerto, precisely due to a domestic circumstance that brought him great fear and unrest.<sup>31</sup> The German composer, deeply affected by his son Franz's near-death experience, having contracted typhus in Egypt earlier that year, found inspiration in his son's recovery.

In a fashion reminiscent of Strauss's tone poems, which consist of multiple sections typically arranged in a single-movement form, his op. 73 may be regarded as a one-movement concerto structured in two parts that are in a semitone relationship. According to Predota, "[t]he overall conception of the *Parergon* is encapsulated in the programmatic *Leiden und Genesung*, which Strauss places at the head of his drafts."<sup>32</sup> The piece progresses from the key of F sharp minor (Part I: mm. 1-181) to F major (Part II: mm. 181-542), symbolizing the transition from illness to recovery and health.<sup>33</sup> The entire melodic material is prefaced by the sound of C#, played by muted horns and trumpets in unison. This note holds a fundamental role in the construction and development of the whole work, indicating poor health. It recurs persistently in various harmonic and melodic alterations, much like an *idée fixe* that marks key moments in the piece, similar to the way the overpowering rhythm appears in *Tod und Verklärung*.<sup>34</sup> Its initial function is to introduce Bubi's theme in F-sharp minor, a tumultuous and feverish iteration accompanied by chromatic passages and somber harmonies.

The first thematic occurrence within *Parergon* is, in fact, a self-quotation that corresponds to the Child's theme present in *Symphonia Domestica* (measures 174-182). In subsequent iterations, the theme appears as a four-note pattern. Del Mar notes that Strauss had to be cautious when quoting from his tone poem to avoid copyright issues with Bote & Bock, his contentious publishers. Despite their recent dispute regarding some song cycles, they couldn't claim illegal infringement of the three bars, which Strauss presents with varying harmonies, interrupted by the relentless C#.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> This fact is confirmed and supported by scholars such as Norman Del Mar, Bryan Gilliam and Michael Kennedy.

<sup>32</sup> Predota, p. 120.

<sup>33</sup> Schmid, p. 318.

<sup>34</sup> Del Mar, p. 285.

<sup>35</sup> Del Mar, p. 285.

E.g. 2



Richard Strauss, *Symphonia Domestica*, bb.174-182

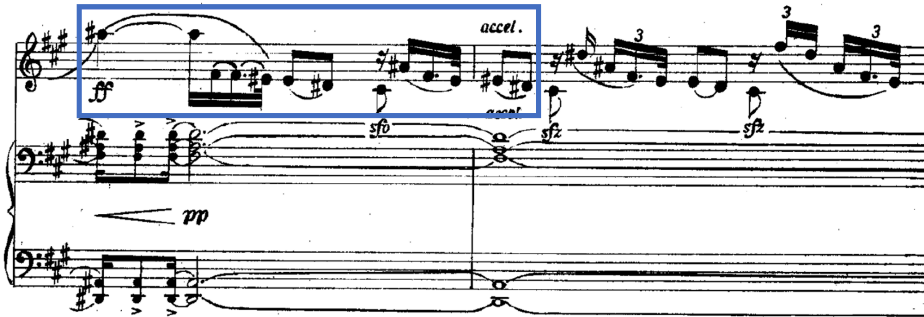
E.g. 3



Richard Strauss, *Pareragon zur Symphonia Domestica*, Theme 1, bb. 1-7

Part I of the work contains two other themes that are presented alongside the one already mentioned. While the second theme is believed to be related to the Child's theme from *Intermezzo*,<sup>36</sup> the third one is considered to be derived from the first theme, resulting in a four-note ascending melodic motion and dotted rhythm, implying a *scherzando* character.

<sup>36</sup> Del Mar, p. 287.



**Richard Strauss, *Parergon zur Symphonia Domestica*, Theme 3, bb. 23-24**

Furthermore, three new themes will be introduced in Part II, each displaying a different character: a lullaby, a soaring lyrical, and a descending chromatic theme.<sup>37</sup>

Drafted in F sharp minor, Part I conveys unease, with low-register instruments constantly evoking great suffering. From the outset, the Child's theme, once defined by warmth and delicacy in the tone poem, now surprises with its serious and somber atmosphere, suggesting that the former child of the *Symphonia Domestica* has now grown to adulthood. Its further appearances emerge in complex textures, often starting outside the tonal center, yet always resolving on the final note. Strauss's anguish is rarely expressed as profoundly as in *Parergon*, where the harmonic writing comes close to polytonality and atonality. Franz's recovery, reflected in *Parergon* through F major, the home key of the tone poem, is also felt as a cathartic act experienced by the composer. It seems that the piano concerto seeks to complement the family depiction in *Symphonia Domestica*, highlighting the undesirable aspects of the child's image, which, upon reaching adulthood, faces life's challenges. Ultimately, health conquers illness, and the composer-parent celebrates, culminating the victory with a triumphant conclusion to the concerto.

<sup>37</sup> Lim, HungChoong Ernest. *Parergon zur Sinfonia Domestica, Op. 73, for Piano Left-Hand and Orchestra by Richard Strauss: An Analytical Study*. University of South Carolina, 2005, p. 44.

## Closing Remarks

Most scholars have agreed that Wittgenstein's commission served as an external stimulus for Strauss to immortalize through music the experience he underwent in 1924 regarding his son's health. By incorporating the Child's theme from *Symphonia Domestica*, the intertextual dimension of the piece is distinctly highlighted. In addition to the aforementioned, we are, nevertheless, of the view that the German composer also considered the work's commissioner when conceiving *Parergon*. Strauss occasionally made visits to the Wittgenstein family, during which he engaged in piano duets with young Paul. It is conceivable that the recollection of these moments might have evoked a sense of paternal affection in the 60-year-old musician towards the left-handed pianist, who was only ten years older than Franz. Certainly, Wittgenstein's wartime experience, the amputation of his hand, the struggle to rebuild his career, and the success he began to achieve as a one-handed pianist integrate perfectly with both the structure and the message of the piece expressed through the programmatic metaphor *Leiden und Genesung*.

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## NATIONAL AND MODERN IN THE MUSIC OF SERBIAN COMPOSERS FROM THE FIRST HALF OF THE 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

VIRĐINIA TOTAN<sup>1</sup>, PETRUȚA-MARIA COROIU<sup>2</sup>

**SUMMARY.** The first half of the 20th century unfolds, in the arts, not only in music, under the pressure of the paradigm shift that leaves its mark on the entire period preceding the First World War. Anyway, once the seeds of modernity sprout, they do not grow satisfactorily, because they will be interrupted by the Second World War. The ideas of national and universal had been developing since the middle of the Romantic century, when the revolutions around 1848 favored the idea of national freedom and unity. It was then that national cultures were born that tended to value the traditional heritage of each cultural and ethnic space. Serbia has taken advantage of these dominances and has achieved, in its turn, a synthesis between the national and the universal - a fact presented by this work.

**Keywords:** national, modernity, culture, ethnic, tradition.

### Introduction

The first half of the 20th century unfolds, in the arts, not only in music, under the pressure of the paradigm shift that leaves its mark on the entire period preceding the First World War. Anyway, once the seeds of modernity sprout, they do not get to grow satisfactorily, because they will be interrupted by the Second World War. The ideas of national and universal had been developing since the middle of the Romantic century, when the revolutions around 1848 favored the idea of national freedom and unity. It was then that national cultures were born that tended to value the traditional heritage of each cultural and ethnic space. Serbia has taken advantage of these dominances and has achieved, in its turn, a synthesis between the national and the universal - a fact presented by this work.

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## Serbian Composers from the First Half of the 20th Century: national and modern musical patterns

In 1931, because of the parallel action of several different stylistic programmes, there was a special tension between “old” and “new” music. However, the year of J. Marinković’s death represented only the start of the increasing tension within the stylistic cluster which extended to the entire fourth decade. Namely, even after J. Marinković’s demise, the tradition of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was still active, as it was throughout the third decade, “in the compositions of both the older (Petar Krstić), and the younger musicians, with a conservative orientation, and modest talent (Ljubomir Bošnjaković)”<sup>3</sup> (our translation). Representing the most conservative tendency among Serbian composers of the interwar years, these authors chose the means which determined the style and historical position of, for example, Božidar Joksimović and Stanislav Binički. With few exceptions, their work brought nothing essentially new to the stylistic framework implemented by S.St. Mokranjac and J. Marinković, but, adhering to the already known stereotypes, which guaranteed their popularity with the general audience, they represented the last stage in the extinction and disappearance of those lines of stylistic development stimulated for the first time by Kornelije Stanković in the Serbian religious music.

Nevertheless, Petar Krstić’s personality deserves a closer look. It is interesting to note that P. Krstić’s “meeting” with the musical atmosphere of Vienna, where he studied for six years (1896-1902) during the fin-de-siècle period, had no significant visible consequences on his compositional work, or on his views on music. It is hard to believe that a former student of Este Guido Adler, with whom he studied counterpoint, stated as early as 1927, at the premiere of his opera *Zulumčar*, that it had been written in a mixt style, Oriental and Serbian: “We have to preserve it and maintain it because it is the only basis on which we can build artistic music. (...) I am not at all attracted by the last musical revelations in Europe and I believe that each musician (...) should write music for the environment in which they live and which they understand the best. I will be absolutely grateful if my music is well received in Belgrade”<sup>4</sup> (our translation).

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<sup>3</sup> Milanović, Biljana, *Poslednji izdanci srpskog nacionalnog romantizma u opusu Ljubomira Bošnjakovića* [The Last Shoots of Serbian National Romanticism in the Opus of Ljubomir Bošnjaković]. Zbornik MS za scenske umetnosti i muziku, Novi Sad, 1994, p. 151-157.

<sup>4</sup> Tomašević, Katarina, *Na raskršću istoka i zapada* [At the Crossroads of East and West]. Ministarstvo nauke Republike Srbije, Beograd, 2009, p. 211.

The memories of Svetomir Nastasijević, who resigned from the “Stanković” orchestra while it was run by P. Krstić, also indicate P. Krstić’s low level of motivation to contribute to the rise of Serbian musical culture through his work, in opposition to P. Krstić’s position, who believed that “the repertoire should include only simpler compositions because the Belgrade public does not deserve more<sup>5</sup>” (our translation). Obviously, Krstić’s “meeting” with Adler remained a sign of “recognizing diversity”. Both continued their journey: Adler entered music history, while the compositions of his former student Petar Krstić are placed on the modest side of quality and, at the same time, on the most conservative side from the point of view of the stylistic tendencies in the interwar Serbian music.

On the completely opposite side of Serbian music, which in the fourth decade crossed, both diachronically and synchronically, a large number of musical styles, there is the creativity of the representatives of the youngest generation of composers (born around 1910), who from the very beginning avoided everything related to tradition and left for Prague in search of new possibilities of expressions.

More different than similar from the point of view of their psychological structure and aesthetic preferences, all of the members of the Prague group agreed that, upon arriving in the capital of the Czech Republic, they would forget the Belgrade tradition. Although vast and scattered, the scale of compositional means and stylistic elements – which helped increase their “escape” from the national musical tradition, but also determined the extent of the stylistic framework offered by the school and considered modern – can be reduced to at least two common denominators: 1) nobody showed any interest in folklore or religious music, and 2) all brought most of their instrumental work from Prague. The first common achievement of the Prague group was that they fully updated their orientation towards the Western achievements and laid the foundation for this last dispute in Belgrade concerning the relationship between “national” and “modern”. This raised again the problem of the identity of modern Serbian music. Secondly, on the other hand, it led to a change in the focus of the genres of Serbian music from predominantly vocal forms at the beginning of the period to those predominantly instrumental in the fourth decade. The complete absence of the vocal genre from the works of the Prague group, as well as of the solo music, representative for the Balkan area, was, also, a significant sign of change in the development of the style and genre of Serbian music in the fourth decade. The youngest generation took care to fill in the genre gaps in the area of chamber and symphonic music.

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<sup>5</sup> Nastasijević, Svetomir, *Autobiografija [Autobiography]*. SANU, Belgrade, 1929, p. 17.

Although they were not as motivated to experiment with the completely new and unknown, the representatives of the Prague group managed to reach in their student compositions various types of co-existence between the “old” and the “new”, but also attempted to synthesize compositional and technical processes and stylistic elements of post-Romanticism, neclassicism and expressionism, those styles which occupied the dominant place in the musical context of Central Europe too as legitimate representatives of the aesthetics of modernism. Although Prague, as a town with a rich musical tradition, was tolerant not only with the most radical stylistic movements arriving from Vienna, but also open to and interested in receiving various tendencies and syntheses of modernism, it is noteworthy that among the youngest Serbian composers in Prague, – in their attempts to conquer the “new” language and to catch up with the current modernist and avant-gardist stylistic directions in Europe, – there was no place for the achievements of French impressionism and the post-Debussy movement, and no interest in the extraordinary stylistic syntheses of folklore performed by B. Bartók, early Stravinsky or Prokofiev.

Although the neoclassic dialogue between the “old” and “new” did not fundamentally affect the youngest generation of Serbian students in Prague, it successfully resonated as early as the third decade in the excellent student work of the oldest of them – Predrag Milošević. At the same time, P. Milošević was the only student in Prague who did not “forget” about S. S. Mokranjac during his studies, but in 1926, when he was already a graduate of the class of Professor Jaroslav Kržička (1882-1969), he brought an original homage to him, worthy of all our attention. *Cvekje cafnalo*, that beautiful melody and, at the same time, the melody of the 12<sup>th</sup> *Rukoveti* by S. St. Mokranjac, was played in 1926 in the second movement of the excellent and inspired composition *Sonatina for piano* by P. Milošević in a completely new, neoclassic style, with a wide range of harmonious colours. “The stylistic world of the five miniature harmonious variations had nothing in common with the style of the melody *Cvekje cafnalo* which was played in the first romantic symphony (1907) by Petar Konjović”<sup>6</sup> (our translation). Other elements of the musical expression of P. Milošević in *Sonatina*, then in *Gudački kvartet* from 1928 and in *Simfonija* from 1930, were truly a qualitative stylistic innovation for the Serbian music of the third decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Its texture, the tendency towards the melody, occasionally with coloured harmony in the impressionist style (*Sonatina*), the bitonal, polytonal and atonal segments (*Gudački kvartet*), the dexterity of the counterpoint solutions, as well as the choice of the polyphonic forms and

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<sup>6</sup> Veselinović-Hofman, Mirjana, *Milivoje Crvčanin [Milivoje Crvčanin]*. UKS, Beograd, 1972, p. 34.

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methods of the Baroque (*pasacaglia* in the second movement of the quartet, the fugue in the third; the imitations, *fugato*, as well as the homage to the greatest maestro of the Baroque) – the theme B-A-C-H in the last part of the *Quartet*), situate beyond any doubt these compositions of extraordinary success written by Predrag Milošević within the stylistic framework of neoclassicism, that is neobaroque. (E.g. 1)

E.g. 1

2. 13

TEMA (narodna melodija)  
tempo pp  
p espressito

VAR I

13

### Predrag Milošević - Sonatina (1926)

The overlap between the “old” and the “new” in the Serbian music of the interwar period was enriched by a new stylistic dimension in the works composed in Prague by P. Milošević. Balanced from a formal point of view, efficient from a pianistic point of view, sometimes motric and, at the same time, not at all sentimental from the point of view of the romantic style, but fine and graceful from the point of view of the neoclassic style, P. Milošević’s *Sonatina* quickly and easily found its place in the repertoire of national musicians, but also of foreign pianists”<sup>7</sup> (our translation). It is regrettable that upon his return to Belgrade, P. Milošević, attracted and absorbed by his activity as the conductor of the Opera, stopped composing almost completely. Rather neglected in subsequent musicological research (the only relevant study belongs to Jelena Mihajlović-Marković, published in 1987), Predrag Milošević’s neoclassicism was anticipated, even during the third decade, as a stylistic

<sup>7</sup> Peričić, Vlastimir, *Muzički stvaraoci u Srbiji [Music Creators in Serbia]*. Prosveta, Beograd, 1969, p. 301.

orientation meant to capture all the attention and to gather the strength of the generation of composers that would later take the stage of the Serbian music history, in the mid-1950s. In connection to the cluster of stylistic phenomena during the fourth decade, it is interesting to note that P. Milošević's neoclassic *Simfonija* premiered in Prague in 1931, and was presented in Belgrade only three years later.

In the learning stage, the attention of P. Milošević's younger colleagues focused almost exclusively on the new music tradition of Central Europe, on its current stylistic trends and on the newly emerging style, i.e. expressionism. If Stanojlo Rajičić's student compositions express the author's generally positive attitude towards the last layer of the late Romantic tradition whose domain, observing the laws of the "old" classic forms, was expanded and deconstructed (up to atonality) by S. Rajičić through expressionism – on a scale of deviation from the "old"; the most developed position is occupied by the Prague compositions of *Dragutin Čolić*, *Vojislav Vučković*, *Ljubica Marić* and *Milan Ristić*, composers who recognized the patterns of their creations in the younger expressionist influences of contemporary music. Among the most daring decisions of this group of young composers there is the style of the Second Viennese School, A. *Schönberg's* dodecaphony principles, the quarter tone system by *Alois Hába*.

These coordinates mark at the same time the maximum point of the deviation from the ensemble of stylistic elements which, from a diachronic point of view, can be placed at the beginning of the Serbian music of the interwar period. In the context of the creation of the Prague group, they are the result of continued acceptance of the impulses and approach of the most modern layer of the Czech music, which at the same time acted as a mediator between, on the one hand, those musical towns who represented the centre and, on the other hand, Belgrade, one of the important receptors in the process of spreading the musical modernism towards South-East Europe and the Balkans. Defined as antiromantic and antifolklore, the area of expressionist elements represented its most radical stylistic layer for the local context of the interwar Serbian music.

Nevertheless, as long as the representatives of the youngest generation were outside the country, as long as their tonal searches remained unknown at the national level, this continuity determined by expressionist elements represented a completely independent stylistical movement, running parallel, with no contact points, with the stylistic discourse dominant on the Serbian territory. Regardless of the years during which the members of the Prague group composed their student work, it is important to remember that the "collision"



between the “new” and the “old” poetics in the Serbian music was really present only during the years that the compositions of the younger generation were presented in Belgrade. In many situations, the “collision” could not actually take place because the compositions of the young generation were either not performed, remaining in manuscript form (subsequently lost or unavailable), or interpreted (perhaps just once?) outside the country, in Prague, during students’ concerts. However, since the expressionist direction continued and expanded in the independent auctorial creations that the two youngest composers, *Vojislav Vučković* și *Stanojlo Rajičić*, authored after returning to Belgrade, – we consider its position in the fourth decade (and especially in the four important years before the war, 1935-1939) as the most advanced path towards the “new” of this dominant, modernist stylistic tendency, which began in the work of the previous generation of composers.

In Belgrade, like in Prague, *V. Vučković* drew support for its own avant-garde through ideological and artistic programmes and ideological practices which were still valid at that time. The case of *S. Rajičić*’s turn towards extreme modernism is different, especially to the extent to which, during the years that *S. Rajičić* spent in Prague he did not completely deny the traditional stylistic elements. *S. Rajičić*’s meeting with (what he perceived back then as) the archaic and conservative musical environment of Belgrade, and, more so, with its resistance to the international evolution represented by his generation made this composer (known for his tenacity and stubbornness) defy even more radically the dissidents who were stylistically opposed to him (“a rebellion-type reaction”). Strongly disturbed by the call to return “to the right path” and to “use the clear source of folk music”, *S. Rajičić* hits back in the most incongruous way against the national tradition in the genre of the solo song, precisely the genre with the longest history in the Serbian music and which recorded, before *S. Rajičić*’ intervention, leaps into the unknown. Athematic and atonal, the cycles of expressionist songs composed by *S. Rajičić* – *Čuvari Sveta*, *Jazz*, *Jesen* and *Jedanaest motoričkih pesama* – differ greatly also in terms of the vocal style from the Serbian *Lied* considered modern by the older generation (*P. Konjović*, *M. Milojević*, *S. Hristić*).

NATIONAL AND MODERN IN THE MUSIC OF SERBIAN COMPOSERS  
FROM THE FIRST HALF OF THE 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

E. g. 2

à Mme F. Pellée

## Protivnosti

Fol - Lo - Tien

Vojislav Vučković

*Allegro con fuoco* (♩=132)

Sopran

Oboe

Clarinetto in B

Fagotto

10

Pro - lo - z i s n i n a

*cresc.* *fff* *mp* *cresc.*

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C. M. 10

Vojislav Vučković – solo piece Protivnosti from Dve pesme (1938)

Miloradu Jovanović 13

# Čuvari sveta

(St. Vinaver)

I

Allegretto (♩ = 176) Stanojlo Rajčić op. 5

Allegretto (♩ = 176)

*P leggiero*

Ved-ri san no - si no - si, pre-de-li sja-j-ut i sve . m, ta-la-re pred o-či, it-la-ze pred o-či

ne - sta - ja.

I u-ur-li-kom sa-zna-ju svet-ho-sti, u okro-ve - vja

sub *p*

S. Rajčić – Čuvari Sveta

Nevertheless, the musical gestures of S. *Rajičić's* "rebellion" were not just a simple "translation" of the "progressive" achievements of the Western musical centres. "The fact that they were immediately encouraged by the exciting and revolutionary events on the Belgrade literary scene is confirmed convincingly by the direct link between S. *Rajičić's* avant-garde confrontation with tradition and Stanislav Vinaver's name and poetry"<sup>8</sup> (our translation).

Which were the real effects of the radical penetration of the "new" in the Belgrade system? One thing is sure: the "horizon of expectations" of the Belgrade audience was moved forward by a few steps. While accepting the absence of the folklore and of the "classic" forms, as well as of the harmonic language imbued by free dissonance, the audience, after having been exposed to the works of the young composers, easily accepted the accomplishments of the older ones, the so-called modern "national school". At the end of the 1930s, the modernism of the older generation was already widely considered the "classic" element of the Serbian music of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. On the other hand, although there is no doubt that the promotion of the compositions by the representatives of the youngest generation at the national level acted as an "avant-garde blow", the long awaited "breath of fresh air" did not take place as a result of the creativity fostered by the main stylistic tendencies: thus, the youth's radicalism remained without a distinct answer or echo in the creation of the older composers. A look at the line of the development recorded in the individual compositions of key representatives of the dominant modernity movement – for example, P. Konjović, S. Hristić – clearly show that the continuity of their stylistic preferences was not disturbed by the immediate meeting and familiarity with the "new" orientation of younger composers.

The only step towards the "new" within the composer's musical language up to that moment is visible in the convoluted stylistic itinerary of *Miloje Milojević*. It is symptomatic that in the mid-1930s, M. Milojević decided in 1935, in his piano composition *Ritmičke grimase*, to deviate from the stylistic basis on which he had already built his personal modernist impression. On the other hand, it is not logical to assume that *M. Milojević*, while preparing for the 14th edition of the Festival of the International Society of Contemporary Music (SIMC), wanted to put forth his "most modern" image all the way from Paris, as one of main music capitals of the world. On the other hand, *M. Milojević's* radicalism in reaching the recognizable attributes of the expressionist musical discourse in *Ritmičke grimase* can be interpreted as the composer's impulsive reaction, an immediate creative "answer" to the challenge of the stylistic

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<sup>8</sup> Tomašević, Katarina, *Na raskršću istoka i zapada [At the Crossroads of East and West]*. Ministarstvo nauke Republike Srbije, Belgrade, 2009, p. 219.

orientation of the younger generation. Considering that M. Milojević's overall creation, *Ritmiske grimase* for piano (as well as a decade earlier, music for ballet – *Sobareva metla*) meant a new adventure in the search for the “new” that he would not use later. On the other hand, a general look at the chronology of the compositions of the fourth decade (up to 1939) clearly shows that, despite the new additions, the most radical layer of the Serbian music discourse from a stylistic point of view was represented by a relatively small number of compositions. The second, more important, reason refers to the stylistic “turn” which took place (again, obviously) in the compositions of V. Vučković and S. Rajčić. If the Prague group led to a new moment of discontinuity in the tendencies in the development of the recent Serbian music, their “turn” towards tradition also caused a break in the continuity of the youngest line of its stylistic development made up of expressionist elements.

A complete overview of the features of musical creativity in the interwar period shows clearly that the moment V. Vučković and S. Rajčić suddenly abandoned the expressionist means of expressions and returned to a more traditional musical discourse was at the same time the only obvious and profound stylistic turn in the general development tendencies of the period. The choice of “new” means made by the two avant-garde movements in the fourth decade had a lot to do with the choice of stylistic elements which represented the foundation of the creativity of their immediate predecessors. In the following compositions, both V. Vučković and S. Rajčić, who had been previously “opponents” of the traditional framework of Serbian music, expressed for the first time their interest in folklore, addressed tonality and opted for classic forms and the thematic organization of the form. As the “older” world came to life again in the music of the younger composers, it seems to confirm J. Cocteau's idea that “each artist who jumps a few steps on their way will come back to the beginning and make the same journey gradually”<sup>9</sup> (our translation). This clearly explains his turn as an orientation towards the “new”, this time V. Vučković was in fact the most radical in his withdrawal towards the “old”, acknowledging *Stevan Stojanović Mokranjac*'s work as a real guide to the so-called “new” music. He was the only representative of his generation who came back to the “old” choral genre. V. Vučković's acknowledgement of S. St. Mokranjac as a model to follow was a symbolic sign, clear and sharp, that the “lightning fight” of Serbian music in the interwar period was over.

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<sup>9</sup> Radman, Zdravko, *Proces, povijest i progres umetnosti* [The Process, History and Progress of Art]. Umetnost i progres, Belgrade, 1988, p. 20-27.

## Conclusion

However, the historical events and the change in the course of the general ideology which followed after WW2 meant that the stylistic turn in the creativity of the youngest generation marked not only symbolically, but also objectively, the end of a short, but stormy, expressionist chapter, during which the youngest movement of Serbian music completely embraced the more current movements of Western music. This look back, towards *S. St. Mokranjac* and tradition, was meant to attract the youngest composers at this stylistic junction in which, for three decades, important creators of the previous generation carried out lively, creative and productive dialogues not only with *S. St. Mokranjac* and *J. Marinković*, but also with musical Europe itself – its modern Orient and its modern Occident. During the entire fourth decade, the creativity of the most numerous group of Serbian modernists filled the large space among the extremely polarized stylistic currents of Serbian music. The polyphony of the individual modernist syntheses in a stylistic space delimited by what was the most conservative (at the same time non-evolutionary) and the most radical, towards the stylistic development direction oriented towards expressionism, also determined the stylistic landscape of the main, dominant discourse in the development of the interwar Serbian music.

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## STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS AND STYLISTIC ASPECTS IN THE THIRD SYMPHONY “SEMNE” BY CORNEL ȚĂRANU

CRISTIAN BENCE-MUK<sup>1</sup> 

**SUMMARY.** The article explores *The Third Symphony “Semne” (Signs)* by Romanian composer Cornel Țăranu, a pivotal work composed in 1984 that marks a stylistic shift in his symphonic output. Known for his deep connection to Enescu’s musical legacy and a commitment to compositional innovation, Țăranu transitions in this piece from a constructivist style to a more expressive, synthesized language. The symphony is structured as a monopartite sonata form, featuring a distinctive brass “signal-theme” (Theme A) and a lament-like secondary theme (Theme B), rooted in Romanian folk idioms. Its development section is richly varied, highlighting pointillism, stretto, melodic expansions, and inverted counterpoint. The work concludes with a cathartic coda evoking collective lament. Analytical comparisons are drawn with Țăranu’s other symphonies and orchestral works, illustrating stylistic continuity and thematic evolution. The article underscores the symphony’s central place in his oeuvre and its symbolic significance within Romanian contemporary music.

**Keywords:** symphonic, structural, stylistic

The Maestro Cornel Țăranu (20 June 1934, Cluj – 18 June 2023, Cluj-Napoca) remains one of the most important Romanian composers of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the first decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a prominent figure in Romanian musical and cultural life and even more.

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His composition studies started in 1948-1949 with Marțian Negrea, even before his studies at the Cluj Conservatory, which materialized between 1951-1957, where he was a disciple of Sigismund Toduță, the first doctor in musicology in Romania. After graduating, Cornel Țăranu spent a semester in Olivier Mesiaen's musical analysis class, attended "many festivals in Darmstadt"<sup>2</sup>, where he got to know Ligeti and Xenakis "very well"<sup>3</sup>, but also learned from the creation and anthological encounters with his fellow guild members, the composers of the so-called "golden" generation: Tiberiu Olah, Anatol Vieru, Ștefan Niculescu, Myriam Marbe and others.<sup>4</sup>

Member of the academic corps at the "Gh. Dima" National Academy of Music in Cluj-Napoca since 1957, he taught especially Composition, guiding generations of disciples and continuing the school of composition of maestro Toduță in Cluj, but he also held courses on "Elements of musical stylistics in the 20<sup>th</sup> century", "Compositional style and language", "Unconventional musical discourses" and "Alternative musical discourses (theater, ballet, film, media)". In 1968, he founded the *Ars Nova* ensemble (which debuted on his birthday, 20 June), "becoming the longest-established contemporary music ensemble in Romania".<sup>5</sup> Vice-President of the Romanian Composers and Musicologists Union (1990-2022) and a member of the Romanian Academy (corresponding member since 1993 and full member since 2012), the composer Cornel Țăranu has left a clear, indelible mark through his rich musical creation, which bears his specific characteristics, revealing a profound originality.

Cornel Țăranu's symphonic creation, on which we will dwell in this case study, "can be divided into two stages: the period of the '60s-80s [...] and the second period, between 2005-2018"<sup>6</sup> (in fact, 2020, according to the composer's official website, where the most recent work, *Cercar la nota* for orchestra - 2019-2020, is also mentioned). *The Third Symphony "Semne" (Signs)*, which is the subject of our analytical endeavor, was composed in 1984 and is part of the first of the two periods mentioned above, a period that ends with *The Fourth Symphony "Ritornele"* (1987).

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<sup>2</sup> Arzoiu, Ruxandra, "Dialog cu compozitorul Cornel Țăranu" (*Dialogue with the composer Cornel Țăranu*). In *Muzica*, no. 2, 1994, pp. 155.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>4</sup> See the interview granted to Radu Constantinescu, in the volume *Clujul în ritm de vals imperial. Interviuuri (Cluj in the Rhythm of Imperial Waltz. Interviews)*, Ed. Casa Cărții de Știință, Cluj-Napoca, 2007.

<sup>5</sup> See the information on his official webpage, <https://corneltaranu.ro/index.php>.

<sup>6</sup> Mercean-Țârc, Mirela "The Symphonics of the new Millenium. Part I – Programmatic orchestral works". In *Artes, Journal of Musicology*, no. 21(1), 2020, pp. 108.

In addition to the four numbered symphonies<sup>7</sup> of the first period, the composer's genre *oeuvre* also includes a *Symphony for large orchestra* (1957), probably a school work, his graduation work. Țăranu's second symphonic period is represented by the works *Sax-Sympho* for saxophone and orchestra (2006 - a concert symphony dedicated to Daniel Kientzy<sup>8</sup>), *Simfonia da Requiem in memoriam Enescu* (2005/2006), for mixed choir and orchestra on biblical texts, *Hetero(sym)phony: pour orchestre*, 2011, *The Symphony "Memorial" pour orchestre (In memory of the victims of totalitarianism)* and *The Symphony "Aforistic"* (2017).<sup>9</sup> For a more extensive overview of the genre, the symphonies proper can be joined by the two works entitled "sinfoniettas", namely *Sinfonietta Giocosa* (1968) and *Sinfonietta "Pro juventute"* (1984) for string orchestra.

*The Third Symphony* was chosen as a case study both for the expressiveness and analytical interest it arouses, as well as for the fact that it "represents a new stage in the composer's creation, a stage that leaves to some extent the constructivist rigor of the previous periods and aspires to a style of synthesis".<sup>10</sup>

Concerning the title of the work, the author states that "these signs can be read in several ways: musical signs, [...] magical symbols, [...]"

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<sup>7</sup> The symphonies are erroneously numbered in some bibliographical sources, for example in the interview cited above, conducted by Ruxandra Arzoiu, she indicates the *Aulodica* Symphony as *The First Symphony* - instead of *Symphony Brevis*, as it appears on the composer's official website, and *Ghirlande* for chamber orchestra as *The Second Symphony* - instead of *Aulodica*, which is printed as *The Second Symphony* at Ed. Muzicală, Bucharest, 1980; the same error also appears in *Larousse - Dicționar de mari muzicieni (Dictionary of great musicians)*, Ed. Univers Enciclopedic Bucharest, 2000).

<sup>8</sup> See Mercean-Țârc, "The Symphonics of the new Millenium. Part I...", Part I – Programmatic orchestral works". In *Artes, Journal of Musicology*, no. 21(1), 2020, (DOI: 10.2478/ajm-2020-0007), pp. 108.

<sup>9</sup> To these could be added the work *Heraldica* (finalized in 2014 and published in 2016) for orchestra - homage to the Romanian Academy (1866-2016), a work that Mirela Mercean-Țârc approaches in the cited study either as a "symphonic poem" or "programmatic orchestral work" - pp. 108, or as a "symphony" - pp.117. Also, in the second part of the study ("The symphony genre in the Transylvanian school of composition - the last seven decades. Part II, years 2000-2023", published in the volume of the international conference "Artistic education - cultural dimensions", Ed. Notograf Prim, Chișinău, 2023, p. 35), the author also indicates *Vocal Palindrom* as a possible symphony – probably the *Palindrom* for orchestra of 2016.

<sup>10</sup> Mercean-Țârc – *Articularea formei în simfoniile compozitorilor clujeni – compuse în cea de-a doua jumătate a secolului XX (The articulation of the form in the symphonies of the composers from Cluj-Napoca – composed in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century)*, Ed. University of Oradea, 2007, pp. 127.

warning [...]”, but which “nevertheless reach a catharsis [...] (also an Enescian legacy [...])”.<sup>11</sup>

The confessed and assumed closeness to the untapped Enescian vein is also remarked by Ștefan Angi, who states that “the evolution of his compositional practice follows the living trajectory of the passage of *melos* from the hypostases that are played like *doinas* to evocative melodic ones”,<sup>12</sup> as a natural consequence also of the profound assimilation of Enescu’s music by the man who finalized several of Enescu’s unfinished works (*Strigoii*, *The Fifth Symphony* - parts I and IV, *Caprice roumain*<sup>13</sup> or *Concerto for piano and orchestra*).<sup>14</sup> In effect, Cornel Țăranu’s work is permeated by Enescu’s themes, which he “involuntarily” paraphrases (as in the opening of the second part of *Pantheon* from *Symphony I “Brevis”*<sup>15</sup>) or evokes in a subtle way (*Sonata for flute*, part II, making a transparent connection with the motives of the third part of the *Chamber Symphony*, op. 33 by G. Enescu).<sup>16</sup>

Moreover, not only the elective Enescian affinities are a constant in Cornel Țăranu’s creation, but multiple other stylistic elements can be found and recognized, which constitute the complex but perfectly recognizable signature of the composer from Cluj. In this regard, Mirela Mercean-Țârc remarks that “the seven symphonic works composed between 2005-2018 are emblematic of a unitary compositional style in which common language elements can be detected”<sup>17</sup> and adds that “the principle of continuous variation [...] generates interweavings of the sonata model with that of variations, which is predominant in some symphonic works”<sup>18</sup> both from the second period of his symphonic creation, as well as from the first.

*The Third Symphony “Semne” (Signs)* is monopartite (like all of Cornel Țăranu’s symphonies, starting with *The Second Symphony “Aulodica”*) and is structured in a bithematic sonata form (common to the second and fourth

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<sup>11</sup> Arzoiu, pp. 154.

<sup>12</sup> Angi, Ștefan, *Site de in. Eseuri despre muzică (Site de in. Essays on music)*, Ed. MediaMusica, Cluj-Napoca, 2013, the study “Varietatea evocării ethosului enescian în compozițiile lui Cornel Țăranu” (*The variety of evoking the Enescian ethos in Cornel Țăranu’s compositions*), pp. 20.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 25.

<sup>14</sup> See the information on his official webpage, <https://corneltaranu.ro/index.php>.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Angi, pp. 22.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 23.

<sup>17</sup> Mercean-Țârc, Mirela “The Symphonics of the new Millenium. Part I – Programmatic orchestral works”. In *Artes, Journal of Musicology*, no. 21(1), 2020, pp. 127.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*.

symphonies, those that frame the opus under discussion in time, but also with other works intended for orchestra, also monopartite, aspects that place the latter on a level close to the symphonies, as is the case with the works *Heraldica*<sup>19</sup> (2016), *Rimembranza*<sup>20</sup> (2005) and others).

Theme I (A) has a "sound signal" character in brass (trumpet and horn), being a motivic cell organized on intervals of perfect and augmented fourths, with an ascending melodic profile, later vaulting (E.g. 1b). Incidentally, these characteristics of the first theme seem to comprise the basic "ingredients" of a compelling incipit in several of the maestro's symphonic works. Thus, also in the second and fourth symphonies the motivic cells that represent the first thematic profile appear in the brass, circumscribing certain specific musical intervals (ascending, in *The Second Symphony*, respectively, descending, in *The Fourth Symphony* – E.g. 1a and c). These elements tend to be preserved also in works of the second period of creation, *Simfonia da Requiem (in memoriam Enescu - 2005*, with a quasi-Gregorian motive in the brass section, E.g. 1d), *Sax Sympho* (2006 - augmented octave leap to the horns in F, E.g. 1e) or *Rimembranza* (written on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of George Enescu's death, which begins with a sound signal to the four horns, through the BACH<sup>21</sup> motive spatialized in two octaves, through an initial leap of a major seventh). Also, even in the *Heraldica*, "the victorious triumphal character is embodied by the signaling motive played by the trumpets in the *Risolto* indication, a first thematic "pronunciation" of the sonata with elements of variation" (E.g. 1f).<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 118.

<sup>20</sup> See Banciu, Ecaterina and Gabriel, "Echoes of Enescu: Cornel Țăranu's *Rimembranza* for orchestra". In *Studia UBB Musica*, no. 2/2011, Cluj-Napoca, pp. 229.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 230.

<sup>22</sup> Mercean-Țârc, Mirela "The Symphonics of the new Millenium. Part I – Programmatic orchestral works". In *Artes, Journal of Musicology*, no. 21(1), 2020, pp. 118.

- sulle corde

**Cornel Țăranu, the “theme motive” (theme I) from the opening of *The Second Symphony “Aulodica”* (M7/d8, m2), m.1-5**

STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS AND STYLISTIC ASPECTS IN  
THE THIRD SYMPHONY "SEMNE" BY CORNEL ȚĂRANU

E.g. 1b

Musical score for the beginning of the Third Symphony "Semne" by Cornel Țăranu, measures 1-3. The score is for a full orchestra and includes woodwinds, brass, strings, and percussion. The tempo is "Molto moderato". The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score shows the initial entry of the "signal-motive" (theme I) in the woodwinds and brass, with a crescendo leading to a fortissimo (ff) dynamic.

Cornel Țăranu, the "signal-motive" (theme I) from the beginning of  
*The Third Symphony "Semne" (Signs)*, m. 1-3 (P4, A4; A5, d4)

E.g. 1c

Musical score for the beginning of the Fourth Symphony "Ritornele" by Cornel Țăranu, measures 1-3. The score is for a full orchestra and includes woodwinds, brass, strings, and percussion. The tempo is "Moderato". The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score shows the initial entry of the "signal-motive" (theme I) in the woodwinds and brass, with a crescendo leading to a fortissimo (ff) dynamic.

Cornel Țăranu, the "signal-motive" (theme I) from the beginning of  
*The Fourth Symphony "Ritornele" (M9)*, m. 1-3

E.g. 1d

Horns 1-2 in F  
 Horns 3-4 in F  
 Trumpets 1-2 in C  
 Trombones 1-2

**Cornel Țăranu, *Simfonia da Requiem (in memoriam Enescu)*, quasi-Gregorian motive in the brass section, m. 5-6**

E.g. 1e

Trp. Do  
 2 Corni Fa  
 1 Trb.

**Cornel Țăranu, *Sax Sympho*, octave leap in the horns in F, m. 2-3**

E.g. 1f

Risoluto  $\text{♩} = 72$   
 2 Fl.  
 2 Ob.  
 2 Cl. in Bb.  
 2 Fag.  
 3 Trp. in C  
 4 Cors. in F  
 2 Trb.

**Cornel Țăranu, *Heraldica*, m. 1-6**

The bridge (transition) of *The Symphony "Semne"* has three segments, the first of which, naturally, deals with the theme-cell A, through transposed recurrences and harmonic syntheses (E.g. 2), similar to the "tower chords" in the beginning of the work *Heraldica* ("containing the sounds of melodies vertically"<sup>23</sup>).

E.g. 2

**Cornel Țăranu, *Third Symphony*, first bridge segment,  
harmonic syntheses, four bars after mark 2**

The third bridge segment sets up a "microrefrain"<sup>24</sup> in the woodwinds, and the strings counterpoint through recurrences. The basic musical cell of the "microrefrain", consisting of four sounds (ascending major second and minor third respectively, spatialized by the leap of the major seventh in two different octaves), has the interesting property of the identity, two by two, of the four basic variational hypostases (original and inverted recurrence, inversion and recurrence respectively).

<sup>23</sup> Mercean-Țârc, Mirela "The Symphonics of the new Millenium. Part I – Programmatic orchestral works". In *Artes, Journal of Musicology*, no. 21(1), 2020, pp. 118.

<sup>24</sup> Term retrieved from Mercean-Țârc, *Articularea formei în simfoniile compozitorilor clujeni – compuse în cea de-a doua jumătate a secolului XX (The articulation of the form in the symphonies of the composers from Cluj-Napoca – composed in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century)*, Ed. University of Oradea, 2007, pp. 127-132.



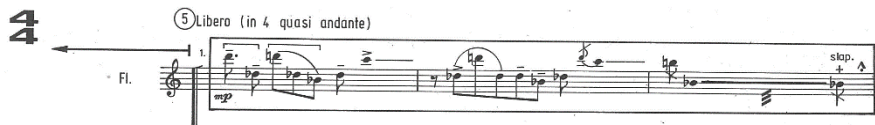
**Cornel Țăranu, *The Third Symphony*, third bridge segment, mark 4**

<sup>25</sup> Mercean-Târc, *Articularea formei în simfoniile compozitorilor clujeni - compuse în cea de-a doua jumătate a secolului XX (The articulation of the form in the symphonies of the composers from Cluj-Napoca – composed in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century)*, Ed. University of Oradea, 2007, pp. 128.

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melodic profile of the beginning of the second themes of the three symphonies, we also find a surprising conceptual similarity with the symphonic work *Heraldica*, in which "the second theme [...] with *appoggiaturas*" emphasizes "the filiation with the *doina* and the care through the glissando of lament", and "the minor second and the major third are the germinal intervals from which the processing of the continuous variation of the second thematic sector of the form starts"<sup>26</sup> (E.g. 4d).

E.g. 4a



Cornel Țăranu, *The Second Symphony*, B<sub>1</sub>, mark 5

E.g. 4b

Cornel Țăranu, *The Third Symphony*, B<sub>1</sub>,  
mark 5 (fifth measure of the fragment)

<sup>26</sup> Mercean-Țărc, Mirela "The Symphonics of the new Millenium. Part I – Programmatic orchestral works". In *Artes, Journal of Musicology*, no. 21(1), 2020, pp. 118.

**E.g. 4c**

Vni I *sul tasto*  
 Vni II *sul tasto*  
 Vle *sul tasto*  
 Vlc *sul tasto*  
 Cb. *pizz.*

**Cornel Țăranu, *The Fourth Symphony*, B<sub>1</sub>, one measure after mark 5**

**E.g. 4d**

2 Ob. 1. Solo legato

**Cornel Țăranu, *Heraldica*, second theme, m. 59-61  
(starting with the third measure of the fragment)**

Theme B<sub>1</sub>, once exposed, is processed by inversions (recurrences) and imitations (in *stretto*) and is combined with theme A, which returns as a microrefrain. Theme B<sub>2</sub> is built on *porrectus* (lower-second oscillation) and *torculus* (upper-second oscillation) cell structures.

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E.g. 5

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system includes parts for Flute (FL), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Fg.), Trumpet (Tr.), Horn (Cor.), Trombone (Trb.), Piano, I-Vib., Violin I (Vni I), Violin II (Vni II), Viola (Vle), Violoncello (Vlc.), and Double Bass (Cb.). The second system continues the orchestration with similar dynamics and includes a 'Libero' marking. The score is written in a complex, modern style with many accidentals and dynamic markings.

Cornel Țăranu, *The Third Symphony*, B<sub>2</sub>, starting with mark 8  
(fourth measure of the fragment)

The development contains four stages (parts) clearly delineated by the writing and developmental techniques used. Thus, the first stage processes the thematic profile A in *stretto* (E.g. 6a), in harmonic syntheses, but also in “rhythmic stages” (E.g. 6b), through the technique of adding sounds (also found in the development of *The Second Symphony*, but also in the *Heraldica*,<sup>27</sup> a technique identifiable, as well, in the gradual accumulation of the exposition of the first theme in *The Fourth Symphony “Ritornele”*, which is fully embodied from measure 20 onwards). The attacks “in *stretto* with ascending, descending, convex, concave, symmetrically horizontal or vertical geometric configuration”<sup>28</sup> seem to represent another styleme in the maestro’s technical arsenal, also given their consistent representation in the orchestral work *Palindrom* (2016). The first part of the development ends with the microrefrain in the third segment of the bridge and reveals “the virtuosity of Cornel Țăranu’s compositional technique, based particularly on variation”.<sup>29</sup>

E.g. 6a

**Cornel Țăranu, *The Third Symphony*, the beginning of development in *stretto*, three bars after mark 10 (third bar of the fragment)**

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 119.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 128.

<sup>29</sup> Cojocaru, Dora – “Cornel Țăranu și obsesia variației” (*Cornel Țăranu and the obsession with variation*). In *Muzica*, no. 1/1995, pp. 10, apud. Mercean-Țârc, *Articularea formei în simfoniile compozitorilor clujeni – compuse în cea de-a doua jumătate a secolului XX (The articulation of the form in the symphonies of the composers from Cluj-Napoca – composed in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century)*, Ed. University of Oradea, 2007, pp. 129.

