

## Writing techniques in the second movement of Leoš Janáček's *Sinfonietta*

Leonard DUMITRIU<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** *This study continues a previous piece of research and sets out to prove both the consistency and the perpetually innovative spirit evinced by Leoš Janáček in this symphonic work. If in the first movement I emphasised the variational technique and the rhythm-meter binomial, the analysis of the second movement in the Sinfonietta reveals the thinking based on repeating (an old contrapuntal technique) and combining (a modern technique in the early 20th century) of sonic structures differing in length. Beside these ways of musical treatment, Janáček re-approaches essential motifs from the first movement and, even though the ethos is now completely different, the results are downright marvellous. The final section features extremely spectacular sonic effects, in which we can speak about combination again, this time, however, regarding the pairing of colours with archaic rhythms. The latter brim over with freshness and cleverness in a piece of writing that offers a veritable demonstration of organising the sonic material.*

**Keywords:** *motif; combination; colour; aksak; rhythm; meter;*

### Introduction

It would be impractical to reproduce here aspects about Leoš Janáček's *Sinfonietta* that readers may find in the above-mentioned study, where they can encounter the circumstances under which the work was written and the names it received. However, given the known fact that the Czech musician was unsatisfied with the name *Sletová symfonietta* (*Rally Sinfonietta*), attributed to the work without his consent, I consider it necessary to return to the ephemeral title that the composer attributed to the second movement of his work, that is *The Castle*, in order to see whether there are profound or merely contextual relations between the music and the title.

The reference to that edifice is not by chance and, consequently, I tend to believe it is linked both to the compositional techniques employed and to assuming patriotism towards the Czech nation and the musician's deep attachment towards the city of Brno, where he lived for most of his life. The castle that Janáček referred to bears the name Špilberk<sup>2</sup> and was built in the 13<sup>th</sup> century on the highest hill of the capital city of the Moravian province. At first a royal and noble residence, between the 17<sup>th</sup> and halfway through the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries the castle was transformed in one of the toughest prisons of the Habsburg Empire, only to then be used as a military barracks until the middle of the last century, when it became the headquarters of the Brno City Museum<sup>3</sup>. A known fact, Janáček had a multilateral activity, also illustrated through a multitude of essays, articles and chronicles published in the newspapers of the time.

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<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Interpretation, Composition and Theoretical Music Studies, "George Enescu" National University of Arts, [leonard.dumitriu@unage.ro](mailto:leonard.dumitriu@unage.ro).

<sup>2</sup> See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Špilberk\\_Castle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Špilberk_Castle).

<sup>3</sup> See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Špilberk\\_Castle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Špilberk_Castle) și <https://www.gotobrna.cz/en/place/spilberk-castle/>.

Janáček however was not only a musician, he was a man of wide sympathies, and a great extrovert, who needed to express not only through music, but also through words. [...] What he preached he practised and as a result we have these illuminating articles, which open to us both the man and the musician.<sup>4</sup>

In an article<sup>5</sup> published at first in the German language under the title *Meine Stadt*<sup>6</sup>, then in the Czech language with the title *Moje město*<sup>7,8</sup>, Janáček himself illustrates his own perception of Brno and the Špilberk castle.

One day I saw a miraculous change in the town. My antagonism to the gloomy town hall vanished, my hatred of the Špilberk jail, inside whose depths so much misery had been suffered, disappeared, and with it my antipathy to the street and those who swarmed there.

Over the town the light of freedom blazed, the rebirth of Oct, 28<sup>th</sup> 1918!<sup>9,10</sup>

The above words paint a portrait of citizen and patriot Janáček, involved in the life of the city that he lives in and aware of the beneficial changes happening in the lives of the people and of the city. As far as this study is concerned, what interests us are the composer's profoundly negative feeling towards the castle and, we will soon see why, his joy about the light of freedom being rekindled.

## 1. Analysys

The minute research of the score reveals a very sophisticated compositional process, focusing on the following aspects:

- the formal organisation and the tonal-modal ambiance;
- the melodic and dynamic components;
- the palette of instrumental colours;
- the rhythmic juxtapositions and overlapping (which, in my opinion, surpass – from the point of view of significance and difficulty – all the others), clothed in a sometimes unusual metric system, which leads towards fluctuating tempos.

If the link of all these with the title of the 2<sup>nd</sup> movement is a hypothetical one – which does not mean I will not discuss certain ideas – their belonging to a modernity of the highest topicality of the time is uncontested. It follows that the analysis I propose will sometimes treat the aspects above one by one and at other times in an overlap, since Janáček acted as he had always done, i. e. subordinated the elements of the musical discourse to the aesthetic messages he wished to convey. Let us remember that in most of his works he took the liberty of considering a pattern a mere starting point for musical ideas, refused its meanings of template, cliché, immutable framework and, consequently, never reigned in the flight of his imagination.

<sup>4</sup> Vilem Tausky & Margaret Tausky, editors. 1982. *Leoš Janáček, leaves from his life*. New York: Taplinger Publishing Company, p. 25.

