THE METAMORPHOSIS OF ARCHAIC ELEMENTS IN CONTEMPORARY ROMANIAN MUSIC

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Abstract

Stylization of folk structures which are specific until getting to the essence, by testing archetypes – represents a phenomenon of synthesis between elements proper to the archaic music and their adaptation in the context of certain individual processes of a compositional labor.

At this level it resorts to a specific ethos, which can only be suggested, by the use of different structures that highlights elements of specific language, structures that appear as a dialectic of folk creation, in which an element that is qualitatively realized in another element, closely related to the other parts of the song, it also represents a clear manifestation of the rhythmic-melodic interdependence in the achievement of the logical unity of the whole.

In the context of searching and adapting the modal ethos of modern, universal languages, the interpretations given by the compositors to the modal structures and mechanisms, rhythmic system, architectonic parameters, get deeper and refined; based on folk-style melodic microstructures some composers have created their own ways of musical expression in accordance to each other's aesthetic creed and artistic orientation, by means of a reconstructive engagement to the distant pass of sound art.

Key Words: *archaic music, modal ethos, modern languages.*

1. Introduction

In the essay entitled *Rehabilitation of "defective" modes*, the late composer and musicologist Anatol Vieru advocates for the restoration of both traditional non-European cultures and those of Eastern Europe, whose musical dowry includes, among other language elements, the undeveloped ways, "poor" ways, which reflect actually a certain defective musical outlook too: "Whether it be about the sociological aspect or the purely musical one, we should remember that the human history works through compensation: it enriches by impoverishing the others, it creates civilization by estranging people from nature, it is getting to jeopardize the ecology; only a wise axiology (coming also as an expression of this history) can maintain a balance in the development process."[1] So we bear a debt of honor, that of demonstrating the

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[1] Vieru, Anatol, *Cartea modurilor*, Bucureşti: Editura Muzicală, 1980, p. 179

perenniality of modalism as of the other elements with ancestral or folkloric roots, elements on which were erected many musical cultures.

2. Archetypes in folk music

Talking about the survey of archetypal folkloric level, this occurs naturally after the simplification of "formal, structural elements", by means of a "decantation" of language, following "three layers of archetypal recovery process:

- the use of archaic archetypes which are common and available in time and space;
- the recovering of *permanent* symbols of music which are regarding the necessity of music both for those who write it and for those who listen to it;
- the reconsideration and regeneration of *available senses* which are transcribed by archetypal symbols, whose aim is to recharge the musical discourse with *sense* and *state*."[2]

Musical archetypes may appear as "syntactic polyvalent relations, specific to musical folk, which can be observed both to architectonic and rhythmic-agogic or melodic level."[3] Looking from this point of view, some different reference zones can be detected in the use of archetypes that are present both in the archaic layer of Romanian folk and in traditional cultures: "*natural resonance, modalism, monody-incantation-ritual-repetition, heterophony, pedal-accompaniment-sonorous continuum*, antagonistic duality and unity of opposites, *giusto* and *parlando rubato* rhythms, *temporal archetypes* concerning the relation between musical time and sonorous spatiality, *formal archetypes* including the idea of open form, continuous variation, *timbre archetypes* in the shape of archaic instruments use or of the suggestion of their sonority."[4]

3. Melodics

In the exploration of *melodic* parameter, modal system offers an extremely varied range of possibilities of expression, starting from typical melodic formulas – initials and finals – which present the features of the genre of origin. Monod creation, by means of its various stances, is related to "a certain expression which is well motivated as signification, outlined in its ethos, permanently keeping its phenomenological organic structure through the nature of its laws."[5]

Thus, based on folk-style melodic microstructures some composers have created their own ways of musical expression in accordance to each other's aesthetic creed and artistic orientation; some "obsolescent systems have been updated and considered open systems of intonation."[6]

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[2] Nemţeanu Rotaru, Doina, *Compozitorii contemporani şi tradiţiile arhaice*, Teza de doctorat, 1998, p. 2

[3] Georgescu, Dan Corneliu, *Studiul arhetipurilor muzicale. Simbolica numerelor.* Studii de muzicologie, vol. XX, Bucureşti: 1987

[4] *Apud,* Maistorovici, Hîrlav, Sanda, *Miniatura românească pentru pian din secolul XX şi folclorul muzical autohton,* Ploieşti: Premier, 2002, p. 133

[5] Vulcu, Sorin, *Conceptul de monodie în viziune diacronică. Premise istorico-teoretice* (I), in Revista Muzica no.3, 1996. p.42

[6] Idem, ibidem, p.44

If the forms of the culture specific to the Middle Age, which evoluated in different directions, are known "today as archetypal patterns of some important melodic relationships kept in our affective present and in modal folkloric music with their local differences", these "principles of functional composition, in the share of important sounds and intervals, were maintained both in octaviant and superoctaviant diatonic and chromatic modes, contributing to the development of the melos in general."[7]

Starting from the specific elements of archaic layer of folk, which are characterized especially by their tetrachordal structure, by their enrichment with piens, or by elements of chromatic nature, it comes to symmetric modal systems that exist in musical folk (of type T St T St T St T; St T St T St T St or St T T St T T) or to asymmetric organizations where tetrachords represent different structures – which are taken up to byzantine music.