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E.g. 6b

The musical score is for the first part of development of the Third Symphony "SEMNE" by Cornel Țăranu, five measures after mark 12. It features woodwinds (Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon) and strings (Piano, Violins I & II, Viola, Violoncello, Contrabass). The woodwinds play a melodic line with "cresc." and "repet." markings. The strings play a rhythmic pattern with "repet." markings.

**Cornel Țăranu, *The Third Symphony*, "rhythmic layers" in the first part of development, five measures after mark 12**

The second stage (part) valorizes melodically, in the sense of an Enescian cantilena, the same theme A, from a perspective quite the opposite of a classical development, in which, from the cursivity of the thematic exposition, one usually reaches, in the development, fragmentation. Here, things unfold exactly in the reverse, i.e. after the symptomatic fragmentation of the exposition of the first thematic structure, in the second stage of the development the same broad melodic line from the violins is enunciated five times, with different orchestral commentary each time. Incidentally, in the development of *The Fourth Symphony "Ritornele"*, too, there is a "generous cantilena in the strings, counterpointed with stretto in the woodwinds".<sup>30</sup> Probably, the key to deciphering

<sup>30</sup> Mercean-Țîrc, *Articularea formei în simfoniile compozitorilor clujeni - compuse în cea de-a doua jumătate a secolului XX (The articulation of the form in the symphonies of the composers from Cluj-Napoca – composed in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century)*, Ed. University of Oradea, 2007, pp. 134.

both of the above-mentioned situations also lies in the “elective Enescian affinities” confessed by Cornel Țăranu, given that, in his doctoral thesis, the author of the *Symphony “Semne” (Signs)* stated that for Enescu “a theme, before being a starting point, is a result.”<sup>31</sup>

**E.g. 7**

The musical score is for the Third Symphony by Cornel Țăranu, specifically a fragment from the second stage of development, the "Enescian" melodic line, mark 15. The score is written for a woodwind section (Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon) and a string section (Violins I & II, Viola, Violoncello, Double Bass). The woodwinds play a melodic line marked "Largamente" and "Moderé". The strings provide a rhythmic and harmonic foundation with various articulations like "pizz." and "arco".

**Cornel Țăranu, *The Third Symphony*, fragment from the second stage of development, the "Enescian" melodic line, mark 15**

The third stage (part), *pointilist* (a necessary contrast after the cursivity of the previous stage), resonates with the fourteenth stage of the development of the “*Aulodica*” *Symphony* (starting with m. 203-204), but also with the “gradual

<sup>31</sup> Țăranu, Cornel, *Creația enesciană în lumina prezentului (Enescu's creation in the light of the present)*, doctoral thesis, ANMGD Library, quota I.h.6, Cluj-Napoca, 1972, pp. 11, *apud*. Anghi, pp. 21.

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elision [...] until the thematic physiognomy dissipates and a punctual writing is achieved",<sup>32</sup> a technique also present in the orchestral works belonging to the second period of creation.

E.g. 8

Cornel Țăranu, *The Third Symphony*, third stage of development, mark 19

The last part of the development, the fourth one, reveals the technique of the inverted counterpoint between woodwinds and strings (see, in the same sense, the third stage in the development of the "*Aulodica*" *Symphony*, in triple counterpoint – "woodwinds", "brass", strings, as well as the double counterpoint between the homophonic and polyphonic writing in the wind instruments in the development of the "*Ritornele*" *Symphony*, m. 144-150).

<sup>32</sup> Mercean-Țărc, Mirela "The Symphonics of the new Millenium. Part I – Programmatic orchestral works". In *Artes, Journal of Musicology*, no. 21(1), 2020, pp. 127.



## E.g. 9

**Cornel Țăranu, *The Third Symphony*, the onset of the fourth stage of development, one measure before mark 22 (second measure in the fragment)**

In a dynamized timbre replication of the exposition, the reversed reprise returns the themes in the order of  $B_1$  (winds, instead of strings),  $B_2$  (strings, instead of winds), and  $A$  (on the “color” instruments - celesta, vibraphone, glockenspiel).

The Coda returns to elements of *bocet* (akin to the second thematic group), “like a collective murmur, a prayer or a chant”<sup>33</sup> (E.g. 10). It is noteworthy that the Coda of the *Symphony “Ritornele”* also appeals to a “collective lament”.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Mercean-Țărc, Mirela, *Articularea formei în simfoniile compozitorilor clujeni - compuse în cea de-a doua jumătate a secolului XX (The articulation of the form in the symphonies of the composers from Cluj-Napoca – composed in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century)*, Ed. University of Oradea, 2007, pp. 132.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 135.

Cornel Țăranu, *The Third Symphony*, the beginning of the Coda, mark 35

Having come to the end of our analytical journey, we will try to summarize the most important aspects, especially through their character, of Cornel Țăranu's specific musical style, bringing together generic, formal, writing and compositional technique, timbre elements and melodic profile, all creating the unmistakable stylistic imprint.

Thus, the work is monopartite and is articulated in sonata form (like the *Second* and *Fourth Symphonies*, but also like many other symphonic works from the second period of his creation).

The first theme is a "signal-theme" to "brass" (not only in the "*Aulodica*", "*Semne*" and "*Ritonele*" symphonies, but also in the *Simfonia da Requiem* (in memoriam Enescu), *Sax Sympho*, *Rimembranza* or *Heraldica*), with a generally ascending melodic profile (in the *Second* and *Third Symphonies*), counterbalanced by the descending profile of the B<sub>1</sub> theme (in all three of the above-mentioned symphonies from the first period of creation).

The development involves a (second) stage of melodic cursivity (as in *The Fourth Symphony*), a (third) “pointilist” stage (similar to the last stage of *The Second Symphony*), a (fourth) stage of inverted counterpoint between the instrumental groups (a stage that finds its counterpart in all three symphonic works). Consequently, the development reveals Cornel Țăranu’s capacity “of metamorphosing sound matter and its creative springs”<sup>35</sup>.

The Coda, by its character of a possible *bocet*, prayer or chant, brings that catharsis of Enescian origin to which the author referred in explaining the title of the symphony, an aspect that is also partially found in the Coda of *The Fourth Symphony*.

Given all these musical elements, with a certain stylistic charge, so clearly outlined in *The Third Symphony* “*Semne*” (*Signs*), we can better understand the symbolic role of this work in the context of the maestro’s creation, fully validated by the character of synthesis mentioned above and selected, certainly not by chance, for the closing concert of the International Festival “Cluj Modern” 2024, edition *in memoriam* Cornel Țăranu.

(Translated by Adina Fodor)

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<sup>35</sup> Lerescu, Sorin, “C. Țăranu, Simfonia a IV-a, Ritornele” (*C. Țăranu, Fourth Symphony, Ritornele*). In *Muzica*, no. 4/1988, Bucharest, pp. 17, *apud* Mercean-Țârc, *Articularea formei în simfoniile compozitorilor clujeni (The articulation of the form in the symphonies of the composers from Cluj-Napoca)*, Ed. University of Oradea, 2007, pp. 134.

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

PAULA MLADIN<sup>1</sup> 

**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 statements that describe melody as "the minimum necessary and sufficient

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condition of music”<sup>2</sup> and music as “the art of melodies”<sup>3</sup> – 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 poetry<sup>4</sup>, 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”<sup>5</sup>.

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”<sup>6</sup>, 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*<sup>7</sup>, 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

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<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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).

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> 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”<sup>8</sup>, “a cultural and identity revelation”<sup>9</sup>.

Although we will also identify in the composer’s oeuvre marks of the *parlando-rubato*<sup>10</sup> 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*”<sup>11</sup> –, 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”<sup>12</sup>, 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”<sup>13</sup>. The choral titles known as *Colinde laice (Secular Carols)*<sup>14</sup> 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

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

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

<sup>10</sup> 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”.

<sup>11</sup> Niculescu, Ștefan, *Op. cit.*, p. 83.

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

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 21.

<sup>14</sup> 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.<sup>15</sup>*

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”<sup>16</sup> 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”.<sup>17</sup>

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*

<sup>15</sup> 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).

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

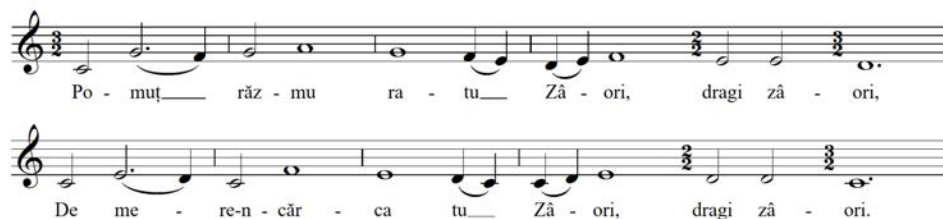
<sup>17</sup> Mercean-Țărc, Mirela, *Articularea formei în simfoniile compozitorilor clujeni – compuse în cea de-a doua jumătate a secolului XX (Form articulation in the symphonies of Cluj composers written in the second half of the 20th century)*, Editura Universității din Oradea, 2007, p. 11.

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 works<sup>18</sup> 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***

<sup>18</sup> 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”<sup>19</sup>. 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”<sup>20</sup>. 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”<sup>21</sup>. 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”<sup>22</sup>, 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”<sup>23</sup>. 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”<sup>24</sup>, 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.

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<sup>19</sup> Pop, Adrian, *Solstice for orchestra* (1979), Presentation.

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

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 32.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>23</sup> 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.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 184.

“Seen by Jung<sup>25</sup> 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”<sup>26</sup>.

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.”<sup>27</sup>

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 work<sup>28</sup> 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

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<sup>25</sup> 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 Olguța Lupu/ Editor Olguța Lupu), Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 2018, p. 14.

<sup>26</sup> Anghel, Irinel, *Op. cit.*, p. 186.

<sup>27</sup> Apostu, Andra, *Op. cit.*

<sup>28</sup> 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 orchestra<sup>29</sup>, 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  $\alpha$  – tritonic, mostly descending, involving a chromatic step *la-la b*, with a “strange”<sup>30</sup> 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  $\alpha$  motif and the addition of new sounds as the discourse continues results in a second motif,  $\beta$  (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”<sup>31</sup> 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.

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<sup>29</sup> 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;

<sup>30</sup> Plaian, Carmen, *Op. cit.*, p. 230.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*

E.g. 2

The two initial motifs,  $\alpha$  (m. 1 – m. 2) and  $\beta$  (m. 6)

The second phrase (m. 7 - m. 13), initiated by the C sharp sound that concludes the  $\beta$ -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  $\beta$  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”<sup>32</sup>. 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.

<sup>32</sup> *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 image displays a page of a musical score for the orchestral work *Solstice* by Adrian Pop. The page is numbered 4 at the top left. The score is written for a large orchestra, with staves for Flute (Flg.), Cor Anglais (Cor. F.), Trumpets (Tr. Sib.), Trombones (Trn.), Percussion (Perc. 2, 3), and various string sections (V.1, V.2, Vla., Vlc., Cb.). The measures shown are from 24 to 35, with measure numbers 30 and 35 explicitly marked. A red rectangular box highlights the section from measure 24 to 35, indicating the first appearance of the carol tune. The score features complex polyphonic textures with many overlapping melodic lines. Dynamic markings such as *mf*, *f*, *mp*, and *p* are used throughout. Articulation includes accents, slurs, and breath marks. The percussion section includes Gong and Piatto sosp. The string sections have detailed bowing and fingering indications.

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.”<sup>33</sup> 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  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  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 free<sup>34</sup> heterogeneous polyphony in a pointillist manner. The chaconne theme, anchored by the C fundamental, is based on cells originating from the initial motifs  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ , 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.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 233.

<sup>34</sup> 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 to 71. The score is written for a symphonic orchestra and includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet in B-flat (Cl. Sib.), Vibraphone (Perc. 3), Violin 1 (V.1), and Violin 2 (V.2). The Vibraphone part is highlighted with a red box, and the Oboe part is highlighted with a blue box. The score is marked 'tutti cresc. ed accel. poco a poco' and 'Piu mosso'. The measures are numbered 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, and 71. The Vibraphone part is a chaconne theme, and the Oboe part features idyllic ornaments.

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

The musical score for Example 5 shows the conclusion of the second section of "Development". The score is for a large orchestra, including Flute (Fl.), Piccolo, Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet in B-flat (Cl. Sib.), Bassoon (Fg.), Cor Anglais (Cor. Fa), Trombone (Tr. Sib.), Trumpet (Tru.), and Percussion (Perc. 1, Perc. 2). The score is marked with "ff" (fortissimo) and "stacc." (staccato). A red box highlights the Piccolo and Flute parts, and a blue box highlights the Trombone part. The score is numbered 14 and 110.

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”<sup>35</sup> 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”<sup>36</sup>, 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  $\beta$ -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”<sup>37</sup>, 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  $\beta$ -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

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<sup>35</sup> 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).

<sup>36</sup> Plaian, Carmen, *Op. cit.*, p. 239.

<sup>37</sup> 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* ison is changed to a *trill* on a minor-second interval. The second flute returns the motif  $\alpha$  (m. 141 – m. 142).

In contrast to the abrupt sound “disruptions” – which the musicologist Carmen Plaian likened to “flashes of distant lightning”<sup>38</sup> – 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”<sup>39</sup> along with the recognition of syntony as “an inherent feature of any cluster-type structural configuration”<sup>40</sup>. The impression of aural “dissolution”, of cosmic resonances – if we refer to the ideational ground – is more and more striking as the flutes articulate

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<sup>38</sup> Plaian, Carmen, *Op. cit.*, p. 246.

<sup>39</sup> Cozma, Andrei, *Op. cit.*, p. 36.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*

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

“motifs decorated with trills and multiple melismatic appoggiaturas”<sup>41</sup> 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 *Solstice* for Orchestra, measures 155-160, is shown. The score includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Percussion (Perc. 1, 2, 3), Violins (V.1, V.2), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vlc.), and Double Bass (Cb.). The Flute part features melismatic appoggiaturas and trills. The Percussion parts include Timpani, P-ttl sosp., and Gong. The Violins and Viola parts have melismatic appoggiaturas. The Double Bass part has melodic arches made up of ascending and descending glissandos interrupted by pizzicato. Blue arrows point to the Violin and Viola parts, and red arrows point to the Double Bass part.

<sup>41</sup> Plaian, Carmen, *Op. cit.*, p. 246.



PAULA MLADIN

The image shows a musical score for Paula Mladin, measures 160-165. The score is written for a large ensemble, including Flutes (Fl.), Oboes (Ob.), Percussion (Perc. 1, 2, 3), Violins (V.1, V.2), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vlc.), and Contrabass (Cb.).

**Measures 160-165 (highlighted in red box):**

- Flutes (Fl.):** The first flute part (Fl. 1) has a melodic line with dynamics *p*, *pp*, *pp*, and *p*. The second flute part (Fl. 2) has a melodic line with dynamics *pp* and *mp*. The third flute part (Fl. 3) has a melodic line with dynamics *pp* and *mp*. The fourth flute part (Fl. 4) has a melodic line with dynamics *pp* and *mp*.
- Oboes (Ob.):** The first oboe part (Ob. 1) has a melodic line with dynamics *p* and *cresc.*. The second oboe part (Ob. 2) has a melodic line with dynamics *p* and *cresc.*. The third oboe part (Ob. 3) has a melodic line with dynamics *p* and *cresc.*.
- Percussion (Perc.):** Perc. 1 (Timpani) has a melodic line with dynamics *p*. Perc. 2 (P-tti sosp.) has a melodic line with dynamics *lv.* and *p*. Perc. 3 (Gong) has a melodic line with dynamics *lv.* and *p*.
- Violins (V.):** V.1 has a melodic line with dynamics *lv.* and *p*. V.2 has a melodic line with dynamics *lv.* and *p*.
- Viola (Vla.):** The Viola part has a melodic line with dynamics *lv.* and *p*.
- Violoncello (Vlc.):** The Vlc. part has a melodic line with dynamics *lv.* and *p*.
- Contrabass (Cb.):** The Cb. part has a melodic line with dynamics *lv.* and *p*.

**Measures 160-165 (highlighted in blue arrows):**

- Violins (V.):** V.1 has a melodic line with dynamics *lv.* and *p*. V.2 has a melodic line with dynamics *lv.* and *p*.
- Viola (Vla.):** The Viola part has a melodic line with dynamics *lv.* and *p*.
- Violoncello (Vlc.):** The Vlc. part has a melodic line with dynamics *lv.* and *p*.
- Contrabass (Cb.):** The Cb. part has a melodic line with dynamics *lv.* and *p*.

**Measures 160-165 (highlighted in red arrows):**

- Contrabass (Cb.):** The Cb. part has a melodic line with dynamics *lv.* and *p*.

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  $\alpha$  (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

Cor. Fa. 1. *p*

Cor. Fa. 2. *p*

Timpani

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

Perc. 2 *pp* *p*

V.1

V.2

Vla. *div. al post. legatiss.* *ppp*

Vlc. *div. al post. legatiss.* *ppp*

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

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36 Timpani 235 rit. . . . . G Andante molto ♩ = 56 240

Perc. 1

V.I. div.

V.II. div.

Vla. div.

Vla. 1.2

retransition

ppp

p

mp

mf

ord.

sul tasto

ppp

gli altri

ppp

The end of E phase – „sound deconstruction” through an ornamental string train (m. 225 – m. 231). Cantilena in double bass (m. 231 – m. 233). Retransition – featuring the fragmented carol tune (m. 237 – m. 240)

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  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  cells is taken up unisonically – 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.

**Recapitulation**

**H** Maestoso  $\text{♩} = 60$

39

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. Sib.

Fg.

Cor. Fa

Tr. Sib.

Trn.

Tb.

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

V.1

V.2

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

Campanc

Gong

improvvisando: irregular free combinations on the given notes, loud, festive and jubilant

f sempre

mf sempre lanciar vibr.

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

Settling on the resolved pedal of the preceding sound canvas, the **Recapitulation of the carol melody (m 266 – m. 283)** presents itself as the culmination of the entire symphonic development, marking, through the

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  $\alpha$ -motif and the  $\beta$ -motif, which descends from  $\alpha$ ), 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  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  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  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  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”<sup>42</sup>, 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

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<sup>42</sup> Koter, Peter, *[H]eterofonia. Considerații teoretice și analitice ([H]eterophony. Theoretical and Analytical Considerations)*. In *Lucrări de muzicologie (Musicology Papers)*, vol. XXXVI/2, 2021, [https://www.musicologypapers.edituramediamusica.ro/images/Reviste/LM\\_2021\\_XXXVI-2\\_08\\_Peter\\_Koter.pdf](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”<sup>43</sup>, 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*.

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<sup>43</sup> 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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## CURRENT WAYS OF MELODICAL IMPROVISATION, REVOLUTIONARY JAZZ THINKING IN THE XXI ST CENTURY

FLORIN BĂLAN<sup>1</sup> 

**SUMMARY.** The assimilation of different musical practices, idioms or aesthetics is an expression that explains in detail the origins of some of the fusions of the significant creators of the jazz phenomenon, an active pursuit whose purpose is to create new, musically innovative, hybridized styles. It represents the modern view, a term for which researchers will suggest that it is a suitable description for the evolutionary compositional technique of certain artists adept at experimental practices of fusion of elements, the preferential ability to combine the structure of standard themes in a modern, original manner that takes on new forms, contrary to the traditional ways of tonal jazz. Musicians of the contemporary style articulate stylistically through unequal and variable musical combinations, which do not completely replace the previously known genre terms (jazz, rock, funk), but allow the emergence of other creative styles, which evolve, delight and continuously challenge the characteristics of the preceding categories. Modernism emphasizes the instability of all gender designations and highlights the creative fluidity, the structure of musical practices that gender names try to immortalize to give discussions about jazz, music in general a significant new starting point. Issuing the title of a musical genre (modernism) is a way of recognizing its existence and being able to distinguish it from other musical genres or styles. This (name) becomes a point of reference and easily allows the constitution of certain forms of interactive musical communication, control and specialization in the field, elaboration of templates, discussions, essentially a new evolutionary step.

**Keywords:** jazz, improvisational thinking, instrumental technique, stylistic skills, contemporary harmonic structures, elements “inheritance”, resulting elements.

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## Introduction

The constantly moving character of the jazz phenomenon results (also) from the multitude of improvisational techniques applied, elaborated. In a previous phase, jazz was dominated by styles such as Dixieland, blues, swing, then bebop, cool and contemporary current, chronologically we are talking about the period of the '20s and the end of the '60s, contemporary the 60s until 2000, current starting from 2000, until 2024.

In its early form, improvisation consists of a form analogous to the theme, in another expression, which often consisted of a brief reinterpretation of the melodic line, as a useful way of instrumental prolongation of the work. The improvisational expression line usually represented the extension of the additional notes constituting the chords (harmonic support), resulting from the performance of the cadences, compared to the note of the melodic line. The weight, the importance of the improvisational moment, was by no means equivalent to that (/a) of today. The moment was previously conceived, as a possibility of respiro, for the conductor/orchestrator, a situation in which the space was reserved for the performance of dancers and animators. Later, the improvised phenomenon becomes a platform conducive to the brief display of skills, creativity, spontaneous artistic originality.

Starting from the middle of the 20th century, after the sure display of bebop, modernism highlights abstract melodic lines, based on modal or scalar thinking, most of the time, melody and harmony representing separate elements. Thus, paradoxically, each chord can be treated as a tonic or constitutive part of the harmonic progression, also the solo unfolding simultaneously with the structure of the harmonic cycle (hronos protos<sup>2</sup>). Everything is new, focused on the transition from the overall complementary attention to the direct, individual attention, the improvisational line or the melodic line of the theme, still remaining a basic element in the expression, the audience, being fully captivated by the virtuosity of the instrumentalists.

Contemporary jazz, delineated in the early 1980s, develops styles such as free, avant-garde, fusion, smooth and more. As a consequence, there is a (re)modeling of the improvisational form, sketched by the tendency towards complex, harmonic-rhythmic abstract forms, unconvergent with the theme. Thus, the performers experiment force the boundaries of the harmonic relations of tonality, this sound evolution, having a large-scale use of the procedure within the instrumentalist.

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<sup>2</sup> Giuleanu, Victor. *Tratat de teoria muzicii (Treatise on Music Theory)*, Editura Univers, București, 1986, pp. 167.

Trying a comparative systematization of the traditional improvisational stylistics, with the modern one, inevitably, the following questions take shape:

1. What are *the essential elements that characterize a certain style*?
2. What are *the typical elements that differentiate between styles*?
3. What are *the ways of implementing traditional elements in the modern interpretative manner*?

### 1. Comparative characteristic features of *swing* and *bebop* style

Although, the detailed treatment of each individual style, (E.g.1) the importance for the success of a systematization of the multitude of characteristic elements necessary for evolutionary transit, here is a first comparison between blues (swing) and bebop (hardbop) styles, styles, which, moreover, are fundamental, for the stages of transformation over time of jazz.

**E.g. 1**

STYLE	BLUES/SWING (1930-1945)	BEBOP/HARDBOP (1945-1960)
Relevance	Dancing music, ambient	Concert music, specialist audience, connoisseur
Rhythmical ward	Base drum on time (emphasized), mixing of short and long-lasting values, even predictable, easy to anticipate, constant, linear rhythmical support	Time cymbals (accentuated), rhythms with complex variations, note durations in small subdivision, polyrhythms, hemioles, continuous interaction
Harmony	Typical stride style chords, conventional harmony with natural tensions, standard ii-VI chains	Accompaniment with specific voice distributions (Bud Powell), 5 b, 9 b, altered dominant chords, tritonous substitutions, chromatisms
Guitar part	On strong time chords, rhythmic support	Multiple melodic lines, in the exposition, often the procedure of dubbing the theme in unison (electric guitar)
Bass line	Continuous movement (walking bassline)	Continuous movement (walking bassline)
Band parts, instrumental constitution	Big Band instrumental composition (oriented towards amplitude and sound dynamics)	Small group (oriented towards virtuosity and spontaneous creativity)

STYLE	BLUES/SWING (1930-1945)	BEBOP/HARDBOP (1945-1960)
Solo elements	Dominant trisons, diatonic chains, lyrical touch. Arpeggios	Arpeggios formed by sounds added to the range (extensions), aggressive impostation, devoid of vibrato (sax.), the use of exotic scales, chromatisms, starting phrases at week parts/ times
Melody	Repetitive, lyric melody, supported by usual, symmetrical harmonic solutions. Easy to sing, melody consisting of adjoining steps	Non-repetitive lines, complex, asymmetrical phrases, serpentine form, unpredictable outline, out of tonal frame, difficile to intonate/render
Compositional invoice	Concise orchestral arrangement, ample sound	Individual, complex, extremely, dynamic improvisations
Tempo	Slow or medium movement	Particularly fast movement with multiple accents

### General characteristics, styles comparison

As a general consequence, gospel, ragtime, blues-boogie, ragtime-stride, blues-urban, swing or even prebop styles are based on elements characteristic of the blues style.

Moreover, as eloquent proof of the relevance of the style, the impact of the phenomenon blues, had a special scope, penetrating and shaping essentially, many other styles of matter "music":

*Country-blues,*

*Urban blues,*

*West Coast Sound,*

*Rhythm & Blues (R & B),*

*Folk blues.*

In turn, the bebop/hardbop style, developed after the '60s, influenced the following styles, such as cool, funky, mainstream, modal, free.

## 2. Features comparison elements, atonal and free style

STYLE	ATONAL	FREE JAZZ
Using Modes	All modes	Modes without tonal center (chromatism use)
Improvising features	Based (still) on modes, steps	Free, nonconformist improvisation.
Functionality of harmonic relations	No functional harmony	No functional harmony
Possible implementation in other musical styles	Can not be implemented (in Schönberg's serialism, the improvisational moment becomes difficult due to complex rules).	Can not be implemented
Tonality	Polytonality, towards atonal	Atonal, free
Rhythm	Polyrhythmia	Arrhythmia
Distinct shape/structure	No clear shape	No clear shape
Pianistic cluster implementation, other elements	Cecyl Taylor, cluster: -chromatic: d, e flat, e. -diatonic: c, d, e. -pentatonic: d, e, g, a.	Non-cluster, predominantly harmonic instruments have the role of summary accompaniment, the importance of speech is taken by wind instruments, percussion, emphasis on the melodic-rhythmic aspect
The term "Energy"	Timbral color, rhythm, tempo, meter, dynamics, register, density= sense of style	Interpretation in force, high speeds, acute registers, incisive manner, staccato, excessive melodic cumulation = sense of style
Ignoring previous rules	Mostly	In totality

### General characteristics, details

### **3. Harmonical appearance, generalities**

The harmonic availabilities implemented in modern jazz constitute one of the strong elements of modern creation. The added extensions (9th, 11th, 13th), whole-half steps modes and scales, shrunk, dominant bebop, super Locrian, contribute fully to the realization of modern jazzistic texture. Creative skills, based on the use of interval jumps, arpeggios, chromatic modulations, vertical chord unfolding in the horizontal scale (on) constitute some of the most important elements. (see Lydian Concept/George Russel)

The distribution of voices in traditional jazz stops with the addition of the 7th and 9th degree, in modern jazz the appearance of 11th and 13th degree bringing that "color" defining contemporary harmonic tensions. The improvisational line/idea is correlated with the harmonic structure, respectively the distribution of voices, the chords with the modal structure obliging the need to appeal to the structure of the tonal-functional lows of the modes.

We find arpeggios, interval jumps in both periods, traditional styles such as swing or bebop strengthening the line of the theme through harmonic structures. The structuring of modern improvisation consists in the intense exploitation of the tonal framework (and not only), the harmonic tensions (dissonances), often omitting the solution to a tonal center.

### **4. Rhythmic appearance, generalities**

More than harmony, rhythm differentiates between traditional and modern, additionally, the complex rhythmic elements giving color, consistency and originality to the improvisational moment. Traditionally, the rhythm taken over, once derived from African culture, is transformed through subdivisions and polyrhythms, attributes that render the contemporary natural approach. The traditional way consists of values of eighth, sixteenth notes, implemented in moments of dynamic coloration or compilations of rhythmic variations. The modern way consists of extensive developments, which give a special, unpredictable dynamism, the alternation with moments of static activity generating that stylistic pressure. Freedom, interpretative creativity, however, makes fixing a rhythmical meter/pattern, or a stable tonal center difficult, the attraction of modern manners, the element of surprise being vital.

## 5. Melodic appearance motif, generalities

The reason is perhaps the most important element, which can differentiate between styles, separate the resulting manners throughout evolution. Motivational development can transform a solo into more than a series of sequences or scales, based on a certain chord, moreover, correlated with variational rhythmic elements, it tends to be the element that differentiates between generations or performers. Previously in improvisation, the motif was apparently geared towards memorizing melodic-improvisational lines, reworked and reinterpreted, often mostly in styles such as Dixieland. The motivational musical narrative changes with the passage of time and the emergence of modern jazz, giving up the repetitive elements, the surprise moments of artistic creativity being fundamental. Modern thought consisted of complex rhythms, which do not respect a certain rhythmic pattern, more hastily simultaneously supports the general unfolding, the new musical approaches directly influencing the improvisational manner through the continuous introduction of new melodic ideas. Although the motifs are made up of different variables, the provenance being a methodological one, improvisations regardless of the stylistic period, result in the formation of a cohesive solo.

Apart from the reason, phrasing in improvisation is another crucial element, meeting elements, gender-specific features. Like the motif, the choice of phrases, their development is thus not neglected in modal and bebop, the melodic lines and improvisations being often identical.

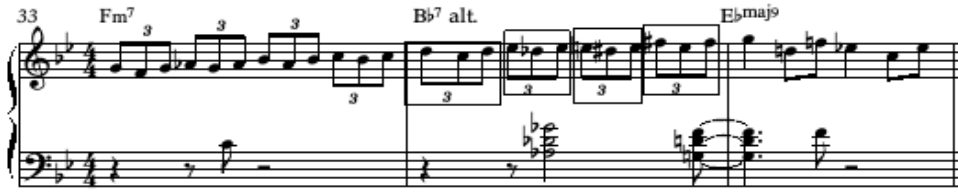
Herbie Hancock<sup>3</sup> (representative of current generosity although chronologically, essentially transitioning as does Chick Corea between contemporary and current generation), in improvisation beginning with measure 33 of the piece, *Tribute to Someone*, from the year 1963, implements the motifs in success, with restricted upward progressive unfolding (octave ambitus, G'-G''), in chromatic transition (E.g. 3 - measure 34).

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<sup>3</sup> Hancock, Herbie. *Solo Piano from the Piano*, Tokyo, Chappel & Co. Inc., Print rights for Japan administrated by Yamaha Music Corporation, 1987, p. 17.



**E.g. 3**



**Modern improvisation ideas**

Another new possible current<sup>4</sup> (E.g. 4.) ample motivic unfolding, with an ambitus on the extent scale of 15 steps (F', C'''), a harmonic support through chords with altered added steps/extensions (5b,7,9b), in harmonic progression, on the extent of 7 consecutive steps, downward movement in perfect 5th interval (E, A, D, G, C, F and B flat), previously mentioned jazz procedure (Quint-Fall). (transcription belonging to Alumni, mDeck Music).

**E.g. 4**

**IMPROVISING MOTIVE**



**Soloing ideas**

<sup>4</sup> Alumni @mDeckMusic, Music Books, Courses & Apps, for Musicians by Musicians, created by Berklee College of Music, Alumni, *Improvising using motives*, Coral Springs, Florida, U.S.A., 2021, p. 34.

## Conclusion

Harmony, rhythm, motives are essential elements in the cognitive assimilation of the improvisational moment, the similarity or interaction of traditional and modern elements, representing the next analytical element of the work.

### 1. Harmonic element retrospective, evolution, trends, current expressions

Aspect not to be neglected, in turn it reaches a new evolutionary stage, diversity, harmonic tension taking an accentuated form, an effect due to multiple and complex dissonances.

I list some poses of spontaneity, harmonic fantasy previously encountered, left as “heritage”-challenge, for the next generations of pianists such as:

1. OSCAR PETERSON (within the concert “Oscar Peterson Trio” with trumpeter Terry Clarke, print in Finland 3/23/1965), where he (re)harmonizes the opening chord of the Misty (E.g.5) jazz standard composed by Errol Garner. Later, it was unanimously taken over, as a chord specific to the piece, thanks to the mysterious coloring, suitable as an introductory way of the work.

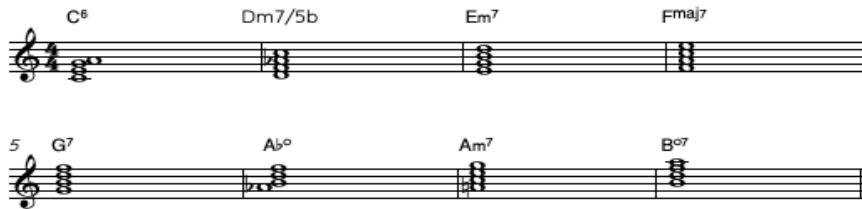
E.g. 5



Reharmonisation, beginning structure

2. BARRY HARRIS, one of the founders of the bebop style, introduces into the harmonic concept (E.g. 6) the chords with added sounds (the VIth degree), considered to be stable, compared to the chords with the large VIIth degree (maj 7), which require an immediate (usually descending) solution, respectively address and finalize the similarity between the reduced chords and the whole-half step scale/ range (E.g. 7).

E.g. 6



Added step scale

E.g. 7

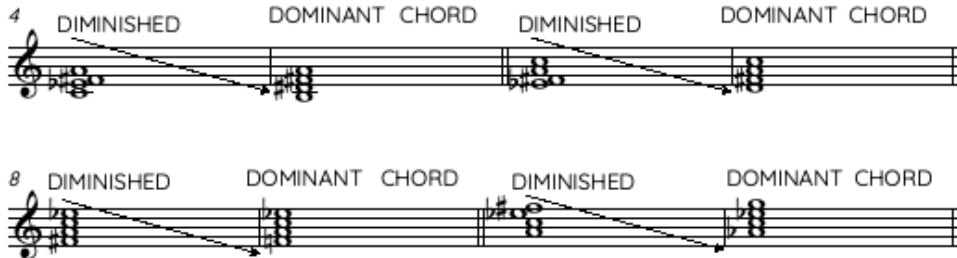


Constitution of diminished chords

The same Barry Harris (E.g. 8), is the promoter of another important step, in the evolution of harmonical thinking, represented by the constitutive closeness, between shrunk chords and dominant chords (minor VII th dominant degree). These results by simply lowering the fundamental, (respectively the first sound of the voice distribution) at a low descendant second interval.

An absolutely beneficial method, necessary for the sudden amplification of improvisational spontaneity, which aims to simplify intervallic, (implicitly) harmonic thinking.

**E.g. 8**



### Similarity between diminished and dominant chords

Another creative elaboration (E.g. 9), due to the same Barry Harris, consists of the fusion of the shrunken chords and the pentatonic range (previously remembered as the procedure often implemented in Chick Corea's expression). Thus, a new, agreed procedure results, represented by the application of the pentatonic range, at a large IIIrd interval compared to the agreement, thus avoiding the possible dissonances of the steps, justified as relevance by the multitude of common sounds (e, g, b).

The melodic unfolding, in the form of a spiral movement, starts from the constituent steps of the diminished chord (I, IIIb, Vb, VIIbb).

**E.g. 9**



### Procedure with pentatonic range

Another evolutionary harmonic finding/hypothesis of contemporary jazz reinforces the theory that shrunk tuning can take over as dominant (E.g.10) within the range. Its location, as a stand-alone chord, on the 7th step of the range, (the place of the VIIth degree in the range), can have /has an approach / solving to the tonic (major/minor construction).

E.g. 10



### Double function of the diminished chord

3. MICHEL PETRUCCIANI (within the concert held in Stuttgart, 1993), in turn (re)harmonizes the “B” part of Duke Ellington's piece *In a sentimental Mood* in his own special, complex, creative-stimulating vision (E.g. 11). It represents an important evolutionary step in terms of (re)interpreting/configuring laws, harmonic relationships. (Jeremy Fleury transcription)

E.g. 11



### Remodeling melodic lines with chords

In conclusion, the findings presented can be treated as possible tendential evidence, in a previous phase preceding the expansion, elaboration of unconventional harmonic color, since the year 1963. Certainly, these visions stimulated, later incited harmonic thinking, constituting a challenge continued by contemporary jazz enthusiasts.

A modern systematization<sup>5</sup> of current modern harmonic thinking (E.g. 12) is due to the brilliant, compact and concise realization of Nicolas Slonimsky. From the content, elements such as modern terminology, pandiatony<sup>6</sup>, the current technique of musical creation, the ways of using the diatonic range without limiting

<sup>5</sup> Slonimsky, Nicholas. *Thesaurus of Scales and Melodic Pattern*, Amsco Publications, New York, London, Paris, Sydney, 1975, p. 242-244.

<sup>6</sup> Kennedy, Michael. *Oxford Dictionary of Music*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1980, p. 778. “Pandiatonicism, term coined by American musicologist Slonimsky, to describe the free use in chord-formation of 7 degrees of the diatonic scale, e.g. the added 6<sup>th</sup> in jazz”.

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the tonal functionality, are all treated from a new, particularly interesting point of view. (In the classical music<sup>7</sup>, eloquent works that reproduce the compositional technique can be listed Stravinsky, Piano Concerto or Serenade 1952, Debussy, Coin des Enfants 1910, a work with which he obtained the title of Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum, or later 1911, again Stravinsky with Petrushka).

**E.g. 12**

The image displays nine musical examples of different chord structures, each on a grand staff (treble and bass clef). The examples are labeled as follows:

- BITONAL MAJOR CHORD:** Shows two triads, one in C major and one in F# major, played simultaneously.
- BITONAL MINOR CHORD:** Shows two triads, one in C minor and one in E minor, played simultaneously.
- WHOLE TONE CHORD:** Shows a triad of whole tones, specifically C4, D4, and E4.
- FOURTH CHORD:** Shows a triad of perfect fourths, specifically C4, F4, and Bb4.
- CHROMATICAL CHORD:** Shows a triad of chromatic thirds, specifically Bb4, D5, and F5.
- PANDIATONIC CHORD:** Shows a triad of major thirds, specifically C4, E4, and G#4.
- CLUSTER PANDIATONIC:** Shows a dense cluster of notes, including C4, E4, G#4, Bb4, D5, and F5.
- CLUSTER PENTATONIC:** Shows a dense cluster of notes, including C4, E4, G#4, Bb4, D5, and F5.
- PIRAMIDAL CHORD:** Shows a dense cluster of notes, including C4, E4, G#4, Bb4, D5, and F5.

**Different chord structures**

<sup>7</sup> Apel, Willi. *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1974, Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A., p. 637.

## 2. Harmonic aspect, parallel current generation

Making the transition, (parallel) to/with the generation of the 21st century, we find a multitude of these new constellations, complex harmonic distributions of the constituent voices, in the expression of many current jazz performers such as:

1. RUSLAN BOLATOV, representative of the current Ukrainian jazz school (Kiev), with a (re)interpretation/harmonization (2017) of the *Blue in Green*<sup>8</sup> (E.g.13) jazz standard, Miles Davies' (*Kind of Blue*) cool style composition from 1959, makes use, of such complex, extensive casts. (Transcription represents the beginning of the piece, minute 0.00-0.10.)

E.g. 13

BLUE IN GREEN

Miles Davies  
Ruslan Bolatov

**A**  
Ad libitum

### Introduction of Blue in Green

Analyzing briefly, at first glance, the wide distributive ambitus of the voices is immediately observed over the extent of 4 octaves in upward motion, compared to the previous way of the 20th century, where everything boils down, in this case, to positions with tight distributions, (left hand & write hand voicings), compact, plated/block chords<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> Bolatov, Ruslan. *Blue in Green*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BM61ZTdMUsw>

<sup>9</sup> Levine, Mark. *Jazz Piano Book*, Sher Music Co., Petaluma, California, U.S.A., 1989, p. 133.

Analyzing, measure 1 (E.g. 14), it renders an ongoing tritonus substitution in the form of arpeggio, based on the note B-flat on bottom (bass) on the left hand (for tonal consolidation the sequence of the 2 ascending quints still appears), followed by an intervallic figuration (perfect 4ths and 5ths in progressive upward movement) of the right hand, structure of the E minor range, elliptic of Vth and VIth degree (note b and note c). Starting from the fundamental, we discover the structure of the B-flat (mode) lidian (note E natural), with the VIIth degree (note A) in the bottom, as range point of view.

**E.g. 14**



### Harmonical voicing's structure

In measure 2 (E.g.15), we note the same arpeggio substitutional procedure, supported by the note a in the base line (tritonus procedure), followed by the intervallic figuration of the E-flat major range, with the minor IIth degree (note f) and the large VIIth degree (d natural) added to the right hand. Starting from the tonic, the steps of the range to the frigic (mode), elliptical of IIIth degree and with a lowered Vth degree (note E flat) stand out.

**E.g. 15**



### Voices, distributions

Measures 3-4 (E.g.16), harmonically stabilize, outlining a tonal center of the piece, through an upward-downward constructive expression of the pentatonic F range, with added major VIIth step (note E) to the right hand,



supported by the D minor 7 sus 4 chord to the left hand, a reordering of the steps, representing the natural, elliptical D minor range of the sext (note B).

**E.g. 16**



**Modal chord voicing**

2. JACOB COLLIER, another representative of the young British generation (real name Jacob Moriaty), born on 02.08.1994, in London, England. Here's a personal way to use (vocal) re-monition (E.g.17), in the introduction to the Moon River jazz standard (1961 Grammy Award-winning *Breakfast at Tiffany's* soundtrack in 1962). (transcription by June Lee<sup>10</sup> 2020, starting min. 3.37).

Modern procedures, chords with (multiple) added sounds, as follows:

**E.g. 17**

### MOON RIVER

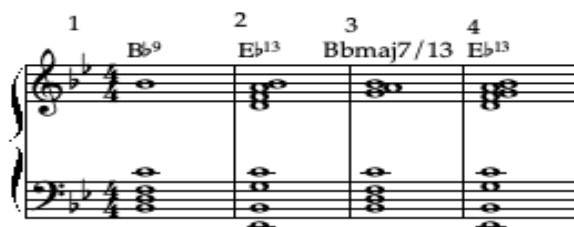
**Voicings distribution's harmonic structure**

<sup>10</sup> Collier, Jacob. *Moon River* (Transcription), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KhyyjRcm84>

# CURRENT WAYS OF MELODICAL IMPROVISATION, REVOLUTIONARY JAZZ THINKING IN THE XXI ST CENTURY

To deepen, the structural clarification of the steps used (E.g.18), the application of the procedure of harmonic reduction of the distribution of voices, in the melodic unfolding of the first 4 measures, render the following constructive constellation:

**E.g. 18**



## Harmonic reduction

Another used procedure, often found in the expression of the current harmonic context, is the involvement of false cadences, a way to think in advance, the realization of the desired harmonic tensions. Structure, color, the resulting new chains, expansion, the freedom of movement of the improvisational framework is necessary for the sound realization of the new evolutionary step. Although, in essence, the mentioned procedure does not constitute a new element, previously Schumann, Brahms, or Chopin (all), apply this method in the romantic period, the use representing an additional bridge, of the overall vision of contemporary/current jazz (complex).

A systematization (E.g.19) of some current possibilities of substitution, modern (often unpredictable) contouring of the v-I relationship, (at third-party intervals), applied in multiple situations of timbral expansion of the harmonic coloring of the contemporary/current generation, looks like this:

**E.g. 19**

A minor-D7	F# minor7- B7	3m descendant
A minor-D7	F minor7- Bb7	3M descendant
A minor-D7	Bb minor7- Eb7	2m ascendant
A minor-D7	B minor7- E7	2M ascendant
A minor-D7	C minor7- F7	3m ascendant
A minor-D7	C# minor7- F#7	3M ascendant

## V-I Extended substitutions, modern solutions

### 3. Melodic elements retrospective, evolution, current trends

If previously, we were fascinated by pianists such as:

- Oscar Peterson (thanks to his great interpretative technique, based on concert style, in the blues manner),
- Michel Petrucciani (by further implementing in addition to that of elements characteristic of blues style, bebop elements in interpretative classical expression),
- Chick Corea (through the additional, creative approach to Latino style<sup>11</sup>),
- Bill Evans (through the creative spontaneity of the big harmonic tensioned picture<sup>12</sup>),
- Herbie Hancock (through the inventiveness of developing the complex of mentioned procedures, in a double way, harmonic and melodic application), finally, we move on to a new segment of performers, made up of instrumentalists of the current period dated after 2000.

After a brief review of the “inheritance” of the melodic concept, for establishing new, derived elements, implicitly the resulting context, an analysis of the current generation is inevitable.

- Returning to the (old) same BARRY HARRIS (E.g.20), he once again makes his personal contribution to the elaboration of the melodic-improvisational lines of the bebop style, realizing by introducing the chromatic concept into the new improvisational thinking.

Thus, in personal elaboration<sup>13</sup>, between steps III-IV and VII-VIII, an upward jump is performed to the next note in the range, thus continuing the procedure, in the direction of intended movement.

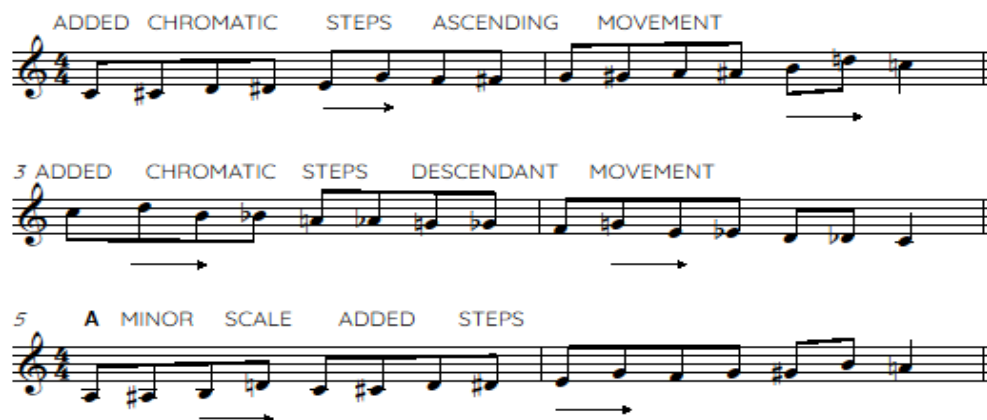
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<sup>11</sup> Fernandez, Raul. *Latin Jazz la Combination Perfécta*, Press and Society for Ethnomusicology, Vol.48, No.3, 2004, University of Illinois, Chicago, pp. 469-473.