<sup>5</sup> Catalogued JW XV/298. See <https://www.leosjanacek.eu/en/published/>.

<sup>6</sup> An article published in *Prager Presse* on 4 December 1927. See Nigel Simeone & John Tyrrell & Alena Němcová. 1997. *Janáček Works, A catalogue of the music and writings of Leoš Janáček*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 427.

<sup>7</sup> An article published in *Lidové noviny* on 24 December 1927. See Loc. cit.

<sup>8</sup> Translated into English, both the German-language and the Czech-language titles mean *My City*.

<sup>9</sup> Leoš Janáček ápuđ Vilem Tausky & Margaret Tausky, Op. cit., p. 43.

<sup>10</sup> The day of 28 October 1918 marks the declaration of independence of Czechoslovakia from Austria-Hungary. Nowadays it is the national day of the Czech Republic. According to <https://www.czech-it.ro/5263/28-octombrie-ziua-nationala-republicii-ceh>.

Starting from this reality, I consider that the music of the second movement of Leoš Janáček's *Sinfonietta* features two great sections, which can be explained beginning from two completely different categories of compositional thinking:

- the technical category:
  - in the first great section the music presents invention (as regards the melodic, the rhythmic, the colour palette, the dynamics), which is completely different from the first movement of the *Sinfonietta*;
  - there follows an almost complete change of sound, which justifies the debut of the second great section, where Leoš Janáček brings a motif, which strikingly resembles the solemn sounds played by the brass section at the beginning of the work.
- the semantic category (of the aesthetic messages and of the ethos):
  - the first great section illustrates the composer's negative feelings towards a past, in which the city of Brno was under foreign domination, with the Špilberk castle as the emblem of abusive force and oppression;
  - the second section reflects the artist's enthusiasm towards liberation and unity<sup>11</sup>.
- In order to observe the musical architecture as well as possible, I propose the following schema, departing from the exterior/general towards the interior/particular: SECTION 1
  - Introduction (bars 1-4)
  - A (bars 5-31)
    - a (bars 5-9)
    - a<sup>1</sup> (bars 9-13)
    - a<sup>varied & transposed</sup> (bars 13-17)
    - a<sup>2</sup> (bars 18-21)
    - a<sup>repeated & amplified</sup> (bars 22-26)
    - transition (bars 27-31)
  - B (bars 32-54)
    - b (bars 31-37)
    - b<sup>transposed 1</sup> (bars 38-45)
    - b<sup>transposed 2</sup> (bars 31-37)
    - b<sup>1</sup> (bars 51-54)
  - C (bars 55-134)
    - c (bars 55-57)
    - c<sup>transposed 1</sup> (bars 58-60)
    - c<sup>1</sup> (bars 61-74)
    - c<sup>transposed 2</sup> (bars 75-77)
    - c<sup>1 transposed 1</sup> (bars 78-89)
    - c<sup>transposed 3</sup> (bars 90-92)
    - section of juxtapositions and overlapping of the various c (bars 93-134)
- SECTION 2
  - D (bars 135-147)

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<sup>11</sup> Maybe that nowadays, in the era of globalisation, the notions of oppression and liberation have gone out of use but during Leoš Janáček's life their antagonism was the subject of open fighting, both with the help of weapons and ideas.

- d (bars 135-140)
- $d^{\text{transposed } 1}$  (bars 141-147)
- $c^1$  (bars 148-154)
- $d^{\text{transposed } 2}$  (bars 155-161)
- E (bars 162-185)
  - e (bars 162-169)
  - $e^{\text{repeated \& extended}}$  (bars 170-178)
  - $e^{\text{transposed}}$  (bars 179-185)
  - $d^{\text{transposed } 1 \text{ repeated}}$  (bars 186-189)
- Coda (bars 189-207)
  - Introduction<sup>shortened</sup> (bars 189-191)
  - $a^{\text{extended}}$  (bars 192-207)

I will attempt to justify the above organisation with arguments as convincing as possible, especially since a first and not necessarily profound perusal of the schema can convey the idea of an agglomerated work, difficult to pick up. Only the repeated audition of the work and the detailed research of the score will convince us that it is not so.

Even as early as the first four bars, constituting the Introduction of the movement I am analysing, the composer uses a sombre, dark sonority, illustrated by the low sounds of the trombones and bassoons, concomitantly with a four-note organisation, which the clarinets repeat almost obsessively. Beyond the fact that all of these reference the obscurity of prison basements, we see the way Janáček uses very modern means of constructing musical motifs.