Thus, from the most profound rapports of folk melodic structures were born *neomodal* systems (which reinterpret in another dimension the previous era - the Renaissance – even if the modal of the two cultures doesn't have the same source), characterized by several common principles. [8]

- the melodic structure based on some cells generating modal archetypes, especially oligochordic and pentatonic archetypes;
- melodic, diatonic and chromatic synthesis, in virtue to some intrinsic laws of the popular modals;
- the formation of melodic micro units by means of the chromatic conveyance in the diatonic interior of the intervals contained by the oligochordic and pentatonic formations, whose sounds become poles of attraction for the sounds of the interior cadre ("the chromatic in slope"); in the case where there are more poles, some of them can manifest attraction even on another poles, affecting them from a chromatic point of view and so producing a fluctuation, an oscillation of stairs;
- the association of two (or more) micro units, by means of conjunction or disjunction, thus enlarging the diatonic-chromatic space, situation where the perfect octave is no more a frame, a limit, this space being framed in a reduced or an increased octave;
- the melodic diatonic-chromatic developments under a fixed point (pole) of departure or return, that can be equaled by a final of manner;
- major-minor melodic synthesis (involving the reduced octave too);
- the melodic of the "motion" of intervallic entities – present in the "false relation";
- melodic constitutions based on the "golden section" law.

4. Harmony

Closely related to archaic melodic parameter and processing modalities in the cultivated creation we find the ***harmonic*** one, totally different from the tonal harmonic

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[7] Idem, ibidem, p.56

[8] Rîpă, Constantin, *Teoria superioară a muzicii*, Vol.I, Cluj-Napoca: MediaMusica, 2001, p.261

system because of its laws, each popular melody containing in itself the elements required to its enrichment in a vertical plan.

Processing the concept of triads, the modal harmony will find out new interpretations: the establishment of sound track agreements, polymodal superpositions, structuring agreements on the major-minor synthesis, agreements consisting of "beating the second" (the real note coexists with its grace note in the same given structure), parallel polymodal structures, agreements made on the "golden section" or on the symmetry principle. Thus, if "in the polytonal or polymodal constellations, the musical syntax – perceived as implementing sound objects validate the concrete existence of **multiple attractors**, which induces, consequently, the action of the **bi-** and **multipolarization** phenomenon"[9], it can be distinguished some specific rules by means of which is built "the origin of conceptual dominants, essential-constructive:

- the functional-tensional order of **harmonic**, **tonal** type, for plotytonal;
- the variability, the mobility, the oscillation, the **monodic** or **modal** ambiguity (amplified and then became polyphonic) for polymodal"[10].

The relations of mutual agreement are perceived in terms of new harmonic phenomena: "the change of the tonal centre to a semitone lower and then the inversion of the modulating process, creates an harmonic effect similar to that of scordatura, also called *harmonic scordatura*, which provides a great musical expressivity – used by George Enescu and the creators of music based on folk"[11]; the phenomenon identified in popular harmony is called by the musicologist Pascal Bentoiu *the harmonic system of motion*.

5. **Polyphony and Heterophony**

Polyphony is another language element which is found in various shapes in the oldest layers of folklore, being explored and taken up by modern composers. The accompaniment, the ostinate pedal, the antiphonic effects and heterophony have enriched the elements of transcription by new technical modalities.

The accompaniment, as an archaic procedure of plurivocity, may occur "in an heterophonic, polyphonic and homogeneous context, being an extremely valuable process for modal music"[12] or it can become "a component of a harmonic structure, its departure point; it is no more about a spontaneous gesture but a deliberate one, due to the creator concerned of the harmonization of the vocal melody."[13]

Heterophony, considered a "phenomenon of archaic, popular origin, which in the evolution of our music is situated before the era from which we have received

[9] Duţică, Gheorghe, *Universul gândirii polimodale*, Iaşi: Junimea, 2004, p. 14
[10] Idem, ibidem, p. 15
[11] Tereny, Ede*, Armonia muzicii moderne*, Cluj-Napoca: MediaMusica, 2001, p.67
[12] Buciu, Dan, *Elemente de scriitură modală*, Bucureşti: Editura Muzicală, 1981, p. 162
[13] Firca, Gheorghe, *Structuri şi funcţii în armonia modală*, Bucureşti: Editura Muzicală, 1988, p.399

polyphonic records"[14], is defined by Stefan Niculescu as the *vacillation* of a timber ensemble between the monomelodic and plurimelodic deployment.[15]