<sup>12</sup> Reilly, Jack. *The Harmony of Bill Evans*, Unichrom Ltd., 1992, Brooklyn, New York, U.S.A., p. 4-31

<sup>13</sup> Rees, Howard. *The Barry Harris Workshop*, Jazz Workshop Productions, 2004, New York, N.Y.U., Artists House Foundation, p. 3.

E.g. 20

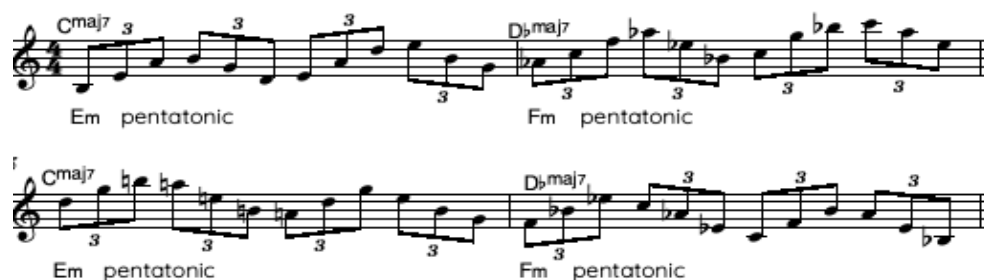


**Added chromatic notes ascending/ descendant motion**

Deepening the previous harmonic procedure of false cadence, in the next step, an absolutely new interval-melodic thinking is outlined (Ex.21a/b), by compiling and transposing (at the same IIIrd and IVth interval construction) the unfolding of pentatonic structures, starting from their different steps.

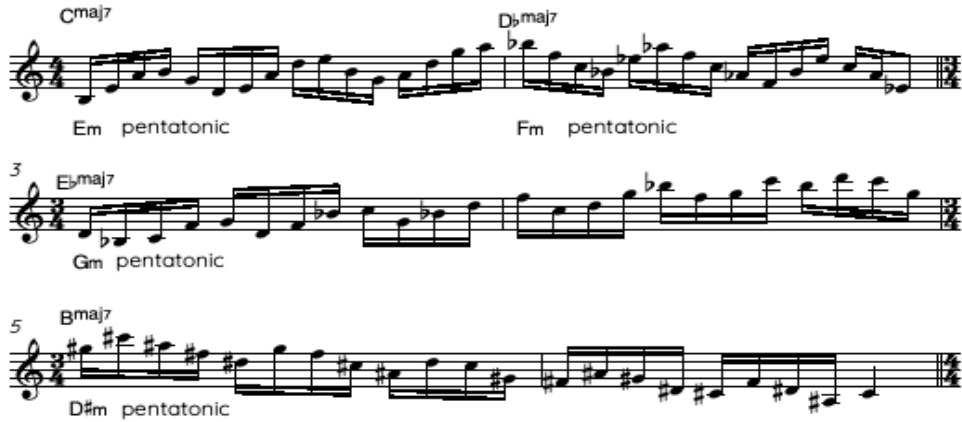
**Pentatonic variations, multiple forms of unfolding**

E.g. 21a



**Pentatonic structures**

E.g. 21b



Extended pentatonic structures

#### 4. Constructive melodic principles of modern improvisational topics

The modern topic of improvisational organization is an active characteristic of the creative phenomenon. One of the current, conclusive concepts, founder of a broad systematization of the construction of improvisational lines (in classical, jazz) is realized, analyzed by Nicolas Slonimsky.

The great orchestrator and composer himself, Quincy Jones<sup>14</sup>, said in a February 2018 interview that „I can imagine that all the material used by saxophonist John Coltrane, in improvisational expression, is found here, with ease”.

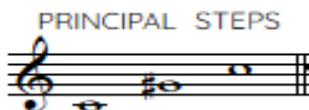
As an initiation procedure (E.g.22), it applies to the classical diatonic structure, a division into:

<sup>14</sup> Marchese, David. *In Conversation: Quincy Jones*, Vulture, 7 February 2018  
**Yeah, he was famously obsessed with the *Thesaurus of Scales and Melodic Patterns*. That's the one you're talking about, right?**  
 „That's right. You're bringing up all the good subjects now! Everything that Coltrane ever played was in that thesaurus. In fact, right near the front of that book, there's a 12-tone example — it's "Giant Steps." Everyone thinks Coltrane wrote that, he didn't. It's Slonimsky. That book started all the jazz guys improvising in 12-tone. Coltrane carried that book around till the pages fell off. “

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- 2 equal parts as follows:

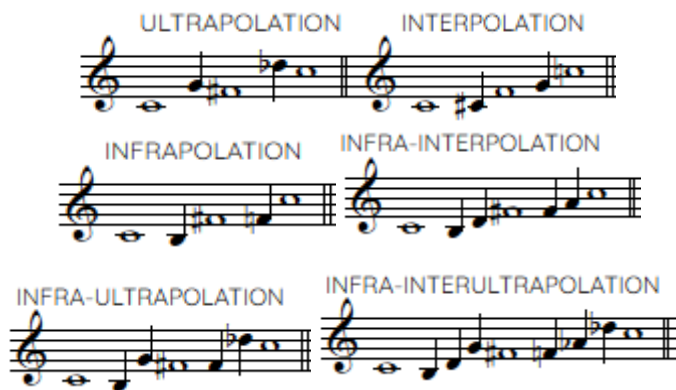
**E.g. 22**



**Principal steps division**

Particularly ingenious methods (E.g.23), relating to the drafting and constructive systematization of the main steps (according to the pattern of said division), are applied by the procedures of ultra, inter, infra, infra-inter-polar, as follows:

**E.g. 23**



**Main division with variations**

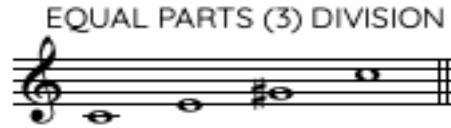
By applying the stated procedure, the following (possible) solutions for expression, 161 intervallic construction of melodic-improvisational lines, previously applied, first especially in the field of classical music, result.

Melodic examples (E.g.24a/b) resulting from the use of the method:

**E.g. 24a**



**Melodical line**



- Additional possibility of dividing the range into 3 equal segments (major third, G# - C, enharmonic evaluation).

E.g. 24b



### Melodic intervallic line

Following this new division, the following possibilities (E.g.25) for the elaboration of the melodic line result:

E.g. 25



### New division possibility

- Additional way of dividing into 4 equal segments (minor 3rds, enharmonic statement) of the diatonic tonal frame.

E.g. 26



### Division, new visions

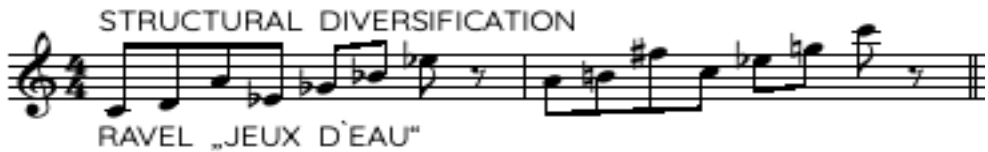
The next examples, E.g. 27a/b, previously applied in classical creation after the new structuring:

E.g. 27a



**Melodic Line**

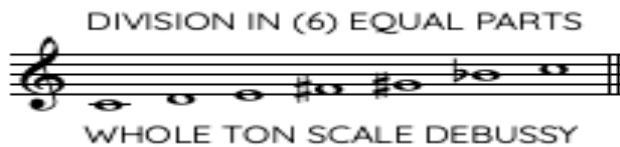
E.g. 27b



**Principal Melodic Line**

- Additional 6-part division (E.g.28) variant of the diatonic tonal frame (major ascending lls, in enharmonic treatment)

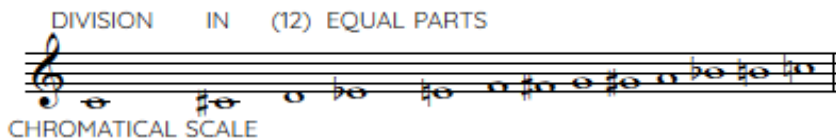
E.g. 28



**New division possibilities**

The additional variant (E.g.29) of splitting into 12 equal parts (minor lls, upward chromatic movement)

E.g. 29



**Division structure**

Creative possibilities (E.g.30), resulting from the new succession, divisions:



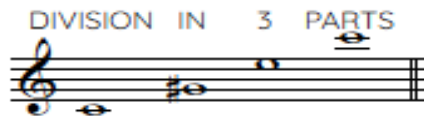
E.g. 30



### Imitations

- Structured division (E.g.31) on a broad tonal scroll (minor VIth, in enharmonic expression) on the ambitus of two octaves.

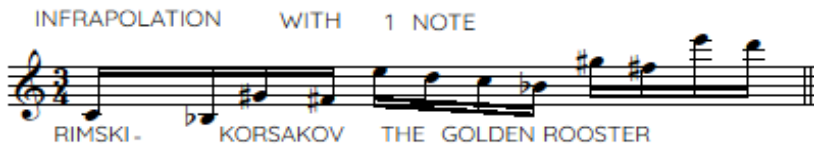
E.g. 31



### Equal divisions

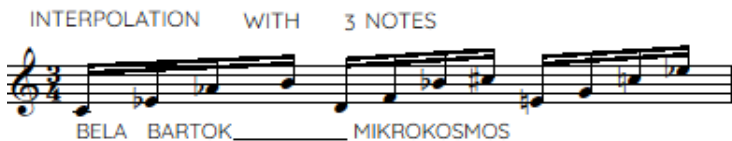
Different melodic expressions (E.g.32) resulting from the contemporary classical creational field:

E.g. 32a



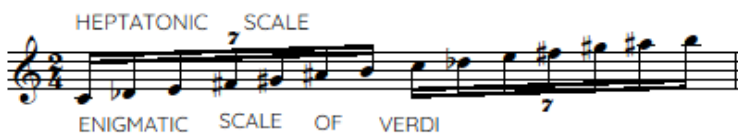
### Melodic line

E.g. 32b



### New melodic line

E.g. 32c



### Compositional ideas

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E.g. 32d



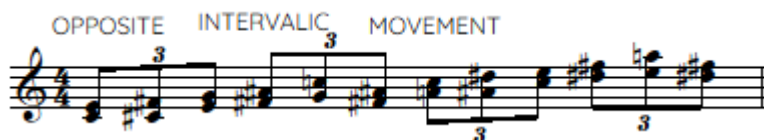
Arpeggios structure

E.g. 32e



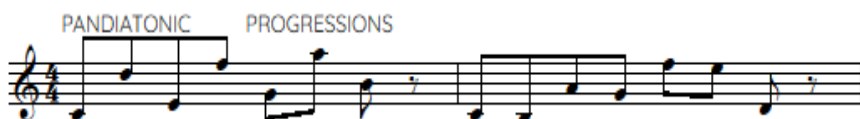
Dodecaphony structures

E.g. 32f



Voicings movement

E.g. 32g



Modern progressions

### Final conclusions

An enumeration of new elements, specific to the current generation, are represented by:

- emergence of motives in the form of progressions on different steps,
- broadening, premeditated extension of improvisational tonal framework,

- the emergence of exotic stairs or ranges, as an improvisational constructive way
- broad harmonic unfolding, spanning 5/6 octaves (of the piano)
- implementation of transient harmonies (passing chords, modal interchange),
- precipitation of melodic-harmonic cumulation,
- precipitation of rhythmic cumulation.

The long history of pianistic jazz that starts with the ragtime style, knows different intermediate stages and now reaches, (21st century), a difficult phase of development.

Through their pioneering work, a lot of pianists contribute to the crystallization of different interpretive styles, the keyboard instrument thus becoming a basic component of expression in the contemporary evolution of jazz.

However, comparing its beginnings, where several established performers could stand out for each style, we now reach the stage where there are only a multitude of variations and not directly indisputably represented of a style, current, or a new direction of creativity!

Contemporary pianists present, through their own interpretive manner, a particularly high level, regarding the technical, harmonic, inventive-interpretive, expressive aspect, etc., *but none of them can be listed as a promoter of a new style, namely, of a new era in the history of jazz!*

- It would certainly be a mistake to list a single performer, as superior to his other peers, decisive for the tie-breaker, in this case, it is certainly the degree of popularity, due to record sales, live or multimedia appearances, essentially this aspect having absolutely nothing in common with the value, musical, artistic substance, of the act issued (on stage)!

- Jazz is a timely, unexpected infusion of musical material. Jazz has discovered in music a particular expressive sphere, foreign to the multi-secular European experience.

- Jazz provides spontaneous access to living and involvement, often without even possessing the basic academic knowledge of the subject, supporting the idea of improvisational flow, as a basic compositional method.

- Jazz represents the logical continuation, at another level of propagation, of the fusion of the genres of the music of the popular masses, implicitly of a popular culture, fitting perfectly into the democratic status, both United States and in Europe, as an expression of freedom and social unrestrained.

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## SCORES OF A FOLKSONG: FROM COLLECTION TO MUSIC TEXTBOOKS

ILDIKÓ PINTÉR-KERESZTES<sup>1</sup> 

**SUMMARY.** In my study, I follow the notational journey of the folk song *Ablakomba, ablakomba besütött a holdvilág*, collected by Béla Bartók. While attending music lessons I experienced that several versions of this folksong were being taught in the lessons. The most striking difference appears in the melody of the third line of the folk song, which may have several reasons. In addition to presumed problems with musical memory and intonation, there are also errors in notation. This paper aims to explore these failures and their causes, with a view to using the research findings to benefit public education. For this reason, I considered it necessary to investigate the circumstances of folk song collection in terms of folk music recordings, sheet music and text published by the Institute of Musicology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Starting from the collection, the arrangement by Bartók is studied first. Then the scores found in music textbooks are interpreted in chronological order, from the version published in the book entitled *Iskolai énekgyűjtemény*<sup>2</sup> to the textbook version found in *Ének-zene 12*.<sup>3</sup> I will also try to explain the melodic and metrical differences in the textbooks, as well as the second and further verses.

**Keywords:** folksong, collection, music, score, textbook

### Collecting folk songs

This folk song was collected by Béla Bartók in Tura, in August 1906. I first listened to the recording, and was most interested in the third line of the folk song, especially from a melodic point of view. As a starting point for

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<sup>2</sup> Kodály, Zoltán & Kerényi, György. *Iskolai énekgyűjtemény II. 11-14 éves tanulóknek (School song collection II. for 11-14 year old pupils)*, Országos Köznevelési Tanács, Budapest, 1944.

<sup>3</sup> Tapodi, Attila. *Ének-zene 12 (Music 12th)*, Oktatási Hivatal, Budapest, 2020.



my analysis, I took the folk song 1392c (1), numbered according to the Bartók order. For the sake of simplicity, I will use relative solmization in the following. Accordingly, in the third line of the folk song, the solmization of the third bar: lah-fah-ray-fah. This is the melodic turn which appears in some places as a different melodic motive, lah-me-ray-fah, in some textbooks and in teaching. However, the subject of my research has broadened, thanks to further melodic, rhythmic and textual differences.

### Bartók's arrangement of the folk song

Bartók's arrangement of the folk song can be found in Hungarian Folk Songs for Voice with Piano Accompaniment, No. 6. The volume was published in 1906 and contains arrangements of ten folk songs by Bartók and Kodály. The following musical notation (E.g. 1) shows the arrangement of the third line of the folk song. The music sample in this study is based on the digitally available version of the publication published by the Károly Rozsnyai Book and Music Publishing Office in 1906, using a music editing software.

E.g. 1

**Magyar népdalok**  
6. Bartók Béla

Lám én csak e - gyet sze - re - tek,  
még - is de so - kat szen - ve - dek,

**Bartók – Kodály: 10 Hungarian Folk Songs  
for voice and piano, 6., bars 7-14.**

The first noticeable and audible difference is the metre of the folk song with piano accompaniment, which is emphasized in several places because of the 2/4. This fact is particularly noteworthy, because in Jenő Ádám's book it is the observation of the change of metre that has a methodological role.<sup>4</sup> Two excerpts from the foreword of the publication are as follows:

"Whether [the folk song is], arranged for choir or piano, the accompaniment should always seek only to replace the lost field and village. And the popular edition should not fall short of the full edition in terms of the authenticity of the melodies."

"We did it with a view to the local conditions, that the melody is also present in the accompaniment. We will not always insist on this in future booklets. When they are published depends on the outcome of the collection. After all, we are giving you something to sing, not to play the piano."<sup>5</sup>

The sentence concerning the authenticity of the melodies implies that the folk songs are accurately conveyed, thus excluding the possibility of altering the melodic tone. Perhaps the reference to "local conditions" refers to the fact that it is easier for a singer to perform a folk song if he hears it at the same pitch. If this is what the composers had in mind, then the piano part partly acts as an intonation aid.

Taking all this into account, the harmonisation of the third line of the folk song raises the question of why the second syllable of the word "mégis" is a me solfa note (g - in g - brackets I indicate the absolute pitch). Based on the principles described in the preface to the publication, it would have been reasonable for Bartók to preserve the lah-fah major third turn (C'-A flat') heard in the folk song collection, since the bass note (A flat) is reinforced even in octave. However, in the upper part of the piano, the note me (g') is observed as a melody note. As a result, in bar 5 of the example, the chord of E-flat major IV7 is heard, followed by II2 and VII7 in bar 6. So in contrast to the lah-fah-ray-fah turn described by the folk song, which could be exhausted either by the use of II2 or VII7 harmony, Bartók adds and gives meaning to the me sound by using IV7.

<sup>4</sup> Ádám, Jenő. *Módszeres énektanítás a relatív szolmizáció alapján (Methodical teaching of music based on relative solmization)*, Turul, Budapest, 1944, p. 196.

<sup>5</sup> *Magyar Népdalok Énekhangra zongorakísérettel*. Közlik Bartók Béla 1-10, Kodály Zoltán 11-20. Rozsnyai Károly könyv- és zeneműkiadóhivatala, Budapest, 1906, p. 5.



## Folk song in music textbooks

In this study I present the folk song using the textbooks that are available to me. I have dealt with the textbooks in chronological order in terms of tracing the path of the publication of the musical notations. In the case of some publications, it was necessary to provide detailed comments on what was seen in the book, which can be found below. Other publications are presented in a summary table at the end of the study, giving an overview of the aspects analysed.

### **Zoltán Kodály - György Kerényi: *School Song Collection I-II* (1944)**

The background to the compilation of the collection can be read, among other things, in Lilla Gábor's *In the Footsteps of Kodály's Pedagogy: the Reminiscences of Lajos Bárdos, Jenő Ádám, György Kerényi and Irma Bors* (Gábor, 1981).

Extract from the study:

“What was the role of Professor in the birth of the School Songbook published in 1943-44?

– In 1940, a state committee chaired by teacher Bruno Balassa met to discuss the publication of an official school textbook. Kodály also attended the meeting. Even though I had just finished the manuscript of the textbook for the eighth grades, I spoke up out of respect for Kodály and suggested that we ask Kodály first of all if he would be willing to edit the textbook. Kodály said yes, and I then took my above-mentioned eight-grade arrangement to him.

We used it to edit the School Songbook. The five appendices were added by Kodály. These are entitled: Religious Songs, Canon Songs, Historical Songs, Songs of the 19th Century, Songs of Other Nations [a) Our Neighbours, b) Our Linguistic Relatives].”

We can assume from the source that György Kerényi had already completed the selection of folk songs and that Kodály had a role in editing the textbook. This is indicated by the note on the inside cover: ‘This collection was prepared with the collaboration of György Kerényi’.<sup>6</sup> It is difficult to determine

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<sup>6</sup> Kodály, Zoltán & Kerényi, György. *Iskolai énekegyűjtemény II. 11-14 éves tanulónak (School song collection II. for 11-14 year old pupils)*, Országos Köznevelési Tanács, Budapest, 1944.

which of them suggested including the folk song *Ablakomba*, *ablakomba* in the second volume of the *School Songbook* and whether it was intentionally changed. It is also not known whether the folk song collected by Bartók or the one already arranged was included in the publication. It can be seen that, compared to the melody first recorded by Bartók, there is a melodic difference in the third bar of the third line: the turn is no longer lah-fah-ray-fah, but lah-me-ray-fah.

Due to the condition of the publication available to me, I have created the inserted musical notation myself using a computer music editing program, faithfully retaining all musical notation (E.g. 2).

E.g. 2

341.

Lépést  $\text{♩} = 80$

Ab-la-kom-ba, ab-la-kom-ba be-sü-tött a hold-vi-lág,  
A-ki ket-tőt, hár-mat sze-ret, so' sincs ar-ra jó vi-lág.

Lám én csakegy-gyet sze-re-tek, még-is de so-kat szen-ve-dek.

Ez az ál-nok bé-res-le-gény csal-ta meg a szí-ve-met.

**The first picture of the musical notation in the textbook  
Based on Kodály – Kerényi, 1944**

**e and ë**

In Volume II of the *School Songbook*, both vowels occur in the text of the folk song. However, modern music notation does not make it possible to display the *ë* vowel, so I have listed the text of the folk song independently of the music (Table 1).

Table 1

School Songbook II. (Kodály – Kerényi)	Bartók's collection (Bartók)
Ablakomba, ablakomba besütött a holdvilág, Aki kettőt, hármat szeret, so'sincs arra jó világ. Lám én csak egyet szeretek, mégis de sokat szenvedek. Ez az álnok béréslegény csalta még a szívemet.	Ablakimba, ablakimba besütött a holdvilág, Aki kettőt-hármat szeret, sosincs arra jóvilág. Ládd, én csak egyet szeretek, mégis de sokat szenvedek; Ez az álnok béréslegény csalta még a szívemet.

### The appearance of e and ě in the text

There are some differences between the Bartók and the School Songbook texts, probably due to the spelling rules of the time (so'sincs; egyet; szívemet), whereas the use of the words "ablakimba" and "ládd" is the result of the transcriber. Bartók added the word "nincsen" under the word "sosincs" to the score he wrote during the collection.

### Zoltán Kodály - Lajos Vargyas: *Hungarian Folk Music*<sup>7</sup>

Although the publication is not a music textbook, its widespread use in education makes it indispensable. The notation of the folk song in this book is extremely interesting. In the melody of the third line, we find the lah-me-ray-fah turn, but the question of the written metre is much more exciting. I have already pointed out that it is the metrical changes in Jenő Ádám that are of methodological importance in this folk song. In the 1952 edition of the book, the written metre is 4/4, but the time signature differs from this, since there are four beats per line, not three. The vertical lines represent the bar lines shown in the score:

Ablakomba, / ablakomba / besütött a / holdvilág. /  
Aki kettőt, / hármat szeret, / nincsen arra / jó világ. /  
Lám én csak e- / gyet szeretek, / mégis de so- / kat szenvedek, /  
Ez az álnok / bérés legény / csalta meg a / szívemet. //<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Kodály, Zoltán and Vargyas, Lajos. *A magyar népzene (Hungarian folk music)*, Zeneműkiadó, Budapest, 1952.

<sup>8</sup> Kodály, Zoltán and Vargyas, Lajos. *A magyar népzene (Hungarian folk music)*, Zeneműkiadó, Budapest, 1952, p. 268.

## The second verse

There are different ways to encounter the second verse of the folk song. In Bartók's collection, the second stanza appears in the following form:

Bicske felül /: tornyosodik :/ a felhő,  
 /: Szaladj kis lány :/ mer megmos a nagy eső!  
 – /: Nem szaladok :/, maj szaladok, ha megázok, –  
 Kishangácson, Nagyhangácson szeretőre talállok.

In Bartók's arrangement and in the School Songbook there is no second verse. This fact may suggest that Kerényi and Kodály based the compilation of the School Songbook on Bartók's arrangement, not on the collection. This is also indicated by the identity of the tempo marking, which reads "Step".

## The appearance of the second verse in music textbooks

The textbook *Singing-Music 6* (MS-2456, 8th edition) of the series *Muzsikáló nagyvilág* [*The World of Music*] is based on the 2007 National Curriculum, written by Katalin Király. The second verse of the folk song *Ablakomba, ablakomba...* in this book differs from the one collected by Bartók, despite the fact that the author of the textbook refers to the folk song collected in Tura. The inserted text most probably originates from the choral work *Szeged felől*, published in 1960 by Lajos Bárdos, who adapted a folk song for mixed choir from a collection by Sándor Bálint. It was the second verse that the author added to the folk song that made me start researching the origin of the second verse of the folk song.

The folk song collected by Sándor Bálint can be found in Katalin Paksa's monograph entitled *A szögedi nemzet zenéje*. The folk song, collected in Szeged in 1931, is a single verse, and has several melodic similarities with Bartók's collection. The strophic structure of the two folk songs (AABA), the notated metrical changes and the cadence are identical. The end of the A line of the two folk songs is identical except for the first note of the second bar, and the two notes are reversed. The first half of the B folk song is the same, but after that there is considerable change. It is therefore probable that the song is a variant of the folk song *Ablakomba, ablakomba...* (E.g. 3).

253.

♩ = 104

Szö-ged fe-lől, Szö-ged fe-lől gyün egy fe-ke-te fel-hő,  
Si-ess kis-lány, si-ess kis-lány, mer mög-ver egy nagy e-ső.  
Nem si-e-tők o-lyan nagyon, fáj a szí-ve-m, sa-jog nagyon,  
Most tu-dom mán, mi-ér sa-jog: a sze-re-tóm el-há-gyott.

Szeged, Balogh Anna Bálint, 1931.

**The folk song collected by Sándor Bálint**  
**Source: Paksa, 1980, p. 284.**

In the table below, I have listed the texts of the folk songs side by side, based on the collection of Sándor Bálint, the choral work of Lajos Bárdos and the textbook of Katalin Király (Table 2).

**Table 2**

Collection of Sándor Bálint	Choral work by Lajos Bárdos	Textbook of Katalin Király
Szöged felől, Szöged felől gyün egy fekete felhő,  Siess kislány, siess kislány, mer mögver egy nagy eső. Nem sietők olyan nagyon, fáj a szívem, sajog nagyon, Most tudom mán, miér sajog: a szeretőm elhagyott.	Szeged felől, Szeged felől jön egy fekete felhő.  Siess kislány, siess kislány, mer megver egy nagy eső. Nem sietek olyan nagyon, fáj a szívem, sajjog nagyon Most tudom már, miért sajog, a <i>galambom</i> elhagyott.	Szeged felől, Szeged felől jön egy fekete felhő,  <i>Szaladj</i> kislány, <i>szaladj</i> kislány, mert megver a nagy eső. Nem <i>szaladok</i> olyan nagyon, fáj a szívem, sajog nagyon, Most tudom már, miért sajog: <i>elhagyott a</i> <i>galambom</i> .

**Changes in the lyrics of the folk song**

Of the textbooks I have studied, only the first stanza is mentioned in (Bartók, 1906)<sup>9</sup>, (Kodály & Kerényi, 1944)<sup>10</sup>, (Kodály & Vargyas, 1952)<sup>11</sup>.

The second stanza can be found in the following music textbooks: (Némethné, 1997<sup>12</sup> and 2002), (Pécsi and Uzsálné, 2001)<sup>13</sup>, (Sóvágó, 2002)<sup>14</sup>, (Riznerné and Ördög, 2003, 2014)<sup>15</sup>, Kéry and Kéryné (2007)<sup>16</sup>, Király (2014)<sup>17</sup>, Tapodi (2020)<sup>18</sup>. It should be noted, however, that the Kéry-Kéryné textbook also contains further verses.

Ha bemegyek, ha bemegyek a baracsi csárdába,  
cifranyelű kis bicskámát vágoma gerendába.  
Aki legény, az vegye ki, aki bátor, az teheti,  
még az éjjel zsandárvérrel írom én a nevem ki!

Szalontai kertek alatt nyergelik a lovamat,  
szalontai kertek alatt ölelik a babámat.  
A lovamat más nyergeli, szép a babám, más öleli,  
az én kedves kisangyalom ne ölelgesse senki!<sup>19</sup>

<sup>9</sup> *Magyar Népdalok Énekhangra zongorakísérettel*. Közlök Bartók Béla 1-10, Kodály Zoltán 11-20. Rozsnyai Károly könyv- és zeneműkiadóhivatala, Budapest, 1906. Magyar népdalok, Sz.33 (Bartók, Béla) - IMSLP [accessed on 01. 26. 2023]

<sup>10</sup> Kodály, Zoltán and Kerényi, György. Iskolai énekgyűjtemény II. 11-14 éves tanulóknak (School song collection II. for 11-14 year old pupils), Országos Köznevelési Tanács, Budapest, 1944.

<sup>11</sup> Kodály, Zoltán and Vargyas, Lajos. A magyar népzene (Hungarian folk music), Zeneműkiadó, Budapest, 1952.

<sup>12</sup> Németh, Endréné. Hatodik daloskönyvem (My music 6th grade), Apáczai Kiadó, Budapest, 1997.

<sup>13</sup> Pécsi, Géza and Uzsálné Pécsi, Rita. Énektár 2. A Kulcs a muzsikához c. tankönyv melléklete (Song collection 2. Appendix for textbook Key for music), Kulcs a muzsikához Kiadó, Pécs, 2001.

<sup>14</sup> Sóvágó, Edit. *Ének-zene 9-10. osztály munkáltató tankönyv (Music 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade textbook)*, Pedellus Novitas Kft., Debrecen, 2002.

<sup>15</sup> Riznerné Kékesi, Mária and Ördög, László. *Ének-zene az általános iskola 6. évfolyama számára (Music for primary school grade 6)*, Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó, Budapest, 2003.

<sup>16</sup> Kéry, Mihály and Kéryné Mészáros, Mária. *Ének-zene 10. osztály (Music 10<sup>th</sup> grade)*, Pedellus Tankönyvkiadó Kft., Debrecen, 2007.

<sup>17</sup> Király, Katalin. *Ének-zene 6. osztály (Music 6<sup>th</sup> grade)*, Mozaik Kiadó, Szeged, 2014. kodalyhub.hu/kodaly-kovetoi [accessed on 01. 28. 2023]

<sup>18</sup> Tapodi, Attila. *Ének-zene 12 (Music 12<sup>th</sup>)*, Oktatási Hivatal, Budapest, 2020.

<sup>19</sup> Kéry, Mihály and Kéryné Mészáros, Mária. *Ének-zene 10. osztály (Music 10<sup>th</sup> grade)*, Pedellus Tankönyvkiadó Kft., Debrecen, 2007, p. 150.

The stanza beginning *Ha bemegyek...* can also be found in Bartók's collection - marked c) - but the authors of the textbook have altered the end of the last line, presumably to make up for the rhyme they felt was missing. The last line Bartók recorded: "*még az éjjel zsandárvérrel írom ki a nevemet.*"

### **Metres written out**

The marking of the alternating meter does not appear in the same way in the publications studied. In addition to the Kodály-Vargyas book, the two books by Mrs. Németh can be considered as errors, in which the editor lists the meter numbers at the beginning of the first line in the order 4/4 2/4, i.e. musically just the other way round. In the Kéry-Kéryné textbook, no meter is indicated, but the division of the bars follows the division shown in the collection.

As in the collection, the Kodály-Kerényi book and the Tapodi book show the change of meter written out bar by bar. The other textbooks (Pécsi and Uzsalyné, Sóvágó, Rizsneré and Ördög, Király) uniformly list the meter numbers in the first line in the order 2/4 4/4.

### **References in music textbooks**

The name of the collector (Béla Bartók) and the place of collection (Tura, or Pest County) are mentioned by the authors of the textbooks, only the name of Béla Bartók is omitted from the Tapodi book. The Pécsi & Uzsalyné and Sóvágó textbooks refer to Pál Járdányi's publication entitled *Hungarian Folk Song Types*, while the Kéry & Kéryné book refers to the 6th grade. The obvious explanation for this might be that the folk song was included in the *Repetitive Singing* section of the textbook for 10th graders.

However, the authors who refer to the Járdányi book did not publish the folk song contained in that book. I have notated the folk song as shown in the book, missing the meter number, the clef and the key signature from the second stave onwards. In addition to the difference in melody, the second verse of the folk song also differs from the folk songs included in the textbooks (E.g. 4).

E.g. 4

**Moderato**  
*l.*



Ab - la - kom - ba, ab - la - kom - ba be - sü - tött a hold - vi - lág,  
A - ki ket - tőt - hár - mat sze - ret, so - sincs ar - ra jó vi - lág.  
Lám, én csak egy - gyet sze - re - tek, még - is de so - kat szen - ve - dek,  
Ez az ál - nok bé - res - le - gény csal - ta meg a szí - ve - met.

**The folk song in Járdányi's book  
Based on Járdányi 1961**

In the table below, the various recordings of the folk song are summarised according to the aspects covered in the study. Following the list of publications, the melodic pattern in the third line of the folk song is indicated, followed by the beginning of the second verse, then the written metre number and finally the reference (Table 3).



Table 3

Publication	Melody of line 3	Stanza 2	Indicated metric number	Reference
Bartók's collection	lah-fah-ray-fah	Bicske felül...	bar by bar	-
Bartók, 1906	lah-me-ray-fah	-	2/4	-
Kodály – Kerényi, 1944	lah-me-ray-fah	-	bar by bar	Tura (Pest) B. B. Song and piano: Bartók and Kodály, Hungarian folksongs, 6.
Kodály – Vargyas, 1952	lah-me-ray-fah	-	4/4	Tura (Pest) Bartók Béla
Némethné, 1997	lah-me-ray-fah	Szeged felől...	at the beginning of the first line 4/4 and 2/4	Tura (Pest) Bartók Béla
Némethné, 2002	lah-me-ray-fah	Szeged felől...	at the beginning of the first line 4/4 and 2/4	Tura (Pest) Bartók Béla
Pécsi – Uzsálné, 2001	lah-me-ray-fah	Szeged felől...	at the beginning of the first line 2/4 and 4/4	Járdányi Pál: Types of hungarian folksongs I-III.
Sóvágó, 2002	lah-me-ray-fah	Szeged felől...	at the beginning of the first line 2/4 and 4/4	Járdányi Pál: Types of hungarian folksongs
Riznerné – Ördög, 2003, 2014	lah-me-ray-fah	Szeged felől...	at the beginning of the first line 2/4 and 4/4	Tura (Pest) Bartók Béla
Kéry – Kéryné, 2007	lah-fah-ray-fah	Szeged felől... further two stanzas	-	- refers to the 6th grade

Publication	Melody of line 3	Stanza 2	Indicated metric number	Reference
Király, 2014	lah-fah-ray-fah	Szeged felől...	at the beginning of the first line 2/4 and 4/4	Tura (Pest) Bartók Béla
Tapodi, 2020	lah-fah-ray-fah	Szeged felől...	bar by bar	Tura (Pest)

### A summary of the publications examined

Looking at the table, it can be seen that the melodic turn of the third line has been established as a lah-me-ray-fah melody for a long time after Bartók's arrangement. From these two conclusions can be drawn: 1. the Kodály-Kerényi publication served as the basis for the textbook, whose authors mentioned Bartók's work in addition to the collection among the references; 2. the authors of several publications relied on Bartók's arrangements instead of the collection. The turn found in the collection occurs later only in the books by Kéry and Kéryné, Király and Tapodi. It is then necessary to compare the melodic turns and the references, from which it can be seen that there is no clear correlation between them. The majority of textbook authors refer to the collection, but do not present the melody accordingly. The comments on the number of metrics prescribed were made in an earlier section of the study.

As for the second stanza, it should be noted that it was not included in Bartók's arrangement. It is likely that this is the reason for the missing second stanza in two works (Kodály & Kerényi, 1944, and Kodály & Vargyas, 1952). Subsequently, in 1960, Bárdos composed his work for mixed choir - as mentioned earlier - which may have had an influence on the second stanzas in the vocal music textbooks.

### Conclusions

The study of the folk song "Ablakomba, ablakomba..." started by the experience of attending singing and music lessons. Originally, I planned to approach it from a methodological point of view, but the increasingly diversified research drew my attention to the diversity of the folk song recordings, so I felt that before I could address the methodological aspects and approach, I needed

to trace the development of the folk song musical score. In this way, the collection of Bartók, Bartók's arrangement, as well as the various melodies, second verse, meter and reference appearing in the vocal music textbooks were examined. Regarding the different notations of the folk song, the issue of tempo markings and rhythmic variations could be further researched. Especially surprising and thought-provoking to me is the fact that the folk song is not included in any of the upper-level vocal music textbooks, so it is up to the vocal music teacher to make sure that his or her students are introduced to it at all.

I tried to find out the reason for the different versions and recordings, but at the same time I was astonished to find that Bartók himself had changed the third melody line. I do not think that teachers of vocal music can be expected to explore the evolution of a folk song in such depth. I hope that they will have the opportunity and the motivation to read studies that will draw their attention to a critical approach to the content of textbooks. If these are not available, they teach their pupils according to the singing and music textbooks available to them. That raises the question of the responsibility of textbook authors. If the name of the folksong collector and the place of collection are mentioned, they should indeed be "only from pure sources". In this respect, the two extremes are represented by Katalin Király's book, which on the one hand faithfully follows Bartók's collection of melodic sounds, but on the other hand misleads with its second stanza and the photograph of the sunlit window.

Towards the end of my work, I came up with the idea of writing another paper, which will focus on the methodological relevance of this research and the practical use of the analysis in public education.

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## THE ROLE OF MUSICAL CONSTRUCTION IN APPROACHING AND RENDERING OF OP. 52 *LIEBESLIEDER-WALZER* BY JOHANNES BRAHMS

CIPRIAN PARA<sup>1</sup> 

**SUMMARY.** In this article, I have outlined several aspects related to the musical structure and the conducting approach to the Brahms work for its interpretation. We adapted our interpretive concept to what the waltz means, and in the 18 pieces written in ternary meter, I presented some rhythmical-melodic formulas specific to the waltz. A specific aspect of Brahms's music was the use of hemiolas, both in the vocal/choral part and in the piano accompaniment, which do not disrupt the flow of the musical discourse. In this regard, I proposed my own scheme for the articulation of each piece among the 18 waltzes, constituting an important element of my interpretative vision.

**Keywords:** Brahms, Waltzes, Love Songs, Musical Construction, Conducting Approach

### Motto

*"If you have a good voice, do not hesitate  
for a moment to cultivate it,  
considering it the most beautiful  
gift that nature has given you."*

Robert Schumann

### Introduction

The cycle "Liebeslieder-Walzer" op. 52 by Johannes Brahms contains 18 waltzes and it is a masterpiece of the repertoire for voices with piano accompaniment (for four hands) combining the lyricism and expressiveness of the German lied with the rhythm of the Viennese waltz.

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The vocal creation of Brahms occupies an important place, along with the symphonic and chamber works, both in terms of its consistency as well as its quality and beauty. Brahmsian Lieds, choruses and vocal-symphonic works stand out as great achievements of the Romantic era.

### **Presentation of the conductor's concept<sup>2</sup>**

The author's original manuscript, which is in the possession of the "Friends of Music" Society in Vienna, has no title, no motto, and no date to indicate when it was composed.

The first edition was released in October 1869 under the title *Liebeslieder. Waltz for the Pianoforte zu vier Händen und Gesang ad libitum* op. 52 composed by Johannes Brahms; published by and property of N. Simrock in Berlin. In the original work there is a different sequence of waltzes than in the first edition: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, 7, 9, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 16:

1. Rede, Mädchen, allzu liebes (Tell me, my sweetest girl)
2. Am Gesteine rauscht die Flut (The wildly lashed waves)
3. O, die Frauen (O women, o women)
4. Wie des Abends schöne Röte (Like a lovely sunset)
5. Die grüne Hopfenranke (The green tendrils of the vine)
6. Ein kleiner, hübscher Vogel (A pretty little bird)
7. Wohl schön bewandt war es (All seemed rosy)
8. Wenn so lind dein Auge mir (When you gaze at me so tenderly)
9. Am Donaustrande (On the Danube's shore)
10. O, wie sanft die Quelle (Ah, how gently the stream)
11. Nein, es ist nicht auszukommen (No, it is not possible)
12. Schlosser auf, und mache Schlösser (Locksmith, come, make me padlocks)
13. Vögelein durchrauscht die Luft (A little bird flies through the skies)
14. Sieh', wie ist die Welle klar (See how clear the waves are)
15. Nachtigall, sie singt so schön (The nightingale sings so sweetly)
16. Ein dunkeler Schacht ist Liebe (Love is a dark pit)
17. Nicht wandle, mein Licht (Do not wander, my love)
18. Es bebet das Gesträuche (The foliage trembles).

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<sup>2</sup> Para, Ciprian, *Conceptia interpretativă în demersul dirijoral (Interpretive Concept in the Conducting Approach)*, Editura Media Musica, Cluj-Napoca, 2015, p. 34.

The first page of the opus displays the indication Waltz on the verses of poet Georg Friedrich Daumer extracted from the volume "Polydora". On this poetic background Brahms created a music vibrating with hope, a music of dance, youth and love. The 18 vocal miniatures were composed by Brahms in the summer of 1869 in Lichtenthal overwhelmed by the thrill of love for Iulia Schumann, the daughter of old friends: Robert and Clara Schumann.

The first audition of these waltzes took place in Vienna on January 5, 1870.

Each waltz has a focused topic about the joys or sorrows of love. Although each piece is well individualized, there is an overall unity of the cycle due to the expressive resonance detectable between certain numbers (we will return to this resonance throughout the work).

Before moving on to a thorough analysis, we point out the fact that the pieces of the cycle alternate between a more settled tempo of an effective ternary movement (ländler) and a more moving tempo characteristic to the alert waltz which involves the concentration of the beats in 1 (the Viennese waltz). Another observation is that on the one hand in these waltzes we find echoes of the lyrics of the Schumannian lied, and on the other hand the brilliance of the Viennese waltz of Johann Strauss the son (1825-1899) contemporary with Brahms.<sup>3</sup>

From the conductor's perspective, the interpretation of these waltzes requires a deep understanding of the balance between the voices and the pianistic accompaniment, the choice of the appropriate tempo according to the character of each waltz, the subtle agogics, the expressivity of the poetic texts, the highlighting of the hemiolas, a varied and contrasting dynamic, flexibility in exchange for rigidity in the interpretation, etc.<sup>4</sup>

Coming back to the title, which is called **Love Songs** and the subtitle **Waltzes for piano for four hands and voices ad libitum**, we are morally obliged to ground our interpretive conception in what the waltz actually means. Without any exception, the 18 pieces are written in ternary meter using specific rhythmic formulas, so undoubtedly – a waltz.

The presence of hemiolas in these waltzes' points some of the parts towards a diversity of the musical discourse (no. 13) without disturbing its natural flow.<sup>5</sup>

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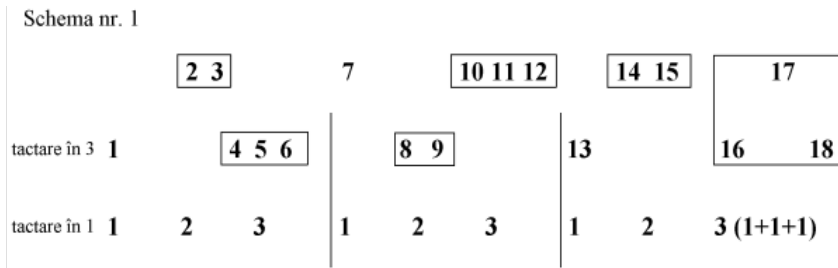
<sup>3</sup> Timaru, Valentin, *Stilistică Muzicală (Musical Stylistics)*, Editura MediaMusica, vol. I, Cluj-Napoca, 2014, p. 257.

<sup>4</sup> Ștefănescu, Ioana, *Arta lui Brahms din perspectiva secolului XX (Brahms' art from a 20th century perspective)*, Teză de Doctorat (Doctoral Thesis), Conservatorul de Muzică "Gh. Dima", Cluj-Napoca, 1974.

<sup>5</sup> Olsen, Glen, *The Liebeslieder Walzer, op. 52, of Johannes Brahms*, Olsen-CJ-Sept-2001.pdf



Seen as a whole, half of the pieces are conceived as a concentrated ternary movement, therefore timed in 1 (no. 1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 13, 16, 18) while the other half is conceived in the usual ternary timed in 3 (no. 2, 3, 7, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17). (Figure 1)

**Figure 1****Metric timing plan<sup>6</sup>**

If we were to overlap these two conceptions of the artistic realization of the cycle, we would notice the following distribution: diagram no. 1. We find it interesting to observe the oscillation between the timings in 1 and 3 which groups the pieces in a first wave from no. 1-6 then the second wave from no. 7-12 and the third wave from no. 13-18.

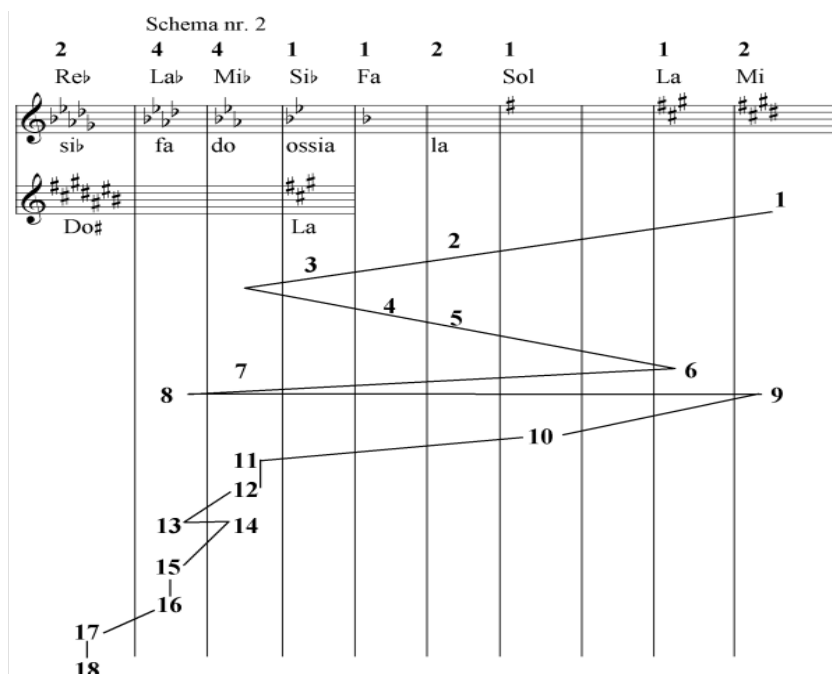
Noteworthy the tonal framework of the cycle. In this sense, I designed diagram no. 2 that shows cases how the major tonalities with 4 and 3 flats respectively (A flat, E flat) prevail.