**Andante** (♩ = 112)

The figure shows a musical score for the first four bars of the Andante movement. The tempo is marked 'Andante' with a quarter note equal to 112 beats. The score is in 4/8 time and features four staves: Clarinet in Bb 1&2, Bassoon 1&2, Trombone 1&2, and Trombone 3&4. The Clarinet part is in treble clef and consists of four measures of chords. Above each measure are interval labels: '4+' and '2M'. Below each measure are interval labels: '2M', '4+', and '2M'. The Bassoon, Trombone 1&2, and Trombone 3&4 parts are in bass clef and play a four-note motif. Above the Bassoon staff is a '4+' label. Above the Trombone 1&2 staff is an 'a2 con sord.' label. Above the Trombone 3&4 staff is an 'a2 con sord.' label. The first measure of the Bassoon, Trombone 1&2, and Trombone 3&4 parts has a '2M' label below it. The second measure has a '4+' label below it. The third measure has a '4+' label below it. The fourth measure has a '2M' label below it. The dynamic marking 'f' is present at the beginning of each staff.

Fig. 1. *Intervallic combinative organisation*

At all instruments the intervals of major second and augmented fourth are found both in juxtaposition and overlapping, a mind game close to the combinative modal formulas that Olivier

Messiaen would imagine later, but also to the scale of whole tones that Claude Debussy had already used before Janáček composed his *Sinfonietta*<sup>12</sup>.

Constantly through the second movement of the analysed symphonic work, this game undergoes a few transformations of both the melodic and the rhythmic level. As far as the note durations are concerned, we see in A how the thirty-second-notes in the Introduction are changed into quavers, during which time only the first two out of the initial four sounds remain, with slight modifications of the melodic and harmonic intervals. Because the clarinets, which had uttered the motif in the beginning, disappear, the restricted intonation is now being taken over by trombones and bassoons.

**Andante** (♩ = 112)

**Allegretto** (♩ = 138)

Fig. 2. Restriction of the initial motif with interval modification

This repetitive and onomatopoeic accompaniment strikingly resembles a fragment entitled *Čaiü (Tea)* from Pyotr Illyich Tchaikovsky's fairy ballet *The Nutcracker*<sup>13</sup>, where the bassoons repeat a series of quavers in the low register. Returning to the A in the second movement of Leoš Janáček's *Sinfonietta*, the melody accompanied by the trombones is entrusted to the oboes and denotes the strong influence of traditional music, especially because of the melodic trajectory and repetitive character.

**Allegretto** (♩ = 138)

Fig. 3. The repetitive melody of the oboes

Even though it resembles the practice of repetition in the era of Classicism, this particular feature of the music emphasises the Czech composer's sources of inspiration, that is folklore and

<sup>12</sup> I remind you that the *Sinfonietta* was written in 1926. As far as the two great French musicians are concerned, Messiaen was born in 1908 and Debussy died in 1918.

<sup>13</sup> See Pyotr Illyich Tchaikovsky. *The Nutcracker Ballet*. New York: Broude Brothers, pp. 337-342. A score taken over from [http://vmirror.imsip.org/files/imglnks/usimg/0/09/IMSLP515595-PMLP8586-TchaiNutcrackerOverture\\_\(etc\).pdf](http://vmirror.imsip.org/files/imglnks/usimg/0/09/IMSLP515595-PMLP8586-TchaiNutcrackerOverture_(etc).pdf).

those speech melodies (*Nápěvky mluvy*), that he had culled for most of his life. Tightly related to repetition is sequencing, a process intensely used by Janáček, such that the above fragment is firstly sequenced departing from the sound B at the piccolo and the flute, then resumed, still at the oboes and in the superior doubling of the violins, starting from A flat. The musical discourse tends to create an intervallic, rather than a chordal impression, so that listeners perceive a dual modalism, equally a fruit of folkloric inspiration and the composer's cerebral activity. The way the above examples show, the rhythm of the beginnings is a binary one, while, outside the usual terms, the tempos are joined by a few very necessary stipulations of the metronomic unit, decisive for inferring and rendering the character of the music.

The compositional techniques of repetition and sequencing are also present in the B segment, where the motif in the Introduction constitutes a constant accompaniment of a new melody, whose ballad character is more than obvious.

**Meno mosso**

Fig. 4. *The ballad-like melody of the B*

This melody is immediately taken over by the first bassoon and the cellos, starting with the sound D (bar 40), then by the bass clarinet and double basses, starting with the sound F (bar 47), only to be resumed for a last time by the cellos again and a horn, starting with the sound F sharp, in a spirited progress towards the high register. The first expositions of the melody are presented entirely, the last one overlapping the last sound of the previous exposition.

The repetitive and sequential concept of the melodic trajectory is presented in the same way as the accompaniment, where we easily recognise the initial motif of the clarinets, sequenced and with slightly modified intervals, now only played by the violins.

**Meno mosso**

Fig. 5. *The first phrase in the B, in which the violins play the initial motif*

In the above example we see the fluctuating dynamics and the permanent tonal-modal undulation of the motif, which begins from a different sound at almost every bar. In order to

understand well the *Meno mosso* tempo, starting with bar 32 we come across the very necessary stipulation that the crotchet is equal to the quaver<sup>14</sup>. In the entire B the rhythmic pulsation remains binary but the auditive sensation is heterogeneous and this because of the fluctuating periodicity of every appearance of the melody which, as we have seen, initially has two bars. A detailed explanation would probably take too much space but analysing the score between the bars 31-54 will definitely explain the matter of the evident rhythmic balance.