In the context of searching and adapting the modal ethos of modern, universal languages, "the interpretations given by the compositors to the **modal structures and mechanisms** get deeper and refined, the deduction of harmonic or polymelodic configurations of a *real*, *given* or / and *potential, latent* structure of the modal melodic, the reflection, in different ways, in the plan of **plurivoices**, of "the functional indecision of stairs", manners intersections (possible because of this indecision), even contrapositions (of bi - or polytonal modal type) of configurations in an homophone or polyphone frame reveal to the musical composing an extremely varied field of action."[16]

The rhythmic system specific to the musical folklore, with its characteristic subsystems – *giusto-syllabic, rubato, aksak* and *divisionary* – and their scientific thoroughgoing study have influenced the creative vision of the composers in the first half of the XXth century. Starting from George Enescu, the first composer who has explored the *parlando-rubato* system, a lot of musicians have achieved true synthesis between "*free* and *bound* rhythm, about which Bela Bartok said that every perfect work should contain it".[17] Different folkloric genre taken up to the cultivated creation bring implicitly to the fore specific rhythms, as "quoted or invented, the (type of) popular dance is more than a main provider of thematic structures; it proves to be the pilot-concept of a music among the modern language canons of which is included the exacerbation of rhythm and which, just as any other national art, has, for the accomplishment of this request, the original resources of a folkloric creation."[18]

As a direct consequence of the influence exercised on the cultivated creation by the popular one it occurs "the horizontal polymetry (juxtapositions of different meters) which is in the same time the most appropriate to confer to the speech special mobility qualities and an expected asymmetry; to which is due the asymmetric cut of phrases and the general character of nervous rhythmic writing."[19]

Also, isomorphic rhythmic structures, present in some folkloric musical genres appear in some complex shapes; considered a "factor always coagulant of composition, rhythmic isomorphism, in stances of *ostinated rhythmic-harmonic functioning as an accompaniment* or as *a isorhythmie* of the entire musical texture (*ostinated* rhythmic or generalized rhythmic-harmonic) stands out now in the extent that it resorts to the folkloric source."[20]

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[14] Jeppesen, Knud, *Contrapunctul*, Bucureşti:Editura Muzicală, 1967, p. 40
[15] Niculescu, Ştefan, *Reflecţii despre muzică*, Bucureşti: Editura Muzicală, 1980, p.274
[16] Firca, Clemansa Liliana, *Modernitate şi avangardă in muzica ante- şi interbelică a secolului XX (1900-1940),* Bucureşti: Editura Fundaţiei culturale române, 2002, p. 149
[17] Niculescu, Ştefan, *Op. cit.*, p.254
[18] Firca, Clemansa Liliana, *Op. cit.*, p. 143
[19] Idem, ibidem, p. 146
[20] Idem, ibidem, p. 145

6. Architectural musical form

In terms of ***architectonic*** parameters, this was also influenced by the factors which define the folkloric space; the principle of melodic lines succession, free improvisation, specific to the parlando-rubato style, the variational phenomenon are elements borrowed from the popular practice which determines the link between the morphology and the syntax of cultivated musical creation and the folkloric musical practice. The form, thus having a "new determination from the part of microstructure", establishes a "new relation between rhythm and intonation"; "the process of variation, of continual variation, of the succession of unrepeated values or submitted to a particular organization leads naturally to the idea of the asymmetric, irregular shape"[21].

Looking to Romanian cultivated music, the school of composition of the XXth century is registered on the trajectory of the constitution of its own national language, folkloric in essence, whose sense was clearly outlined by George Enescu, "and, it could be said, [as noted Clemansa Firca] by means of a certain irony of the history – just the moderator vocation and the striving for synthesis specific to Romanian modern musical art will make it *communicating* with the contemporary occidental one."[22]

Capitalizing archaic elements of folk, through morphological relationships, starting from the level of cell, reason, phrase or theme's, investigating all the language parameters – melodic, rhythmic, polyphonic-harmonic and architectural – as that which targets the specific elements of popular instrumentalism, it reveals a complexity that reflects a unique spirituality, deeply symbolic among the multitude of characteristic elements, defined by the two concepts: "mioritic space" and "dor" – with deep significations for the Romanian people.

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[21] Firca, Gheorghe, ***Asupra*** *unui principiu de variaţie specific creaţiei contemporane româneşti,* Studii de muzicologie, vol. VI, Bucureşti, Editura Muzicală, 1970, p.19
[22] Firca, Clemansa Liliana, *Op. cit.*, p.131

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