Starting from the beginning to the middle of the cycle, the composer gropes around the tonalities with 1, 3, 4 sharps, followed by a transit zone through tonalities without alterations (**A**) then tonalities with 1, 2 flats so that after no. 10 to settle on keys with 3, 4 flats.

In this sense, we could imagine a real winding of the functional circuit (Figure 2).

<sup>6</sup> Diagram created by Ciprian Para, 2025.

**Figure 2**



**The tonal plan used by Brahms in Op. 52<sup>7</sup>**

In an ideal interpretation these two parameters should be corroborated of course; in this sense, it would be interesting to observe the place of the pieces in the respective keys seen in this serpentine that requires to be intensively timed in 1 or 3. We see a concentration of waltzes that require to be interpreted in both 1 and 3, in the area of keys with flats.

Regarding the formal conception, the framework for the development of the entire cycle, we can extract several generalities that come to the aid of the interpretative process:

- the prevalence of bistrophic forms (with or without recapitulation)
- the appearance of both symmetrical phrases and those that are atypical, external expansions respectively which, however, are circumscribed within the entire stanza without creating noticeable disturbances

<sup>7</sup> Diagram created by Para Ciprian, 2025.

- noteworthy the moments of completion of the choral phrases by the piano.

All of this provides sufficient clues towards the correct decoding of the interpretative intention.

In terms of the actual musical “content”, we point out two types of rhythmic cells:

- downbeat measure: no. 11 (E.g.1)

E.g. 1



Crusic rhythmic-melodic cells<sup>8</sup>

- and upbeat measure: no. 6 (E.g.2)

E.g. 2



Anacrusic rhythmic-melodic cells<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Brahms, Johannes, *Sämtliche Werke, Band 20*, Editura Breitkopf&Härtel, Leipzig, op.52, 1926-27

<sup>9</sup> Idem.

These bring about the melodic configurations specific to the waltz turn.

The contrapuntal procedures in these delightful vocal miniatures occupy an important place both in the interweaving of the choral parts with the accompaniment and in the merging of the voices in the choral ensemble; this is precisely where the mastery of the polyphonist Brahms lies, the contrapuntal subtleties not being an end in themselves but the result of accumulations along the lines of his predecessors: Bach-Beethoven-Brahms.

We also aim to trace the ways in which Brahms uses the vocal parts. Starting from the monody (unison) of a single voice, enabled to be performed either with the part or with a soloist (no. 7, 17) then the antiphonic alternation between the women's choir and the men's choir (no. 1, 5) passing through pieces intended for male voices (no. 3, 14) and female voices (no. 4, 13) to the point of balance which is the classic mixed choir ensemble: (no. 2, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 18).

The accompaniment is not, in our view, an accompaniment per se, being an equal partner in the true sense of the word.

Brahms's pianism remains more massive, perhaps more monumental; it is no coincidence that the composer wants two performers at one piano.

The melodic turns are basically the ones that R. Schumann made us familiar with in his wonderful lieder, but at the same time the "Brahmsian outbursts" in his great piano pages are also charming.

A coherent approach must emphasize the unity of the Brahmsian cycle with attention to the architectonic structure of the entire cycle, as well as each individual number.

Within interpretative performance, the conductor must pay attention to the contrast between the energetic pieces and the most internalized ones, achieving a balance in the development of the entire waltz cycle.<sup>10</sup>

I was deeply impressed when I first listened to this opus of great refinement and expressiveness in the summer of 1995 at the Accademia Santa Cecilia in Rome.

Coming back to Cluj, I discovered the complete works of great Brahms in the library of the Music Academy. After a careful study of opus 52, I had the chance and the joy to conduct this opus in its entirety in the company of the "George Enescu" Philharmonic Choir in Bucharest (150 years after the composer's death). Later, still in 1997 I conducted in Cluj as well this Brahmsian opus in the company of the Choral Ensemble of the Theoretical Faculty of the

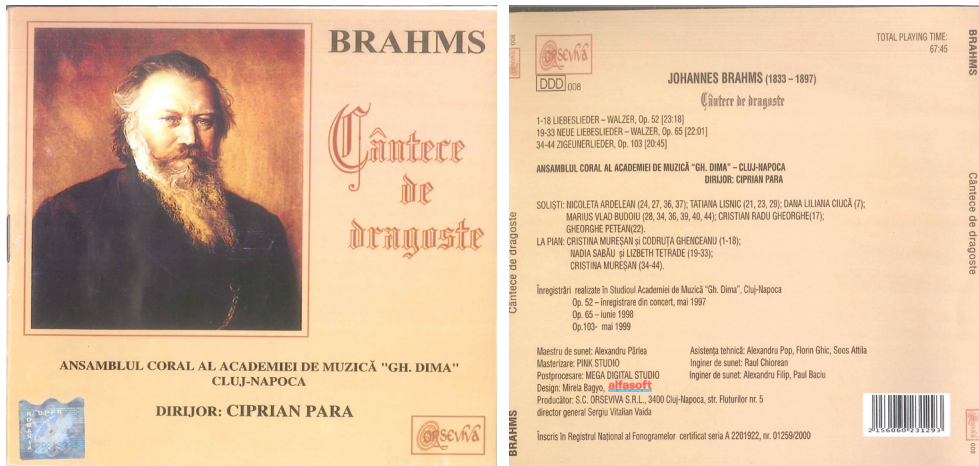
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<sup>10</sup> Para, Ciprian, *Concepția interpretativă în demersul dirijoral (Interpretive Concept in the Conducting Approach)*, Editura Media Musica, Cluj-Napoca, 2015, p. 34.

Academy of Music. There were two different interpretative versions of the same opus, although there was the same conducting conception, both at a professional and academic level, the concerts were of a high artistic level.

After a few years, I conducted two more Brahms opuses, namely op. 65 Neue Liebeslieder-Walzer and op. 103 Zigeunerlieder, which I recorded and edited on a CD together with op. 52. (Figure 3)

**Figure 3**



**CD Brahms op. 52, op.65 and op. 103 - conductor Ciprian Para<sup>11</sup>**

These opuses are conceived as vocal miniatures and constitute one of the areas of great interest that I have shown, namely for the romantic choral music of Johannes Brahms. Practically, it was the result of three years of assiduous work together with the Choral Ensemble of the Academy of Music from Cluj, whose help I owe the opportunity to finalize my conducting conception. The version I opted for is not the original one – vocal quartet with piano accompaniment for four hands – but a choral one alternating with solo “moments”. An incentive for the realization of this variant was also that of having an ample choral apparatus capable of approaching these opuses. On the other hand, and as far as the vocal soloists are concerned,

<sup>11</sup> Para, Ciprian, *Demersul dirijoral ca factor de împlinire a unei concepții interpretative (The conducting approach as a factor in fulfilling an interpretive conception)*, Doctoral Thesis, “Gh. Dima” Music Academy, Cluj-Napoca, chapter. IV, 2003, p. 125.

we benefited from very special voices at that time, which worked well together with the pianists. Attracted by the beauty of Brahmsian choral music, we gave ourselves entirely to it, trying to express the most subtle aspects of its romantic language in the most edifying way possible.

Regarding the concept of conducting, Maestro Marin Constantin states:

*"In the interpretative approach, the ways to use the dynamic and agogic arsenal will be determined only by passing them through the stylistic filter. Therefore, respecting the 'tale-quale' of the musical commentary belonging to the composer or editor involves the danger of distorting artistic expression, of mechanical, scholastic rendering, if it is not analyzed stylistically, if it is not preceded by a deep understanding of the author and their intrinsic particularities"*<sup>12</sup>

## Conclusion

If we were to say everything we feel about this wonderful opus, we could summarize that it was written for: "big hands and special voices".

We reserve the right to have written down some subjective points of view from the performer's position. It is natural for the performer to remain a subjective temperament who constantly strives to get closer to the objective message of the score through everything it offers.

The analysis of these famous musical pages demonstrates the quality, value and extraordinary expressiveness of the "Liebeslieder-Walzer" cycle, which manages to combine the dancing elements of the waltz with the depth of the German *Ländler*, creating a cycle full of contrasts, nuances, subtleties, love and hope.

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<sup>12</sup> Marin, Constantin, *Artă construcției și interpretării corale (The Art of Choral Construction and Interpretation)*, Teză de Doctorat, (Doctoral Thesis), Conservatorul de Muzică "G. Dima", Cluj-Napoca, 1984, p. 49.

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## THE HERMENEUTIC STUDY OF THE MUSICAL AND POETIC TEXTS IN THE VOCAL MUSIC BY E. CHAUSSON

NATALIYA GOVORUKHINA<sup>1</sup>, TETIANA ZHARKIKH<sup>2</sup>,  
ALONA MILANINA<sup>3</sup>

**SUMMARY.** This study proposes an exploration of the symbolism within the works of Ernest Chausson's of the vocal music, as an example we choose cycle "Poem of Love and the Sea", (words by Maurice Bouchor) the application of hermeneutic methodology and analysis of the work's intonational dramaturgy. The uniqueness of the composer's conception, combined with the multi-layered structure of the poetic text, drives researchers to interpret the hidden symbolic levels inherent in this vocal cycle. As a result of the analysis, it is concluded that the meaning of "Poème" is grounded in core principles: the duality of the real and the otherworldly, expressed through the embodiment of hidden meanings via symbols; Romanticism and Symbolism, manifested in the observed unity between nature and human, as well as in the mystical visions of the lyrical protagonist.

An analysis of the poetic text reveals Bouchor's clear inclination toward phonetic play, the understanding of which helps unveil the symbolic essence of the entire work. The interaction of the idealistic with the realistic, the pictorial exterior with the concealed interior, is likewise evident in musical text and is revealed through the dominance of two overarching intonational graphemes. The musical and poetic levels of the vocal cycle are combined thanks to a common symbolic basis, particularly through the use of symbolism of pictorial origin. This symbolism is decoded in the musical text through principles of the painter Gustave Moreau. The fusion of poetic and musical symbolism results in mutual amplification, thereby enriching the symbolic content of the vocal cycle as a synthesis of the arts.

**Keywords:** vocal cycle, hermeneutics, symbolism, phonetic play, musical and poetic text, artistic interpretation

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## Introduction

The unique personality and creative legacy of Ernest Chausson (1855–1899) have attracted the attention of scholars, performers, and listeners for over a century and a half. However, the work of this French composer has elicited mixed responses, both during his lifetime and posthumously. Some critics viewed E. Chausson's music in a highly negative light. Others, including H. Schneider<sup>4</sup> and J. Gallois<sup>5</sup>, found it so captivating and original that they considered the composer to be the most distinctive voice of the *fin de siècle* generation, which preceded the emergence of C. Debussy's creative figure on France's musical Olympus. Regrettably, the composer's tragic death at the age of 44 prevented him from fully realizing his artistic potential. The choice of the topic for this study is explained by the fact that "Poem of Love and the Sea" was composed by a French artist during the final mature stage of his career (according to the periodization proposed by A. Milanina<sup>6</sup>), when the composer's philosophical and artistic explorations had already taken shape in both general aesthetic and intonational-stylistic terms. It represents the culmination of the Master's creative method, where symbolic imagery is most fully realized in its ongoing development. The originality of the compositional approach and the meaningful aspect of the poetic text are currently attracting the researchers' attention and desire to reveal the internal symbolic layers inherent in this vocal cycle. Thus, this study is primarily focused on identifying the symbolic principles of E. Chausson's *Poème* by based on the poetic text by M. Bouchor.

In any performed work, in addition to the technical methods, the understanding of the "matter" of the artistic work (what it is made of) is far more important (and from this understanding, everything else follows – phrasing, articulation, cantilena, and so on). The substance is subordinate to the author's soul, but this soul cannot always be felt with a cursory study of the work. Sometimes the symbolism of the text is so complex that understanding of its hidden meaning is only possible if the performer (who is also the interpreter) retraces the path taken by the creator (in this case – the creators of the vocal cycle). Our study offers to undertake such a journey with the authors of "Poem

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<sup>4</sup> Schneider, Herbert. *Ernest Chausson. Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. In MGG Online. Edited by Laurenz Lütteken. Kassel, Stuttgart, New York, 2019. <https://www.mgg-online.com/articles/mgg02744/1.2/id-6905567a-69c0-1528-5fcc-7934b1bce071>

<sup>5</sup> Gallois, Jean. Chausson E. *L'homme et son oeuvre: Catalogue des oeuvres, discographie, illustrations*. Paris. Seghers, 1967.

<sup>6</sup> Milanina, Alona. *Symbolism of the vocal cycles of Ernest Chausson. Dissertation for the scientific degree of Doctor of Philosophy in specialty. Kharkiv I. P. Kotlyarevsky National University of Arts*. 2024. p. 47.

of Love and the Sea” – this opens up diverse avenues for interpreting both the verbal and musical texts, highlighting the relevance and originality of the chosen topic.

**The purpose** of this research is to explore the symbolism embedded in the music of Ernest Chausson's and poetic text of M. Bouchor's, as a basis for interpretative performance. In line with the stated objective, the following methods were chosen: the hermeneutic method introduced to clarify the “obscure areas” of cycle “Poem of Love and the Sea”; the analysis of intonational dramaturgy – to comprehend the processes of cycle formation in the French artist's chamber-vocal composition; the psychoanalytic approach – to identify the relationship between the phenomenon of artistic energy and a specific repertoire<sup>7</sup>.

## Discussion

According to Hans-Georg Gadamer<sup>8</sup>, hermeneutics allows us to “understand and express something incomprehensible”, said in a different language, whether it be “hints at signs in the language of the gods”. Such an area of the “incomprehensible” (i.e., encoded in the artistic text) is represented by both the poetic and musical components of “Poem of Love and the Sea”.

The poetic component in the vocal cycle takes on immense significance, and *“despite the fact that the process of embodying the poetic primary source in vocal music is accompanied by a number of changes justified by the composer's vision of the content of the poem and the musical form, a number of features of the musical text are dictated by the specifics of the verbal one”* (Govorukhina)<sup>9</sup>.

E. Chausson used the poetic source of Bouchor's – confirms that the composer, like his poet friend, gravitated toward mysticism and symbolism in his creative process. M. Bouchor's most exquisite collection of poems, “Poème de l'Amour et de la Mer” (1876), is composed of symbols that elevated his

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<sup>7</sup> This approach is based on the method used in the study: Chernyavska, Marianna; Ivanova, Iryna; Timofeyeva, Kira; Syriatska, Tetiana; Mits, Oksana. Artistic energy of the performers in the mirror of their repertoire preferences. *Studia UBB Musica*. Volume 68 (LXVIII), Special Issue 2. 2023. pp.165-179.

<sup>8</sup> Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Truth and Method*, Second, Revised Edition Translation revised by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Ma. Great Britain. [https://dl1.cuni.cz/pluginfile.php/908863/mod\\_resource/content/1/truth-and-method-gadamer-2004.pdf](https://dl1.cuni.cz/pluginfile.php/908863/mod_resource/content/1/truth-and-method-gadamer-2004.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Govorukhina, Nataliya. *The principles of interpretation of the poetic primary source in ballads by F. Schubert, S. Moniuszhko, H. Wolf on Goethe's text «kennst du das land»* *Studia UBB Musica*, LXVII, Special Issue 1. 2022. p. 104.

poetry to unprecedented heights and sparked significant interest among readers. The symbolism inherent in Bouchor's poetic texts was subsequently preserved by E. Chausson in his vocal cycle of the same name. Out of the collection's three parts – "The Flower of the Waters"; "The Death of Love" and "Divine Love" – only the first two were used, along with selected poetic fragments from the third part of the poem.

The central idea of M. Bouchor is conveyed through the title – *Poème de l'Amour et de la Mer*, which declares the work's primary interconnected symbols – Love and the Sea. Notably, symbols such as love, sea, flower, water, and death are capitalized in the poetic text, hinting at their particular significance. In French, the word *la mer* (sea) and *amer* (bitter) are homophones, identical in sounding but differing in spelling and meaning. The poet encoded the homophone *amer* within the word *mer*, and through this distinctive phonetic play, a hidden meaning of the story of lost love was embedded. Thus, the sea symbolizes both joyful and bitter love. This unique linguistic wordplay results in the emergence of a new image with a different connotation. The disruption and separation of the linguistic form (the word) is coupled with a constant accretion of the form elements, leading to a persistent semiotic densification of the form itself. The violation of the form is compensated by the fusion of elements united by a single thematic and conceptual connection. This meaning unity serves as the foundation for drawing parallels between linguistic concepts.

A similar approach to poetic symbolism is observed not only in the title of the entire work but also in the titles of its parts. It can be said that in the title of the first part, "The Flower of the Waters", the French words *fleur* (flower) and *eaux* (waters) share two vowels and one consonant, indicating an internal rhyme. Moreover, they are semantically close: a flower cannot live without water, and an involuntary parallel arises: just as a person cannot live without love, since the sea (waters) symbolizes love itself.

In the title of M. Bouchor's second poem, "The Death of Love", homophones are also used: *l'amour* (love) and *la mort* (death). The boundaries between love and death are exceedingly thin, and they are inextricably linked. The theme of death, as the poet's balancing on the narrow edge connecting the otherworldly and natural world, is, in fact, a traditional theme in the poetics of symbolism. Thus, the key symbols of the work are paired: Love-Sea, Flower-Waters, Death-Love, and, through the symbolic titles of the 'Poem', Bouchor effectively provides a preliminary outline of the work's overall content, which is later elaborated in the poetic text through a detailed portrayal of the lyrical hero's love story. In *poème* M. Bouchor positions himself both as a creative artist and as a researcher and interpreter, as if engaging in a dialogue with his own texts.

The content of “The Flower of the Waters”: The protagonist reminisces about a time when “the air carried the delicate fragrance of lilacs, “the sea shimmered beneath the radiant sun,” and “the wind sang through the blooming lilacs. And as at the dawn of creation, for the lyrical hero, no one existed except his “one and only Eve” – his beloved. He kissed the sand she walked on with “her dear little feet”; for him, the sky took on the color of her eyes, and everything was imbued with “Love and Youth”<sup>10</sup>. His beloved seemed the center around which everything revolved. It was a time when the heaven “showered the young lovers with roses”. However, in the second half of “La Fleur des eaux”, a different scene emerges – a scene of farewell. Following a principle of distorted reflection, nature “does not respond” to the inner state of the lyrical hero: the sea seems to mock, “caring little that the time of parting has come, it sings”; “birds fly by, their wings spread almost joyfully over the abyss”; “the heavens shine”; “the dark noise of the waves drowns out the sound of sobs”; and “the wind mocks the youth’s sorrow”. Content of the second poem “La Mort de l’Amour”: The imagining of a future when “a blue and joyful island will appear again amongst the rocks,” an awareness of “dead love,” profound regret for the intoxicating lilac-scented past, and the love that has vanished<sup>11</sup>.

The symbolism embedded in the titles of the poems is further developed in the poetic text of the work, particularly through floral symbolism, which the poet uses to reveal all stages of the lyrical hero’s inner state: love, disappointment, and “The Death of Love”. In the first poem, M. Bouchor specifies the flowers – roses and lilacs, while in the second poem, water lilies are mentioned. According to the interpretations in the French dictionary, “The Language of Flowers”<sup>12</sup>, the rose symbolizes love, the lilac represents the first emotions of love and initial romantic feelings. Both the rose and the lilac bloom in spring, while the water lily, a symbol of coldness and solitude, blooms until autumn. Thus, these seasons serve as symbols of human existence.

Regarding the symbol of the “rose”, since the Middle Ages, this flower has been considered a symbol of love for a woman. Over time, in French literature, this floral image acquired new meanings. For instance, in the poetry of Charles Baudelaire, particularly in his collection “Les Fleurs du mal”, and specifically in the poems “Spleen” and “L’Idéal”, roses are depicted as sad, faded, and often completely withered flowers, seemingly reflecting the poet’s own state.

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<sup>10</sup> Wong Wai Yee, Marina. *Ernest Chausson's poemed'el'amour et dela mer, op 19: an Investigation of the sntegration of musical Parameters and textual content*. Thesis of the Master of philosophy. 1994. p. 34. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/48542784.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p.35.

<sup>12</sup> Tanase, Nicolae. *Le langage des fleurs: Le dictionnaire des fleurs et leurs significations (fragrance des fleurs)*. Independently published. 2021. p.37.

However, the French symbolist poet also undergoes some changes that return him to traditional romantic notions of the flower, as seen in the poem "Tout entière", where the image of the beloved is envisioned as beautiful and whole, with everything about her imbued with beauty: her breath is music, and her voice is the scent of roses. Thus, even in Baudelaire's melancholic poetry, the rose remains a symbol of love for a woman. In the first half of "The Flower of the Waters", the interpretation of the "rose" symbol is traditional, reinforced by the flower's golden, divine color. However, in the second poem, "La Mort de l'Amour", Bouchor's roses become akin to Baudelaire's:

Notre fleur d'amour est si bien fanée,  
Hélas! que ton baiser ne peut l'éveiller!<sup>13</sup>

In the poem "The Death of Love", M. Bouchor returns to floral imagery, which is intertwined with a fatal female character of the decadent movement in French poetry: a flower enchants a person with its beauty and scent, just as a fatal woman seduces with her sensuality. While the first half of "The Flower of the Waters" is crafted by Bouchor in the romantic tradition, depicting nature as a "paradise bush," the second half reveals an obvious yearning for lethargy peculiar to "Feuillage du cœur" (Foliage of the Heart) from Maurice Maeterlinck's collection: "our flower of love has withered," "dead, crumpled leaves," resonating with the melancholy of the lyrical hero. In his turn, the Belgian poet, while creating his "floral images," was influenced by Charles Baudelaire, making it relevant to revisit his work "Les Fleurs du mal", as well as his introduction of the idea that beauty exists within evil. Consequently, the poems of Maeterlinck, the "poet-gardener," take on a metapoetic scope: through floral symbols, poetry itself is depicted as dangerous, associated with evil and death.

Regarding the symbolic meaning of the water lily, in the 20th-century French literature, Boris Vian's well-known novel "L'Écume des jours"<sup>14</sup> (Froth on the Daydream) tells the story of a young woman suffering from a disease that gradually consumes her. This illness is linked to a water lily – a flower that grows within her and destroys any other form of life. As noted earlier, the symbolic meaning of the water lily includes coldness, powerlessness, and solitude. In M. Bouchor's second part, "The Death of Love", the water lily is mentioned as:

Bientôt l'île bleue et joyeuse  
Parmi les rocs m'apparaîtra;

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<sup>13</sup> Baudelaire, Charles. *Fleurs du Mal*. Pocket. 2018. p.72.

<sup>14</sup> Vian, Boris. *L'Écume des jours*. Paris. Le Livre de Poche. 2014. p.36.

L'île sur l'eau silencieuse  
Comme un nénuphar flottera<sup>15</sup>.

Here, the island, like the lily, becomes a symbol of final detachment — a serene, sorrowful drift into emotional isolation.

In this poem, the topos of “morbid” solitude depicted as an island of the flower is used to artistically convey the suffering of the lyrical hero, additionally, it emphasizes the parallel between flower and woman, which is peculiar to the decadent poetry. Théodore de Banville<sup>16</sup>, author of *Odes funambulesques*, in the preface to Laurent Tailhade's *Jardin des Rêves* (*Garden of Dreams*), aptly comments on the perception of the female image among French writers of the late 19th century: “Yes, this is an entire generation that, with its voice, laments and admires, gloriously celebrating Woman, who was a slave, a companion, a queen, victorious, triumphant, but whom only our recent sufferings have made ideal and divine.

In “Poem of Love and the Sea” by M. Bouchor, the sea – watery continuum – is portrayed as a powerful symbol that, in “The Flower of the Waters”, unites the hearts of two lovers. The French poet's choice of this symbol is unsurprising, as renowned poets and composers of all times and cultures have assigned the sea a decisive role in the great drama of love and death. An example is Wagner's opera “Tristan und Isolde” with its maritime first act and depiction of the events happening between the wave-beaten Celtic shores of Cornwall and Brittany. This attraction to the sea as a symbol can be explained by its dual interpretation: on one hand, the sea represents a feminine element, a maternal affect; on the other hand, it is far more commonly understood as a symbol of eternity. In the works of poets and artists, turning to water themes often signifies a return to a divine inspiration – an awareness of the unique connection between human being and existence.

M. Bouchor's descriptions of nature feature a rich palette, and his sketches of the sea create an atmosphere of peace and warmth. The lines “Under the scorching sun / The soft sand is kissed / And over which dazzling waves roll” evoke associations with picturesque masterpieces, such as Gustave Courbet's painting “The Wave”. The statement by the famous French painter and landscapist – “painting is a representation of things that the artist can see and touch,” undoubtedly resonates with M. Bouchor's poetic imagery<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> Baudelaire, Charles Les. *Fleurs du Mal*. Pocket. 2018. p. 72.

<sup>16</sup> Tailhade, Laurent. De Banville, Theodore. *Le Jardin des Reves*. Paris. Alphonse Lemerre. 1980. p. 49.

<sup>17</sup> Schultze, Jürgen. *Kunst im Bild: Neunzehntes Jahrhundert*. München: Naturalis Verlag. p. 88.

The landscapes of the French poet seem to echo the paintings of the Impressionists: everything that exists in nature – sea, sky, people, plants, is depicted with a perfection, for example, in Claude Monet's *Lilacs in the Sun*, everything is surrounded by air and light. For M. Bouchor, the same as for the Impressionist painters, light plays a crucial role. Thus, the first section of "The Flower of the Waters" takes place in the morning, symbolizing the dawn of love. The poet captures this time of day: "And my heart awoke this summer morning <...> giving vision to my eyes, filled with light." This is just the beginning of the relationship, so there is no need to rush, allowing one to bathe in the sunlight, which fosters an impression of peace and quiet joy. The love of this period is imbued with a divine light, evidenced by the following line in the poetic text of the first section of the work: "Et du ciel entr'ouvert pleuvaient sur nous des roses" (quote by M. Bouchor<sup>18</sup>). This seems to be a heavenly likeness, and even love is interpreted as a manifestation of God's essence.

In "The Death of Love", M. Bouchor adheres to traditional contrast: earlier, the sea, sandy shore, and green paths – witnesses to the romantic dates of the lovers – were "embraced" by a gentle breeze, its breath resembles the hugs of a young couple. However, by the time the love ends, "the wind changes, the sky is overcast." In the finale of the second part of the "Poem", the presence of the wind that "rolled dead leaves" is projected onto the protagonist's feelings – "rolled my thoughts like dead leaves in the night." The exact repetition of the text and the use of alliteration with the letter "r" further intensify the evocation of memories through an echo-like effect. In this figurative symbolism, the wind becomes more an allegory of love than a symbol. Typically, in Romanticism, the wind is a tempest, signaling the end of passion, leaving only room for memories tinged with sadness and melancholy.

It seems that each of M. Bouchor's sketches is a poetic impression of a lived moment. The author manages to create poetry that can be not only read but also seen, similar to a painter's canvas or a scene from a film. This is achieved through heightened attention to the facture of the verse and its sound instrumentation. The worldview in "Poem of Love and the Sea" is seemingly created with broad brushstrokes, image by image: the poet shifts his gaze from the sea to the sky, then to the land, into the misty distance of memories. Nature seems to gradually transition from one state to another. Consequently, Bouchor's work is not a static landscape poem where the

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<sup>18</sup> Bouchor, Maurice. *Chants Populaires pour les Écoles* (Recueil M. Bouchor et J. Tiersot), Deuxième série. Livre du maître, Paris, Hachette. 1903. p. 14.

lyrical subject merely observes the surrounding world, but rather a poetic “cinematograph,” where one frame swiftly transitions to another. The continuous movement of the gaze from one image to the next one, from top to bottom and then from bottom to top, also resembles the performance of a symphonic piece. This may have inspired E. Chausson to compose such a work based on his friend’s verses.

M. Bouchor’s “Poem of Love and the Sea” was perfectly aligned with the composer’s vision of the divine purpose of love. Just two years after completing the cycle, as if summarizing his own artistic resolution, E. Chausson writes a letter to Raymond Bonheur (dated November 14, 1892), in which he notes that love is a divine creation, the manifestation of which was observed in human creativity. This is what allows one to consider human as a Being created in the image and likeness of God, they are united through the creative process<sup>19</sup>. As the composer states, the expression of divine love and the unity of God and humanity lies in the interpretation of the symbolism of the “Poem”<sup>20</sup>.

E. Chausson’s choice of M. Bouchor’s “Poème” for his vocal cycle is also explained by the inherent musicality of these poems, which perfectly met the requirements for the poetic text in the *mélodie* genre. Referring to the concept of Alain Corbellari, a professor at the University of Lausanne, the main characteristics of the *mélodie* genre include: the use of a poetic text that is initially self-sufficient, meticulous attention to prosody (the correlation between word stresses and strong parts of the melody, where the length of the poetic syllables determines their melodic quality), the omission of melismas and other vocalizations, and adherence to the form of the poem<sup>21</sup>.

The French composer dedicated the “Poem” to his friend, Henri Duparc, who, in his turn, dedicated one of his most famous melodies – “Phidylé”, to E. Chausson. Some letters from both artists have been preserved, including Duparc’s advice regarding this work: “I see almost no mistakes; they relate only to prosody, which can be easily corrected. <...> The work itself is amazing; there is nothing to return to; I believe you will succeed in everything”<sup>22</sup>. Such

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<sup>19</sup> Barricelli, Jean Pierre. Weinstein, Leo. *Ernest Chausson: the Composer’s Life and Works*. Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press. 1973. p. 25.

<sup>20</sup> Gallois, Jean. *Chausson E. L’homme et son oeuvre: Catalogue des oeuvres, discographie, illustrations*. Paris. Seghers. 1967. p. 54.

<sup>21</sup> Corbellari, Alain. *Subjectivité et objectivité dans la mélodie française des XIXe et XXe siècles*. 2011. p. 33. <http://journals.openedition.org/narratologie/6485>;  
<https://doi.org/10.4000/narratologie.6485>

<sup>22</sup> Barricelli, Jean Pierre. Weinstein, Leo. *Ernest Chausson: the Composer’s Life and Works*. Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press. 1973. p. 65.



a union of poeticized music and musicalized poetry, serving as an ideal model of the genre, was highly praised by Duparc himself, who is regarded as one of the perfectionist composers of the second half of the 19th century<sup>23</sup>.

E. Chausson's vocal cycle exists in several compositional versions: for high voice with a paired symphonic orchestra, for medium voice with a paired symphonic orchestra (the analysis in this study was based on this score), for high voice accompanied by a string quartet and piano, and for medium voice accompanied by a string quartet and piano.

The existence of multiple compositional versions of work proves the significance of this vocal cycle within the context of the French composer's creative legacy. Ten years spent working on "Poem of Love and the Sea" represent a considerable period. E. Chausson tried to fully realize the work's concept, creating authorial editions for various performance ensembles. Such quantity of compositional interpretations serves as evidence of the multifaceted symbolic meaning of the work. Throughout the process, the composer was in search of the ideal version, aiming for the music to captivate the hearts of listeners.

The premiere of "Poème" took place on February 21, 1893, in Brussels, where the composer accompanied tenor Désiré Demest on the piano. The first orchestral version was performed on April 8 of the same year (1893) with soprano Éléonore Blanc and the National Music Orchestra under the direction of Gabriel Marie. The significance of this vocal piece for the composer is evidenced by his personal involvement in the premiere. The initial performance, featuring specific interpreters, a tenor and a soprano, gives the symbolism of this work both a masculine and feminine characteristic.

The designation of the genre itself – poem – that connects both French poetry and music plays a significant role. The verbal poem finds its continuation in music, while music draws inspiration from poetry. They are also united by the shared symbol of the sea, one of the most classic symbols, having its own sound aura. The sea symbolizes the image of love, boundless yet ever-changing. Music and words reveal that the sea and love are symbols of creation. The symbolism of Love and the Sea in the "Poem" is distinguished by its polysemantic nature. Both images symbolize human life, emotions, and existence within the realm of being. Similar to the sea having tides and ebbs, human life experiences rise and falls, but unlike the sea, a human life has a beginning and an end. Thus, the title of the vocal cycle can be interpreted not as a lyrical story of the birth and death of love, but, at the very least, as

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<sup>23</sup> Zharkikh, Tetiana. *Henri Duparc in the history of the mélodie genre*. Aspects of Historical Musicology XXVII. Kharkiv I. P. Kotlyarevsky National University of Arts. 2022. p. 99.

a “matrix” of human destiny. It is possible that while intending to give this eternal theme of art special grandeur, the composer turned to such a performing ensemble that deprives the work of the definition of “chamber”. The use of a symphonic orchestra provides the cycle greater scale and a richer timbral palette: chamber music gives way to concert music, embodying a certain symbolism. Since an orchestral version of the Poem exists, it can be argued that the composer envisioned an orchestral scope for the piano accompaniment as well. Evidently, both the piano and the orchestra can symbolize the elemental force of love/the sea.

This study focuses on the orchestral version of the vocal cycle “Poem of Love and the Sea” by E. Chausson and M. Bouchor, which consists of two vocal parts (“The Flower of the Waters” and “The Death of Love”) and an interlude (an orchestral section). Such analysis is crucial, as in the contemporary performance practice, a correct understanding of the composer’s intent “helps the interpreter to expand their timbral range, connected to an emotional “immersion” in the essence of the work, and enables the music researcher to accurately interpret (often “decode”) and convey the composer’s vision to the listener”<sup>24</sup>.

Thematically, the “Poem” is based on two main themes, intonations of which permeate the entire musical fabric – both the vocal line and the orchestral score. The intonations of the First Theme appear in the opening bars of the introduction and reach their crystallized form in the vocal line of the first vocal period of the first section. The Second Theme is introduced for the first time in the first section, during the third vocal period, with orchestral accompaniment. The Second Theme of the “Poem” concludes with an oboe solo.

The opening of the first part of “The Flower of the Waters” introduces the core theme, from which the musical dramaturgy of the “Poem of Love and the Sea” unfolds (Example 1). This core theme has a wave-like structure, with clearly traceable ascending and descending movements; the extreme points of the wave converge, and its range spans a sixth. The change in meter and rhythm, as observed in Example 1, reflects the freedom inherent in both love and the sea. Subsequently, the core theme transforms into a melodic theme.

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<sup>24</sup> Zharkikh, Tetiana. *Musical Stained-glasses by Olivier Messiaen*. Aspects of Historical Musicology Kharkiv I. P. Kotlyarevsky National University of Arts. 2018. p. 23.

## E.g. 1

**Ernest Chausson «The Flower of the Waters» bb. 1-3.**

The seed theme in the First Theme is based on a derivative contrast (Example 2). A certain mirror-like quality is observed. There is an inversion of the first and second intonational phases, yet all these changes do not lead to a transformation of the main intonational idea – the wave motif, which, in Example 2, becomes more expansive.

## E.g. 2

**Ernest Chausson «The Flower of the Waters» bb. 19-22.**

E. Chausson avoids uniform filling and regular repetition of rhythmic figures within phrases that correspond to poetic footprints. The meter and rhythm of the work reflect not only the composer's style but also the specificity of French intonation, that is, the musical movement of the voice during speech. The melodics of a French sentence is characterized by a gradual rise in the vocal pitch from the initial to the final syllable within a rhythmic group or syntagma. In an affirmative sentence, the intonation typically features a sharp drop in the pitch on the last syllable of the final rhythmic group, with the preceding syllable being the highest in the pitch. As a French-speaking composer, E. Chausson consistently adheres to this principle.

The Second Theme appears in the oboe part, which forms the basis of the vocal line in the third period of "The Flower of the Waters" (Example 3). Based on the core theme, the composer constructs two themes. The First Theme is tender and liquid, while the Second Theme introduces a thematic contrast. In the Second Theme, the wave-like nature of the melodic line is preserved, but the range expands to an octave. Gradually, the core theme evolves into a melodic theme that constantly transforms, much like the ever-changing sea. However, the core theme remains recognizable due to its transformed characteristics, the primary one being the presence of a wave-like structure. The melody, which gradually ascends, suddenly breaks off with

a leap of an octave downward – a feature absents in the liquid structure of the First Theme. This can be interpreted as a wave that unexpectedly crashes. In figurative terms, at the beginning of “The Flower of the Waters”, the wave is calm, like a gentle tide, while in the third section, it becomes a tempestuous wave. From a single intonational unit, two distinct images emerge: a tranquil sea surf and a raging elemental force, presenting an internal thematic contrast, yet both being symbols of the sea. The shift in the depiction of the sea’s elemental force mirrors the transformation in the protagonist’s emotional state.

E.g. 3



Ernest Chausson «The Flower of the Waters» bb. 54-57.

To analyze the musical symbolism of the “Poem of Love and the Sea”, it is important to highlight the compositional stylistic features that E. Chausson employs, basing on principles peculiar to those found in painting. Besides the interaction with the poetic word, particularly that of M. Bouchor, the vocal cycle exhibits a musical adaptation of certain techniques used by symbolist painters – contemporaries of the composer. For instance, the French painter Gustave Moreau (1826–1898) – a proponent of the symbolist movement in art, who, in his paintings, used color as a mean of transfiguring reality, believed not in what he touched but in what he saw and felt. The French symbolist writer Jean Lorrain wrote about Moreau: “This visionary, like no other, transforms the land of his dreams into his own universe, where the madness of dreams gives a rise to feelings of longing and despair. A master-sorcerer, he enchanted his era, captivated his contemporaries, and infused a shade of idealism into the skeptical and pragmatic fin de siècle. Under the influence of his painting, an entire generation of writers, especially poets, emerged”<sup>25</sup>. The painting “The Apparition” (1876), which astonished viewers with its iconographic innovations, achieved through the depiction of the levitating head of Saint John the Baptist, presents a particular significance in

<sup>25</sup> Dava Jean-Luc. *Modern Art, the Decisive Years. 1884–1914*. Skira/Rizzoli International Publishing. New York, N. Y. 1979. p. 59.

this context. Both M. Bouchor and E. Chausson fell under the influence of this “prophetic sorcery,” and parallels can be observed in Chausson’s work due to a sense of kinship with Moreau’s creative style.

The association with E. Chausson’s musical symbolism is evident in the distinctive manifestation of the creative principles derived from Gustave Moreau<sup>26</sup>. The first of these principles involves adhering to a “beautiful inertia”, for example, “stop, beautiful moment”. This is why Moreau’s paintings feature the effect of motionless, hieratic (sacred) bodies, almost sculptural in appearance. The second method entails pushing the decorative quality of the artist’s creative style to an extreme. A manifestation of the principle of “beautiful inertia”, peculiar to the paintings of G. Moreau, is also observed in the “Poem” – in a certain static quality of the musical material, achieved through techniques such as instrumental pedals, ostinato, and prolonged adherence to a single harmonic vertical, which enhances the sense of silence and immobility. As for the principle of decorativeness, it manifests in the creation of numerous strikingly vivid and captivating variants of the melody derived from an initial melodic invariant. In Chausson’s work, these principles are realized in a distinct musical form. The implementation of these two principles within the musical texture of Chausson’s “Poem of Love and the Sea” allows the composer to portray the states of the sea such as constant movement and an infinite state of hypnotic trance.

Thus, the composer, relying on symbolic techniques, intended to abandon the old Romantic foundation, which he considered unsuitable for himself, while realizing that his anti-Romantic pursuits might be a mistake. This is evidenced by a letter written in February 1882 to Madame de Rayssac: “I do not forget that I have an old Romantic foundation, which is now impossible for me, but perhaps I am mistaken”<sup>27</sup>. Therefore, E. Chausson is both an innovator and a conservative.

Since, as the French composer himself stated, “an idea can only be mastered when there is a complete control over the form”<sup>28</sup>, this study examines musical symbolism in the context of Chausson’s vocal cycle structure (however, due to the article’s page limitations, the analysis is partial).

For the first section of “The Flower of the Waters,” the French composer selects a pastoral tonality – F major – which indeed corresponds to the occurrence of idyllic relationship between the main characters. Flutes, oboes, and clarinets, joined by the bassoon, create an impression of sunlit shimmers

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>27</sup> Wong Wai Yee, Marina. *Ernest Chausson's poemedell'amour etdela mer, op 19: an Investigation of the sntegration of musical Parameters and textual content*. Thesis of the Master of philosophy. 1994. p. 42. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/48542784.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

similar to those seen in Impressionist paintings. Following M. Bouchor's poetics, the French composer emphasizes each emotional nuance, and the orchestra becomes a passionate witness to the adventures encountered by the narrator.

In the polychromatic orchestral palette, the timbre of the violins conveys a stream of light, the awakening of nature, vivid spring colors, and the sound of sea waves. The sophistication and transparency of the flutes, with their naturally high register, add lightness, elegance, and grace, the timbral qualities of the clarinet enrich the overall sound with nobility and joy, while the horns and trombones blend softly and harmoniously with the timbres of the woodwinds and strings, as if highlighting the contrast between the celestial and the earthly, introducing imitations of phrases and melodies that are sequentially presented in contrasting registers.

The vocal phrase "You, who will tremble under his dear little feet" serves as the climax of the third section, the verbal text is emphasized by visual means – icons. The flutes introduce a tremolo on a rising semitone in the second and third octaves; the sound of the main theme against a wavering accompaniment (second ostinato movement) in the flutes, muted violins, and a quintal pedal in the cellos conveys associations of "a floating island, like a water lily, on calm water". Meanwhile, the melodic movement of the "Poem", unpredictable due to the lack of symmetry and specific support points, distracts listeners, who allow themselves to immerse in wave-like musical sounds, in an elusive world close to the land of dreams, created by their imagination. Symbolism, which strives to mask reality, is very well identified with such music.

The large orchestral episode (Section 6) is built on the material of the Second Theme, which is sequentially introduced by various instruments. The timbre of each instrument serves as a kind of symbol for a particular emotion or sensation. The color, full of solar brilliance, is shaped by unique orchestration. The score of this episode, which spans the entire orchestral range, is dynamic due to ascending and descending sextuplets in the flutes and clarinets, wave-like harp passages, ostinato motion outlining triads in the violins, and ascending and descending runs in the flutes, clarinets, and bassoons. The entire orchestral vertical is built on a pedal extended to the double basses and emphasized by the tremolo of the timpani. Nearly the entire episode is performed fortissimo, as it represents a hymn to love and the elemental force of the sea. Thus, in this orchestral episode, the composer employs pictorial techniques of "graceful inertia" and "extreme abundance of decorativeness".

In the finale of the third section of "The Flower of the Waters", Chausson achieves a moment of immense dramatic intensity through wide leaps in the vocal line: it begins in the lower octave and quickly ascends to

the third, while the orchestra emphasizes the peak of emotional tension by doubling the melody in octaves in the woodwinds and violins, spanning a range of three octaves. This sound space, along with the contrasting “treading in place,” opens new directions that will find real use in the music of the next decade.

In the context of the concept of the Symbolist ideal, the quiet cantilena expands the expressive palette of Chausson’s music, since the chromaticisms present in the vocal part and in the accompaniment, as well as the diminished chords that appear in the orchestral texture throughout the first section, render the main key unstable and unrecognizable. Modal intrusion, while remaining tied to the perception of a tonal center, opens new possibilities for musical style that are part of the Symbolist path. In the score, there is a kind of imperceptible “sliding” from one chord to another without clearly defined tonal orientation. Such uncertainty, illusion, and transience reveal the touching universe of the French composer. In Chausson’s work, a different harmonic syntax occurs: the chords are not connected in the usual way but obey other rules in order to realize the overall authorial idea, which is confirmed by the following Chausson’s words: “The most important thing is the order of work, understanding of thematic material, the beauty of melodic phrases. Criticisms of specific harmonies do not count. According to Wagner and all great masters, harmonies are only a means of expression. And this is something else”<sup>29</sup>.

In the Interlude, a certain mirroring and wave-like structure can be observed, and the same upward motion noted in the third section of “The Flower of the Waters” appears in the Interlude even more prominently, with the melody sounding almost like a call. While the first key intonema within the range of a prime, in the Interlude, its range reaches an octave – that is, in this sea storm, love perishes. It should be noted that, although M. Bouchor does not emphasize the transition from “calm” to “storm,” the composer does, and thus the role of the Interlude is difficult to overestimate.

Moreover, the principle of painting – that is, the “principle of extreme ornamental abundance” – is manifested in the broad emotional instrumental palette: from the bassoon solo with its rich, dark sound, which makes it ideal for expressing depth and complexity, to the soft, pure timbre of the flute. All of this adds a sad and somewhat melancholic character to the Interlude. The same principle of decorativeness appears in the orchestral texture through the use of contrapuntal technique: in the first section, the main theme sounds as a counterpoint in octaves in the tremolo of the violin accompaniment, while elements of the main theme can also be heard in the parts of the woodwinds

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<sup>29</sup> Grover, Ralph Scott. *Ernest Chausson: the Man and His Music*. London. Athlone Press. 1980. p. 66.

(oboes, clarinets, and bassoons), as a result of which new types of imagery form on the semantic musical plane, and the cumulative effect of sound color increases immeasurably.

In the poetic text of the second part of “The Death of Love” based on the content of the work, three sections should be distinguished: the first – hopes for a bright future; the second – mystical images; the third – regret over the past love. The leading musical theme is once again transformed – the wave acquires new variations based on sigh-like intonations. At the initial point of the descending wave motion and at the point where the wave begins to rise again, a certain mirroring can be observed.

**E.g. 4**



**Ernest Chausson «The Death of Love» bb. 82-89.**

Following the poetry of M. Bouchor – “And I shall be happy and sad / Soon to remember!” – E. Chausson introduces a bell-like tremolo in the flutes on short chords in instruments with a soft timbre – oboes and clarinets. The word “triste” (sad) sounds in a minor key in the vocal part, but, by the end of the phrase, E major returns. The first theme is played by clarinets and violins.

Pedal notes permeating the entire texture of “The Death of Love”, appear as one of the components of the author’s idea, since the broad use of registers, constant changes in durations and timbres, as well as in their intensity, which create a special atmosphere, during pedalization, lead, through their immobility, to each instrument losing its distinctive color, and the musical “image becomes blurred” analogically to Impressionist paintings, and, due to the absence of “events,” E. Chausson invites the listener to interpret and decode the author’s symbolism. In this way, the French composer reveals a new musical reality, leaving space for imagination – a fundamental element of the Symbolist doctrine.