In the formal make-up of the second movement of Leoš Janáček's *Sinfonietta*, whose logic I continue to display, there follows the C segment, the last and most extensive of the first large section. Should we return to the above schema, we observe the existence of smaller segments, called *c* and *c*<sup>1</sup>, firstly played twice – with repetition signs and multiple endings, a technique the composer also used in the A segment – and then resumed in one or more transpositions. In *c* and *c*<sup>1</sup> we remark the same overlapping of two strata, followed by the juxtaposition of some transpositions of the respective fragments, which propels the music in its progress towards the climax. As a continuity element, one of the strata in *c* brings back a transposition of the motif in the Introduction.

**Più mosso**

The figure shows three systems of musical notation for the 'Strata in c' section. The first system (bars 55-56) includes parts for Clarinet in Bb 1&2 and Horn 1 in F. The second system (bars 56-57) includes parts for Horn 1 in F and Violins 1 & 2. The third system (bars 57-58) includes parts for Clarinet in Bb 1&2 and Horn 1 in F. The tempo is marked 'Più mosso' and the dynamics are marked 'f'.

Fig. 6. *Strata in c*

In the above three bars representing the *c* – out of which I have eliminated the instruments playing in doubling with others – we observe the way the horn plays a melodic-rhythmic line of folkloric origin, while the clarinets and violins take over (from one another) and

<sup>14</sup> The indication may belong to the composer but it is also possible that it was merely an initiative of the publishing house.

present (to one another) the motif in the Introduction. Although the note durations and the combinations between them can suggest a binary rhythm in a fast tempo, the fact that they are integrated in only three bars gives one the sensation of a ternary progress in a slow tempo. Due to this balancing act between the various categories of rhythms and tempos, I believe a new comparison between Janáček and Tchaikovsky, the maestro of waltzes in binary<sup>15</sup> and heterogenous<sup>16</sup> rhythms, is justified. Regarding the tonal-modal trajectory of the entire C segment, the intonation in *c* appears wholly no less than twelve times, departing from the sounds: F flat (the intonation is repeated with repetition signs); A (repeated with repetition signs and multiple endings) and B, an intonation appearing thrice, identically repeated at a distance of a few measures.

In *c*<sup>1</sup>, a fragment somewhat more extended than the previous one, two new motivic intonations appear, which the composer cleverly superimposes, while also keeping the incipit of the motif in *c*, a proof of consummate compositional mastery. Furthermore, the first motivic intonation is also slightly processed rhythmically.

66 *mf* incipit from *c* new motif 2

Cl. in B $\flat$  1&2

V. 1

V. 2

V.-lc.

Vc. & Cb. *mf* incipit from *c* new motif 1

70 *accel.* new motif 1 rhythmically reworked

Fig. 7. *Strata in c*<sup>1</sup>

We see how the motif of the cellos and double basses – named above “new motif 1” – is built along the principles of rhythmic recurrence, repetition and, in the last measures of the example,

<sup>15</sup> We find numerous such examples in Tchaikovsky’s ballets.

<sup>16</sup> See the second movement, *Allegro con grazia*, from Tchaikovsky’s Symphony no. 6, op. 74.

of sequencing, which proves once again the modernity of the compositional techniques used by the Czech musician.

I was saying about the first appearance of the c motif that it proves rhythmic and tempo balancing, which is no longer the case after measure 75, when the speed increases and the respective intonation is produced in the high register of flutes and clarinets. The audition can create the impression of a portion with a development character, which, upon analysing the score, proves to be built out of the repetitions and sequencing I have just mentioned. In measures 90-92 I remark the composer's audacity of taking the prime violins towards the ultra- high register, which, in their very high speed, fully require the players' intonational accuracy. The sonic richness of the passage is surprising compared to the aspect of the score, the passage is parsimonious regarding the compositional means, while Janáček continues to express himself in this manner until he reaches the culmination of register, nuances and colours, when the closing of the first large section takes place.

The second section of the second movement of Leoš Janáček's *Sinfonietta* begins with a segment, which I have named D, and brings a few elements of novelty. The first of these is the fresh rhythm of the trumpets, combined with that of the trombones without sourdine<sup>17</sup> and of the tuba, which appears at the beginning of a fragment noted d. The return to the sound of the first movement of the work, *Fanfare*, is thus as evident as possible and, I believe rightly so, the association with the moment of the liberation of the city of Brno from Austro-Hungarian domination and the constitution of the Republic of Czechoslovakia. The new motif appearing here is luminous, intensely diatonic and based on the interval of perfect fifth.



Fig. 8. *The motif of the trumpets*

Until the end, this motif will be presented in its entirety three more times, twice with a tone higher, the last time on the last repeated sound. So, the first exposition begins on E, the second on G flat, all the starting sounds being in the second octave. Beyond a simple observation regarding register, I must say that the major-third ascent renders the sound of the trumpets progressively more luminous and penetrating and causes the itinerary from high to low, which we observe in the previous example, to receive ever brighter colours with every exposition.