Rhythmic ambiguity in performance is notable in certain musical fragments: the rhythm is weakly discernible, which brings E. Chausson’s music as close as possible to the Symbolist direction, and, in a way, this is expressed by Symbolist poet Ch. Baudelaire: “Which one of us, during the heights of our ambition, has not dreamed of the miracle: poetic, musical prose, without rhythm



and without rhyme, flexible enough and fragmented enough to adapt to the lyrical movements of the soul, to the waves of reverie”<sup>30</sup>.

Since the Symbolist poetry of *poème* became a source of inspiration for E. Chausson, a general continuity is indeed felt in his musical text: slow episodes of the sixth section, in both tempo and meter, echo the stylistic features of several Symbolist poets: P. Verlaine disrupts verse regularity, A. Rimbaud practices free verse – *vers libre*, and S. Mallarmé creates his own language devoid of punctuation.

In the musical and poetic coda of “The Death of Love”, the slow fading of tumultuous passions is reflected. The vocal line, in accordance with the “principle of extreme abundance of decorativeness”, loses further melodic development, the wave-like line of the core theme straightens and freezes. The vocal melody turns “into a pedal,” just like in the orchestral part. The ending of the work is perceived as a reminiscence of its beginning: while at first, the wave is born from the silence of the orchestral pedal, in the finale, the wave gradually fades and folds into a point. The suggestiveness of such music supports a sublimated or idealized world characteristic of Symbolist concepts. Decorativeness gives way to beautiful statics.

The French composer avoids overly complex phrases; E. Chausson is inclined toward the search for what allows one to explore the mysteries of M. Bouchor’s poetic symbolism. On this subject, French music critic and impresario Arthur Dandelot wrote: “Once, Ernest Chausson told me that the older he became, the more he tried to simplify his new creations.”<sup>31</sup>. The development of the composer’s style is characterized not so much by the complication of the musical text as by the achievement of noble simplicity.

E. Chausson’s vocal cycle set to the poetry of M. Bouchor reveals a dynamic interplay between idealism and realism, between external imagery and inner depth, which serves as the foundation of the “Poem of Love and the Sea”. This is revealed through the dominance of two overarching intonational graphemes: the core theme arises from statics, which gives a start to the wave-like movement, and then this movement returns to statics – that is, first comes unfolding, then folding; and the principle of growing the core theme into the melody-theme, which has a broken structure presents of the wave intonema.

In the work, the illustrative and pictorial imagery is intensified by the frame-like structure of the musical form’s frame-like composition – that is, the sea’s movement is seemingly framed by the wave intonema. The introduction

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<sup>30</sup> Baudelaire, Charles. *Les Fleurs du Mal*. Pocket. 2018. p. 49.

<sup>31</sup> Dandelot, Arthur. *Petits mémoires musicaux*. Paris. Editions de la Nouvelle Revue. 1936. p. 51.

and the coda function as a frame, symbolizing the birth of the movement of Love and Sea and its cessation. Alongside this, the frame composition also reflects an artistic and constructive idea as the transition from beginning to end and vice versa. Since the movement repeats in a cycle, the “Poem” takes on a cyclical form.

In vocal cycle, a triple code is traceable at the level of word, music, and painting. While the poetic symbolism is mirrored in the musical text, from the visual symbolism, the composer adopts the two above principles from the French painter Gustave Moreau. Poetic symbolism contains four inner symbolic levels: word, philosophy, painting, and music. Thus, the symbolic meanings of “Poem of Love and the Sea” are multiplied.

## Conclusions

This study identifies the symbolic principles of the vocal cycle “Poem of Love and the Sea” by E. Chausson and M. Bouchor. The first principle lies in the idea of the duality of the real and the other world, as well as the embodiment of hidden meanings through symbols. The symbolism of the very title of the “Poem” is characterized by polysemy. Both main images – the Love and the Sea – symbolize human life, emotions, and existence within both real and eternal worlds. The second symbolic principle of the ‘Poem’ draws upon elements of Romanticism and Symbolism, reflected in the portrayal of the unity between nature and humanity, as well as in the mystical visions experienced by the lyrical protagonist. The convergence of idealism and realism is also evident in the artistic chronotope of *Poème*, which is structured around two poems that encompass the lyrical subject’s past, present, and future. In the verbal text, M. Bouchor leans toward Romanticism, Symbolism, and Mysticism. A close analysis of the musical and poetic components reveals that even in the symbolic titles of the poems, Bouchor embeds a kind of ‘annotation’ or prelude to the work’s thematic content. The work is rich with symbolism, particularly centered on paired motifs such as Love – the Sea; the Flower-of-Waters; and Death – Love.

The repetition of identical or similar consonants (alliteration) in Bouchor’s “Poem” gives it extraordinary sound expressiveness and musicality. On an associative level, the closeness of the French poet’s poetry to the paintings of Impressionist artists confirms the double encoding of *poème* at the levels of word, painting, and music.

The interplay between the idealistic and the realistic, the outwardly pictorial and the inwardly hidden – foundational elements of the ‘Poem’ – manifests itself in the vocal cycle under study. This interaction is manifested

through the predominance of two key intonational structures: a core theme that emerges from a static state, initiates a wave-like motion, and eventually returns to stasis; and compositional principle in which the core theme evolves into a melody-theme characterized by a fragmented. The entire intonation fabric grows from a single source – the intonation wave.

Shared Symbolist principles unify the musical and poetic layers of the vocal cycle, as exemplified by the use of imagery rooted in visual symbolism. In this study, such symbolism is decoded: in the musical text, through principles of the French painter Gustave Moreau. The mutual complementarity of poetic and musical symbolism determines the multi-layered artistic interpretation of the vocal cycle.

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## TRADITION AND INNOVATION IN WORKS DEDICATED TO THE STRING QUARTET BY GIACOMO PUCCINI

RALUCA IRIMIA<sup>1</sup> 

**SUMMARY.** Despite the fact that Italian music is most often associated with opera, and chamber music did not have such a strong tradition in Italy, nonetheless opera composers of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries have contributed to the repertoire of chamber ensembles with complex and unique compositions. The uniqueness and novelty of these works represents a genuine challenge for chamber ensembles, because these compositions were conceived in an orchestral manner (the orchestral apparatus, similar to the chorus, represents and active character within the unfolding of an opera, often calling for a full part of first violins, second violin, viola, or cello, not just a single instrument), or in a manner that resembles the vocal line. The desire of every instrument player is to imitate the human voice, especially within the works of those composers whose music is meant to emphasize the meaning of the words. The instrumental chamber compositions of Giacomo Puccini, *Crisantemi*, *3 Minuetti*, and his *String quartet* mirror the particularities of his operatic works. The current study aims to present the distinctive elements of the *3 Minuetti* and the instrumental prelude for string quartet *Crisantemi*, highlighting those aspects that endow the genres with novel features.

**Keywords:** Giacomo Puccini, Minuet, dynamics, tempo

### Introduction

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Italian opera composers had a sporadic, but discreet contribution to the repertoire dedicated for the string quartet. The *6 sonate a quattro* composed by Gioachino Rossini and the 18 quartets by Gaetano Donizetti paved the way for the great Giuseppe Verdi,

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who composed his only quartet towards the end of his life, the sole work belonging to the sphere of lyrical compositions that would have a major impact on the repertoire dedicated to the string quartet. The *String Quartet in E minor* was composed in 1873, shortly after the completion of the opera *Aida*. After the work was published by Ricordi in 1876, the public premiere took place in Milan.

After almost two decades, in 1890, Giacomo Puccini dedicated one of his compositions to the string quartet. The elegy for string quartet, *Crisantemi* is often encountered in the repertoire of string quartets, as well as in that of chamber orchestras. Among the chamber compositions of Puccini, the *Tre Minuetti* must also be mentioned, edited by the Ricordi Publishing House in 1901, as well as his last composition, the *String Quartet in D Major*, discovered and revised by the Ricordi experts, and finally published in 2001.

### **3 Minuetti (1884)**

The three minuets for string quartet have initially been published together with the version for four hand piano, in November/December 1884, by the small Milanese publishing house of Pigna. The Parisian Heugel edition contains only two of the three minuets, the first and the last. In 1901 Ricordi published these same two minuets, intentionally omitting the second one, owing to the fact that the first measures have been identically incorporated by the composer in his opera *Manon Lescaut*. Once his artistic personality was established, Puccini was able and could afford to reuse and process motifs from his early works, transforming these into complex and profound themes within his important operas. The minuets became known to the public due to their transcription for piano four hands, this version being easier to perform than the original one for string quartet.

These works can be considered lightly stylized divertissements, that aim to reconstruct the style of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in a manner full of imagination. The novel approach to classical compositional elements is also reflected in the dance lessons within the opera *Manon Lescaut*, or later in the gavotte from the opera *Tosca*, for example.

The three minuets are dedicated to important personalities from the region of Lucca, the birthplace of Puccini:

1. To her Majesty, Vittoria Augusta di Borbone, Princess of Capua;
2. To the eminent violinist and teacher Augusto Michelangeli;
3. To his friend, Maestro Carlo Carignani, the colleague who completed the voice and piano reduction of almost every opera by Puccini.

Even though the precise time when these works were composed is not known, it is highly probable that the 3 *Minuetti* could have been composed in the region of Lucca, around 1880, as proven by the precise information regarding the dedications that accompany the works, as well as the news concerning the performance of a minuet, perhaps one among the three, in 1881. On 18 September 1881 a concert was organized by the Società Orchestrale Boccherini, which opened with the *Coriolan Overture* by Beethoven, while the central piece of the performance, framed by two opera arias, was a minuet by Puccini. It is clear that this work must be understood as Puccini's tribute to his illustrious compatriot Luigi Boccherini and his famous minuet from the *String Quintet in A Major*, Op. 13, No.5

According to the dictionary of musical forms and genres, the minuet is a dance of French origin, which was performed with small steps (*pas menus*).<sup>2</sup> Gradually, the dance was introduced in operas and ballets (Rameau and Gluck), as well as in the suites of Baroque dances (Bach and Händel), then later as the third part of symphonies (Haydn and Mozart), finally being replaced by the *scherzo* in the symphonies of Beethoven. Throughout history, the structure of the minuet was altered. Initially, the minuet was in simple binary form, but gradually the second section was expanded, leading to the augmentation of the form to compound ternary. The second (or middle) minuet was endowed with contrasting features, in several directions:

1. Change of key:  
The first minuet in Major key;  
The second minuet in the homonymous minor key, in the key to the subdominant, or the relative minor key.
2. Change of themes:  
The second minuet is governed by a new musical idea, often related to the first version, a role similar to that of the *double*.  
According to these, the scheme of Puccini's 3 *Minuetti* is the following:

E.g. 1

	A	B (trio)	A
<b>Minuetto 1</b>	A Major	D Major	A Major
<b>Minuetto 2</b>	A Major	D Major	A Major
<b>Minuetto 3</b>	A Major	D Major	A Major

**The key changes in Puccini's 3 *Minuetti***

<sup>2</sup> Bughici, Dumitru. *Dicționar de forme și genuri muzicale* (Dictionary of Musical Forms and Genres), Editura Muzicală a Uniunii Compozitorilor, București 1978, p. 182.



## Dynamics and tempo indications as means of stylizing the *Minuetti*

Regarding the **dynamics**, the first and second minuet evoke the atmosphere of refined dance, emphasised by the composer's indication – *piano*. The instances are quite rare when a composition lacks indications regarding dynamics from its first bars, but the third minuet is one of these cases. The possibility of an editing mistake cannot be ruled out, although the Ricordi publishing house respected the manuscripts by consulting specialists in the field for the revision of the scores. The composer's handwriting was difficult to decipher and Romanian musicologist George Sbârcea considered that Puccini suffered throughout his life owing to his disorderly writing.<sup>3</sup>

The lack of dynamic indications may also be attributed to the young composer's lack of experience. Within the third minuet, up until the trio, there are no marks in this sense. The trio, however, is endowed with a particular expression, which places it outside the classical minuet. The trio encountered here is stylized, with emphasis placed on the syncopated rhythm (employed in almost every measure) through precise marks (accents).

The evolution of the Puccinian minuet in its three phases may be observed by following the terminology regarding **tempo**: from the classical dance presented in a moderate movement, to the minuet performed at a much faster tempo. The minuet composed for choreographic performances is played at a slower tempo than the purely instrumental minuet. Thus, Giacomo Puccini traces the evolution of the dance in just three works.

The first minuet lacks any other *tempo* indications, apart from a natural *rallentando* that occurs in the trio, prior to the return of the main theme. This first minuet was dedicated to Her Highness, Vittoria Augusta di Borbone, Princess of Capua. This could explain why the work fulfils the requirements of a classical minuet, composed for royal courts. It has the tempo of a social dance, beginning with a "reverence" from the two violins, suggestively realized through the short ascending melodic motion and a longer melodic descent (E.g. 2). It is also the only minuet in which Puccini employs the *trill*.

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<sup>3</sup> Sbârcea George, *Puccini, viața și opera* (Puccini, Life and Works), Editura Muzicală a Uniunii Compozitorilor 1966, p. 18.

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E.g. 2

Minuetto n. 1 *A S.A.R. Vittoria Augusta di Borbone  
Principessa di Capua*

The musical score for Minuetto n. 1 is written for a string quartet. It features four staves: Violino I, Violino II, Viola, and Violoncello. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked MODERATO. The score shows the first four bars, with the two violins playing a prominent, elegant melody. The Viola and Violoncello provide a harmonic foundation.

**Giacomo Puccini: 3 Minuetti. Minuetto n. 1 (bars 1-4): the “reverence” of the two violins, suggesting the elegant movement of the classical minuet**

The second minuet is dedicated to the distinguished violinist Augusto Michelangeli and is intended to be performed at a higher dynamic level compared to the first minuet. The sheer association of the renowned violinist's name with a lively tempo outlines the image of a work of virtuosity. There are several indications related to the violin technique, for both the left hand and the right hand, which leads to the conclusion that Michelangeli not only received a dedicated work but also contributed to its composition (E.g. 3).

E.g. 3

Minuetto n. 2 *All'esimio violinista prof. Augusto Michelangeli*

The musical score for Minuetto n. 2 is written for a string quartet. It features four staves: Violino I, Violino II, Viola, and Violoncello. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked ALLEGRETTO. The score shows the first two bars, with the two violins playing a lively, virtuosic melody. The Viola and Violoncello provide a harmonic foundation.

**Giacomo Puccini: 3 Minuetti. Minuetto n. 2 (bars 1-2)**

The final minuet is dedicated to Carlo Carignani, composer and conductor, who made the reduction of all Puccini's operas, from *Edgar* in 1889, to the *Il Trittico* in 1919. This minuet associates in a less common manner two expressive marks regarding tempo, *Assai* and *Mosso*, which place the work much closer to the ideas of the Italian *verismo*, embodied by Puccini's works (E.g. 4).

The term *Assai* is used to alter the tempo of a composition, while *Mosso* means movement, agitation. These two terms, placed side by side, suggest a very lively tempo. *Risolto*, a term meaning determination and boldness, completes the already established flowing character of the work, which is naturally present in Puccini's creation. This last minuet is placed under the sign of boldness, breaking the mold of the classical genre: the boldness of stylizing a classical form, making it contemporary, and transposing into the present an instrumental musical genre that was born in an era of sobriety.

E.g. 4

Minuetto n. 3 *All'amico maestro Carlo Carignani*

*ASSAI MOSSO*

The image shows a musical score for 'Minuetto n. 3' by Giacomo Puccini. The score is for a string quartet, with parts for Violino I, Violino II, Viola, and Violoncello. The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo marking 'ASSAI MOSSO' is prominently displayed above the staves. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'v' (forte) and 'o' (crescendo).

**Giacomo Puccini: 3 Minuetti. Minuetto n. 3 (bars 1-4)**

### ***Crisantemi*, Instrumental Prelude for String Quartet (1890)**

The **elegy** (a word of Greek origin, meaning *mourning*) is a poem in which feelings of sadness are expressed, ranging from melancholy to pain. According to Bughici, in his dictionary of musical forms, the elegy is a musical composition, either vocal or instrumental, with piano accompaniment, that conveys a feeling of pain or sadness. The elegy does not have a fixed form,

with composers adopting various structures depending on the expression and musical development; however, most often, the *lied form* is preferred.<sup>4</sup>

*Crisantemi* and the *3 Minuetti* were composed during the early period of Puccini's creation and are among his first published works (Giulio Ricordi published the work in 1890, the year of its composition). The prelude *Crisantemi* is a musical elegy for strings composed in 1890, in memory of Amadeo di Savoya. Puccini sent a letter to his brother, Michele, in which he wrote about *Crisantemi*, referring to the work as a composition for string quartet that was performed with great success at the Milan Conservatory and in Brescia.

*Crisantemi* is a composition that did not remain a simple manuscript but found its way into the repertoire of chamber ensembles (in its original form), but also in the repertoire of chamber orchestras (in its transcribed form). The work was written in only one night, as tribute to his good friend, Amadeo I, duke of Spain. Chrysanthemums are flowers associated with the funeral rite, which explains Puccini's choice for the title.

The elegy does not have a fixed form, and it can easily be adapted to the requirements of expression and musical development. However, most often the work will be structured according to one of the *lied forms*, as is the case with the present composition. Puccini's *Crisantemi* is constructed according to the simple three-part *lied form*, ABA.

Puccini's elegy is a single-movement work, resembling a sigh composed in a minor key, characterized by a constant search for chromaticism. With the composition of this elegy Puccini established his own harmonic and expressive parameters, thus becoming a unique entity that is easily recognizable, but hard to match. The two themes of *Crisantemi* were the source of inspiration for the opera *Manon Lescaut*, begun in the same year 1890 and first performed in 1893 (rightfully dethroning the opera bearing the same name by Massenet).

At that time, Puccini had not yet won over the audience, accusations regarding his lack of originality hovering over each new work he presented. As for *Manon Lescaut*, he could have been even more susceptible to criticism, not only because of the thematic material employed, but also because of the opera's title.

*Crisantemi* can be considered an interlude of the opera, the thematic material employed by Puccini describing the death of Manon at the end of the work. Wagner's influence of Puccini's instrumental writing makes *Crisantemi* a genuine exercise in chromatic technique, a work of great maturity within the genre of chamber music.

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<sup>4</sup> Bughici, Dumitru. *Op. Cit.*, 1978, p. 102.

The *Intermezzo* between the two acts of the opera *Le Villi*, in which the thematic development represents one of the most important elements, proves Puccini's inclination towards symphonism, which lead the experienced Verdi to state as early as 1884 that Puccini's melody differs both from the old and new styles. Because symphonic elements predominate, great care must be taken to avoid falling into the trap of composing symphonic fragments for the sheer pleasure of making the orchestra sound. Four decades later, the conductor Arturo Toscanini took part in a study conducted by a music magazine, that aimed to identify the best contemporary Italian symphonists. The results revealed that Puccini was placed in the top ranks, had he not exclusively dedicated himself to musical theater. However, Puccini heeded Verdi's advice and attributed to the instruments the role of completing those features that were not sufficiently outlined in the vocal line.

### Aspects Regarding the Performance of *Crisantemi*

Puccini's approach when composing this chamber work, dedicated to the four stringed instruments of the quartet, transforms the elegy into an intimate artistic performance. Nonetheless, the characteristics of Puccini's operatic music, where the word is paramount and the instruments complete the featured not thoroughly outlined by the vocal melody, are present from the first note to the final breath of the composition (represented by the fermata placed at the end) – E.g. 5.

E.g. 5

**Crisantemi** Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924)

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

*pp dolce* *rit.*

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TRADITION AND INNOVATION IN WORKS DEDICATED TO THE STRING QUARTET  
BY GIACOMO PUCCINI



**Giacomo Puccini: *Crisantemi* SC 65. Bars 1-5 (first) and 94-99 (final)**

In each of the initial measures of the work the presence of syncopations or an anacrusis can be observed. The symmetrical syncopation on the beat in the line of the cello evokes the motif of existence of this elegy. The term *syncopation* carries the same connotations of restlessness and uncertainty, both in music and literature. A single repeated note, a low note, clearly attributed to the cello, uttered in a faint voice (*pp* with diminuendo) and in emotional imbalance (represented by the syncopation), suggest the utterance “*He is dead!*” (E.g.5).

Verdi's advice, of assigning the instruments the role of completing the features of the vocal melody, is clearly outlined in the opening bars of the present work. The soloist's voice is represented by the cello, whose melody is later taken up (in terms of the intervention of the other voices before the cello's quarter note on the first beat of the second measure has ended) and developed by the orchestra, represented by the two violins and viola.

This elliptical intervention on part of a stressed beat combines with the syncopation to create auditory images of imbalance. There are isorhythmic laments in an ascending chromatic progression expressed in a faint nuance of piano dolce, which demand the return of time, even if just for a moment, through a *ritardando* (slowing of the tempo) at the end of the second bar (E.g.5). Harmonically, one can observe uncertainty; the work does not begin with the tonic function, but with the dominant function, creating suspense in the first two measures, which will be resolved by the cello in the third measure, inevitably descending to solve the tension of the dominant.

From an **agogic** perspective, the second bar has an uncertain tempo. Normally, before a *ritardando*, if it is not encountered at the end of a phrase, there should exist an *accelerando* to maintain the general tempo consistently. Thus, in the first bar, the tempo cannot be detected with certainty; however, the second bar (in its first half) requires an acceleration of the eighth notes for the *ritardando* in the last beat of the measure to set the tempo for the third

measure and the entire work. The dynamic and agogic changes are subtly made; the elegy is not characterized by extreme changes in tempo or nuances. *Ritardando*, according to the *Dictionary of Musical Terms*, represents a slowing down after an accelerando, as previously explained. On the other hand, *rallentando*, a term found in bar 7, will gradually slow down the musical discourse, but starting from the base tempo (E.g. 6).

**E.g. 6**



**Giacomo Puccini: *Crisantemi* SC 65 (Bars 6-10)**

The elegy is a work from the early period of Puccini's creation, when the composer allowed himself to be carried away by the orchestra's possibilities; however, the human voices were always present in the composer's mind. *Manon Lescaut* is the only opera that "never caused him any sorrow", as Puccini himself claimed. It is the opera in which, even though the score indicates sung notes in the third act, the characters speak with a more impressive naturalness than in any aria. The traditional *recitativo secco* of the Italian melodrama gives way here definitively to the puccinian *parlando*.

As a violinist passionate about opera, the author of the current study recognized in *Elegy* several moments that the composer would certainly have written as *parlando*, if this work had been intended for lyric artists. Moreover, the endeavor to imitate the human voice is essential in order to achieve the most faithful rendition of the musical intentions conveyed by the composer. Giacomo Puccini perfectly combines what Giuseppe Verdi and Richard Wagner constructed before him — Italian melodicism and instrumental technique — which makes him equally a fine connoisseur of both voices and instruments. The moments of *instrumental parlando*, easily recognizable in bar 5, in the lines of the first violin and viola, are marked by the composer with *detache lines* under *legato* (E.g. 5). The vocal intention is very well translated instrumentally through the punctuation marks.

In other chamber works by Puccini, musical terms referring to affect are used, such as *affrettando*, *trattenuto*, and *andante mesto*. These terms are less commonly encountered in instrumental scores. Giacomo Puccini writes a similar term, *un poco affrettando*, in bar 21, followed by *allargando* and *sostenuto*, which are specific indications for instrumental scores. *Affrettando* falls under agogic terms, indicating an acceleration of the tempo; however, the purpose of this acceleration at the climax of section A is not just the increase in tempo, but the conveying of a specific feeling, which, evidently, is communicated through the alteration of the tempo. It must be emphasized that it is not the correct execution of these indications that must come first, but rather the key is to understand the musical text and translate this into images and emotional states. The notations can serve as guides, but once the musical message is perceived, they should be executed intuitively.

The two terms, *affrettando* and *allargando*, lead to the first dynamic indications of *f* and *ff*, which are used within the same bar (bar 24). This is the only moment in the entire work (except for the return of section A) that is marked with *f* and *ff*. Puccini marks *sostenuto* to maintain the dramatism of the climax (E.g. 7).

E.g. 7

Giacomo Puccini: *Crisantemi* SC 65 (Bars 19-31)



To the previously discussed term *parlando*, very well transposed instrumentally, Puccini now adds the declamatory moment. Bar 23 (E.g. 7) perfectly demonstrates this technique through:

- rhythmic unison, with a syncopated rhythm and accentuation of the eighth notes, using both the symbol and the term *crescendo*;
- the dynamic palette starts from *p* and reaches *f*;
- the use of *allargando*.

*Parlando* and *declamation* are exemplified in both the A and B sections:

- *parlando* in section A, bar 5, first violin – second beat, viola – fourth beat; bar 11, second violin (E.g. 5).
- *parlando* in section B, bar 37-28 (E.g. 8)
- *declamation* in the A section, bar 23, unison (E.g. 7).

**E.g. 8**



**Giacomo Puccini: *Crisantemi* SC 65. Bars 36-40**

## Conclusions

Giacomo Puccini dares to approach the classical minuet through the lens of the conceptions of the Italian *verismo*, promising its liberation from the boundaries of the classical tradition and making it contemporary even in the 1900's. However, the greatest act of boldness is represented by the fact that Puccini approached the genre of the string quartet at a time when Italy refrained from encouraging the composition of chamber music, as it was more focused on the operatic stage. Giacomo Puccini concludes the list of Italian opera composers who had the curiosity to explore the genre of chamber music.

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## ADAPTATION AND TRANSFORMATION OF MEXICAN VERNACULAR ELEMENTS IN ART MUSIC: A CASE STUDY OF MANUEL PONCE'S *SONATA FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO*

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**SUMMARY.** The adaptation of folk traditions into composed art music has played a crucial role in shaping national musical identities. This article explores the ways in which Mexican vernacular elements are integrated, transformed, and recontextualized within composed works, with a particular focus on the *Sonata for Violin and Piano* by Manuel M. Ponce. By examining the broader processes of adaptation, the authors aim to highlight how composers navigate the balance between preservation and innovation, using folk material as a foundation for new artistic expressions. The analysis addresses melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic transformation techniques, situating Ponce's approach within a broader historical and cultural framework.

**Keywords:** Folk-adaptation, Mexican Nationalism, Stylization

### Introduction: The Role of Vernacular Music in Art Music Contexts

Vernacular music is traditionally transmitted through oral means, meaning that instrumental traditions are learned by ear, imitation, and communal practice rather than through written notation. This mode of transmission fosters stylistic fluidity and regional variation, as performers adapt and reinterpret musical material over time. In contrast, art music is codified through notation, allowing for structural complexity, theoretical refinement, and consistency

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in transmission. The integration of folk elements into composed art music establishes a dynamic interaction between these two traditions—one characterized by spontaneity and collective memory, the other by formalized composition and analytical development. This aesthetic and stylistic fusion not only preserves and recontextualizes vernacular traditions within new artistic frameworks but also enriches art music with distinctive rhythmic, modal, and timbral characteristics. Moreover, the adaptation of folk material within composed works plays a critical role in shaping national and regional musical identities, reflecting broader cultural and historical processes.

Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, composers sought to integrate folk traditions into composed art music as a means of shaping national identities. In Central and Eastern Europe, Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály documented and incorporated peasant melodies into their works, creating a fusion of folk idioms with modern harmonic and rhythmic structures. George Enescu blended the modal inflections and asymmetrical rhythms of his homeland with classical forms, creating a highly expressive and distinct national style. Drawing from traditional Romanian *doinas* and folk dances, his compositions integrate improvisatory melodic contours with sophisticated harmonic language, transforming oral folk material into elaborate structures while preserving the spontaneity and ornamentation characteristic of local peasant music. Through his compositions and pedagogical influence, Enescu bridged the gap between rural musical traditions and Western concert music. Similarly, in Spain, Manuel de Falla drew on Andalusian traditions, particularly flamenco, infusing his compositions with the expressive qualities of regional folk music.

In Mexico, composers such as Carlos Chávez and Silvestre Revueltas developed a distinctive national style by integrating indigenous and mestizo musical elements into their symphonic and chamber works<sup>4</sup>. Chávez's *Sinfonía india* employs melodies and percussion drawn from Yaqui traditions<sup>5</sup>, while Revueltas's *Sensemaya* incorporates Afro-Cuban rhythmic structures<sup>6</sup>. Manuel M. Ponce, a key figure in Mexican musical nationalism, explored the fusion of vernacular idioms with classical forms, an approach exemplified in his *Sonata for Violin and Piano*. Alongside contemporaries such as José Pablo Moncayo and Blas Galindo<sup>7</sup> – whose works transformed mariachi and huapango rhythms

<sup>4</sup> Nutt, Katharine Ferris. "Carlos Chávez: Exponent of Nationalism." 1948. 7 3 2025, pp. 72-74. <[https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1198&context=hist\\_etds](https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1198&context=hist_etds)>.

<sup>5</sup> Nutt, Katharine Ferris. "Carlos Chávez: Exponent of Nationalism." 1948. 7 3 2025, p. 72. <[https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1198&context=hist\\_etds](https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1198&context=hist_etds)>.

<sup>6</sup> Zambrano, Helga. "Reimagining the Poetic and Musical Translation of "Sensemaya"." *Ethnomusicology Review* 19 (2014), p. 6.

<sup>7</sup> Chase, Gilbert. "Creative Trends in Latin American Music-II." *Tempo* 50 (1959): 25-28, pp. 27-28.

into symphonic textures<sup>8</sup>—Ponce contributed to a broader movement that redefined the role of folk material within composed music.

By examining Ponce's *Sonata for Violin and Piano*, the current article will explore how vernacular elements are adapted and transformed within art music. The case study provides insight into the broader processes of folk integration, revealing how composers mediate between oral traditions and formalized composition to construct new, yet culturally rooted, musical expressions.

## 1. Methods of Adaptation and Transformation in Composed Music

The adaptation of Mexican folk music into art music has required composers to carefully balance preservation with innovation. This process involves modifying traditional melodies, rhythms, harmonic structures, and formal designs to fit within a concert setting while retaining the essential characteristics of vernacular music. Whether through direct quotation, stylized reinterpretation, or structural expansion, composers have employed a variety of techniques to incorporate folk material into composed works. This chapter explores four primary methods of transformation—melodic integration, rhythmic adaptation, harmonic expansion, and structural considerations—focusing on Mexican composers while drawing brief comparisons with similar nationalist movements in Europe and Latin America.

### 1.1. Melodic Integration

Mexican composers have employed both direct quotation of folk melodies and stylized reinterpretations of folk tunes in their concert works. In many cases, composers explicitly incorporate recognizable folk songs or indigenous melodies as thematic material. For instance, Carlos Chávez's *Sinfonía India* (1935) is built around three actual indigenous melodies drawn from the Yaqui, Huichol (Cora), and Seri peoples of northern Mexico<sup>9</sup>. These native themes are presented prominently and form the basis of the symphony's sections, which Chávez treats in a classical developmental manner. Similarly, José Pablo Moncayo's *Huapango* (1941) famously orchestrates three *sones*

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<sup>8</sup> Tonatiuh, García Jiménez. *Between Assimilation and Resistance of Western Musical Culture: Traces of Nationalism on José Pablo Moncayo's Viola Sonata*. Lubbock, Texas: Texas Tech University, 2014, pp. 10-11.

<sup>9</sup> García Morillo, Roberto. *Carlos Chávez: Vida y obra*. Tiera Firme, Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1960, pp. 92-93.

*jarochos* from Veracruz – “El Siquisirí,” “El Balajú,” and “El Gavilán” – directly into the score. Moncayo follows advice from his mentor Candelario Huízar to “introduce the material first in the same way you heard it and develop it later according to your own ideas”, reflecting a clear initial statement of the folk tune before symphonic development<sup>10</sup>. This direct melodic borrowing lends an immediate folkloric character, anchoring each composition in the sound of Mexican vernacular music.

Other composers prefer a more stylized approach, creating original melodies that evoke the spirit of folk music without quoting specific tunes. Silvestre Revueltas, for example, often wrote folkloric-sounding themes that capture the inflections of rural songs or street music, rather than lifting melodies verbatim. His melodies in works like *Cuauhnáhuac* and *Sensemayá* are original yet feel idiomatically “folk” through their contour and repetition, an approach comparable to European nationalists such as Béla Bartók who sometimes invented folk-like themes to fit local idioms<sup>11</sup>. In the same vein, Manuel M. Ponce’s compositions show a creative synthesis of folk inspiration and original invention. Ponce was a pioneer in connecting concert music with Mexican popular song traditions. Many of his pieces, like *Rapsodia Mexicana* No. 2 (1913), use well-known folk tunes (e.g. the Jarabe Tapatío melody) as a basis<sup>12</sup>, while others emulate folk styles in new melodies. This balance of authentic folk quotation and stylized creation allowed Mexican composers to integrate melody in a way that feels both genuine and artistically original. Notably, Ponce’s own song “Estrellita” became so popular worldwide that it is often mistaken for an anonymous folk song, demonstrating how successfully a composed melody in folk style can enter popular consciousness<sup>13</sup>. Such examples underscore the range of melodic integration techniques, from literal folk quotations to inspired reimagining of folk tunes, in Mexico’s art music.

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<sup>10</sup> LAPhil. *Huapango* - José Pablo MONCAYO. n.d. [Accessed 6 3 2025]. Huapango, José Pablo Moncayo.

<sup>11</sup> Fisk, Josiah and Jeff Nichols. *Composers on music: eight centuries of writings*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1997, p. 271.

<sup>12</sup> Vazquez Medrano, Oscar. *The Romantic Style in the Piano Works of Manuel M. Ponce The Romantic Style in the Piano Works of Manuel M. Ponce*. University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2022, p. 56.

<sup>13</sup> Hall, Graham F. “The Folia. Manuel Ponce and his Variations.” 1998. [Accessed 2 3 2025]. <[https://api.research-repository.uwa.edu.au/ws/portalfiles/portal/43117104/Hall\\_Graham\\_1998\\_compressed.pdf](https://api.research-repository.uwa.edu.au/ws/portalfiles/portal/43117104/Hall_Graham_1998_compressed.pdf)>.

## 1.2. Rhythmic Adaptation

A defining feature of Mexican folk music is its vibrant rhythm, especially the distinctive dance rhythms found in regional genres like the *son*, *jarabe*, and *huapango*. Composers adeptly incorporated these rhythmic patterns into their works, often preserving the characteristic hemiola and syncopation that give the dances their energy. In traditional *jarabe tapatío* (the Mexican Hat Dance), for instance, the meter famously alternates between a 6/8 feel and a 3/4 (or 2/4) feel, creating a playful shifting pulse<sup>14</sup>. Manuel M. Ponce's *Rapsodia Mexicana No. 2* employs the Jarabe Tapatío as thematic material, retaining its metric shifts (the dance moves from a 6/8 triple pulse to a 2/4 duple meter mid-piece). This kind of *sesquialtera* (the layering or alternating of two and three beat groupings) became a common technique in art music arrangements of folk dances<sup>15</sup>. Likewise, Moncayo's *Huapango* is propelled by the distinctive huapango rhythm of the Gulf coast: the composition is driven by the alternating triplet and duplet subdivision feel of the *son jarocho*. Moncayo literally orchestrates the folk rhythm – at one point the trumpet plays quarter-note triplets against a 6/8 accompaniment, exemplifying the 3:2 hemiola that is at the heart of the huapango dance groove. Throughout *Huapango*, syncopated accents and off-beat emphasis mirror the footwork of the folk dancers, bringing the raw verve of the Veracruz fandango into the symphonic hall<sup>16</sup>. Even in a concert setting, the listener can sense the underlying dance, as the composers carefully preserve the folk rhythm's profile while adapting it to orchestral textures.

Beyond meter, Mexican composers infused their works with the lively syncopations and rhythmic drive characteristic of folk and popular genres. In many *sones* and dances, the upbeat is stressed, or phrases cross the barlines, reflecting Afro-Indigenous influences in Mexico's music. Composers often notated these syncopations precisely or used percussion to reinforce folk rhythms. Carlos Chávez's writing highlights this: in *Sinfonía India*, the indigenous themes come with complex rhythmic patterns – the score features "13 changes of rhythm in the first five pages" to accommodate

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<sup>14</sup> Escalante, J. Arturo Chamorr. *Mariachi Antiguo, jarabe y Son: Aimbolos Compartidos y Tradición Musical en las Identidades Jaliscienses*. Jalisco: Secretaría de Cultura, Gobierno del Estado de Jalisco, 2006, p. 85.

<sup>15</sup> Hiley, David and Thomas E. Stanford. "Sesquialtera." *The New Grove dictionary of music and musicians*. Ed. Stanley Sadie. 6th Edition. Vol. 17. London: Macmillan Publishers, 1980. 20 vols. 192-193.

<sup>16</sup> BIPOC Keyword Database. *Huapango - Jose Pablo Moncayo*. n.d. [Accessed 6 3 2025]. <<https://equity.nbsymphony.org/musical-pieces/huapango#:~:text=Time%20Stamp%3A%200%3A53%20—%201%3A19,Triplet%20%202C%20%2017>>.



the irregular phrasing of the native melodies<sup>17</sup>. The result is a dynamic, ever-shifting metric structure that still feels natural, because it follows the folk source. Similarly, Silvestre Revueltas embraced non-European rhythms in his compositions. His famous work *Sensemaya* (1938), based on an Afro-Caribbean poem, is a powerful example of integrating a *quasi-folk rhythm* into art music. The piece throbs with an Afro-Cuban ostinato and layered syncopations; Afro-derived clave patterns and heavy percussion give it a “*boldly rhythmic, hypnotic*” character<sup>18</sup>. Revueltas’ use of complex cross-rhythms and irregular accents in *Sensemaya* and other works shows how Latin dance rhythms (even those outside Mexico) were transformed into symphonic language. This approach has parallels in the broader Latin American scene – for instance, Cuban dances like the danzón were orchestrally developed by composers such as Arturo Márquez, and Argentine composer Alberto Ginastera infused his scores with the malambo (a gaucho dance in shifting meter)<sup>19</sup>. In Mexico, the fusion of folk rhythms with Western art music techniques created compositions that are both rhythmically sophisticated and deeply rooted in the national musical soil. By transplanting the son huasteco’s rapid violin figurations or the jarabe’s foot-stomping accents into orchestral and chamber works, Mexican composers ensured that the *pulse* of the people remained alive in their concert music.

### 1.3. Harmonic Expansion

Traditional Mexican folk and dance music often relies on straightforward harmonic frameworks, which composers expanded and enriched in their classical compositions. In many regional songs, vocals or violins move in parallel thirds and sixths, a hallmark of mestizo folk harmony that gives a sweet, resonant sound. This can be heard in countless rancheras and sones where two voices harmonize a third apart, or a guitarra and violin double a melody in sixths. Folk pieces also frequently use modal scales and modal cadences – for example, the Mixolydian mode (major scale with a flat-7) is common, yielding cadences that may finish on the dominant or use a subtonic

<sup>17</sup> Kahn, Joseph and Elizabeth Kahn. “Espíritu Latino.” n.d. *Austin Symphony*. [Accessed 7 3 2025]. <<https://austinsymphony.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Program-Notes-MW1.pdf#:~:text=Chávez%20employs%20three%20authentic%20Indian,was%20invited%20to%20conduct%20the%20>>.

<sup>18</sup> Ortiz, Edward. “Exploring the enduring influence of composer Silvestre Revueltas.” 9 10 2023. *Chicago Symphony Orchestra*. [Accessed 5 3 2025]. <<https://cso.org/experience/article/15601/exploring-the-enduring-influence-of-composer#:~:text=Think%20Afro%20>>.

<sup>19</sup> Plesch, Melanie. “Resisting the Malambo: On the Musical Topic in the Works of Alberto Ginastera.” *The Musical Quarterly*, 101.2/3 (2018): 157-215, p. 157.

VII chord instead of a leading-tone resolution. Such techniques, while harmonically simple (often oscillating between I and V chords or using the “Andalusian” cadence in minor), carry a strong flavor of tradition. Composers writing art music did not discard these folk harmonic traits; rather, they initially embraced them to invoke authenticity, then stretched them with chromatic and modern elements. A vivid illustration comes from Aaron Copland’s observations when incorporating Mexican folk tunes: “most of the tunes use meters of 6/8 or 3/4... Copland applied standard folk music practices... such as harmonizations in parallel thirds and sixths” in *El Salón México*, along with other folk ornaments<sup>20</sup>. Mexican composers similarly preserved parallel harmonizations and open-string sonorities as a nod to folk practice, before adding their own harmonic twists.

To elevate folk material into the concert realm, composers expanded these basic harmonies using the tools of 20th-century music – chromaticism, altered chords, and even polytonality. Carlos Chávez provides an example in *Sinfonía India*: while the themes themselves are indigenous and diatonic, he supports one slow melody with “an austere succession of chords built from fourths” instead of traditional triads<sup>21</sup>. This quartal harmony under a folk tune produces a more modern, open sound, enriching the simple melody with new colors. Chávez and others also weren’t afraid to modulate away from the original mode of a folk tune, or to superimpose unexpected bass lines beneath it, creating gentle dissonances that add depth. Silvestre Revueltas took an even more radical approach to harmony. Influenced by European modernists, Revueltas “employed dissonance [and] polytonality” in works that still carried folk resonance<sup>22</sup>. We find similar harmonic expansions in the works of Manuel M. Ponce, who after studying in Paris, infused his arrangements of Mexican songs with late-Romantic and Impressionist harmonies. For example, in Ponce’s piano and guitar pieces based on folk melodies, one might encounter unexpected chromatic chords or French-influenced modulations that go beyond the original tune’s three-chord setting<sup>23</sup>. This technique of reharmonization is comparable to Béla Bartók’s approach in Europe – Bartók

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<sup>20</sup> Heninger, Barbara. “El Salon Mexico.” [Accessed 1 4 2001]. *Redwood Symphony*. 7 3 2025. <<https://redwoodsymphony.org/piece/el-salon-mexico/#:~:text=In%20creating%20his%20potpourri%2C%20Copland,response%20const%20ructions%20>>.

<sup>21</sup> Orbón, Julián. “Las sinfonías de Carlos Chávez (part 2).” *Pauta: Cuadernos de teoría y crítica musical* 6.22 (1987b): 81-91, p. 86.

<sup>22</sup> Antokoletz, Elliott. *A History of Twentieth-Century Music in a Theoretic-Analytical Context*. New York and Abington: Routledge, 2014, p. 194.

<sup>23</sup> Witten, David. *The Eclectic Piano Music of Manuel M. Ponce*. n.d. [Accessed 8 3 2025]. <<https://www.naxos.com/MainSite/BlurbsReviews/?itemcode=8.223609&catnum=223609&filetype=AboutThisRecording&language=English>>

often kept the folk melody intact but surrounded it with sophisticated accompanying harmonies and contrapuntal lines, effectively *re-coloring* the tune<sup>24</sup>. Mexican composers followed suit: they maintained the folk song's outline (sometimes even the parallel thirds in the melody's harmonization, as a sentimental touch) but beneath and around it they introduced richer chords, occasional blue notes or pentatonic mixtures, and bold key shifts. The result is a harmonic expansion that respects the folk source's simplicity yet elevates it, allowing vernacular music to blossom within complex, modern textures. This blending of the *familiar* (simple diatonic folk harmony) with the *foreign* (chromatic and experimental harmony) gave Mexican nationalist compositions a distinctive sound – warm and rooted, yet innovative. It echoed techniques used by Spanish composers like Manuel de Falla (who merged Andalusian modal folk themes with Debussy-esque harmony) and other Latin American composers such as Villa-Lobos, thereby placing Mexico's folk-based art music in an international context while retaining its unique harmonic character.

#### 1.4. Structural Considerations

When adapting folk material into concert works, Mexican composers also considered large-scale form, integrating traditional melodies within established classical structures like sonata-allegro, theme and variations, and rondo forms. Rather than simply stringing folk tunes together, many composers carefully fused folk content with Western classical architecture, achieving a synthesis of form and content. A clear example is Chávez's *Sinfonía India*, which, although a single-movement work, has a sectional design that matches that of the three-movement symphony. Chávez treats each indigenous melody as a thematic subject: one functions like an opening allegro theme, another as a slow movement, and the last as a finale theme, all played without break but fulfilling the roles of a multi-movement structure<sup>25</sup>. In effect, he places folk melodies into a symphonic argument, demonstrating that native material can undergo classical development (motivic fragmentation, modulation, recapitulation) just as European themes do. Similarly, Manuel M. Ponce often cast folk-based pieces in classical forms. His *Rapsodia Mexicana No. 2* (1913), which uses the Jarabe Tapatío tune, is structured as a rhapsody – a free but coherent form where the folk theme is introduced, varied, and reappears in new guises. Ponce also wrote more orthodox forms: for instance, his early piano works, and orchestral suites sometimes resemble dance

<sup>24</sup> Orbon, Julian. "Carlos Chavez's Symphonies." *Carlos Chavez and his World*. Ed. Leonora Saavedra. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2015. 62-76, p. 70.

<sup>25</sup> García Morillo, Roberto. *Carlos Chávez: Vida y obra*. Tiera Firme, Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1960, pp. 92-93.

suites or sonatinas where each movement draws on a folk-dance rhythm or melody, but the overall form (exposition-development-recapitulation) is maintained. By projecting Mexican melodies onto forms like the sonata-allegro or ABA song form, composers ensured their music was accepted on classical concert programs while still evoking the pueblo. Composer Blas Galindo, a student of Chávez, explicitly aimed to “*merge Mexico’s folk and popular music into formal classical forms*”, composing works such as concertos and symphonies that incorporate folk motifs within their traditional frameworks<sup>26</sup>. His *Sones de Mariachi* (1941) is essentially a folkloric medley arranged for orchestra, but it is artfully unified and symphonically developed, with recurring motifs and transitions that give it a rondo-like cohesion. In short, Mexican national composers demonstrated that folk material could serve not just as local color but as structurally significant thematic content in large-scale works.

The efforts of Mexican composers to naturalize folk elements in classical forms were part of a broader nationalist movement in music, influenced by European and Latin American precedents. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, European composers from nationalist schools had shown the way: Dvořák wove Bohemian folk-inspired themes into symphonies and string quartets, Edvard Grieg wrote Norwegian dances and folk songs within sonata forms, and Spanish composers like Isaac Albéniz and Manuel de Falla built entire works around indigenous dances (the *andaluz* dances, *cante jondo* songs, etc.) shaped into suites and ballets. This legacy was not lost on Mexican musicians. In fact, Mexican composers were often in dialogue (literally and figuratively) with their foreign counterparts. The Hungarian composer Béla Bartók, who famously collected folk songs and transformed them into art music, had a kindred spirit in Carlos Chávez. Chávez in 1930s was described as “*a kindred spirit to Béla Bartók... Like Bartók, Chávez synthesizes indigenous music with Western instrumentation*”<sup>27</sup>. The philosophy behind works like Chávez’s *Sinfonía India* closely parallels Bartók’s approach: using scholarly-collected folk melodies and placing them in symphonic form to create a nationalist statement within a European art form. There were direct personal connections as well. Ponce’s studies in Paris (with Paul Dukas) and friendships with composers like Manuel de Falla reinforced the idea that one’s own country’s melodies and dances could be elevated to high art. Indeed, Falla’s successful integration of Spanish folk idioms (e.g. in *El sombrero de tres*

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<sup>26</sup> Kahn, Joseph and Elizabeth Kahn. “Espiritu Latino.” n.d. *Austin Symphony*. [Accessed 7 3 2025]. Program-Notes-MW1.pdf

<sup>27</sup> Huston Symphony. *A Salute to Mexico’s Independence*. 7 9 2010. [Accessed 8 3 2025]. <<https://houstonssymphony.org/a-salute-to-mexicos-independence/#:~:text=the%20strength%20and%20durability%20of,folk%20music%20its%20elf>>.

*picos*) provided a template for Latin American composers. Mexican composers took these influences and forged their own path. They would embed a *son jalisciense* or a Yucatecan *jarana* into a sonata or a suite, much as European nationalists embedded polonaises or gigues into theirs, but often with an even stronger declarative purpose given Mexico's post-revolutionary cultural policies. By using Western classical forms as a vessel and Mexican folk elements as the content, composers like Chávez, Revueltas, Moncayo, Galindo, and Ponce created works that simultaneously paid homage to European structural craft and celebrated Mexican heritage. The synthesis of form and folk content in these works exemplifies the methods of adaptation and transformation at the heart of Mexican nationalist music: a dialogue between tradition and innovation, between the local and the cosmopolitan, ultimately yielding a rich repertoire that feels both familiar and new.

## 2. Case Study: Ponce's *Sonata for Violin and Piano*

Manuel M. Ponce's *Sonata for Violin and Piano* (sometimes called *Sonata Breve*, composed c.1930–32) is a showcase of Mexican musical nationalism filtered through a refined late-Romantic and Impressionist lens<sup>28</sup>. Like many nationalist composers of the early 20th century, Ponce deliberately integrated folk melodies, dance rhythms, and modal harmonies from his homeland into classical forms<sup>29</sup>. He had collected and harmonized hundreds of Mexican folk songs (*canciones*) and often used these or original folk-like themes as the basis for works in sonata, suite, or variation form<sup>30</sup>. Influenced by Mexican cultural figures (e.g. José Vasconcelos) who urged artists to develop a national style<sup>31</sup>, Ponce blended vernacular elements with European forms much as Bartók did with Hungarian folk music or Manuel de Falla with Spanish flamenco. However, Ponce's approach retained a lush lyricism and chromatic warmth – a product of his Romantic heritage and Parisian training with Paul

<sup>28</sup> Gaytan, Luis Francisco. *An introduction to the piano music of Manuel M. Ponce*. LSU Doctoral Dissertations, 2014, p. iii.

<sup>29</sup> Serres, Jean-Michael. *Notes on Manuel Ponce (1882–1948) and His Works*. 14 2 2025. [Accessed 8 3 2025]. <<https://www.jeanmichelserres.com/2025/02/14/notes-on-manuel-ponce-and-his-works/#gsc.tab=0>>

<sup>30</sup> Aguilar, Alexandro and Roger McVey. "The Folk Influences on the Piano Works of Manuel M. Ponce." 2023. *Scholarworks Boiesstate*. [Accessed 8 3 2025]. <<https://scholarworks.boiesstate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2546&context=icur#:~:text=,tap%20dance%29%20dancing>>.

<sup>31</sup> Serres, Jean-Michael. *Notes on Manuel Ponce (1882–1948) and His Works*. 14 2 2025. [Accessed 8 3 2025]. <<https://www.jeanmichelserres.com/2025/02/14/notes-on-manuel-ponce-and-his-works/#gsc.tab=0>>

Dukas – giving his folk adaptations a unique voice. Below is a movement-by-movement analysis, focusing on how Ponce adapts Mexican folk elements in melody, rhythm, and harmony, how he fits them into classical structures, and how the violin-piano duo interacts to bring these elements to life.

## 2.1. Historical and Stylistic Context

Manuel M. Ponce composed his *Sonata Breve* for violin and piano in 1930 while studying in Paris at the École Normale de Musique under the mentorship of Paul Dukas. This period marked a significant shift in Ponce's compositional style, as he absorbed elements of Neoclassicism and Impressionism, evident in his increasing use of modal harmonies, thematic economy, polytonality, and refined counterpoint<sup>32</sup>. Unlike his earlier, more overtly Romantic works, *Sonata Breve* reflects a growing interest in formal clarity and brevity, aligning with contemporary trends in French modernism. However, despite these European influences, Ponce's music remained deeply connected to his Mexican heritage.

The *Sonata Breve* exemplifies a fusion between French and Mexican idioms, integrating folk-inspired melodic contours, dance rhythms, and harmonic inflections within a refined chamber music setting. While Ponce does not explicitly quote Mexican folk material, he assimilates its modal characteristics, rhythmic flexibility, and improvisatory spirit into the structural framework of a violin-piano sonata. This case study examines how Ponce subtly adapts vernacular elements, transforming them into an idiomatic yet distinctly personal musical language.

## 2.2. Movement I: Allegretto Mosso – A Folk-Inspired Sonata Form

### 2.2.1. Melodic Adaptation

The first movement unfolds in a compact sonata-allegro form, structured around three primary themes, each shaped by Mexican folk influences. The first theme (A), introduced in the piano and later taken up by the violin in a progressive stepwise ascent, exhibits a distinctive cantabile lyricism with an improvisatory character, reminiscent of traditional Mexican *canciones* and their stepwise melodic motion. Unlike strict folk melodies, however, Ponce infuses the line with chromatic passing tones and wide intervallic leaps, enriching its expressivity.

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<sup>32</sup> Vazquez Medrano, Oscar. *The Romantic Style in the Piano Works of Manuel M. Ponce The Romantic Style in the Piano Works of Manuel M. Ponce*. University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2022, pp. 2-3.

### E.g. 1

**Allegretto mosso**

Violin

Piano (left hand)

*p*

*dolce*

*f*

12

Vln.

*f*

19

Vln.

*cresc.*

*f*

25

Vln.

**First theme introduced by the Piano (left hand),  
then taken over by the Violin, mm. 2-28.**

The second theme (B) contrasts the first by introducing wider interval leaps and syncopated rhythms, possibly evoking the rhythmic drive of Mexican *son huasteco*. This section's freer phrasing mirrors the spontaneous, non-repetitive nature of oral folk traditions, yet remains carefully structured within the sonata's harmonic framework.

The third theme (C) introduces a dance-like rhythmic energy, characterized by detached articulation, syncopation, and frequent hemiola shifts, hallmarks of Mexican *huapango* and *jarabe* traditions. Similar to the first theme, it is first introduced by the piano. Only several measures later will the violin reiterate it, in an imitative manner. Its punctuated accents and rapid violin figurations recall the violinistic style found in rural Mexican ensembles, reinforcing Ponce's ability to evoke folk idioms without direct quotation.

### E.g. 2

Violin

42

*p*

130

*p*

Piano

42

*p* *scherzando*

130

*p*

**Third theme: piano, mm. 42-43; violin, mm. 130-131.**

### 2.2.2. *Rhythmic and Harmonic Adaptation*

Ponce employs subtle rhythmic displacement throughout the first movement, creating a sense of fluidity and asymmetry that enlivens the sonata form. While the overall meter is stable, the interplay between the violin and piano introduces syncopated figures and rhythmic suspensions that momentarily obscure the underlying pulse.

Ponce's harmonic language in *Sonata Breve* incorporates modal colors and subtle chromatic shifts, enriching the work's tonal framework. While the sonata remains grounded in tonal organization, Ponce occasionally employs plagal cadences (IV-I) and parallel mode alterations (major-minor inflections) to soften tonal resolutions, lending a more fluid, folk-inspired quality. Additionally, his use of chromatic expansion and quartal harmonies in transitional passages introduces a harmonic flexibility that reflects his exposure to modernist techniques during his Parisian studies. Rather than fully abandoning tonal stability, Ponce refines it, creating a synthesis between classical form and folk-inspired harmonic expression<sup>33</sup>.

E.g. 3

The image shows a musical score for Violin and Piano. The Violin part is in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 2/4 time signature. It features a half note G4 (marked *sf*) and a half note F#4. The Piano part is in treble and bass clefs with the same key signature and time signature. The right hand features a chromatic descent: G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4. The left hand features a quartal structure: F#3, C4, F#3, C4.

Chromatic descent and quartal structures, mm. 60-61.

### 2.2.3. *Structural Considerations*

Despite its folk elements, the movement retains a coherent sonata structure, demonstrating Ponce's ability to assimilate vernacular material into a sophisticated formal design. The development section fragments and recombines motivic elements, treating the themes with contrapuntal interplay that showcases the dialogue between violin and piano. This section also intensifies chromaticism and harmonic ambiguity, momentarily destabilizing the folk-like simplicity of the exposition before a recapitulation that reaffirms the thematic material, now subtly transformed through motivic variation.

<sup>33</sup> Covarrubias Ahedo, Virginia. *Three Main Chamber Music Works for Strings and Piano by the Mexican Composer Manuel M. Ponce*. Miami: University of Miami, 2008, pp. 70-71.



## 2.3. Movement II: Adagio – A Mexican *Canción* Reimagined

### 2.3.1. Melodic and Expressive Adaptation

The second movement functions as a short lyrical intermezzo, stretched on the span of 16 measures, evoking the sentimentality of Mexican serenades and *canción ranchera* traditions. It is divided into three sections, each individualized by its own melodic profile, unrelated to the others. The violin presents a long-breathed, deeply expressive melody, characterized by ornamental slides (portamenti), expressive appoggiaturas, and phrase-ending sigh motives, all techniques commonly associated with folk vocal styles. These expressive means are not necessarily indicated verbatim by the score, but the aesthetic, melodic and harmonic profile of the movement strongly supports and encourages an extended interpretative personal license on the part of the performers. Ponce's melody retains the flexibility and quasi-improvised nature of oral tradition but is sculpted into a refined through-composed form that eliminates the strict periodic repetition found in many folk tunes.

E.g. 4

First section of the second movement, mm. 1-3.

### 2.3.2. Rhythmic and Harmonic Treatment

Unlike the first movement's dance-like rhythms, the Adagio is rhythmically free, mimicking the fluid pacing of a sung *canción*. Ponce employs rubato-like phrasing, allowing the violin to stretch its melodic line in an almost vocal fashion. Beneath this, the piano provides a delicate accompaniment reminiscent of guitar strumming.

**E.g. 5**

Violin  
Piano  
cresc. ed animando  
cresc. ed animando  
f  
f  
p  
pp  
g

**Third section of the second movement, mm. 12-16.**

Harmonically, this movement explores chromatic inflections and modal mixture, frequently shifting between major and minor modes to heighten expressivity. The use of extended tertian harmonies and impressionistic sonorities (e.g., added sixths, unresolved suspensions, and whole-tone progressions) lends an ethereal, introspective quality, further bridging folk and modernist aesthetics and, also, bearing witness to the French impressionistic influence that Ponce's compositional style undertook during his years in Paris.

## **2.4. Movement III: *Allegro alla spagnuola* – A Folk Dance Transformed**

### **2.4.1. *Spanish and Mexican Dance Influences***

The final movement introduces a fiery, rhythmically driven character marked "*alla spagnuola*", signaling a hybrid of Spanish flamenco and Mexican *son* dance rhythms. The primary theme is built on rapid violin figuration and syncopated piano accompaniment, resembling the percussive drive of Andalusian *zapateado* and the virtuosic improvisatory violin flourishes of *son huasteco*.

E.g. 6

Violin

Piano

$\text{♩} = 76$   
**Allegro alla spagnuola**

*p sautillé légèrement*

*pp*

Third movement, typical *huasteco* violin structure, mm. 1-4.

Ponce's adaptation of flamenco elements is particularly evident in the harmonic structure. The movement is grounded in the Phrygian mode, a characteristic of Spanish folk music, but Ponce modifies it by raising the third degree (creating a "false Phrygian" effect), a common practice in flamenco and mariachi traditions. This adaptation lends a distinctly Mexican identity to what initially appears to be an Iberian gesture<sup>34</sup>.

#### 2.4.2. Harmonic and Structural Transformation

The movement employs hemiola rhythms and rapid shifts between triple and duple meter, reinforcing the folk dance's kinetic energy. Ponce's syncopated left-hand piano figures resemble strumming patterns found in Spanish guitar accompaniment, while the violin's rapid bowing techniques emulate the aggressive articulation of flamenco and *huapango* fiddlers.

E.g. 7

Violin

Piano

*p légèrement*

*p*

Vln.

Pno.

*f*

Third movement, *huapango* style accompaniament, mm. 25-32.

<sup>34</sup> Covarrubias Ahedo, Virginia. *Three Main Chamber Music Works for Strings and Piano by the Mexican Composer Manuel M. Ponce*. Miami: University of Miami, 2008, p. 79.

Structurally, Ponce favors a rondo-like episodic form, with a recurring A theme punctuated by contrasting sections. The B and C sections introduce lyrical interludes, providing relief from the movement's rhythmic intensity while preserving folk-inspired melodic gestures, specific to *cante jondo*.

E.g. 8

The image displays a musical score for the third movement of Manuel Ponce's Sonata for Violin and Piano, specifically measures 47-60. The score is written for Violin (Vln.) and Piano (Pno.) in 3/8 time. It features a recurring 'cante jondo' melody. The Violin part (Vln.) and Piano part (Pno.) are shown. The Piano part includes dynamic markings such as *p* (piano) and *sf* (sforzando). The score is divided into three systems, with measure numbers 7, 12, and 17 indicated at the beginning of each system.

Third movement, *cante jondo* melody, mm. 47-60.

The coda accelerates, culminating in a flamenco-inspired percussive passage, where violin double stops and forceful piano chords mimic the interplay of dancers and guitarists.

## 2.5. Conclusion: Ponce's Folk-Classical Synthesis

Ponce's *Sonata Breve* represents a masterful synthesis of Mexican folk idioms and European chamber music traditions, bridging vernacular inspiration and classical refinement. Through melodic stylization, rhythmic

adaptation, harmonic expansion, and formal integration, Ponce demonstrates that folk material need not remain in its original form to retain cultural significance. His approach aligns with the broader nationalist movements in early 20th-century music, paralleling composers like Bartók, de Falla, and Ginastera. However, his lyricism, harmonic warmth, and subtlety of folk integration distinguish him within the Mexican nationalist school. The *Sonata Breve* stands as an exemplary model of how a composer can honor folk tradition while transforming it into a sophisticated art music expression, ensuring its continuity and evolution within the concert repertoire.

## Conclusion

The adaptation and transformation of Mexican vernacular elements in composed art music illustrate the fluid relationship between folk traditions and classical concert music. This study has explored how composers like Manuel M. Ponce integrated melodies, rhythms, and harmonic structures derived from Mexican folk music into composed works, particularly through the lens of his *Sonata for Violin and Piano*. By situating this work within the broader context of nationalist movements in music, we have seen how the incorporation of folk elements serves both as a means of cultural preservation and as an avenue for innovation.

The first chapter provided an overview of how composers across Europe and Latin America sought to define national identities through folk materials. In Mexico, a similar movement emerged with composers such as Carlos Chávez, Silvestre Revueltas, José Pablo Moncayo, and Blas Galindo, each contributing to a distinct national sound through the transformation of indigenous and mestizo musical traditions. Ponce's role in this movement was particularly significant, as he not only collected and harmonized folk music but also embedded its stylistic traits into sophisticated concert compositions.

The second chapter analyzed the various methods of adaptation used in composed music, focusing on melodic integration, rhythmic adaptation, harmonic expansion, and structural considerations. It highlighted how Ponce and his contemporaries adapted folk melodies either through direct quotation or stylized reinvention, while also manipulating dance rhythms and metric patterns such as the *sesquiáltera* to imbue their compositions with a distinctly Mexican character. Harmonic expansion allowed composers to elevate simple diatonic folk harmonies into complex tonal landscapes, incorporating chromaticism and modal shifts. Structurally, Mexican folk material was successfully integrated into classical forms such as sonata-allegro, ABA song forms, and rondo structures, demonstrating that vernacular idioms could thrive within Western compositional frameworks.

The third chapter provided an overview of Ponce's *Sonata for Violin and Piano*, offering concrete examples of how these adaptation techniques were employed within a single work. The sonata's first movement illustrated Ponce's ability to craft original themes that retain a folk character while undergoing classical development. The second movement revealed his skill in transforming a *canción*-like melody into an expressive violin-piano duet, enriched by harmonic and textural sophistication. Finally, the energetic third movement showcased his treatment of dance rhythms, blending *huapango* and *jarabe* influences with virtuosic violin writing and a dynamic interplay between the instruments. Through this analysis, it became clear that Ponce did not simply arrange folk music but reimagined it, allowing traditional elements to evolve within the art music tradition while retaining their core expressive qualities.

Overall, this article has demonstrated that the adaptation of folk elements in Mexican composed music is a process of both preservation and transformation. Composers like Manuel Ponce engaged in a delicate balance, ensuring that the essence of folk material was maintained while expanding its artistic potential through compositional techniques. This approach has not only enriched Mexico's classical music repertoire but has also contributed to the ongoing dialogue between vernacular traditions and composed art music. The continued interest in folk integration by contemporary composers suggests that this synthesis remains a fertile ground for artistic exploration, reflecting the dynamic nature of cultural identity in music. Future research could further investigate how modern composers continue to engage with these traditions in contemporary compositions, examining how digital media and cross-cultural exchange influence the evolution of folk elements in today's classical music landscape.

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ADAPTATION AND TRANSFORMATION OF MEXICAN VERNACULAR ELEMENTS IN ART MUSIC:  
A CASE STUDY OF MANUEL PONCE'S *SONATA FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO*

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## OVERTURE “SHÉHÉRAZADE” BY MAURICE RAVEL: GENRE AND SEMANTIC PROJECTIONS

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GANNA RIZAIEVA<sup>3</sup> 

**SUMMARY.** The article is devoted to the study of the genre specificity of M. Ravel's overture de féerie “*Shéhérazade*” (1898) and the identification of its important semantic aspects. The non-traditional genre definition of the composition as an overture de féerie reveals the composer's desire to *actualize* the theatrical context known to the listener (the féerie genre). The composer seems to extend the “exotic” semantic layer, given in the title by the name of the heroine of the Arabian tales “One Thousand and One Nights”, to the “stereophonic” space of the féerie, and the orchestra completely takes over all the functions of creating the physical and metaphysical dimensions of the féerie. The multidimensionality of the national theatrical genre of the féerie is “folded” in the “*Shéhérazade*” *overture* into an orchestral space that contains multilevel projections of the unfolding of extra-musical meanings. This is how the connections between the first orchestral composition and the compositions of the following years - “Waltz” (“choreographic poem”) and “Bolero” (“ballet for orchestra”) – are revealed. The unity of plastic and sound gestures, sensual and deeply hidden from thoughts fantasies will remain a distinctive characteristic of Maurice Ravel's thinking until his last compositions.

**Keywords:** Maurice Ravel, Shéhérazade, overture de féerie, genre innovation, semantic projection, Orientalism.

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## Introduction

The compositions of Maurice Ravel attract performers and researchers with original artistic concepts that reveal the uniqueness of the composer's style system and the independence of genre solutions. From the very first opuses, the composer follows his own path, and his "voice" immediately becomes noticeable in the colorful sound context of the French musical culture of the fin de siècle.

Among Ravel's earliest compositions, which clearly reveal the individual "Me" of their author, is the overture de féerie "*Shéhérazade*" (1898), based on the Arabian tales "One Thousand and One Nights". A few years later, the composer wrote another composition with the same title, but with completely different genre parameters – "*Shéhérazade*" (Three Poems for Voice and Orchestra) (1903) based on poems by Tristan Klingsor.

Both compositions embody dissimilar artistic ideas and have independent concepts. Their performance fate also developed in a different way. "Three Poems for Voice and Orchestra" (Durand, 1914), published during the composer's lifetime, put the overture de féerie on the sidelines for a long time, and its score was published only in 1975 (S.E.M.U.P. et A.R.I.M.A., New York). And Ravel's critical references in his "Autobiographical Sketch" about "the significant influence of Russian composers"<sup>4</sup> on him while working on his unfinished opera "*Shéhérazade*" in the late 90s of the XIX century further consolidated the later vocal and orchestral version of *Shéhérazade* as original and artistically perfect. To this day, the focus of researchers' attention is mainly on the composer's interpretation of the semantic space of Arabic fairy tales through the prism of Tristan Klingsor's prose poetic texts, although they do not ignore the "*Shéhérazade*" overture<sup>5</sup>.

Both of the composer's early compositions are represented in contemporary music practice, so studying the genre and style parameters of Ravel's orchestral debut is a necessary step in understanding the unique artistic world of the French artist. The "*Shéhérazade*" overture reveals important features of Ravel's musical thinking. So, let's focus on its exceptional genre characteristics and methods of implementing the author's idea.

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<sup>4</sup> Ravel Maurice. *Esquisse autobiographique*. Maurice Ravel. L'intégrale – Correspondance (1895–1937) écrits et entretiens. Sous la direction de Manuel Cornejo. Paris : Le Passeur, p. 1438.

<sup>5</sup> Marnat, M. *Maurice Ravel*. Paris: Fayard, 1995; Roger, Nichols. *Ravel*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011.

## 2. "Overture de Féerie": Specifics of the Genre Definition

In November 1898 Ravel finished his first composition for symphony orchestra, the overture de féerie "Shéhérazade". At this time, he was a student of Gabriel Fauré's class at the Paris Conservatoire and already had creative experience of working with chamber vocal and piano genres (in the Catalog of the composer's compositions compiled by M. Mame, the "Shéhérazade" overture is marked as O.17<sup>6</sup>). However, in the field of large forms it was the composer's debut and the prevailing negative reviews of contemporaries at the premiere testify to the fact how alien Ravel's artistic ideas remained to them.

Already the definition of the genre shows the originality of the composer's idea. The author's definition of "**overture de féerie**" refers to the French theatrical genre of "féerie", the basis of which was fantastic plots, miraculous transformations, vivid visual effects and the synthesis of various artistic languages (words, music, gesture and dance). Its origins are in spectacular productions of the ballet de cour and comédie-ballet, in which visual, verbal and musical expression of the plot were intricately woven into an exciting illusion. Jean-Philippe Rameau<sup>7</sup> is considered the creator of the "opéra-féerie" genre. The fusion of mythological and magical plans of plot unfolding, magical twists and turns of action, and the possibility of immersing the audience in a reality far away from the commonplace and everyday life, characteristic of the opéra-féerie, explained the great popularity of the genre, explained the great popularity of the genre on the French theater stage of the next romantic XIX century (opéras-féerie "*La fée aux roses*" by Fromental Halévy (1849), "*La Chatte blanche*" (1852) by des Frères Cogniard, "*Le Roi d'Ys*" by Édouard Lalo (1888), "*Isoline*" by André Messager (1888), etc.).

Of course, as a fine connoisseur of national traditions, Ravel was well aware of this stratum of French culture, which is why his reflection in the definition of "overture de féerie" seems particularly important for understanding the author's intention. The author's unusual definition of the genre is all the more impossible to ignore, given how carefully Ravel always searched for the right word to express his ideas. Hinting at the theatrical context known to the listener, the composer seems to extend the "exotic" semantic layer to the "stereophonic"

<sup>6</sup> Marnat, M. *Maurice Ravel*. Paris: Fayard, 1995. p. 730

<sup>7</sup> Regarding the use of the term "opéra-féerie," the authors of the article "Opéra féerie" in The New Grove Dictionary write: «While the term opéra féerie was uncommon in the 18th century (although it did exist, e.g. Dezède's Alcindor, 1787), and entered the current vocabulary only after 1800, modern scholars use it with justice to refer to these earlier works». In: Bartlett, M., Elizabeth, C. *Opéra féerie*. Grove Music Online: website. Link: <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.18674>

space of the *féerie* given in the title by the name of the heroine of the Arabian fairy tales “One Thousand and One Nights”. It should be emphasized that he is writing not a composition for the stage, “but an orchestral piece”. Therefore, **the orchestra** fully assumes all the functions of creating **the multi-dimensional space of the *féerie*, its physical and metaphysical dimensions**.

In the light of the above-mentioned, we should note that at the same time the semantic projections of the genre of the *féerie* attracted Maurice Maeterlinck, a brilliant contemporary of Ravel, a Belgian symbolist writer. He labeled his famous play “The Blue Bird” (1908) as “*Féerie en six actes et douze tableaux*”. Related artistic ideas of the writer are subtly commented on by modern researchers, emphasizing that the *féerie* should be understood here **as a special semantic matrix of the “vision of the world” as a unity of the visible and invisible**<sup>8</sup>. Proceeding from the fact that art “must obstruct the obvious visibility of things in order to penetrate into their essence”, Maeterlinck finds in the *féerie* “a means of depicting his irrational worldview and rediscovering this magical space of indivisibility, the inseparability of man and the universe”<sup>9</sup>. Then “people no longer seem isolated, but immersed in their relationship with the whole world. They are part of a network of correspondences circulating through the universe, linking humans and animals, animate and inanimate beings, things on and under the Earth, sounds, colors and elements”.<sup>10</sup>

The semantic fields outlined above are close to the spiritual world of Ravel, a refined Dandy who devoted his entire life to the Service of Beauty and the identification of the unity of its laws in life and art. We see strikingly close reasoning in his article of 1931: “For me there are not many arts, but only one: Music, painting and literature differ only in the means of expression. Therefore, there are not different types of artists, but only different types of *spécialistes*”.<sup>11</sup> The creation of ideal artistic structures in which all elements would merge into a whole determines the composer’s main creative routes. On this path, the “*fantasie lyrique*” “*L’Enfant et les Sortilèges*” (1925) becomes a vivid expression of Ravel’s creative credo. It unites not only different artistic languages, but also the fictional and the real (autobiographical) into a unique space of true *féerie*. It is remarkable that already in his first orchestral composition, Ravel, with genius insight, “rolled up” all the intentions of his

<sup>8</sup> Vandenborre, Katia. *Analyse comparative de la féerie chez Maeterlinck et Wyspiański. La Noce face au premier théâtre de Maeterlinck*, TRANS- [En línea], 8/ 2009. Link: <http://journals.openedition.org/trans/348>

<sup>9</sup> Op.cit.

<sup>10</sup> Gorceix, Paul. *De La Princesse Maleine à La Princesse Isabelle. Essai sur le théâtre de Maeterlinck*. Maurice Maeterlinck, Œuvres II : théâtre I, Bruxelles, Complexe, 1999. p. 11.

<sup>11</sup> Ravel, M. *Mes souvenirs d'enfant paresseux*. Maurice Ravel. L'intégrale – Correspondance (1895–1937) écrits et entretiens. Sous la direction de Manuel Cornejo. Paris : Le Passeur. p. 1443.

further creative movement into a fifteen-minute orchestral canvas, leaving the label "overture de féerie" on the surface of his artistic ideas.

However, the author's genre definition went unnoticed by his contemporaries, and the "guiding star" for understanding the music of the overture was its title "Shéhérazade". It clearly resonated with the total fascination of European society with the East at the end of the XIX century, when Orientalism dominated in the decorative elements of architectural ensembles and paintings; it was evident in the "oriental" details of the closet of the Parisian artistic elite and the organization of interiors; it flourished in the decoration of ceremonial salons with Japanese prints, Chinese gravures, valuable examples of oriental weapons and showcases with exquisite exotic trinkets. In line with this fascination was also the success of "oriental" compositions of Russian composers in Paris. "Antar", "Shéhérazade", "Sadko" by N. Rimsky-Korsakov, "Tamara" by M. Balakirev, included in the concert program of the World Universal Exhibition in 1889, were well known to French listeners. It is quite natural that on reading the title Shéhérazade, the audience expected to hear another variant of the interpretation of the popular plot of Arabian fairy tales, and the parallels with Rimsky-Korsakov's "Shéhérazade" were on the surface.

Certainly, Ravel was not aloof from these ideas that had taken hold of French society. According to the testimony of Ravel's friend Ricardo Viñes, during the Exhibition in Paris the composer spent hours in Kampong, a reconstruction of a village on the island of Java, which became a genuine sensation and surprised visitors to the Exhibition with the unconventional sounds of Indonesian musical instruments and the dances of graceful dancers. Perhaps it was this experience of combining the mesmerizing grace of movements and the sound of gamelan, when the visible and audible were combined in a new and unusual reality, that became the basis for the artistic conception of Ravel's first orchestral composition.

In addition, an important source of Ravel's artistic ideas were his contacts with prominent representatives of French culture of the time. Thanks to G. Fauré, who always showed concern for his students, Ravel was accepted by representatives of the Parisian artistic elite, united around "*La Revue blanche*" – one of the best magazines in Paris. Here André Gide, Jules Renard, Guillaume Apollinaire, Paul Claudel, Stéphane Mallarmé, and other prominent French figures discussed the pressing issues of modern life. In particular, Joseph-Charles Mardrus, a great connoisseur of Eastern culture, who realized a new "authentic" translation of the tales of "*One Thousand and One Nights*", was often mentioned<sup>12</sup>. This may also have encouraged Ravel to conceive

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<sup>12</sup> The first edition of the tales of "One Thousand and One Nights" in Europe was published in 1704. In a new translation by Joseph Charles Mardrus, the tales were published from 1899 to 1904 (16 volumes in total).

of his first opera, “Shéhérazade”. As a result, only the “overture de féerie” was finished, for which the composer chose a triple orchestra with an expanded group of percussion instruments. And this fact should also be noted as extraordinary in the career of a novice composer who boldly used a huge orchestral composition in his first composition, requiring great skill and musical taste on the part of the composer.

“Shéhérazade” was performed in a concert of the National Society on May 27, 1899 under the baton of the author and immediately showed the complexities of understanding Ravel’s music. For the composer, who was still a student at the conservatory, the opportunity to hear his composition in a concert of the National Society was a rare chance to make a name for himself. Gabriel Fauré played a major role in organizing this concert, insisting that his student overcome his shyness and submit the score for consideration, and ensuring that the National Society committee accepted the composition of an unknown young composer.

It is interesting from the standpoint of the present day to see how the story of the preparation of the overture for the premiere unfolded. Having received an approving score, Ravel had to prepare and scrutinize the musical text in all the parts himself, since the National Society was “saving money as much as possible”<sup>13</sup>. Vincent d’Indy, who was to conduct the overture, wrote to the author of “Shéhérazade” on April 29, 1899, that he needed to discuss the details of the performance of the composition, which “is not yet clear in all its details in my mind”<sup>14</sup>. It is significant that in the very next letter this authoritative musician, out of inertia, calls “Shéhérazade” a “**poème symphonique**”, apologizing that “circumstances prevent him from conducting the composition”<sup>15</sup>.

Fauré was very worried about this situation. He lamented that Ravel, who spent all day copying parts, was in such a difficult position<sup>16</sup>. As a result, the composer himself took the console, appearing in front of the public for the first time both as the author of an orchestral work and as a conductor.

“Shéhérazade” was not welcomed by the audience and drowned in the noise of indignant whistles and stomping. Ricardo Viñes described the evening of the premiere in his diary like this: “I was the only one who confronted

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<sup>13</sup> d’Indy, Vincent. Lettre à Maurice Ravel № 5 de 29.04.1899. Maurice Ravel. *L’intégrale – Correspondance (1895–1937) écrits et entretiens*. Sous la direction de Manuel Cornejo. Paris : Le Passeur, p. 67.

<sup>14</sup> Op. cit. p. 67.

<sup>15</sup> d’Indy, Vincent. Lettre à Maurice Ravel № 6 de 8 ou 15.05.1899. Maurice Ravel. *L’intégrale – Correspondance (1895–1937) écrits et entretiens*. Sous la direction de Manuel Cornejo. Paris : Le Passeur, p. 67.

<sup>16</sup> Fauré, G. Lettre à Ernest Chausson № 7 de 20.05.1899. Maurice Ravel. *L’intégrale – Correspondance (1895–1937) écrits et entretiens*. Sous la direction de Manuel Cornejo. Paris: Le Passeur, p. 68.

the entire hall, shouting 'bravo,' 'bravo,' 'bravo,' standing up, applauding with all my might, in such a way that everyone had to pay attention to me. In fact, Ravel deserved it, because he had talent, he was young and unknown to everyone"<sup>17</sup>.

After the concert, official criticism literally attacked the composer. Pierre Lalo, who remained hostile to Ravel until the end of his career, was particularly polemical. Lalo's review, published in the authoritative "Temps" on June 13, 1899, testified to his fierce rejection of the conception of the composition, his misunderstanding of the principles of form and the logic of the movement of the material: "In reality, "Shéhérazade" consists of a sequence of very short fragments connected to each other only superficially. It is 10 bars, or 15, or 30, which seem to expound an idea; then suddenly there is a completely different material and again another. It is not known where it comes from or where it is going. To call this **rhapsody** an overture "built on a classical model"<sup>18</sup>, Ravel must have had great naivety or imagination; unless he is mocking us"<sup>19</sup>.

This rather pejorative definition of "rhapsody" used by the critic for a symphonic composition of the late XIX century is quite revealing, which speaks eloquently of how unnoticed the composer's methods of combining the musical elements of the orchestral fabric remained. And yet, paying tribute to the sophistication of Ravel's harmonic language and the colorfulness of the sound of individual episodes, Lalo admitted that "he could have made a great artist". Therefore, "we should wish Mr. Ravel not to neglect unity and to think more often of Beethoven"<sup>20</sup> [ibid].

Similar reviews appeared in other publications, expressing the hope that a great future could await Ravel, provided he worked hard, further improved his compositional technique and developed his own style, different from Debussy, Satie and the Russians.

The wise Fauré advised Ravel not to pay attention to criticism and believed that the very attention to the young composer's name and the atmosphere of scandal around him was extremely useful. As for the unfair

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<sup>17</sup> Marnat, M. *Maurice Ravel*. Paris: Fayard, 1995. p. 91.

<sup>18</sup> The program of the concert included the author's commentary on the composition, which explained the compositional intent of the overture; Ravel wrote that the overture was "built on **the model of classical overtures**": "the piece opens with an introduction in which the theme of "Shéhérazade", given to the oboe, is carried on by the French horns and trumpets. Then the overture in the true sense of the word begins. *The first part*: the initial motif in B-minor; development - the Theme of the episode (with the trumpets expounding the second motif in F sharp major), inspired by a Persian melody - Conclusion of the first part. *Second part*: development of four themes - Pedal based on an increase of the original motive. *Third part*: return of the first and second motives in simultaneity. *Recapitulation of the introduction*, which is fulfilling the role of a coda". In: Marnat, M. *Maurice Ravel*. Paris: Fayard, 1995. p. 92.

<sup>19</sup> Marnat, M. *Maurice Ravel*. Paris: Fayard, 1995. p. 92.

<sup>20</sup> Op.cit. p. 92.



assessments and judgments of reviewers, he was sure that very soon these opinions would be refuted.

Ravel himself was rather pleased with his conducting debut and the premiere of the overture. In a letter to Florent Schmitt (dated June 9, 1899) he wrote: "As this ... (choose your own epithet) quite accurately pointed out, "Shéhérazade" was greatly booed. True, they applauded too, and I must admit, for the love of truth, that there was more applause than whistles: I was even called twice. D'Indy, who, however, had kept a perfect attitude towards me, exulted that at least something had stirred up the passions. As far as I could tell from the conductor's desk, I had succeeded in the orchestration. Everyone found it colorful; and "Menestrel" even declared it "curious"<sup>21</sup>.

Ravel's student and friend Manuel Rosenthal recalled that the composer later spoke disparagingly of his first symphonic composition: "He was ashamed of it, which is why it was not published. Laughing at himself, he said that the whole-tone scales used here were enough for him to last a lifetime! Also, it is very poorly orchestrated. And finally, there's **nothing** here, it's horrible."<sup>22</sup>.

Ravel's assessment seems overly harsh. The composer still managed to say his own word, and it is hard to believe in the sincerity of his words that there is "nothing in this composition". In this context, it is important to note that later, Ravel would say something similar about his brilliant "Bolero": "My masterpiece? It is the "Bolero". But unfortunately, *it has no music*"<sup>23</sup>. We should also emphasize that "Bolero" (according to the genre definition "ballet for orchestra") was the composer's last theatrical composition, summing up his numerous references to various *stage genres* (opera, ballet and dance *divertissements*). Thus, between the earliest and the last orchestral composition, a kind of arch emerges, encompassing Ravel's entire path and revealing the remarkable integrity of his creative principles and aesthetic guidelines.

So, impressive replacements of the author's genre definition (symphonic poem, rhapsody), as well as the use in modern practice of the genre definition "overture" without the author's specification "féerie" make it difficult to understand the semantic levels of the composition. It seems that it is the definition of "féerie" that indicates the main characteristics of the content – *exclusion from the ordinary context, the charm of fantasy and fiction*. The title "Shéhérazade" suggests little to the listener, and what becomes important is what lies beyond the sphere of the purely musical.

<sup>21</sup> Ravel, M. Lettre à Florent Schmitt № 9 de 9.06.1899. Maurice Ravel. L'intégrale – Correspondance (1895–1937) écrits et entretiens. Sous la direction de Manuel Cornejo. Paris : Le Passeur, p. 69.

<sup>22</sup> Ravel. Souvenirs de Manuel Rosenthal / recueillis par Marcel Marnat. Paris: Hazan, 1995. p. 71.

<sup>23</sup> Marnat M. *Maurice Ravel*. p. 635.

What the young composer was really thinking about can only be answered by studying the score of the overture, which should be given independent attention.

## Conclusion

Already in his early composition, Ravel seeks to delineate the semantic space of his music through an appeal to an unconventional genre model. The definition of "Shéhérazade" as an overture de féerie indicates that the main meanings of the composition should not be sought in the musical portraits of the protagonist (Shéhérazade) or in the sound illustrations of the stories she tells. Actualizing a powerful layer of national culture represented by the theatrical féerie, Ravel emphasizes by genre definition the idea of creating a *new artistic world* in which the author's fantasies and his voice merge.

In none of his "Shéhérazades" (1899 and 1903) did the composer seek to portray an "authentic Orient." Ravel's individual vision of the Orient as the Other, as a space of freedom of the spirit, persisted throughout his life, until his last unrealized composition inspired by a trip to Baghdad (the opera "Morgiana"<sup>24</sup>).

The multidimensionality of the theatrical genre of féerie, which traditionally requires synthetic scenes, is "rolled up" in the "Shéhérazade" overture into **an orchestral space** that accommodates multi-level projections of the unfolding of extramusical meanings. This reveals the links between the first orchestral composition and the compositions of the following years – "Waltz" ("choreographic poem") and "Bolero" ("ballet for orchestra"). The unity of plastic and sound gesture, of sensual fantasies and deeply hidden reflections, will remain a distinctive characteristic of Maurice Ravel's thinking until the very last of his compositions.

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<sup>24</sup> Only 10 pages of sketches dating back to 1932 have been saved.

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## “THEME OF THE STAR AND THE CROSS” – CHRISTIAN SYMBOLS IN OLIVIER MESSIAEN’S “VINGT REGARDS SUR L’ENFANT-JESUS”

RALUCA RAD<sup>1</sup> 

**SUMMARY.** Olivier Messiaen wanted his music to express of his profound Catholic faith, and many of his instrumental works written for the concert hall have an overt religious message. The Star of Bethlehem and the Cross of Golgotha, the most powerful symbols of Christianity, stand at the beginning and the end of Christ’s earthly life. The connection between the birth of Jesus and His death on the cross in theological texts and pictorial representations in Christian art is briefly surveyed. The study focuses on the way Messiaen gave a musical expression to this connection by using similar motifs and themes in movements depicting the joy of the Nativity and movements expressing the sorrow of the Passion. Relevant movements in which the composer uses the so-called Boris motif are presented, followed by an in-depth analysis of the “Theme of the star and the cross” in the piano cycle *Vingt Regards sur l’Enfant-Jésus*.

**Keywords:** Messiaen, theology, Christian symbols, Nativity and Passion, art, musical analysis

### Introduction

“To write poetry means to invent Symbols, and to understand poetry means to understand symbols. The truly creative musician can only be understood by viewing him as a poet. He may claim as his right that one penetrates his symbolic world, seeks to open it up and, by participating in it, corresponds to his will for the ideal binding of spirits.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Schering, Arnold. *Das Symbol in der Musik*. Leipzig: Koehler & Amelang, 1941, p. 144-145.



Olivier Messiaen, indisputably one of the most “truly creative musicians” of the twentieth century, and a fervent catholic, makes ample use of symbolism in his instrumental music. In this study we illuminate some aspects of the relationship of Nativity (respectively Epiphany), symbolized by the Star of Bethlehem and Passion, symbolized by the Cross of Golgotha, as well as their conflation in art and in the music of Messiaen.

## Messiaen and theology

“Born a catholic”, the composer declared that “the illumination of the theological truths of the Catholic faith, is the first aspect of my work, the noblest, and no doubt the most valuable [...]”<sup>3</sup>. Messiaen had a broad theological knowledge and is considered by several authors, both religious and secular<sup>4</sup>, to be himself a theologian. “Not only ... do I adhere to the faith, but I have studied theology ... and have tried in many of my works, in fact in most of my works, to depict the mysteries of the faith.”<sup>5</sup>

Among the works of modern theologians who influenced Messiaen most are the writings of Dom Columba Marmion (1858-1923), and in particular his *Le Christ dans ses Mystères* (*Christ in His mysteries*) from 1919. When Messiaen was a novice church organist, his confessor recommended him the book, as a help with understanding of the liturgical cycle. The young musician was in awe. “I have discovered a magnificent book [...] each mystery of Christ is analyzed according to the offices of the liturgical year, [...] Each mystery has its specific beauty, its particular splendor as well as its own grace.”<sup>6</sup> The book directly influenced Messiaen’s piano cycle *Vingt Regards sur l’Enfant-Jésus*<sup>7</sup>. Marmion’s “theology of hope, based on an understanding of God’s love for all his creatures<sup>8</sup> might also have been influential for Messiaen’s “theology of joy”. “In principle I am a musician of joy, and it pleases me above all to meditate on the glorious mysteries.”<sup>9</sup> Messiaen’s music is based on the

<sup>3</sup> Samuel, Claude & Olivier Messiaen. *Musique et couleur*. Paris : Belfond, 1986, p. 20-21.

<sup>4</sup> Père Pascal Ide, Père Jean-Rodolphe Kars, Andrew Shenton.

<sup>5</sup> Murray, Michael. “An Interview with Olivier Messiaen.” *Diapason* 70/1 (No. 829), December 1978, pp. 3-5, p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Massin, Brigitte. *Olivier Messiaen, un poétique du merveilleux*. Aix-en-Provence: Editions Alinea, 1989, p. 68, 70.

<sup>7</sup> “Twenty contemplations of the infant Jesus”, henceforth referred to as *Vingt Regards*.

<sup>8</sup> Moës, Luc, O.S.B. “Dom Columba Marmion. A precursor and logistical survey for Springtime.” *Newsletter of Blessed Columba Marmion*, Courrier n° 14, 2008, p. 110.

<sup>9</sup> Meltzheim, Irène & Ide, père Pascal (1991), « Le musicien de la joie », entretien avec Olivier Messiaen, cited in Joachim Havard de la Montagne, (1992). *Olivier Messiaen. Musica et memoria*, 1991.

"Theologia Glorïae" as opposed to what is called "Theologia Crucis"<sup>10</sup>. He wrote two monumental cycles devoted to the Nativity (*La Nativité du Seigneur*<sup>11</sup> for organ, 1935 and *Vingt Regards*, 1944), but "surprisingly, there is no actual Passion work by Messiaen, which has earned him the accusation that he emphasizes the "Theologia gloriæ" too much<sup>12</sup>. However, a few movements in the composer's oeuvre are devoted to Christ's Passion, among others the first movement (dedicated to the cross) of the symphonic meditation *Les Offrandes oubliées*, (*The forgotten Offerings* 1930, version for piano 1931), *Jésus accepte la souffrance* (*Jesus accepts suffering*, seventh movement of *La Nativité*), *Amen de l'agonie de Jésus* (*Amen of Jesus' agony*, third movement of the cycle for two pianos *Visions de l'Amen* 1943), *Regard de la Croix*<sup>13</sup> (*Contemplation of the cross*, seventh movement of *Vingt Regards*) and the first scene, intitled "La croix", of the opera *Saint François d'Assise*, (premiere 1983).

In *Vingt Regards*, among the "gazers" that contemplate the infant Jesus, Messiaen lists a few "immaterial or symbolic creatures: the Time, the Heights, the Silence, the Star, the Cross"<sup>14</sup>. The composer gives the star and the cross the same musical theme *Thème de l'étoile et de la croix* (Example 5c) "because one opens and the other closes the earthly period of Jesus."<sup>15</sup>

Theological texts have pointed to the inherent relationship between the birth of Jesus and His death on the cross. Don Columba Marmion cites Saint Paul: "As St. Paul teaches us, it was from the first moment of His Incarnation that Christ accepted to accomplish His Father's will and to offer Himself as Victim for the human race". Marmion goes on writing: "It is from the Crib that He inaugurates this life of suffering such as He willed to live for our salvation, this life of which the term is at Golgotha, and that, in destroying sin, is to restore to us the friendship of His Father. The Crib is certainly only the first stage, but it radically contains all the others."<sup>16</sup>. As a conclusion, in the extended *Contents* at the end of the book we read: "The whole life of Our Lord was ordered in view of His Sacrifice upon Calvary; and marked with the seal of the cross"<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> Strelan, John G. "Theologia Crucis, Theologia Glorïae: A Study in Opposing Theologies." *Lutheran Theological Journal* 23, no. 3, December 1989.