Next to this motif, another novelty of fragment d is represented by the rhythm and the metric solution chosen by the composer for his graphic representation, a wonderful opportunity to now bring back to the table the absolute freedom of the rhythmic imagination proved by Leoš Janáček. In the entire D segment, the combination between note durations and rests can bear a single label: *aksak*, which is definitely a reminiscence of the research and folklore culling, which the Czech musician undertook in Moravia and published in the first half of his life. In combination with the *giusto* rhythmic, the limping I am talking about demonstrates the Czech composer's innovative symphonic thinking, radically different from his countrymen Bedřich Smetana and Antonín Dvořák's, whose rhythms are influenced by German thinking. It is a new

<sup>17</sup> I remind the fact that up to this point the trombones used sourdines.

proof of the specificities of the two great influences, which were reunited in Czech spirituality: that of Bohemia (close to the tradition of Western Europe) and that of Moravia (part of the ancestral trunk in the eastern part of continental Europe, next to Hungarian, Slovak, Romanian, Serb, Bulgarian, Albanian spirituality).

I will formulate a few phrases about the *aksak* rhythm. One of the most important contemporary researchers of folklore in the Balkan area says:

The «primitive», «exotic», «peasant», «non-European music», as folk music was called in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was not a subject of serious scholarly research until the first decades of the last century.<sup>18</sup>

Beside Béla Bartók, who deeply researched the folklore of Eastern-European peoples, let's not forget the Romanian scientist Constantin Brăiloiu, whose contribution to the study of the *aksak* rhythm, also abundantly presented in Romanian folklore, is essential<sup>19</sup>.

In Romania, the anapestic form of *aksak* rhythm is spread in Dobrogea, Muntenia, Moldova, and the eastern part of Oltenia. It is found in some wedding songs, rain-songs, in dancing tunes with masks [...], but especially in the melodies of folk dances [...]. The folk dance *Geamparalele* is very popular in Romania [...] this dance is something of a synonym of the anapestic form of *aksak* rhythm.<sup>20</sup>

Returning to the second movement of the symphonic work that I am analysing, I remark the making of the *aksak* rhythm, whose end-phrase appearance, by adding a quaver after a minim, gives a clear impression of limping. Very subtly, the composer immediately repeats the dotted minim – quaver formula, which now belongs to the *giusto* rhythm. Because a theoretical account would be very complicated, I consider it necessary to clarify rhythmically, both horizontally and vertically, the melodic intonation, which can be observed in measures 137-138 of Figure no. 8.

Maestoso (♩ = ♪)

Rhythm

Pulse

Fig. 9. *Metrically ambivalent rhythm; the minim – dotted quaver formula in the aksak and giusto rhythms*

The *aksak* – *giusto* dualism of the rhythmic formula is more than obvious, because the limping (i. e. the additional quaver) appears in the trajectory of the pulsation at the end of each measure, while, in the rhythmic itinerary of measure 138, the quaver after the dotted minim comes on the downbeat. I urge readers not to consider this pleading as a banal musicological artifice, because audition clarifies things. Let us now observe the metric system chosen by the composer, specifically the 13/8 time signature – completely unusual for Western metric thinking –, juxtaposed on the 12/8 one, but also the mode of beating time on the 6-beat scheme, with a prolonged impulse on the 6<sup>th</sup> beat, due to the added quaver.

<sup>18</sup> Nice Fracile. 2003. "The «Aksak» Rhythm, A Distinctive Feature of the Balkan Folklore". *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* T. 44, Fasc 1/2 (2003): 197-210, p. 197. A study taken over from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/902645>.

<sup>19</sup> A list of the works dedicated to folklore by Constantin Brăiloiu can be found on [https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constantin\\_Brăiloiu](https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constantin_Brăiloiu).

<sup>20</sup> Nice Fracile, Op. cit., pp. 205-206.

**Maestoso** (♩ = ♪)

Fig. 10. Metric system and the beating of time

The solution of the beating of time is given by the notation of the equivalence, more suggestively said - of the pulsation, of the quaver duration before and after *Maestoso*, but also by the duration groups noted by the composer. Beyond the clarity and the firmness of the gesture, beating time along this scheme can prove the suppleness, even the elegance of the conductor's arms.

Here is what the score of the same measures 135-138 looks like, presented for brevity's sake at only a few instruments. The red arrows indicate that the respective quaver belongs to the *aksak* rhythm, while the green arrow shows the link to the *giusto* rhythm.

**Maestoso** (♩ = ♪)

Fig. 11. Aksak rhythm and giusto rhythm

However, a few measures later we are faced with a piece of unwonted writing, of two types of overlapping *aksak*.

The image shows a musical score for three instruments: Piccolo (Picc.), Trumpets in C (Trp. in C 1,2,3), and Double Bass (C-bas). The score is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 141 and 142, and the second system covers measures 143 and 144. The time signature is 4/4 for measures 141-142 and 13/8 for measures 143-144. The Piccolo part in measures 141-142 consists of eighth notes with a quaver at the end of each measure. In measures 143-144, the Piccolo part consists of a continuous stream of eighth notes. The Trumpets and Double Bass parts in measures 141-142 consist of dotted minims. In measures 143-144, the Trumpets and Double Bass parts consist of dotted minims with a quaver between them. Red arrows point to the quaver notes in the Piccolo part in measures 143-144, and blue arrows point to the quaver notes in the Double Bass part in measures 143-144. The score is marked with dynamics like *f* and *a3*.

Fig. 12. Graphic overlapping of two types of *aksak* rhythm

It remains to be researched why the composer chose two types of *aksak* notation of the note durations, the first (from the piccolo) with the quaver added at the ending, the second (from the double bass) with the quaver between the two dotted minims, so long as the quaver from the double bass is part of the continuous sound of the pedal.

Continuing the analysis I underline the fact that in the second large section of the movement that I am analysing, the technique of the melodic-rhythmic strata, that the 72-year-old composer masters with virtuosity, can be admired in absolutely splendid expression. Janáček knows – or maybe feels? – when to add or eliminate one instrument or another, one instrumental group or the other, which melody, rhythm or combination between these will dominate the sonic discourse, how will the nuances manage to manipulate – in a strictly positive sense! – the listeners' attention. There is in this score an absolutely glorious musical moment, a sonic construction worthy of the gothic cathedrals set to notes by Johann Sebastian Bach. There are four measures (155-158) of veritable ecstasy before God, a *Te Deum* of greatness and glory.



157

FL. 1

FL. 2

Cl. in Bb  
1&2

Fg. 1&2

Hr. in F  
1&2

Trp. in C  
1,2,3

Trb. 1&2

Trb. 3&4

Tuba

V. 1

V. 2

V-la

Vc.

C-bas

The image shows a page of a musical score for a symphony or concert band. The score is for measures 157 and 158. The instruments listed on the left are: Flute 1 (FL. 1), Flute 2 (FL. 2), Clarinet in Bb (Cl. in Bb 1&2), Bassoon 1&2 (Fg. 1&2), Horn in F (Hr. in F 1&2), Trumpet in C (Trp. in C 1,2,3), Trombone 1&2 (Trb. 1&2), Trombone 3&4 (Trb. 3&4), Tuba, Violin 1 (V. 1), Violin 2 (V. 2), Viola (V-la), Violoncello (Vc.), and Double Bass (C-bas). The Flute parts play a melodic line with slurs and accents. The Clarinet and Viola parts play a rhythmic eighth-note pattern. The Bassoon, Horn, Trombone, and Tuba parts play sustained notes with slurs. The Violin 1 and 2 parts play a melodic line with slurs and accents. The Violoncello and Double Bass parts play a melodic line with slurs and accents.

Fig. 13. A Hymn of glory

The strata that I am talking about can be easily identified: the first one belongs to the trumpets, to the melody based on fifths and spread between the second octave and the minor octave; the second one belongs to the flutes and the violins, in the ultra-high register of the 3<sup>rd</sup> octave; the third one belongs to the violas and clarinets in octave parallelisms (the first and second ones); with a melodic intervention placed an octave lower, the bassoons join in the first two measures of the first stratum, only then to be annexed to a fourth stratum of pedal sounds together with the horns, trombones and double basses. Different from the above sonic bouquets, each with their own outline and easily identifiable, is the itinerary of the tuba, whose sonority is identical to the other brass instruments in the low register, the notation of the note durations being, however, different. I believe that I am not mistaken when stating that the technique chosen by Janáček is only justified for the visual impression of someone running through the score, because listeners do not perceive any difference in the absence of the written document. Even so, the sensation of sonic luxuriance is overwhelming, as the conscience of the audience is inundated by the brightness and positive force of the moment.

Once the climax reached, the musical discourse drastically reduces all its components and, in just a few measures and very few seconds, Janáček presents a new musical motif, for which he also chooses the timbre of the oboe, followed shortly by that of the clarinets. I have named E the new fragment starting with measure 162 and e the motif between measures 164-167. After the previous apotheosis, this musical itinerary seems minuscule and shy, like the song of a small child playing with a toy made out of rags.

The figure displays a musical score for several instruments. The top system includes Arp., V. 1, and V. 2. The bottom system includes Ob. I, Cl. in Bb 1&2, Hr. in F 1&2, Arp., V-la, and Vc. The score is marked with 'Tempo I' and 'mf' at the beginning of segment E (measure 162). Motif e begins at measure 164, marked with 'mf dolce' for the oboe and 'p' for the clarinets. The score includes various dynamics and articulations such as 'pizz' and 'mf pizz'.