<sup>11</sup> "Nativity of the Lord", henceforth referred to as *La Nativité*.

<sup>12</sup> Walter, Meinrad. "Musik aus dem Geist der Theologie Zum Werk des Komponisten Olivier Messiaen." *Herder Korrespondenz* 61 11/2007, 589-593, p. 593.

<sup>13</sup> "Contemplation of the cross"

<sup>14</sup> Messiaen, Olivier. *Note de l'auteur* [author's note], in *Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant-Jésus*, Paris : Durand, 1947.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Marmion, Don Columba. *Christ in His Mysteries*. tr. Mother M. St. Thomas of Tyburn Convent, 9th ed. London: Sands & Co., 1939, p. 127.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 414.

One of the most popular and highly influential religious works of the Middle Ages, *Legenda Aurea* (*The Golden Legend*), a collection of the legendary lives of the saints compiled around 1260 by blessed Jacobus de Voragine, archbishop of Genoa, tells of the Magi: “On the day of the Christ’s birth, [...] a star came to them above the mountain: it had the shape of a most beautiful child over whose head a cross gleamed”.<sup>18</sup>

### Star and cross in visual arts

The image of the child Jesus together with symbols of his sacrifice was widely spread in late medieval art.<sup>20</sup> The imagery in the South Netherlandish tapestry *Christ Is Born as Man’s Redeemer* (1500–1520) seems to have been influenced by the *Golden Legend*. In the upper right corner, the depiction of the Magi shows above them a star “which has the form of a nude child carrying a cross in the midst of rays of light”<sup>21</sup>. The infant bears the cross on the shoulder, in a manner similar to renderings of the *Way of Sorrows* (Figure 1).

**Figure 1**



**Detail of the tapestry<sup>19</sup>**

<sup>18</sup> de Voragine, Jacobus. *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, William Granger Ryan (translator) Vol. 1, Princeton University Press 2012, p. 80.

<sup>19</sup> Metropolitan Museum, New York <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/467650>

<sup>20</sup> Gertsman, Elina. “Signs of Death: The Sacrificial Christ Child in Late-Medieval Art.” *The Christ Child in Medieval Culture: Alpha es et O!*, edited by Theresa M. Kenney, & Mary Dzon, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012, pp. 66-91.

<sup>21</sup> Cavallo, Adolfo Salvatore. *Medieval tapestries in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1993. p. 333.

The collapsing of time by showing symbols of Calvary in images of Nativity, has been called Proleptic Passion. One striking example is Roger van der Weyden's so-called St. Columba Altarpiece from around 1455 – "the most influential depiction of the subject [Adoration] in the fifteenth century"<sup>22</sup>. The central panel of the triptych depicts the Holy Family in a somewhat dilapidated shed and the three Magi with their attendants bearing the gifts (Figure 2).

**Figure 2**



**Rogier van der Weyden: St. Columba Altarpiece (central panel)<sup>23</sup>**

<sup>22</sup> Acres, Alfred. "The Columba Altarpiece and the Time of the World." *The Art Bulletin*, 80(3), 422–451, p. 424.

<sup>23</sup> Alte Pinakothek München, <https://www.sammlung.pinakothek.de/de/artwork/jWLpO7nxKY>

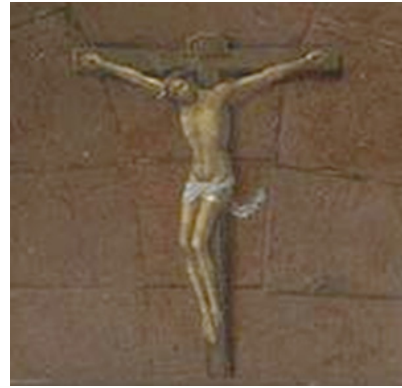


The star, partially hidden by the roof of the shed, shines brightly in the dark sky (Figure 3). Hanging of a pier there is a small crucifix (Figure 4). In a detailed analysis of the Altarpiece, Acres considers that the Columba crucifix stands apart from other depictions of the Proleptic Passion as it “intrudes as a piercing anachronism, occupying the center of this expansive scene of Epiphany with singular audacity”<sup>24</sup>.

**Figure 3**



**Figure 4**



**Van der Weyden: *St. Columba Altarpiece*: Details of Star and Crucifix**

Zink points at several details in the composition of the scene which direct the attention towards the crucifix.<sup>25</sup>

In the first years of the sixteenth century, two famous series of woodcuts by Albrecht Dürer (*The Small Passion* and *The Life of the Virgin*) include a Nativity scene each. Both depict the Holy Family and feature the Star above the shed. The upcoming sufferings of the Infant are alluded by the cross which is formed by the beams supporting the roof of the shed.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Zink, Jörg. *Drei Könige unter dem Kreuz: Betrachtungen über das Weihnachtsbild Rogiers van der Weyden*. Gelnhausen: Burckhardhaus-Verlag, 1964. p. 11.

**Figure 5**



**Dürer: *Nativity (Life of the Virgin)***<sup>26</sup>

**Figure 6**



**Dürer: *Nativity (Small Passion)***<sup>27</sup>

### **Messiaen: relationship of joy of the Nativity and sorrow of the Passion**

As has been pointed, in the music of Olivier Messiaen there are only a few movements dealing with aspects of the Passion. In a few cases, the composer connected musically the joy of the Nativity and the sorrow of the Passion, mainly by using the same musical motif. This is seen both in the dual use of the so-called "Boris motif" and in the Theme of the star and the cross. Messiaen was an admirer of the idea of the Wagnerian Leitmotif. "This Leitmotif is an extraordinary means of language and expression that makes it possible to depict the past, present and future simultaneously."<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup> National Gallery of Art, Washington, public domain <https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.6701.html>

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.* <https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.6754.html>

<sup>28</sup> Rößler, Almut. *Beiträge zur geistigen Welt Olivier Messiaens mit Original-Texten des Komponisten*. Duisburg: Gilles & Franke Verlag, 1984 p. 57.

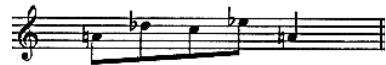
One of the motifs Messiaen used numerous times in his works is the Boris motif, borrowed from the coronation scene in Modest Mussorgsky's opera Boris Godunov. In his *Technique de mon langage musical*<sup>29</sup> the composer himself commented on it.<sup>30</sup> As was his wont with borrowings, the composer "passed [it] through the deforming prism of [his] language"<sup>31</sup>, mainly by enlarging its range from a perfect fifth to a tritone (Example 1). The motif also undergoes a few rhythmical changes. (see Example 2c, d, e, g).

Messiaen often used the Boris motif accompanied by the same harmonies of the second mode of limited transposition<sup>32</sup>, as he showed in *Technique* (Example 2a), where he also cites its use in *La Vierge et l'Enfant* (Example 2d). *La Vierge et l'Enfant* ("The Virgin and the Child"), the first movement of *La Nativité*, is preceded by a motto containing the phrase "Rejoice greatly, Daughter of Zion!"<sup>33</sup>. In *Première Communion de la Vierge* ("The Virgin's first communion"), depicting the joyful moment between the Annunciation and the Nativity, when the Virgin worships the fruit in her womb, Messiaen brings in a "reminder" (explicitly marked in the score) of this motif from *La Nativité*, albeit transposed (Example 2e). Within the cycle *La Nativité*, the Boris motif is used both in the joyful movement *La Vierge et l'Enfant*, and in the sorrowful movement *Jésus accepte la souffrance*, which is preceded by a motto from St. Paul, stating that Christ has accepted his Father's will since his Incarnation. The same motif is used in *Amen de l'agonie de Jésus*, the poignant rendering of the supplication of Jésus, suffering alone in the Garden of Gethsemane, in *Visions de l'amen*.<sup>34</sup>

### E.g. 2 (a-g)



a) Technique ex 75



b) Technique Ex 76

c) Technique: example 321

d) La Vierge et l'Enfant (Nativité), bar 1

<sup>29</sup> *The technique of my musical language*, henceforth referred to as *Technique*

<sup>30</sup> Messiaen, Olivier. *Technique de mon langage musical* – 2 volumes. Translated by John Satterfield *The technique of my musical language*. Paris: Leduc, 1944, 1956, p. 30-31.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>33</sup> Zechariah 9:9

<sup>34</sup> Messiaen, Olivier. *Note de l'auteur* in *Visions de l'Amen*. Paris : Durand, 1950.

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**e) Première communion de la Vierge (Vingt Regards), bar 17-18**

**Très lent**

R: trompette  
P: salicional,  
unda maris  
G: Fonds 16,  
8, 4

Péd: basson  
16 seul

**f) Jésus accepte la souffrance (Nativité), bar 1-2**

**Un peu plus lent (♩=63)**

**g) Amen de l'agonie de Jésus (Visions de l'amen), bar 17-18**

**Messiaen: Boris motif**

### Star and Cross in Messiaen's *Vingt Regards*

The dual use of the Boris motif within the same cycle (*La Nativité*) in the two movements depicting the joy of the Nativity (*La Vierge et l'Enfant*) and the sorrow of the Passion (*Jésus accepte la souffrance*) respectively is paralleled by the *Theme of the star and the cross* in the *Vingt Regards*. This theme dominates the second movement *Regard de l'étoile* and the seventh movement *Regard de la croix*.

Messiaen, who stressed the symbolic importance of numbers throughout his works, often chose the place of various movements within cycles accordingly. About the place of the movements in *Vingt Regards* he stated that "they are ordered by the contrasts of tempo, intensity, color – and also for symbolic

reasons”<sup>35</sup>. *II. Regard de l'étoile* is the second movement of the cycle and *VII. Regard de la croix* the seventh. “*Regard de la croix* bears the number VII (7, perfect number) because the sufferings of Christ on the Cross restored the order upset by sin”.<sup>36</sup> It is worth mentioning that within the cycle *La Nativité*, the sufferings of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane are depicted in the seventh movement (*VII. Jésus accepte la souffrance*), and in the opera *Saint François d'Assise*, *Les Stigmates* (The Stigmata) is the seventh tableau.

In the *Note de l'auteur* that precedes the score of *Vingt Regards*, Messiaen lists the *Theme of the star and the cross*, alongside the *Theme of God* and the *Theme of chords* as the main themes of the cycle. In the more extended liner notes to Michel Béroff's recording of *Vingt Regards*, Messiaen lists “four cyclical themes which circulate throughout the work”<sup>37</sup>, adding to the three from the *Note de l'auteur* the *Theme of mystical love*. Naming the *Theme of the star and the cross* “cyclical”, even though it occurs only in the two movements dedicated to star and cross respectively, while the other themes are present in several movements, emphasizes the significance the composer attaches to this theme. This importance is also highlighted by the fact that the two movements are the only ones in the whole cycle for which Messiaen uses his mode 7 of limited transposition. The motto of *Regard de la l'étoile*, which seems to have come down directly from the *Golden Legend*, also stresses the relationship between the star and the cross: “[...] the star shines innocently, surmounted by a Cross”.

Messiaen indicates that the theme is “inspired by the first antiphon of second Vespers of Epiphany (Ante luciferum genitus)”<sup>38</sup>. He later comments that in the theme “there is a mysterious echo of the Greek metrics and of the neumes of plainchant.”<sup>39</sup> The composer considered plainchant to be “an inexhaustible mine of rare and expressive melodic contours”<sup>40</sup>. The small melodic intervals, the even note values, the longer value at the end of each two-bars phrase, as well as the monodical setting of the theme in *Regard de l'étoile* underline its origin in Gregorian chant. The words “flavor” and “inspired” seem to hint at Messiaen's having used his deforming prism on the original.

<sup>35</sup> Messiaen, Olivier). *Notes to recording of Vingt Regards sur L'Enfant Jésus*, Michel Béroff (piano), La voix de son maître EMI, 1970, quoted in Rogosin, David (1996). *Aspects of structure in Olivier Messiaen's Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant-Jésus*. Doctoral Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1996, p. 213.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> Messiaen *Notes to EMI recording* 1970, op. cit., cited in Seifert op. cit. p. 212.

<sup>38</sup> *Traité de Rythme, de Couleur et d'Ornithologie* (1994-2002) [Treatise on rhythm, color, and ornithology], en Sept Tomes, henceforth referred to as *Traité*, Paris: Alphonse Leduc, vol II p. 439.

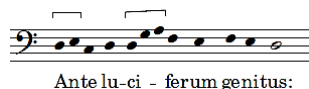
<sup>39</sup> Messiaen 1970, op. cit., quoted in Rogosin op. cit., p 213.

<sup>40</sup> Messiaen, *Technique*, op. cit., p. 33.

### E.g. 3 (a-b)



a) neumes (five-line stave)



b) modern notation

#### Ante luciferum genitus (incipit)<sup>41</sup>

As early as 1930, Messiaen had used a melodic line inspired by the neumes of plainchant for the opening of the first movement of *Les offrandes oubliées*. The movement, dedicated to the Cross, is reflected in the composer's poetic preface to the score:

*Arms extended, sad unto death  
 on the tree of the Cross you shed your blood.*<sup>42</sup>

### E.g. 4



#### *Les offrandes oubliées*, bars 1-3<sup>43</sup>

The incipit of the *Theme of the star and the cross*, shown in the *Note de l'auteur* (Example 5c), deserves special consideration. The melodic line bears a striking resemblance to the first two bars of *Les Mages* (*The Magi*), the eighth movement of *La Nativité*. This movement, preceded by a (shortened) quote from the Gospel according to Matthew ("they went on their way, and the star went ahead of them"), is a depiction of the caravan of the Magi, guided by the star towards Bethlehem.

The two motifs are highly lyrical ascendant chromatic lines and share a similar tonal material. *Les Mages* is notated in Messiaen's favorite key of F# major, while for both *Regard de l'Étoile* and *Regard de la Croix*

<sup>41</sup> Transcription by Stenberg, Andreas (ed.) Gierolamo Lombardi. *Ante luciferum genitus*. 2023

<sup>42</sup> Dingle, Christopher. Forgotten offerings: Messiaen's first orchestral works. *Tempo* 61/241, 2007, pp. 2-21, p. 5.

<sup>43</sup> after Messiaen *Technique*, op. cit., Ex. 361

the composer uses his preferred way of notation with local accidentals. If the first two bars of *Les Mages* are rewritten with accidentals to correspond enharmonically the first two bars of *Theme de l'étoile et de la croix*, the similarity is evident at a glance (E.g. 5).

**E.g. 5 (a-c)**

**a) Les Mages (original)**



**b) Les Mages (rewritten)**



**c) Theme of star and cross**



#### **Incipit *Les Mages* versus incipit *Theme of star and cross***

Both motifs use mainly small melodic intervals, even note values, and have similar modal organization. Michaely<sup>44</sup> notes that both use six of the eight sounds making up mode 4,3 starting on G: G, A flat, A, B flat, D flat, D, E flat, E. Messiaen's mode 4 belongs to the family of modes based on the division of the twelve semitones of the octave into two (six semitones = tritone). Of these modes (4, 5, 6, 7), mode 7 is the "richest", containing nine sounds. As mentioned, in all of *Vingt Regards* Messiaen used mode 7 exclusively for *Regard de l'étoile* and *Regard de la Croix*.

Both motifs are made of eight sounds, which leads to speculation<sup>45</sup>: might the be a musical depiction of the eight-pointed Star of Bethlehem.<sup>46</sup> "The eight-pointed star is the Christmas star that shines for the wise men from the East and radiates in all directions. Its figure contains the cross."<sup>47</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Michaely, Aloyse. "Verbum Caro." *Programmusik – Studien zu Begriff und Geschichte einer umstrittenen Gattung*, edited by Constantin Floros, Hans Joachim Mark & Peter Petersen, Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 1983, pp. 225-346, p. 253.

<sup>45</sup> Michaely op. cit. p. 253.

<sup>46</sup> Sach, Hannelore, et al. *Christliche Ikonographie in Stichworten*. [Christian iconography in keywords]. 2nd ed., München: Kösel-Verlag, 1975, pp. 143, 311.

<sup>47</sup> Lipfert, Klementine *Symbol-Fibel. Eine Hilfe zur Betrachtung und Deuten mittelalterliche Bildwerke*. Kassel: Johannes Stauda Verlag, 1976, p. 144.

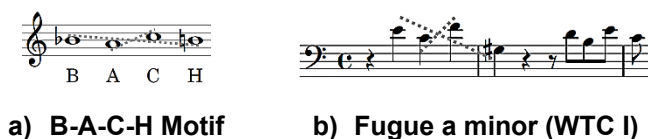


In visual art there have been, since early Christian time, countless representations of the Star of the Magi. The star is depicted variously with five, six, eight or more points, as a comet like in Giotto's fresco<sup>48</sup> or a pulsating golden star in the hands of the guiding angel in Edward Burne-Jones depictions<sup>49</sup>. The star in Dürer's woodcuts is six-pointed (Figure 5-6). The star in van der Weyden's panel, even if partially hidden behind the roof, is eight-pointed, as indicated by the angle between the points (Figure 3).

Commenting on the melodic contour of *Theme of the star and the cross*, Seifert<sup>50</sup> proposes that, in the tradition of the cross symbolism in the so-called *Augenmusik*<sup>51</sup>, "the interlocking of the notes, A to A flat and B flat to G represents the two arms of the cross both sonically and visually."

J. S. Bach is famous for his use of this kind of cross symbolism in several of his works, both sacred and secular.<sup>52</sup> One of the best-known examples is the B-A-C-H motif; the lines uniting the two outer notes and the one uniting the two inner notes intersect, forming a cross (E.g. 6).

#### E.g. 6 (a-b)



#### J. S. Bach: Cross motif

Bruhn<sup>53</sup> goes further in her interpretation of the melodic representation of a form of the cross. She suggests that for the musical representation of the phrase "the star shines innocently, surmounted by a Cross" from the motto of *Regard de l'étoile* Messiaen does not imagine the cross as it is usually seen, standing and ready to bear the body of the crucifies, but inclines as Jesus must have borne it". To the representation of the cross Bruhn superimposes the "vaguely similar" [silhouette] of the comet of Bethlehem" (Figure 7).

<sup>48</sup> Giotto di Bondone Adoration of the Magi, Padova, Capella degli Scrovegni (c. 1305)

<sup>49</sup> *Adoration of the Magi*, design for a tapestry (1888), *The Star of Bethlehem watercolor* (1890)

<sup>50</sup> Seifert, Charles. *Messiaen's Vingt Regards: a historical and pedagogical study*. PhD Thesis University of Illinois, 1989, p. 161.

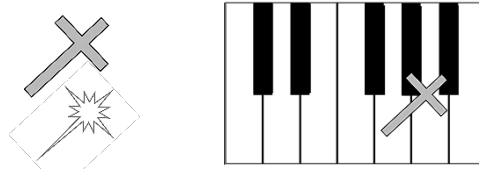
<sup>51</sup> "Eye music": a graphical feature of the score that is not noticed by the listener

<sup>52</sup> Bodky Erwin. *The interpretation of BACH's keyboard works*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960 p. 245.

<sup>53</sup> Bruhn, Siglind. *Les visions d'Olivier Messiaen*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2008, p. 181.



Figure 7



Symbol of the cross on the keyboard<sup>54</sup>

The *Theme of the star and the cross* in its entirety consists of 12 bars (bar 6-17). In *Regard de l'étoile* it appears twice, the second time with variations, framed by five introductory bars which are repeated identically before, between and after the theme, and followed by a coda.

E.g. 7 (a-b)

a) Theme (incipit, bar 6-7)

b) Variation (incipit, bar 23-24)

### *Regard de l'étoile*

*Regard de la croix* consists of a single statement of the theme, varied to match the somber atmosphere. The most obvious variation is the significant difference in pace. While in *Regard de l'étoile* the theme is marked *Modéré, un peu lent* with a metronome indication of eighth equal to 76, in *Regard de la croix*, marked *Bien modéré*, the theme is augmented rhythmically by a factor two (the eighth becoming a quarter), and the metronome indicates eighth equal to 40. This amounts to a speed almost four times slower. The augmented melody, presented in double octave spanning is accompanied by “by a perpetual chromatic lamentation”<sup>55</sup> in a chain of sigh-motives. From baroque to romantic music, the sigh-motif consisting of a slurred descending second,

<sup>54</sup> after Bruhn, op. cit.

<sup>55</sup> Messiaen, *Traité*, op. cit. vol. II, p. 459.

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often enhanced by short rests, has been a device for expressing pain, sorrow and lamentation. The marking *expressif et douloureux* (expressive and doleful) in the score underlines the composer's intention.

E.g. 8

**Bien modéré** (♩ = 40)  
*expressif et douloureux*

*mf*  
*pp*  
**PIANO**  
*mf*

(Thème de l'étoile et de la Croix)

**Regard de la croix, bar 1-3**

Messiaen had used sigh-motifs in movements dedicated to the pains of Calvary before *Vingt Regards* (E.g. 4). There are a few typical sigh motifs in the plainchant-like incipit of *Les offrandes oubliées*. In the orchestral version the theme, played by the strings in octaves, the descending half steps are slurred, with a stronger first note. The expression marking is "*douloureux, profondément triste*" (painful, deeply sad). In *Amen de l'agonie de Jésus*, the weeping of the abandoned Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane is rendered by several sigh-motifs, the expression marking is "*douloureux, en pleurant*" (doleful, weeping).

E.g. 9

**Bien modéré** (♩ = 84)  
*legato douloureux, en pleurant*

*ff*  
*f expressif, très lié*

**Amen de l'agonie de Jésus, bar 29-31**

The varied statement of the *Theme of the star and the cross* in *Regard de la Croix*, prompts Bruhns to consider the movement together with *Regard de l'étoile* as three “verses” (theme and first variation in *Regard de l'étoile*, *Regard de la croix* as second variation). Her conclusion is that by this “the composer declares, in a symbolic but powerful way, that the Cross is in fact the necessary complement of what began under the star of Bethlehem”<sup>56</sup>. Considering that the coda leaves the second movement somewhat incomplete, Bruhn states: “Messiaen’s unusual strategy – to postpone the missing complement until the seventh movement [...] – creates a musically couched suggestion of theological content: In order to be complete, the aspect represented in the Star of Bethlehem must be supplemented by that of the Cross of Golgotha.”

## Conclusions

The conflation of Nativity and Passion, has a long history in Christian theology and arts. In Messiaen’s oeuvre, its musical representation is to be found in the use of the same motif, respectively theme, both for movements depicting the joy of Christ’s birth and for movements depicting the sorrow of Calvary. It is most fully expressed in his monumental piano cycle *Vingt Regards sur l’Enfant-Jésus*.

## Aknowlegements

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<sup>56</sup> Bruhn op. cit., p. 184.

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## BRAZILIAN SAMBA IN THE GUITAR MUSIC OF RADAMÉS GNATTALI

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**SUMMARY.** The guitar music of Radamés Gnattali is investigated in the aspect of realization of genre traditions of popular Brazilian music of choro, samba, bossa nova. The melodic and rhythmic features of samba inherited from Afro-Brazilian ritual dances and ritual practice of candomblé and capoeira are noted. On the basis of modern publications of Brazilian, American, Canadian, European scientists, ethnologists and choreographers the historical and stylistic varieties of samba are systematized, metric characteristics, rhythmic patterns, links with African dances Batuque and Lundu are summarized. The specificity of the choreographic vocabulary of the samba dance school is outlined, illustrations and video materials of Rio de Janeiro carnival parades are given. The polymetric gestural-plastic atmosphere of the movement is described. The nature of the combination of musical timbres is outlined; the correlations of articulated body movements with percussion rhythm are derived. An analysis of three concert guitar etudes is presented from the perspective of a hybrid dialog of musical languages and genres of Brazilian and European music, as well as elements of North American jazz. The guitar sound-imaging techniques of playing, which create imitation of the sound of string, wind and percussion instrument sounds, are generalized.

**Keywords:** genres of Brazilian music, Concert Studies for Guitar of Radamés Gnattali, choro, samba, bossa nova, sound-imaging performance techniques.

### 1. Introduction

The name of Radamés Gnattali (1906, Rio Grande do Sul - 1988, Rio de Janeiro), Brazilian composer, pianist, violinist, conductor and arranger, was much less frequently mentioned in his lifetime than that of his world-famous

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compatriot Heitor Villa-Lobos. Meanwhile, it has been familiar to local audiences since the early 1930s, when the musicians' compositions were adjacent to each other on the concert stage. The concert music of Radamés Gnattali (as the composer himself named it) easily traveled through the familiar soundscapes of popular urban music in Brazil – intonations of choro, samba, bossa nova, generously seasoned with timbres and rhythms of local folklore with a dash of elements of North American jazz culture.

Modern musicology in the process of studying this area of creativity includes a number of publications by Brazilian, American, Canadian, Belgian musicians, ethnographers, choreographers, experts on Latin American dances. One block of materials is devoted to the analysis of the composer's (Marcio Correa<sup>2</sup>, Rui Pedroso<sup>3</sup>, Valdemar Silva<sup>4</sup>), the other one – to the issues of the samba genre's existence, the specificity of its musical language and dance choreography (Barbara Browning<sup>5</sup>, Elizabeth Drake-Boyt<sup>6</sup>, Luciano Lima<sup>7</sup>, Luiz Naveda<sup>8</sup>).

The aim of this article is to discover in R. Gnattali's guitar music the traditions of Brazilian samba and its links with authentic models, using the cycle "3 Concert Studies for Guitar" as an example. The research direction continues the topic of the author's previous publications on Brazilian guitar music<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Pedroso, Rui F. *Três estudos de concerto para violão de Radamés Gnattali: uma análise interpretativa através das diretrizes de Jan Larue (Three concert studies for guitar by Radamés Gnattali: an interpretative analysis through the guidelines of Jan Larue)*. Santa Maria, RS, 2019.

<sup>4</sup> Silva, Valdemar A. *Três estudos de concerto para violão de Radamés Gnattali: peculiaridades estilísticas e suas implicações com processos de circularidade cultural: PhD thesis ((Three concert studies for guitar by Radamés Gnattali: stylistic peculiarities and their implications for processes of cultural circularity))*. Escola de Música e Artes cênicas, Goiânia, 2014.

<sup>5</sup> Browning, Barbara. *Samba: resistance in motion*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1995.

<sup>6</sup> Drake-Boyt, Elizabeth. *Latin Dance*. Greenwood, Santa Barbara, 2011.

<sup>7</sup> Lima, Luciano. *Radamés Gnattali e o Violão de Concerto: Uma revisão da obra para violão solo com base nos manuscritos (Radamés Gnattali and the Concert Guitar: A review of the work for solo guitar based on the manuscripts)*. UNESPAR, Curitiba, 2017.

<sup>8</sup> Naveda, Luiz; Leman, Marc. *A Cross-modal Heuristic for Periodic Pattern Analysis of Samba Music and Dance*. *Journal of New Music Research*, Ghent University, 2009, vol. 38, pp. 255–283.

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## 2. Brazilian genres in the guitar music of Radamés Gnattali

The oeuvre of Radamés Gnattali was initiated by a deep interest in the language and everyday traditions of Brazilian folk genres, which became the basis for all areas of the musician's professional activity: professor at the National Music Institute of Music in Rio de Janeiro, conductor, concert academic pianist, who mastered the basics of classical guitar and cavaquinho playing techniques. As the author of arrangements of popular Brazilian samba melodies for radio and compositions for the concert stage, Radamés Gnattali was interested in unusual for academic ensembles instrumental compositions with guitars, cavaquinho, mandolin, accordion and harmonica. The composer's creative output includes thousands of arrangements of Brazilian songs, five symphonies, four concertos for guitar and orchestra, 274 concert compositions, the manuscripts of which are partially preserved in family archives.

Most of the works were written "based on Brazilian music" for various timbres, and many are notable for their authentic references to traditional folkloric origins. Examples include thirteen "Brasilianas", three "Carioca" concertos, six "Brazilian Fantasies", a "Brazilian Suite", and concert virtuoso cycles featuring folk instruments such as harmonica, cavaquinho, surdo, reco-reco, tambourines, rattles, accordion, and mandolin. Experiments are based on the knowledge of regional instrumental performance traditions, household environment and specific timbre colorations.

The guitar heritage of R. Gnattali is no less indicative in this respect. Along with H. Villa-Lobos, the composer created the cycle "Ten studies" for solo guitar (1967), with personal dedications to each of the first performers, famous Brazilian guitarists: Turibio Santos, Sergio and Eduardo Abreu, Antonio Carlos Barbosa Lima. In contrast to his large cyclical plan, between 1950 and 1981, the musician wrote three more virtuoso etudes with the program titles "Danza Brasileira" (1968), "Toccata em ritmo de samba No. 1" (1950), and "Toccata em ritmo de samba No. 2" (1981). The connection between the language of music and local folklore in the titles of the compositions is often articulated by the author himself: "Suíte popular brasileira" for guitar and piano (1952), "Suíte brasileira" for piano, electric guitar, double bass and percussion (1954), "Brasiliana No. 7" for tenor saxophone, quintet with electric guitar and accordion (1956); "Concerto Carioca No. 3" for flute, alto saxophone, guitar, double bass and percussion (1964), "Concerto à Brasileira" (1967), the guitar piece "Alma Brasileira" based on choro motifs, and the third part "Choro" from the cycle "Brasiliana No. 13" (1983), the manuscript of which is signed by the author's hand: "I am samba bossa nova".

### 3. Brazilian samba: the language of sounds and the plasticity of dance

There are discrepancies in the definition of the origin of the term “samba”: the etymology comes from the word “semba”, which in the Kimbundu language (a family of Bantu languages spoken in Angola) means an African circular dance. However, Brazilian researchers, in particular Bernardo Alves, believe that the word *samba* is known since the XVII century in the grammar of the language of the Karirí, inhabitants of the agglomeration of the Brazilian state of Ceará. It was the name of an indigenous Brazilian dance, which later came into contact with African traditions in northeastern Brazil and arrived in Rio as a result of internal migrations. With all the etymological interpretations of the name, the samba genre implies a lively, excited dance of militant or, on the contrary, erotic character. The states of growing joyful excitement, strengthening of powerful energy of the spirit are inherited from magical rituals, dances of African tribes and peoples of Bantu, Yoruba, from ceremonies of worship of the pantheon of gods and sacrifices. Authentic religious and cult ceremonies were accompanied by sensual movements of dancing bodies, articulating with each gesture the most complex figures of furious African rhythm. To this day, one can still feel this ancient power of candomblé rituals in the samba poetics of Bahia. It was there that the most archaic Brazilian form of samba (Samba de Roda), the circular cult dance (roda) and its magical scenography, was born.

Samba in Rio de Janeiro became a reference point for the Afro-Brazilian groups of residents of the outskirts of the musical capital, who gathered in homes in families, communities or took to the streets for candomblé rituals to the sound of hundreds of percussion instruments. The dances had a mass character; they were included in carnival processions and festive ceremonies. Currently, samba is considered the “musical pearl” of Brazil, officially recognized as a national cultural symbol.

Unlike the candomblé ritual, samba was not religious in nature. At parties where batucada and capoeira were played, since the introduction of choral singing of improvised couplets to the accompaniment of applause and percussion at the carnival there appeared something that was considered the first samba – the song “Pelo Telephone” (1917). According to this genre-communicative situation, it was recorded on the first records as “Carnival Samba”. Its rhythm differed significantly from the subsequent samba samples of the 1930s, but it was from this first moment that the genre name was

fixed, although in the future it changed its semantic content more than once. In the 1930s it was the rhythm known as “Samba do Estácio” that became the defining genre “marker”. The secular version of samba is close to the *maxixe* (Brazilian tango, not similar to the Argentine tango). From the atmosphere of a secular party samba went to the squares, integrated into urban and rural carnivals, in their crowded processions and was created for walking along the streets of carnival groups dancing and singing. The “estácio”-style samba is performed with the singing of verses and refrains with different texts to the same melody, accompanied by a number of regional instruments – guitar, flute, cavaquinho, pandeiro, sometimes together with woodwind instruments, banjo and extended range of percussion. Thus, two models of samba of different genre branches were formed: *estácio* – urban samba based on *baiao-carioca* (a regional variety created by natives of Rio de Janeiro); *maxixe-samba* based on paired “Brazilian tango” with a characteristic manner of swaying hips, with accents on erotic elements of movements familiar to the dance floors of evening clubs. The fiery, burning passion of this dance was enhanced by the choreography of figures similar to the flexible movements of the “wriggling snake” (*passo cobra*), picked up by the energy of active rhythm accompanied by the party of African drums with marching characteristics, rhythmic accelerations suitable for carnival parades. In the 1950s, a slow rhythmic samba influenced by the bolero (*samba do fossa*) emerged and began the bossa-nova movement. Along the way, Radamés Gnattali and Laurindo Almeida turned to the samba genre field as fast samba flowed into slow bossa nova. Next came the names of Tom Jobim, João Gilberto – middle-class men well acquainted with Debussy’s music and North American jazz. From the fusion of style phenomena of such different natures and in different proportions arose the wave of bossa nova.

*The basic binary meters, syncopated rhythms* of samba and bossa nova are based on alternating equal beats and syncopated rhythmic figures with the addition of forward and backward punctuations. The syncopation figures changed their “location”, appearing respectively on the second and fourth beats (variant 1), as inverse punctuations on the second and third beats (variant 2), or on the first and fourth beats (variant 3), which also suggests the possibility of total syncopation of all four beats of a bar (variant 4):

### Scheme 1



## The basic binary meters, syncopated rhythms of samba and bossa nova

Brazilian samba sounds lively, Caribbean samba sounds very fast, Brazilian bossa nova or the “white” version of samba sounds slow. Rural and urban authentic national samba traditions, symbolic of Brazilian culture as a whole, spread in the XXth century to all regions, not only to the south or northeast. They became sonic emblems of the song and dance culture of local carnivals – joyful, pleasant, familiar music, perfectly harmonized with the environment. Popular forms of life correlate with academic and jazz “readings” of genres. The updating of popular melodies and rhythms with dissonant harmonies and jazz swings merged with the intimate character of vocal intoning. Rhythmic disruptions between the voice and the accompaniment embellished the poetics of soft sound, without affective emotions, forcing – quietly, easily, with a flexible timbre palette of musically intoned words. This evoked distant artistic resonances with the European modernist quests of European art, generating a metaphorical frame between French refined sound painting and jazz, which was reflected in the “mirror” of new incarnations of popular Brazilian traditions.

Barbara Browning comments extensively on the apparent close association of samba with Candomblé ceremonies: "It is an ancient, complex, powerful belief system in which spirituality is expressed through complex rhythmic structures and divinity manifests itself in the bodies of the dancers"<sup>10</sup>. The ceremonies of the cult are conducted under the sounds of percussion rhythms – the ringing of agogo bells, the rattle of the atabaque drum, the lingering sounds of berimbau strings are repeated like magical incantations.

<sup>10</sup> Browning, Barbara. *Samba: resistance in motion*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington, p. 23.

The plastic body language, its rhythmic and gestural vocabulary, inherits figures of African ethnogenesis. For the dancer, the samba is a polymeter superimposed on the structure  $\frac{2}{4}$ , in which the strong beat is suspended and the weak beat is accented, serving as the dominant mode of Pan-African music. It should be considered that “Western musical notation is not suitable for recording polymetres, since samba contains rhythms that are curved so weakly that their variations in imprecise writing are read synchronously, in the interaction of all the patterns, models, and breaks in pauses”<sup>11</sup>. The binary steady pulse of sixteenth notes is usually carried by the high-pitched percussion of the reco-reco; triplets are articulated by the mid-range sound of the tambourin, grace notes are played by the deep low-frequency African surdo bass drum, while dotted rhythms, broken by pauses, are featured in the pandeiro part. The dancer responds to each layer of rhythmic structure with different muscle movements. Next scheme is based on the sample from Barbara Browning’s explanation of the features of samba choreography<sup>12</sup>:

## Scheme 2



### Vertical grid of samba rhythms

The dense, springy rhythms of samba interweave in the performance of the entire samba percussion section, which consists of nine instruments: the surdo bass drum, the ganza shaker, the tamborim mid-range drum, the agogo bells, the pandeiro tambourine, the reco-reco wooden idiophone, the caixa aluminum membranophone, the cuica small high-pitched cylindrical drum, and the rebolo drum with a double-layer membrane for accent articulation.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 11.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

The choreographic pattern of samba disrupts the body's alignment with lightning-fast, sharp gestures during short steps. Syncopation generates swaying, shifts in body weight from one leg to the other, side-to-side steps, turns, jerks, twists, curves, and articulated movements, including hip rotations synchronized with knee bends and lifting the foot onto the toe, wave-like undulations of the torso, smooth arm openings, rapid micro-tremors of the abdominal and hip muscles, head and shoulder turns, and sudden leaps. The dance movements evoke a sense of "playing apart," captivating the audience with their ancient "African exoticism".

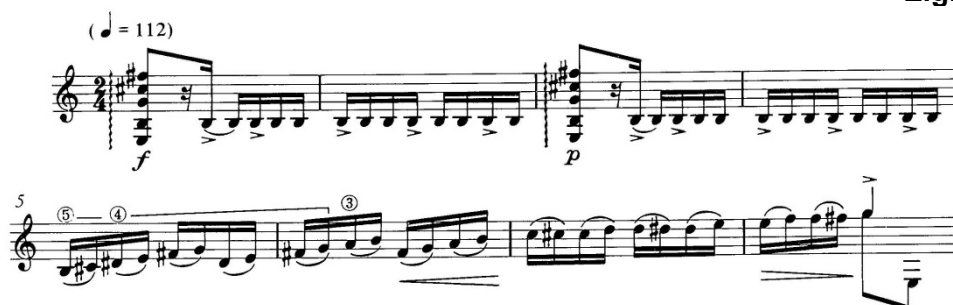
#### **4. Three Concert Studies (etudes) for guitar by Radamés Gnattali: dialogues in the rhythm of samba**

The idea to combine three separate etudes into a cycle arose post factum and therefore, the order of their arrangement does not correspond to the chronology of creation – "Dansa Brasileira" (1958), "Toccata em ritmo de samba No. 1" (1950), "Toccata em ritmo de samba No. 2" (1981), which is reflected in the first London edition (1989). Each etude may sound separately, but all are united by the color of Brazilian samba: the best soloists of Brazilian dance schools move in a single powerful gust of joyful excitement in a stream of carnival parade, in exotic outfits of tropical juicy colors. Fast tempo, rumbling of hundreds of drums, pulse of syncopations in a complex grid of rhythms, general singing of popular samba melodies, flickering of gestures and bodies with almost acrobatic silhouettes of movements – such an imaginary picture is conveyed by the composer thanks to the resources of the guitar solo. Like Heitor Villa-Lobos, Radamés Gnattali played guitar in the carnival quarters of Rio. He strove to create a new repertoire inspired by urban folklore on the one hand, concertizing as a pianist with the music of Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel on the other, and recording improvisations with jazz musicians on the radio on the third. This hybrid reality is therefore characteristic of many of the composer's works: in the cultural fabric of the language of Brazilian music, one can clearly see stylistic traces of romanticism, impressionism, modernism, and echoes of jazz.

"*Dansa Brasileira*" is dedicated to the famous guitarist Laurindo Almeida, the first performer of this etude. The author encouraged improvisation of the performer on the basis of the manuscript text, variation of rhythmic and melodic patterns, as is customary in folk tradition. He believed that musicians know better the peculiarities of their instruments.

The initial bars open with a guitar solo – a presentation of the rhythm of choro and samba (bars 1-4). This usually sounds like a signaling “invitation” to dance in the percussion part, with sharp punctuation and articulation of the weak beats, syncopation and variation of the accent side of the rhythmic pulse. The strength of the initial beat of the e-moll chord, with the addition of the Doric harmonic coloration of the characteristic cis tone common to baiao and choro melodies, reinforces the genre references to the northeastern genetic roots of the dances. The connection with the choro music is most clearly signaled by the melody of the ascending passage (bars 5-8) – usually entrusted to the flute, violin, guitar, or piano (in concert settings). It demonstrates virtuoso intense movement of appoggiaturas grouped into two sounds:

**E.g. 1**



**R. Gnattali. “Dansa Brasileira” (bars 1–8)**

The phase of material development includes sequences with the transposition of segments down by minor thirds, encompassing a dissonant chromatic space. This approach is uncharacteristic of traditional Brazilian popular music vocabulary but is typical of jazz multi-voiced chord blocks (bars 17–23), while maintaining the choro rhythm:

**E.g. 2**



**R. Gnattali. “Dansa Brasileira” (bars 17–24)**



The samba rhythm is emphasized at a fast tempo (bars 27–46) by sharp figure patterns in the primary key of E-minor and sequential movement of similar chord structures (built on a tritone and a fourth) ascending in minor thirds, followed by whole-tone descents of melodic phrases in bar 32. Here, the samba rhythm, which has ancestral connections to the African dances lundu and batuque, is generalized:

**E.g. 3****R. Gnattali. “Dansa Brasileira” (bars 29–36)**

In the middle section, a sharp deceleration to an *Andante* tempo marks the transition from the fast, fiery samba to a more lyrical, sentimental version – the bossa nova, characterized by smooth, slow swaying, suspended triplets, and the soft sonorities of ninth chords, with fluid single-third harmonies and major-minor colorations (bars 66–69). From there, all the themes move in a circular pattern:

**E.g. 4****R. Gnattali. “Dansa Brasileira” (bars 66–71)**

“*Toccata em ritmo de samba No. 1*”, dedicated to Raphael Rabello, incorporates a dialogue between genre elements: the virtuosic European toccata, Brazilian choro, the fiery brilliance of a fast samba, and, in contrast, the quiet, slowly suspended in time, tender, sensual, and contemplative bossa

nova. The proportions of the song's three-part form (ABA, bars 32 + 12 + 32), traditional for Brazilian popular music, with a literal reprise and codetta (Menos), follow a tonal process strategy (D→G |D|D→G|*codetta* D). The author's manuscript contains no key signatures, yet modulation shifts are clearly perceptible through deep bass pedals pulsating in the samba rhythm. Each time, they begin with a powerful "push" from a tied weak beat and sustain for a long duration, pulsing in the same rhythm over one or two measures. This establishes the impulse of the primary key, D, revealed over a sustained organ point in a major-minor environment. The entire first section maintains an intense dissonant background: over a stable bass framework, subdominant and altered dominant seventh chords are layered, followed by D<sub>11</sub>, D<sub>13</sub> – typically jazz harmonies transposed downward in minor thirds while preserving their original structure (tritone, fourth, fourth). These shifts of multi-third verticals (or "block chords") are characteristic of jazz music as well as modernist academic composition. The syncopated rhythm is drawn from choro, further accentuated in the samba, and occasionally interrupted by smooth passages – imitations of choro musicians playing the flute or violin. At times, everything comes to a halt, frozen in a quiet harmonic overtone or during a meter change, yet the dance, in its fiery and jubilant essence, continues pulsating until the end of the section. The strong, rhythmic "strokes" of the sustained bass resemble the percussion of carnival processions (bars 12–14; 17–18), where the tambourine gives the signal ("bell") for all performers and marks the primary rhythmic pattern:

E.g. 5



**R. Gnattali. "Toccata em ritmo de samba No. 1" (bars 1–8)**

The mid-part completely "throws off" the energy of the rapid motoric movement that relates Brazilian samba to the European toccata. It is precisely this "fast running in the Brazilian soundscape" that is metaphorically implied in the title of the piece. In the middle, the plasticity of fluid movements reigns. It appears as in "slow motion animation" – 12 bars of "floating" in the atmosphere of a beautiful, quiet, gentle bossa nova:

## E.g. 6

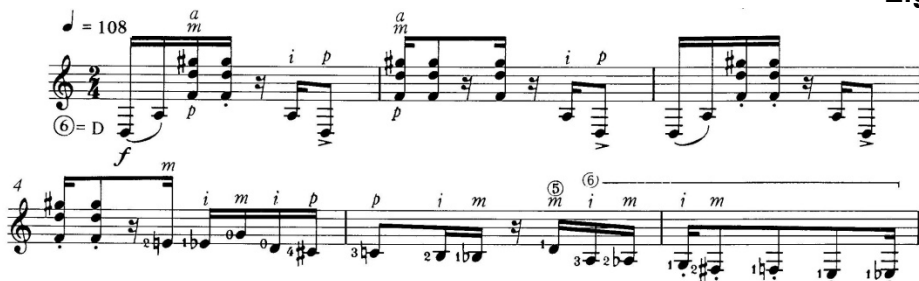


## R. Gnattali. “Toccata em ritmo de samba No. 1” (bars 33–36)

A sequence of non-accords shades the expressive melodic phrases that follow sequential deviations. The sonic fabric either gathers into an arpeggiated vertical or scatters into melismatic embellishments, but here the samba rhythm loses its springy activity. It acquires the calmness of a *lento* movement and is organically integrated into a state of sensual contemplation.

“Toccata em ritmo de samba No. 2”, dedicated to Waltel Blanco, the piece is characterized by the use of open strings, the instrument’s coloristic resources, and percussive playing techniques to simulate a full ensemble (bars 43–46). The etude was written 23 years apart, and this can be felt in its musical vocabulary – more modern yet still grounded in familiar rhythms. The addition of a second, and especially a tritone or a split third, to the supporting chords enhances the music’s sharpness and poignancy. Dissonant clusters unfold within the texture, where the upper layer creates intense dissonance against the acoustic bass foundation. Their repetition is accompanied by a varied interplay of sonic constructs:

## E.g. 7



## R. Gnattali. “Toccata em ritmo de samba No. 2” (bars 1–6)

The imitation of Afro-Brazilian membranophone percussion is indicated by the author's marking *percussion*. The absence of a specific pitch allows the performer to choose the striking point – on the strings and fingerboard, on the guitar body, or along the rim. In the first case, the sound resembles palm strikes on the leather membrane of the atabaque – a ritual instrument of African shamans – producing deep, resonant low tones. This sound is well known by capoeira. In the second case, tapping on the guitar body or rim creates the effect of a high-pitched wooden cajón-like box or a medium-range pandeiro tambourine:

**E.g. 8**

**R. Gnattali. “Toccata em ritmo de samba No. 2” (bars 35–46)**

## 5. Conclusions

The study of Brazilian samba in the guitar works of Radamés Gnattali has revealed the significance of popular folk genres in the composer's oeuvre. These genres manifest in the blending of rhythmic formulas and the “carnival” contrasts of dance movements. The guitar's imitation of percussion, string, and wind instruments – sonic attributes of Rio de Janeiro's urban parades – recreates the folk-regional spirit of the music. Its sound is revitalized through the influence of modernist compositional techniques and jazz aesthetics. The fusion of diverse, stylistically and generically contrasting materials into a heterogeneous mix has become a defining feature of Brazilian musical thought and way of life. Here, we have chosen to focus on samba, setting aside – though not diminishing – the equally compelling aesthetic phenomenon of bossa nova. While directly connected to samba,

bossa nova requires a separate study of its musical-linguistic and gestural-plastic morphology. This aspect, particularly in its projection onto Brazilian guitar compositions, presents a promising avenue for further research.