Fig. 14. The beginning of segment E and motif e

In the entire segment E I remark the attention that the Czech musician pays to the harp-violins-violas timbral combination and to the perfect fifth interval, which these instruments play ascendingly and descendingly, which edifies a subtle accompaniment, a very airy sonic layer, neuter from a tonal point of view. The whole fragment from Fig. 14 is repeated between measures 168-173, with only two differences: in measure 170 the oboe begins with F flat instead of F; D flat is written instead of D at the first clarinet on the quavers on the third and fourth beats of measure 172. What upon a cursory look can be interpreted as a mistake or absent writing<sup>21</sup> proves to be the composer's intention, which slightly overshadows the sonority of the e, before resuming, in a transposition on A flat and then in a repetition of the transposition, only the third measure of the motif.

**Tempo I**

Fig. 15. *The transposition and its repetition*

The last time we hear motif e is starting with measure 179, this time beginning with G# and without the last measure. In the buzz of the harp and of the violins, which play tirelessly the ascending and descending perfect fifths, only now on other sounds, we hear motif d of the trumpets in its entirety in its transposition on A flat. Even if the exposition is integral, the triumphant sound can now be heard from a great distance, due to the sourdines that the trumpeters have to use. Janáček also returns to the *aksak* rhythm, the one with a quaver added to a string of a further 12 other quavers. In preparing the Coda, he does not anymore introduce that quaver at the end of the string, but after the first six quavers. It is a wonderful example of a complete change of the rhythmic and tempo configuration in the same metric framework, an ingenious solution of combining two distinct musical structures.

<sup>21</sup> I have listened to several interpretative versions of the respective moment, all of which observed the inflections in the score.

189 *Allegretto* (♩ = 138)

Fl. 1&2

Fg. 1&2

Trp. in C 1,2,3

Trb. 1&2

Trb. 3&4

V. 1

V. 2

V-la

Vc. Cb.

*ff*

*p*

*p*

*ff*

con sord.

con sord.

*p*

senza sord.

senza sord.

div.

pizz

Fig. 16. A rhythmic change and a change of tempo, maintaining the time signature (the arrows indicate the added quaver)

I consider that the conducting and expressive logic of the above moment imposes, however, a different metric approach and of beating time, i. e. the succession of the 7/8 and 3/4 time signatures, in which the metric entities are separated by ethos and message: the first closes fragment E, with its gentle sonority and reminding the apotheosis, the second ensures the transition towards the reappearance of the a. The graphic aspect of measures 189-190 would be this:

189 *Allegretto* (♩ = 138) 190

Fl. 1&2

Fg. 1&2

Trp. in C 1,2,3

Trb. 1&2

Trb. 3&4

V. 1

V. 2

V-la

Vc. Cb.

*ff*

*p*

*p*

*ff*

con sord.

*p* con sord.

*p* senza sord.

senza sord.

div.

pizz

Fig. 17. The measure 189 divided in two distinct metric entities

As I have just stipulated, the trombones and the bassoons open the way towards a new and last appearance of motif a, still played by the oboes and in the same register as the first time (measures 5-9), only that now a few measures with the role of an ending are added. The movement ends with a war-like, decisive, victorious sonority.

## 2. Debates

In the above analysis I have depicted my vision on the great Czech composer Leoš Janáček's compositional thinking in the second movement of the *Sinfonietta* JW VI/18. The scheme of the form, present at the beginning of the analysis, represents a profound dissection of a musical material about which opinions have already been formulated. I will quote below two of these with the sincere wish of presenting readers with other points of view, as well, which my sometimes differing judgements do not altogether oppose but tend to constitute what I hope are welcome additions. What I have before me first is the introductory information, signed by Dr. A. P., to the score published by Universal Edition in Vienna in the revised edition of 1980. Here is what the author identified through his initials states regarding the second movement of the work:

The Andante which follows alternately employs two themes: a sustained melody supported by wind instruments and later by strings; and a dance motive in a graceful 2/4 time. The latter appears first, after a short Introduction, and the second melodic theme is worked out later. The Dance theme in various transformations, is worked up to a "maestoso" passage in which the accompanying motive of the Dance theme assumes the character of an independent figure, over sustained chords. After a climax is reached, the Dance portion of the beginning recurs, varied and in accompanying figures. The movement terminates in this mood.<sup>22</sup>

I cannot but observe quite a vague expression especially of the order in which the sonorities considered important, sometimes called themes, other times motifs, appear. Equally unclear are the statements regarding the other motifs, while the similarity of the culmination with the first movement of the work is not even reminded of. At the same time, neither the *aksak* rhythm, the ingenious metric solutions imagined by the composer, nor his tonal-modal language are mentioned. Of course that the above description does not claim to be a consummate analysis, the author's goal certainly being to synthesise, so that any opinions about all the movements of the *Sinfonietta*, not only those quoted above, are more than welcome for one who embarks on the road of an in-depth study of the score.

The second document that I will refer to is a study published by musicologist Charris Efthimiou<sup>23</sup>. Let us take the following statement into consideration:

In the second movement of the *Sinfonietta* appear four motifs which are repeated several times. Although these repeated motifs have the same thematic structure, they gain a different tone color through different orchestrations. On the one hand, through these discolorations, Janáček manages to avoid sound monotony, while on the other hand his music gains tone-color diversity. Specific processes become apparent if the entire orchestration of a motif is considered from an overarching perspective.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Leoš Janáček. 1926. *Sinfonietta* für Orchester, herausgegeben von Karl Heinz Füssl (1980), Universal Edition A. G. Wien

<sup>23</sup> Charris Efthimiou (b. 1978), a Greek composer and musicologist. According to <https://musikprotokoll.orf.at/en/node/9481>.

<sup>24</sup> Charris Efthimiou. 2013. "About the instrumentation of the bass and melody line in Leoš Janáček's *Sinfonietta* and *Mládí*". *Musicologia Brunensia* 48: 31-43, p. 32.

Although for the most part I agree with the Greek musicologist's opinion regarding the discussion about the aspects concerning the sonic colour of the four motifs, a few observations are, nevertheless, mandatory. If they are precise regarding the first three motifs – from measures 1, 5 and 61 –, the fourth one is presented erroneously. Here is what Ex. 4 from Charris Efthimiou's research looks like:



Ex. 4 *Sinfonietta*, II. movement: accompaniment-motif 2 (bar: 166).

Fig. 18. A passage from the score, as it is noted in the Greek musicologist's research

In the above example three differences to the original score can be observed. The first and least significant one is the fact that the passage under discussion appears in measure 162, not 166. However, the other two distort one's perception of the motif, which is why I will present and comment upon the motif as Janáček wrote it, in order to offer readers a perspective allowing a correct understanding of the matter.

**Tempo I**

Fig. 19. Measures 162-163

The distortion that I was talking about consists first of all in the wrong presentation of the first ascending interval, which is not a perfect fourth, as Charris Efthimiou describes it, but a perfect fifth. The Czech composer combines three sounds found at an interval of a perfect fifth one in relation to the other, while the Greek musicologist reduces the group to only two sounds, E and A, where A is sometimes presented at an ascending fourth, sometimes at a descending fifth in relation to E. Let us admit it is not really the same thing... The other distortion consists in the sounds themselves; nowhere in the score of the second movement of Leoš Janáček's *Sinfonietta* does the respective motif feature the sounds E natural and A natural! To clarify I will present each transposition of the game of perfect fifths:



Fig. 20. *The game of perfect fifths and its transpositions*

In fact, in a subsequent example<sup>25</sup> to the one I presented, aware or not of the difference, Charris Efthimiou himself makes the necessary change, although in this matter also there would be further things to be debated on. Not wanting to enter any polemics, the Greek musicologist's study is worthy of attention, as the above corrections are meant to present things exactly as they are written in the score.

### 3. Conclusions

This piece of research occasioned for me an entry into the profound strata of the compositional processes and techniques, which Leoš Janáček used in the second movement of the *Sinfonietta*. Naturally, I concerned myself with bringing as solid arguments as possible on my own vision. Regarding the architecture of the movement, which I see made up of two large sections, I have observed that the methods of the motivic exposition and processing are omnipresent, so that I have subjected several musical fragments to a cellular level dissection. Not to a lesser extent I was interested in the messages, which the composer wished to convey. Even if in this regard of semantics and symbolic meanings my judgements can be equated with deductions and hypotheses, I believe that these follow the path wished by the composer. Occasional and unique, Janáček's intention of establishing a connection between the second movement of the *Sinfonietta* and the Špilberk castle is, however, real, as such an argument supporting my statements. The folkloric source and the apotheosis of the trumpets directed my thoughts towards the people, towards their joy in the context of the liberation and unification.

Although emotionally involved in the work, which he called "a beautiful life *Sinfonietta*"<sup>26</sup>, the Czech musician considered it secondary in the ensemble of his work. A reason can be that several times during the composer's life only the first movement was played on various official occasions. This does not mean that Janáček was not pleased with the news about the enthusiastic reception that audiences of prestigious philharmonics from Europe and the USA gave to the work, even if in the press there were published, beside praises, a few reserved opinions, also. Maybe that justifies the composer's joke on the importance of the significance of musical works in general: "In short I am conscious of the insignificance of musical works. It's useless to talk much about them!"<sup>27</sup> His statement comes in the context of a visit to London and of the question marks regarding the reception, including the quantitative one, of his music.

<sup>25</sup> Charris Efthimiou, *op. cit.*, Ex. 8.

<sup>26</sup> Fragment from a letter from Leoš Janáček to Kamila Stösslová, dated 26 March 1926. See John Tyrell. 1994. *Intimate letters. Leoš Janáček to Kamila Stösslová*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, p. 86.

<sup>27</sup> Fragment from a letter from Leoš Janáček to Kamila Stösslová, dated 13 May 1926. See *op. cit.*, p. 89.

Although the previous words seem to be the expression of a slightly pedantic and morose man, I am convinced it represents an outburst, a contextual feeling because his entire activity as a musician and man of culture proves his intense preoccupation with refinement, skill, clarity and, above all, for the connection that art must have to life.

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