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## EXPLORING MALAY ART SONG: A MUSICAL AND TEXTUAL STUDY OF KORBAN TANAH AIR BY YUSRAN YUSOFF

KHAIRUNNISA DIYANA MD NOOR<sup>1</sup>, MARZELAN SALLEH<sup>2</sup>

**SUMMARY.** Malay art songs remain an underexplored yet significant genre within the classical vocal tradition. This study examines *Korban Tanah Air*, a Malay art song composed by Yusran Yusoff with lyrics by Usman Awang, through textual analysis, musical composition analysis, and performance practice. The song's patriotic and melancholic themes are deeply intertwined with its harmonic and melodic structures, reflecting a fusion of Western classical and traditional Malay musical elements. The analysis highlights the integration of Malay poetry into art song, demonstrating how the poem's imagery and emotional depth are musically interpreted. Additionally, the study explores the challenges of performing Malay art songs, particularly in terms of lyric diction, rhythmic nuances, and expressive delivery. Through this examination, the research emphasizes the artistic and cultural significance of Malay art song and advocates for its recognition within contemporary classical vocal performances.

**Keywords:** Malay Art Song, Text and Music Analysis

### Introduction

The art song is a genre that merges poetry and classical music, evolving significantly from the German Lied in the 19th century to various national adaptations worldwide. Western composers such as Franz Schubert, Robert Schumann, and Hugo Wolf were pivotal in shaping the genre, using poetry as a foundation for their musical expressions.<sup>3</sup> Over time, this tradition

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expanded beyond Europe, influencing composers in Southeast Asia, particularly in Indonesia and Malaysia, where art songs began incorporating local poetry and traditional musical elements.<sup>4</sup>

In Indonesia, the art song tradition emerged in the form of Lagu Seriosa, which served as a nationalistic and poetic form of vocal music. Scholars have documented how Western harmonic influences merged with Nusantara (Malay Archipelago) musical traditions, resulting in a unique blend of Western and traditional aesthetics.<sup>5</sup> While Lagu Seriosa has received academic and artistic recognition, the Malay art song repertoire remains underexplored, largely due to the dominance of Western classical music in vocal training institutions.<sup>6</sup> Scholars have emphasized that more research and composition efforts are necessary to develop a strong foundation for Malay art songs in classical performance settings.<sup>7</sup>

The integration of Malay poetry into art songs is a defining feature of the genre in Malaysia. Traditional poetic forms such as pantun and syair have been adapted into structured musical compositions, reinforcing their lyrical beauty through melodic expression.<sup>8</sup> This process can be observed in Korban Tanah Air, a Malay art song composed by Yusran Yusoff, based on Usman Awang's poem. The song embodies themes of patriotism and sacrifice, with the melancholic tonality of C minor reflecting the deep emotional impact of its text. Its piano accompaniment plays an essential role in reinforcing expressive nuances, merging Western classical harmony with traditional Malay melodic inflections.

Despite its artistic depth, Malay art song performance presents unique challenges, particularly in terms of lyric diction and pronunciation. Malay and Indonesian languages, though related, exhibit significant phonetic differences, which can affect articulation and interpretation in singing.<sup>9</sup> To address these issues, researchers have suggested the use of International Phonetic Alphabet

<sup>4</sup> Yunita, Anindita Trika. "Kebangkitan Nasionalisme Eropa dan Pengaruhnya terhadap Perkembangan Lagu Seriosa di Indonesia" ["The Rise of European Nationalism and Its Influence on the Development of Indonesian Art Song"]. *Resital: Jurnal Seni Pertunjukan*, vol. 13, no. 2, 2012, pp. 159–165.

<sup>5</sup> Nurkholis. *Lagu Seriosa sebagai Lagu Seni Indonesia: Pengaruh Musik Barat dan Musik Etnis Nusantara* ["Lagu Seriosa" as Indonesian Art Song: Influence of Western Music and Nusantara Ethnic Music]. Thesis, Institut Seni Indonesia Padangpanjang, 2012.

<sup>6</sup> Proehoeman, S. C. "Lyric Diction of Indonesian and Malay Art Songs for Singers." *International Journal of Arts, Culture & Heritage*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2012, pp. 101–106.

<sup>7</sup> Yusoff, Mohd – Yasser, Mohd. "The Creation of a New Anthology of Malaysian Art Songs Utilizing Malay Poems and Text." *Proceedings of the Fourth Music and Performing Arts (MusPa) Research Colloquium*, Faculty of Music and Performing Arts, Universiti Teknologi MARA, 2015.

<sup>8</sup> Kimball, Carol. *Art Song: Linking Poetry and Music*. Hal Leonard, 2013.

<sup>9</sup> Proehoeman, op.cit., pp. 101–106

(IPA) transcription systems, which help singers achieve accurate diction and expressive clarity in their performances.<sup>10</sup> The application of linguistic precision ensures that Malay art songs maintain textual and musical integrity, making them accessible to both native and non-native performers.

Given the limited academic focus on Malay art songs, this article aims to analyze Korban Tanah Air through three perspectives: textual analysis, musical composition, and performance practice. By examining the relationship between poetic imagery and musical structure, this study highlights the artistic depth of Malay art songs while advocating for their recognition in contemporary classical vocal performance. Moreover, this research underscores the broader cultural significance of Malay art songs in shaping a national musical identity, ensuring their preservation and development for future generations.<sup>11 12</sup>

### **Analysis of poem of Korban Tanah Air**

Biar dia telah pergi  
Atau gugur ke persada ibu  
Yang takkan kembali  
Meninggalkan bakti dan jasa

Dia hanya seorang mata mata  
Atau perajurit yang berbakti  
Meninggal bingkisan jasa  
Pada bangsa dan ibu pertiwi

Dia gugur di medan perjuangan  
Di tengah-tengah hutan belantara  
Atas kuburnya ditabur kembangan  
Disiram dengan airmata

Kekasih yang menunggu dia  
Putus cinta  
Bisikan jiwa

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<sup>10</sup> Collins, James T. *Malay Dialect Research in Malaysia: The Issue of Perspective*. 1989, <http://sabrizain.org/malaya/library/dialectresearch.pdf>. Accessed [date of access].

<sup>11</sup> Yusoff, Mohd – Yasser, Mohd. "The Creation of a New Anthology of Malaysian Art Songs Utilizing Malay Poems and Text." *Proceedings of the Fourth Music and Performing Arts (MusPa) Research Colloquium*, Faculty of Music and Performing Arts, Universiti Teknologi MARA, 2015.

<sup>12</sup> Proehoeman, S. C. "Lyric Diction of Indonesian and Malay Art Songs for Singers." *International Journal of Arts, Culture & Heritage*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2012, pp. 101–106.



The poem *Korban Tanah Air* by Usman Awang is a deeply evocative reflection on sacrifice, patriotism, and loss, portraying the emotional weight of a soldier or spy who gives his life for his homeland. Through vivid imagery and poignant language, the poem captures the tragic yet noble essence of selfless devotion to the motherland.

The first stanza immediately introduces the central theme of irreversible departure. The phrase *Biar dia telah pergi* (Even though he has gone) establishes a sense of finality, reinforcing the idea that the soldier's sacrifice is absolute. The line *Atau gugur ke persada ibu* (Or fallen on the motherland) connects his fate directly to the nation, implying that his death is not in vain but rather a form of service. The final two lines, *Meninggalkan bakti dan jasa* (Leaving behind his service and merit), elevate the fallen soldier's legacy, positioning him as a figure of honor whose contributions persist beyond death. This opening stanza sets a somber yet reverent tone, emphasizing remembrance and respect.

The second stanza further explores the soldier's duty and anonymity. The phrase *Dia hanya seorang mata-mata* (He was just a spy) or *perajurit yang berbakti* (a soldier who served) emphasizes that the individual identity of the fallen is secondary to his role in the greater mission. By not naming a specific soldier, the poem universalizes the act of sacrifice, making it applicable to all who have given their lives for their country. The idea that he has *Meninggal bingkisan jasa / Pada bangsa dan ibu pertiwi* (Left a gift of merit to the nation and motherland) reinforces a collective sense of gratitude, portraying his actions as a selfless contribution to a larger cause.

The third stanza shifts to a visual and emotional depiction of loss. The line *Dia gugur di medan perjuangan* (He fell on the battlefield) situates the reader in the heart of the conflict, while *Di tengah-tengah hutan belantara* (In the midst of the jungle wilderness) evokes the imagery of Malaysia's war-torn landscapes, possibly referencing historical battles fought within dense rainforests. The soldier's final resting place is described with the touching image *Atas kuburnya ditabur kembang / Disiram dengan air mata* (Flowers are scattered over his grave / Watered with tears), a poetic representation of both honor and grief. The act of scattering flowers and watering the grave with tears signifies a ritual of remembrance, suggesting that while the soldier's body may rest in solitude, his sacrifice is deeply mourned and revered.

The final stanza personalizes the loss by introducing the figure of a lover left behind. The phrase *Kekasih yang menunggu dia / Putus cinta* (The lover who waited for him / Love is broken) conveys the emotional devastation experienced by those who remain. This transition from nationalistic

tribute to personal grief adds depth and universality, showing that beyond the soldier's heroism lies a profound sense of personal loss. The concluding line, *Bisikan jiwa* (Whispers of the soul), carries a haunting quality, symbolizing either the lingering pain of love unfulfilled or the voice of the fallen soldier echoing in memory. This ending highlights the human cost of war, grounding the poem in both national and personal dimensions.

Overall, *Korban Tanah Air* is a powerful meditation on the price of patriotism. It balances public honor and private sorrow, illustrating how sacrifice for the nation is both a heroic act and a personal tragedy. The poem's structure, moving from a national perspective to an intimate emotional loss, reinforces the duality of remembrance—the soldier as a symbol of national pride and a beloved individual mourned by those left behind. Through its carefully chosen words and poetic imagery, Usman Awang's *Korban Tanah Air* serves as a timeless tribute to the bravery, loss, and enduring memory of those who have laid down their lives for their country.

### **Analysis of Music Composition**

The composition of *Korban Tanah Air* by Yusran Yusoff is carefully structured to reflect its poignant theme of sacrifice and patriotism. The song follows a binary form (A-B) with a D.C. al Coda, which reinforces its cyclical nature, symbolizing the ongoing remembrance of those who have given their lives to their homeland. It begins with an eight-bar piano solo that establishes the solemn and reflective atmosphere, setting the foundation for the melodic and harmonic motifs. Section A introduces a lyrical yet solemn melody, divided into two subsections (A(a) – A(b)), where the harmonic and melodic materials are first developed. In contrast, Section B introduces a shift in emotional intensity, utilizing an agitated rhythmic drive and dynamic variation to express the struggles and urgency of the song's message. This section reaches a climactic moment before transitioning into morendo, signifying a moment of reflection and mourning. The return to Section A via D.C. al Coda emphasizes the thematic material of devotion and sacrifice, leading to the song's ultimate climax in the Coda before settling into a quiet resolution.

**E.g. 1**



**Subsection (a) in Section A of Korban Tanah Air**

**E.g. 2**



**Subsection (b) in Section A of Korban Tanah Air**

Melodically, *Korban Tanah Air* is tailored for the soprano voice, ranging from C4 to G5. The melody primarily moves in stepwise motion, interspersed with occasional leaps that heighten expressive moments. The song is firmly rooted in the C minor scale (natural and harmonic forms), avoiding excessive chromaticism to maintain its lyrical quality. The use of triplet figures and semiquaver ornamentations reflects influences from Melayu Asli, a traditional Malay musical style known for its intricate melodic embellishments. These elements provide fluidity and expressiveness to the vocal line, with rhythmic augmentation in climactic moments adding contrast. Notably, the highest note (G5 in the Coda) is placed strategically on a climactic word, reinforcing the emotional weight of the lyrics. The descending motion in the closing section further enhances the song's narrative, portraying a sense of loss and reverence.

The harmonic framework of the piece revolves around C harmonic minor, with functional progressions emphasizing minor, diminished, and dominant qualities. The use of I (C minor), iv (F minor), V (G major), and vii° (B diminished) forms the harmonic foundation, with additional chromatic passing chords and suspensions to heighten tension and resolution. A secondary dominant (D9#11 as V9/V) in bar 20 momentarily shifts harmonic focus, creating a sense of harmonic expansion before returning to the primary tonal center. Another notable harmonic feature is the Eb augmented chord (III+), which appears exclusively in first inversion, providing a subtle yet effective harmonic color. The cadences play a significant role in structuring the piece, with half cadences sustaining momentum, while authentic cadences (V–i) establish strong resolutions, particularly in the Coda. The harmonic treatment balances traditional functional harmony with expressive dissonances, effectively complementing the song's themes of patriotism and sacrifice.

E.g. 3

c:	c	d°	E <sup>b</sup>	f	G	A <sup>b</sup>	b° or B <sup>b</sup>
	i	ii°	III	iv	V	VI	<u>vii° or</u> VII

Chords in the key of C harmonic minor

E.g. 4

c:	c	d°	E <sup>b</sup>	E <sup>b</sup> +	f	G	A <sup>b</sup>	B <sup>b</sup>	b°
	i	ii°	III	III+	iv	V	VI	VII	vii°

  = Chords utilised

Chords in the key of C harmonic minor that are used in Korban Tanah Air

The piano setting in *Korban Tanah Air* is integral to the composition, serving as more than just an accompaniment. The introductory piano solo presents thematic material that reappears throughout the piece, creating cohesion between the instrumental and vocal lines. The piano interacts dynamically with the voice, employing imitation and echoing techniques (e.g., bar 15, where the piano prolongs the vocal motif), reinforcing melodic ideas.

Throughout the song, the piano alternates between arpeggiated accompaniment, harmonic support, and counter-melodies, shifting roles seamlessly to enhance the musical expression. The textural contrast between block chord harmonization in Section B and the running sextuplets in the Coda highlights the changing emotional landscape of the piece. The climax is particularly emphasized by the descending arpeggios spanning five octaves, symbolizing the finality of sacrifice, before resolving to a subdued ending. The song's conclusion, with the lowest C on the keyboard, leaves a lasting impression of solemnity and reflection.

**E.g. 5**

13

tau gu-gur ke per-sa-da i - bu

ii° 05 ii° V7

3

### **Correlation between voice and piano part**

The integration of poetry and music in *Korban Tanah Air* showcases Yusran Yusoff's ability to translate thematic depth into musical expression. The slow tempo, minor tonality, and dynamic shifts mirror the dramatic progression of the text, capturing the essence of loss, reverence, and patriotism. The harmonic choices and melodic phrasing align closely with the poetic imagery, ensuring that the emotional weight of the lyrics is fully realized through the music. The piano's role as a collaborative voice, rather than a mere accompaniment, further enhances the storytelling aspect of the composition. Ultimately, *Korban Tanah Air* stands as a compelling example of Malay art song, merging poetry, melody, and harmony into a deeply evocative musical work that pays tribute to the sacrifices made for the homeland.

### **Performance Practice and Experience of *Korban Tanah Air***

The preparation for performing *Korban Tanah Air* by Yusran Yusoff, with poem by Usman Awang, required a rigorous and immersive process to capture both its technical demands and emotional depth. Over the course of

several weeks, approximately 25 hours were dedicated to understanding and mastering the piece. The initial phase of preparation focused on analyzing the score and text, where about five hours were spent studying the historical and emotional context of the song. Understanding how Yusran Yusoff musically translated the poetic themes of sacrifice and loss was crucial in shaping the interpretation. The piece's setting in C minor, known for its melancholic and solemn qualities, immediately established an atmosphere of reflection and reverence, which had to be conveyed effectively through vocal delivery.

Once the contextual analysis was complete, around eight hours were dedicated to melodic refinement. The melodic motion, primarily stepwise with occasional leaps of a perfect fifth, was carefully rehearsed to ensure its expressive integrity and connection to the song's narrative. Special attention was given to maintaining the lyricism and phrasing of the melody, ensuring that each note carried emotional weight. The harmonic elements, particularly the minor key inflections and chromatic tension, were explored in depth to maintain the song's solemn and reflective character.

Rhythm played a significant role in performance practice, particularly the influence of *Melayu Asli* rhythmic patterns. Over the next six hours, emphasis was placed on perfecting triplets and semiquavers, rhythmic elements that are deeply rooted in Malay traditional music. These rhythmic figures required precise articulation and control, as they not only contributed to the stylistic authenticity of the piece but also enhanced its expressiveness. The contrast between the steady pulse in Section A and the intensified rhythmic activity in Section B was particularly important in conveying the emotional journey of the song.

The structure of *Korban Tanah Air* follows a binary form (A-B) with a return to A via *D.C. al Coda*, making it crucial to understand the relationship between the sections. Three hours were spent analyzing how Section B builds in intensity before returning to the somber and reflective atmosphere of Section A. This transition had to feel organic, with the crescendo of emotion in Section B giving way to the final resolution. The process of rehearsing these transitions ensured that the shifts in dynamics, tempo, and articulation were seamless, preserving the narrative flow of the composition.

The final stage of preparation involved approximately three hours of rehearsal with a vocal coach, where all musical elements melodic interpretation, harmonic nuances, rhythmic execution, and textual expression were integrated into a cohesive and polished performance. Particular emphasis was placed on stage presence, breath control, and emotional engagement, ensuring that the delivery remained compelling and deeply resonant. Attention was also given to diction and phrasing, reinforcing the poetic meaning behind the lyrics.

Beyond the technical preparation, the performance experience itself was deeply immersive and emotionally charged. Singing *Korban Tanah Air* was not merely about executing the notes correctly and it was about conveying the solemnity and weight of sacrifice embedded within the poetry and music. The climactic sections, where the vocal line reaches its highest register, demanded a balance between power and control to convey urgency and intensity. The mournful conclusion, marked by a gradual *morendo* (dying away), required careful dynamic shading to leave a lingering emotional impact on the audience.

Through journaling and self-reflection, insights into the emotional and technical journey of performing this piece were documented. The interaction between traditional rhythmic embellishments and the melodic line played a crucial role in shaping the overall interpretation. Notably, the audience response indicated that the familiarity of *Melayu Asli* rhythmic elements evoked a deep emotional connection, reinforcing the cultural and historical significance of the song.

Ultimately, performing *Korban Tanah Air* was an enriching and transformative experience, requiring a holistic approach that combined musical precision with emotional storytelling. By ensuring that every musical element melody, harmony, rhythm, and text was carefully intertwined, the performance aimed to honor the sacrifices depicted in the song and provide a deeply moving experience for listeners.

## Conclusion

Within the framework of Malay art songs, Yusran Yusoff's analysis of *Korban Tanah Air* demonstrates the profound interaction of poetry and music. This research highlights the song's profound patriotic spirit and emotional impact through textual analysis, musical composition assessment, and performance practice. Usman Awang's poetic composition embodies themes of sacrifice, recollection, and national pride, which are meticulously represented in the song's melodic and harmonic structure. Yusoff's piece utilizes a harmonious integration of Western classical and traditional Malay musical components, notably through its *Melayu Asli* rhythmic patterns, stepwise melodic progression, and emotive harmonic language.

The examination of the song's structure, adhering to a binary form with D.C. al Coda, elucidates how the piece adeptly communicates the emotional trajectory of heroism and lamentation. The interaction between the piano accompaniment and vocal line enriches the lyrical narrative, enabling the music to function as an expressive extension of the text. Considerations of

performance techniques, such as diction, phrasing, and dynamic control, underscore the intricacies of presenting Malay art songs within a contemporary classical framework. The artistic and technical hurdles encountered in executing Korban Tanah Air, especially in conveying the subtleties of Melayu Asli rhythms and the emotive climactic instances, underscore the necessity for specialized training and research in this genre.

This study promotes enhanced recognition and incorporation of Malay art songs within the classical vocal repertoire. Notwithstanding its profound cultural and historical importance, Malay art songs are inadequately represented in scholarly and performing arenas. This research on Korban Tanah Air enhances the discourse around the incorporation of Southeast Asian art songs into the classical music canon. Subsequent research ought to further investigate the diversity of Malay art songs, specifically regarding its linguistic, stylistic, and interpretative dimensions, to guarantee its preservation and advancement. Ultimately, Korban Tanah Air exemplifies the capacity of music to articulate national identity, historical memory, and profound emotional expression, rendering it an indispensable contribution to the canon of classical vocal music.

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## THE WAR TOPOS IN IVAN NEBESNYI'S WORKS (ON THE EXAMPLE OF "MESSAGE FROM UKRAINE" AND "...WHILE RECALLING...")

OLENA YAKYMCHUK<sup>1</sup>, OLENA RIEZNIK<sup>2</sup>

**SUMMARY.** The works of the Ukrainian composer Ivan Nebesnyi (born in 1971) are well known not only in Ukraine, but also abroad. His works are performed by both domestic and foreign musicians. The composer's works feature the theme of war. In the symphonic work "Message from Ukraine" (2010, 2014) and the choral cycle "...While Recalling..." (2023), the author illustrated not only his personal reflection but also generalized the traumatic experience of many Ukrainians' generations. In the choir cycle the author conveyed subtly the state of praying, the secret communication with God, personal and collective asking for help. In "Message from Ukraine" the Ukrainians' existential worldview during the war is depicted with musical means. Both works were performed at Ukrainian and foreign concert venues.

**Keywords:** Ivan Nebesnyi's work, the theme of war, symphonic work, choral work.

### Introduction

War always was one of the basic plots of art. Since 2014 it entered actively into Ukrainian artistic space and became a top priority theme for domestic artists, musicians, writers. The artists comprehend it through personal stories, traumatic experience, and collective memory. Their works transform the pain and resistance into artistic images, form a social dialogue, help rethink

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reality, consolidate the nation. The role of art enhances considerably in confrontation of the authoritarian ideology and the democratic values. The anti-war nature of the artists' activities is directed to the support of Ukraine. They attract the world's community's attention to the country, which defends its independence and European values.

Musicologists O. Berehova<sup>3</sup>, V. Dutchak, H. Karas, N. Kukuruza, and V. Fedorak<sup>4</sup>; I. Lokshuk, O. Cherednychenko, O. Kopeliuk, I. Sediuk and S. Pototskyi<sup>5</sup>; O. Vereshchahina-Biliavska<sup>6</sup> pay close attention to the work of Ukrainian composers during the Russian Ukrainian war in various aspects.

Among the latest studies about Ivan Nebesnyi's oeuvre there is L. Nazar-Shevchuk's publication about the premiere of I. Nebesnyi's ballet "Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors"<sup>7</sup>. The K. Cherevko's article deals with the consideration of I. Nebesnyi's chamber music<sup>8</sup>. The author of this article analyzes the role of Ivan Nebesnyi's music for plays<sup>9</sup>. However, the works on the war theme were not studied earlier on.

Therefore, two Ivan Nebesnyi's pieces, associated with the war theme (the symphonic "Message from Ukraine" and choir cycle "...While recalling..."),

<sup>3</sup> Berehova, Olena "Art of the unbreakable: Ukrainian composer's creativity against Russian aggression" In *Musicological thought of Dnipro region*, vol. 27(2), 2024, pp. 115–114. DOI10.33287/222446

<sup>4</sup> Berehova, Olena; Dutchak, Violetta, Karas, Hanna, Kukuruza, Nadiia, and Fedorak, Volodymyr "Intercultural communication in crisis conditions of the new wave of Ukrainian emigration" In *Brazilian Journal of Education, Technology and Society*, vol. 17, 2024, pp. 315–333. DOI <http://dx.doi.org/10.14571/brajets.v17.nse4.315-333>

<sup>5</sup> Lokshuk, Iryna, Cherednychenko, Olha, Kopeliuk, Oleh, Sediuk, Ihor, and Pototskyi, Stanislav "Resilience and resistance: Ukrainian art under martial law" In *Amazonia Investiga*, vol. 13(82), 2024, pp. 70–80. <https://doi.org/10.34069/AI/2024.82.10.5>

<sup>6</sup> Vereshchahina-Biliavska, Olena "The image of man and the world in contemporary music: anthropological dimensions of the work of Ukrainian composers in the socio-cultural continuum" In *Scientific notes of Vinnytsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi State Pedagogical University. Series: History*, vol. 47, 2024, pp. 90–98.

<sup>7</sup> Nazar-Shevchuk, Liliia "Light from shadows: about Ivan Nebesny's ballet "Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors". In *Music. Ukrainian online magazine*, May 4, 2024. <https://mus.art.co.ua/svitlo-vid-tiney-pro-balet-ivana-nebesnoho-tini-zabutykh-predkiv-iii-chastyna-vsezahalne/> (07.02.2025)

<sup>8</sup> Cherevko, Kateryna "Chamber music of Ivan Nebesnyi: at the intersection of tradition and innovation" In *Ukrainian music*, vol. 3–4 (50–51), 2024, pp. 141–147 <https://doi.org/10.32782/2224-0926-2024-3-4-50-51-15>

<sup>9</sup> Yakymchuk, Olena "The role of Ivan Nebesnyi's music in the play 'On Sunday early morning she was digging potion herbs' ". In *Scientific collections of the Lviv National Music Academy named after M.Lysenko*, vol. 51, 2024, pp. 56–61. <https://doi.org/10.32782/2310-0583-2023-51-09>  
Yakymchuk, Olena "Ivan Nebesnyi's Music for Plays: Syntactic Aspect" In *Bulletin of the Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts. Series: Musical art*, vol. 7(2), 2024, pp. 149–157. <https://doi.org/10.31866/2616-7581.7.2.2024.316723>

are considered in this article. The semantic specificities of symphonic and choral scores are analyzed; the peculiarities of the author's composer style are elucidated.

### **"Message from Ukraine"**

The Ukrainian composers' artwork, born by the war, can be divided conditionally into two categories. The appearance of the first one was caused by the artist's acute emotional reaction to the awful events; the second one generalizes tragic and traumatic experience. Ivan Nebesnyi's "Message from Ukraine", for electric guitar, men's choir and symphonic orchestra (2010, 2014), and the choir cycle "...While Recalling...", based on Ukrainian prayers (2023), belong to the second category. Despite affiliation with different genres, both works illustrate not only the composer's personal reflection on the war events but also generalize the experience of many millions of Ukrainians.

"Message from Ukraine" appears as a bright sound-expressive picture. I. Nebesnyi wrote it in 2010. It was important for the composer to fix the messages, characteristic for Ukrainian music<sup>10</sup>. However, the seven-minute address turned out to be prophetic. The story of the wonderful country, its fight for existence is recreated in the symphonic piece's score – in the narrative of nowadays. The cast is rather original, too. It seems at first glance that the electric guitar, man's choir and symphonic orchestra have different generic and semantic meanings. Though, the composer chose timbres, whose combination creates many-voiced pictures of joint fight.

The electric guitar symbolizes the voice of disfigured but unconquered Ukraine. Even though this instrument is used in different styles of music – from blues to punk-rock and metal – it is mostly associated with rebellion and liberty. It is this semantics that is laid in "Message". The men's choir symbolizes the prayer of a multimillion people. It performs the chant from the Great Vespers "Lord, I Call Upon Thee, Hear Me". This type of choir is tightly connected to the church singing traditions and is associated with strength, wisdom, and stability. Church acoustics enhance the sound of the men's choir and create a feeling of space and greatness. It symbolizes the strength of spirit, faith, and invincibility. Fragments of peaceful life and military attacks are portrayed expressively in the symphonic score. The voices of the instruments recreate a bright sound palette of military events.

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<sup>10</sup> Kovaleva, Alla "Ivan Nebesnyi: 'I thank my fate I am able to make music'" In *Music. Ukrainian online magazine*, December 12, 2020 <https://mus.art.co.ua/ivan-nebesnyy-ya-diakuiu-doliza-te-shcho-meni-vdaiet-sia-zaymatysia-muzykoiu/> (11.02.2025)

The premiere of the piece took place in 2010 at the festival “Season Premieres”, performed by the Honored Academic Symphony Orchestra of Ukrainian Radio<sup>11</sup> under the baton of the People’s Artist of Ukraine Volodymyr Sheiko<sup>12</sup>. The author made the second edition of it in 2014; since then, it is performed in concerts, thematically connected to the Maidan events<sup>13</sup> and the 2014 war.

Oleh Pavliuchenkov created a video version of I. Nebesnyi’s “Message from Ukraine”, having used photos and video records of Russian Ukrainian war chronicles. Visual content complements audio one and gives an idea of the awful events, portrayed in music<sup>14</sup>. The video clip was used during the performance of the piece at the concert “Symphony mainstream. Message from Ukraine” on 11 July, 2022<sup>15</sup> in the Recording House of Ukrainian Radio by the Honored Academic Symphony Orchestra of Ukrainian Radio (conductor – the People’s Artist of Ukraine Volodymyr Sheiko). In the conductor’s opinion, combining the music and the video is effective, since visualization enhances the music’s influence on the hearers<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Honored Academic Symphony Orchestra of Ukrainian Radio (1929) – leading symphony orchestra in Ukraine, one of the oldest symphony orchestras in Europe. It made over 10 thousand records of symphony music for the Fund of Ukrainian Radio. Live broadcasts and records of the orchestra sound regularly on the radio «Culture», on the First channel of Ukrainian Radio; they are broadcast on the TV-channel UA:Culture, and also on foreign radio stations.

<sup>12</sup> Volodymyr Oleksandrovych Sheiko – Ukrainian conductor, Honored Art Worker of Ukraine, People’s Artist of Ukraine, laureate of the National Prize of Ukraine named after Taras Shevchenko. Recorded by the Symphony Orchestra of Ukrainian Radio under the baton of V. Sheiko, the works of the luminaries of domestic musical art and those of young composer generation sound regularly on air of national channels and the European language community “European Broadcasting Union” of 56 world’s countries.

<sup>13</sup> Maidan is a Ukrainian way of upholding of personal and public freedoms in respond of arbitrariness and despotism of the authorities. During the last 30 years the basic people’s movements concentrated geographically around of the Maidan of Independence in the centre of Kyiv; intellectually, they were based on the idea of individual and collective freedom of choice as a main social value. The First Maidan, the Revolution on the granite, 1990, was an important factor of Ukraine’s obtaining independence. On the Maidan of 2004, the Orange revolution, people defended their right for the fair election. The last Maidan of 2014 defended European course of the state and was continued by military defending of its territories.

<sup>14</sup> Ivan Nebesnyi “Message from Ukraine” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IQ9w79lgO-0> (27.01.2025)

<sup>15</sup> Mori, Yevhenii “Symphonic ‘Message from Ukraine’ – the first recording concert took place at the Recording House” In *Public. Culture*, July 13, 2022. [https://suspilne.media/culture/260001-simfonichniy-mesedz-z-ukraini-u-budinku-zvukozapisu-vidbuvsya-persij-koncert-zapis/?utm\\_source=](https://suspilne.media/culture/260001-simfonichniy-mesedz-z-ukraini-u-budinku-zvukozapisu-vidbuvsya-persij-koncert-zapis/?utm_source=) (10.02.2025)

<sup>16</sup> Sikorska, Iryna “Volodymyr Sheiko: ‘Message from Ukraine’ “ In *Music. Ukrainian online magazine*, September 24, 2020 <https://mus.art.co.ua/volodymyr-sheiko-message-z-ukrainy/> (07.02.2025)

The piece consists of the Introduction, four sections and the Coda. The first section characterizes peaceful life, the second one recreates the aggressor's invasion, the third reflects the victims' prayers, the fourth – cruel military attacks.

The brief seven-measure Introduction portrays the beginning of the day. The harmonics of the electric guitar and the vibraphone's sounds create a pleasant atmosphere, an effect of ethereal space. Nature is gradually awakening from sleep.

In the first section the narrative continues – a new day is coming to birth. The woodwind instruments recreate nature's sounds and the bird's voices; the string instruments depict the sunrise. It seems that its light fills all the space. The string group's soft sound becomes stronger; it conquers the diapason. Two upward waves of the strings confirm a warm sunny day's start. The second part, dynamically more powerful, leads to a breakdown in music. The blow happens. The musical events change dramatically. The second section begins – the aggressor's attack.

The penetrating timbre of trumpets permeates the orchestra sounding. The woodwinds' trills, the brass' repetitions, the percussion's *tremolo* depict chaos, destruction of habitual life. At first destroying replicas appear in turn in different orchestral parts, but they unite, step by step, in unison, and therefore the feeling of chaos increases. Finally, the mess of various pitch and rhythmical formula merges into a dissonant chorale of the brass instruments.

In the third section the score contains the three clearly outlined sound layers: the electric guitar as the voice of the country, the male choir – the nation's prayers, and the symphony orchestra as the theatre of war. The timbre of the electric guitar interferes with the chaos of battle. It is the voice of Ukraine, which is speaking to the whole world. It sounds like a protest of arbitrariness and an appeal to all humanity to stop the aggressors and prevent the tragedy. Huge leaps up and down, long *glissando*, *tremolo*, and *vibrato* create an expressive, emotionally tense oration. It makes an impression as if a humanitarian catastrophe was announced on the radio.

The men's choir joins the electric guitar with a traditional Christian chant from the Great Vespers "Lord, I Call Upon Thee, Hear Me"<sup>17</sup>. It is a prayer request for help and kindness; it conveys humble and hope, defines the need for God's mercy. The prayer is compared with the incense, which rises

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<sup>17</sup> The text is derived from Psalm 140 (141): 1-2: "Lord, I am calling you, hear me. Hear me, Lord. Let my prayer come down as an incense before thee, and the offering of my hands as an evening sacrifice".

to God as a spiritual sacrifice. It unites millions of people, victims of war. Their voices penetrate through the cannons (short motives of the woodwinds and the strings). The solidity of the sounding is palpable in each choral vertical. In the context of the narrative of “Message” sacredness and dramatism are combined in the male choir’s sounding.

The third layer of the symphonic score is one-measure-long motives of the woodwind and the string instruments, which break into the prayer’s sounding as a vortex. They remember short shelling’s. Prickly accents of the strings and winds in a high register are seething between the sounding of the electric guitar and the choir.

The solo of the electric guitar, built on the prayer’s tune, becomes a peculiar epilogue of the sacral chant. In the clear chord support of the orchestra, it gains the sound of a peremptory slogan – the affirmation of the position of the country, which is fighting for its own existence. The composer emphasized the steadfastness of the appeal by the consonance. The harmony consists only of the main triads. It is the highest degree of consistency in the score.

The fourth section portrays war theatre. The counteraction of the two musical spheres, a sarcastic march and an aggressive mess, occurs in the mind of the hearer. For a while the clear rhythm of the strings’ march and the sequences of the winds, sounding in a random order, are in counteraction. They accumulate an inner tension until the explosion occurs – and then there is silence. Music returns the hearer to the theme of the Introduction; it is an allusion to peaceful everyday life. The literal repetition reminds of the true values – the right of the human for existence and freedom. Despite all wandering, life goes on. What it will be like depends only on us.

### **“...While recalling...”**

In the choir cycle “...While recalling...” (2023) I. Nebesnyi combined three Ukrainian prayers to a higher power and dedicated it to all who lost his relatives during the war in Ukraine.

The premiere of the work took place on domestic and foreign stages on April 30, 2023 at the concert “Making the way to the light” at the Ukrainian Art Festival “Bouquet Kyiv Stage” (Tbilisi, Georgia), and on October 7, 2023 at the International Festival “Kyiv Music Fest” (Kyiv, Ukraine), performed by the chamber choir “Kyiv”, conducted by the People’s Artist of Ukraine Mykola

Hobdych. The conductor's subtle feeling of the author's text was supported by the sounding of the leading choir collective. The hearers responded to the lyricism of I. Nebesnyi's prayer chants with emotional compassion.

The choir cycle "...While recalling..." consists of three parts: "The Prayer of Morning Intentions", "The Prayer of the Warrior", and "The Prayer to the Guardian Angel". Glorification of the God is absent in the chants; instead of that, the sphere of plea is conveyed softly and carefully; it defines the sacredness of the spoken words: I am asking for support, for help.

The main characteristics of I. Nebesnyi's works are cordiality, deepening into themselves, respectful attitude to their own land, etched in our people's mentality. They are embodied in the choir cycle "...While recalling..." at the level of verbal and musical language.

"The Prayer of Morning Intentions". The morning prayer is an obligatory part of many religious practices. It combines several functions in itself: expressing gratitude to the God for the possibility to live one more day (*Lord, let me live this day with dignity*); asking for blessing, help, and protection in everyday affairs; since the war began, from the Ukrainians' lips the existential asking is sounding – to survive throughout the day. The person praying gives his own thoughts to the God's judgement (*You guide my thoughts about all people...*). It is spiritual purification, the moment of inner concentration, the possibility to clear the thoughts of all the negative and to get filled with serenity.

The chant has two parts – the static and the dynamic ones. The developed Introduction *brumendo* with the help of long note values creates a sound semiosphere of diatonic and chromatic tones. The absence of words gives the hearer a possibility to plunge into timbral and sonoric sounding, to concentrate on the harmony extracts. However, the feeling of complete inner serenity is absent. It fluctuates between consonant and dissonant choral verticals, which seek stable tones (E.g. 1). The resolving only happens in measure 17.



## E.g. 1

**"Молитва ранішніх намірів"**

Largo  
Медитативно, з внутрішнім спокоєм  
♩ = 50-54

Іван Небесний

The musical score is written for a soprano solo and a choir. The tempo is marked 'Largo' with a note value of 50-54. The mood is 'Медитативно, з внутрішнім спокоєм' (Meditative, with inner calm). The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 4/4. The score includes dynamic markings such as *pp* (pianissimo) and *p* (piano). The lyrics 'Y(oy)...' are written below the notes, indicating a vocal line. The score is divided into two systems, each containing staves for the soloist and the choir.

## Ivan Nebesnyi "The Prayer of Morning Intentions", measures 1–16

The first (static) part combines four sentences of repeated structure. The beginning of *soprano solo* with *II<sup>b</sup>* note of the minor scale sharpens the intonation. The soloist's part is based on the alternating of the *I* and *II* steps' neighboring tones. The tune has traits of melodeclamation, which make it sound like a talk to the God. The suspension points at the end of the sentences mean uncertainty today. This state is enhanced by musical intonation; the sentences ended on the unsteady *II* step (*cis*). Only one lexeme "Lord" is present in the choral accolade; it is, in a way, a semantic pillar. The choir creates a harmony support for the soloist. Changing of *B minor* and *G major* harmony diversifies the immobility of the first part.

In the second part the dramaturgical development gets more dynamic. "Give us the strength to believe!" – the feeling of unity and internal force sounds in the everyday prayer. Every person praying becomes a participant of the great spiritual battle for life. The upward sevenths in the solo part become a stimulus for further development of the morning prayer's energy.

THE WAR TOPOS IN IVAN NEBESNYI'S WORKS  
(ON THE EXAMPLE OF "MESSAGE FROM UKRAINE" AND "...WHILE RECALLING...")

The melody of women's voices goes up through the diapason of two octaves (measures 45–48) (E.g. 2). It reminds by its semantics of the upward motion of the string instruments in the first part of "Message from Ukraine" – the move to the light. Besides, it is a characteristic feature of I. Nebesnyi's composer style as a symbol of optimism, of spiritual rise.

E.g. 2

45 *poco accel.* *Драматично,  
з войовничюю строгістю*

дай віри ти, дай нам си лу віри ти!  
дай нам си лу, си лу віри ти!  
дай нам си лу віри ти!  
си лу, си лу віри ти!

Ivan Nebesnyi "The Prayer of Morning Intentions", measures 45–48

The culmination is marked by widening of the diapason, awakening of inner energy. Dynamic and emotional filling symbolizes augmentation of the number of voices in the unified prayer for peace and fairness. Such an enlightenment, illuminated by optimism, continues in "The Prayer of the Warrior". "The Prayer of Morning Intentions" gets finished by *soprano solo* (Lord), which sounded at the beginning of the work. The last choral vertical *brumendo* softens the sharp sounding of the *II* ♭ note.

I. Nebesnyi pays special attention to the inner state of the performers. Therefore, he scrupulously marked the mood in all parts: *meditatively, with inner serenity* (Introduction); *meditatively, with melancholy* (the first part); *with hope, expecting, gradually more and more dramatically, with elements of militancy* (the second part); *dramatically, with bellicose severity* (culmination). They tune the musicians to correspondent tone of saying the prayers.

The structure of the second part “The Prayer of the Warrior” comprises two sections. The first one, as it is in “The Prayer of Morning Intentions”, has static prayerful character. The choral score is rather transparent in it: the base part is kept on the tonic (e), the tenor’s part is built on the first three steps of the main key (e, *fis*, g), the soloist’s recitation covers the first and the second steps (e, *fis*). Two-measure phrases have agogic deviations – small *accelerando* and *ritenuto*; it ruins the chant’s statics. The tonic’s domination, minimal diapason in the tenor’s and the soloist’s parts, and *basso ostinato* define calm state without extra emotions, and inner strictness of the first section of “The Prayer of the Warrior”. The bells at the beginning of each phrase enliven the sounding, add the choral score lightness and transparency.

In the second section of “The Prayer of the Warrior” I. Nebesnyi portrayed the prayers of millions of Ukrainian women for the defenders. The choral accolade of the women’s parts turns into a polydeclamative prayer where each performer sings the word combination “*Lord, have mercy and preserve them*” in a random order and *tempo ad libitum* (the author’s remark) (E.g. 3). The divisi in the bass part diversify harmonical filling of the score (*A-dur* – *a-moll* – *E-dur*). The piece finishes itself in *E-dur*, which continues the general conception of the dramaturgy – musical and emotional enlightenment.

## E.g. 3

7 **ДІЛІКАТНІСТЬЮ** **росо accel.** 7

(дані послідовності повторювати у довільному порядку, у довільному темпі ad libitum)

69 *pp* Госпо ди, поми-луй їх, Госпо ди, по-ми-луй їх,

(дані послідовності повторювати у довільному порядку, у довільному темпі, кожен виконавець ad libitum)

*pp* Госпо ди, по-милуй їх. Збере-жи їх, Госпо ди.

(дані послідовності повторювати у довільному порядку, у довільному темпі, кожен виконавець ad libitum)

*pp* Збе-ре-жи їх, Госпо ди, по-милуй їх.

(дані послідовності повторювати у довільному порядку, у довільному темпі, кожен виконавець ad libitum)

*pp* Госпо ди, помилуй Госпо ди, по-ми-луй і збе-ре-жи їх.

(дані послідовності повторювати у довільному порядку, у довільному темпі, кожен виконавець ad libitum)

*pp* Го-споди, по-ми-луй їх. Збережи їх, Го-спо-ди.

*p* Ти по-буль тут, мій

У(оу)...

Ivan Nebesnyi “The Prayer of the Warrior”, measures 69

In the last phrase the composer gathers scattershot voices in a choral vertical (*Credo!*) in the sign of affirmation of the faith, of the summary of the Christians' basic ideas.

The third part "The Prayer to the Guardian Angel" is the lightest chant among others from the cycle. It portrays the image of the angel as a symbol of purity, sacredness, presence of the grace of God. Gradual motion of long note values dominates in choral parts. Major sounding gives solemnity and sublimity to the prayers. Upward perfect fifths in the soprano part make the sounding lighter, elevating those who are praying to the God's Light.

In general, in the choral cycle I. Nebesnyi focuses on semantically important lexemes of the canonic text (*I believe (Credo); Lord; Lord, give us strength; Lord, have mercy on them; Lord, have mercy and preserve them*). The last one, sung in "The Prayer of the Warrior" with women's voices, becomes like Ukrainian women's prayer for the saving of the defenders. At the level of verbal speaking the endings of the phrases are marked by three dots; it demonstrates cautious and gradual entering of the person into the praying state.

At the musical level the prayer is conveyed by narrow diapason of the choral parts and of the part of the soloist. Its melody ("The Prayer of Morning Intentions", "The Prayer of the Warrior") is intonationally like melodeclamation, therefore it resembles the talk to God. Gradual motion and long notes dominate in the choral parts; all these convey inner serenity and concentration of the person praying. In the culmination of the first part changing of musical events happens: the texture is condensed, the diapason of the choral score is widened. The upward motion (the *anabasis* figure) symbolizes enlightenment. The general dramaturgical development goes from deep sorrow to bright joy: it is outlined in the culmination of the first part, the second part is finished in an eponymous major key (*E-dur*), the third one sounds entirely in a major key (*A-dur*).

The prayer semantics is realized on the dynamic level (*mp – mf*), in the agogic deviations, marked by the author (*poco accelerando, poco ritenuto, molto rubato, a tempo*).

The most important of all is the intonation of the praying person's communication with the God and with the angel; the music and the author's clues point to this. The score is replete with the composer's instructions, which remind the person about the character of the communication with the Savior (*calmly, without any extra emotions, with inner strictness; meditatively, with inner serenity; with hope; gradually more and more dramatically, with elements of militancy; elegantly, tenderly, with delicateness; sublimely, with elements of solemnity*).

So, the choral cycle has reflected a consonant prayer of the Ukrainians to the Higher Forces with asking for support and blessing for every day of their life.

## Conclusion

Today the topos of war is represented by different musical genres – from intimate and lyrical songs to the full-scale symphony scores. Only two works, associated with the theme of war, are considered in the article. The composer's personal reflection and generalized traumatic experience of many generations of the Ukrainians are represented in them. In the choir cycle the author conveyed subtly the state of praying, the secret communication with God, personal and collective asking for help. In "Message from Ukraine" the Ukrainians' existential worldview during the war is depicted with musical means. There is hope in each of them. It radiates in the upward move of the melody, in the tendency to major keys as a symbol of optimism and sublimation, sincere prayer, spiritual enlightenment.

I. Nebesnyi's works, in which the theme of war is represented, are consonant to H. Havrylets' "The Prayer to the Holy Mother" (2022), V. Sylvestrov's "Tears" (2023), Three Spiritual Chants (2023), V. Poliova's "Hymn to the Holy Mother", which were performed in the concert programs, mentioned above. Their sacral words contain the prayer for humanity's saving.

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